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*Children of Laughter and the Re-creation of
Humanity: The Theological Vision and Logic of
Paul's Letter to the Galatians from the Vantage Point
of 4:21-5:1*

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Abstract

This thesis contributes to the discussion about the theological vision and logic in Paul's letter to the Galatians, in which he opposes the “Judaizing” of the Gentiles by means of their circumcision and the observance of the Mosaic Law, and calls for full alignment with the reality that the Christ-event had inaugurated. Thus, the discussion is also about discontinuity and continuity between Paul's message and Israel's scriptures, and with the hermeneutic in, and the shape of, Paul's retelling of Israel's story.

After reviewing six perspectives on the reading of Galatians, I position my approach in relation to N. T. Wright and John Barclay. With Wright, I focus on Paul's appropriation of Israel's scriptures and story, giving special attention to the hermeneutic involved in it. In search for the logic in Paul's resistance to Gentile circumcision, I develop Barclay's emphasis on the centrality of incongruous grace with reference to Paul's scriptural matrix.

The vantage point for my reading of the letter is the strategically important passage of 4:21-5:1 that draws together the preceding argument, and moves it to a new phase. Also, in 4:21-5:1, Paul invites the Galatians to adopt his interpretative practice, which opens up Paul's hermeneutic for analysis. I demonstrate that Paul's allegoresis in 4:21-5:1 is intertextual; Paul reads the Abraham narrative together with Isaiah in light of the revelation of Christ and the experience of the Spirit.

Following Paul's signals in Gal 4:21-5:1 that point to his scriptural matrix, I analyse the theological potential in the narrative of the birth of Abraham's two sons and in Isaiah's vision of restoration. I claim that Paul's theological vision draws from the Abrahamic promise of blessing to all the nations and from its re-appropriation in Isaiah in terms of the Gentiles' inclusion in the regenerated people of God. Paul also makes a correlation between the pattern in Isaac's birth and the alienation-restoration paradigm in Isa 54:1 that is formative for his logic of incongruent grace that recognises the dependence of both the Jew and Gentile on the promissory act of God in Christ and the Spirit for inclusion in the restored people of God – the re-created humanity.

Key words: Paul's theology, Galatians, Intertextuality, Abraham narrative, Isaiah's vision of restoration

Children of Laughter and the Re-creation of Humanity:
The Theological Vision and Logic of Paul's Letter to the Galatians
from the Vantage Point of 4:21-5:1

By

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at the

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Abbreviations

All abbreviations of ancient literature, academic journals and monograph series follow the forms indicated in the *SBL Handbook of Style: For Biblical Studies and Related Fields*, 2nd ed. (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014).

Declaration

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

Statement of Copyright

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

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Chapter 1. Introduction

“No one will ever say the last word on this Epistle”¹

Paul's letters are held to be the first documents that link us with the first century Jesus movement, and his *letter to the Galatians* is one of the earliest writings that deal with the impact of the message about Jesus – the gospel – reaching beyond the Jewish world.² Galatians can thus be held as a foundational document for the movement that later became known as Christianity. It was written in the mid first century CE – only about 20 years after the events of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus (the Christ-event) that, together with the subsequent experience of the Spirit, form the core of the gospel the letter represents – to the groups of believers Paul had earlier established in the Roman province of Galatia.³ In the letter, we are presented with Paul's passionate reproclamation of the “truth of the gospel” and its implications for all humanity in the context of a challenge by a “distorted gospel” that compels non-Jewish/Gentile believers to be circumcised (males) and adopt the observance of the Mosaic Law (Gal 1:1-9; 3:1-5; 5:2-12; 6:11-18).

The letter's passionate personal tone, condensed argumentation, and creative use of Israel's scriptures continue to generate various configurations of its message. Since the Reformation, a traditional Lutheran reading has dominated the scholarly scene until the emergence of the *New Perspective on Paul* about 40 years ago. Yet neither has the new completely eclipsed the traditional reading, nor has the development of more new perspectives ceased. This thesis participates in the ongoing discussion about the configuration of Paul's theological vision and logic in Galatians by claiming that an unparalleled vantage point for the task is found in Gal 4:21-5:1 where key aspects of

1 John Bligh, *Galatians: A Discussion of St. Paul's Epistle* (London: St Paul Publications, 1969), i.

2 For a general chronological account of Paul's life and letter writing, see Rainer Riesner, “Pauline Chronology,” in *Blackwell Companion to Paul*, ed. Stephen Westerholm (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 9–29; and his larger work Rainer Riesner, *Die Frühzeit des Apostels Paulus: Studien zur Chronologie, Missionsstrategie und Theologie*, WUNT 71 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1994).

3 Riesner argues for the South Galatia position (interestingly finding correspondence between Paul's geographical direction and Isa 66:18-21), and claims that Galatians was written before the apostolic council in Jerusalem (“Pauline Chronology,” 20–23). For discussion and a traditional argument for the “South Galatia hypothesis,” see Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians* (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), lxi–lxxii. For a new angle in support of the South Galatia view that looks at the role the table of nations in Gen 11 plays in Paul's mission, see James M. Scott, *Paul and the Nations: The Old Testament and Jewish Background of Paul's Mission to the Nations with Special Reference to the Destination of Galatians*, WUNT 84 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1995). My thesis does not depend on the South Galatia hypothesis, but it would support the perception of a more substantial Jewish “presence” in the text, whether in the form of mixed congregations or in the general role the Jews have in the argument.

Paul's hermeneutic are made visible, the development of important themes is brought to a climax, and the move is prepared towards the final section of the letter that exhorts the Galatians to live in accordance with the “truth of the gospel.” I use the terms vision and logic to focus my inquiry on Paul's understanding of what the gospel is set to perform (vision), and how it is configured in relation to Scripture, the Jew-Gentile divide, and the Mosaic Law in the new situation brought about by the Christ-event (logic).

In this introductory chapter, I first review six configurations of Paul's theological vision and logic that have been chosen because they offer perspectives that shape my approach, and raise important questions with which I interact in this thesis.⁴ After the review, I articulate the key questions this thesis addresses, and chart my approach and argument, both of which will be developed fully with each step of the thesis.

1.1 Review of Six Perspectives on the Theological Vision and Logic of Galatians

To focus my review, I tease out an answer from each of the following six perspectives to the core question of the letter: why does Paul resist the requirement for Gentile circumcision? In anticipation of my own approach, I also note what role Gal 4:21-5:1 plays in the different configurations. I recognise that not all commentators include 5:1 in the passage, and hence I use throughout this theses with each scholar that I discuss the delineation that they have made. I discuss my reasons for including 5:1 in section 2.2.

1.1.1 Martin Luther

I start with Martin Luther, since his reading of Galatians provides the background for the development of later configurations. The letter's antithetical presentation of the law and gospel, and its passionate tone provided Luther with a focal point to express his central Reformation teaching. My review is based on Luther's 1535 commentary that represents his fully developed Reformation perspective.⁵

⁴ I am not able to include the perspective of Brigitte Kahl, *Galatians Re-Imagined: Reading with the Eyes of the Vanquished* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), who essentially argues that Paul's problem with the law is not with the Jewish Law as such, but with how it is caught up in the Roman Imperial “law.” My constraints do not permit interaction with the Roman context in this research.

⁵ The 1535 commentary is based on a series of lectures on the letter in Wittenberg in 1531 that were recorded and compiled into a commentary in 1535, which Luther authorised (Editor's Preface in Martin Luther, *A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* [London: James Clarke and Co. Ltd, 1953], 1–2).

Luther helpfully outlines his understanding of the argument of Galatians in the *Introduction* that he himself wrote to the commentary:

St. Paul goeth about to establish the doctrine of faith, grace, forgiveness of sins, or Christian righteousness, to the end that we may have a perfect knowledge and difference between christian righteousness and all other righteousness.⁶

The key for Luther is to distinguish Christian righteousness as *passive* righteousness, in which the human receives the benefits of Christ by faith in contrast to all other forms of righteousness that are *active*, i.e. have to do with works.⁷ Thus, Luther configures the theology of Galatians around the theme of righteousness by faith in opposition to the “works of the law.”⁸ Although Luther was aware of the option of taking the “works of the law” as referring only to certain aspects of the Jewish Law (the ceremonial Law), he rejected that view (represented by Jerome and Erasmus),⁹ and insisted that the question is about the whole Law, including the Ten Commandments, as well as any set of laws/traditions that were taken as necessary for righteousness before God:

Take thou the work of the law therefore generally for that which is contrary to grace. Whatsoever is not of grace, is the law, whether it be judicial, ceremonial, or the Ten Commandments.¹⁰

For Luther, the central concern is that no works are brought by any means into the mechanism of justification, which is solely by the grace of God.

Luther reads Galatians with generalisations (any law and any works) that have a focus on applying the text to his Reformation context. But underlying this is Luther's construction of the specific occasion of the letter. Luther understands that Paul's original battle was against “the other gospel,” which held that it is not enough to believe in Christ or to be baptised, but that one must also be circumcised “after the manner of Moses” to be saved – “Christ began the building, Moses must finish it.”¹¹ Furthermore, Luther recognises that the specific focus of the letter is on opposing the requirement of circumcision of male Gentile believers, and yet having the implication that circumcision should not be regarded as necessary for righteousness even for the Jews:

Paul then did not reject circumcision as a damnable thing, neither did he by word or deed enforce the Jews to forsake it. ... But he rejected circumcision as a thing not necessary to

6 Ibid., 21.

7 Ibid., 22.

8 I spell *law* with the upper case when it is a reference to the Mosaic *Law*, and otherwise with the lower case.

9 Timothy Wengert, “Martin Luther on Gal 3:6-14: Justification by Curses and Blessings,” in *Galatians and Christian Theology: Justification, the Gospel, and Ethics in Paul's Letter*, ed. Mark W. Elliott et al. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 92–96.

10 Luther, *Galatians*, 128; commenting on Gal 2:16.

11 Ibid., 63.

righteousness...¹²

Luther's understanding of Paul's logic in resisting the requirement of circumcision becomes clear with his comments on Gal 5:2 (ὅτι ἐὰν περιτέμνησθε, Χριστὸς ὑμᾶς οὐδὲν ὠφελήσει), where he highlights that the problem is adding something to *faith in Christ* to be saved.¹³ By faith, Luther means trust placed in Christ in contrast to confidence in works to bring righteousness.¹⁴ Thus, the problem with circumcision arises when it is the object of trust to gain merit with God (whether by the Gentile or by the Jew). This is contrary to the gospel, for Luther, because it makes the work of Christ of no value – living as if Christ had not come.¹⁵

Despite the strong antithesis between Christ and the law, or faith and works, Luther is able to retain a place for the law in Paul's gospel. For Luther, there is a wrong and a right way to do the law. The wrong way is to do the law to be justified by it.¹⁶ The right way is first to believe, and then by faith perform the law.¹⁷ In Luther's illustration about the right place for works, we get an example of his view on justification that is also about participation, or union with Christ,¹⁸ which enables the right doing of the law:

In him we are by faith, and he in us. This bridegroom must be alone with the bride in his secret chamber, all the servants and family being put apart. But *afterwards*, when he openeth the door and cometh forth, then let the servants and handmaids return, to fulfil their ministry. There let charity do her office, and let good works be done.¹⁹

When Luther comes to Gal 4:21-31, he takes it as an illustration of the argument Paul has already made in the letter.²⁰ Luther is attracted by Paul's antithetical

12 Ibid., 94–95. Also: “Notwithstanding, I give no restraint to the Jews herein: who if they will needs keep the law and be circumcised, I am not against it, so that they do it with freedom of conscience. And thus have I taught and lived among the Jews, 'being made a Jew unto the Jews;' holding ever the truth of my Gospel notwithstanding.” (Ibid., 93.)

13 Luther, *Galatians*, 447.

14 Ibid., 448, also 22, 24.

15 Ibid., 448, 454. Luther clarifies this point in his comment on Gal 2:21 claiming that, if the law is needed for salvation, then Christ loses his role as the saviour (Ibid., 146–47). Luther directed stronger criticism on the church's practices for gaining merit than on his perception of the self-righteousness of the Jews, because the church is guilty of it even when knowing the Messiah (Ibid., 17).

16 Luther, *Galatians*, 249.

17 Ibid., 247.

18 Emphasised by Tuomo Mannermaa: “Luther's notion of the 'righteousness of faith' is permeated by christological thinking. He does not separate the person (*persona*) of Christ and his work (*officium*) from each other. Instead. *Christ himself*, both his person and his work, *is* the Christian righteousness, that is, the 'righteousness of faith.' Christ – and therefore also *his entire person and work* – is really and truly present in the faith itself (*in ipsa fide Christus adest*).” (Tuomo Mannermaa and Kirsi Irmeli Stjerna, *Christ Present In Faith: Luther's View Of Justification* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005]; originally published in Finnish as Tuomo Mannermaa, *In ipsa fide Christus adest: Luterilaisen ja Ortodoksisen Kristinuskonkäsityksen leikkauspiste [The Point of Intersection between Lutheran and Orthodox Conceptions of the Christian Faith]* [Helsinki: Missiologian ja Ekumeniikan Seura, 1979]).

19 Luther, *Galatians*, 142; emphasis added.

20 Ibid., 417.

construction of the passage to once again “set forth plainly the difference between the law and the Gospel.”²¹ Thus, the two women and the two covenants (4:23-25) become an expression of the antithesis between the law and the gospel:

Paul therefore plainly sheweth by this allegory the difference between the law and the Gospel: first, when he calleth Agar the Old Testament, and Sarah the New; again when he calleth the one a bondmaid, the other a free-woman... . By these differences are resembled the two sorts of people, of faith and of the law I mean.²²

Also, the two Jerusalems (4:25-26; the present and the above) come to represent the people of the law and the people of the gospel – the Church.²³ Although Luther applies the legalistic character of the present Jerusalem to any group that relies on the law for righteousness, and most pointedly to the “Papists,” it is Luther's antithetical construction between the Synagogue and the Church²⁴ – between Judaism and Christianity as representatives of legalism and grace – that created a legacy,²⁵ which later scholarship has sought to modify or distance itself from.

1.1.2 The New Perspective on Paul

The Lutheran bishop and biblical scholar Krister Stendahl began to chart in the 1960s and 70s the shift in the reading of Paul's letters that would become known as the *New Perspective on Paul* (NPP). Stendahl argued that Paul's formulation of “justification by faith” must be understood firmly in the context of his Gentile mission, and that it has to do specifically with the Jew-Gentile relationship:

... a doctrine of justification was hammered out by Paul for the very specific and limited purpose of defending the rights of Gentile converts to be full and genuine heirs to the promises of God to Israel. ... We think that Paul spoke about justification by faith, using the Jewish-Gentile situation as an instance, as an example. But Paul was chiefly concerned about the relation between Jews and Gentiles – and in the development of *this* concern he used as one of his arguments the idea of justification by faith.²⁶

21 Ibid., 425.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid., 420.

24 “The apostle sheweth by this allegory of the prophet Isaiah [Isa 54:1 in Gal 4:27], the difference which is between Agar and Sarah, that is to say between the Synagogue and the Church, or between the law and the Gospel.” (Ibid., 423).

25 This legacy is reflected e.g. in Hans Dieter Betz's commentary on Galatians: “[on 4:30]... if God has given the inheritance to the Gentile Christians ..., the Jews are excluded from it, and the Christians constitute the 'Israel of God' (6:16). ... According to Galatians, Judaism is excluded from salvation altogether, so that the Galatians have to choose between Paul and Judaism.” (*Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia*, Hermeneia [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979], 250–51.)

26 Krister Stendahl, *Paul among Jews and Gentiles, and Other Essays* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 2–3.

Stendahl also challenged Luther's focus on the conscience; Paul did not share Luther's struggle with his own conscience (he had a rather “robust conscience”),²⁷ nor did Paul preach justification by faith to consciences plagued by guilt:

Paul's thoughts about justification were triggered by the issues of divisions and identities in a pluralistic and torn world, not primarily by the inner tensions of individual souls and consciences. His searching eyes focused on the unity and the God-willed diversity of humankind, yes, of the whole creation.²⁸

Thus, rather than focusing Paul's gospel on the individual's relationship with God, Stendahl perceived a more horizontal (social) dimension in it; the gospel is about the unity of humanity, and especially the bridging of the Jew-Gentile divide.

The moves charted by Stendahl would be elevated to a new pitch after the work of E. P. Sanders that undercut the construal of Judaism as a religion of works-righteousness, which was the foil for Luther's reading of Galatians. Sanders argues in his *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* that, rather than being legalistic, the pattern of religion in Palestinian Judaism is best described by *covenantal nomism* that emphasises the priority of grace as the basis for obedience to the Law.²⁹

In regard to Paul, Sanders perceives that Paul agrees generally with Judaism on grace and works: “in Paul, as in Jewish literature, good deeds are the *condition* of remaining 'in', but they do not *earn* salvation.”³⁰ However, Sanders emphasises that in other ways Paul's pattern of religion is essentially different from that of Palestinian Judaism: Paul uses righteousness as a transfer term, whereas in Judaism it is about maintenance of status among the elect;³¹ repentance, which is essential to the pattern of *covenantal nomism*, is not part of Paul's scheme;³² sin is primarily a power to be freed from rather than transgression;³³ and being among the saved is about participating *in Christ* for Paul, rather than being a member *in Israel*.³⁴ Consequently, Sanders finds it striking that, for Paul, “everyone – whether Jew or Gentile – must *transfer* from the group of those who are perishing to the group of those who are being saved.”³⁵ The logic in this runs from solution to plight: “for Paul, the conviction of a universal

²⁷ See his famous essay: “The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West” in *Ibid.*, 78–96.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 40.

²⁹ E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (London: SCM Press, 1977), 421–22.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 517; emphasis original.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 544.

³² *Ibid.*, 546.

³³ *Ibid.*, 546–47.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 547.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 547–48; emphasis original.

solution preceded the conviction of a universal plight.³⁶ Sanders's insistence on the solution – Christ – determining the shape of Paul's view about the plight is reflected also in his overall emphasis on the Christ-event as generating the shape of Paul's theology:

Paul appears as one who bases the explanation of his gospel, his theology, on the meaning of the death and resurrection of Jesus, not as one who fitted the death and resurrection into a pre-existing scheme, where they take the place of other motifs with similar functions.³⁷

Where Sanders highlights the discontinuity between Paul's conception of the gospel and the matrix of Palestinian Judaism, the further development of the NPP has emphasised continuity between Paul and his Jewish matrix, especially the scriptures of Israel. This is most characteristic in the work of N. T. Wright, but before I review his configuration of Galatians, I present the key moves that James Dunn has made, which also underlie Wright's reading.

Dunn is commonly attributed with coining the actual phrase *The New Perspective on Paul*, which was the title of his Manson Memorial Lecture in 1982, and the subsequent reprint in 1983.³⁸ Appreciating the work of Sanders in undercutting the construal of Judaism as a religion of works-righteousness, Dunn, however, develops the NPP differently from Sanders.³⁹ In his 1983 paper, Dunn focuses the NPP on Gal 2:16 with a new definition of the “works of the Law.” He notes that the statement on justification in Gal 2:16 follows immediately the debates at Jerusalem and Antioch that focused on two issues: circumcision (Jerusalem) and food laws/ritual purity (Antioch).⁴⁰ Thus, Paul's denial of justification by “works of the Law” is to be understood in relation to these specific issues.⁴¹ The works of the Law in Galatians are then, according to Dunn, about particular observances: circumcision, food/purity laws and observance of special days (4:10).⁴² The Jews themselves, and the Greco-Roman observers, regarded these as characteristic and distinct Jewish practices that separated the Jews from other peoples.⁴³ Thus, Dunn identifies circumcision as the prime *identity marker* of

36 Ibid., 474.

37 Ibid., 555–56.

38 James D. G. Dunn, “The New Perspective on Paul,” *Bulletin of John Rylands University Library Manchester*, vol. 65 (1983): 95–122. However, see N. T. Wright (*Paul and His Recent Interpreters: Some Contemporary Debates* [London: SPCK, 2015], 64–87) and Magnus Zetterholm (*Approaches to Paul: A Student's Guide to Recent Scholarship* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009], 118) for discussion on the genesis of the NPP, and how the same expression and similar views were used earlier by Wright.

39 Dunn, “The New Perspective on Paul,” 102, 109. Also Dunn, *The Theology of Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (Cambridge: CUP, 1993), 143.

40 Dunn, “The New Perspective on Paul,” 107.

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid., 107, 115

43 Ibid., 107–8.

membership in the covenant people, and the food laws and observance of special days (Sabbath) as expressions of covenant loyalty.⁴⁴ Dunn also defines the “works of the Law” as *badges* – observances that covenant people do to distinguish themselves as such.⁴⁵ Consequently, Dunn argues that Paul's resistance to Gentile circumcision is not about opposing works righteousness with justification by faith in relation to gaining merit with God, but about circumcision – “works of the Law” – and faith in Christ being two mutually exclusive alternatives for *defining the people of God*.⁴⁶ Dunn understands that Paul constructs faith in Jesus Christ as the new identity marker of the people of God that renders the previous markers – circumcision included – superfluous, in contrast to Peter and the Jewish believers at Antioch who regarded them as complementary.⁴⁷

Dunn's reading of Gal 5:1-6, in his later commentary, deepens the explanation. He identifies freedom as the *leitmotif* of the letter, which means freedom for the Gentiles from having to submit to distinctly Jewish practices.⁴⁸ Since circumcision had become the mark of the Jew as distinct from the Gentile, it had become a means of ideological and national imperialism.⁴⁹ Thus, the problem with circumcision – “coming under the Law” – is that it means adopting the total Jewish way of life, that is, complete assimilation and absorption of any distinct Gentile identity.⁵⁰ This is contrary to Paul's gospel, in which identity is rooted in Christ independent of circumcision.⁵¹

N. T. Wright agrees with Dunn that Paul's opposition to the imposition of the “works of the Law” on the Gentiles is about a false conception of what should define the new people of God. However, Wright's emphasis is more on the role of the positive vision for the unity of the reconstituted people of God (worldwide family of Abraham) rather than the negative aspect of the Torah creating a “trap of nationalism:”

The thought which drives Paul into this paragraph [Gal 3:10-14], then, has to do with the question of what happens to the promises to Abraham, granted the plight of the Jews which is

44 Ibid., 108–109; also James D. G. Dunn, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* (London: A & C Black, 1993), 136–137.

45 Dunn, “The New Perspective on Paul,” 110.

46 Ibid., 112–113. At this point Dunn perceives that Paul breaks from the other Jewish Christian understanding, which held that faith in Jesus as Messiah was just a narrower definition of covenantal nomism.

47 Ibid.; also Dunn, *Galatians*, 138. In Dunn's later work, circumcision is not categorised as superfluous, but only as relativised by the cross; it is totally proper in the Jewish mission, but not in the mission to the Gentiles (*The Theology*, 31–32).

48 Dunn, *Galatians*, 260–263. The “yoke of slavery” denotes for Dunn the obligations and privileges of the Jew, but even more a metaphor of the defeated people in war being brought under subjection to the other. This confirms for Dunn that Paul is taking issue with the nationalistic overtones of Jewish insistence on the law (Ibid., 262–263.)

49 Dunn, *Galatians*, 265.

50 Ibid., 266–267.

51 Ibid., 265.

brought about by the Torah. This is more than simply the plight of the sinner convicted by a holy law; more, too, than the plight of Israel caught in the trap of nationalism. The thought is as follows: God promised Abraham a worldwide family, characterized by faith. The promises were entrusted to Israel, the people whose life was lived *ὀπὸ νόμου*. The Torah, however, held out over this people, the agents of promise, the curse which in fact had come true, and was still being proved true, in the events of the exile and its strange continuance right up to Paul's day and beyond. How could the promises, the blessings promised to Abraham, now reach their intended destination?⁵²

The above quotation exemplifies also the most distinctive feature in Wright's reading of Galatians: his emphasis on narrative.⁵³ Paul inhabited a shared Jewish narrative world, and, Wright argues, Paul's particular retelling of Israel's story that has come to its climax in Jesus underlies his theological vision and logic in Galatians.⁵⁴ Wright's understanding of the shape of Paul's retelling of Israel's story can be summarised in the following manner:

- a) it has a *covenantal frame* that is shaped by the primacy of the Abrahamic promise of a single worldwide family of God and by the giving of the Torah, which is at the same time “blocking” the promise but also creating the conditions for the promise to be fulfilled, as it focuses the sin of the world on Israel where it can be dealt with;
- b) the plight of Israel is the curse of the Law in her *ongoing exile*, and the solution is the covenant renewal/restoration, in which the Gentiles have a share;
- c) the climax of the story is in the solution that is brought about by Jesus as Israel's representative – *the Messiah* – who deals with the curse of the Law in his death, and inaugurates the restoration in his resurrection.⁵⁵

52 N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 142. However, Wright's comments on Gal 4:1-11 (especially vv. 3, 9) have some sharp words on the negative problem with Israel's application of the Torah: “The irony of Paul's exposition at that point of the letter is of course that Israel had used the (god-given) Torah in the same way, locking herself up hereby inside her own nationalism, not realizing that the design of her god was that the covenant should be the means of his saving the world, and that she too needed liberating from the quasi-paganism involved in the idolization of nation, soil, and blood” (“Gospel and Theology in Galatians (1994),” in *Pauline Perspectives: Essays on Paul, 1978-2013* [London: SPCK, 2013], 87.)

53 Wright acknowledges the importance of the work of Richard B. Hays (*The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11*, 2nd ed., [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002]) in the new appreciation of narrative in Paul. For a discussion on the role of narrative in Wright's overall construction of Paul's theology, see Joel R. White, “N. T. Wright's Narrative Approach,” in *God and the Faithfulness of Paul: A Critical Examination of the Pauline Theology of N. T. Wright*, ed. Christoph Heilig, J. Thomas Hewitt, and Michael F. Bird, WUNT 2. 413 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 181–204.; see also Wright's response to White on pgs. 731-735 in the Epilogue to the same volume, *The Challenge of Dialogue: A Partial and Preliminary Response*, 711–768.

54 Wright, “Gospel and Theology,” 89.

55 Wright, *Climax*, 137–156.

In Wright's more recent work, he develops further the exile-restoration scheme that stands at the centre of his construction of Paul's retelling of Israel's story, especially in terms of how the "strange continuance" of the exile was conceived in Paul's Jewish world. First, Wright argues that there are two central biblical texts, Deut 27–30 and Dan 9, that stand out in Jewish reflections on the exile-restoration scheme. The text from Deuteronomy charts "a *single historical sequence*,"⁵⁶ and "functioned in the second-Temple period as a prophecy about the bad times to come (specifically, the extended exile) and of the covenant renewal that would ultimately come about."⁵⁷ The idea of an *extended exile* is derived from Dan 9 where Daniel extends Jeremiah's prediction of 70 years of exile to 70 times 7 years (Dan 9:2, 24f).⁵⁸ By doing this, Wright perceives that Daniel is "positioning himself and his people within the continuous narrative promised by Moses... ." ⁵⁹ But this positioning did not end with Daniel, Wright argues, as many different Jewish groups "were anxiously trying to work out when Daniel's 'seventy weeks' would be over," and "they were reading their own situation, again and again, within the single flow of national narrative which they found in Deuteronomy 27–30."⁶⁰ Although Wright recognises that there were different ways in which many Jews, Paul included, located themselves in the narrative as being in a state of an extended exile (e.g. as a "geographical reality" [some diaspora Jews] or being the "advance guard of the 'real return from exile'" [Qumran community]), the common denominator is that there was a "*theological awareness of being at a particular stage within the overall continuing narrative.*"⁶¹ Thus, the key aspect in Wright's construction of the exile-restoration scheme in Paul's retelling of Israel story is the state of an *ongoing/extended exile* within a *continuous* narrative:

Perhaps we can get at the heart of what I am saying like this: that, within the *continuing narrative* which virtually all Jews believed themselves to be living in ... a great many second-Temple Jews interpreted *that part of the continuing narrative in which they were living* in terms of the so-called Deuteronomic scheme of sin-exile-restoration, with themselves still somewhere in the middle stage, that of 'exile' (which, granted, could itself become quite complicated).⁶²

56 N. T. Wright, *Christian Origins and the Question of God. [Vol. 4]: Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 143; later abbreviated as *PFG*.

57 *Ibid.*, 118.

58 *Ibid.*, 142.

59 *Ibid.*, 143.

60 *Ibid.*, 145–46. Also "... it is the combination of Deuteronomy and Daniel, and their regular retrieval in the key sources, that compels us to go on highlighting 'exile' as the best controlling metaphor to characterize this continuing moment in the single, though complex, perceived narrative of a great many Jews, including Pharisees, in the second-Temple period" (*Ibid.*, 162).

61 Wright, *PFG*, 140; emphasis original.

62 *Ibid.*; emphasis original.

Wright's focus on reading Galatians with a mind tuned to Paul's retelling of the story of Israel is concomitant with his understanding that Paul's primary theological matrix is Israel's scriptures:⁶³

But at the heart of it all – not as an occasional added extra, but as the living force within the whole thing – there lies Paul's fresh reading of Israel's scriptures as the unfinished narrative of creation and covenant which, attaining its *telos* in the Messiah, now reaches out, still as Israel's story, to embrace the whole world, as Israel's story always aimed to do. The types and patterns fit within this larger framework. The playful allegories and poetic reworkings give it further, sometimes paradoxical, embodiment. But the story remains the story.⁶⁴

For Wright, Paul's “playful allegory” in Gal 4:21-5:1 does not determine the shape of Paul's retelling of Israel's story in Galatians, but rather continues to express what has already been established in the main argument of the letter.⁶⁵ Accordingly, Wright perceives that the allegorical retelling of the story of Abraham's two sons continues to address the issue of “the actual 'inheritance' of Abraham's family” or “the public demarcation of Abraham's family.”⁶⁶ To be clear, Wright insists that Gal 4:21-5:1 is not about disinheriting Judaism – setting up the opposition between Judaism and Christianity – as it is rather about “two very different visions of the essentially Jewish belief that the Messiah has come and that what matters is the formation of Messiah-communities.”⁶⁷ The central aspect in Paul's vision and logic in Galatians is again, for Wright, Israel's story that climaxes in the Messiah as a fulfilment of Jewish eschatological hopes. He perceives that this eschatological aspect is present in Paul's quotation of Isa 54:1 in Gal 4:27, which is connected to the notion of restoration after exile.⁶⁸ With this, Wright spells out the centrality of eschatology in his configuration:

And the point of locating all this [the ecclesiology of the single community] within 'eschatology' should now be clear. *This is not a debate about 'types of religion.'* It is a matter of eschatology. Either the long-awaited 'age to come' has arrived with the Messiah or it has not. ... It is about the fulfilment of the ancient covenant plan in the Messiah and the spirit – and about the various strategies used in the first century, as well as in the twenty-first, to avoid the radical implications of that fulfilment.⁶⁹

The radical implications that Paul draws from his eschatological convictions are

⁶³ Here, Wright acknowledges the impact of the ground-breaking work of Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

⁶⁴ N. T. Wright, “Israel's Scriptures in Paul's Narrative Theology (2012),” in *Pauline Perspectives*, 552.

⁶⁵ Wright, *PPG*, 1133.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 1134.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 1135.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 1137–1138.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 1138; emphasis original.

reflected in the contrasts he sets between the “two covenants” (Abrahamic vs. Mosaic) and the two Jerusalems (4:22-26) that reiterate the point that Paul has been making about the invalidity of applying the Law of Moses in the new era of the Messiah:

Here again we see Paul's revised eschatology, exactly as in 3.23-9: now that the Messiah has come, we are no longer under the Torah. ... We belong to the new Jerusalem, not in the sense of 'going to heaven when we die', but in the sense that the long-awaited return from exile, and indeed rebuilding of the temple, has happened. ... The Sarah/Hagar 'allegory' says again, The promise to Abraham has been fulfilled, the 'inheritance' is secure for all his 'seed'; and the law of Sinai is quite simply out of date.⁷⁰

Wright's emphasis on configuring Paul's message by his Jewish matrix/Israel's scriptures underscores Paul as a Jew who is engaged in an intra-Jewish debate about the implications, if Israel's story is reconfigured by its fulfilment in Jesus the Messiah:

... he [Paul] claimed to be speaking as a true Jew, criticizing – as did many who made similar claims – those who embraced other construals of Judaism, on the basis that Israel's God had now acted climactically and decisively in Jesus, the Messiah.⁷¹

Thus, Wright locates Paul firmly *within* the context of first century Judaism, although, ironically, the proponents of the *Radical New Perspective on Paul* have adopted *Paul within Judaism* as a title to highlight their distinction from both Luther and the NPP.

1.1.3 The Radical New Perspective on Paul

The Radical New Perspective on Paul (RNPP) is a title that has been used to describe a reading that radicalises aspects of the NPP.⁷² Some proponents of the RNPP, however, would rather use the title *Paul within Judaism* to emphasise their insistence on locating Paul *within* Judaism as opposed to readings that place Paul in opposition to Judaism (Luther: grace vs. law; faith vs. works), or infer that Paul thought that something was wrong with Judaism (NPP: ethnocentricity).⁷³ I find it problematic that the options for understanding Paul *within* Judaism would be restricted only to how the RNPP proponents envision it. Hence, I use the more apt title RNPP.

The RNPP portrays Paul as a Torah observant Jew – a Pharisee – before and

⁷⁰ Ibid., 1139–1140.

⁷¹ N. T. Wright, “The Letter to the Galatians: Exegesis and Theology (2000),” in *Pauline Perspectives*, 196–197.

⁷² Zetterholm, *Approaches to Paul*, 127–163. Also Pamela Eisenbaum, *Paul Was Not a Christian: The Original Message of a Misunderstood Apostle* (New York: HarperOne, 2010), 65–66.

⁷³ Mark D. Nanos and Magnus Zetterholm, eds., *Paul Within Judaism: Restoring the First-Century Context to the Apostle* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 1–11. Also, Matthew Thiessen, *Paul and the Gentile Problem* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 11.

after his encounter with the risen Jesus,⁷⁴ whose only issue with the Law is its wrong application to the Gentiles, and not with the Law in relation to the Jews.⁷⁵ The RNPP radicalisation of the Jew-Gentile distinction is also reflected in the claim that Paul's vision is driven by a view of an eschatological restoration, in which the nations come to join Israel's monotheistic worship while remaining distinct from Israel and the Jews.⁷⁶ Consequently, Pamela Eisenbaum expresses the eschatological logic in Paul's resistance to Gentile circumcision thus: "... it is necessary that Gentiles remain Gentiles on the Day of the Lord, when the God of Israel is shown to be the one God of the world."⁷⁷

The starting point in the RNPP reading of Paul's letters is to take to one extreme Stendahl's move to locate Paul's theology in his Gentile mission by insisting that Paul must be read as *addressing* (practically) *exclusively* the non-Jews, and that the *content* is also about the Gentiles and does not concern the Jews.⁷⁸ Matthew Thiessen's *Paul and the Gentile Problem* is an example of a reading of Galatians that begins here:

These claims [including Gal 2] to having divine authority to preach to gentiles suggest that he [Paul] wrote primarily, perhaps even exclusively, for gentiles-in-Christ. Therefore, when Paul quotes Jewish scriptures or comments on the Jewish law, he does so in relation to his mission to non-Jews. ... at virtually every point modern readers need to interpret Paul's letters in light of this intended gentile audience.⁷⁹

Thus, together with 1 Cor 7:19, Gal 5:6 and 6:15, the hermeneutical key in Thiessen's configuration is to separate the Law that has been given to the Jews from the commandments given to the Gentiles:

He [Paul] argues that Jews should keep the laws that God has laid upon them, while gentiles should be satisfied with the laws that God has laid upon them, not coveting those laws that God has given to Jews alone.⁸⁰

Thiessen develops the logic that underlies this distinction further. He argues that

⁷⁴ Eisenbaum, *Paul Was Not a Christian*, 132–149.

⁷⁵ Eisenbaum (referring to 1 Cor 7:19): "the teachings about the Jewish law preserved in the apostle's letters are teachings about how Torah *is* and *is not* applicable to Gentiles;" and "the commandment to circumcise applies specifically and exclusively to Jewish males, meaning it is not appropriate to circumcise Gentiles, for God did not and does not command Gentiles to be circumcised" (Ibid., 62).

⁷⁶ Paula Fredriksen, "Judaizing the Nations: The Ritual Demands of Paul's Gospel," *NTS* 56 (2010): 241–244; 249–250. Also Eisenbaum, *Paul Was Not a Christian*, 96–98. One area of variance within the RNPP appears in the identity of the gentiles vis-à-vis Israel, e.g. Caroline Johnson-Hodge: adopted into the Abrahamic family by baptism into Christ, the seed of Abraham (*If Sons, Then Heirs* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007], 4); Mark D. Nanos: incorporated into a newly created people of God (*The Irony of Galatians: Paul's Letter in First-Century Context* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002], 99–100).

⁷⁷ Eisenbaum, *Paul Was Not a Christian*, 171.

⁷⁸ Johnson Hodge concedes that Paul can write about the Jews, but maintains that the real concern has to do with the Gentiles: "Paul is clear that he is the apostle to the gentiles (Rom 11:13) and that he is writing *to* gentiles, even if he writes *about* Jews at times" (*If Sons*, 11; emphasis original).

⁷⁹ Thiessen, *Gentile Problem*, 11.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 10.

Paul underwent a change in his view on the solution to the Gentile problem. Paul was involved in his earlier life in Judaism (1:13-14) in a proselytising Gentile “mission” that aimed to make Gentiles into Jews by circumcision (5:11).⁸¹ But after the revelation of Christ, Paul had come to realise that the Gentile problem was deeper still, and that circumcision could not provide the needed solution.⁸² The deeper problem was the lack of genealogical connection with Abraham. Circumcision could not remedy this, because the only right fulfilment of the “whole law” of circumcision (5:3) is to perform it on the eighth day from birth,⁸³ which is predicated on being born to the right lineage: “[t]he descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob practiced infant circumcision, demonstrating that they alone were and are the rightful heirs of God's promises to Abraham.”⁸⁴ Thiessen's argument rests on the premise that Paul read Gen 17 in line with the Jewish tradition (especially *Jubilees*) that emphasises the eighth day requirement (17:14 LXX) as the *only* valid practice of circumcision.⁸⁵ Thus, to require circumcision from the Gentiles is, for Thiessen's Paul, trying to apply a remedy that could not solve the Gentile problem of not being born to the Abrahamic lineage.

In charting Paul's new-found solution to the Gentile problem, Thiessen focuses on Gal 4:21-31 that continues the emphasis on Abrahamic “sonship” in Paul's vision and logic in Galatians. Thiessen understands that Paul uses the figure of Ishmael “to call into question his opponents' claim that if the Galatians undergo circumcision they would become covenantal heirs.”⁸⁶ Isaac, in contrast, is used to configure the manner in which Gentiles are made sons of Abraham: “[t]he birth of Isaac is, from first to last, the result of divine action and prerogative, or, as Paul would say, through divine promise (δι' ἐπαγγελίας, 4:23) and according to the pneuma (κατὰ πνεῦμα, 4:29).”⁸⁷ Thus, the contrast between Ishmael and Isaac focuses the logic in Paul's resistance to Gentile circumcision: “[c]ircumcision and adoption of the Jewish law are a dead end for gentiles because God did not intend for the Jewish law to make gentiles into sons of Abraham.”⁸⁸

81 This view depends partly on Thiessen's understanding of Paul's earlier life in *ioudaismos* to mean “his former inclination to promote judaizing behaviour” (Ibid., 40).

82 Ibid., 41.

83 For Thiessen's reading of keeping/not keeping the “whole Law” in Gal 5:3 and 6:13, see Ibid., 91–96.

84 Ibid., 80.

85 Ibid., 77–82. Thiessen's premise is a continuation of his earlier work *Contesting Conversion: Genealogy, Circumcision, and Identity in Ancient Judaism and Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). I engage his reading of Gen 17 in section 3.5.

86 Thiessen, *Gentile Problem*, 88.

87 Ibid., 89.

88 Ibid., 105.

The emphasis on the πνεῦμα as the means to connect the Gentiles to the Abrahamic lineage leads to Thiessen's novel argument about how “God would rewrite gentile genealogy in order to make them Abraham's sons and seed.”⁸⁹ For Thiessen, Paul's gospel insists that “gentiles must somehow become genealogically descended from Abraham,”⁹⁰ because only in that way would they participate in the Abrahamic promises that deal with the problems of morality and mortality.⁹¹ Hence, Thiessen builds an elaborate case for the centrality of Abrahamic sonship in the argument of Galatians.⁹² As Thiessen probes after how Paul thought the gospel was pre-proclaimed to Abraham (3:8), he notes that Paul connects the Abrahamic promise of blessing to all the nations with the reception of the πνεῦμα (3:1-5, 14), and thus argues that the πνεῦμα must be found within the Abrahamic promise.⁹³ He locates it in Gen 15:5 in the promise that Abraham will have descendants like the stars.⁹⁴ Using a wide variety of Second Temple Jewish, early Christian, and Rabbinic sources, Thiessen suggests that the promise of the stars does not refer only to the quantity, but also to the *quality* of the descendants.⁹⁵ According to Thiessen, stars were understood as angelic beings, and thus as pneumatic in many Jewish and Christian texts.⁹⁶ Hence, the pre-proclamation of the gospel to Abraham is in the promise of pneumatic descendants, and the promise comes true to the Gentiles by the singular Abrahamic seed Christ (3:16):⁹⁷ “by being pneumatically placed in Christ, who is Abraham's seed and who at one time existed in Abraham, gentiles become Abrahamic seed and find themselves to be in Abraham.”⁹⁸ This is not merely a spiritual connection but a real genealogical one, since the πνεῦμα is understood by Paul in some (Stoic) sense materially:

In receiving the *pneuma*, then, the gentiles undergo a material transformation – again, to use a modern analogy, they undergo gene therapy – which addresses their genealogical deficiencies as gentiles.⁹⁹

Thus, Thiessen's configuration of Paul's theology in Galatians emphasises the role of the Abraham narrative in it, although heavily mediated by other ancient sources.

89 Ibid., 100.

90 Ibid., 105. Thiessen develops further the argument of Johnson Hodge, *If Sons*.

91 Thiessen, *Gentile Problem*, 148–154.

92 Ibid., 106–108.

93 Ibid., 129–132.

94 Ibid., 132–135.

95 Ibid., 135–140.

96 Ibid., 140–147.

97 Ibid., 111–128.

98 Ibid., 127.

99 Ibid., 117.

In the above sections, I have presented the main contours of the NPP and the RNPP that have challenged the traditional Lutheran reading of Galatians and emphasised the necessity to locate Paul more firmly within his Jewish matrix, and thus to construct his theological vision and logic with reference to the potential that the scriptures of Israel offered him. I now present briefly two other perspectives that raise important questions about the shape of Paul's gospel (apocalyptic; Martyn) and his hermeneutic (allegory; Boyarin) before I review the recent work of John Barclay that challenges some of the assumptions in the post-Sanders era, and provides a new paradigm for discussing Paul's theology.

1.1.4 J. Louis Martyn and the Apocalyptic Perspective

The perspective of J. Louis Martyn is a parallel development to the NPP that follows the impulses from the work of Barth (emphasis on the vertical act of God from above) and Käsemann (apocalyptic; cosmic scope of salvation).¹⁰⁰ A guiding principle in Martyn's approach is that, rather than asking about the underlying matrix in Paul's thought, the means to probe Paul's intentions in the letter is to inquire *how the first recipients understood it*.¹⁰¹ Hence, to capture the message of Galatians, Martyn sets up a reading scene, in which he takes “a seat in one of the Galatian congregations” with one ear tuned to Paul and the other to the opposing voice of the “Teachers.”¹⁰² Martyn defines the “Teachers” as Jewish Christian missionaries, and thus the debate is internal to the church, and the polemic in the letter is not about Christianity against Judaism, but about the tension between two different Christian understandings of the Gentile mission.¹⁰³ This construction is vital in Martyn's reading of Gal 4:21-5:1. He argues that Paul's use of the language of “begetting” and “giving birth,” with the contrasting expressions: “by the power of the flesh” and “by the power of the promise/the Spirit,” refers to the way “Paul speaks of two different ways in which churches are being begotten among the Gentiles at the present time, and thus of two different Gentile missions.”¹⁰⁴

More importantly, Martyn defines the polemic of the letter in terms of God's

100 See analysis by John M. G. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift* (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 2015), 130–150; and Wright, *Paul and His Recent Interpreters*, 135–186.

101 J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 42.

102 Ibid.

103 Martyn, *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 77–84.

104 Ibid., 199. Also the “two women” and the “two covenants” refer to the two missions (Ibid., 203).

apocalyptic act in Christ against religion.¹⁰⁵ By this move, he generalises the issue away from the particularities of the Jewish Law to the general characteristics of religion, which he defines as: differentiation of sacred and profane, means for humans to seek blessedness, and the superstitious attempt to know “god” and influence him.¹⁰⁶ Hence, according to Martyn, Paul thinks that demanding circumcision – taking the Law to the Gentiles – is to engage in a mission that is marked at its centre by the impotence of religion.¹⁰⁷ Martyn avoids casting Judaism as such in this pejorative light of religion, as he further defines the issue to be about the counterfeit gospel of the Teachers, in whose Gentile mission the covenant understanding of the faith of Israel is not valid, because it is now about getting Gentiles into the covenant from outside of it.¹⁰⁸ In this context, the Teachers' message about coming under the Law via circumcision to secure forgiveness falls under religion, which is about a circular exchange that places God in debt.¹⁰⁹

In contrast to the counterfeit gospel of the Teachers, Paul understands the gospel as God's *apocalyptic* act in Christ. This is the heart of Martyn's interpretation of Paul's theological logic. By apocalyptic, Martyn does not mean either revelation or the imminent expectation of the *parousia*, but God's invasion of the cosmos in Christ.¹¹⁰ The key passage for this is Gal 6:14-15: Εμοὶ δὲ μὴ γένοιτο καυχᾶσθαι εἰ μὴ ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, δι' οὗ ἔμοι κόσμος ἐσταύρωται καὶ γὰρ κόσμῳ. οὔτε γὰρ περιτομὴ τί ἐστίν οὔτε ἀκροβυστία ἀλλὰ καινὴ κτίσις. Martyn recognises the radical nature in Paul's words that deny any significance both to circumcision and to non-circumcision.¹¹¹ Since the old cosmos (construal of reality) consisted of pairs of opposites, denying real existence to this central pair (3:28 describes other pairs) is in essence the declaration of the death of the old cosmos.¹¹² This text also directs Martyn to view Christ's crucifixion as a cosmic event that brought about the death of the old cosmos and the birth of the new creation.¹¹³ Hence, Martyn perceives that the body of the letter to Galatians is a “sermon” centred around answering two key questions: “*what time is it?*” and “*in what cosmos do we actually live?*”¹¹⁴ From this apocalyptic perspective, circumcision and the Law belong to the old cosmos, and hence,

105 Martyn, *Theological Issues*, 78.

106 Ibid., 79.

107 Ibid., 82.

108 Martyn, “The Apocalyptic Gospel in Galatians,” *Interpretation* 54 (2000): 248.

109 Ibid., 247–248.

110 Martyn, “Apocalyptic Antinomies in Paul's Letter to the Galatians,” *NTS* 31 (1985): 411–414.

111 Ibid., 412–414.

112 Ibid., 413–414.

113 Martyn, *Galatians*, 278.

114 Ibid., 23.

to insist on them would be to live in the world before Christ, and not in the real world brought about by his cross and resurrection.¹¹⁵

The cosmic scope and the apocalyptic character of the Christ-event are also crucial in Martyn's interpretation of Gal 2:15-21. Martyn rephrases justification as *rectification*, because he understands it to be about God making right what has gone wrong, rather than about forgiveness for breaking moral/religious norms.¹¹⁶ The human dilemma is not primarily guilt, but being enslaved to powers beyond human control.¹¹⁷ Correspondingly, salvation is not about repentance and forgiveness, but about deliverance from enslaving powers (death, curse, Law etc.).¹¹⁸ Hence, the act of salvation is apocalyptic: God invades the cosmos to deal with the malignant enslaving powers.¹¹⁹ Consequently, faith is not, for Martyn, firstly the human act of believing, but rather denotes Christ's act – his faithful death.¹²⁰ For Martyn, the fundamental antinomy is not between two human actions – faith and works of the Law – but between divine and human action.¹²¹ In this apocalyptic gospel, God is not responding to human faith by justification, but acts first in Christ to right what has gone wrong, and then by the proclamation of the gospel elicits the human response of faith/trust, which is in fact the fruit of the Spirit.¹²² To add circumcision with salvific potency to the redemptive, apocalyptic act of God is to violate the gospel and to be separated from that act.¹²³

1.1.5 Daniel Boyarin and Paul's Allegorical Mode

Daniel Boyarin's *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* is a reading of Paul that is in tune with the focus on the social dimension of the Jew-Gentile relationship, but with a radically different interpretation. His cultural reading of Paul from a Jewish perspective is openly informed by the culture of the reader, and understands Paul as a Jewish cultural critic.¹²⁴ The starting point in Boyarin's configuration of Paul's theological vision and logic of Galatians is 3:27-29: ὅσοι γὰρ εἰς Χριστὸν

115 Ibid., 573.

116 Ibid., 250.

117 Ibid., 308.

118 Ibid., 272.

119 Martyn, *Theological Issues*, 82.

120 Martyn, *Galatians*, 271.

121 Ibid.

122 Martyn, "The Apocalyptic Gospel," 250–252.

123 Martyn, *Galatians*, 471, 477.

124 Daniel Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 1–3.

ἐβαπτίσθητε, Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε. οὐκ ἔνι Ἰουδαῖος οὐδὲ Ἕλληγ, οὐκ ἔνι δοῦλος οὐδὲ ἐλεύθερος, οὐκ ἔνι ἄρσεν καὶ θήλυ πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἰς ἔστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. εἰ δὲ ὑμεῖς Χριστοῦ, ἄρα τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ σπέρμα ἐστέ, κατ' ἐπαγγελίαν κληρονόμοι.¹²⁵ Boyarin claims that Paul was a Hellenistic Jew who was motivated by a Hellenistic desire for the One, which produced in him the vision for a universal human essence beyond difference and hierarchy.¹²⁶ He argues that the unification of humanity is the coherent core in Paul's theology,¹²⁷ and that the letter of Galatians is entirely devoted to the theme of the new creation of God's one people.¹²⁸ Hence, Paul's opposition to Gentile circumcision is due to the fact that circumcision is the most complete sign of the connection of the Law to the concrete body of Israel, and that the insistence on the literal – the physical – is a stubborn clinging to difference and resistance to the universal.¹²⁹ Furthermore, Boyarin perceives that Paul's vision for a non-differentiated, non-hierarchical humanity means that cultural specificities must be eradicated, whether or not the people in question were willing.¹³⁰

Boyarin also argues that the impulse toward universalism motivated and enabled Paul's move towards allegory.¹³¹ He states that Paul (with Philo) belongs to the tradition of a platonic mode of thinking with external and internal realities, although Paul's dualism does not radically devalue the body, and yet presupposes a hierarchy of spirit and body.¹³² Galatians 4:21-31 is the key text that convinces Boyarin of the centrality of allegory in Paul's theology. He perceives that this passage is “the climax of the entire argument and preaching of the letter, in which all of its themes are brought together and shown to cohere.”¹³³ It is here that Paul's theological vision for the erasure of difference is demonstrated, and the method by which that is accomplished is found, namely allegory.¹³⁴ But, in Boyarin's construal, allegory is not merely the interpretative method; it is also a revelation of the structure of reality, and hence becomes Paul's whole mode

¹²⁵ Ibid., 6.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 7. Boyarin recognises that Hellenism did not alone influence Paul, and further clarifies that Paul's universalism was born out of the union of Hebraic monotheism and Greek desire for unity and univocity (Ibid., 106). Nevertheless, Boyarin claims that the Hellenistic influence is the key that provided the means for Paul to reinterpret the universalistic tendencies within biblical Israelite religion (Ibid., 52).

¹²⁷ Boyarin, *A Radical Jew*, 36.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 106–107.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 36–37, 69.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 8. This perceived non-tolerance of difference is what Boyarin most stringently opposes in Paul's cultural vision (Ibid., 8–10; 220–268).

¹³¹ Boyarin, *A Radical Jew*, 8.

¹³² Ibid., 14–15. Boyarin identifies the difference between Philo and Paul thus: Philo could allegorise the Law, but still held that the literal, material practices were valid, whereas Paul would completely replace the literal by the spiritual, allegorical meaning (Ibid., 153).

¹³³ Boyarin, *A Radical Jew*, 32.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 22, 32.

of doing theology.¹³⁵ Allegory reveals, for Boyarin's Paul, that the particular signifies the universal.¹³⁶ In the case of circumcision, the true meaning of circumcision is the allegorical one: “inscription in the spirit,” “writing on the heart,” which enables universal applicability.¹³⁷ Hence, the problem with the requirement that Gentiles must be circumcised in order to join the people of God is about an inadequate realisation that “the physical observances that constitute the physical Israel as the people of God have been transmuted and fulfilled in the allegorical signification in the spirit, thereby constituting the faithful Gentiles as Israel in the spirit.”¹³⁸ Thus, the logic in Paul's resistance towards Gentile circumcision is, according to Boyarin, also hermeneutical: the danger is to resort “back into the fleshly hermeneutic of literal interpretation of circumcision.”¹³⁹

1.1.6 John M. G. Barclay and the Incongruity of Grace

With John Barclay's recent work, we come to reassess some of the central issues that Sanders's work raised, which led to the development of the NPP/RNPP. In *Paul and the Gift*, Barclay develops a new approach for the discussion of Paul's conception of grace in relation to Judaism. Part of the foundation for Barclay's configuration of grace in Paul's theology is to connect it to the category of gift, understood in its first century context.¹⁴⁰ Another integral part of Barclay's foundation is his discussion of the history of reception, i.e. the different ways Paul's conception of grace has been configured that continue to shape the way grace is understood.¹⁴¹ Yet the decisive feature in Barclay's approach is the development of the analytical tool of the “six perfections of grace” that aid in discerning the particular way Paul or any author discusses grace/gift. The idea of “perfecting” a concept is about the “tendency to draw out a concept to its endpoint or extreme,”¹⁴² which is to be expected especially when it is discussed in relation to God: “Since God is *ens perfectissimum* (‘the most perfect entity’), concepts used with reference to God are likely to appear in their most complete, extreme, or absolute

135 Ibid., 32–36.

136 Ibid., 35.

137 Ibid., 91.

138 Ibid., 112–113.

139 Ibid., 34.

140 Barclay, *Gift*, 11–65, 183–185.

141 Ibid., 4–5, 79–182.

142 Ibid., 67.

form.”¹⁴³ Furthermore, Barclay argues that grace/gift should not be viewed as a monolithic concept, but rather as a “multifaceted phenomenon” that creates the possibility for it to be perfected in multiple ways, of which Barclay identifies six:

- 1) *superabundance* is about the “size, significance, or permanence of the gift;”
- 2) *singularity* refers to the attitude/motivation of the giver that is regarded exclusively as benevolent;
- 3) *priority* focuses on the “timing of the gift,” which is taken to be always prior to any actions of the recipient;
- 4) *incongruity* is a type of a gift that is given “without regard to the worth of the recipient;”
- 5) *efficacy* describes a gift that “fully achieves what it was designed to do;”
- 6) *non-circularity* defines a one-way gift that “escapes reciprocity.”¹⁴⁴

These distinctions in conceptions of grace provide Barclay with the analytical tool to redress Sanders's comparison between the patterns of religion in Judaism and Paul.

Barclay notes that Sanders's emphasis on sequence in the pattern of *covenantal nomism* in Palestinian Judaism (distinguishing “getting in” from “staying in”) naturally led to his emphasis on the *priority* of grace.¹⁴⁵ Yet Sanders's discussion about grace mixes in other “perfections” of grace without duly distinguishing them (especially between priority and incongruity), and thus results in “homogenization” of Second Temple texts that operate with different perfections of grace.¹⁴⁶ Barclay's alternative approach modifies Sanders's claim that “grace is everywhere in Judaism” by arguing that *grace is not everywhere the same*.¹⁴⁷ Barclay's own analysis of five representative Second Temple Jewish writings (The Wisdom of Solomon, Philo, The Qumran *Hodayot*, Pseudo-Philo, and 4 Ezra) highlights the diversity of the material with regard to their conception of grace: “our texts are irreducibly diverse; to characterize them all as products of a 'religion of grace' would hardly be illuminating.”¹⁴⁸ Furthermore, Barclay observes that the question about the congruity or incongruity of grace (are God's gifts given without regard to the recipients' worth or not?) was a matter of ongoing debate within Judaism.¹⁴⁹ Consequently, Barclay challenges Sanders's conclusion that Paul is in

143 Ibid., 68.

144 Ibid., 70–75.

145 Ibid., 152–154.

146 Ibid., 158.

147 Ibid.

148 Ibid., 313.

149 Ibid., 315–318.

essential agreement with Judaism on grace (priority), and instead emphasises that Paul is a participant within the “ongoing Jewish dialogue in which the motif of grace was perfected in various ways,” and thus Paul is “neither against Judaism nor in undifferentiated agreement with all his fellow Jews.”¹⁵⁰

Barclay's perspective on Galatians is thus also a reading that places Paul within Judaism, and yet differently than the NPP/RNPP. The main distinction comes with Barclay's emphasis on the centrality of the logic of grace as an incongruous gift in Paul. Barclay's new way to discuss grace moves beyond the NPP without resorting to the Lutheran discourse of grace vs. works. Instead, Barclay discusses grace in relation to concepts of worth and value that are also intrinsically social:

Paul's theology in Galatians is significantly shaped by his conviction, and experience, of the Christ-gift, as the definitive act of divine beneficence, given *without regard to worth*. By its misfit with human criteria of value, including the 'righteousness' defined by the Torah, the Christ-event has recalibrated all systems of worth, creating communities that operate in ways significantly at odds with both Jewish and non-Jewish traditions of value. This incongruous gift has subverted previous measurements of symbolic capital, establishing its own criteria of value and honor that are no longer beholden to the authority of the Torah. The Christ-event *as gift* is thus the foundation of Paul's Gentile mission, in which Paul resists attempts to reinstitute preconstituted hierarchies of ethnic or social worth, and forms alternative communities that take their bearings from this singular event.¹⁵¹

Barclay further explains the logic of the *incongruous gift* in Paul's resistance to the requirement of Gentile circumcision in his comments on Gal 5:2-6 that highlight the power of the unconditioned gift to relativise any other source of value or worth:

... to require circumcision of Gentile believers is to place the Christ-event within the parameters of worth defined by the Jewish tradition, and that would make the Christ-gift conditioned by something outside and before itself, in this case the values of Jewish ethnicity and Torah. ... 'in Christ Jesus', Paul insists, 'neither circumcision is worth anything (τι ἰσχύει) nor uncircumcision' (5:6). The Greek τι ἰσχύει is derived from the world of finance, and means, 'is worth something'. Both conditions are denied differential value (neither is worth more than the other) because the gift was given in Christ without regard to either.¹⁵²

Thus, the incongruent character of the Christ-gift subverts the role of the Torah as an ultimate authority.¹⁵³ Rather than the Torah, or any other preexisting value system, defining the norms for the new communities, Barclay highlights that the experience of the unconditioned Christ-gift generates a new social dynamic. In fact, Barclay

150 Ibid., 320–321.

151 Ibid., 350; emphasis original.

152 Ibid., 392–393.

153 Ibid., 385.

underscores that the theological vision driving Paul's gospel is the formation of innovative communities:

the theology of Galatians drives towards *the formation of innovative communities*, which not only span the boundary dividing Gentiles and Jews, but practice a communal ethos significantly at odds with the contest-culture of the Mediterranean world.¹⁵⁴

Furthermore, in development from his earlier work *Obeying the Truth*,¹⁵⁵ Barclay now argues that the community expression of the Christ-gift, as described chiefly in Gal 5-6, is an essential *embodiment* of the gospel without which it simply loses its meaning:

Paul's 'good news' is composed of the announcement of an event, the death and resurrection of Jesus as the gift of God. But the meaning of that event, and its quality as unconditioned gift, is discovered only in its social embodiment, in social experience and practice.¹⁵⁶

Barclay identifies that the “radical rationale” for Paul's “norm-breaking” Gentile mission stems initially from Paul's experience of his own calling (1:15-16):

Paul's 'calling in grace', unconditioned by his worth, undermined his previous confidence in the defining values of his former 'Judaism'. There is now for him no stable Jewish tradition whose boundaries might be enlarged to embrace outsiders. On the contrary, he announces an event that reformulates the identity of both Jew and non-Jew.¹⁵⁷

Yet the full formation of Paul's view on the incongruous Christ-gift and its implications was, according to Barclay, a combination of “Paul's experience, scriptural re-reading, reflection on the story of Christ, and extended interaction with 'un-judaized' believers.”¹⁵⁸ However, Barclay emphasises the *hermeneutical priority* of the Christ-event in Paul's re-reading of Israel's scriptures in a way that distinguishes his approach from Wright's.¹⁵⁹ Where Wright emphasises Paul's retelling of Israel's story as a continuous narrative within a covenantal frame, to be sure, from the perspective of the Christ-event as the climax of the covenant, Barclay downplays the role of the covenant or the existence of an underlying continuous narrative, in which Christ acts as the climax: “Wright's notion that Paul 'saw himself on a map, a grid, constructed ... out of the controlling narratives of ancient Israel' hardly fits what we have found in Galatians... .”¹⁶⁰ The influence of Martyn's approach can be perceived in Barclay's

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 443.

¹⁵⁵ Barclay concluded in his earlier work that Paul's purpose in the paraenetic section was to convince the Galatians of the moral sufficiency of his strategy in the face of the attraction of the Law (*Obeying the Truth: A Study of Paul's Ethics in Galatians* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988], 216–220).

¹⁵⁶ Barclay, *Gift*, 440.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 361.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ In highlighting the priority of the Christ-event in Paul's hermeneutic, Barclay also inverts Richard Hays's “Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul” to “echoes of the gospel in the Scriptures of Israel” (Ibid., 418).

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 413; and discussion in pgs. 400-410.

emphasis that Paul connects Christ only with the trajectory of promise, and even here without a sense of a linear development:

... the Christ-event completes a narrative line projected by the divine promise, but not a narrative progression in human history. By a slanted reading of the promise of Abraham's 'seed', Paul finds reference not to multiple generations of Israelite history, but to a single seed, Christ (3:16), and only after and in Christ to a plurality (3:29). In between there is no development in the story of Israel, no progress or preparation for the future.¹⁶¹

... there is no exodus, no entry into the land, no temple, no division of the kingdoms, no exile, and no return. All we have is an interval during which the heir waits for the time set by the Father (4:1-2).¹⁶²

But Barclay does not simply follow Martyn's emphasis on the punctiliar character of the Christ-event (apocalyptic invasion) that is completely discontinuous with the story of Israel, as he makes a distinction between discontinuity on the human level – “[a]t the *human level*, the Christ-event is a matter of discontinuity and reversal”¹⁶³ – and continuity on the level of divine promise – “the narrative arc from the Abrahamic promise to Christ.”¹⁶⁴

Barclay perceives that the hermeneutical priority of the Christ-event that shapes Paul's sense of divine continuity and human discontinuity comes to its sharpest expression in Gal 4:21-5:1.¹⁶⁵ Hence, the births of Ishmael and Isaac become paradigms for how Paul conceives “salvation-history.” Ishmael – born according to the flesh (4:23, 29) – represents what Paul rejects: an account of salvation that is located “on a standard historical map,” whereas Isaac – born by the promise and according to the Spirit (4:23, 29) – represents what Paul finds true about the Christ-event: an act of God to generate a people “contrary to all conditions of the possible,” and thus it is not a standard historical phenomenon with a human cause-effect pattern.¹⁶⁶ Furthermore, Barclay perceives that Paul fills the central categories in the narrative of the birth of Abraham's two sons with new meaning that is derived from the “Christ-centered narrative sketched earlier in the letter.”¹⁶⁷ Thus, the category of *slavery* that describes both Hagar and the present Jerusalem is about slavery “under the authority of the Torah (4:21) or Sinai (4:24-25), which can be classified as 'slavery' only from the perspective of the culture-relativizing

161 Ibid., 412.

162 Ibid., 413.

163 Ibid., 412; emphasis original.

164 Ibid., 414.

165 Ibid., 415.

166 Ibid., 414.

167 Ibid., 416.

'freedom' created by God's gift in Christ (2:4; 5:1)."¹⁶⁸ Also, the polarity between "flesh" and "Spirit" in the births of Ishmael and Isaac is "made visible only since the gift of the Spirit of Christ (3:2-5, 14; 4:6)."¹⁶⁹ With these remarks, it becomes clear that Barclay's configuration of the theological vision and logic in Paul's letter to the Galatians proceeds from Paul's perfecting of grace as an incongruous gift that shapes both his understanding of the past – his re-reading of Israel's scriptures – and his conviction about the present generation of the new communities that need to embody the gospel.

1.2 Key Questions for This Thesis

The above review of six different perspectives in the reading of Galatians gives rise to the key questions that this thesis interacts with. They can be divided into three interconnected categories: structural, hermeneutical, and theological questions.

1) *Structural questions*: The different perspectives have placed more weight on different part/s of the letter that in turn direct the reading of the whole. Dunn's development of the NPP places emphasis on the second chapter of the letter that orients the discussion towards its historical context that defines and narrows the discussion on Paul's opposition to Gentile circumcision. Wright's reading gravitates towards the central section of Gal 3-4 that locates Paul's vision and logic in Paul's retelling of Israel's story with a rereading of Israel's scriptures. By contrast, the beginning and end chapters (chs. 1-2 and 5-6) seem to hold most weight in Barclay's reading that emphasises the logic of the incongruent Christ-gift (language of grace/gift being especially prominent in Gal 1-2) and the vision of the formation of innovative communities (Gal 5-6). Martyn's apocalyptic reading takes its co-ordinates from the cosmic emergence of the new creation by the cross of Christ in Gal 6:14-15, and finds its vision in the programmatic proclamation of the dissolution of the polarities of the old cosmos in Gal 3:28. Likewise, Boyarin identifies a Hellenistic vision in Gal 3:27-29, but gives also much weight to Gal 4:21-31 where he finds the allegorical mode as the key to Paul's theological logic. For different reasons, Thiessen also highlights Gal 4:21-

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 416–417. Barclay makes clear that the categories of "slavery" under the Torah and "freedom" do not map on to the dichotomy of Judaism vs. (Gentile) Christianity, as they both encompass Jews and Gentiles (Ibid., 417, footnote 64).

¹⁶⁹ Barclay, *Gift*, 417.

31 as a key passage that encapsulates Paul's emphasis on Abrahamic sonship. These different starting points for the various perspectives raise the question:

Does Galatians contain within the flow of the argument a strategically central passage that helps us to configure its theological vision and logic better than any other passage?

2) *Hermeneutical questions*: If one aspect must be singled out as the main reason for the plurality of perspectives, the conception of Paul's hermeneutic would rank rather high on the chart. Furthermore, how Paul's theological matrix is conceived results in the different constructions that emerge from it. Boyarin's emphasis on the Hellenistic matrix, and his conception of Paul's allegorical mode produce a picture of a universalistic Paul that takes aim at particularity. The NPP/RNPP emphasis on Paul's Jewish matrix generates readings of Paul's theology that are more firmly fitted within the conceptual world of Judaism, and yet with different configurations. Wright focuses on the role of Israel's scriptures and on Paul's retelling of Israel's story from the perspective of its fulfilment that gives Paul's theology a narrative shape and a sense of continuity that has implications for both the Jews and Gentiles. The RNPP's insistence that Paul's hermeneutical key is the distinction between the Jew and Gentile results in a reading of Galatians where the problem with the Law has to do only with its application to the Gentiles. Thiessen's view on Paul's "hermeneutical conversion" places Paul into certain reading traditions that mediate a reconstructed view of the Gentile problem, which emphasises the necessary continuity with Abrahamic genealogy. Sanders and Martyn place all the weight on the Christ-event generating the shape of Paul's theology, which results in an emphasis on discontinuity. Barclay's modified version of this also emphasises the hermeneutical priority of the Christ-event, and yet retains a connection with Israel's story that incorporates continuity in the divine trajectory of the promise, but is discontinuous on the level of human history. These different views on Paul's hermeneutic generate the following questions:

What is the theological matrix for Paul's vision and logic?

And more specifically:

How do Israel's scriptures function in Paul's theological matrix?

How does the Christ-event and the experience of the Spirit impact Paul's reading of Scripture, and shape Paul's retelling of Israel's story?

As the NPP and RNPP have highlighted, the Jew-Gentile divide is a central feature in the letter to the Galatians. Yet it is not clear how this distinction functions for Paul. Is it, as the RNPP insists, a hard and fast divide that must not be transgressed in order to follow Paul's theological vision and logic? Or is there, as Barclay has pointed out, something about the Christ-event that relativises the distinction for Paul? The conception of the Jew-Gentile distinction has also implications on how Paul's retelling of the story of Israel is understood in Galatians that raises the following question:

How does Paul's retelling of Israel's story navigate the Jew-Gentile divide, i.e. how are the Jews and Gentiles located in it?

3) *Theological questions:* The different perspectives configure Paul's theological vision and logic in various ways. For Luther, the scope of the gospel is the individual's conscience, and the letter is about justification by faith that excludes any works, circumcision included, from the way to find favour with God. Wright perceives that community is central in Paul's vision that is about the one worldwide family of Abraham. The central logic here is found in the eschatological fulfilment of the story of Israel by the Messiah – the reconstitution of the people of God – that renders the Torah outdated. The RNPP shares the eschatological focus, and yet perceives the logic in the necessity to keep the Gentiles as distinct from the Jews. Thiessen develops this further with his emphasis on the inability of circumcision to remedy the Gentile problem that is about the lack of genealogical connection with Abraham. Martyn raises the vision to a cosmological scale, in which the logic of the letter is about perceiving the cosmic implications of the divine apocalyptic invasion. Boyarin's universal vs. particular dichotomy is at the heart of his construction. Barclay's configuration is centred on the Christ-event as an incongruous gift that generates new innovative communities. Hence, the two central questions in this research are:

What is the vision that drives Paul's mission and proclamation of the gospel?

What is the logic in Paul's gospel that resists Gentile circumcision?

In addition to these big questions are other more specific issues that require attention in my configuration of Paul's theological vision and logic in Galatians. At the centre of all the different perspectives is the question about Paul and the Law. Luther perceived the problem with the Law in general terms as the false object of trust in a legalistic attempt to gain merit with God. The NPP has emphasised a more specific problem in the Law's function to maintain the Jew-Gentile divide that was blocking (and

preparing) the fulfilment of the Abrahamic promise of blessing to all the nations. For Wright, the Law is also the cursing agent that effects Israel's exile, which Christ bears on the cross to release the blessing of restoration in his resurrection. The RNPP perceives the problem with the Law only in its application to the Gentiles and not in its covenant-maintaining function with the Jews. Martyn is similarly careful to focus the problem on the wrong application of the Law to the Gentiles, in which context it functions in the mode of circular exchange that places it under the category of religion. In Boyarin's configuration, the Law insists on the particular Jewish identity, and is thus the enemy of universal humanity. For Barclay, the Law is a norm that upholds systems of worth and value that are relativised by the incongruous gift of Christ. Hence, this thesis also addresses the question:

How does the Law function in Paul's theological vision and logic?

This can be expressed in terms of the tension between Paul's negative and positive perspectives on the Law:

How can Paul connect the Law with slavery, on the one hand, and find a positive role, or fulfilment, for it, on the other hand?

Subordinated to the above key questions that this work primarily engages with, there are also other questions that my thesis aims to contribute to with a lighter touch. One of the aims of this research is to offer an *integrative reading* of Galatians that can incorporate and co-ordinate the various concepts/themes that Paul uses in the articulation of his theological vision and logic. The different perspectives illuminate the potential of the material for different configurations of the content and relationships between these. The Lutheran construal focuses on the concept of righteousness, whereas the NPP/RNPP places special emphasis on “sonship” and inclusion in the people of God (inheritance). Hence, I inquire how righteousness relates to the other related concepts. The concepts of blessing and curse, freedom and slavery, Spirit and flesh are also integrated into Paul's theological logic in various degrees and various ways. Luther co-ordinates them around his theme of the right kind of righteousness. For Wright, they gain their coherence in Paul's covenantal narrative. Barclay emphasises their Christological orientation and sociological dimension. Martyn highlights these as components in the way Paul distinguishes the old and new cosmos, and talks about God's act of salvation in opposition to religion. Boyarin perceives the spirit and flesh as important hermeneutical categories, whereas they are for Thiessen the different media

of genealogical connection with Abraham. The most plausible configuration of Paul's theological vision and logic should have the ability to incorporate and co-ordinate all the central concepts within its system without force, and without the need to omit “embarrassing” texts. My aim is to offer a reading of Galatians that integrates all of the letter's central concepts.

I seek to provide insights to all the questions in the above three categories throughout the thesis, yet not with equal weight. The main contribution of my work is on the hermeneutical dimension that offers a unique perspective on the configuration of Paul's theological vision and logic, which in turn allows for discussion about the other theological questions. Chapter two charts my approach to the structural questions; chapters three and four form the foundation for my analysis of Paul's hermeneutic in chapter 5, and also for the intertextual reading of Gal 4:21-5:1 in chapter 6 that offers the vantage point in this thesis to engage the theological questions that concern Galatians as a whole. The key questions will finally be addressed in a condensed and synthesised form in the conclusions (ch. 7).

1.3 The Approach and Argument of This Thesis

This thesis is ambitious. It aims to configure Paul's theological vision and logic in his letter to the Galatians within the remit of a doctoral thesis. I tackle the task with a literary approach that has theological interests: I analyse the structure of the text of Galatians to locate the best vantage point for configuring the letter's message, and then follow the clues in this passage for how it should best be read. The argument of this thesis is correspondingly audacious. I argue that Gal 4:21-5:1 is the best vantage point for configuring Paul's theological vision and logic in the letter. The passage has often been sidelined due to the allegorical mode of Paul's engagement with Israel's scriptures. Yet, as the above review indicates, some recent work has drawn the passage closer to the centre of Paul's thought. Boyarin has turned the downplaying of Paul's allegory upside down, as he detects in Paul's allegory the heart of his mode for doing theology. I agree with Boyarin that Gal 4:21-5:1 is a central text, but I am unsatisfied with the way Boyarin understands Paul's allegorical mode and with his consequent configuration of Paul's theology. Contrary to Boyarin, I argue in section 5.2 that Paul's allegorical mode

is essentially intertextual. Thiessen has also given much weight to Gal 4:21-5:1 in his configuration of Paul's theological vision and logic in relation to the Abraham narrative and the theme of Abrahamic sonship. The deficiency in Thiessen's reading is the one-sided attention it gives to the Abraham narrative without recognising how the quotation from Isa 54:1 in Gal 4:27 impacts the way Paul appropriates the theological potential in the narrative of the birth of Abraham's two sons. I argue that an integral feature in Paul's hermeneutic is his reading of the Abraham narrative *together with* the Isaianic vision of restoration that shapes his vision of the gospel as being about the re-creation of humanity – Jew and Gentile included – and configures its logic by the paradigmatic birth of Isaac and the alienation-restoration paradigm that is encapsulated in the image of the barren woman giving birth to many children in Isa 54:1.

My approach for configuring Paul's theological vision and logic in Galatians navigates most closely between the perspectives of Wright and Barclay. Together with Wright, I affirm that Paul's primary theological matrix is Israel's scriptures, and that Paul's conception of the gospel is to be understood in the context of Israel's story. My key interest is in the *hermeneutic* in, and the *shape* of, Paul's retelling of Israel's narrative, and how he incorporates the Gentiles into it. In particular, I analyse how the birth of Isaac and the exile/alienation-restoration paradigm in Isaiah (see discussion in 5.5 for my preference to use the language of alienation-restoration rather than exile-restoration) function in Paul's theological vision and logic. I argue that the vision of inaugurated restoration is central to Paul's conception of the Christ-event and the gift of the Spirit, but that this does not necessarily mean that he had a sense of a prior reality of an ongoing/extended exile. Rather, I argue that it is the reality of inaugurated restoration that configures for Paul the realm of existence outside of it as being a form of alienation. In sum, I argue that Paul perceives the Christ-event and the gift of the Spirit as the fulfilment of the Isaianic promise of restoration (that is also the fulfilment of the Abrahamic promise of blessing to all the nations), but that Israel's experience of exile, as interpreted theologically by Isaiah, acts more as a paradigm (rather than a prior ongoing stage) that Paul reapplies to describe the realm of existence outside of Christ.

Thus, I perceive, together with Wright, that eschatological fulfilment of the Abrahamic-Isaianic promise is an important part of Paul's vision and logic. However, Terence Donaldson has rightly pushed the discussion towards seeking a *deeper explanation* for *how* the vision of restoration provides a logic for Paul to resist Gentile

circumcision, and for what happens to the Torah in the fulfilment of the hope of Israel.¹⁷⁰ It is not self-evident why the Gentiles could not be integrated into the one people of God via circumcision, or why the Torah could not function normatively in the new eschatological age of restoration based on a different re-appropriation of the scriptural tradition. To explore Paul's deeper reasoning, I capitalise on the insights of Barclay's work that has successfully resuscitated grace, and brought it to the centre stage in Paul's logic. I perceive that Barclay's configuration of the logic of the incongruent grace is a very plausible explanation for Paul's resistance to the requirement of circumcision, and for the relativisation of the Torah. However, Barclay's approach emphasises the hermeneutical priority of the Christ-event to the extent that, at least in practice, it underplays the *formative* role of Scripture as the matrix from which Paul finds the resources to configure the meaning and implications of the Christ-event and the experience of the Spirit. I argue that Scripture, and especially the Abraham narrative and Isaiah's vision of restoration, contain the theological potential from which Paul can develop (and not only to reflect on) the conviction for the logic of incongruent grace together with his experience of the Christ-event. Hence, I combine Wright's emphasis on the role of Israel's scriptures and Barclay's focus on the shape of Paul's gospel in my attempt to configure Paul's theological vision and logic in Galatians.

My approach is a literary analysis that employs a variety of literary methods that have been applied particularly for Biblical Studies, as they appear relevant for each step of the thesis. In section 2.1, I assess the gains and limitations of *rhetorical/epistolary analysis* of the structure of the letter, and then execute my own *structural analysis* that is focused on *content*. In chapter three, I perform a *narrative analysis* to highlight the theological potential in the story of the birth of Abraham's two sons. To draw out the theological potential in the Isaianic vision of restoration that is encapsulated by Isa 54:1 (and its immediate context), I devise and execute an *intratextual thematic analysis* of Isaiah in chapter 4. Finally, based on my analysis in chapter 5 that demonstrates Paul's allegorical as being essentially intertextual, I undertake in chapter 6 an *intertextual* reading of Gal 4:21-5:1 that enables my configuration of Paul's theological vision and logic in the letter in conversation with the scriptures of Israel.

With the integral role that intertextuality plays in my work, I echo the approach of Richard Hays:

¹⁷⁰ Terence L. Donaldson, "Paul within Judaism: A Critical Evaluation from a 'New Perspective' Perspective," in *Paul Within Judaism*, 284–293.

I approach the task of interpretation not by reconstructing the historical situation in the churches to which Paul wrote, not by framing hypothetical accounts of the opponents against whom Paul was arguing, but by *reading the letters as literary texts shaped by complex intertextual relations with Scripture*.¹⁷¹

I develop my intertextual method further at the beginning of chapter 6, which includes establishing criteria to analyse the intertextual relations between Paul's text and the texts of Scripture he interacts with. I note here that my analysis of the intertextual relations and their theological import is not limited by what can be postulated about the ability of the recipients of Paul's letter to appreciate them.¹⁷² Thus, I avoid the pitfall that Francis Watson observes in a minimalist approach: "Paul's own interpretative freedom combines with his audience's scriptural ignorance to ensure that the original context is erased."¹⁷³ Rather than taking a seat as a listener among the Galatian congregations (Martyn), I take the position of an *interpreter* whose task is to probe into *Paul's line of thought* in light of Paul's most likely matrix in order to capture the vision and logic that is *present in his text*. This kind of intertextual approach is not about reading between the lines,¹⁷⁴ but about following the lines in Paul's text that lead to the matrix of Scripture it draws from.

I limit the scope of my intertextual approach to scriptural texts, and do not apply Watson's enlarged approach that places Paul in a three-way intertextual conversation: Paul, Scripture and other interpreters of Scripture.¹⁷⁵ The other interpretations highlight the semantic potential of the text of Scripture that allows for different interpretations.¹⁷⁶

171 Hays, *Echoes*, xi; emphasis added.

172 For a discussion on the role of the recipients in Paul's use of Scripture, see Christopher D. Stanley, *Arguing with Scripture: The Rhetoric of Quotations in the Letters of Paul* (New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 40–48; and J. Ross Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul "in Concert" in the Letter to the Romans*, SNT v. 101 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 18–19. I do not think we can be certain about the readers of the letter (are the "opponents" included?). Other factors that impinge on the question about the recipients' ability are: how have they been prepared to recognise the context of Scripture; is Paul aiming at the lowest common denominator, or writing the letter to be explained and studied (see Wright, *PHF*, 1452)? I agree with Oda Wischmeyer that it is conceivable that there were also believers of devout Jewish families among the Galatians, and that some of the Gentile believers could have been associated with the synagogue prior to Paul's coming. These would have made them already familiar with the scriptures and contributed to the fact that Scripture could function as the shared basis for argumentation. Wischmeyer also argues that Septuagint-readings, synagogue lectures, and, most importantly, Paul's own teaching ministry had trained the recipients to follow Paul's argumentation from Scripture. ("Wie kommt Abraham in den Galaterbrief? Überlegungen zu Gal 3,6-29," in *Umstrittener Galaterbrief: Studien zur Situierung und Theologie des Paulus-Schreiben*, ed. Michael Bachmann and Bernd Kollmann, BTS 106 [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2010], 147-149.)

173 Francis Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*, 2nd ed. (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 495; later abbreviated as *PHF*.

174 Compare Kahl who postulates that the allusions to the Roman Empire are a semi-hidden transcript that "requires encoded forms of speech and reading 'between the lines,' on the part of his hearers and of his contemporary interpreters alike" (*Galatians Re-Imagined*, 252).

175 Watson, *PHF*, 1–5.

176 *Ibid.*, 3–4.

Also, Watson's approach satisfies the criticism directed at Hays's work that Paul should not be read only in direct relation to Scripture, but also in relation to interpreted Scripture.¹⁷⁷ Whilst I recognise the value of the enlarged intertextual approach, I choose to focus in this thesis on a more limited “three-way conversation,” in which Paul reads the Abraham narrative together with Isaiah. Excluding other interpreters of Scripture from the conversation is a limitation in my approach, but it does keep me from the potential problem of coming to Paul with the reading options from other interpreters without first exploring the potential in the texts that Paul explicitly interacts with. Thiessen's heavy emphasis on other ancient sources informing the reading possibilities that we can imagine for Paul would, at best, increase the historical plausibility of the reading. But, at worst, rather than sharpening the reading of Paul, the lenses that Thiessen employs unnecessarily cloud Paul's logic. This, I argue, is especially the case in the complex argument about the pneumatic people based on a reading of Gen 15:5 in light of various ancient sources. My approach offers a more straightforward solution for the connection Paul makes between the Abrahamic promise and the gift of the Spirit by giving attention to Paul's actual hermeneutical practice in Gal 4:21-5:1 that is reflected also elsewhere in the letter (see 6.3.2). Thus, although my approach may be limited (lacking the enlarged three-way conversation), it has a clear focus on Paul's own text and the texts Paul explicitly interacts with. The power of this approach to offer a satisfying reading of Paul's theological vision and logic in Galatians is for the reader to decide.

¹⁷⁷ See e.g. Craig A. Evans, “Listening for Echoes of Interpreted Scripture,” in *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel*, ed. Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 47–51.

1.4 Construction of the Thesis: a Guide for the Reader

To guide my reader, I offer here a summary of how the thesis is constructed:

Chapter 2 establishes the argument for holding Gal 4:21-5:1 as the best vantage point for configuring the theological vision and logic of the letter. It includes a structural analysis of the letter as a whole (2.1) as well as of 4:21-5:1 (2.2). These form the foundation for the following analyses.

Chapters 3 and 4 analyse the theological potential in the intertexts that Paul explicitly indicates in Gal 4:21-5:1.

Chapter three focuses on the theological potential in the Abraham narrative of the birth of his two sons.

Chapter four focuses on the theological potential that comes with Isa 54:1, as the themes that are embedded in it (within its immediate context) are explored in the context of the whole book of Isaiah.

Chapter 5 analyses Paul's hermeneutic/allegorical practice, which then forms the foundation for my approach to reading Galatians.

Chapter 6 offers an intertextual reading of Gal 4:21-5:1 with discussions that demonstrate how the passage functions as a vantage point to focus Paul's theological vision and logic in the whole letter.

Chapter 7 draws the work together to discuss the key questions that were articulated in the above section, in light of the insights gained in chapters 2-6.

Chapter 2. Galatians 4:21-5:1 as the Vantage Point

The choice of Gal 4:21-5:1 as the vantage point for configuring the theological vision and logic in Galatians is based initially on two factors:

- 1) the passage has a strategic function in the letter as the climax of the preceding argument and a bridge into what follows;
- 2) the passage contains, co-ordinates, and clarifies important themes for configuring Paul's vision and logic.

I substantiate the first claim in section 2.1, and begin to substantiate the second in section 2.2 that is filled out in chapter 6. In addition, I argue in chapter 5 that an analysis of Paul's actual allegorical practice in Gal 4:21-5:1 exposes key features of Paul's hermeneutic that are vital for configuring his theological vision and logic in the letter.

2.1 The Function of Galatians 4:21-5:1 in the Letter

In this section, I analyse the role that Gal 4:21-5:1 has in the letter to the Galatians, and demonstrate why this makes it an unparalleled vantage point for focusing the message of the letter.

The structure of the letter to the Galatians, and thus also the function of 4:21-5:1 in it, has been construed in various ways. As my review of the different perspectives indicated (see 1.1), many scholars do not perceive that the passage contributes new substance to the overall argument. Luther thought that Paul could have ended the letter at 4:20, but then it occurs to him to come up with an allegory to paint the matter to the eyes, which he had already explained in words to the ears.¹⁷⁸ Dunn also thinks that 4:21-31 “could be regarded not so much as a further or independent argument, but as an illustration or additional documentation of the point already made.”¹⁷⁹ A similar sentiment was also present in the approaches of Wright and Barclay (see 1.1.2 and 1.1.6).¹⁸⁰ On the one hand, this view recognises that the passage has much in common with what has preceded it in the letter, but, on the other hand, in saying that it does not

¹⁷⁸ Luther, *Galatians*, 414.

¹⁷⁹ Dunn, *Galatians*, 243.

¹⁸⁰ However, Wright can be seen to move towards the position espoused in this thesis: “... the ‘allegory’ of Sarah and Hagar, in Galatians 4.21-5.1, can be seen both as the culmination of the long argument from the start of chapter 3 and also as setting up the terms for the concluding (and quite complex) exhortations” (*PFG*, 1133).

add anything of substance, it fails to perceive how 4:21-5:1 acts as the climax of the development of the important themes in the letter that shapes the configuration of Paul's theological vision and logic. Furthermore, the passage also prepares for what follows, and thus functions as an integrative passage that offers a vantage point to configure the flow of the argument in the whole letter. To prepare for my analysis in chapter 6 that demonstrates the potential of the passage in these respects, I discuss here two statements about the function of 4:21-5:1 in the letter:

- 1) 4:21-5:1 is the climax of the preceding argument;
- 2) 4:21-5:1 is a “pivotal passage” between the more theological and more exhortative sections.¹⁸¹

I discuss first the gains and limitations of the approaches that focus on the rhetorical/epistolary features of Galatians, and follow it with my own analysis of the function of 4:21-5:1 in the letter that is focused on content and thematic development.¹⁸²

2.1.1 Gains and Limitations of Rhetorical and Epistolary Approaches

Betz claims that, rather than being mere repetition of previous material, Gal 4:21-31 is the climax of the argument in the *probatio* section where it has a sophisticated rhetorical role to draw in the Galatians to agree with Paul on the proofs.¹⁸³ This explains, for Betz, the seemingly “weak” allegorical mode that by its ambiguity leaves room for the Galatians to make their own inferences, and prove that they are not the “simpletons” they were charged to be in 3:1.¹⁸⁴ Thus, Betz gives more weight to 4:21-31, but his analysis of Galatians being an apologetic letter with forensic rhetoric has been challenged.

Betz's categorization of Galatians as an apologetic letter causes him to place most weight on what precedes 4:21-31. This is different with Kennedy who perceives

181 I hesitate to make a hard and fast distinction in Paul's thought between theology and ethics – indicative and imperative. Cf. discussion by Volker Rabens, “‘Indicative and Imperative’ as the Substructure of Paul's Theology-and-Ethics in Galatians?: A Discussion of Divine and Human Agency in Paul,” in *Galatians and Christian Theology*, 285–305. Rabens interacts here with the work of Ruben Zimmermann (with an unwarranted claim that he leaves divine agency out of his model; personal interaction with Zimmermann, July 2015) who has introduced the concept of “implicit ethics” (see e.g. Ruben Zimmermann, “The ‘Implicit Ethics’ of New Testament Writings: A Draft on a New Methodology in Analysing New Testament Ethics,” *Neotestamentica* 43, [2009]: 399–423).

182 However, as de Boer recognises, these two approaches can hardly be separated – what is said and how it is said are interrelated (Martinus C. de Boer, *Galatians : A Commentary* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011], 15). Yet he prioritises content over rhetoric.

183 Betz, *Galatians*, 238–40.

184 *Ibid.*, 239–40.

the letter as an instance of deliberative rhetoric, and thus claims that the purpose of the letter is to lead up to the paraenetic section in 5:2-6:10.¹⁸⁵ This gives 4:21-31 a pivotal role in the structure of the letter: “it [4:21-31] has close ties with what has gone before and prepares for the declaration of freedom which is to follow.”¹⁸⁶ Similarly, but with more developed arguments, Hansen emphasises the role of the passage in relation to what follows; 4:21-31 is the biblical appeal that paves the way for the authoritative (5:1-12) and ethical (5:13-6:10) appeals.¹⁸⁷ Hansen also constructs the relationship of 4:21-31 to what precedes it in a different way than Betz. He challenges the notion that 3:1-4:31 forms an “unbroken train of argumentation,” which does not adequately account for the rupture that 4:12-20 causes to the flow, or to the difference in the type of scriptural exposition in 3:1-4:11 and 4:21-31.¹⁸⁸ These factors are best explained, according to Hansen, by a shift in the letter structure and rhetoric that takes place in 4:12 where the letter turns from rebuke to request, and from forensic to deliberative rhetoric.¹⁸⁹ Thus, Hansen finds in 4:21-31 mainly an imperatival focus that is directed at the Galatians, and calls them to resist the troublemakers just as Paul had done in Jerusalem (2:3-5) and Antioch (2:11-14).¹⁹⁰ Furthermore, this influences Hansen's perception of why Paul resorts to allegory: Paul uses the allegorical technique that appeals to etymology (Hagar's name) and word-associations between names (e.g. with Sinai and with Jerusalem) to subvert the traditional reading of the Abraham narrative in order to validate his imperatives.¹⁹¹

Hansen's structural and rhetorical analysis is insightful in connecting 4:21-5:1 with the shift that begins in 4:12, and especially with the ethical section that follows. But there are significant weaknesses in this approach that stem from the emphasis on the imperatival aim of the passage, which neglects the indicative foundations that it rests on. This results in at least two shortcomings. First, the connection of 4:21-5:1 to the preceding argument is cut short by the division between rebuke and request at 4:12. By emphasising the differences in Paul's handling of the Abrahamic material between the rebuke and request sections, Hansen does not observe the connections from 4:21-5:1

¹⁸⁵ George Alexander Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*, Studies in Religion (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 145–146.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 150.

¹⁸⁷ G. Walter Hansen, *Abraham in Galatians: Epistolary and Rhetorical Contexts*, JSNT 29 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 154.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 143–144.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 144–145.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 145–146.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 147–150.

backwards beyond 4:12. This results in the failure to capture how the passage focuses the themes from the preceding argument. Second, the focus on the imperatives relegates Paul's allegorical handling of Scripture to a level of etymology and word-associations without adequately exploring the scriptural matrix that he appeals to in order to determine whether there is more potential to illuminate the logic of the passage.

Despite the limitations of the rhetorical/epistolary approaches, they have given more weight to Gal 4:21-5:1 as the climax of the preceding argument (Betz), and as the bridge, or pivot, that is integral to the movement of the letter towards exhortation (Kennedy, Hansen). In the following, I elaborate on both of these dimensions with an approach that focuses on the content and thematic development in the letter.¹⁹²

2.1.2 Galatians 4:21-5:1 as a Climactic Passage

The beginning and end of Gal 4:21-5:1 connect the passage with the central concern of the letter: the danger of the Galatians to submit to life “under the Law” (4:21) away from the “freedom” in Christ (5:1). This danger has been expressed in the letter in terms of the Galatians' turning to *another gospel* due to the pressure of the troublemakers who distort the *true gospel* (1:6-7). This outward pressure of a distorted gospel instigated also Paul's rebuke of Peter's hypocritical actions towards the Gentiles that *ipso facto* compelled them to Judaize, i.e. adopt the Jewish way of life according to the Mosaic Law (2:11-14).¹⁹³ What was at stake, for Paul, was the proper understanding of the new reality of Christ and its implications for the question of how anyone, Jew and Gentile alike, is justified (δικαιώω), and what role the Law has in it (2:16-21).¹⁹⁴ At this point in the letter, it is clear that its sharp tone results from the two trajectories that Paul perceives to be antithetical: the way of the true gospel that consists of *faith in Christ*

192 Cf. Wright: “Consideration of literary genre must always remain in dialogue with the question of what the text actually says” (“The Letter to the Galatians: Exegesis and Theology [2000],” 194).

193 On this understanding of “Judaize,” see Barclay, *Obeying*, 36, footnote 1; also discussion in Matthew V. Novenson, “Paul's Former Occupation in *Ioudaismos*,” in *Galatians and Christian Theology*, 24–39, especially pg. 30: “‘Judaizing’ is not what Paul's opponents are doing; it is what the Galatian believers are contemplating doing.”

194 Pace the RNPP insistence that Paul is only concerned about the Gentiles. E.g. Johnson Hodge's comments on Gal 2:16: “I read it as Paul staging a conversation with his colleagues (other Jewish teachers) about how gentiles might be made right with God: through the faithfulness of Christ and not through the works of the law. ... Gentiles are ‘sinners’, in need of being made righteous, or being brought into a right relationship with God and being made moral. Jews, already God's people, know how to accomplish this.” (*If Sons*, 58.) She seems to comment only on 2:16a, understanding ἄνθρωπος as Gentile only, and neglects 2:16b.

(πίστις Χριστοῦ),¹⁹⁵ and following the claims of a distorted gospel that demands *works of the Law* (ἔργα νόμου)¹⁹⁶ for righteousness (1:6-9; 2:5; 2:16-21).

I argue in the following that the antithetical trajectories of the true and false gospels are developed throughout the letter with evolving themes that culminate in 4:21-5:1. The beginning of chapter three develops the antithetical relationship between Law and faith in Christ in terms of the “*works of the Law*” versus “*hearing of faith*” (ἄκοη πίστεως) (3:2)¹⁹⁷ that are also expressed with categories of *flesh* and *Spirit* (3:3). The Galatians are expected to recognise that it was the “hearing of faith” that constituted their reception of the Spirit, and going “under the Law” is tantamount to living according to the flesh. The centrality of the reception of the Spirit in evaluating the “works of the Law” versus “hearing of faith” dichotomy is further developed and grounded by an appeal to the Abraham narrative (3:6-14). Paul establishes first that Abraham received righteousness by faith (3:6), and thus it follows that the children of Abraham are also those of faith (ἐκ πίστεως) (3:7). Furthermore, the Gentiles receive the promised *blessing* with Abraham on the mutually shared ground of faith (3:8-9). Thus, blessing is brought into the same conceptual field with righteousness.

In the following dense argumentation in 3:10-14, Paul first spells out the reality of life “under the Law:” it produces *curse* despite its promise of life (3:10-12). What incurs the curse is not doing everything written in the Law (3:10). Hence, Paul again contrasts the “works of the Law” (doing the Law) with faith, now in relation to righteousness and receiving blessing, in which the Law fails to produce both, but faith succeeds (3:11-12). Paul then defines the faith that produces blessing Christologically: Christ redeemed “us,” those under the curse of the Law, by becoming cursed himself

¹⁹⁵ I understand πίστις Χριστοῦ here with an objective genitive sense, or as Barclay prefers to call it, “genitive of quality” that refers “to the faith exercised by believers that signals their dependence on and reconstitution by Christ” (*Gift*, 380). I cannot engage here the considerable debate over the best sense of πίστις Χριστοῦ (see the two appendices by Dunn and Hays in Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, 249–297; and the collected essays in Michael F. Bird and Preston M. Sprinkle, eds., *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies* [Peabody: Baker Academic, 2010]). It seems that, since linguistic and grammatical arguments have not settled the debate, it is the wider understanding of Paul's theology (and other theological concerns) that influences the choice (see Barclay, *Gift*, 381–384). For some, the choice has significant theological consequences; e.g. Eisenbaum: “[i]f Paul did not ever speak of having faith in Christ, that is, having faith in Christ on a par with having faith in God, then Paul's monotheism remained uncompromised” (*Paul Was Not a Christian*, 195). The subjective genitive reading is also crucial for Martyn's emphasis on divine agency (see 1.1.4), and to Hays's emphasis on narrative in Paul's gospel. I develop my understanding of the relationship between faith and Christ in 6.3.3 and 6.5.

¹⁹⁶ I understand ἔργα νόμου to refer to the general observance of the Law and not restricted to the specific practices highlighted by the Gentile mission (e.g. circumcision). Cf. Barclay, *Gift*, 373–375.

¹⁹⁷ I use here a very wooden translation “hearing of faith” to leave its meaning ambiguous. I discuss in 6.6 the possibility of this expression alluding to LXX Isa 53:1 (cf. Rom 10:16-17), which would imply that it is about hearing the message about Christ that evokes faith.

(3:13), and thus made possible that the blessing of Abraham could reach the Gentiles so that “we” could receive the promised Spirit by faith (3:14). This is a very condensed argument that requires deciphering in terms of who are the “us” of 3:13 and the “we” of 3:14, and how the redemption from curse, blessing to the Gentiles, and the reception of the Spirit are connected (see 6.3.2-3). At this point, I simply note that Paul's “truth of the gospel” presents faith in Christ as the means to receive righteousness, blessing and the Spirit. In contrast, the trajectory of the false gospel that compels the Gentiles to come “under the Law” is perceived by Paul to imply works of the Law that do not bring righteousness and blessing, but rather curse.

The development of the trajectory of the “true” gospel receives in 3:15-18 a shift in emphasis from faith to *promise* that is configured in terms of a *covenant*. The pre-proclamation of the gospel to Abraham about the blessing of the nations by faith (3:8) was construed in 3:14 in terms of the reception of the *promise* of the Spirit. In 3:15-18, Paul first relates how the *promises* given to Abraham (the plural most likely refers to the repeated promise of blessing in Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:17-18) were specified to his “seed,” which Paul interprets to refer ultimately to Christ (3:16). Paul also understands that this promise constitutes a *covenant*, and then, having appealed to human customs that do not allow reductions or additions to covenants (3:15),¹⁹⁸ he argues that the covenant of promise, which was established by God, cannot be made void by the Law that was given later (3:17). Another shift also takes place at the end of this section that anticipates the direction of the argument; the concepts of righteousness and blessing are now replaced by the term *inheritance* (κληρονομία) (3:18). Again, Paul highlights the antithesis by claiming that the inheritance cannot be by the Law, because it would then be no longer of promise, by which God initially gave it to Abraham (3:18). Thus, 3:15-18 signal a shift in the argument of the letter, in which Paul's proclamation of the truth of the gospel is now focused on the covenant of promise and inheritance.

At this point Paul pauses to answer the question that arises from leaving the Law outside of the trajectory that leads to inheritance (3:19). But rather than relegating the Law completely to an antagonistic relationship with the promise, Paul explains that the limitation of the Law is in its inability to make alive (ζωοποιέω), and hence it was

¹⁹⁸ Cf. Peter Oakes: “Paul uses human analogy to explain God's actions. In particular, he discusses the characteristics of human covenants, probably mainly thinking of wills, as being fixed documents.” (*Galatians* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015], 118–119.) Paul himself quickly places the focus on the scriptural “covenant of promise.” Hence, this should be regarded as the primary matrix that is being illustrated by notions of human covenants.

unable to make righteous (3:21). In other words, the problem with the Law is that it cannot bring deliverance from the universal problem of sin (3:22a ἀλλὰ συνέκλεισεν ἡ γραφή τὰ πάντα ὑπὸ ἁμαρτίαν). Paul also explains that, besides the “soteriological” limitation, the Law is also temporally limited: the Law acted as a custodian (παιδαγωγός) until the time of the revelation of Faith/Christ (3:23-24; see 6.5). Now that Christ has come, the custodian is no longer needed (3:25), i.e. life “under the Law” is no longer the appropriate state of existence in light of the new reality in Christ.

In what follows, Paul continues to develop the theme of inheritance in relation to *sonship*. Paul claims that through faith in Christ all become “sons” of God (3:26), and are made one by incorporation into Christ in baptism (3:27-28). This oneness in Christ restructures identity, as those in Christ are no longer defined in terms of Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female (3:28). The ones in Christ are also regarded as Abraham's children, “seed,” and *heirs* (κληρονόμοι) according to the promise (3:29).

In 4:1-7, Paul reconfigures what has been said up to this point by using the ideas of “sonship” and inheritance and setting them in contrast to life “under the Law” and the concept of *slavery*. In 4:1, Paul refers to the social reality, in which the potential heir is no different to the status of a slave as long as he is under-aged (νήπιος); the heir is under the household managers until the appointed time set by the father (4:2). Using this social reality to illustrate his point, Paul states that similarly “we” were enslaved under the elements of the cosmos (στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου)¹⁹⁹ until the fullness of time when the Father sent his Son to redeem those under the Law so that “we” would receive “sonship” (4:3-5). This process of redemption from slavery to “sonship” echoes the earlier argument of redemption from curse to blessing.²⁰⁰ Again, “sonship” is configured in relation to the Spirit; because the “we” have been made “sons,” they have been given the Spirit of God's Son that confirms their “sonship” with the cry: *Abba*, Father (4:6; cf. 3:14).²⁰¹ Paul then pits “sonship” against slavery in relation to inheritance: in this new reality of Christ and the Spirit – in the fullness of time – people are no longer slaves but “sons,” and, as such, made heirs by an act of God (διὰ θεοῦ)²⁰² (4:7). In sections 6.3.2-

199 For a discussion on the meaning of the στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου see Barclay, *Gift*, 408–410; and Martyn, *Galatians*, 393–406. It seems that they refer to the four physical elements (earth, water, air, fire), but also to the way the “cosmos” is divided into pairs of opposites (Martyn).

200 For discussion on the relationship between 3:13-14 and 4:3-6, see Hays, *Faith*, 74–82.

201 Cf. Hays (in agreement with Calvin) who understands that Paul is reasoning from the effect (Spirit) to the cause (adoption), having the purpose of convincing the Galatians that it is because of the reception of the Spirit that they can know that they are “sons” (cf. 3:2-5) (Ibid., 99).

202 διὰ θεοῦ is an unusual expression, and hence it is the likely original reading (supported by P⁴⁶, N original hand, A, B, C original hand) that has received multiple scribal alterations.

3, I return to these two central texts (3:10-14 and 4:3-7) to investigate whether the reading of 4:21-5:1 sheds light on how the condensed arguments in these have been constructed, especially in relation to the story of Israel.

At this point, I summarise with *Figure 1* the flow of Paul's argument in terms of the development of the themes that Paul has used in building it.

Figure 1. Development of themes in Galatians 2:16-4:7

Gal 2:16-21; 3:6-8		Gal 3:1-5		Gal 3:8-14		Gal 3:14-18	
Faith in Christ	Righteousness	“Hearing of faith”	Spirit	Faith in Christ	Blessing / Spirit	Covenant of Promise(s)	Inheritance
Works of the Law		Works of the Law	Flesh	Works of the Law	Curse	Law	

Gal 3:19-22		Gal 3:23-29		Gal 4:1-7	
Faith in Christ	Promise	Faith in Christ	“Sons”	“Sons”	Spirit / Inheritance
Law		“Under the Law”	/Heirs	Slaves	

In 4:8-20, Paul picks up the tone of amazement and outrage at the Galatians' desire to “come under the Law” (cf. 1:6-9; 3:1-5). Paul reminds the Galatians of their former life when they did not know God, and were in slavery to things that by nature are not gods (4:8-9). But now that they know God, or better yet, are known by God, Paul is amazed at their desire to turn again to slavery, to turn towards the weak and worthless elements by adopting Jewish calendrical observances (4:9-10; cf. 4:21).²⁰³ Paul is worried for the Galatians; he is worried that his labour has been in vain (4:11). Thus, Paul begins an appeal that recalls his initial ministry among the Galatians. He calls them to become as he is (4:12), remembering how he came among them. They should respond to Paul now as they initially did (4:12-14). Paul reminds them of their joy and the length they were ready to go for him (4:15), and asks how he has become like an enemy to them by representing the truth (4:16). Paul is worried that the Galatians' zeal is being misdirected; the troublemakers – proponents of the “distorted gospel” – want to direct the Galatians' zeal away from Paul towards themselves (4:17). But this is not about party politics, it is about what each party represents. Paul is not

²⁰³ Pace Kahl who argues that the calendrical observances refer to the Roman festivals (*Galatians Re-Imagined*, 218–227).

only fighting to win the Galatians' zeal back to him; he is in labour pains so that *Christ* would be fully formed among them (4:18-19). He wants to be present with them and change the tone of his voice,²⁰⁴ because he is perplexed about their turn towards the troublemakers' "distorted" gospel (4:20). As Betz remarks, Paul knows his "wish is at present not fulfillable and that the letter must suffice as a substitute."²⁰⁵ But although he cannot be present, he can change the tone of his voice.²⁰⁶ This is what he in fact does in 4:21-5:1, which thus represents what Paul wanted to do, if he were present with them.²⁰⁷ Hence, it is possible that what follows in 4:21-5:1 acutely expresses what Paul wanted to say face to face, but now only with the writing of the letter.²⁰⁸

Gal 4:21-5:1 begins with an expression of Paul's perplexity that resembles the tone that he has had throughout the letter (cf. 1:6; 3:1-5; 4:8-9), but the tone changes. With the question in 4:21 (λέγετέ μοι), Paul invites the Galatians to a dialogue, or a rather direct conversation, around the interpretation of Scripture that challenges the Galatians to follow Paul's hermeneutical practice (cf. 4:12). This is different from the tone in the rhetorical questions earlier. Furthermore, as Hansen has observed, Paul's tone also changes to deliver the force of his argument with the controlling imperatives of the letter that call the Galatians to a place of decision: the Galatians must do away with the temptation to come under the Law (4:30), resist the "yoke of slavery," and stand firm in the "freedom" in Christ (5:1). Paul is led to this change in tone in his labour pain; he is

204 I understand ἀλλάξει τὴν φωνήν μου (4:20) to refer to a change in the tone. I do not think it simply indicates Paul's desire to move from the letter to oral communication (*pace* Betz, *Galatians*, 236), but more how he would want to address them whether present, or in the letter that stands for his presence. I also do not perceive that his desire is to change the tone to be more friendly and joyous (*pace* Martyn, *Galatians*, 426), since that is what he could have done, but does not do. Instead, I understand that this expression indicates the seriousness of the situation that calls for a sharp address that brings the Galatians to a place of decision. This is what he does in 4:21-5:1.

205 Betz, *Galatians*, 236. David Aune defines a letter as "a substitute for oral communication" (*The New Testament in Its Literary Environment* [Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 1987], 158), and "a surrogate for the presence of a friend" (*Ibid.*, 172; with reference to Klaus Thraede's study on friendly letters, *Gründzuge Griechisch-Römischer Brieftopik* [Munich: C. H. Beck, 1970]).

206 Although the imperfect form of the main verb (ἤθελον) that governs both of the infinitives (to be present, and to change the tone) makes it a wish that cannot be fulfilled, I suggest that Paul actually continues to partially fulfil the second part of his wish; it is the best he can do with the letter.

207 Cf. Albrecht Oepke, referring to 4:20: "Nicht nur an den physischen Klang denkt er dabei. Sogar im Briefe zieht Paulus auch inhaltlich immer neue Register. ... Gleich der nächste Abschnitt ist ein Beispiel dafür. ... [referring to 4:21] Der Wechsel des Tons ist auffallend." (*Der Brief des Paulus an die Galater*, ed. Joachim Rohde, 4. Auflage [Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1979], 146–147.) Also Franz Mußner, commenting on 4:20: "Vielleicht hat der Apostel seine folgenden Ausführungen wenigstens als einen Versuch betrachtet, seine 'Stimme zu ändern' und die briefliche Distanz zu überwinden, wie das unmittelbar folgende λέγετε μοι im V 21 und das ἴδε ἐγὼ Παῦλος λέγω ὑμῖν in 5, 2 noch erkennen lassen könnten" (*Der Galaterbrief*, 5. Auflage [Freiburg: Herder, 1988], 315–316).

208 The other passages that seem marked out as especially expressing the burden of the letter are 5:2-12 (beginning with Ἴδε ἐγὼ Παῦλος λέγω ὑμῖν) and 6:11-16 (beginning with Ἴδετε πηλικοίς ὑμῖν γράμμασιν ἔγραψα τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ).

in pain because the Galatians are called to be a new community, the “Jerusalem above” people (language of labour in 4:19 and 4:27), that derives its identity and character from the act of God in Christ and the Spirit (5:1; 4:28-29) rather than from the observance of the Law (4:21; 5:1). Hence, 4:21-5:1 expresses acutely Paul's deeply felt burden that is driving his letter writing.

In 4:8-20 Paul began to direct the address more directly towards the Galatians and their situation in terms of their relationship to Paul and the gospel he represents in the face of the challenge by the troublemakers and the “distorted” gospel they represent. From 4:21 onwards, Paul continues in this line, as he gathers together what he has said before, and applies it directly to the situation at hand. In this climactic moment, the weighty themes that have appeared earlier in the letter come together and follow the development that has taken place in the course of the argument: the shift in emphasis from faith to promise; blessing related to the Spirit; righteousness configured in terms of “sonship” and inheritance. As Wolter expresses it: “[d]er Text [4:21-31] ist eng mit der paulinischen Argumentation in 3,6-4,11 verknüpft.”²⁰⁹ The shift that began in 3:15-18 is reflected in 4:21-5:1, as the antithetical trajectories are configured not in terms of righteousness or blessing, but in relation to “sonship” and inheritance. The theme of “sonship” – generating the children of God who are the heirs of the promise of Abraham (3:26-4:7) – is present in the focus on the births of Abraham's two sons (4:23-24, 28). But “sonship” is not only configured in relation to Abraham, since the Galatians are also to identify themselves as children of the mother “Jerusalem above” (4:26). The issue of inheritance (cf. 3:18, 29; 4:1-7) takes centre stage in the climactic scriptural exhortation in 4:30. Also, the trajectory that leads to inheritance is focused on divine action – promise – in Christ (5:1) and the Spirit (4:29) rather than on faith. However, as the theme of faith has always been presented in relation to Christ, so it is possible that faith is also implied in the call to stand firm in the freedom of Christ (5:1).²¹⁰

The dominating themes of slavery and freedom, and the generation of “sons” in 4:21-5:1, follow the development that began in 3:23-4:10, in which inheritance is the

209 Michael Wolter, “Das Israelproblem nach Gal 4,21–31 und Röm 9–11,” *ZTK* 107 (2010): 9. Wolter develops the cross-connections (*Querverbindungen*) in the following manner: the theme of promise that has been the red-thread (*roter Faden*) in 3:14-29 is taken up in 4:23b, 28. The themes of slavery and to enslave in 4:24c, 25c were present in 4:3, 7, 8, 9. Paul's discussion about Sinai and the “present Jerusalem” (4:24c-25) in slavery and enslaving reflect the similar notions about the Law in 3:23 and 4:5. The theme of inheritance is taken up in 4:30 from 3:29 and 4:1, 7. The keyword (*Stichwort*) covenant in 4:24b is already present in 3:15, 17. (Ibid.)

210 The verb stand (στήκω) is closely tied to the theme of faith elsewhere in Paul: στήκετε ἐν τῇ πίστει (1 Cor 16:13); διὰ τῆς ὑμῶν πίστεως, ὅτι νῦν ζῶμεν ἐὰν ὑμεῖς στήκετε ἐν κυρίῳ (1 Th 3:7-8).

result of realised “sonship,” and the state of slavery is something that even the heir is subject to prior to receiving the inheritance (4:1-4).

The designation of the cities as “present Jerusalem” and “Jerusalem above” reflects the eschatological framework of the letter (1:4 present evil age; 6:15 new creation) and also the eschatological logic in 4:1-7 (appointed time, fullness of time). The antithesis between the Law and promise that has been configured in relation to time and covenant (cf. 3:10-25) is reflected in the “allegorical” two covenants, in which Hagar and the birth of Ishmael represent the Sinai covenant – Law – that corresponds with the “present Jerusalem,” whereas the “free woman” and the birth of Isaac represent the promise that corresponds with the “Jerusalem above” (4:21, 23, 24-28, 31).

The connection made in 3:1-5 between flesh and the Law in contrast to life in the Spirit (3:1-5) is also reflected in 4:21-5:1. Ishmael is born from flesh, and represents the reality of coming “under the Law” and slavery (4:23), whereas Isaac and the Galatians are generated by the Spirit (4:29) that correlates with freedom (4:31).

In summary, 4:21-5:1 is the climax of the argument that Paul has developed up to this point for three reasons:

- 1) many of the important themes that have been discussed prior in the letter come together in 4:21-5:1;²¹¹ furthermore,
- 2) not only do the prior themes appear in 4:21-5:1, but the development of the themes climaxes here, and their relationships are co-ordinated, which facilitates a focused analysis of Paul's theological vision and logic;
- 3) Gal 4:21-5:1 follows strategically the indication of Paul's burden for writing the letter (4:19-20), and thus, it encapsulates Paul's defence of the truth of the gospel that the Galatians need to line up with.

Hence, in 4:21-5:1 Paul has taken his argument to a “mountain top” that gives a vantage point to gaze at the path that has been trodden more clearly.²¹² Crucially, it is exactly a written work – Paul's letter – rather than oral communication when being physically present that enables this strategic role for 4:21-5:1, in which the recipients (and later interpreters) can “reread earlier sections of a document not completely understood or

211 This reason inspires Wolter to conclude: “Diese Querverbindungen sind jedoch lediglich äußere Indizien dafür, dass Gal 4,21-31 ein integraler Bestandteil der theologischen und rhetorischen Gesamtstrategie ist, die Paulus in Galaterbrief verfolgt” (“Das Israelproblem” 9).

212 Cf. Gerhard Ebeling commenting on the role of 4:21-31 in the letter: “In order to conclude his argument he brings it to new height from which the parenetic conclusion opens a broad and liberating perspective on Christian life” (*The Truth of the Gospel: An Exposition of Galatians* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985], 231).

fully appreciated on the first reading.”²¹³ It is this potential that I explore in chapter 6 where I reread the message of the letter in light of Gal 4:21-5:1. But 4:21-5:1 is not only a vantage point to gaze backwards, as it also prepares for what is ahead so that the argument can be followed to the end with a better sense of direction and purpose. It is to this pivotal quality of 4:21-5:1 that I turn next.

2.1.3 Galatians 4:21-5:1 as a Pivotal Passage

The last verse of 4:21-5:1 represents the pivotal role that the passage has in the flow of the letter: “the restatement of Christ's liberating activity and the two imperatives of 5:1 make it the climax of both the pericope and indeed of the letter, by summing up what precedes and introducing what follows.”²¹⁴ On the one hand, the call to stand firm in freedom by resisting the “yoke of slavery” in 5:1 applies the scriptural exhortation in 4:30 to the Galatians. Furthermore, it encapsulates the change in tone (4:20) that began with the imperative in 4:12 (“become like me,” cf. 2:4-5), and was heightened with the stark contrasts drawn in 4:21-31 that direct the recipients of the letter to a place of decision. But, on the other hand, the choice set forth in 5:1 between freedom in Christ and the “yoke of slavery” paves the way for the following elaboration of the terms of the decision that Paul challenges the Galatians to make.

In 5:2-4, Paul explains the “yoke of slavery” in terms of circumcision and the obligation to keep the whole Law (5:2-3). Submitting to this “yoke” – placing the hope of justification on the Law (5:4) – has the consequence of losing the benefit of Christ (5:2) that amounts to falling away from grace (5:4; cf. 1:6). By contrast, Paul presents the Spirit and faith as the true means for waiting for the “hope of righteousness” (5:5, discussed in 6.2.4). Furthermore, he explains that circumcision or non-circumcision count for nothing in the new reality of Christ, in which the only thing that matters is faith that expresses itself in love (5:6), which signals the direction Paul will take the argument from 5:13 onwards.²¹⁵ But before Paul moves to his positive argument, he

²¹³ Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment*, 159. Martyn emphasises the oral communication of the letter in the congregation (see 1.1.4), but it is unnecessary to approach the content of the letter by restricting its ability to speak only to the lowest common denominator of what can be grasped on the first hearing. Surely it is conceivable that an important and weighty letter by Paul is not only heard once, but read many times and discussed.

²¹⁴ Susan Grove Eastman, *Recovering Paul's Mother Tongue: Language and Theology in Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 133–134. The fact that some scholars include 5:1 in the passage that begins at 4:21 and some with the passage that follows reflects the *Janus* character of the verse (see 2.2).

²¹⁵ Cf. François Vouga, *An die Galater* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 124.

again places the Galatians at the point of decision between obeying the truth and the “leaven” of the distorted gospel (5:7-12). This time Paul signals his confidence that the Galatians will side with the truth (5:10), and thus he explains how the Galatians are to live in the freedom of Christ.²¹⁶

The theme of freedom that was brought to the fore in 4:21-5:1 is the point of departure in the paraenetic section from 5:13-6:10. Accordingly, Engberg-Pedersen argues that 4:21-31 facilitates the move towards “the positive notion of freedom (from the Law, 5:1).”²¹⁷ This is connected to Engberg-Pedersen's wider argument about the role of the paraenetic section in the letter. He claims that Paul has before 4:21 “argued *negatively against*” the need to come under the Law because “the Christ event and faith has brought *freedom* from the law” (5:1), and then the paraenetic section makes explicit the positive argument, which has only been implicit, about “what is *meant* by that freedom.”²¹⁸ This move towards the positive argument about freedom is facilitated by 4:21-31, as it simultaneously “gather[s] up the previous argument in terms of the precise notion of freedom,” which leads up to the summary of the negative argument in 5:2-12, and also “serves as a pointed entry into the ‘parenetic’ section of 5:13-6:10” where freedom *from* the Law is focused on “freedom *for* this and that.”²¹⁹ Furthermore, Engberg-Pedersen argues that in 4:21-31 the “two triads of law, flesh and slavery versus Christ faith, spirit and freedom” are developed in anticipation of “*their internal, logical connection* in the ‘parenetic’ section” by spelling out “*exactly how* it makes sense to connect the three items in either triad.”²²⁰

I find Engberg-Pedersen's analysis of the pivotal role of 4:21-5:1 convincing, and thus follow his lead, as I trace how the themes in 4:21-5:1 play out in 5:13-6:10. In 5:13-15, Paul warns that freedom should not be used as an opportunity for the flesh (5:13; cf. 3:3; 4:24, 29). Instead, it should be, ironically, lived out in “servitude” (δουλεύω) to one another through love (5:13). In fact, loving one's neighbour as oneself amounts to a fulfilment of the Law (5:14). Thus, Paul indicates that, even as he opposes

216 The connection between 5:13-6:10 and the earlier part of the letter has been much discussed (see Barclay, *Obeying*, 1–35). I develop my understanding here in structural terms, and in 6.6, with a more theological focus.

217 Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and the Stoics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 133.

218 *Ibid.*, 132–133.

219 *Ibid.*, 133–134.

220 *Ibid.*, 134. Hansen also notes the importance of the conceptual framework set up in 4:21-31 for understanding the ethical instructions. He highlights the correspondence between the slave–free, and flesh–Spirit antitheses (slavery to the law and flesh are equated: “the threat of nomism that boasts in the flesh”) to argue that Paul does not change fronts in his battle, but that “[h]is attack against the works of the flesh is a continuation of his attack against the works of the law” (*Abraham in Galatians*, 150–153).

the demand of circumcision and Law observance, he simultaneously upholds the Law, or, as Barclay puts it, Paul understands that carrying out the love command “actually fulfils what the Torah envisaged.”²²¹ Initially the Law is fulfilled by love, but as Paul develops the thought, he highlights the Spirit as the means by which the intention of the Law is reached (5:18, 23). Hence, he exhorts the Galatians to walk by the Spirit and not according to flesh (5:16-17). Those who practise the works of the flesh will not inherit the “Kingdom of God” (5:18-21; see 6.2.3), but instead “reap corruption” (6:8). Those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh (5:24), live by the Spirit exhibiting its fruits (5:22-25), and “reap eternal life” (6:8). In 5:26-6:10, Paul applies the description of the life in the Spirit directly to the Galatians' communal life,²²² and in doing so defines fulfilling the Law in terms of the “law of Christ” (6:2; see 6.6). Thus, the freedom Paul calls the Galatians to align with is a fulfilment of the Law that is now defined in terms of Christ, Spirit and service of love. In contrast, life according to the flesh is connected to the demand of Law observance, as the last paragraph indicates.

In the final paragraph of the letter (6:11-18), Paul first assigns the troublemakers' demand for circumcision to the side of the flesh. Paul states that his opponents actually do not keep the Law, but only seek a good standing, or an occasion to boast, by the circumcision of the Galatians' flesh (6:12-13). Ironically, rather than crucifying their flesh (5:24), Paul interprets their motive to be the avoidance of persecution for the sake of the cross (6:12). Furthermore, Paul separates himself from the troublemakers exactly in relation to the cross of Christ, which is the sole focus of Paul's boasting (6:14). It is the cross that marks not only Paul's break with the flesh, but also with the cosmos (6:14). His cosmos is reconfigured; he awards no weight to circumcision or uncircumcision in the reality of the “new creation” (καινή κτίσις) (6:15; see 6.2.2). Thus, Paul blesses those who follow this standard (κωνών) with peace, and yet, instead of proclaiming a curse as he did on the “troublemakers” (1:8-9), he calls for mercy on the “Israel of God” (6:16; see 6.3). Finally, Paul expresses the request that the Galatians would no longer burden him, as they are to recognise him as the servant of the crucified Christ (6:17). His final greeting highlights the centrality of grace that joins Paul and the Galatians into the people of God (6:18).

In summary, the key theme of freedom in 4:21-5:1 becomes the point of

²²¹ Barclay, *Gift*, 431; discussed more in 6.6.

²²² Cf. Barclay: “It is striking how many of these qualities [fruit of the Spirit in 5:22-23] are given concrete form in the communal maxims that follow (5:26-6:10)” (Ibid., 430).

departure for the paraenetic section that articulates a positive argument about what it means to live in freedom. The antithetical relationship between flesh and Spirit that first appeared in 3:3, and was part of the characteristics of the two different “genealogies” in 4:21-5:1, becomes the central framework for defining the way of life in freedom. The relationship between Law observance and faith in Christ, which has been the central point of contention throughout the letter that was also addressed in 4:21-5:1, is further developed. On the one hand, the antithetical relationship between the demand of circumcision (and implied Law observance) and the grace of Christ/faith is upheld, but, on the other hand, Paul now demonstrates that it is actually through faith in Christ that the Law is fulfilled by those who serve one another in love by the Spirit. Finally, the issue of inheritance that was configured in 4:29-30 by the two representative sons – the one born of the Spirit and the one born of the flesh – is developed in the same terms of Spirit and flesh in relation to inheriting the Kingdom of God and eternal life (5:23; 6:8), or being outside of this inheritance and reaping corruption (5:23; 6:8). Hence, 4:21-5:1 is not only a climactic passage that gathers the preceding argument together, but it is also pivotal, as it facilitates the development of the argument from what has preceded to how Paul finishes it. Eastman summarises this pivotal quality well: “it [4:21-5:1] connects the themes of identity in 3:6-4:7 with the concerns for behaviour in the Galatians' congregations in 5:13-6:10;”²²³ and “the argument about ‘genetic identity’ in 4:21-5:1 anticipates the ethical outworking of that identity in 5:1-6:10.”²²⁴

2.2 Structural Analysis of Galatians 4:21-5:1

In this section, I analyse the structure of Gal 4:21-5:1 in terms of the flow of thought, allegorical correspondences, integration of Scripture, and thematic connections. I demonstrate that the text is “pregnant” with themes that are connected, co-ordinated, and clarified by contrasts so that it offers an unparalleled vantage point for configuring the message of the letter.

Before I can analyse the structure of Gal 4:21-5:1, I briefly deal with one major text-critical issue to establish the text. This has to do with the first line in 4:25 that stands in the UBS⁴ and the NA²⁸ thus: τὸ δὲ Ἀγάρ Σινῶ ὄρος ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ Ἀραβίᾳ.

²²³ Eastman, *Recovering*, 136.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 135.

The text critical question concerns the three words at the beginning of the sentence (δὲ Ἀγὰρ Σινᾶ) where the manuscripts are heavily divided (see the apparatus in NA²⁸). Carlson's recent work has helpfully reviewed and evaluated the different options based on external evidence, transcriptional probabilities, and intrinsic features of the text.²²⁵ He suggests that out of the five possibilities, two text forms are best supported in the manuscript evidence: 1) τὸ δὲ Ἀγὰρ Σινᾶ ὄρος ... and 2) τὸ γὰρ Σινᾶ ὄρος ..., with the latter held stronger by Carlson (most widely spread in early witnesses).²²⁶ But since the external evidence and transcriptional probabilities are inconclusive in determining the original text form, the intrinsic features of the text become decisive.²²⁷ As Carlson evaluates the intrinsic features, he actually concludes that the whole note in 4:25a is “semantically superfluous” and structurally “sticks out like a sore thumb,” and hence is most likely originally an early marginal note (possibly even Paul's own) that was later interpolated as part of the text.²²⁸ The problem with this conclusion is that it follows from Carlson's subjective evaluation of it being semantically superfluous,²²⁹ and his unconvincing structural analysis.²³⁰ I agree that the precise meaning and role of the note in 4:25a is difficult, but I suspect that the sense of it being superfluous stems from the nature of the text that “abuses” normal use of language, and makes contradictory statements that invite an engagement with the “deeper meaning” of the scriptural matrix that Paul appeals to.²³¹ Hence, e.g. the geographical discrepancy of locating Sinai first in Arabia and then associating it with the “present Jerusalem” is not about an argument

225 Stephen C. Carlson, “‘For Sinai Is a Mountain in Arabia’: A Note on the Text of Galatians 4,25,” *ZNW* 105 (2014): 80–101. Also, Stephen C. Carlson, *The Text of Galatians and Its History*, WUNT 2. 385 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 163–169. See also earlier discussion in Ernest De Witt Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1921), 259–261.

226 Carlson, *The Text of Galatians*, 163; Carlson, “For Sinai,” 99. Also J. B. Lightfoot (*Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians: A Revised Text*, 10th ed. [London: Macmillan, 1890], 192–93) and N. T. Wright (“Paul, Arabia and Elijah [Galatians 1.17],” in *Pauline Perspectives*, 155, footnote 12) favour the 2nd option. The difficulty of basing the decision on the manuscript evidence and transcriptional probabilities is reflected in the UBS rating C. The evidence that supports the 1st option is: A, B, D, 0278. 323. 365. 1175. 2464, sy^{hmg}, bo^{pt}; and the support for option 2 is: **Σ**, C, F, G, 1241. 1739, lat, (sa; Ambst).

227 Carlson, “For Sinai,” 90–95.

228 *Ibid.*, 95–101. Cf. Burton: “The difficulty of interpretation, especially the absence of definite evidence of any usage that would account for the identification of Hagar and Sinai, either as names or places suggest the possibility of an interpolation at this point” (*Galatians*, 260).

229 Carlson, “For Sinai,” 95–96.

230 *Ibid.*, 96–97.

231 Anne Davis argues that the centre section (4:24-28) of 4:21-5:1 is full of allegorical devices that “abuse” normal use of language, and introduce contradictory statements that are aimed to “startle” (“Allegorically Speaking in Galatians 4:21-5:1,” *BBR* 14 [2004]: 164–171). She concludes: “I suggest that the puzzling nature of these allegorical assertions leads the reader to the Hebrew Scriptures to find deeper aspects of understanding such key words and concepts as freedom, slavery, the Law, heritage, and the promised inheritance” (*Ibid.*, 171).

based on concrete locations,²³² but about a deeper level of meaning in the connection between Hagar and Law that is reflected in the “present Jerusalem” (see 6.4). Also, in contrast to Carlson, my structural analysis below gives support for the note belonging intrinsically to the text, and hence I have not relegated it to the margins. Thus, 4:25a is in my evaluation part of the text that needs to be included in the analysis of the passage, and I discuss it later in 6.4 with regard to the two strongest text forms. It is also not necessary to decide on the text form for the purposes of the structural analysis below.

I now begin my structural analysis of Gal 4:21-5:1 that follows a rough division, in which the passage can be understood to progress in three stages:²³³

- 1) 4:21-23 introduces the passage and lays out why and how the Abraham narrative is drawn to speak to the situation at hand;
- 2) 4:24-28 offers the allegory proper,²³⁴ i.e. establishes the allegorical correspondences;
- 3) 4:29-5:1 develops the allegory to an exhortation that calls for a decision.

The initial question in 4:21 (Λέγετέ μοι, οἱ ὑπὸ νόμον θέλοντες εἶναι, τὸν νόμον οὐκ ἀκούετε;) introduces the concern of the passage that connects it directly with the occasion of the letter: the danger that the Galatians go “under the Law” via circumcision (5:2-12; 6:11-13).²³⁵ The question also introduces Paul's strategy to counter this misguided desire; ironically, he appeals to the “law.”²³⁶ The appeal to “listen to the law” indicates that the struggle for the Galatians' devotion is fought largely in the field of scriptural interpretation.²³⁷ Paul begins the appeal (γέγραπται γάρ) by a schematic summary from the narrative of the birth of Abraham's two sons (4:22-23) that highlights

²³² See Carlson, “For Sinai,” 88–89.

²³³ Cf. Davis, “Allegorically Speaking,” 171–174. De Boer has a similar division, but he locates v. 28 in the third rather than the second section: 1) vv. 21–23; 2) 24–27 and 3) 28–5:1 (*Galatians*, 288).

²³⁴ Cf. Dietrich-Alex Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums: Untersuchungen zur Verwendung und zum Verständnis der Schrift bei Paulus* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1986), 204.

²³⁵ Cf. de Boer, *Galatians*, 290. Is the question in 4:21 a realistic one (Barclay, *Obeying*, 62–63) or an ironic one (Todd A. Wilson, *The Curse of the Law and the Crisis in Galatia: Reassessing the Purpose of Galatians*, WUNT 2. 225 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007], 40–42)? I perceive it as a realistic appraisal of the situation by Paul, because of the alarmed tone of the letter (1:6; 3:1; 4:9–11; 5:2–12) and the socio-historical probability noted by Barclay.

²³⁶ For discussion on Paul's use of νόμος in this passage, see discussion in 5.2.

²³⁷ Listening to the Law connotes an appeal to right interpretation (Bligh, *Galatians*, 396). Joachim Rohde connects the call for right hearing to the idea of an “internal understanding of the Law” (das innere Verstehen des Gesetzes) that is about capturing its deeper sense (*Der Brief des Paulus an die Galater* [Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1989], 192). Douglas J. Moo understands it with the sense of the Hebrew שמע that connotes not just hearing but listening that leads to understanding and obedience (*Galatians* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013], 297). All of these point to the decisive issue being the right interpretation of the Scripture that calls the Galatians to a decision that shapes their practice.

the dominating themes of the passage:

- 1) in relation to *status*; the two mothers present the *slave-free* dichotomy: one is a slave woman (παιδίσκη)²³⁸ and the other is a free woman (ἐλευθέρα) (4:22);
- 2) in relation to *generation*; the two sons present two contrastive ways of generation: the birth of the son from the slave woman is according to *flesh* (κατὰ σάρκα), whereas the birth of the son from the free woman is through *promise* (δι' ἐπαγγελίας) (4:23).

After the introductory notes that highlighted the key features that Paul draws from the narrative, he moves on to make allegorical correspondences (4:24 ἄτινά ἐστιν ἀλληγορούμενα) between the narrative of the two births and the present theological realities.²³⁹ The two mothers (and implied two different kinds of birth), Paul says, are about “two covenants” (4:24 αὐταὶ γὰρ εἰσιν δύο διαθήκαι). The structure of the presentation of the two covenants resembles a chiasmic flow of thought.²⁴⁰

A Sinai, begetting to slavery (v.24a μία μὲν ἀπὸ ὄρους Σινᾶ εἰς δουλείαν γεννώσα)

B Hagar + explanatory note (v.24b-25a ἥτις ἐστὶν Ἀγάρ. τὸ γάρ/[δὲ] [Ἀγάρ] Σινᾶ ὄρος ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ Ἀραβίᾳ)

C Present Jerusalem, slavery (v.25b συστοιχεῖ δὲ τῇ νῦν Ἱερουσαλήμ, δουλεύει γὰρ μετὰ τῶν τέκνων αὐτῆς)

C' Jerusalem Above, freedom (v.26a ἡ δὲ ἄνω Ἱερουσαλήμ ἐλευθέρα ἐστίν)

B' Our mother + explanatory quotation of Isa 54:1 (v.26b-27 ἥτις ἐστὶν μήτηρ ἡμῶν γέγραπται γάρ· εὐφράνθητι, στείρα ἢ οὐ τίκτουσα, ῥῆξον καὶ βόησον, ἢ οὐκ ὠδίνουσα· ὅτι πολλὰ τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἐρήμου μᾶλλον ἢ τῆς ἐχούσης τὸν ἄνδρα)

A' Promise, children (v.28 Ὑμεῖς δέ, ἀδελφοί, κατὰ Ἰσαὰκ ἐπαγγελίας τέκνα ἐστέ)

238 παιδίσκη is a common term used in reference to Hagar in the LXX Genesis narrative.

239 For discussion on ἀλληγορούμενα, see 5.3.

240 My construal of the chiasm is not fully balanced because of the lengthy quotation of Isa 54:1. Michael Bachmann's *Ringkomposition* of the whole passage (4:21-5:1) resembles mine in regard to the section that I focus on. He also parallels lines from v. 24 and v. 28, although he suggests that slavery and promise are the corresponding concepts (*Anti-Judaism in Galatians?: Exegetical Studies on a Polemical Letter and on Paul's Theology* [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2008], 92). For other chiasmic construals of the passage, which generally place the “present Jerusalem” and the “Jerusalem above” at the centre, see e.g. Gerhard Sellin, “Hagar und Sara: Religionsgeschichtliche Hintergründe der Schriftallegorese Gal 4, 21-31,” in *Das Urchristentum in seiner literarischen Geschichte: Festschrift für Jürgen Becker zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Ulrich Mell and Ulrich B. Müller, BZNW 100 (Berlin; New York: de Gruyter, 1999), 64–66; Joel Willitts, “Isa 54,1 in Gal 4,24b-27: Reading Genesis in Light of Isaiah,” *ZNW* 96 (2005): 198; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 213.

This structure highlights that the central pivotal point is the contrast between the “present Jerusalem” and the “Jerusalem above.” But it also helps to identify the two covenants, especially the other covenant that is non-explicit,²⁴¹ in terms of the Sinai-covenant and the covenant of “promise.”²⁴² The first covenant, Sinai/Law, has a double allegorical correspondence. The first level of correspondence is with Hagar (4:24b ἥτις ἐστὶν Ἀγάρ). This is initially established by Paul's assertion that the Sinai covenant (Law) leads to slavery (4:24), which corresponds with the realities he has associated with Hagar (4:22-23, παιδίσκη): “[w]hat binds the Sinai covenant to Hagar and makes them part of the same oppositional column is the notion of slavery.”²⁴³ At this point, Paul adds an explanatory note (4:25a) that capitalises on the geographical connection between Hagar, Sinai and Arabia, and demonstrates his command of the allegorical technique that invites an engagement with the deeper meaning of Scripture (see 6.4). Paul then develops the allegorical line/column (συστοιχεῖ) of the first covenant of the Law (Sinai) and Hagar with the “present Jerusalem” (νῦν Ἰερουσαλήμ) (4:25b). Again, this correspondence is explained by the “fact” that the “present Jerusalem” is in slavery with her children (4:25b δουλεύει γὰρ μετὰ τῶν τέκνων αὐτῆς). Thus, Standhartinger rightly observes: “[d]ie Reihe [Bund vom Berg Sinai, Hagar in Arabien, jetziges Jerusalem] ist verbunden über das Stichwort Sklaverei (δουλεία/δουλεύειν).”²⁴⁴

In a chiasmic fashion, Paul begins the second allegorical line of the other covenant from a contrast with the end point of the line of the first covenant. The “present Jerusalem” is contrasted with the “Jerusalem above” (ἄνω Ἰερουσαλήμ) that is free (4:26a). The expected next move would be a connection from “Jerusalem above” to the free woman, Sarah, but Paul does not go there. This omission is to be noted for its possible significance in Paul's theological logic (see 6.2.4 and 6.3.1). Instead, Paul identifies the “Jerusalem above” as “our mother” (ἥτις ἐστὶν μήτηρ ἡμῶν) (4:26b).

241 This is why Angela Standhartinger claims that Paul fails to present any other covenant (“»Zur Freiheit... Befreit«?,” *EvTh* 62 [2002]: 297). The other covenant is not explicitly mentioned or clearly introduced with the expected μὲν ... δέ construction, unless the δέ in 4:26 or 28 is counted; cf. Carlson who suggests that the δέ in 4:26 indicates the beginning of the second covenant, but notes that “it does not present a precisely parallel construction to the μὲν clause” (“For Sinai,” 85). Since the μὲν ... δέ construction is not decisive, it is the structure of the passage / the chiasmic flow of thought that guides the reader to make the identification. Recognising the covenants as Law and promise is supported by Paul's earlier designation of the promise as being a covenant that is in tension with the Law (3:15-18).

242 Cf. Bachmann, *Anti-Judaism in Galatians?*, 92. Pace Sellin who pairs 4:24b-25a (Hagar-Sinai) with 4:27 (Isa 54:1) (Sellin, “Hagar und Sara,” 66).

243 De Boer, *Galatians*, 299.

244 Standhartinger, “»Zur Freiheit«?,” 297. Cf. Wolter, “Das Israelproblem” 12. Moo also suggests that the γὰρ in 4:25b could be taken as causative: “the Hagar Sinai mountain represents the present Jerusalem, because it (like Hagar) is in slavery” (*Galatians*, 304; emphasis original).

Furthermore, the reason for this identification is given in the explanatory note (γέγραπται γάρ) that is a verbatim quotation of the LXX rendering of Isaiah 54:1 (4:27). The quotation presents the “mother” Paul is talking about, and gives the reason why she is the “mother” of the believers in Jesus. The quotation highlights the “miraculous” birth of many children to a barren and desolate woman: her children are to be more numerous than those of the one who has a husband. Paul finishes the allegorical line of the other covenant by moving from the many children of the barren woman to identifying the Galatians as the children of promise like Isaac (4:28). With this move, Paul completes the chiasmic presentation of the two covenants.²⁴⁵ But 4:28 functions also as a transitional line. By referring to Isaac, Paul returns back to the Abraham narrative, but now with the focus shifting from the two mothers to the two sons and two modes of generation. This prepares for the exhortative section (4:29-5:1) that works out of the contrast Paul set between the two covenants.

In 4:29, Paul begins to apply the allegory to the present “conflict” in Galatia with the final exhortation in view. Just as then (τότε) the one born according to flesh “persecuted” (διώκω) the one born according to Spirit, so also now (οὕτως καὶ νῦν) (4:29). That Paul chooses to depict the conflict in terms of flesh and Spirit is again an important signal of his theological framework. Here, the Spirit replaces the earlier category of promise (4:23, 28), indicating that these two are closely related in Paul's theological logic (see 6.3.2). Paul uses a slightly modified quotation from the Abraham narrative (LXX Gen 21:10)²⁴⁶ to sound his concluding exhortation: “cast out the slave woman and her son” (4:30a). Because Hagar (the slave woman) corresponds with the covenant of Sinai, Ishmael (the one born according to flesh) represents those who base their existence on the Law. Thus, continuing in allegorical mode, Paul applies the scriptural command not as a literal command to expel the “troublemakers” from the

245 Cf. Koch understands 4:28 to flow logically from the preceding argumentation as the result (*Ergebnis*) (*Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums*, 209); also Dunn: “verse 28 effectively rounds off and concludes the exposition” (*Galatians*, 256). Burton also takes the δέ in a continuative sense (*Galatians*, 265). Some, for understandable reasons, take 4:28 as beginning a new stage rather than completing the previous: the δέ is read as signifying a shift to a new section (“now”), and the Ὑμεῖς beginning the direct address (e.g. Moo, *Galatians*, 308). But, in a tightly knit and condensed argument, it seems best to avoid hard and fast boundaries. Gal 4:28 is best understood as a *Janus*, looking backwards and forwards. Besides preparing for what follows, 4:28 completes the allegorical correspondences in vv. 24-28 by connecting the mother with her children – it explicitly designates the Galatians as “children of the promise” that is logically connected to their identification with their mother, the “Jerusalem above.” Furthermore, the designation “children of *promise*” (and not of Spirit, cf. 4:29) looks backwards to the son of the “free woman” who was generated by promise (4:23).

246 Paul changes *my son Isaac* [τοῦ υἱοῦ μου Ἰσαακ] to *the son of the free woman* [τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς ἐλευθέρως] to emphasise the theme of freedom, and to make it the voice of Scripture rather than of Sarah.

church, but more so to reject what they represent.²⁴⁷ He calls the Galatians to stand firm in their identity as children of promise like Isaac, and “expel” their desire (and to resist the pressure) to come “under the Law” that has been identified with Hagar/Ishmael.²⁴⁸ The quotation also gives the reason for the command, and thus presents the choice in terms of acquiring inheritance: οὐ γὰρ μὴ κληρονομήσει ὁ υἱὸς τῆς παιδίσκης μετὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς ἐλευθέρως (4:30b). Hence, in 4:29-30, Paul brings the two contrastive covenants – “genealogical lines” – to their two contrastive ends in relation to the inheritance. The allegorical line from “Hagar”/Sinai produces children of the flesh – children of the “present Jerusalem” – and leads to slavery and *exclusion* from the inheritance, whereas the line from the “free mother” produces children of promise and Spirit, and leads to freedom and *inclusion* in the inheritance. In 4:31, Paul adds an emphatic note to the exhortation. With the stark incompatibility of the two sons – two covenantal lines – and with the exclusion of the son of the flesh/slave from the inheritance in view (διό),²⁴⁹ Paul reinforces the Galatian believers' identity by emphasising first that they do not belong to the “slave woman,” but are children of the “free woman” (4:31). The “free woman,” at this point, is not simply a reference to Sarah, as the title has been attached to the allegorical referents of the “Jerusalem above” and the barren-made-fruitful-woman of Isa 54:1 (see further discussion in 6.2 and 6.3).²⁵⁰ Furthermore, the flow of thought (διό) suggests that it is the prior experience of the inheritance by the Galatians (by the promise [4:23, 28], and Spirit [4:29]) that shapes the logic that identifies them with this “free woman.” The emphatic note struck

247 Cf. Steven Di Mattei: “Yet Paul clearly intends, above all, for the allegorical meaning to resonate through ...” (“Paul’s Allegory of the Two Covenants [Gal 4.21-31] in Light of First-Century Hellenistic Rhetoric and Jewish Hermeneutics,” *NTS* 52 [2006]: 121).

248 Cf. Stanhartinger: “es wird nicht nur »der Übeltäter« [Ishmael], sondern auch »die Ursache« [Hagar] des Problems beseitigt” (“»Zur Freiheit«?,” 300). De Boer leaves open the question in how concrete terms the decision should be understood: “Did Paul mean that the new preachers (and their converts) were literally to be expelled from the Galatian churches? Apparently so, though he leaves it up to the Galatians (‘What does the Scripture say?’). Perhaps the point is simply that the Galatians are to reject the message and the missionary efforts of the new preachers active in Galatia.” (*Galatians*, 308.) I favour the latter, since it fits better the flow of thought that continues in 4:31-5:1, but I agree with Wright that the cited scriptural command has also the potential of issuing a disciplinary social act: “You must *reject* the alternative teaching, and *eject* those who are teaching it” (*PFG*, 1137; emphasis original).

249 διό indicates an inference that Paul is drawing. Betz thinks it draws a conclusion to the whole argument of the *probatio* (*Galatians*, 251), but most see it as drawing together the argument of this passage (e.g. Longenecker, *Galatians*, 218; Mußner, *Der Galaterbrief*, 333; Oepke, *an die Galater*, 152–153). I think it might even be more specifically focused on drawing together vv. 29-30, although with reference to the preceding verses. The main thing is that vv. 29-30 should not be seen as parenthetical (*pace* de Boer *Galatians*, 306–309), because that would fail to follow the flow of thought that the identity of the Galatians can be reinforced in 4:31 because it has been configured around the “inheritance” in 4:30.

250 Cf. de Boer: “Believers in Christ (‘we’) are thus children of ‘the free woman,’ allegorically understood as this Jerusalem above (v.26)” (*Galatians*, 308).

in 4:31 is played in reverse in the last verse of the passage where Paul rounds up the argument with a concluding statement that emphasises first the freedom to which Christ has liberated the believers, and, due to that reality (οὖν), sounds the command not to submit to a “yoke of slavery” (5:1).²⁵¹ This command develops the earlier “allegorical” scriptural exhortation (4:30), and puts the decision in stark terms to the Galatians who desire to come “under the Law” (4:21): they are to stand firm in the freedom Christ has given, and not be led to slavery by coming “under the Law.”²⁵² The scholarly opinion is divided on whether to include 5:1 in this passage (e.g. Barclay, Martyn, Wright) or with the following (e.g. Betz, Dunn, Hansen). There are at least three reasons why I think 5:1 is more naturally connected to what precedes it, and yet it also acts as a transitional verse for the continuation of the argument: 1) there is no indication of a break from what precedes it, but rather, the break comes in 5:2 with the particle Ἴδε; 2) the use of the first person plural in 5:1a connects it intimately with the claim in 4:31 and keeps the flow; 3) with its emphasis on freedom and slavery, 5:1 is thematically connected to 4:21-31 rather than to what immediately follows in 5:2-12.

In conclusion, my structural analysis of Gal 4:21-5:1 has followed how Paul constructs allegorically two contrasting “covenants.” The first is the covenant from Sinai that corresponds to Hagar/Ishmael and the “present Jerusalem,” and it is characterised with the themes of slavery and flesh. The second covenant is that of promise, and it corresponds to the mother “Jerusalem above” and the barren-made-fruitful mother of Isa 54:1, and it is characterised with the themes of freedom and the Spirit. The second covenant is ultimately defined in relation to Christ, and both covenants are ultimately configured around inheritance. Hence, I aim to capture in chs. 3-6 the vision and logic that underlies these two covenantal lines, as I ask in particular:

How can Paul make the Law/Sinai correspond with Hagar?

How are the Law and flesh related with the “present Jerusalem” and slavery?

How do the themes of promise, Spirit and Christ work together in generating the children of the “Jerusalem above” that is free?

What is the inheritance?

251 Cf. Vouga on 5:1: “Die Logik verbindet Indikativ u. Imperativ ...” (*An die Galater*, 120).

252 Cf. Florian Wilk: “sie knüpft an die Aussage: ‘Ihr wollt unter dem Gesetz sein!’ (4_{21b}) antithetisch an und greift gemeinsam mit 5_{1a} das zentrale Wortpaar ‘ἐλευθερία / δουλεία’ noch einmal auf” (*Die Bedeutung des Jesajabuches für Paulus*, FRLANT 179 [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998], 90).

The structural analysis has also indicated that the central point of the argument of Gal 4:21-5:1 revolves around the “present Jerusalem” and the “Jerusalem above.” The Jerusalem above is the starting point of the other covenant and the Galatians' identification with it. The Galatians are to embrace their identity both as belonging to the “Jerusalem above” and as being “children of promise” like Isaac. Hence, I ask:

What do the “Jerusalem above” and the “present Jerusalem” refer to?

What does the promise in 4:28 refer to?

How can Paul call the Galatian believers children of promise “like Isaac”?

The two key identifications signal also the two explicit scriptural intertexts that are woven into the flow of the argument. Paul draws from the narrative of the birth of Abraham's two sons (Gen 11-22) by schematically summarising features from it, and quoting Gen 21:10 in Gal 4:30. The other explicit intertext is the quotation of Isa 54:1 in 4:27 that is structurally situated in the middle of the two key identifications of the Galatian believers. Hence, I probe after the hermeneutical dimension in Paul's theological vision and logic with questions that relate to the intertexts:

How do the narrative of the birth of Abraham's two sons and the Isaianic vision of restoration encapsulated in Isa 54:1 function in Paul's vision and logic?

What is the relationship between these two intertexts?

Chapters 3–4 give an in-depth analysis of the theological potential in the intertexts, and ch. 5 explores the hermeneutic in Paul's re-appropriation of the potential of these texts. The results of those investigations are applied in ch. 6 to an intertextual reading of Gal 4:21-5:1 to capture Paul's theological vision and logic in the letter as a whole.

Chapter 3. The Theological Potential in the Abraham Narrative

3.1 The Method

I come to Genesis with Pauline interests in mind. This has at least three implications. First, it directs my attention to elements in the narrative that relate to Paul's interests in Galatians in order to facilitate a robust and in-depth intertextual reading of Gal 4:21-5:1 in ch. 6. Accordingly, my analysis of the Abraham narrative is centred on the births of Abraham's two sons (section 3.3) – a feature that proves to be coherent with the narrative. I also analyse the theme of the promise of blessing to all the nations (3.4), and the issue about circumcision and the identity of the people of God (3.5) in relation to Ishmael and Isaac. My aim, however, is not to exercise a flat Pauline reading of the text of Genesis, but to respect its integrity in order to discern how Paul utilises the potential of the text, i.e. does Paul go with or against the grain of the text?

Secondly, although I recognise that there were many ways in which Jews were reading the Abraham narrative before and around Paul's time, I do not engage in either a comparative study between Paul and other Second Temple Jewish texts (except in a limited way with Philo's allegorical practice in 5.1.3), or an exploration of other aspects of the narrative with regard to other Jewish interests. I only mention here two points where Paul's interests appear to be distinctive. First, Paul focuses on Abraham's faith as the grounds for his righteousness, and distinguishes it from Law observance (Gal 3:1-18; cf. Rom 4), whereas some other Jewish interpreters were interested to present Abraham as an example of a Torah observant Jew. Thus, e.g. both the writer of *Jubilees* and Philo attempt to explain the chronological discrepancy in the claim that Abraham followed the Law of Moses before the time of Moses in their own distinctive ways. The book of *Jubilees* presents the Law in "heavenly" terms (transcending Mosaic confines) to argue that it was accessible to Abraham before it was given to Moses at Sinai.²⁵³ Philo uses Abraham's conformity to the Law as evidence that the Mosaic Law conforms to the

²⁵³ The Law is released from Mosaic confines with the repeated emphasis on it existing in the heavenly tablets, e.g. law of circumcision (*Jubilees* 15:25), and being mediated by angelic beings (e.g. *Jubilees* 1:27-2:33 to Moses [Sabbath laws]; 4:18 to Enoch). In *Jubilees* 12:25-27 Abraham is enabled to understand and speak Hebrew, the language of creation, to read the books of his fathers. Thus, in *Jubilees* 21:10 Abraham accredits his knowledge of the laws to the reading of the words of Enoch and Noah. *Jubilees* 4:17-18 describes how Enoch received revelation concerning calendrical observances. Chapters 6-7 describe the laws that were made known to Noah. Thus, the Law predated Moses, at least in regards to the aspects that *Jubilees* highlights (calendrical observances, circumcision, food laws).

unwritten law of nature that was already available to Abraham (*Abr.* 3–6; 60–61; *Opif.* 3). Second example of Paul’s distinctive interest is his emphasis on the Abrahamic promise of blessing to all the nations, whereas, as Popović argues, there is no reception history of Gen 12:3 in the Dead Sea scrolls, which is most likely not due to silence of evidence but due to a conscious outlook that excluded the Gentiles from the covenantal blessings (this outlook is also shared in other Jewish texts, e.g. *Jubilees*).²⁵⁴

The third implication of approaching the Abraham narrative with Pauline interests in mind is the assumption that Paul was not aware of questions about different compositional strands of the Pentateuch.²⁵⁵ Thus, my analysis operates on the “final form” of the text that is witnessed primarily in the LXX, but also in the MT.²⁵⁶ Paul quotes Gen 21:10 in Gal 4:30 from the LXX (with his own modifications), but the possibility must be entertained that Paul can also operate with Hebrew (cf. Acts 21:37–22:1 that portrays Paul as being bilingual),²⁵⁷ and occasionally demonstrates, possibly his own, Hebraic revisions of the Greek text.²⁵⁸ I think that it is a plausible historical reality that Paul, as a self-confessed Pharisee, was trained with the Hebrew scriptures (Gal 1:13–14; Phil 3:5–6; cf. Acts 22:3; 23:6; 26:4–5),²⁵⁹ and thus, although my analysis

254 Mladen Popović, “Abraham and the Nations in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Exclusivism and Inclusivism in the Texts from Qumran and the Absence of a Reception History for Gen 12:3,” in *Abraham, the Nations, and the Hagarites: Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Perspectives on Kinship with Abraham*, ed. Martin Goodman et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 102–103.

255 Although source critical questions do not guide my investigation, I appreciate the observations of the approach. Source critical analysis points to features of the text (similarities between accounts, tensions in the text etc.) that are important to recognise even when the focus is on the final form of the text.

256 I recognise that the LXX is not a simple entity or a stable text. I use it here as a shorthand for the fluid tradition of the Greek translations (Old Greek) of the Hebrew Bible, a work that began in the mid 300 BCE. To have the best available access to the Old Greek text that Paul possibly used, I use the critical LXX Göttingen edition. The MT is the most comprehensive witness to the possible Hebrew text that was available to Paul, but I recognise that the MT might both reflect a different *Vorlage* to that of the LXX translator, and a different Hebrew text to what Paul used. I have not included in my analysis the relevant Qumran texts or Targums, but occasionally note their contribution to the discussion.

257 Cf. Matthew S. Harmon, *She Must and Shall Go Free: Paul's Isaianic Gospel in Galatians*, BZNW (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 25.

258 For discussion, see Christopher D. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), who maintains that Paul used existing Hebraic revisions. Also, Dietrich-Alex Koch undertakes an analysis of the textual development of the LXX and argues that, since Paul's Hebrew-oriented renderings of the Greek text resemble at points an already available textual revision of the LXX, it is more likely that Paul had such a version at his disposal rather than making his own renditions (“The Quotations of Isaiah 8,14 and 28,16 in Romans 9,33 and 1Peter 2,6.8 as Test Case for Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament,” *ZNW* 101 [2010]: 223–40, especially pages 238–240). Martin Hengel suggests that Paul made himself the revised text he worked from (*The Septuagint as Christian Scripture: Its Prehistory and the Problem of Its Canon* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001], 83, 89). Whether Paul used an already revised Greek text, or made his own revisions is beyond the scope of this research. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that Paul mainly operates with the Greek, but also potentially had the resource to read Hebrew.

259 Cf. W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology* (London: SPCK, 1948), 1–16. Paul's reading of Scripture in Hebrew is a debated question, which is left

is focused on the Greek text that Paul uses in Galatians, I also consult the Hebrew. My aim is to follow the lines in Paul's thought to the matrix of Scripture that he has reflected with (Greek and Hebrew), and not only to the text that he is using (Greek) in his communication in the Gentile mission. Thus, I note the relevant differences between the LXX and the MT, as I analyse the semantic potential in the Abraham narrative.²⁶⁰

Since my focus is on the final form of the text of Genesis 11-22, I approach it with insights gained from narrative criticism. I present here some features of the narrative approach that are important for my analysis. Berlin compares narrative to art and to the task of representation, in which *relationships* rather than absolutes matter: “[t]here is no correct size for painting a house or a flower. It depends on what else is in the picture, and where in the picture it is.”²⁶¹ Thus, relationships are the clues for interpretation.²⁶² Berlin supplies several insights for how biblical narratives set up the relationships that should guide its interpretation:

- a) *narrative analogy*: the reading of one story in terms of another.²⁶³ A prevalent feature in my analysis of the Abraham narrative is to establish relationships between accounts that elucidate one another (e.g. chs. 12 // 22; 16 // 21). I also note analogies that extend beyond the Abraham narrative.
- b) *character contrasts*: “[c]haracters, especially main characters, in the Bible tend not to be absolutes. Our perception and evaluation of them comes through contrasts with other characters, with their earlier selves, or with the reader's expectation.”²⁶⁴ This is crucial for analysing the significance of Ishmael in relationship to Isaac. Also, the development of Abraham's character, and the contrast with the people of Babel is important in order to capture the narrative point about Abraham's relationship to God and his significance for humanity.
- c) *repetition*, and variations on it: “it calls attention to the similarity of two things

open by many scholars (see discussions in Friedrich Wilhelm Horn, ed., *Paulus Handbuch* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013], 66–75, 479–482).

²⁶⁰ I offer in the body of my text mostly quotations from the LXX, but include the MT when the Hebrew words become important in the discussion. Otherwise, I note significant differences with the Hebrew text in the footnotes. My own sense is that the LXX translator of Genesis attempted a very literal translation, but nevertheless could not retain the features that only the Hebrew language facilitates. This is supported by evidence that the LXX reading accords occasionally closely with the Hebrew text preserved in Qumran. Thus, it is possible that the LXX translator did not have the exact same *Vorlage* as the MT. See an example in Matthew Thiessen, “The Text of Genesis 17:14,” *JBL* 128 (2009): 628–629.

²⁶¹ Adele Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative* (Sheffield: Almond, 1983), 135.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 136.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

or utterances, and may also be calling attention to their differences.”²⁶⁵ This relates to capturing the narrative point of view.²⁶⁶ Alter elaborates on the idea of repetition and proposes “a scale of repetitive structuring and focusing devices” that run from smaller elements to larger ones: *Leitwort*, motif, theme, sequence of actions and type scenes.²⁶⁷ The following are relevant in my analysis:

1) *Leitwort*: repetition that explores the semantic range and different forms of the word-root; includes word-play that involves phonetic relatives. This is important in capturing the significance of Isaac's birth that “plays” with his name.

2) *theme*: a leading idea that “is made evident in some recurring pattern, and that is often associated with one or more *Leitwörter*” or with a motif (a recurring concrete image, sensory quality, action, or object).²⁶⁸ This is relevant in section 3.4 that follows the theme of blessing to the nations that follows the recurring pattern in the promise of the great nation and blessing to all the nations, and is connected with the two *Leitwörter* blessing and seed.

3) *sequence of action*: a pattern of action with “some intensification or increment from one occurrence to the other, usually concluding either in climax or a reversal.”²⁶⁹ This is important in connecting Abraham with what precedes him (Babel), but also within the Abraham narrative to discern the distinctions between the covenants (chs. 15 and 17+22) that have a certain pattern of action (establishing the covenant followed by ratification that includes a sacrifice).

Berlin also points to the biblical narrative “technique of leaving gaps”²⁷⁰ and connects it to the artistic principle where “the suggestion of a thing may be more convincing than a detailed portrayal of it.”²⁷¹ This suggestive technique invites the reader to fill in the picture.²⁷² Besides being a technique to make the representation more convincingly realistic, it also lends the potential of the text for the “painting” of various

265 Ibid. Alter adds emphasis on the differences: “what you have to look for more frequently is the small but revealing differences in the seeming similarities, the nodes of emergent new meanings in the pattern of regular expectations created by explicit repetition” (Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* [New York: Basic Books, 1981], 97). Thus, e.g. the differences in the repeated promise of the blessing formula are important to note (e.g. in you; in your seed).

266 Berlin, *Poetics*, 136.

267 Alter, *The Art*, 95–96.

268 Ibid., 95.

269 Ibid., 96.

270 Berlin, *Poetics*, 137.

271 Ibid., 136.

272 Ibid., 137.

kinds of “pictures.” Thus, whilst recognising the potential of other kinds of pictures, I paint a picture in the following analysis that highlights the births of Abraham's two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, as the focal point for the interpretation of other important themes of the narrative. This is done to uncover the theological potential in the narrative for Paul's application in Gal 4:21-5:1. In doing this, I do not claim to give the right reading, or the historically understood original meaning of Genesis, but aim to elucidate the potential of the text that is relevant for reading Paul.

3.2 The Big Picture

The calling of Abraham²⁷³ is a pivotal moment in the book of Genesis and also in the whole of Scripture.²⁷⁴ It can be viewed as the inception of new creation: the beginning of a movement to generate a new humanity. To capture the significance of Abraham's call, it must be placed first in the context of the preceding narrative. Cassuto draws out the significance in the connection between Abraham and Noah:

According to the genealogy in Gen. xi, Abram belongs to the tenth generation of the line of Shem the son of Noah. Just as in the tenth generation after Adam there arose Noah, a wholly righteous man who was privileged to become the father of the new humanity after the Flood, so in the tenth generation after Noah, Abram was born, the chosen of the Lord who was to become the father of a spiritually renewed mankind.²⁷⁵

The need for the “spiritual renewal of humanity” comes to the fore, as the Abraham narrative emerges from the fallout of the tower of Babel – humanity's autonomous attempt to make a great name for itself, to reach the heavens and build a human community independent of God (11:1-4).²⁷⁶ This results not in a flourishing society, but in disintegration; humanity is not only alienated from God, but also from each other (11:5-9): “[l]inguistic differentiation is now seen as expressive of non-communication,

²⁷³ For clarity's sake, I use the names Abraham and Sarah consistently even though their names are changed to these in chapter 17.

²⁷⁴ “We stand here, therefore, at the point where primeval history and sacred history dovetail, and thus at one of the most important places in the entire Old Testament” (Gerhard Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary* [London: SCM Press, 1961], 149). Also Paul R. Williamson, *Abraham, Israel and the Nations: The Patriarchal Promise and Its Covenantal Development in Genesis*, JSOT 315 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 220.

²⁷⁵ Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, the Hebrew University, 1964), 291.

²⁷⁶ Cf. Keith Nigel Grüneberg, *Abraham, Blessing and the Nations: A Philological and Exegetical Study of Genesis 12:3 in Its Narrative Context*, BZAW 332 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), 131.

an aspect of alienation.²⁷⁷ This is portrayed as a judgment of God on sinful rebellion. As von Rad eloquently expresses, the narrative leading up to Abraham raises the urgent question: “[i]s God's relationship to the nations now finally broken; is God's gracious forbearance now exhausted; has God rejected the nations in wrath forever?”²⁷⁸

Levenson observes that the pattern of “human rebellion followed by divine punishment, which is then tempered by divine forbearance” is broken “with the Tower of Babel, the last narrative before the introduction of Abram.”²⁷⁹ Instead of including “a note of grace to leaven the dire sentence of international incomprehension and universal exile,” what follows offers “a new beginning” that is “not simply a tempering of the note of judgment but a reversal of it.”²⁸⁰ Thus, the promise to Abraham in Gen 12:1-3 can be viewed as a promise of a re-creation of humanity: I will make you into a great nation, I will bless you and make your name great; you will be a blessing, in fact, all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you:

the theme of blessing, underscored fourfold in the poem above, reverses the theme of punishment and curse that dominates from the story of Adam and Eve through that of the Tower of Babel. What is more, God promises to do for Abraham what the builders of that tower catastrophically failed to do for themselves – to grant him a great name (compare 11:4).²⁸¹

Thus, Abraham becomes the “patriarchal figure” in the promise to bring blessing to humanity. In contrast to the independent human attempt to build human society, Abraham is to be the beginning of the new humanity *made by God*. The first lines of the Abraham narrative introduce what the rest of the narrative underlines: the promise and programme set in motion in Abraham is an act *of God*.²⁸²

At the heart of this promise and programme is the expectation of progeny, “seed,” to carry the promise to its fulfilment. But, as the genealogical introduction of the narrative indicates, this is going to create tension in the fulfilment of the promise: Abraham's wife is barren (11:30)! Hence, Levenson points out that “[t]he man whom

²⁷⁷ Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Creation, Un-Creation, Re-Creation: A Discursive Commentary on Genesis I-II* (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 165.

²⁷⁸ Von Rad, *Genesis*, 149.

²⁷⁹ Jon Douglas Levenson, *Inheriting Abraham: The Legacy of the Patriarch in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Princeton; Woodstock: Princeton University Press, 2012), 19.

²⁸⁰ Ibid. However, Grüneberg notes that the narrative does not seem to envision here a reversal of the dispersion of the nations and the restoration of “humanity's original unity,” because Abraham is going to become another nation and blessing will come “to the nations in their *מישפחה*” (*Abraham, Blessing and the Nations*, 140). This highlights the need to follow the development of this theme (see 3.4).

²⁸¹ Levenson, *Inheriting Abraham*, 19.

²⁸² Levenson observes that Gen 12:1-3 “foreshadows a key fact about the ‘great nation’ that will emerge from him: namely, that in this and other biblical texts, its existence is due to the special providence of God rather than the natural human processes of human reproduction and population growth” (Ibid., 21).

God summons with the lofty call of Genesis 12:1-3 is an exceedingly unlikely candidate to father the ‘great nation’ therein promised.”²⁸³ With this, we come to the central theme of the Abraham narrative that is about the births of the two sons: “[t]he Abraham cycle focuses primarily on the question of whether and how Abraham will have descendants.”²⁸⁴ The question of “seed” is also bound up with the questions of how the promise of the “great nation” and the blessing to all the nations will be brought about.

3.3 The Births of Ishmael and Isaac

The question that has cast a dark shadow over the promised blessed future for Abraham and the world comes to full expression in chapter 15: Who will inherit from Abraham? How will the promise be carried forward (15:2-3)? The problem has been apparent for the reader since the mention of Sarah's barrenness in 11:30. Abraham has no progeny of his own, and no prospect of having one. The option of transferring the inheritance to Lot, Abraham's nephew, appeared on the horizon until the parting of their ways in chapter 13.²⁸⁵ In 15:2-3, Abraham bemoans that as the situation stands – him being childless – it will be his servant Eliezer who will inherit from him.²⁸⁶ But the Lord is clear that it will not be the servant, but a son who comes from his own body that will be his heir (15:4). As if the promise of a son was not enough, the Lord promises a multitude of descendants as the stars in the sky (15:5). Despite the promise being against nature and beyond the realm of human possibility, Abraham receives the promise of descendants in recognition that this is totally dependent on God. This dependence on God is what God is looking for; it is counted to Abraham as righteousness (15:6 καὶ ἐπίστευσεν Ἀβραμ τῷ θεῷ, καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην):

God has indicated his plan for history, namely, to make of Abraham a great people; Abraham ‘has firmly assented’ to that, i.e. he took it seriously and adjusted to it. In so doing he adopted,

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ Grüneberg, *Abraham, Blessing and the Nations*, 9.

²⁸⁵ Cf. Cassuto: “[t]his, too, is a test and trial for Abram: he was hoping to become a great nation (xii 2), yet now, even though he was still childless, he was compelled, out of his love of peace, to separate himself from his brother's son, who was to him as a son” (*Genesis*, 366).

²⁸⁶ The Hebrew is difficult, but has a nice wordplay between Eliezer the Damascene and the heir (son of the possessions of my house) of Abraham's house (15:2b וְיִשְׁמָעֵאל אֲלֵי עֲבָדִי הַיְהוּדִי הוּא הַיְהוּדִי בְיָמֵי הָאֵלֹהִים). The LXX clearly struggles with the rare Hebrew expressions עֲבָדִי הַיְהוּדִי, and translates it with a proper name (ὁ δὲ υἱὸς Μασεκ τῆς οἰκογενοῦς μου, οὗτος Δαμασκὸς Ἐλιεζερ).

according to God's judgment, the only correct relationship to God.²⁸⁷

With this, the question about Abraham's heir seems as settled as the promise of the land that is confirmed by an unconditional covenant (15:7-21). But a new twist is added to the fulfilment of the promise that begins at chapter 16.

3.3.1 The Birth of Ishmael

The problem that stood in the way of the fulfilment of the promise of descendants still remained: Sarah had not given birth to a child even after ten years had passed in the promised land (16:3). As the couple had earlier turned to Egypt for help in time of famine (12:10-20),²⁸⁸ so also now they turn to an Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid Hagar (most likely acquired during their stay in Egypt, cf. 12:16), in their need for a son from Abraham (16:1).²⁸⁹ In both cases, there is no indication that the moves were divinely initiated or approved,²⁹⁰ and in light of the past experience in Egypt, this move seems perilous. This time it is Sarah who is in charge, suggesting a perfectly reasonable, theologically argued and apparently selfless solution to Abraham's dilemma: Ἴδοὺ συνέκλεισέν με κύριος τοῦ μὴ τίκτειν· εἴσελθε οὖν πρὸς τὴν παιδίσκην μου, ἵνα τεκνοποιήσῃς ἐξ αὐτῆς (16:2).²⁹¹ The suggestion seems in line with the promise of progeny that has been thus far specified to be from Abraham, but not particularly from Sarah (cf. 15:4). Levenson suggests that in view of the promise at this point of the story, the actions of Abraham and Sarah can be regarded even as a “deed of faithful response,” in which they can be viewed “willingly playing their role in the divine-human synergy through which the astonishing providential design will be realized.”²⁹² Abraham agrees with the plan, Sarah gives Hagar as wife to Abraham, and he has sexual relations with

²⁸⁷ Von Rad, *Genesis*, 180.

²⁸⁸ This is an incident that prefigures Israel in Egypt and her exodus with great possessions (Gen 42:1-3; 45:5-11; Exod 12:35-38). Cf. Cassuto, *Genesis*, 334, 336; Jon Douglas Levenson, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 86.

²⁸⁹ Egypt in the Hebrew Bible connotes ‘house of bondage’ (Exod 20:2), ‘land of oppression’ (Exod 3:9), place to be liberated from and not to return to (Deut 17:16) (Ed Noort, “Created in the Image of the Son: Ishmael and Hagar,” in *Abraham, the Nations, and the Hagarites*, 39). But it is also a land of refuge in time of famine (Gen 41:57-42:2; 45:5-11).

²⁹⁰ In a parallel scene, Isaac is deliberately commanded to stay in the promised land with assurance of blessing and a reminder of Abraham's later obedience (Gen 26:1-5)

²⁹¹ The closing and opening of wombs is a divine prerogative and a recurring theme in the patriarchal narratives that highlights the narrative point of divine “election” and generative power in the formation of the people (cf. 25:21; 29:31; 30:1-2). Sarah's situation and suggestion is echoed in Rachel's (30:1-3), where Jacob's answer brings out the divine prerogative pointedly (30:2b: Μὴ ἀντὶ θεοῦ ἐγὼ εἶμι, ὃς ἐστέρησέν σε καρπὸν κοιλίας;)

²⁹² Levenson, *The Death and Resurrection*, 92.

her resulting in her conceiving (16:4a). But with the apparently valid arrangement (cf. Gen 30) there comes an immediate complication: tension between the two women – Hagar looks down on Sarah (16:4b). This is the first indication that obtaining an heir from the “slave woman” would bring about unforeseen consequences that only increase in the course of the narrative.

The tension is temporarily resolved, as Abraham hands power to Sarah, and she treats Hagar harshly, resulting in her fleeing from Sarah (16:5-6). But God meets Hagar in the wilderness. An angel of the Lord instructs her to return back to Sarah (16:7-9). He also conveys a promise that Hagar will bear a son who has a future with a multitude of descendants (16:10 Πληθύνων πληθυνῶ τὸ σπέρμα σου, καὶ οὐκ ἀριθμηθήσεται ἀπὸ τοῦ πλήθους). As this promise resembles the one given earlier to Abraham in 13:16 and 15:5, Syrén argues that “Ishmael is, in effect, integrated into Abraham's family and is seen to share in the promise made to the patriarch.”²⁹³ So it seems, but in fact, the narrative begins here a “play” on the role of Ishmael in relation to the promise of a great nation from Abraham (12:2), a “play” that the narrative extends up to chapter 21. Hence, the question why Ishmael is brought and kept in the narrative becomes one of the central questions in my analysis of the Abraham story.

But even in this hopeful prospect there is tension; the son of Abraham from Hagar will live in hostility with his kinsmen (16:12 οὗτος ἔσται ἄγροικος ἄνθρωπος· αἱ χεῖρες αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ πάντα, καὶ αἱ χεῖρες πάντων ἐπ’ αὐτόν, καὶ κατὰ πρόσωπον πάντων τῶν ἀδελφῶν αὐτοῦ κατοικήσει, cf. 25:18).²⁹⁴ Nevertheless, it is here in Hagar's womb in the wilderness that the son receives his name: he is to be called Ishmael to signify that the Lord had heard Hagar's oppression (16:11b καὶ καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰσμαηλ, ὅτι ἐπήκουσεν κύριος τῆ ταπεινώσει σου / MT יִשְׁמָעֵל לְעֵלְיָזָבֵת אֵשְׁתֵּי אַבְרָהָם). Ishmael bears in his name the reality of oppression, but also the hope of God attending to it. After this encounter, Hagar returns and bears a son to Abraham, and Abraham honours Hagar's revelation by naming the son Ishmael (16:15).

293 Roger Syrén, *The Forsaken First-Born: A Study of a Recurrent Motif in the Patriarchal Narratives*, JSOT 133 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 18. However, as von Rad says: “there is not a word about the great promise to Abraham” (*Genesis*, 189). Yes, there is no explicit reference to the Abrahamic promise, but the language of descendants that cannot be numbered does suggest that some “play” between Ishmael and the promise is intended.

294 The Hebrew is even more metaphoric in its expression of Ishmael's future relationship to his brothers in describing him as a ‘wild donkey’: וְהָיָה יִשְׁמָעֵל כְּחֵמַר בְּעַלְיוֹתָיו כִּי יָדָהּ בְּכָל יָדָהּ כָּל בֶּן וְעַל-פָּנָיו כָּל-אֶחָיו יִשְׁכַּן. Hence, the interpretation of this verse divides commentators in terms of how the relationship is understood, whether hostile, neutral, or positive (see Syrén, *The Forsaken First-Born*, 23). Both Westermann (*Genesis: A Commentary*, vol. 2 [London: SPCK, 1984], 246) and von Rad (*Genesis*, 189) perceive a description of hostility here.

Like the earlier account of Abraham and Sarah in Egypt, so also this incident prefigures Israel later being in Egypt; paradoxically, Israel's matriarch's harsh treatment of Hagar prefigures the harsh treatment of Israel by Egypt.²⁹⁵ In addition to the conceptual connection, the prefigurative function of this episode is indicated by a word connection, in which the same word for oppression (ענה) is used when God attended to Hagar's oppression and later to the oppression of Israel in Egypt (Exod 4:31 וַיִּצְעֲקוּ אֶת־עֲנָיִם).²⁹⁶ Thus, the birth of Ishmael, although in a limited way, prefigures the oppression and servitude of Israel and simultaneously the hopeful reality that God attends to the oppression of his people.

But why God does not resolve the tension with this occasion and let Hagar go? This incident already anticipates the final expulsion in chapter 21, and thus begs the question: why allow it to be repeated? What role does Ishmael have in the narrative that requires his enduring presence all the way to chapter 21? I argue that it is to bring clarity by contrast to what ultimately demarcates the child of promise, and thus also the people to be identified with him (see 3.5).

3.3.2 The Birth of Isaac

Thirteen years after the birth of Ishmael, when Abraham is 99 years old, God affirms and further defines the promise of descendants. God comes to make a covenant with Abraham regarding his offspring and their relationship to God as his people (17:1-21). After the covenant that promises God's identification with Abraham's descendants, the moment comes for the crucial aspect of this promise to be revealed: this special people will come from the son born from Sarah (17:15-21)!²⁹⁷ This specification of the promise to Sarah is signalled in her name change from Sarai to Sarah (17:15). God promises to bless her, and thus she will give birth to Abraham's son (17:16a). The absurdity in the

295 Cf. Phyllis Trible: “[i]ronically the verb depicts here the suffering of a lone Egyptian woman in Canaan, the land of her bondage to the Hebrews. Sarai afflicts Hagar. . . . Hagar becomes the suffering servant, indeed the precursor of Israel's plight under Pharaoh.” Hagar flees from Sarai “even as Israel will flee from Pharaoh.” (“Ominous Beginnings for a Promise of Blessing,” in *Hagar, Sarah, and Their Children: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Perspectives*, ed. Phyllis Trible and Letty M. Russell [Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006], 40.)

296 The conceptual connection is present also in the LXX (καὶ ἐπίστευσεν ὁ λαὸς καὶ ἐχάρη, ὅτι ἐπεσκέψατο ὁ θεὸς τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραὴλ, καὶ ὅτι εἶδεν αὐτῶν τὴν θλίψιν), but the word connection functions only in the Hebrew. There is also a connection in the word “see,” as Hagar names God as the one who saw her (אֵל־רָאָה), and in Exod 4:31 God saw (הִרְאָה) the affliction of the Israelites.

297 Although there is mention of Abraham's old age, the focus is on the absurdity of the birth from Sarah. Abraham's old age is not an obstacle, since he was able to father Ishmael and also later six more sons through Keturah (25:1-4)!

focus of the promise on Sarah is expressed in Abraham's laughter (17:17a καὶ ἔπεσεν Ἀβραὰμ ἐπὶ πρόσωπον καὶ ἐγέλασεν / MT קָרַח): “God often fulfils God's plans by making a mockery of human expectations.”²⁹⁸ It is also expressed in the request that Ishmael could live before God (17:18). This indicates that Abraham had expected, and still maintained that Ishmael could be enough to fulfil the promise about descendants, because the new twist to the fulfilment of the promise was inconceivable to him (17:17b).²⁹⁹ But God is adamant that Ishmael is not the means for the fulfilment of the promise. It is Sarah who will bear him a son and his name will be Isaac (קָרַח), and it is to him and the people from him that the covenant is applied (17:19). Nevertheless, God honours Abraham's request and promises to bless Ishmael with fruitfulness (17:20); he will become a “great nation” and give rise to twelve tribes (17:20 δώδεκα ἔθνη γεννήσει, καὶ δώσω αὐτὸν εἰς ἔθνος μέγα).³⁰⁰ Again, the blessing on Ishmael resembles the promise of *the* “great nation.” However, it is repeated that the covenant is only established with Isaac (17:21a). This tension between Ishmael and Isaac in the prospect and promise of the “great nation” opens the potential that their contrast helps to define the identity of God's people (see 3.5).

Finally, 23 years after the initial promise of descendants (12:2-3), the fulfilment of that promise is finally given a due date: Isaac will be born in a year! (17:21b).³⁰¹ But the narrative is not ready to leap the year. The significance of the birth of Isaac is given more weight and context. Hence, in the next move, the promise of a son from Sarah is repeated and delivered to Sarah herself (18:1-15). God comes to meet Abraham with a message to Sarah (18:9). Sarah is inside the tent but hears the message that she will bear a son next year this season (18:10). Echoing Abraham's response in 17:17, Sarah also laughs (18:12 ἐγέλασεν δὲ Σαρρα ἐν ἑαυτῇ / MT הָרַח שָׂרָה בְּקִרְבָּהּ). The laughter gives voice to the total absurdity of the promise; not only is Sarah still barren, she is also past the time a woman can in any case give birth (18:11-13):

[i]t certainly underlines the magnitude of the miracle of Isaac's birth: it was not simply that Sarah

²⁹⁸ Joel S. Kaminsky, “Humor and the Theology of Hope: Isaac as a Humorous Figure,” *Interpretation* 54 (2000): 373.

²⁹⁹ Cf. von Rad: “Abraham attempts to side-step what is incomprehensible to him and to direct God's interest (typically!) to what is already certainty, i.e. to Ishmael!” (*Genesis*, 198; see also Westermann, *Genesis*, 2:268; Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16-50* [Dallas: Word Books, 1994], 26).

³⁰⁰ The LXX portrays Ishmael as a “father” of twelve tribes and a great nation, whereas the MT refers to a prince or tribal leader (נָשִׂיא) and a great nation (see Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 27; Westermann, *Genesis*, 2:270). In Gen 25:13-16 ἔθνος is used to denote Ishmael's 12 sons/tribes. Thus, on the concrete level, they are clearly separate from the 12 sons of Jacob, but on the narrative level there seems to be an intentional contrast to the identity of Israel.

³⁰¹ See Wenham on the Hebrew כִּשְׁנָה הַבְּאֵר as an expression for “next year” (*Genesis 16-50*, 47–48).

had long been infertile but that she was well past menopause too. Conception, let alone birth, was impossible.³⁰²

The promise has been emphatically stretched beyond any human possibility. This is where the theological crux of the birth of Isaac is revealed: the birth of Isaac is an act *of God*; what is humanly impossible is not impossible with God (18:14 μὴ ἀδυνατεῖ παρὰ τῷ θεῷ ῥῆμα;). Moreover, while there is absolutely no human possibility in the fulfilment of the promise, the narrative has also demonstrated right after the initial promissory call (12:10-20), and will do so again immediately before the fulfilment of the explicit promise of the son from Sarah (20:1-18), that human activity outside of faith puts the promise only in peril. The contrast highlights the central point: only faith accords with the promise (cf. 15:6 and 22:15-18).

There are still two events that separate this final word of promise from its fulfilment.³⁰³ The first is directly linked with the giving of the final promise, as it is given on the same journey when God is heading towards Sodom and Gomorrah to inspect its iniquity (18:16-21), and execute judgment (18:22-19:29). God chooses to reveal to Abraham the intent of the journey, since it is he who carries the promise of blessing to all nations (18:18). Like the promise in 12:2-3, so also this promise of blessing to the nations is given in the context of the reality of sin and judgment, and invests the birth of Isaac with theological significance for all of humanity (cf. 22:18). This is a reminder that, although Isaac is to inherit the covenant about a special people of God, the scope and purpose of it is the need for a blessing of all the peoples, the “spiritual renewal of humanity” (see 3.4).

The second event between the final promise of the birth of Sarah's son and its fulfilment resembles the earlier Egyptian detour in 12:10-20, but also offers a contrast to the destruction of the unrighteous Sodom. Again, out of fear – not of faith – Abraham deceives the men in Gerar concerning his wife Sarah, saying that she is her sister (20:2a, 11). This act of unbelief puts Sarah and the promise in peril; Abimelech the king of Gerar takes her to himself (20:2b).³⁰⁴ God comes to the rescue, again, and appears to

³⁰² Ibid., 48.

³⁰³ Alter notes that this “delay” or “interruption” between the annunciation and the fulfilment is unique among other similar accounts that include barrenness-annunciation-fulfilment patterns (Gen 25:19-25; Judg 13; 1 Sam 1; II Kings 4:8-17) (“Sodom as Nexus: The Web of Design in Biblical Narrative,” in *The Book and the Text: The Bible and Literary Theory*, ed. Regina M. Schwartz [Cambridge: Blackwell, 1990], 149).

³⁰⁴ The placement of this event seems very unlikely in line with “historical” sequence, since Sarah is at this point 90 years old and hardly so attractive that Abraham would fear other men to kill him to get her. This highlights that the deliberate narrative positioning of this event here has a point to make.

Abimelech in a dream revealing the truth of Sarah's identity (20:3). With surprising moves, the narrative places Abraham in a negative and Abimelech in a positive light. Abraham thought no one fears God in Gerar – he “assumes that Gerar is an other Sodom”³⁰⁵ – and thus lied due to his “fear of men,” nearly causing the destruction of the place (20:9-11),³⁰⁶ whereas Abimelech had acted in ignorance, and was prevented by God from the actual sin of “touching Sarah” (20:4-6). Furthermore, Abimelech fears God and corrects the situation and reprimands Abraham (20:7-9). Nevertheless, Abraham is recognised as a prophet, and his prayer opens the closed wombs of Abimelech's wives (20:7, 17-18). This incident highlights that Abraham has nothing to add to the fulfilment of the promise of the son from Sarah; his action has nearly forfeited the promise, and, although shown to be a possibility, his prayer has not opened Sarah's womb (cf. 25:21; Isaac's prayer opens Rebekah's womb).

Finally, after 24 years, the day arrives for the long awaited fulfilment of the promise of a descendant to inherit from Abraham; Isaac is born to Abraham when he is 100 years old (21:5). The narrative has reached the point where the theology invested in Isaac's birth is pregnant enough (pun intended) to deliver the point: the birth of Isaac is an act *of God*; it proceeds from the power of his promise (21:1-2 Καὶ κύριος ἐπεσκέψατο τὴν Σαρραν, καθὰ εἶπεν, καὶ ἐποίησεν κύριος τῇ Σαρρα, καθὰ ἐλάλησεν, καὶ συλλαβοῦσα ἔτεκεν Σαρρα τῷ Αβρααμ υἱὸν εἰς τὸ γῆρας εἰς τὸν καιρὸν, καθὰ ἐλάλησεν αὐτῷ κύριος).³⁰⁷ The theology is also invested in his name; Abraham names the son of the promise, born of Sarah, Isaac – he laughs (21:3).³⁰⁸ Sarah's response to Isaac's birth completes the significance of the name: God has made laughter for her, and people who hear of this will rejoice with her (21:6 εἶπεν δὲ Σαρρα Γέλωτά μοι ἐποίησεν κύριος· ὃς γὰρ ἂν ἀκούσῃ, συγχαρεῖταιί μοι).³⁰⁹ Thus, the

305 Alter, “Sodom as Nexus,” 156.

306 James Bruckner notes the irony in Abraham's thought that no one “fears God,” when it is actually he himself who “fears men” rather than God (*Implied Law in the Abraham Narrative: A Literary and Theological Analysis*, JSOT 335 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001], 180).

307 The repetition of καθὰ εἶπεν, καθὰ ἐλάλησεν, καθὰ ἐλάλησεν places the emphasis heavily on the promissory act. The lack of mention that Abraham had sexual relations with Sarah (cf. 16:4) also highlights this as an act of God rather than man, although 21:2 specifies that Sarah bore this child *to Abraham*. Philo emphasises the “divine begetting of Isaac,” as he uses the example of Sarah's giving of birth in his argument that God begets all things (i.e. virtues), but gives what he has begotten to the one who would receive: “For he [Moses] introduces Sarah as conceiving a son when God beheld her by himself [ὄτε ὁ θεὸς αὐτὴν μονωθεῖσαν ἐπισκοπεῖ]; but he represents her as bringing forth her son, not to him who beheld her then, but to him who was eager to attain to wisdom, and his name is called Abraham” (*Cher*: 45; translation by C. D. Yonge). The *Testament of Abraham* attributes the birth of Isaac to the “angels” that visited Abraham and Sarah at the oak of Mamre (A 6:4-5).

308 Isaac is the only patriarch whose name is not changed. This emphasises that it is the theology connected with the birth of Isaac that is of significance in his role in the founding of the “great nation.”

309 The Hebrew (וַיִּשְׂמַח אֲבְרָהָם בְּיֶלְדָהּ וַיִּשְׂמַח אֵת כָּל־הַיִּשְׂרָאֵלִים אֲשֶׁר עִמָּו) could also be translated with a

laughter that initially signalled disbelief in the human impossibility of the promise (17:17 and 18:12-13) has now turned into rejoicing due to the act of God. Kaminsky expresses well the theological significance of “laughter” in the narrative:

One of the major themes in Genesis is God's promises to the patriarchs. There are times when humans are expected to trust in God's promises even when they seem unrealistic or even impossible. Inasmuch as God's promises require the patriarchs to develop a hope that rejects a common-sense worldview, one should not be surprised to find humor in these narratives. ... And most importantly, it is in the laughter evoked by Isaac that one finds the strength to believe, even when trust in God's promises seems absurd.³¹⁰

Isaac is the son of promise, and his name communicates both absolute human insufficiency and total divine sufficiency that is to shape the character of the people that are to be generated by the promise that is extended to Isaac's “seed” (17:19; 21:12). The “Isaac people” are to be “children of laughter” – people who recognise the insufficiency of human potential in their existence as the people of God, and thus depend solely on the promise of God – they live from faith. This is what Abraham exemplified in relation to the promise of descendants in 15:6, and demonstrates in the extreme in the final climactic episode in the narrative of the birth of Isaac (22:1-19) (see 3.3.4).

3.3.3 Ishmael Is Excluded

Now Abraham has two sons from two mothers: Ishmael from Hagar and Isaac from Sarah. The tension that was already between Hagar and Sarah (16:4), is, as predicted in 16:12, now reflected between Ishmael and Isaac. At a banquet for the occasion of Isaac's weaning, Sarah notices Ishmael treating Isaac in a contemptuous way that arouses her alarm (21:9).³¹¹ Thus, echoing the earlier incident with Hagar, she asks Abraham: Ἐκβαλε τὴν παιδίσκην ταύτην καὶ τὸν υἱὸν αὐτῆς· οὐ γὰρ κληρονομήσει ὁ υἱὸς τῆς παιδίσκης ταύτης μετὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ μου Ἰσαακ (21:10). It is a harsh request, and causes great distress to Abraham (21:11). But it is inevitable. God confirms that Sarah is right: the two sons cannot inherit together; it is only in Isaac that the heirs to the

derogatory sense: the one who hears about this will laugh at Sarah. But the context supports the LXX translator's choice to refer to rejoicing with her.

310 Kaminsky, “Humor and the Theology of Hope,” 373–374.

311 Tribble: “the ‘laughing’ may suggest usurpation. For Sarah, Ishmael's laughing poses a threat because, by word association, Ishmael is ‘Isaacing’. The son of Hagar plays the role of the son of Sarah” (“Ominous Beginnings” 45). This is possible, but there are also other word connections that bring out the negative connotation. The word קִיָּץ (Piel ptc. to jest/mock) that is used of Ishmael treating Isaac is also used in 19:14 in the same Piel stem when Lot speaks to his sons-in-law about the need to escape, and they think he is as one who ‘jests/mocks’ (קִיָּץ). The observed word connections work only in the Hebrew. The LXX uses two different words in its translation of קִיָּץ . In 19:14 it is γελοιάζω but in 21:9 παίζω .

Abrahamic promise are counted (21:12 ὅτι ἐν Ἰσαακ κληθήσεται σοι σπέρμα; cf. 17:19 and 25:5-6 in relation to the other sons of Abraham). The absolute incongruity between the child born of human initiative and the child born of the power of God's promise is highlighted in relation to the identity of God's people. However, even though Ishmael is excluded from the covenant, and he and Hagar are expelled from Abraham's household, God affirms that Ishmael will be made into a "great nation" because he is also a son of Abraham (21:13 καὶ τὸν υἱὸν δὲ τῆς παιδίσκης ταύτης, εἰς ἔθνος μέγα ποιήσω αὐτόν, ὅτι σπέρμα σὸν ἐστίν). Thus, the narrative extends the "play" with Ishmael as an alternative construal of the "great nation" up to this point. But the distinction is clear: the covenant people, the true "great nation," is counted from Isaac alone (21:12). Nevertheless, God looks after the needs of the expelled mother and child (21:14-21): "God is not only with Isaac, but also with the wretched Ishmael!"³¹²

3.3.4 The Climax: Abraham's Faith and the Near Sacrifice of Isaac

The description of the birth of Isaac in chapter 21 is surprisingly succinct; after all the waiting and suspense, his birth is narrated with only a few, although theologically weighty, words. This is in contrast to chapter 22, where the narrative progression slows down and descriptions are detailed and emotional. It is with good reason that this chapter is regarded as the climax, or peak, of the Abraham narrative.³¹³ It is in the near sacrifice of Isaac that the significance of the promise of Isaac and the faith of Abraham come to sharp focus. Abraham's faith is ultimately defined in relation to the son of promise on the Mountain in Moriah.³¹⁴ The faith that connects Abraham with the promise has already been present at the beginning of the narrative in Abraham's obedient response to the command to go to the land that will be shown him, making a break with the past (12:1-4). It is demonstrated in its completion in Abraham's response to the final command to go to the mountain that will be told him to make an apparent break with the future (22:2-3).³¹⁵ In between these two commands is the explicit

³¹² Syrén, *The Forsaken First-Born*, 44.

³¹³ E.g. R. W. L. Moberly, *The Bible, Theology, and Faith: A Study of Abraham and Jesus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 72.

³¹⁴ Levenson objects to the reading of the test of Abraham being about his faith, because he perceives that a traditional Lutheran reading severs faith from action (*The Death and Resurrection*, 125–126). But, as my analysis below demonstrates, these two need not be separated, but are joined together as belonging to a life lived in dependence on the sufficiency of God.

³¹⁵ Levenson argues similarly for the connection between chs. 12 and 22 with additional notes on the similarity in the command (12:2 cf. 22:2) and in the intensification of the break, the "step effect of the nouns." "'your son, your favored one, the one whom you love' in chapter 22 and 'from your native land,

moment where Abraham's faith is defined in relation to the promise of progeny, and receives a favourable verdict from God (15:4-6). The connection between the promise of a son, and the request to sacrifice that son of promise invites the interpretation of chapter 22 as a further, and fuller, expression of the faith of Abraham in 15:6.

After the miraculous, long awaited birth of Isaac, and the expulsion of Ishmael, Abraham is commanded to go to a mountain in Moriah to sacrifice his (only) beloved son (22:1-2).³¹⁶ The dynamics for creating a new humanity come into the spotlight on this mountain in the figures of Abraham and Isaac (the focus here is on how Abraham's faith relates to this; sections 3.4 and 3.5 complete the analysis from other perspectives). First, it is important to recognise that the “test of Abraham” is not just about any child sacrifice, but that it is only meaningful as it relates to Isaac, the son of promise.³¹⁷

Isaac is the child of promise. In him every saving thing that God has promised to do is invested, and guaranteed. The point here is not a natural gift, not even the highest, but rather the disappearance from Abraham's life of the whole promise.³¹⁸

Thus, it is striking that Abraham responds to God's command to go sacrifice Isaac without grumbling or hesitation (22:3).³¹⁹ There seems no doubt that Abraham is ready for this test (cf. 22:10-11). He has learned in the course of the narrative to trust God in the unexpected ways of his promise. When Isaac unknowingly asks about the sacrifice, Abraham answers in faith: God will see for himself the “lamb” for the offering (22:8). In this trust in the God who “sees better,” Abraham is ready to sacrifice his son even in the face of the absurdity of the command (22:10).³²⁰ On the one hand, Abraham has learned that taking matters into his own hands, acting on the basis of what a human sees, has resulted only in danger and conflict (Egypt, Hagar, Abimelech). On the other hand, Abraham has seen God's power at work with the impossible promise (11:30; 15:4-5; 17:15-21; 18:9-15; 21:1-7). Thus, he is ready to face the absurdity of the command:

from your kinsmen, and from your father's house' in chapter 12” (Ibid., 128; cf. Cassuto, *Genesis*, 310).

316 The description of Abraham's relationship with Isaac in 22:2 highlights the unique role he plays. The LXX focuses on Abraham's special love for Isaac (τὸν ἀγαπητόν, ὃν ἠγάπησας), but the MT has Isaac as Abraham's *only* son (אֶת־בְּנֵי אֱבְרָהָם אֶת־יִצְחָק בְּיָחִיד). This might be with reference to Ishmael's expulsion, but also to the exclusivity of the promise that is focused on Isaac (17:19; 21:12).

317 Cf. von Rad: “Above all, one must consider Isaac, who is much more than simply a ‘foil’ for Abraham, i.e., a more or less accidental object on which his obedience is to be proven” (*Genesis*, 244).

318 Ibid.

319 Levenson argues that the sacrifice of Isaac in 22 is to be read in light of the expulsion of Ishmael in 21 (*The Death and Resurrection*, 104–109). I perceive some development. In 21, Abraham objects to Sarah's request to expel Ishmael and Hagar, because it seems too harsh and even ethically wrong to him (21:11, especially the MT). But here, Abraham expresses no objections.

320 Moberly recognises that Abraham's words “represent a fundamental trust in God as the context within which adherence to God's will is worked out” (*The Bible, Theology, and Faith*, 96). Also: “His response shows the logic of trust in its most sharp and paradoxical form” (Ibid., 120).

to hand Isaac over as dead to the God who gave life to the son from the dead womb of Sarah.³²¹ Abraham trusts God to continue the promise of blessing even in the face of the death of the son of promise. Only faith survives in the place of paradox.³²²

Like earlier in 15:6, so also now Abraham's faith is explicitly commented upon. First, God expresses that it is by Abraham's readiness to sacrifice Isaac that he knows that Abraham *fears* him (22:12). The “fear of future” (15:1-3; Μὴ φοβοῦ, Αβραμ ...) and the “fear of men” (20:2, 11) have now turned into the “fear of God.” This “fear of God” is an expression of Abraham's faith.³²³ His “fear” expresses his complete dependence on God; he is ready to trust God even when there would be good reason to fear the consequences. This “fear” makes him free to follow through with God's command. Thus, secondly, Abraham's faith is expressed in terms of *obedience* (22:16 οὐ εἵνεκεν ἐποίησας τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτο καὶ οὐκ ἐφείσω τοῦ υἱοῦ σου τοῦ ἀγαπητοῦ δι' ἐμέ ... 22:18b ἀνθ' ὧν ὑπήκουσας τῆς ἐμῆς φωνῆς). The initial faith that Abraham had in receiving the promise (15:6) is the same faith he now needs to live in the fulfilment of the promise. It is a life lived in continuous dependence on the sufficiency of the God of the promise – he needs to finish like he started. The faith that Abraham expresses in the near sacrifice of Isaac also receives the reaffirmation of the promise of blessing (22:17-18). It is to this theme of the promised blessing that I turn next.

3.4 Abraham and the Promise of Blessing that Extends to All the Nations

The Abraham narrative proper begins with these pivotal words (12:1-3):

Καὶ εἶπεν κύριος τῷ Αβραμ
 Ἔξελθε ἐκ τῆς γῆς σου καὶ ἐκ τῆς συγγενείας σου καὶ ἐκ τοῦ οἴκου
 τοῦ πατρός σου εἰς τὴν γῆν, ἣν ἄν σοι δείξω·

321 Pace Levenson, who argues that the essence of the test is to see that Abraham loves God more than Isaac, that Isaac has not become an idol to him (*The Death and Resurrection*, 126–128).

322 Although Levenson does not view faith as the key to Abraham's actions (Ibid., 141), he recognises well the paradoxes of the episode: “[o]ne paradox of the aqedah is that it is Abraham's willingness to give up Isaac that insures the fulfilment of the promise that depends on Isaac. The other paradox is this: though Abraham does not give up his son through sacrifice, he gives him up nonetheless – to the God who gave Isaac life, ordered him slaughtered, and finally grants him his exalted role in the divine plan.” (Ibid., 142.)

323 Cf. Moberly's argument that “fear of God” is “*the* primary term within the Old Testament for depicting a true and appropriate human response to God,” and is “equivalent to ‘faith’ in Christian parlance” (*The Bible, Theology, and Faith*, 79).

- a καὶ ποιήσω σε εἰς ἔθνος μέγα
 b καὶ εὐλογήσω σε
 c καὶ μεγαλυνῶ τὸ ὄνομά σου,
 c' καὶ ἔσῃ εὐλογητός³²⁴
 b' καὶ εὐλογήσω τοὺς εὐλογοῦντάς σε, καὶ τοὺς
 καταρωμένους σε καταράσομαι
 a' καὶ ἐνευλογηθήσονται ἐν σοὶ πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς.³²⁵

It begins with a command, turns into a promise, and is saturated with blessing. Abraham is to leave his native land to receive the new land that will be shown him; Abraham is to make a break from his kindred to become the beginning of a new people that will be made out of him. The promise of making Abraham into a great nation precedes the word of blessing, which is otherwise the prominent note. This order can be to emphasise that the promises extend “well beyond Abraham's own life and lifetime,” as the promise points to the origins of the nation of Israel.³²⁶ But the order can also indicate a carefully crafted structure, in which I perceive a rough chiasmus.³²⁷ This suggests that the first and last line (a and a') are to be read together; they are the two major dimensions of the promise that the narrative develops. The structure also indicates that Abraham's name

324 In the MT, clause c' begins with the conjunction waw + imperative, and is followed by the noun (וְהָיָה בְרָכָה). This is read in different ways; some as a second command (be a blessing); some as an emphatic consequence clause (so that you will effect blessing) (Williamson, *Abraham, Israel and the Nations*, 221). I follow Grüneberg's reading: “the force of the imperative is not to issue a command, but to state further the divine purpose” (*Abraham, Blessing and the Nations*, 146). In any case, the Hebrew points already here to a turn from Abraham being blessed (b) to Abraham becoming a blessing. The LXX has the future verb and an adjective here (you shall be blessed), and turns to the idea of Abraham communicating a blessing in the next clause.

325 The LXX has translated the Hebrew with a future passive (although the Greek can also have a middle force). This is the sense that Paul also reads in the promise (Gal 3:8). There is considerable debate as to the proper translation and sense of the Hebrew *niphal* form of the verb here and in 18:18, and the *hithpael* form in 22:18. The debate has a linguistic level, but the significance is acutely theological; how Israel's role is conceived: instrumental – mediating the blessing – or more substantive – a model people. The linguistic debate is whether there is a passive or a reflexive sense in the verbal forms used for blessing (the middle sense is closely connected to the passive). For an argument for taking it as a reflexive see Moberly, *The Bible, Theology, and Faith*, 123–124; and for the passive, see Grüneberg, *Abraham, Blessing and the Nations*, 65, 177–179, 183–184, 220. For discussion on distinguishing the significance of the use of the *niphal* in 12:3 and 18:18 (also 28:14) and the *hithpael* in 22:18 (also 26:4), see Williamson, *Abraham, Israel and the Nations*, 227–228.

326 Thus Grüneberg (*Abraham, Blessing and the Nations*, 162–163). He also suggest that the lack of an explicit promise of land here might be “to prioritise the people over the land: possession of the land is not a goal in itself, but only insofar as it facilitates the fulfilment of the other promises” (*Ibid.*, 164).

327 Although the poetic quality and carefully crafted structure of 12:1–3 is well recognised (e.g. Robert Alter, ed., *Genesis: Translation and Commentary* [New York: Norton, 1996], 51; Cassuto, *Genesis*, 312, 315; Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, [Waco: Word Books, 1987], 270; Williamson, *Abraham, Israel and the Nations*, 228–229), the possible chiasmic structure of vv. 2–3 is not. This might be due to the lack of a clear centre, and the fact that b' holds together the two καί clauses rather than separating them to give a list of seven promises. My reading is not dependent on the chiasmus, since the features that it highlights are also confirmed in the development of the narrative (see below).

being made great (c) and him being blessed (c') are integral in the movement towards his role in mediating blessing to all the nations.³²⁸

The first movement in the promise is focused on blessing Abraham (b-c'). Although the promise of the great nation (a) precedes the blessing (b), it is conceptually dependent on it.³²⁹ The blessing reaches both to what precedes and to what follows: it is the enabling source for the promise that Abraham is to be made into a great nation, and that his name is to be made great (c). Thus, Abraham is the antitype of the people of Babel who were building a “great nation” (city) and making their name great (tower) independent of God.

The second movement of the promise is focused on how Abraham will become a blessing (b'-a').³³⁰ Others will “inherit” blessing in relation to him; those who bless him will be blessed by God, while those who curse him will be cursed by God:

God now brings salvation and judgment into history, and man's judgment and salvation will be determined by the attitude he adopts toward this work which God intends to do in history.³³¹

Ultimately, the goal of the promise is that all the families of the earth/nations (φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς)³³² will be blessed in Abraham:

God's action proclaimed in the promise to Abraham is not limited to him and his posterity, but reaches its goal only when it includes all the families of the earth.³³³

Thus, Gen 12:1-3 has introduced the main trajectories for the rest of the narrative to develop: the promise and blessing for the formation of a great nation, and the promise of blessing that is to be mediated to all the nations.³³⁴ My analysis focuses

328 Commentators usually discuss the meaning of making the name great in terms of fame or reputation in connection with royal ideology where the king's reputation is tied to his subjects' greatness (e.g. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 275–276; Westermann, *Genesis*, 2:150). But a focused analysis on what actually happens to Abram's name rather than his fame points to the development of the theme in Gen 17 that supports my view that the great name is part of the movement towards the blessing of all the nations.

329 Cf. Westermann: “The promise [of blessing] is directed to Israel; it is the basis of the people's greatness; and this is to be stated at the beginning” (*Genesis*, 2:149).

330 Von Rad expresses the movement in scope thus: “This blessing concerns Abraham first of all; but it also concerns those on the outside who adopt a definite attitude toward this blessing” (*Genesis*, 155).

331 Ibid.

332 The choice of מִכָּל־עַמֵּי־הָאָרֶץ or φυλαὶ deserves attention. Grüneberg demonstrates how the Hebrew term can be used to refer to a family, tribe or whole nation (*Abraham, Blessing and the Nations*, 185). Since the words refer back to the “description of the world's population” in Gen 10, they most likely refer to large units; “perhaps the nations in units defined by consanguinity” (Ibid.). The main point is “to make clear that the promise concerns other people however their communities are organised” (Ibid., 186).

333 Westermann, *Genesis*, 2:152. Williamson suggests that the language of the international blessing denotes that “[t]he division of the earth's population into clans and nations recounted in Genesis 10 will be ‘reversed’ through the fulfilment of this aspect of the divine promise to Abraham” (*Abraham, Israel and the Nations*, 233). Cassuto is bold in stating that “[w]e have here the first allusion to the concept of universalism inherent in Israel's faith, which would subsequently be developed in the teaching of the prophets” (*Genesis*, 315).

334 Cf. Williamson, *Abraham, Israel and the Nations*, 18. This provides the narrative framework for what follows, although the focus is “mainly on the first stage in the outworking of this programmatic

on how these two are related. In chapter 15, the focus is on the blessing for the formation of the great nation. The first part of the chapter (15:1-6) addresses the question of the heir (15:3-4), the key to unlock the promise of a multitude of descendants (15:5) who will inherit the land promised to Abraham's "seed" (12:7; 13:15-17), which is the focus of the second section of the chapter (15:7-21).³³⁵ The promise of descendants and land address together the issue of the great nation.³³⁶ Although Abraham responds to the promise of descendants with faith (15:6), the promise is not settled here but continues its life in the complex narrative development that intertwines the two dimensions of the promise of blessing (great nation and blessing to all the nations). This is not the case with the promise of land; the "unilateral covenant" concerning the land in 15:7-21 seems to settle the question; it will surely be given to Abraham's posterity, although with a delay.³³⁷ The prophetic divine speech to Abraham in 15:13-16 (ἔκστασις ἐπέπεσεν τῷ Ἀβραμ... καὶ ἐρρέθη πρὸς Ἀβραμ) extends the narrative beyond Abraham to Israel's experience of servitude in Egypt and the exodus,³³⁸ giving the narrative a broader horizon of meaning that supports the discernment of prefigurative elements in it (see 5.3).

The covenant established in chapter 15 developed the promise of the blessing of the great nation, but left the other trajectory of blessing to all the nations untouched, creating an expectation for its later development.³³⁹ This is what we find in chapter 17 where both trajectories of the promised blessing are present.³⁴⁰ Abraham is asked to walk with God and be blameless (17:1) as a prerequisite of the covenant God is about to make with him (17:2a καὶ θήσομαι τὴν διαθήκην μου ἀνά μέσον ἔμοῦ καὶ ἀνά μέσον σοῦ).³⁴¹ The requirement is followed by a promise of increase (17:2b).

agenda: the establishment of a special line of descendants through which God's promises of nationhood and international blessing will find fulfilment" (Ibid., 18–19).

335 Cf. Williamson, *Abraham, Israel and the Nations*, 123.

336 Cf. Ibid., 135.

337 There are no obligations put on Abraham, and only God "walks" between the cut pieces in the ratification ritual (Ibid., 138).

338 Cf. Levenson: "In the oracle amidst the covenant making ceremony (Gen 15:13-16), in sum, YHWH provides Abram with the interpretation of his own life. Abram has not only been living in anticipation of his unconceived and inconceivable progeny; he has also been proleptically living their life in his" (*The Death and Resurrection*, 88).

339 Cf. Williamson, *Abraham, Israel and the Nations*, 140.

340 Cf. Ibid., 143.

341 Williamson addresses the debate on how the "two covenants" of chs. 15 and 17 are related. The options have been to view them as a development of one single covenant (two stages; ratified and reaffirmed; two different accounts of the same covenant), or as two distinct covenants (Ibid., 21). His own reading recognises that the two are "theologically distinct," but related covenants (Ibid., 25, 212). The introduction to the covenant in chapter 17 is given in the future tense/imperfect (θήσομαι / תַּתְּנֶנִּי), and hence does not refer back to the covenant already established (Ibid., 145).

The promissory aspect of the covenant is highlighted, as the initial promise in 17:2 is repeated and further defined: Abraham is to become the “father of a multitude of nations” (17:4 Καὶ ἐγὼ ἰδοὺ ἡ διαθήκη μου μετὰ σοῦ, καὶ ἔσῃ πατὴρ πλήθους ἐθνῶν). Abraham's new name is the “sign” of the promise; Abram becomes Abraham – the “father of multitudes” (17:5).³⁴² The promise is further intensified, as God promises to increase Abraham greatly / make him extremely fruitful (17:6a καὶ αὐξάνω σε σφόδρα σφόδρα / MT אַבְרָם בְּמִאֵד אֶתְּ אַבְרָם); indeed, he is to be made into nations (καὶ θήσω σε εἰς ἔθνη), and kings will proceed from him (17:6b). The intensification of the promise echoes the original blessing on humanity to be fruitful, increase, and rule the earth (Gen 1:28 καὶ γένησθε αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς λέγων Αὐξάνεσθε καὶ πληθύνεσθε καὶ πληρώσατε τὴν γῆν καὶ κατακυριεύσατε αὐτῆς καὶ ἄρχετε / MT וְרַבְרַבְתֶּם וְרַבְרַבְתֶּם וְרַבְרַבְתֶּם וְרַבְרַבְתֶּם וְרַבְרַבְתֶּם וְרַבְרַבְתֶּם וְרַבְרַבְתֶּם וְרַבְרַבְתֶּם וְרַבְרַבְתֶּם וְרַבְרַבְתֶּם). Hence, this promise (as a development of 12:2-3) suggests that in the making of Abraham's name great, he is designated as a “father” of a regenerated humanity that inherits blessing – a “new Adam” for a new humanity.³⁴³ As Abraham's great name is a contrast to the “great name” of the builders of Babel, this promise suggests also that the divided humanity will find common ground and blessing via Abraham.³⁴⁴

The movement in 17:1-6 has been from the one to the many – from Abraham to a multitude of nations. It was focused on the promissory aspect of the covenant and left its mark in the name of Abraham. But then the narrative makes a sudden shift. The covenant is specified to Abraham's “seed” as a perpetual covenant, and includes the promise of a special relationship between the descendants and God, and the possession of the land of Canaan (17:7-8). This aspect of the covenant relates to the making of the “great nation” from Abraham (a development of 12:2 and 15:1-21). But this perpetual covenant with the “great nation” – a people that God specially identifies with – comes with the strict obligation to keep it by circumcising every male (17:9-10). Thus, circumcision becomes the sign of the covenant that identifies “the great nation” (17:11), a people separate from other peoples.³⁴⁵ The covenant is to be marked in the flesh of the

342 The meaning of the name comes from a wordplay in Hebrew between אַבְרָם and אֶתְּ אַבְרָם.

343 Cf. Williamson: “this covenant with Abraham will be ‘the means through which God's original blessing would again be channelled to all mankind’” (*Abraham, Israel and the Nations*, 163). Similarly, Wenham, who also notes that, “whereas Adam and Noah were simply commanded ‘be fruitful’ (qal imperative), God makes Abraham a promise, ‘I shall make you fruitful’ (hiphil)” (*Genesis 16-50*, 22).

344 To fully appreciate the meaning of Abraham being designated the “father of many nations” with the promise that many nations will come out from him, we must wait for its further development in the narrative (see discussion below on 17:16 and 35:11).

345 There is discussion on what is the “sign” role of circumcision. Williamson defines it as a

males (17:13 καὶ ἔσται ἡ διαθήκη μου ἐπὶ τῆς σαρκὸς ὑμῶν), and every male that is not marked by circumcision is outside of this covenant (17:14).

The covenant in chapter 17 presents an apparent tension: Abraham is to be a father of a multitude of nations, but only one special people is to be marked as the covenant people.³⁴⁶ This tension has the potential for distinguishing these two aspects as two covenants: a covenant of promise that relates to all the nations, and a covenant of circumcision that relates to the “great nation.” The double specification for establishing a covenant – first in relation Abraham's role as the father of many nations 17:3 (Καὶ ἐγὼ ἰδοὺ ἡ διαθήκη μου μετὰ σοῦ), and then again in relation to Abraham's “seed” in 17:7 (καὶ στήσω τὴν διαθήκην μου ἀνὰ μέσον ἐμοῦ καὶ ἀνὰ μέσον σοῦ καὶ ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ σπέρματός σου μετὰ σέ) – give some textual and contextual warrant for designating them as two distinct, and yet interrelated covenants.

The tension is present also in the promise of blessing to Sarah. Echoing the promise to Abraham in 17:1-6, Sarai's name is changed to Sarah (17:15). She is explicitly blessed so that she will bear a son, who is in turn to be blessed so that nations and kings of nations will proceed from him (17:16 εὐλογήσω δὲ αὐτήν καὶ δώσω σοι ἐξ αὐτῆς τέκνον καὶ εὐλογήσω αὐτόν, καὶ ἔσται εἰς ἔθνη, καὶ βασιλεῖς ἐθνῶν ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἔσονται).³⁴⁷ Thus, the new Adam receives the new Eve; Abraham and Sarah are together the designated parents of the new humanity that includes the many nations. Since Sarah (via Isaac) is designated the “mother of many nations,” it further defines the meaning of the promise that Abraham will be the “father of many nations:”

cognition sign – a mnemonic devise – and refutes the idea that it could function as an identity marker, since other nations around Israel practised circumcision also, and it would not be a readily perceived sign for the outsiders (*Abraham, Israel and the Nations*, 178–181). I agree that circumcision functions as a reminder for Israel of her covenant, but do not follow that it excludes its function also as a boundary marker, since Gen 17 connects it integrally with the formation of a “special people.” *Jubilees* understands that circumcision is what makes Israel separate from the Gentiles (15:25-34); 15:34 expresses it in the negative: “And they have provoked and blasphemed inasmuch as they have not done the ordinance of this law because they have made themselves like the gentiles to be removed and be uprooted from the land” (English translation from Charlesworth). The focus of separating Israel from other nations is expressed also at Sinai in the introduction to the giving of the Law (Exod 19:5).

346 Cf. Watson referring to Abraham's new name and the sign of circumcision: “the name and the sign are at odds with each other” (*PHF*, 195).

347 The MT has feminine pronouns (וַבְּרַבְרָתֶיהָ וְהָיְתָה לְגוֹיִם מְלֻכִּים עִמָּהּ וְהָיָה), whereas the LXX (Rahlfs), the Vulgate and Syriac have the masculine (BHS apparatus). The Göttingen edition has the feminine pronouns, but lacks convincing reasons for it: “The majority tradition cannot be correct since the only masculine referent in this section is Abraam who is not referred to at all in a verse entirely devoted to Sarra” (John William Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Genesis* [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993], 237). This evaluation misses the focus on Isaac who is known to be masculine even though spoken of as τέκνον that is neuter. These different renderings reflect either fluctuation in the text or the challenge of following the complex moves of the text. Nevertheless, the sense of the text is sufficiently clear: “Sarah is brought into the promise, thus preparing the way for the special place of Isaac over against Ishmael” (Westermann, *Genesis*, 2:267).

One does not grasp the meaning of this promise if one thinks primarily of the Ishmaelites, Edomites, and sons of Keturah (ch. 25.1 ff.); for the descendants about whom these words speak are not to be sought among those who are outside God's covenant, even less since later the same promise is made to Sarah (v.16).³⁴⁸

Hence, it becomes apparent that the sense of the “fatherhood” is something other than physical. Williamson argues that the “father of a multitude of nations” is best understood in terms of Abraham being the “mediator of divine blessing.”³⁴⁹ The metaphorical sense is supported especially when 17:1-6, 15-21 is read as a development of the promise in 12:2-3 where there is a close connection between the making of Abraham's *name* great and him becoming a blessing, eventually to all the nations.

The Genesis narrative continues to develop the theme of the “fatherhood of Abraham” in terms of him “mediating blessing” to the nations. In Gen 18, the content and purpose of the blessing is further defined. The two-fold promise – great nation and all the nations – is reiterated to Abraham (18:18 Αβρααμ δὲ γινόμενος ἔσται εἰς ἔθνος μέγα καὶ πολὺ, καὶ ἐνευλογηθήσονται ἐν αὐτῷ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη τῆς γῆς) in the context of God moving towards Sodom and Gomorrah to inspect their sin and execute judgement (18:16-21). Abraham is allowed insight into the purposes of God, partly because of the promise that Abraham will be a blessing to all the nations (18:17-18); he is drawn into the episode to facilitate initial reflection on his role in mediating blessing. Abraham was chosen to be the servant of God (18:17 Αβρααμ τοῦ παιδός μου) – to be the father of the great nation and the mediator of blessing to all the nations (18:18) – because he will teach his descendants, and they will follow the way of the Lord by

348 Von Rad, *Genesis*, 194–195. Similarly Watson: “The ‘multitude of nations’ cannot be linked with Abraham's children by Hagar or Keturah (Gen.25.1-6, 12-18), for Sarah is identified as the ‘mother of nations’, her own name corresponding to the unanticipated role just as Abraham's does (17.15-16)” (*PHF*, 193).

349 Williamson, *Abraham, Israel and the Nations*, 158. He supports this by tracing the non-biological usage of the term in the Hebrew Bible (e.g. in Gen 45:8 Joseph is the “father of Pharaoh” [that is used in a context of Joseph mediating blessing, i.e. preserving life]; Judg 17:10; 18:19 Micah's personal Levite priest being his “father;” Isa 9:5 the Messiah as “Everlasting Father;” Job 29:16 Job as the “father of the needy”), and the non-literal usage of the term in reference to the fatherhood of God (e.g. Deut 32:6; Isa 63:16; Jer 3:4, 19; Mal 2:10; Ps 68:6; Ps 89:27; 1 Chron 22:10) (*Ibid.*, footnotes 47, 48). From this, Williamson infers that “there is no *a priori* reason to restrict the international community associated with Abraham to those who are able to trace their genealogical lineage back to the patriarch himself” (*Ibid.*). That the metaphorical sense is indicated in Gen 17:4 is further supported by the use of the inseparable preposition **בְּ** in connection with the noun **אָב**. Significantly, “In every other instance where the preposition is joined with **אָב**, a metaphorical concept of fatherhood is undeniably in view” (*Ibid.*, 159). Watson perceives the significance of Abraham being called the father of many nations thus: “It is all the more remarkable that in Genesis 17 the innumerability motif breaks out of this narrative containment, as the descendants like the dust of the earth or the stars in the sky come to be identified not with the people of Israel but with the ‘many nations’ of which Abraham is now said to be the father” (*PHF*, 192). Furthermore, Watson connects the fathering of many nations with the promise of blessing to all the families of the earth in Gen 12:3 (*Ibid.*, 193).

doing righteousness and justice (18:19).³⁵⁰ Wenham notes the significance of this: “its [the promise's] fuller purpose is now stated for the first time: to create a God-fearing community.”³⁵¹ As a servant of God he also intercedes for the salvation of the city (18:22-33), although it is only Lot that is eventually saved because of Abraham (19:29). Nevertheless, this incident reflects the same reality that occasions the initial promise in 12:2-3: humanity is in need of regeneration because of its sin.³⁵²

The next occasion that develops the theme of mediating blessing to all the nations focuses it on Abraham's “seed.” After Abraham has passed the test that required readiness from him to sacrifice Isaac – the son of promise – he receives back not only the son but also a further affirmation of the promises given in chs. 12, 15, 17, and 18:

ἢ μὴν εὐλογῶν εὐλογήσω σε καὶ πληθύνων πληθυνῶ τὸ σπέρμα σου ὡς τοὺς ἀστέρας τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ὡς τὴν ἄμμον τὴν παρὰ τὸ χεῖλος τῆς θαλάσσης, καὶ κληρονομήσει τὸ σπέρμα σου τὰς πόλεις τῶν ὑπεναντίων καὶ ἐνευλογηθήσονται ἐν τῷ σπέρματί σου πάντα τὰ ἔθνη τῆς γῆς, ἀνθ' ὧν ὑπήκουσας τῆς ἐμῆς φωνῆς. (22:17-18).

Echoing the conditional character of the two-fold promise in 17:1-21 and 18:18-19, the promise of blessing that will generate the great nation (a multitude of descendants) is based on Abraham's readiness to sacrifice the son of promise (22:16), and the promise that all the nations will be blessed in Abraham's “seed” is given due to his obedience (22:18).³⁵³ Williamson argues that the covenant established in chapter 17 is finally ratified in 22:15-18 by the solemn oath of God that follows the sacrifice of the ram (cf. covenant ratification by sacrifice in 15:9-18), and is predicated upon the proved “blamelessness” (17:1) of Abraham in his “fear of God.”³⁵⁴ Whether this is a ratification

350 Cf. Williamson, *Abraham, Israel and the Nations*, 182. The LXX highlights the conditional note, whereas the MT underlines that Abraham was chosen for the purpose of teaching and following the ways of the Lord (כִּי יִדְעֻתוּ לִמְעַן אֲשֶׁר יִצְחָק אֶת־בְּנָיו וְאֶת־בֵּיתוֹ אֲתַלְמִדוּ וְשִׁמְרוּ דְרָדְךָ יְהוָה לַעֲשׂוֹת צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט). Nevertheless, also the MT has the conditional note at the end of the verse: לִמְעַן הִבִּיא יְהוָה עַל־אֲבְרָהָם אֶת אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר עָלָיו.

351 Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 50. Bruckner further states that God's purpose in involving Abraham “as a participant in determining justice in this case” is related to training Abraham so that he “will learn to teach this ‘way’ of determining justice and living righteously” (*Implied Law*, 128).

352 Both the Babel (Gen 11:5-9) and Sodom episodes have God “coming down” to see the situation, and execute judgment on sinful humanity.

353 Moberly points out the significance that this is not the first time the promise has been given to Abraham: “Abraham by his obedience has not qualified to be the recipient of blessing, because the promise of blessing had been given to him already” (“The Earliest Commentary on the Akedah,” *Vetus Testamentum* 38 [1988]: 320). He then proposes a creative way to perceive the role of Abraham's obedience in the fulfilment of the promise of blessing: “A promise which previously was grounded solely in the will and purpose of YHWH is transformed so that it is now grounded both in the will of YHWH and in the obedience of Abraham. It is not that the divine promise has become contingent upon Abraham's obedience, but that Abraham's obedience has been incorporated into the divine promise. Henceforth Israel owes its existence not just to YHWH but also to Abraham.” (Ibid., 320–321.)

354 Williamson, *Abraham, Israel and the Nations*, 245–247.

of the covenant initiated in ch. 17 or its further development, this final reaffirmation of the promise of blessing to all the nations bringstogether the two dimensions of the promise in 12:2-3, and the covenants in 15 and 17: all the nations are to be blessed ἐν τῷ σπέρματί σου.³⁵⁵

The further development of the theme of mediating blessing to all the nations in Genesis continues to tie it closely with the “seed” of Abraham – the people of God. When the Abrahamic promise is conveyed to Jacob in 35:11(εἶπεν δὲ αὐτῷ ὁ θεὸς Ἐγὼ ὁ θεὸς σου· ἀνξάνου καὶ πληθύνου· ἔθνη καὶ συναγωγὰ ἐθνῶν ἔσονται ἐκ σοῦ, καὶ βασιλεῖς ἐκ τῆς ὀσφύος σου ἐξελεύσονται), it clearly echoes the promise in 17:6. The striking similarity in context and content between 35:10-12 and 17:4-6, 16 invites them to be read together.³⁵⁶ The peculiar designation that Jacob is to give “birth” to a “gathering” of nations (συναγωγὰ ἐθνῶν)³⁵⁷ suggests to Chee-Chiew Lee that “both the physical descendants of Jacob as a nation and a multitude of nations will be associated with Israel”³⁵⁸ This, together with the idea of Israel' expansion to the whole world in Gen 28:13-14,³⁵⁹ opens the possibility that the role of Abraham and his “seed”

355 Space does not permit the exploration of the potential in Genesis to facilitate Paul's move to refer to Christ as the singular seed of Abraham (Gal 3:16). I offer here some pointers for further investigation. The possibility of reading the “seed” in 22:18 with a singular sense is already opened by the singular pronominal suffix in the Hebrew word for enemies יִצְחָק in Gen 22:17 (see T Desmond Alexander, “Further Observations on the Term ‘Seed’ in Genesis,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 48 [1997]: 363–67; and Williamson, *Abraham, Israel and the Nations*, 248–250). Thus, the one “seed,” who is promised victory over his enemies (22:17b), is distinguished from the manifold “seed” in 22:17a. If this is so, then the blessing for all the nations that follows is most naturally tied to this one “seed” of Abraham. The singular “seed” reading in 22:18 receives support from the allusion to this verse in Ps 72:17 that refers to a royal individual. This royal tone is not foreign to the purview of Genesis. The victorious “seed” in 22:17b can already be viewed as looking forward to a royal figure, and the promises in 17:6, 16 refer to kings coming from Abraham and Sarah/Isaac. Furthermore, in Gen 49:10, the tribe of Judah is identified with the prospect of royal lineage that has implications for the nations (see Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 476–478) that opens the possibility for a messianic interpretation: “all at least agree that this line is predicting the rise of the Davidic monarchy and the establishment of the Israelite empire, if not the coming of a greater David. And if the primary reference is to David, traditional Jewish and Christian exegetes would agree that like other Davidic promises it has a greater fulfilment in the Messiah.” [Ibid., 478].

356 Cf. Von Rad, *Genesis*, 334; and Westermann, *Genesis*, 2:552. Jacob's name change to Israel just prior to the promise resembles the case with Abraham. Also the name used of God (יְהוָה) is the same.

357 In the first instance of this promise in 28:4 and the recounting of this promise by Jacob to Joseph in Gen 48:4, the wording in Hebrew is different (לְקַהֵל עַמִּים), whereas the LXX uses the same designation in all the references. None of these are typical references to the twelve tribes of Israel.

358 Chee-Chiew Lee, *The Blessing of Abraham, the Spirit, and Justification in Galatians: Their Relationship and Significance for Understanding Paul's Theology* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2013), 85. In her earlier work, Lee formulated this connection even stronger: “As early as in Genesis, ‘Israel’ as the ‘people of God’ is portrayed as consisting of the physical descendants of Jacob – the nation of Israel – and a multitude of nations” (Chee-Chiew Lee, “יִצְחָק in Genesis 35:11 and the Abrahamic Promise of Blessings for the Nations,” *JETS* 52 [2009]: 474). Lee also proposes that 35:11 has an eschatological dimension, which is captured in the prophets' vision of the nations' gathering to the restored Israel (Ibid., 474–480). I develop this dimension more in ch. 4, and the potential it opens up for Paul in chs. 5 and 6.

359 Scott notes Gen 28:13-14 as an example of OT texts where “the land promised as an inheritance to Abraham and his seed extends beyond the borders of Canaan to include the whole world” (*Paul and the Nations*, 62–63). The idea of Israel spreading beyond its borders suggests the nations' inclusion in it.

in mediating blessing to all the nations ultimately consists of the nations' inclusion in God's people. To follow the implications of the theological potential that this contains for Paul's vision for Gentile inclusion in his letter to the Galatians must wait for the exploration of how this theme is developed in Isaiah's vision of restoration (see ch. 4), but it also requires a focused inquiry on the identity of the people of God that the contrast between Ishmael and Isaac highlights. It is to this that I turn next.

3.5 Circumcision and the Identity of the People of God

I have now offered close readings of most of the material in the Abraham narrative. Based on that work, I engage here a discussion on the topic that is of key interest to Paul in his letter to the Galatians: circumcision and the identity of the people of God.

Gen 17 is the key chapter for this discussion. I have followed the movements of Gen 17 in sections 3.3.2 and 3.4, and demonstrated that it is woven with cross-stitches; there is no simple line that defines the covenant of circumcision. The people that would comprise the covenant people are to be counted from Isaac (17:19, 21), but Ishmael is also in the story. In 17:18, Abraham asks the hermeneutically key question that Ishmael could live before God, i.e. would Ishmael not do? The promise of Isaac, and thus the continuation of the covenant, seemed impossible. Hence the laughter and request that Ishmael would do. In response, while removing Ishmael from the covenant, God also describes Ishmael's future in terms that come strikingly close to the description of the intended covenant people from Isaac. He is to become into a "great nation" and a father of 12 tribes (17:20). He is also circumcised according to the requirements of the covenant. In fact, his circumcision is emphasised more than Abraham's (Ishmael's circumcision is recounted three times in vv. 23, 25, 26; cf. Abraham's only twice in vv. 24 and 26). And yet he does not count! He is excluded from the covenant, and later expelled from Abraham's house so that there would be no mistake as to who is the heir to the Abrahamic promise of *the* "great nation" (21:12).

The tension in the narrative concerning the role of Ishmael as the "circumcised outsider" has evoked differing explanations. Williamson approaches the problem by rephrasing it: "perhaps the question we should be asking is not: 'In what sense was

Cf. Rom 4:13-18 that reflects on Abraham being the "father of many nations," and interprets Abraham/his "seed" having received a promise that he would inherit the "cosmos."

Ishmael excluded from the covenant?’ but rather, ‘In what sense did this covenant relate uniquely to Isaac?’”³⁶⁰ For Williamson, the key is the “perpetual covenant” with Isaac. Hence, Ishmael “was himself included within the covenant community,” but “this covenantal status was not explicitly extended to his progeny, as is clearly so in the case of Isaac.”³⁶¹ The weakness in this view is that Ishmael himself is not in fact regarded as part of the covenant community, as his expulsion demonstrates.

Thiessen offers another solution that perceives timing as the central point of the circumcision legislation: Ishmael is circumcised wrongly in his thirteenth year and Isaac at the proper eighth day.³⁶² Furthermore, Thiessen argues that the circumcision legislation is a priestly author's insertion into the narrative with a specific concern:

Through the category of sacred time, the priestly writer solves the problem created by according covenantal significance to circumcision in a region in which Israel was confronted by the existence of non-Israelite circumcision. The reference to Ishmael's circumcision is not a mistake that unwittingly *undermines the rite's covenantal importance*; rather, it serves as the author's attempt to address the well known fact that non-Israelites, in particular those thought to be descendants of Ishmael, also practice circumcision, and to distinguish their circumcision from Israelite circumcision.³⁶³

Thus, Thiessen recognises that Ishmael's circumcision can potentially “undermine the rite's covenantal importance.” To avoid that conclusion, Ishmael's circumcision must be invalidated on the basis that it does not meet the eighth-day requirement. But the argument is not strong. There is no indication in the narrative that it was wrong to circumcise Ishmael and the other male members of Abraham's household as a response to the given legislation. In fact, the opposite is true; it would have been wrong not to circumcise them! Never in the narrative is Ishmael's wrong-dated circumcision the reason for his expulsion.³⁶⁴ Another weakness in the argument is the fact that Abraham is also circumcised at a wrong age: 99! Thiessen admits that

no completely satisfactory explanation for this difficulty exists, presumably the priestly writer was not greatly concerned with this problem: no one questioned whether Abraham belonged within the covenant.³⁶⁵

³⁶⁰ Williamson, *Abraham, Israel and the Nations*, 161.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 162.

³⁶² Thiessen recognises that the timing of circumcision is not the only thing that separates the two sons, but it is the factor that is decisive, since the other aspects are “no fault of his own” (offspring of Hagar, the Egyptian slave; his birth “issues from the uncircumcised penis of *Abram*”), and cannot be remedied (*Contesting Conversion*, 39). This is simply contradictory. Ishmael's circumcision in the thirteenth year is also “no fault of his own;” it is done at the moment the legislation is given.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, 35.

³⁶⁴ If the dating of the circumcision is integral to its validity, it would also invalidate the circumcision of the whole generation of Israelites who conquered the promised land (Joshua 5:1-8).

³⁶⁵ Thiessen, *Contesting Conversion*, 38.

This wobble in the argument reveals the weakness in the approach: it is asking after the priestly writer's concerns and not looking for narrative intent.³⁶⁶

Syrén approaches the problem/potential posed by Ishmael's circumcision similarly to Thiessen, but with different conclusions. He perceives an inherent tension between Ishmael's exclusion (17:19-21) and inclusion (17:23-27).³⁶⁷ Both represent a “retrojection of later conditions in Israel back into the lifetime of Abraham.”³⁶⁸ The exclusive material “would then be an understandable reaction by a redactor concerned about the purity of Israel,” whereas the inclusive material would represent concern for circumcision as an absolute prerequisite for being counted among the true children of Abraham. Through circumcision the marginal groups were allowed into the religious community of Israel.³⁶⁹

Syrén then postulates that these concerns would have been acute

in the period of the restoration, in which the many conflicts between the various strands within the Jewish community are given different emphases in different biblical books. ... The question of national identity became urgent.³⁷⁰

The question of national identity was not only forced by foreign influence, but also by the reality of the different groups within Israel: the people who remained in the land of Judah and those outside in exile/diaspora.³⁷¹ Whether or not this explains the genesis of the Ishmael tradition,³⁷² Syrén's analysis demonstrates the potential of the Ishmael material for defining the identity of Israel. Thus, although Syrén operates mainly within a source-critical framework, he comes close to my understanding of the narrative intent for the role of Ishmael: “[i]t is through the two sons of Abraham that the division will take place that is necessary for the nation of Israel to emerge.”³⁷³ This emergence of Israel is aided by the comparison with Ishmael:

The comparison with Israel is underlined further by the prediction in v. 20 that ‘a great nation’ will arise from Ishmael and that he will be ‘a father of twelve princes’ – just as Isaac will father a

366 Thiessen presents a possible reading of the material, although I do not find it convincing on the level of narrative intent. The reading he proposes is represented in some strands of Jewish tradition, especially in the book of *Jubilees*, which Thiessen understands as being written as a reaction to the Hellenizers of Judaism during the Hasmonean period that opened the possibility for Gentiles to “convert” to Judaism via the rite of circumcision: “For the author of *Jubilees*, however, conversion was impossible. *Jubilees* links law observance inextricably with birth and therefore with genealogy, insisting that eighth-day circumcision is the principal indicator of Jewish identity” (Ibid., 85; see discussion in pgs. 67-86.)

367 Syrén, *The Forsaken First-Born*, 40–41.

368 Ibid.

369 Ibid.

370 Ibid., 58. The book of Ezra is, for Syrén, an example of a *halachic* application of Ishmael's expulsion in its concern to preserve the purity of Israel when challenged by intermarriage (Ibid., 61–65).

371 Syrén, *The Forsaken First-Born*, 58–59.

372 “I conclude that the Sitz im Leben of an ‘Ishmael theology’ would have been the struggles of the Jewish community soon after the exile” (Ibid., 62).

373 Ibid., 37.

nation of twelve tribes through his son Jacob. ... Ishmael will form a second and separate nation beside Israel; an 'Israel', as it were, without a Promised Land.³⁷⁴

Furthermore, Syrén suggests that the story of Hagar and Ishmael in the wilderness (21:14-21) “evokes memories of Israel's own past” in the desert wanderings.³⁷⁵

Nevertheless, the distinction between Ishmael and Isaac remains: “Israel's time in the desert was only a station on the way from Egypt to the Promised Land; Ishmael was to remain in the desert, to make it his home.”³⁷⁶

I agree with Syrén that the narrative gives Ishmael the role of contrast, but differ with him as to the point of the contrast. I do not perceive the contrast in terms of the Land, but in terms of how the people of God are generated and sustained. It is a contrast that is designed to highlight the theological understanding of the identity and character of God's people. Ishmael represents an alternative way of construing what it means to be “Israel.” If Ishmael would do, as Abraham asked, he would represent descendants according to “flesh:” he is Abraham's physical son (emphasised in 21:13), he is circumcised (emphasised in 17:23-26), and he fathers a great nation. He is everything else except not being Isaac, and the one thing that separates Ishmael from Isaac is a different mother, and thus a different manner of birth. The difference is in what generates the two sons: a “natural” arrangement that relies on human potential, or an outrageous promise that is totally dependent on divine performance. Ishmael does not represent the character of the people that God was generating – the *Israel of God*. That central characteristic is only highlighted in relation to Isaac – the child of promise. The first signpost for this was given at 11:30 where Sarah's barrenness alerts the reader to expect something that transcends the natural. Levenson's reflection on the character of God's people captures the significance of this:

Just before the story of the Tower of Babel, we find a table listing the seventy peoples who emerged from Noah's three sons. That Israel, which emerges only afterward, is not one of these early nations is a matter of the highest significance, underlining the fundamentally different character of the new nation, not only born later but emerging as a result of a highly unlikely promise. ... the new people comes into existence only through God's promise to Abram, a childless man with a barren wife. Israel was never secular, so to speak; it never had an identity unconnected to the God who called it into existence in the beginning and who has graciously sustained it ever after. ... the Hebrew Bible consistently assumes a unique dependence of the special people upon God.³⁷⁷

³⁷⁴ Ibid., 37–38.

³⁷⁵ Ibid., 49.

³⁷⁶ Ibid., 50.

³⁷⁷ Levenson, *Inheriting Abraham*, 21–22.

But, as Levenson continues his reflections, he ends up with a paradox:

That Abram is commanded to break with his father at the beginning of his story – and to give up his son at the end of it ... – tells us that the ‘great nation’ of which he is the promised progenitor is not simply another ethnic group, to be added to the seventy nations cataloged in Genesis 10. Instead, it is something more like a religious community, a collective founded on shared faith rather than on descent. Yet the fact that the promised heir, from whom this nation is to descend, comes into being not from Abram's preaching – for he preaches nothing in Genesis – but from his own loins suggests something very different. It suggests that the ‘great nation’ is *not* a community founded upon a creed or a religious experience. Rather, it is a natural family. ... a natural family with a supernatural mandate.³⁷⁸

It is precisely because of this apparent tension in the narrative – a natural family yet not just another ethnic group – that the interpretation of the theology of the people of God in light of the contrast between Isaac and Ishmael offers clarity to reach beyond the tension to the essence of what characterises the true people of God. Ishmael represents natural descent and even conformity to the covenant requirement of circumcision, but yet the people of God are not to be identified with him. Although Levenson is correct in that the people do not emerge out of Abraham's preaching, he misses what ultimately differentiates Isaac from Ishmael: promise and faith. Isaac is generated by the power of the promise, to which Abraham's faith is the only response that receives divine approval (15:6), and also the reaffirmation of the promise for the emergence of a people whose identity is to include all the peoples in the blessing (22:15-18; 35:11; see 3.4). This is the “Isaac-people” – the “children of laughter” – who are a re-created humanity brought into existence and sustained by the power of God's promise.

3.6 Conclusions

The aim of this chapter has been to explore the theological potential in the Abraham narrative with regard to the themes that are of interest to Paul in Galatians. The analysis has not been a comprehensive exploration of the meaning potential in the Abraham narrative, nor has it included a comparative study of different Jewish readings. I have simply attempted to follow the lead of Paul's special interests to explore how the text of Genesis resonates with Paul's convictions. The purpose has been to gain material for a robust and in-depth intertextual reading of Gal 4:21-5:1 in ch. 6.

³⁷⁸ Ibid., 23–24.

The Abraham narrative emerges from the context of the aftermath of the tower of Babel. The tower of Babel represents a rebellious human attempt to build community (city, tower, great name) independent of God. This is judged by God and results in further alienation – peoples are separated. The call of Abraham in 12:1-3 launches an opposite project to that at Babel. *God* begins with Abraham a new creative act to generate a new humanity: he is going to bless Abraham, and to generate a great nation out of him that would ultimately mediate blessing to all the nations. Although the narrative in Gen 11-22 is about Abraham, the central theme in the call and promise are the descendants. The promise of descendants raises the question of the heir: who is going to inherit the promised blessing to Abraham (15:1-6; 17; 21)? Thus, it is the birth of Abraham's two sons – potential heirs – that forms the theological nexus of the narrative.

The births of the two sons are crafted into the narrative to provide a contrast. The main contrast between Ishmael and Isaac is the manner of their births. Both are sons of Abraham, both are circumcised, and both are involved in the formation of alternative “great nations.” But the one thing that separates them is their different mothers. Ishmael is born out of Hagar, Sarah's Egyptian handmaid. Isaac is born from Abraham's wife Sarah who is barren and beyond the age of childbirth. The birth of Ishmael does not require divine intervention. The birth of Isaac is totally an act of God; he is generated by the power of the promise. The narrative highlights the contrast intentionally, and presents it as divinely orchestrated. Since God had closed Sarah's womb (16:2), the need for Hagar arose. When Hagar and the son in her womb could have been lost from sight, God brings them back. In fact, Ishmael is kept in the narrative until the climactic moment on the mountain in Moriah. The reason is to display on the mountain what is the means and purpose of God in generating a new humanity.

One aspect in the process of generating a new humanity is Abraham's faith that is defined in relation to the promise of a son. Both of the two central texts about Abraham's response to God (15:1-6; 22:1-18) suggest that faith is about dependence on the sufficiency of God. This quality is also highlighted by means of contrast. The birth of Ishmael, on the one hand, does not require dependence on God. The birth of Isaac, on the other hand, is totally dependent on God. Furthermore, the birth of Isaac does not only require dependence on God, it generates it. The promise of Isaac is deliberately delayed to the point of complete exclusion of any human potential in its fulfilment. The absurdity of the promise evokes laughter. The laughter signals the recognition of the

insufficiency of human potential to produce what God wants. The priority of the promise over faith highlights the need for the emptying of the human potential in order for it to be realigned. Isaac's birth is not generated by faith. In fact, the narrative demonstrates Abraham's lack of faith just prior to the birth of Isaac. Abraham has no merit to claim in the birth of the son of promise. The promise evokes Abraham's faith that is ready for the test on the mountain in Moriah. Abraham's experience of the power of God's absurd promise prepares him for the paradox of the command to offer Isaac. Abraham demonstrates faith – dependence on the sufficiency of God – in obedience.

The promise to Abraham has two dimensions: the formation of the great nation and blessing to all the nations (12:2-3). Genesis 15 focuses on the promise of the great nation, whereas chapter 17 develops both dimensions. The promissory aspect of the covenant in chapter 17 focuses on Abraham's name change that signifies his role as the “father of a multitude of nations,” which is best taken as a metaphorical designation of his role as the mediator of blessing. This interpretation was already indicated in the initial giving of the promise where the making of Abraham's name great leads to him becoming a blessing (12:2-3). I followed the development of this promise in 17:4-6, 16; 18:18; 22:15-18 and also 35:11, and argued that the promise of blessing to all the nations is intertwined with the promise of the great nation. In fact, the blessing can be understood in terms of the nations' inclusion in the great nation – the people of God.

Isaac and Ishmael offer a contrast to capture the theology of the people of God. Ishmael represents an alternative way to construe the identity of the “great nation” (16:10; 17:20; 21:13). The alternative view focuses on physical descent and circumcision. But the fact that Ishmael is excluded from the covenant people relativises the importance of physical descent and circumcision as the ultimate means of identifying the people of God. If they were not sufficient for Ishmael to be included, they cannot be the essence, and thus can possibly be relativised. This has the potential for the opening of the covenant to people outside of physical lineage to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It also opens the possibility that circumcision is not the ultimate mark of the people included. What matters more is to be like Isaac. Isaac represents the “Israel of God” – the people that is generated by the power of God's promise. Although Isaac is also Abraham's son, he is more a child of promise. Abraham could not father him; it was an act of God. Sarah could not give him birth; God opened Sarah's womb, and thus revealed the creative power of his promise – the people of God are a “new creation.”

Chapter 4. The Theological Potential in Isaiah's Vision of Restoration

4.1 The Method

The role of the Abraham narrative in Paul's conception of the gospel is made very visible in the argument of Galatians. This is not the case with the book of Isaiah. However, increasing attention has been given to the role the book of Isaiah plays in Paul's sense of mission and his theology in general,³⁷⁹ and also in the letter to the Galatians in particular.³⁸⁰ Paul quotes Isaiah (54:1) only once in Galatians (4:27), but I understand, together with Hays and Harmon, that this is only the tip of the iceberg as far as the presence of the book of Isaiah in Galatians is concerned. Yet to discern the Isaianic influence in Paul's theological vision and logic in Galatians, it is best to begin from where it is explicit, and move from there to where it is more allusive. Thus, I focus my analysis of the theological potential in Isaiah's vision of restoration on Isa 54:1.

As was the case with the Abraham narrative in ch. 3, so also now I approach the text of Isaiah with Pauline interests. This means that I explore the meaning potential of Isa 54:1 for Pauline application. Accordingly, I select and analyse themes that are related to Isa 54:1 in its immediate context and that are of interest to Pauline motifs in Galatians. The purpose is to build a foundation for a robust and in-depth intertextual reading of Gal 4:21-5:1 in ch. 6. My focus also limits the scope of my study; I do not engage in a comparative analysis between Paul's use of Isaiah and other Jewish interpretations. To be sure, there were many ways in which Second Temple Jews were reading Isaiah, but, within the constraints of this thesis, I cannot widen my focus to analyse the text with other Jewish interests in mind. I only mention below a few examples of other Jewish appropriations of the meaning potential in Isaiah.

The book of Isaiah does not play a major role for Philo, but, with a rare reference to Isa 54:1, Philo perceives that the barren woman who was made fruitful has an allegorical level of meaning that is about the purification of the soul (*Praem.* 158-160). Shum's study of *Paul's Use of Isaiah in Romans* includes an analysis of the use of Isaiah in the Sibylline Oracles and the Dead Sea scrolls.³⁸¹ He gives examples of the use

³⁷⁹ E.g. Richard B. Hays, *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel's Scripture* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 2005), 25–49; Wagner, *Heralds*; Wilk, *Die Bedeutung*.

³⁸⁰ E.g. Harmon, *She Must*.

³⁸¹ Shiu-Lun Shum, *Paul's Use of Isaiah in Romans*, WUNT 2. 156, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck,

of Isaiah in the Third and Fifth books of the Sibylline Oracles that originate most likely from the Jewish community in Alexandria. One of the most prevalent themes from Isaiah that Shum detects in both books is related to divine punishment of the wicked (e.g. Isa 14:12-15 are alluded to in Sib.Or.3:100, 360; 5:72; and Isa 66:16 is alluded to in Sib.Or.3:287, 542-544, 672-673; 5:375-380),³⁸² but the Third book contains also allusions to the Isaianic eschatological vision of peace, which is understood by the Sibyl in terms of cessation of wars and a state of social and political stability (e.g. Isa 11:6-9 and 65:25 alluded to in Sib.Or.3:788-795), and allusions to Isaianic material about a positive fate for the nations (e.g. Isa 49:1 and 51:5 are alluded to in lines 710-731).³⁸³ The book of Isaiah had an important role for the Qumran community, which is evidenced by the 20-24 manuscripts that have been found that incorporate the book of Isaiah wholly or partially, and the numerous explicit and implicit references to it in the other writings.³⁸⁴ The Qumran community appropriated Isaiah for the construction of their sectarian identity, and for the role they believed to have in preparing the final visitation of the Lord (e.g. the use of Isa 40:3 in 1QS 8:1-16a [quoted in 8:14]).³⁸⁵ Thus, themes of judgement and destruction from Isaiah were applied to other nations as well as to non-sectarian Jews (e.g. Isa 24:17-18 in CD 4:13-20),³⁸⁶ whereas themes about the faithful remnant were applied to the sectarians themselves (e.g. Isa 11:11 in 1QH 14:8).³⁸⁷ Also, the messianic passage from Isa 11:1-5 influenced the sectarians' expectations concerning the coming of Israel's Messiah who would lead them as the "Sons of Light" to fight the eschatological battle, in which they would be vindicated and the unfaithful Jews and foreign nations would be punished (e.g. 1QSb, 4Q285, 4QpIsa^a).³⁸⁸ These examples highlight the variety of ways, in which Jewish readers appropriated the potential in Isaiah with different interests and agendas. In the following, I discuss my approach to exploring the theological potential of Isaiah's vision of restoration, as encapsulated by Isa 54:1, for Paul's application in Gal 4:21-5:1.

One of the main weaknesses in analysing the impact of Paul's quotation of Isa 54:1 in Gal 4:27 has been the under-appreciation or inadequate analysis of the

2002), 38-172.

382 Ibid., 54-95

383 Ibid., 54-80, 93-95. Shum accredits the difference between the outlook of the Third and Fifth books to the different socio-political situations they originate from (Ibid., 94-95).

384 Ibid., 102.

385 Ibid., 111-116.

386 Ibid., 127-129, 171

387 Ibid., 151, 171.

388 Ibid., 171.

immediate and thematic context of Isa 54:1. Eastman, Harmon and Jobes have charted the way towards a more engaged analysis of the Isaianic context.³⁸⁹ Jobes has done most in incorporating a thematic dimension in her intertextual approach, but her emphasis on locating the meaning in the intertextual space *in between the related texts* (Gen, Isa and Gal) points out both the promise and potential weakness in the intertextual approach. The promise is evident; forging connections between the scriptural texts and Paul's text provides a rich theological matrix for configuring Paul's understanding of the Christ-event and its implications. The weakness is more subtle; it resides in the temptation to develop their meaning potential in the space *between the texts* without a thorough analysis of the interacting *texts themselves*. This can result, on the one hand, in a perception of discrepancy between Paul's use of the texts of Scripture and their original context, i.e. deeming Paul's reading as radical or as “extraordinary hermeneutical inversion.”³⁹⁰ This runs the risk of having missed the potential of the text for Paul's “radical” reading. On the other hand, a lack of depth in the analysis of the scriptural intertexts can also lead to readings that smooth the connections between the texts of Scripture and Paul's text without engaging the difficulties the material presents to Pauline application (e.g. Isaiah's vision of Gentile inclusion is not only positive), or without reflecting on the process of how the potential in the intertexts is re-appropriated (e.g. how the historical experience of exile becomes a matrix for Paul's theological reflection). To avoid these weaknesses in the intertextual approach, I have undertaken an in-depth analysis of the Abraham narrative in ch. 3, and focus here on a thematic analysis of the Isaianic vision of restoration. Furthermore, I analyse in ch. 5 Paul's hermeneutical practice, and reflect on the dynamics in Paul's re-appropriation of the potential in these intertexts. In analysing the theological potential that Paul's quotation of Isa 54:1 connects to, I am guided by the conviction that only a step by step approach that first identifies the themes that are present in the immediate context of Isa 54:1, and then performs an analysis of these themes in the *intratextual dynamic within the book of Isaiah* can facilitate a nuanced handling of the material, and elucidate the possibilities Isa 54:1 offers for Paul's application. I now explain my method in more detail.

389 Eastman, *Recovering*; Harmon, *She Must*; Karen H. Jobes, “Jerusalem, Our Mother: Metalepsis and Intertextuality in Galatians 4:21-31,” *WTJ*, September 1, 1993. I discuss the works of Harmon and Jobes more in 5.4.

390 Hays, *Echoes*, 120. Christopher Stanley, who focuses on the rhetorical effect of Paul's quotations, makes a stronger claim that anyone in Paul's audience who would have had the capabilities to check the context of the quotations would have been unconvinced by Paul's argument based on those texts (*Arguing with Scripture*, 125–126, 130–135).

Hays duly notes that Paul was not aware of the modern critical division of Isaiah³⁹¹ (1-39, 40-55, 56-66) that has often caused the reading of the sections as separate works.³⁹² The focus on the literary unity of Isaiah gives emphasis to internal connections within the book. Accordingly, it fosters the use of synchronic analysis that regards the text as a coherent unity and looks for suitable intertexts (internally and externally), not to demonstrate dependency of the text on other material (diachronic reading), but to practice interpretation, in which meaning emerges from the connections between the intertexts – the intertextual matrix.³⁹³ The connections are not established by simple linguistic techniques alone (synonyms and parallel expressions need to be accounted for also), but by a careful analysis of the content and function of the textual units in the book.³⁹⁴ Laato summarises the synchronic approach thus:

a prophetic book is understood as a contexture – a collection of different texts – which has three qualities: contextuality (the place of the text in the collection), intertextuality (the relationship between the texts in the collection), and the resultant texture of resonance and meaning.³⁹⁵

My analysis of the context of Isa 54:1 is synchronic, aiming to discern what *intratextual* resonances (I use the term *intratextual* to denote textual connections *within* the book of Isaiah) are heard in the themes of the vision of restoration that are derived from the immediate context of Isa 54:1. I first determine and analyse the immediate context of Isa 54:1, and then proceed to the thematic intratextual analysis. I analyse Paul's use of Isaiah primarily based on the critical edition of the LXX (Göttingen), but also compare the LXX with the MT to note when there are important implications of following either the Greek or the Hebrew text (see 3.1). In approaching Isaiah with Pauline interests, I do not attempt to give the “right reading” or the historically

391 Hays, *Conversion*, 26. Also, John Sawyer points out that there was only “one Isaiah” until the 19th century, and hence “it can be misleading to talk, as many modern writers do, about Paul's use of ‘Deutero-Isaiah’ or ‘the Servant Songs’ or the ‘Isaiah Apocalypse’ or the like” (*The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the History of Christianity* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996], 22–23). However, scholarship on Isaiah has a growing trend to approach it as a unified whole rather than a strictly divided collection of different sources. For examples and discussion on this trend, see H. G. M. Williamson, “Recent Issues in the Study of Isaiah,” in *Interpreting Isaiah: Issues and Approaches*, ed. David G. Firth and H. G. M. Williamson (Nottingham; Downers Grove: Apollos; IVP Academic, 2009); H. G. M. Williamson, *Variations on a Theme: King, Messiah and Servant in the Book of Isaiah*, Didsbury lectures 1997 (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1998); John F. A. Sawyer, “Daughter of Zion and Servant of the Lord in Isaiah: A Comparison,” *JSOT* 44 (1989): 89–107. Even with increasing attention to literary unity, it is still mostly recognised that underlying the final form of the text of Isaiah is a complex process of compilation.

392 Antti Laato describes the historical-critical view of Isaiah thus: “*different* texts from *different* historical periods composed by *different* authors and edited in *different* redactional layers of the book by *different* redactors” (“*About Zion I Will Not Be Silent*”: *The Book of Isaiah as an Ideological Unity*, *Coniectanea biblica* 44 [Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1998], 2).

393 Laato, *About Zion*, 7.

394 *Ibid.*, 5.

395 *Ibid.*, 7.

understood “original meaning” of Isaiah, but aim to elucidate the potential of the text that is relevant when reading Paul.

Before executing the above method, I discuss two questions that relate to the validity of performing an intratextual thematic analysis of Isaiah 54:1 to elucidate Paul's engagement with Isaiah. First, did Paul read Isaiah as a whole? The collected force of the analysis of Wilk, Wagner, Hays, and Harmon with their lists of citations, allusions, echoes and thematic parallels convincingly demonstrate that Paul is aware of and uses texts from the whole book of Isaiah. Hence, it is plausible that Paul is drawing from the potential of the whole book of Isaiah, as it contributes to the themes of the vision of restoration in the context of Isa 54:1. But, second, how plausible is it that Paul's citing of Isa 54:1 evokes a thematic intratextual matrix? In other words, do we have evidence for Paul's thematic reading of Scripture? Hays argues that Paul's “explicit citations are merely the tip of the iceberg; they point to a larger mass just under the surface, Paul's comprehensive construal of Isaiah as a coherent witness to the gospel.”³⁹⁶ For Hays, this construal takes the shape of a narrative: “Paul reads Isaiah as having narrated beforehand the events that have at last been set in motion in Paul's generation through the death and resurrection of Jesus.”³⁹⁷ Paul's narrative construal of Isaiah strongly suggests thematic awareness. Wagner is on the same lines:

Paul's use of Isa. 54:1 reveals an awareness of the function of this passage in its wider setting in Isaiah. Again, it is the wider contours of Isaiah's prophecies, and not just particular phrases or sentences, that have shaped Paul's understanding and presentation of the Gospel in important ways.³⁹⁸

Horbury develops this contextual awareness more specifically in terms of Paul reading passages together that are thematically connected:

Paul's Isaianic Zion testimonies in Gal 4.27 and Rom. 11.26-7 are unlikely to have been quoted without awareness of other similar oracles; each will have evoked for him not just a single passage, but a group of Zion oracles, especially those in the later chapters of Isaiah, and the whole biblical topic of Zion.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁶ Hays, *Conversion*, 27. C. H. Dodd already argued that New Testament authors, Paul included, used quotations as pointers to the larger originating context: “These sections were understood as *wholes*, and particular verses or sentences were quoted from them rather as pointers to the whole context than as constituting testimonies in and for themselves” (*According to the Scriptures: The Sub-Structure of New Testament Theology* [London: Nisbet, 1952], 126; emphasis original).

³⁹⁷ Hays, *Conversion*, 45.

³⁹⁸ J. Ross Wagner, “Isaiah in Romans and Galatians,” in *Isaiah in the New Testament*, ed. Steve Moyise and M. J. J. Menken (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2005), 130. Sawyer also suggests that, if there is evidence of one passage being fundamental to Paul (he suggests Isa 49:1-13 “or the like”), “this means that anything else Isaiah said – in the whole book that bears his name – was probably read or remembered or interpreted in that light, and given special significance” (*The Fifth Gospel*, 23).

³⁹⁹ William Horbury, *Messianism among Jews and Christians: Twelve Biblical and Historical*

Hence, there is a sense that Paul can read Scripture, including Isaiah, thematically.

Paul's thematic reading of Scripture is readily perceived in places where there is concentrated focus on texts of Scripture. The letter to the Romans is one prime example where texts from different books of the scriptures of Israel are connected, as they relate to the same theme. Wagner has analysed Paul's connection of Isaiah and Deuteronomy on three occasions in Romans (10:19-21; 11:8; 15:9-12), and describes their connection as a "joint testimony" or "harmonious chorus," nevertheless in a dynamic relationship that is transformative to the understanding of both thematically connected texts.⁴⁰⁰ Paul's thematic reading of Scripture can be perceived also in Galatians. In Gal 3:6-14, Paul develops the theme of "righteousness by faith," and connects quotations from Genesis (15:6 in Gal 3:6; 18:18 in Gal 3:8), Deuteronomy (27:26 in Gal 3:10; 21:23 in Gal 3:13), Habakkuk (2:4 in Gal 3:11), Leviticus (18:5 in Gal 3:12), and an allusion to Isaiah (44:3 in Gal 3:14, see 6.3.2) in his flow of thought. Paul's thematic reading of the prophets, and especially Isaiah, can be demonstrated in Rom 9:24-33 where he marshals evidence to explain that God has called not only the Jews but also the Gentiles to belong to the "vessels of mercy" destined for glory (9:23). First, he uses the voice of Hosea to argue for Gentile inclusion: God makes the non-people his people (Rom 9:25-26; quoting Hosea 2:25 and 2:1). Then he uses Isaiah to speak to the theme of Israel's inclusion in the "vessels of mercy," but in the present only as the "remnant" (Rom 9:27-29; quoting Isa 10:22; 28:22 and 1:9). Finally, Paul explains the dilemma arising from the Gentiles obtaining righteousness and Israel's (as a whole) failure to obtain it in terms of the necessity of faith, which Isaiah already indicates (Rom 9:30-33; quoting a conflation of Isa 28:16 and 8:14). Thus, when Paul chooses to quote a strategic verse from Isaiah (54:1) in Gal 4:27, it is plausible to envision Paul thinking about the rich thematic connections within the book of Isaiah that resonate with it.

With these remarks on method, I undertake first an analysis of the immediate context of Isa 54:1 to discern the themes that form the vision of restoration that Isa 54:1 is intimately connected with. I then explore the intratextual thematic matrix within the whole book of Isaiah to fully appreciate the theology embedded in the respective themes that correlate with Paul's interests in Galatians.

Studies (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 195.

⁴⁰⁰ J. Ross Wagner, "Moses and Isaiah in Concert," in *"As Those Who Are Taught": The Interpretation of Isaiah from the LXX to the SBL*, ed. Claire Mathews McGinnis and Patricia K. Tull, (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 102–103.

4.2 The Vision of Restoration in the Immediate Context of Isaiah 54:1

*Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear;
break forth, and shout, you who are not in labor!
Because more are the children of the desolate woman
than of her that has a husband, for the Lord has spoken. (Isa 54:1 NETS)*

In Isa 54:1, the Lord addresses an unidentified barren woman with a promissory exhortation to rejoice over numerous children. The exhortation to shout for joy is a sure signal that we are to listen to the sounds of deliverance and restoration (cf. Isa 12:1-6; 24:14-16; 26:19; 35:4-10; 48:20-21; 51:3, 11; 52:8-9; 60:16; 62:5; 65:18-19). In order to capture how this verse connects and communicates Isaiah's vision of restoration, it needs to be placed initially in its immediate context.

Isaiah 54:1 is directly preceded by the description of a servant (52:13-53:12), suggesting that the deliverance and restoration described in Isa 54 is the result of the servant's work.⁴⁰¹ The servant appears on the scene after deliverance and restoration have been declared, and emphatically ascribed to the work of the Lord himself (52:12). The servant is introduced by a theme of astonishment (52:13-15) that leads to the opening of chapter 53: κύριε, τίς ἐπίστευσεν τῇ ἀκοῇ ἡμῶν; καὶ ὁ βραχίων κυρίου τίνι ἀποκαλύφθη (53:1)? Here the servant acts as the arm of the Lord (cf. 52:10 καὶ ἀποκαλύψει κύριος τὸν βραχίονα αὐτοῦ τὸν ἅγιον ἐνώπιον πάντων τῶν ἐθνῶν) in bringing about the promised restoration.⁴⁰² But the amazement continues: he had no form of glory and beauty (53:2), rather, he was despised and dishonoured; he was in calamity/wounds and knew how to bear sicknesses (53:3). The amazement intensifies, as it turns out that this servant's suffering is actually for others: he bears *our* sins and suffers pain for *us* (53:4 οὗτος τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἡμῶν φέρει καὶ περὶ ἡμῶν ὀδυνᾶται); he was wounded because of *our* lawlessness, made weak/sick because of *our* sins (53:5). Furthermore, the punishment on him is to bring peace to *us*, and his wounds bring *us* healing (53:5); he is the servant arm of the Lord that gathers the stray sheep, and who was given by the Lord for the sins of *us* (53:6 καὶ κύριος παρέδωκεν αὐτὸν ταῖς ἀμαρτίας ἡμῶν). The “us” are defined as the people of the Lord (53:8 τοῦ λαοῦ

⁴⁰¹ Cf. Jan Leunis Koole, *Isaiah III, Vol.2/Isaiah 49-55* (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 347.

⁴⁰² Cf. Williamson who argues that it appears that it is God himself who accomplishes the task of the servant, but the link from the arm of the Lord in 51:5 to the arm of the Lord in 53:1 (referring to the servant) indicates that, although it is ultimately God, he uses a mediator in accomplishing his purpose (*Variations*, 164).

μου), who will also be the long “seed” of the servant (53:10 ἐὰν δώτε περὶ ἀμαρτίας, ἢ ψυχὴ ὑμῶν ὄψεται σπέρμα μακρόβιον).⁴⁰³ Childs explains that the voice of the “us” in vv. 1-11a represents those within Israel that have come to understand and believe by divine *revelation* “derived from the arm of Yahweh.”⁴⁰⁴ The vicarious death of the servant is underscored, as he is declared innocent and dying due to the lawlessness of God's people (53:8 ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνομιῶν τοῦ λαοῦ μου ἤχθη εἰς θάνατον). The “we” turns into many, as the results of the servant's work are presented. He is righteous and justifies by serving well the many (53:11 δικαιοῦσαι δίκαιον εἶ δουλεύοντα πολλοῖς); he will bear their sins, and because of that inherit many (53:12 ... κληρονομήσει πολλούς). Thus, the inheritance of the servant is the many “seeds” that he has generated by his vicarious suffering.

The description of the servant's work being for the many leads to the vision of restoration in Isa 54, in which the barren woman is promised πολλὰ τὰ τέκνα (54:1); the many “seeds” in 53:10-12 turn out to be the children born to the barren woman.⁴⁰⁵ Consequently, she is asked to broaden her tent (54:2), because of the need to spread out, as her numerous “seed” will inherit the nations (54:3 καὶ τὸ σπέρμα σου ἔθνη κληρονομήσει), suggesting also that the servant's inheritance of the multitude of “seeds” expands to include people of other nations. The reference to a barren woman, the setting of a tent and the promise of numerous offspring inheriting nations evoke also the connections with the matriarch Sarah, the Abrahamic promise of many descendants, and the promise of blessing that reaches the nations (Gen 12:2; 15:5; 18:18; see 3.4).⁴⁰⁶

In Isa 54:1, the barren woman is said to have more children than the married

403 It is difficult to determine who the “you” in δώτε περὶ ἀμαρτίας, ἢ ψυχὴ ὑμῶν ὄψεται refers to; there is also a reference to your soul and then to his soul. Because the focus is on the servant and removing affliction from his soul, it is best to read the “you” as directed to the servant; it is through his giving of himself for sin (sin offering) that he will be then relieved of affliction – a suffering-exultation pattern. The LXX can be understood to reflect the ambiguity of the Hebrew (יְשַׁעְיָהוּ יְרָאָה וְרַע יִצְרָיִם מִיָּמִים) where יְשַׁעְיָהוּ can be read either as 2 masc. sg. or 3 fem. sg. (referring to his soul).

404 Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah: [a Commentary]* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 411, 413–414; Childs goes on to suggest that this indicates that “the response to the servant would divide the people of Israel into two groups, those who believe and those who oppose” (Ibid., 414); see 4.3.5–6.

405 Cf. Koole, *Isaiah III, Vol. 2/Isaiah 49-55*, 352; John Goldingay, *The Message of Isaiah 40-55: A Literary-Theological Commentary* (London: T&T Clark International, 2005), 524. Mark S. Gignilliat argues for “strong thematic coherence” between Isa 53 and 54, and points to the following parallel themes: “seed (53:10; 54:3); the many (52:14-15; 53:11-12; 54:1); righteousness (53:11; 54:14) and peace (53:5; 54:10)” (“Singing Women and Promised Seed: Isaiah 54:1-3 as Christian Scripture,” in *Searching the Scriptures: Studies in Context and Intertextuality*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Jeremiah J. Johnston, vol. 543, Library of New Testament Studies [London; New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015], 8); cf. Bligh who observes the connection of the servant's “seed” in 53:10 and the description of the barren woman's “seed” in 54:1-10 (*Galatians*, 151).

406 Goldingay, *The Message of Isaiah 40-55*, 525; Walter Brueggemann, *Isaiah* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 151.

one. This comparison is a puzzle: who is the married woman? Numerous suggestions have been offered in the history of interpretation (Babylon, Rome, Synagogue etc.),⁴⁰⁷ but the text is best taken as referring to Jerusalem before exile and in the future.⁴⁰⁸ This is supported by the immediate context where the “story of Jerusalem” is told in terms of an abandoned (widowed, *χηρεία*) woman's shame (implying that she has been married) that is transformed by God's (implied husband) reception of her in mercy (54:4-8, see below). Burton captures the imagery well:

The barren woman is Jerusalem in the absence of the exiles, the woman that hath a husband is Jerusalem before the exile; and the comparison signifies that her prosperity after the return from exile was to exceed that which she had enjoyed before the captivity.⁴⁰⁹

As both women refer to Jerusalem, there is theological significance in the fact that she has more children after her barrenness rather than as a result of her being always married. This reflects on the experience of Israel: it is through Israel's abandonment/alienation, rather than her undisturbed covenantal existence (always married to the Lord), that the numerous children are produced – the regeneration of the people of God extends its scope to include the nations (cf. Isa 66:9; see 4.3.2 and 4.3.6).

The passage continues to address the abandoned woman's shame due to her “unmarried” and desolate state (54:4). She is not to be afraid, because the Lord is the one who makes her, and the God of Israel himself will redeem her (54:5). He forsook her for a while in wrath, but delivers her in great and everlasting mercy (54:7-8 *καὶ μετὰ ἐλέους μεγάλου ἐλεήσω σε, ἐν θυμῷ μικρῷ ἀπέστρεψα τὸ πρόσωπόν μου ἀπὸ σοῦ καὶ ἐν ἐλέει αἰωνίῳ ἐλεήσω σε, εἶπεν ὁ ῥυσάμενός σε κύριος*).⁴¹⁰ This promise of mercy triumphing over wrath is patterned on God's oath to Noah and guarantees lasting peace – οὐδὲ ἡ διαθήκη τῆς εἰρήνης σου οὐ μὴ μεταστῆ (54:10). Levenson also notes that “[the] reference to Noah and the great flood in Isa 54:9-10 ... frames this return of the lost children in the context of cosmic renewal.”⁴¹¹

The following verses shift the imagery from the woman to the rebuilding of a

407 See Koole, *Isaiah III, Vol.2/Isaiah 49-55*, 352-353.

408 Cf. Willitts, “Isa 54,1 in Gal 4,24b-27,” 195–196. *Pace* Michael Wolter who suggests that the “other woman” is merely a rhetorical device without any specific “extratextual reference” (*textexterne Referenz*) to emphasize the extraordinary character of the announcement to the barren woman (“Die Unfruchtbare Frau und ihre Kinder: Zur Rezeptionsgeschichte von Jes 54,1,” in *Paulus – Werk und Wirkung: Festschrift für Andreas Lindemann zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Paul Gerhard Klumbies and David S. du Toit [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013], 107).

409 Burton, *Galatians*, 264.

410 The MT is more explicit about the marriage imagery, as it designates God as the woman's husband – the one who made you is the one who marries you (MT 54:5 *כִּי בָרַךְ עָשָׂה אֱלֹהִים אֶתְּךָ*).

411 Jon Douglas Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel: The Ultimate Victory of the God of Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 148.

city (54:11-17), which confirms that the woman and the city correspond to the same reality of restoration. But, as Goldingay points out, the imagery of the woman implies that the focus of restoration is not simply on the rebuilding of a city of stone, but on a *city of people*.⁴¹² Accordingly, after the description of the city's rebuilding with precious stones (54:11-12), the focus is on her inhabitants. Her sons are taught by God and dwell in peace (54:13). This newly formed community of people is built by God in righteousness (54:14), and are called to live in accordance with its character in keeping away from unrighteousness/injustice (54:14 ἀπέχου ἀπὸ ἀδίκου; MT oppression רָשָׁעִים יִקְרָךְ). Horbury notes that the language of “creating” in the description of the restoration of the city/people (54:16 ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ κτίζω σε ... ἐγὼ δὲ ἔκτισά σε) suggests that the themes of new creation and the restoration of Zion/Jerusalem are closely associated.⁴¹³

The theme of the nations being included in Israel's restoration is continued in 54:15; “proselytes” shall come to her on account of the Lord and flee to her for refuge (ἰδοὺ προσήλυτοι προσελεύσονται σοι δι’ ἐμοῦ καὶ ἐπὶ σὲ καταφεύξονται). The people in the restored city are the Lord's servants who have the refuge of the city as their inheritance (54:17 ἔστιν κληρονομία τοῖς θεραπεύουσιν κύριον; MT עֲבָדֵי יְהוָה נַחֲלָתָם). The LXX does not provide a word link to the servant in 52:13-53:12 like the MT does, but nevertheless, there is a conceptual link: the servant of the Lord has produced the many children of the barren woman who are presented here as the servants of the Lord, and the righteous ones (54:17 καὶ ὑμεῖς ἔσεσθέ μοι δίκαιοι).⁴¹⁴ The LXX (not the MT) does provide another link: the servant inherits many (53:12 αὐτὸς κληρονομήσει πολλοὺς), and the many servants receive an inheritance as a result of the servant's work (54:17). Hence, the concepts of righteousness, inheritance and the vision of a restored people of God come together in 54:17.

Goldingay perceives that the vision of restoration in Isa 54 begins the conclusion to chs. 40-55, the final act of the drama of deliverance.⁴¹⁵ Uhlig echoes this sentiment, and understands chs. 54-55 to contain the message of chs. 40-55 in a nutshell, in which

412 Goldingay, *The Message of Isaiah 40-55*, 521.

413 Horbury, *Messianism*, 214.

414 The MT עֲבָדֵי יְהוָה נַחֲלָתָם does not designate the servants as the righteous ones, but portrays both the righteousness of the servants and their inheritance (both inheritance and righteousness refer back to the נַחֲלָתָם) to refer back to the promise of protection against accusing/judging voices in 54:17, and also forward to the promise of the Spirit, the provision of waters in 55:1 (for the syntactical function of נַחֲלָתָם see Ronald J. Williams, *Williams' Hebrew Syntax*, 3rd ed. [Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2007], 49). Hence, the restoration reality is the inheritance and the righteousness of God's newly formed people. This points to the need to explore the concepts of righteousness and inheritance in Paul in light of the restoration vision in Isaiah.

415 Goldingay, *The Message of Isaiah 40-55*, 522

ch. 54 announces the restoration of Zion, and ch. 55 summons the exiles to come and return to the Lord.⁴¹⁶ Hence, I include in the context of 54:1 the development of the vision to its conclusion in ch. 55.

The promise of restoration in Isa 54 is followed by the invitation for the thirsty to come to the water (55:1 Οἱ διψῶντες, πορεύεσθε ἐφ' ὕδωρ), a common symbol for the Spirit in Isaiah.⁴¹⁷ This invitation is for the thirsty, but as Childs points out, it can be viewed as directed to the servants of the Lord in 54:17, as further extending their inheritance: “to embrace to the full the new divine world order that has just been described in 54:9ff.”⁴¹⁸ Those who do not have capital are invited to feast and, paradoxically, to buy wine and fat without a price (55:1). This is a gift of grace, in which Blenkinsopp observes an intention “to subvert the standard view of covenant as expressed in classical form in Deuteronomy,” in which “God's intervention on behalf of his people is contingent on their moral performance.”⁴¹⁹

Responding to the Lord (to the invitation to “drink and eat” in 55:1-2) opens a new future for the servants of the Lord: God will make with them an everlasting Davidic covenant (55:3 καὶ διαθήσομαι ὑμῖν διαθήκην αἰώνιον, τὰ ὅσια Δαυιδ; MT דָּוִד הַחַיִּי), a move that indicates “the theology of kingship is democratized.”⁴²⁰ The content of this covenant is about being a witness to the nations: as David was made a witness to the nations,⁴²¹ so also now the restored people shall be called on by nations that did not know her (55:5), and they will run to her for refuge because of the work of God in her glorification (55:4-5). Thus, the servants receive their calling: “they are to call nations, not previously known, who will respond to this invitation, not because of Israel's power or intrinsic worth, but because of God that they now reflect.”⁴²²

Chapter 55 ends with a recapitulation of the message of Isa 40-54.⁴²³ It sounds a call to seek and return to God in repentance to receive mercy and forgiveness (55:6-7). The wicked are to forsake their ways and unrighteous thoughts, because the Lord's

416 Torsten Uhlig, “Too Hard to Understand? The Motif of Hardening in Isaiah,” in *Interpreting Isaiah*, 76.

417 Cf. Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 369. See 4.3.4.

418 Childs, *Isaiah*, 434.

419 Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 369.

420 Goldingay, *The Message of Isaiah 40-55*, 547; see 4.3.5.

421 Childs argues that this is “a prophetic construct used to depict David's true vocation according to the original, theological purpose of God for his anointed one. . . . David's true role as God's chosen is presented as a witness to God's wonders (Ps 89:6-7)” (*Isaiah*, 435).

422 *Ibid.*, 436.

423 Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 371.

thoughts are not theirs and their ways are not his (55:7-8), which echoes the new thing the Lord is doing and the theme of amazement in the introduction of the servant in 52:13-53:12. The summons turns into a promise; the Lord's word, the promise of restoration, is sure and shall accomplish what it has been sent for (55:10-11). The performative power of the promise is compared to the rain that waters the ground and makes it fruitful (LXX ἐκτέκη καὶ ἐκβλαστήσῃ / MT הַיָּמִינַי הַיָּדֵי־וְהַיָּדֵי). Hence, the generative power of the promise is linked to the imagery of the water transforming barren land, imagery that connects both with the barrenness of the woman in 54:1 (the woman who has not יָלְדָה) and the Spirit (see 4.3.4). Blenkinsopp captures the essence of Isa 55:6-11 well: “the prophetic word recorded here [referring to chs. 40-54] is efficacious, it will bring about what it proclaims, but it does not operate according to normal human calculations.”⁴²⁴ Echoing the rejoicing related to the birth of the many children from the barren woman, the redeemed and restored people will go out with rejoicing and be taught (LXX) / led (MT) in joy (LXX) / peace (MT) (55:12). Furthermore, restoration is pictured as a new creation event: the people are welcomed by mountains, hills and trees to a land that is transformed, resembling the reversal of a curse and return of paradise (55:12-13).⁴²⁵

At this point, my conclusions are succinct, since fuller reflections follow the next step of thematic intratextual analysis. I have argued that Isaiah 54:1 belongs intimately to the context of the vision of restoration set in Isa 52:13-55:13.⁴²⁶ The following list presents the themes of this vision as they have emerged from this context:

1. **Restoration is the result of the *servant's work* that produces a *community of servants* (52:13-53:12; 54:17)**
2. **Restoration is pictured as an event where a *barren woman gives birth to many children* (54:1)**
3. **Restoration causes the need to *enlarge* the tent/city, because of the *many children that include the nations* (54:2-3)**
4. Restoration is about the *remarrying* of an abandoned woman (54:4-8)
5. **Restoration is pictured as the *rebuilding of a city* (54:11-12)**

⁴²⁴ Ibid.

⁴²⁵ Koole, *Isaiah III, Vol.2/Isaiah 49-55*, 445; also Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 372–373.

⁴²⁶ Cf. Goldingay who treats the same section (52:13-55:13) as one unit with the title: “Yhwh's Act of Restoration and Transformation” (*The Message of Isaiah 40-55*, 461). I discovered this only after my own analysis to determine the proper context for 54:1.

6. Restoration is an act of God's *mercy* and it brings *peace*, as well as produces *righteousness* (54:7-17)
7. **Restoration includes an invitation to *drink of the water* – a symbol of *the Spirit* – that the Lord provides** (55:1)
8. Restoration invites to *feast freely* as a response to God's grace (55:1)
9. Restoration invites to be *taught by God* to have life (55:2-3)
10. Restoration renews a *covenant* that is about witness to the nations (55:3-5)
11. Restoration invites to *return to God* in repentance (55:6-9)
12. Restoration is a *promise with performative power* that causes a transformation described in terms of a “*new creation*” (55:10-13)

The themes that are highlighted in bold are chosen for the next step of an intratextual thematic analysis, because they directly relate with the themes in Gal 4:21-5:1:

- the barren woman giving birth (cf. Gal 4:27) is analysed in 4.3.2;
- the theme of the rebuilding of the city (cf. Gal 4:26) is analysed in 4.3.3;
- the invitation to drink of the waters, as a reference to the Spirit (cf. Gal 4:29), is analysed in 4.3.4;
- the theme of the servant (cf. Gal 5:1) and many servants is analysed in 4.3.5;
- the many children and the nations' inclusion (cf. Gal 4:26, 28, 31) is analysed in 4.3.6.

Other relevant themes that relate to the concerns of Galatians are also taken into account (e.g. Abrahamic promise, mercy/grace, Law, new creation, kingdom of God etc.), as they appear in conjunction with the chosen themes.

4.3 Intratextual Thematic Analysis of the Vision of Restoration in Isaiah

With the picture of restoration envisaged in the context of Isa 54:1 (52:13-55:13), it is possible to undertake a thematic intratextual analysis of the themes of restoration in the whole book of Isaiah that also connect integrally with the themes in Gal 4:21-5:1. This is done to appreciate the rich theological potential that is embedded in the intertextual matrix that Paul invites us to explore by his citing of Isaiah 54:1 in Galatians 4:27.⁴²⁷

⁴²⁷ I picture the process thus: when Paul cites Isa 54:1, he is picking up a bright flower that stands out on the field. The petals of the flower are the five themes that emerge in the immediate context of 54:1: barren woman giving birth, rebuilding of a city, provision of the Spirit, the work of the servant, and the many children and the nations' inclusion. As the flower is picked, it comes with its roots that are

4.3.1 The Structure of the Book

Before plunging into the synchronic analysis of the varied and diverse material of the book of Isaiah, I present here an analysis of the structure of the whole with some important insights from a diachronic perspective.⁴²⁸ The standard way of dividing the material in Isaiah is to view it in three parts: chs. 1-39, 40-55 and 56-66.⁴²⁹ There are historical-critical reasons for dividing the material thus, but also literary ones. Chapters 1-39 are grounded in the historical prophetic ministry of Isaiah (the name Isaiah appears only in this section), and the section is set in the historical framework from the time of king Uzziah to Hezekiah.⁴³⁰ Chapters 34-39 are transitional: they connect with the previous chapters (1-33), and prepare (predict the Babylonian exile) for the message of the following section.⁴³¹ Chapters 40-66 present the message of Isaiah to an implied audience that lives in a different historical period to what was implied in 1-39; although the Babylonian exile was already implied in 1-39, it is only in 40-66 that the people are addressed to leave Babylon and return to Judah.⁴³² In chapters 56-66, the message is addressed in a context of partial or complicated fulfilment of the promises and hopes of restoration; it is implied that some have returned, but problems remain with regard to the whole scope of the vision of restoration.⁴³³ Laato encapsulates this internal movement in the book succinctly:

Isaiah 40-55 proclaims that the time is now at hand when the programme of Isaiah 1-39 will come in fulfilment ... However, Isaiah 56-66 extends this hermeneutic programme of Isaiah 40-55 by transforming the fulfilment of the promised salvation to a future time when the people has come loyal to Yhwh.⁴³⁴

Furthermore, Laato suggests that the connection between the two major sections (1-39 and 40-66) is best understood by a typological model: the proclamation of the prophet

intertwined and form the intratextual thematic matrix that provides the rich theological “nutrients” for the flower – the vision of restoration in Isa 52:13-55:13.

428 Although my focus is primarily on the final form of the text and on a synchronic analysis, the diachronic dimension adds depth, as Brevard Childs remarks: “To work with the final form of the text is not to lose the historical dimension, but it is rather to make critical, theological judgment regarding the process. The depth dimension aids in understanding the interpreted text, and does not function independently of it.” (*Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* [London: SCM, 1979], 76.)

429 The Qumran community has left evidence of an attractive alternative structuring of the book of Isaiah, in which it is viewed in two major parts: 1-33 and 34-66, and the two mirror each other thematically. See George J. Brooke, “On Isaiah in Qumran,” in “*As Those Who Are Taught*”, 77–81.

430 Laato, *About Zion*, 45–46.

431 *Ibid.*, 45.

432 *Ibid.*, 49–50.

433 *Ibid.*, 50; Cf. Williamson on Isa 56-66 addressing problems that the apparent non-fulfillment of the promise of restoration raised (“Recent Issues” 37–38).

434 Laato, *About Zion*, 168.

Isaiah in a certain ideological-historical situation (1-39) provides a paradigm for the future generations (40-66).⁴³⁵ Understanding the nature of the connections within the sections of the book as typological – the re-appropriation of a paradigm in a new historical setting – fosters a dynamic analysis of the thematic connections. In this re-appropriation, some themes can evolve, e.g. royal ideology is reinterpreted as concerning the servant.⁴³⁶ However, since Zion-theology retains its predominance, it suggests that the fate of Jerusalem/Zion is a central theme throughout the book (1:1 and 2:1 introduce it; Jerusalem is mentioned 49 times and Zion 47 times by name; they are referred to in many other places with other names and images).⁴³⁷ Childs is close to Laato in his understanding of the book of Isaiah as a whole, but expresses it in terms of intratextuality: “[t]he growth of larger composition has often been shaped by the use of a conscious resonance with a previous core of oral or written texts.”⁴³⁸ The intratextual reapplication is not clearly one-directional – movement from beginning towards the end – which complicates interpretation of sequential trajectories.⁴³⁹ With this understanding of the whole book of Isaiah, I proceed to the intratextual thematic analysis of the vision of restoration in Isaiah 52:13-55:13.

4.3.2 Barren Woman Giving Birth

Isa 54:1 paints the picture of restoration in terms of a barren woman giving birth to many children. To appreciate the theology of this imagery, I seek to find intratextual resonances in the identity of the woman and the process of giving birth to children (the identity of the many children is discussed in 4.3.6).

The immediate context suggests that the woman is closely connected with the image of the restoration of a city (54:11-17). This connection is confirmed in 51:17 where Jerusalem (in exile) is addressed as a woman who has drunk the cup of God's wrath, and none among her sons whom she has borne can guide her (51:18), because they lie faint under the wrath of the Lord (51:20). Identifying the woman with the city is also established through the marriage imagery in 54:4-8, which is present also in Isa 62.

⁴³⁵ Ibid., 60–61. Cf. Uhlig who also holds that 40-55 is to be understood as stemming from the material in 1-39; 40-55 needs to be read together with the proclamation of Isaiah, and the need for this new call has its roots in the vision of Isaiah in 1-39 (“Too Hard to Understand?,” 72).

⁴³⁶ Laato, *About Zion*, 62.

⁴³⁷ Ibid., 62–64.

⁴³⁸ Childs, *Isaiah*, 4.

⁴³⁹ Ibid.

Chapter 62 refers to Zion (62:1-2) who is not to be called forsaken anymore, neither her land desolate (ἔρημος), but she is called “my delight” and the land “inhabited” (LXX) / “married” (MT) (62:4). Her sons will dwell in marriage with her, and the Lord rejoices over her as a bridegroom (62:5). Thus, the image of the woman giving birth (54:1) is associated with Jerusalem/Zion being restored.

But there is more to the image than just a direct equation of the woman with Jerusalem/Zion. In chapter 26, the inhabitants of Judah sing an “eschatological song,” in which the community of the faithful is situated between the times: “the old is passing; the new has not yet come in its fullness.”⁴⁴⁰ It is in this tension and frustration of expectancy that the community “compares itself to a false pregnancy”⁴⁴¹ (26:18 ἐν γαστρὶ ἐλάβομεν καὶ ὠδινήσαμεν καὶ ἐτέκομεν πνεῦμα σωτηρίας οὐκ ἐποίησαμεν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς).⁴⁴² But the note of frustration is contrasted and exceeded by divine promise: the dead shall rise and those in the tombs shall be raised (26:19 ἀναστήσονται οἱ νεκροί, καὶ ἐγερθήσονται οἱ ἐν τοῖς μνημείοις). This is seen as a classical salvation oracle (*Heilsorakel*) of divine reassurance that salvation will come; a promise that transcends all the other promises.⁴⁴³ Although there is debate whether the text envisions only the rebirth of the nation or also individual resurrection from the dead, Childs argues that the main point is clear:

the ultimate status of the believing community of Israel, which lives at an intersection of two dispensations within God's economy, is not determined by the rules of the old age. The sign of the new is not that pain and misery cease, but that the promised life in God's kingdom extends even beyond the grave.⁴⁴⁴

The note of human frustration and the need for divine intervention in salvation/restoration is sounded also in the transitional section of the book. Chapters 36-37 narrate the Assyrian threat and how the Lord foils it. As Hezekiah sends a message regarding the Assyrian threat to Isaiah, he describes the distress and hopelessness with an image that contrasts with the one in 54:1: ὅτι ἤκει ἡ ὠδὶν τῆ τικτούση, ἰσχὺν δὲ οὐκ ἔχει τοῦ τεκεῖν (37:3). Human “strength” fails to bring deliverance in the face of an overwhelming threat; there is no strength to deliver the children. In contrast, the Lord

440 Ibid., 190–191.

441 Ibid., 191.

442 The LXX witness is not unison; Rahlfs (also Swete) gives a positive note: πνεῦμα σωτηρίας σου ἐποίησαμεν, but Göttingen edition has it as: πνεῦμα σωτηρίας οὐκ ἐποίησαμεν. The MT is similar to the Göttingen: כְּמוֹ יִלְדְנוּ רוּחַ יְשׁוּעָה בְּלִי-עֲשֵׂה אֲרָץ. I choose to follow the Göttingen on this, since it reflects most likely the original Greek and accords more closely with the Hebrew. The other versions can be understood as smoothing out the negative connotation in the community's ability to produce salvation.

443 Childs, *Isaiah*, 191.

444 Ibid., 192.

promises deliverance for the remnant in Jerusalem (37:28-35). With this emphasis, the initial historical ministry of the prophet Isaiah closes, and becomes the typological paradigm for the vision of future deliverance and restoration.

As we come to the second major section of the book of Isaiah, the image of the woman giving birth receives more dimensions and a more positive note of promise. The Lord is depicted going out like a mighty man of war to deliver his people (42:13-16). In the midst of this description of deliverance, the Lord is said to have endured like a woman in labour pains (42:14 ἐκαρτέρησα ὡς ἡ τίκτουσα; cf. 45:10).⁴⁴⁵ Thus, God himself is depicted as a woman in the process of giving birth as he brings deliverance. This image of God generating a people is to be placed in contrast to the beginning of the book of Isaiah where the Lord exclaims a sad realisation that the children he begat have rejected him (1:2 υἱοὺς ἐγέννησα καὶ ὕψωσα, αὐτοὶ δέ με ἠθέτησαν; cf. 48:8),⁴⁴⁶ they have not known God neither understood him (1:3), and thus have become a sinful (ἔθνος ἁμαρτωλόν, λαὸς πλήρης ἁμαρτιῶν) and degenerate people who provoked the anger of the Lord (1:4).⁴⁴⁷ But anger is not the final note, as the promise of restoration is an act of God's mercy that brings new hope (cf. 40:1-2; 54:7-10). God's commitment to regenerate a people is reflected in the following texts that develop the theme further.

In the beginning of chapter 44, Israel is to gain hope for the future from her origins. She is addressed as God's servant whom God formed from the womb (44:1-2 ... ὁ ποιήσας σε καὶ ὁ πλάσας σε ἐκ κοιλίας) – a possible reference to the birth of Isaac from Sarah.⁴⁴⁸ At the end of the chapter, Israel is asked to recognise the work of God in the present/future: God is the one who redeems her and is re-forming her from the womb (44:24 ὁ λυτρούμενός σε καὶ ὁ πλάσσων σε ἐκ κοιλίας).⁴⁴⁹ The Lord's address

445 The MT is even stronger in its description of God in labour: כִּי־לָדָתִי הָיָה־לִּי אֱלֹהִים וְעַתָּה הִיא־לִּי אֱלֹהִים וְיִתְּנֵנִי אֱלֹהִים וְיִצְדָּקֵנִי.

446 The MT does not use the term begat, but instead descriptions of raising children up and exalting them (בָּנִים גָּדְלָתִי וְרוֹמְמָתִי) that might be to emphasise the privileged status of Israel among the nations.

447 The MT does not speak of anger, but focuses on the people having despised the Lord and having become estranged (וְנִצְרָתִי וְנִצְרָתִי לֹא־יָדָעוּ אֵת־יְהוָה וְנִצְרָתִי וְנִצְרָתִי).

448 There are various views as to what event in Israel's history this refers to. Blenkinsopp suggests that this refers to the birth of Jacob (*Isaiah 40-55*, 233). Claus Westermann connects verse two with the exodus, but with reference to the creation account (*Isaiah 40-66: A Commentary* [London: S.C.M. Press, 1969], 135). Koole does not tie the interpretation to one single event in Israel's history: “the verbal forms relate not only to Israel's first beginning but to her entire history. ... God not only chose his people but also brought it into being and preserved it ... This was evident in the history of the patriarchs, the Exodus, the settlement in Canaan, in short, in the entire history in which the people was able to maintain itself by the will of God” (*Isaiah III, Vol 1/Isaiah 40-48* [Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1997], 358). Koole's approach is attractive, but I still discern the strongest connection with the initial paradigmatic birth of Isaac from the barren womb of Sarah, because of the strong resonances to the Abrahamic tradition in 44:3 (seed, blessing). The LXX rendering of וְיִצְדָּקֵנִי וְיִשְׁרָתֵנִי as Ἰακωβ καὶ ὁ ἡγαπημένος Ἰσραηλ in 44:2 also supports the connection with the Abraham narrative and the identification of the people with Isaac – the beloved son (LXX Gen 22:2) – or with Abraham (ὄν ἡγάπησα) in Isa 41:8.

449 The image of God as the “mother” is present also in Isa 46:3-4.

to daughter Babylon in chapter 47 provides a contrast to the promise of restoration to Israel. Babylon's destruction is depicted with the image of being made a widow and losing children (47:7-11) – a counter image to the barren woman bearing children, and an abandoned woman being married in Isa 54:1-7.

In chapter 49, a servant speaks to coastlands and people afar. The servant's name was called from the womb of his/her mother (49:1 ἐκ κοιλίας μητρός μου ἐκάλεσεν τὸ ὄνομά μου),⁴⁵⁰ referring to Israel's call to be the Lord's servant (49:3). Later in the passage, the Lord says that a servant will bring Jacob back and gather Israel (49:5). Hence, the Lord challenges Zion who thinks the Lord has forsaken and forgotten her (49:14), and asks whether a woman would forget her nursing child. Even if she would, the Lord would not forget (49:15). There is even more amazement, as her sons, who had been lost/destroyed, will say that the place is too narrow (49:20). Then Zion wonders:

Who has begotten me these?

But I was childless and a widow, so who has reared these for me?

But I was left all alone, so from where have these come to me? (Isa 49:21, NETS)

The Lord answers that it is he who signals the nations and peoples to bring her sons and daughters (49:22-23). Thus, chapters 44 and 49 together suggest that Israel's initial call to existence and her future restoration are closely connected in the theological matrix of Isaiah: “[t]he revitalization of the downtrodden and despondent people is clearly patterned on the old legends [Abrahamic promise and Jacob] of their having to come into being against all odds, historical and natural.”⁴⁵¹ The possible echo to the birth of Isaac from the barren womb of Sarah is brought to the surface in chapter 51.⁴⁵²

Chapter 51 addresses the people who align themselves with the servant from ch. 49 (see 4.3.5). They are first to look to God as the ultimate source of their existence (MT 51:1b).⁴⁵³ Then they are to look to Abraham their father and to Sarah who bore

450 Koole notes that the womb of the mother in 49:1 has been identified with Sarah in the history of interpretation (*Isaiah III, Vol.2/Isaiah 49-55*, 7). It is not clear in this text, but as 51:2 makes an explicit connection to Sarah, it is possible to have an allusion to Sarah also here.

451 Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel*, 145.

452 Also, Isa 48:18-19 suggests that restoration is understood in connection with the promise to Abraham about many descendants.

453 The LXX and MT render 51:1b differently. The LXX uses the active voice: look to the solid rock you hewed (ἐμβλέψατε εἰς τὴν στερεὰν πέτραν, ἣν ἐλατομήσατε), whereas the MT has the passive voice: look to the rock from which you were hewn (הַבְּרִישׁ אֶל-צֶדֶד הַצֵּדִיק הַצֵּדִיק). The MT thus points to the ultimate origin of the people in God their Rock, an echo of Deut 32:4, 15, 18, 30-31 (cf. Blenkinsopp, who recognises the link to Deut 32, but still prefers to identify the rock and quarry with the “ancestral couple” [*Isaiah 40-55*, 326]). The LXX does not use the term rock in Deut 32, but speaks only of God in the verses given above. This might explain why LXX Isaiah renders 51:1 in a way that misses the connection with Deut 32. The MT rendering, with its connection to Deut 32, highlights the origin of the people from Abraham to be an act of God. This link is obscured by the LXX.

them (51:2 ἐμβλέψατε εἰς Ἀβραάμ τὸν πατέρα ὑμῶν, καὶ εἰς Σαρραν τὴν ὠδίνουσαν ὑμᾶς).⁴⁵⁴ As Noort aptly summarises: “in Isa 51:1-3, everything is focused on the rebirth of the people, exemplified by the names of Abraham and Sarah.”⁴⁵⁵ They are encouraged, because as Abraham was but one when he was called and the Lord blessed and multiplied him (from the barren womb of Sarah) (51:2), so also now the Lord is able to transform Zion's desolate places (barrenness) into a paradise of the Lord (51:3 τὰ ἔρημα αὐτῆς ὡς παράδεισον κυρίου; cf. 54:1 where ἔρημος is used to describe the barrenness of the woman). Callaway captures the significance of this:

The way in which Yahweh called the single man Abraham and made him into a nation, and chose the barren Sarah to become the mother of all Israel is the paradigm for the way in which he will recreate the nation out of the desolate band of exiles which is now Israel.⁴⁵⁶

Thus, Sarah is “theologically” the woman who has given birth to the people aligning themselves with the servant of 49:5f.⁴⁵⁷ Although the focus is on Abraham, the reminder invokes the miraculous way the promise of many offspring was realised to Abraham through the barren womb of Sarah. Hence, the vision of restoration, as transformation of barrenness, is intimately connected with the miraculous birth of Isaac.

In chapter 66, God's act of deliverance is pictured as a woman who gave birth before she was in labour; before her pain came she delivered a son (66:7). This event refers to Zion's restoration (ὅτι ὠδίνεν καὶ ἔτεκεν Σιών τὰ παιδιά αὐτῆς), and is marvelled at as an unheard thing: did the earth give birth in one day; was a nation born in one moment (66:8)? Childs encapsulates the effect of this imagery: “God has accomplished the totally unexpected.”⁴⁵⁸ It also provides a fitting climax to the development of the imagery of a woman giving birth, as it “makes the point that the restoration of Jerusalem will come about by direct divine action.”⁴⁵⁹ Blenkinsopp discerns resemblance in this with the miraculous birth of Isaac.⁴⁶⁰ But the questions probe deeper. The Lord asks: was it not I who made the woman who bore the children

454 Blenkinsopp notes that this is the only place besides Genesis that Sarah is mentioned by name (Ibid.). He also perceives that Isaiah represents the recognition of two traditions in the ancestry of Israel: Jacob as the father (perceived from the reading of Isa 40-48), and Abraham the father and Sarah the mother of the people (cf. Isa 29:22; 41:8) (Ibid.).

455 Ed Noort, “Abraham and the Nations,” in *Abraham, the Nations, and the Hagarites*, 10.

456 Mary Callaway, *Sing, O Barren One: A Study in Comparative Midrash* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, c1986), 62.

457 Cf. Noort: “Zion's motherhood is visualized by the matriarch *par excellence*, Sarah, once barren. In a combination of past and present, the matriarch bears the new Israel ..., here addressed.” (“Abraham and the Nations,” 11.)

458 Childs, *Isaiah*, 541.

459 Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56-66* (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 305.

460 Ibid., 305–306. Blenkinsopp perceives that the Abrahamic promise of descendants, land and blessings underlies much of Isa 40-66. I agree, as this surfaces clearly in chs. 49, 51 and 54.

and the one who is barren (66:9 οὐκ ἶδὸν ἐγὼ γεννώσαν καὶ στειρὰν ἐποίησα; εἶπεν ὁ θεός)? The implied answer is that the Lord has ultimately caused the punishment of exile (barrenness), and redemption and restoration (bearing of children). This advances my initial interpretation of Isa 54:1 as a reflection on God's paradoxical working in Israel's experience: the Lord “caused” the barrenness of Israel so that her restoration in mercy would generate more children, as the nations are included in the people of God. I return to this theme in 4.3.6. But before that I explore the theme of the restoration of the city (4.3.3), the Spirit's transformation of barrenness into fruitfulness (4.3.4), and the servant's work in generating a community of servants (4.3.5).

4.3.3 The Tale of Two Cities

The barren woman giving birth in Isa 54:1 is connected with the restoration of Jerusalem; the picture of a woman giving birth turns into a vision of a restored city (54:11-14). The exhortation for the woman to broaden her tent (54:2) also echoes an earlier description of Zion/Jerusalem as a secure tent (33:20).⁴⁶¹ Hence, I turn next to the resonances of the restoration of the city in the intratextual matrix of the whole book.

Chapters one and two constitute a framing scene for the rest of the book of Isaiah; it is a “tale of two cities” – from the Jerusalem before exile to the restored Jerusalem. This tale is encapsulated in 54:1 in the figures of the barren woman who is promised more children (restored Jerusalem) than the woman with a husband (Jerusalem before exile).⁴⁶² Chapter one speaks of future restoration in open (the city has not yet been destroyed) and conditional terms (repentance can prevent destruction), but it culminates in promises for restoration after the purging punishment of the Lord (1:24-28). The punishment of exile (1:7-8; forsakeness and desolation) is due to lawlessness – a failure to heed the Law (1:4-17). Yet the horizon beyond the punishment portrays Zion as a city of righteousness (Πόλις δικαιοσύνης) and a faithful “metropolis” (1:26 μητρόπολις πιστῆ Σιών). The LXX rendering μητρόπολις is a rare use of the term, and could be used here to elevate “Zion to the mother-city for which the exile heart yearns,”⁴⁶³ or as a reflection on the significance of the city as the locus of identification

461 Cf. Horbury, *Messianism*, 219.

462 Cf. Willitts, “Isa 54,1 in Gal 4,24b-27,” 192–197. He credits the term “tale of two cities” to William J. Dumbrell, *The End of the Beginning: Revelation 21-22 and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Baker Book House, 1985). I suspect also an echo from Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859).

463 David A. Baer, “‘It's All about Us!’ Nationalistic Exegesis in the Greek Isaiah (Chapters 1-12),” in *As Those Who Are Taught*, 41–42.

for the community. The designation of the city as a “mother-city” provides also a word picture that connects the symbol of the woman with the city.

Chapter two continues the note of future restoration, as it starts with an elevated vision of the restored Zion/Jerusalem:

Ὅτι ἔσται ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις ἐμφανὲς τὸ ὄρος κυρίου καὶ ὁ οἶκος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπ’ ἄκρων τῶν ὀρέων καὶ ὑψωθήσεται ὑπεράνω τῶν βουνῶν καὶ ἤξουσιν ἐπ’ αὐτὸ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, καὶ πορεύσονται ἔθνη πολλὰ καὶ ἐροῦσιν Δεῦτε καὶ ἀναβῶμεν εἰς τὸ ὄρος κυρίου καὶ εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ θεοῦ Ἰακωβ, καὶ ἀναγγελεῖ ἡμῖν τὴν ὁδὸν αὐτοῦ, καὶ πορευσόμεθα ἐν αὐτῇ· ἐκ γὰρ Σιων ἐξελεύσεται νόμος καὶ λόγος κυρίου ἐξ Ἱερουσαλημ. (Isa 2:2-3)

This is a vision the LXX ascribes to the last days (ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις).⁴⁶⁴ Zion is pictured as the mountain of the Lord that is now made visible. The house of the Lord is on the highest of the mountains, and it is exalted far above (ὑπεράνω) the hills. This geographical note is to be taken with theological significance: “we must not understand biblical geography as a statement of scientific nature. . . . geography is simply a visible form of theology.”⁴⁶⁵ The theology conveyed by this “mythic” imagery in connection with other “mythic” connotations in Zion theology are summed up by Levenson:

Zion as the place from which the world was created, as the point from which the primal ray of light emanated, and as the only mountain to stand above the deluge, is also the highest point in the highest land, the center of the center, from which all the rest of reality takes its bearings.⁴⁶⁶

Childs also connects the significance of this imagery with creation and the function of orienting reality. He perceives that the vision of Zion's transformation resembles ancient Canaanite mythopoetic imagery, and reflects the theme of “new creation,” but now bearing “the marks of God's original intention of primordial harmony of the universe (Gen 2:10ff.).”⁴⁶⁷

This future “new creation” reality invites all the nations (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη) and many peoples (ἔθνη πολλά). They are pictured coming into it to be taught by God (2:3). Childs understands this statement to emphasize that “the nations come not to be proselytized into the Hebrew religion – the concept of human religion is foreign to the

464 Cf. Childs commenting on the Hebrew term: $\text{בְּאַחֲרֵי הַיָּמִים}$: “It speaks of God's time, different in kind from ordinary time, and it signals immediately that there is no simple linear continuity between Israel's historical existence and the entrance of God's kingdom” (*Isaiah*, 29).

465 Jon Douglas Levenson, *Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1985), 116.

466 *Ibid.*, 135.

467 Childs, *Isaiah*, 29–30. Levenson points also to the Rabbinic tradition, in which Mount Zion was understood as the navel of the earth, “the point from which creation proceeded” (*Sinai and Zion*, 118).

text – but to learn from God.”⁴⁶⁸ Levenson also understands that a reference to Torah here resembles Mal 2:6-7, and “refers to revealed instruction, oracles, and not to the Pentateuch.”⁴⁶⁹ This is supported in the text by the move from the νόμος from Zion to the λόγος κυρίου from Jerusalem (2:3).

Chapter four presents a vision of the day when the inhabitants (daughters) of Jerusalem/Zion (mother) have been washed and cleansed (4:3-4). It pictures the Lord coming to Zion and it being covered by a cloud during day and by fire during night, echoing the exodus experience (4:5). Integral to this restoration of Zion is the return of God's glory (4:5 *πάση τῇ δόξῃ σκεπασθήσεται*) – his presence among the people. But, as Childs notes: “the sign of God's gracious presence is no longer confined to the Holy of Holies with its access only to the high priest, but the entire mountain is overshadowed as a sacred sanctuary.”⁴⁷⁰

Chapter 24 presents the restoration of Zion in terms of cosmic redemption: the eschatological focus of these chapters [chs. 24-27] has raised their sights to the ultimate purpose of God in portraying the cosmological judgment of the world and its final glorious restoration.⁴⁷¹

After depictions of judgment (24:1-22), the Lord is seen to reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem with his glory (24:23 *βασιλεύσει κύριος ἐν Σιων καὶ ἐν Ἱερουσαλημ*). Again, Zion and Jerusalem are intimately connected, and its restoration is about the reign of God over the faithful remnant from both Israel and the nations (24:6

468 Childs, *Isaiah*, 30. There is much debate about the role and content of the Torah in this: is it referring to the Mosaic Torah or the prophetic teaching independent of the Law of Moses? Childs avoids this polarisation and suggests that “the Mosaic Torah itself increasingly received its full meaning from the divine reality witnessed to by the prophets” (Ibid.). This meant that the prophetic polemic both “kept in check” all legalistic moves and “blocked all attempts to mitigate the full force of the divine will that was given a concrete form at Sinai” (Ibid.). Childs summarises this relationship thus: “both law and the prophetic proclamation were expanded in terms of a deepening grasp of God's reality, but neither was subordinated in principle to the other” (Ibid.). This understanding of the nature of Scripture was, according to Childs, the means for “Paul to identify the divine truth of the entire Old Testament with the one reality made known through God in Jesus Christ” (Ibid.). Significantly, the LXX uses the term νόμος, which Paul uses in Gal 4:21 to refer to both the Mosaic Law and to the Scripture in a wider sense. Hence, it is plausible to follow Childs' argument that the concept of Torah/νόμος is for Paul the interpretation of the entirety of God's revelation in light of the reality of Christ (see 5.2). Blenkinsopp understands the vision of Isa 2:2-4 very differently: it “envisages Jerusalem as preeminent among the nations, the *religious* capital of the world to which Gentiles will come attracted by the high ethical ideals embodied in the *Jewish law*” (Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39: A New Translation with Introduction, Commentary* [New York; London: Doubleday, 2000], 203; emphasis added). Both are possible readings, but the aim here is to explore the meaning potential of the text that Paul could have utilised.

469 Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 126.

470 Childs, *Isaiah*, 37.

471 Ibid., 173.; it is in this sense (focus on final eschatological judgment and entrance of the kingdom of God) that Childs agrees to call this section apocalyptic, but at the same time he does not perceive the Isaianic writer to “leave the realm of history,” or being concerned with “mysteries known only to the initiated or to hidden numbers pointing to heavenly secrets that call for a special interpreter” – elements usually associated with apocalyptic (Ibid.).

καταλειφθήσονται ἄνθρωποι ὀλίγοι): “this climax also signals the beginning of God’s new order and its effect on the faithful of the world, both among Israel and the nations.”⁴⁷² The vision flows into chapter 26 where the city is pictured protected by the surrounding walls of salvation (26:1). In chapter 27, the Lord gathers his people and they will come and worship the Lord on the holy mountain at Jerusalem (27:13). Thus, restoration of Zion/Jerusalem in the “apocalyptic” section of Isaiah is about the ultimate, eschatological, restoration of the reign of God over his saved people.

In chapter 44, Cyrus is specified as the one fulfilling God’s purposes in the rebuilding of Jerusalem (44:26-28). Due to opposition and questioning of God’s choice, God affirms that he has chosen Cyrus, and makes his way level so that he shall build Jerusalem and set the exiles free (45:13). When Cyrus is pictured in the restoration of Israel, the content is more specific and the language is concrete (build my city, return the exiles) rather than metaphoric.

In chapter 51, the ransomed of the Lord are pictured returning to Zion with singing and joy (51:11). Furthermore, it is the community of the people that constitute Zion (51:16 ἐρεῖ Σιών Λαός μου εἶ σύ). In chapter 52, Zion is called to awake, and Jerusalem is designated as the holy city (52:1). It is because of the holiness of the city that no uncircumcised or unclean person shall come into her anymore (52:1 οὐκέτι προστεθήσεται διελθεῖν διὰ σοῦ ἀπερίτμητος καὶ ἀκάθαρτος).⁴⁷³ Captive Zion will have a day when she hears the good news of salvation: your God reigns (52:7 Βασιλεύσει σου ὁ θεός). The watchmen sing for joy as they see the Lord having mercy on Zion (52:8 ἡνίκα ἂν ἐλέησῃ κύριος τὴν Σιών).⁴⁷⁴ Westermann captures the mood well: “what for so long a time Israel had been unable to believe or comprehend now turns out to be a real thing that men can plainly see.”⁴⁷⁵ Desolate (barren) Jerusalem is to break forth into singing because the Lord has had mercy on her and has delivered her (52:9 ῥηξάτω εὐφροσύνην ἅμα τὰ ἔρημα Ἱερουσαλημ, ὅτι ἠλέησεν κύριος αὐτήν καὶ ἐρρύσατο Ἱερουσαλημ, cf. 54:1).

Chapter 60, reflecting on the promise of restoration from the perspective of a

⁴⁷² Childs, *Isaiah*, 181.

⁴⁷³ The negative note on the uncircumcised/unclean seems to be highly contextual, as Blenkinsopp explains: “[Jerusalem] must no longer be defiled by the presence of foreign conquerors” (*Isaiah 40-55*, 340). Childs connects the holy city with the divine name and explains the prohibition thus: “the uncircumcised and unclean will not be allowed in the city to profane the name of God” (*Isaiah*, 405). Thus, the focus here is more on holiness than on the actual practice of circumcision. The scenario could be very different, if the “uncircumcised” were not the invaders but actual participants in the redemption, and furthermore, if they would be “sanctified” by the Lord by some other means than circumcision.

⁴⁷⁴ MT: return of the Lord to Zion (יְיָ שָׁבָה יְהוָה אֶל־צִיּוֹן).

⁴⁷⁵ Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 251.

return from exile with yet unfulfilled expectations of full restoration, describes the time when Jerusalem is to shine for her light has come, and the glory of the Lord is upon her (60:1 Φωτίζου φωτίζου, Ιερουσαλημ, ἦκει γάρ σου τὸ φῶς, καὶ ἡ δόξα κυρίου ἐπὶ σὲ ἀνατέταλκεν).⁴⁷⁶ This language of light and glory describes a “theophany, in which God reveals himself in the victory over his enemies and the salvation of his people.”⁴⁷⁷ The nations that are under darkness shall come to her light (60:3). Jerusalem is to gaze at all her children that have been gathered from afar (60:4). Jerusalem's fate is turned and she is to be called the City of the Lord, Zion of the Holy one of Israel (60:14). The description of the new building materials (60:17; cf. the more heightened language in Isa 54:11-12) highlights the contrast between the old and the new, and the use of hyperbolic language envisions a new eschatological city of God.⁴⁷⁸ The eschatological note is taken further, since there is no more need for the light of the sun, as the Lord is her light and glory (60:19). But it also refers to the new reality where “everything will literally be seen in a different light.”⁴⁷⁹ The ordinary light has not been enough for the blind people; true light – revelation – comes from God: “he is the light himself.”⁴⁸⁰ This picture of the restoration of Jerusalem envisions it in a new eschatological reality, in which salvation and the presence of the Lord is the glory and light of the new restored people that encompasses both the gathered children of Israel and nations that are attracted to it by her light. The note of eschatological restoration of Jerusalem – the new thing God is going to do – is heightened in chapter 65 in the promise of new heavens and new earth (65:17 ἔσται γὰρ ὁ οὐρανὸς καινὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ καινή) that includes a restored Jerusalem (65:18 ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ποιῶ Ιερουσαλημ ἀγαλλίαμα καὶ τὸν λαόν μου εὐφροσύνην).⁴⁸¹ This is a nexus that is already present in Isa 54:11-17.

In conclusion, the imagery of the barren woman being made fruitful evokes a “tale of two cities” that is about the restoration of the desolate Jerusalem into a glorious future metropolis – a “mother-city” – that functions as a symbol, or a place of identification, for the new community that includes people from other nations. The

476 The LXX has Jerusalem named here, whereas the MT does not: כִּי בָּא אֲנִיךָ וּבְבוֹד יְהוָה עֲלֶיךָ יֵרָא. This reflects most likely the LXX translators mode to translate the sense rather than give a literal translation – “a natural insertion” (Richard Rusden Ottley, ed., *The Book of Isaiah According to the Septuagint*, vol. 2 [Cambridge: University Press, 1906], 365).

477 Jan Leunis Koole, *Isaiah III, Vol.3/Isaiah 56-66* (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), 222.

478 Childs summarises the note well: “the new Jerusalem is not a rebuilt earthly city, but the entrance of the divine kingdom of God, the creation of a new heaven and earth” (*Isaiah*, 500).

479 Koole, *Isaiah III, Vol.3/Isaiah 56-66*, 218.

480 Ibid.

481 Horbury notes the connection between “new creation” and the expectation of a future temple/city (*Messianism*, 204).

restoration of Jerusalem has an eschatological horizon, and it is essentially about restoring the presence and rule (kingdom) of God among the people. Furthermore, the elevation of Zion, and the establishment of the new Jerusalem above any other city transposes the event to a cosmic level that is described with language of new creation.

4.3.4 The Spirit and Fruitfulness

The vision of restoration in Isa 52:13-55:13 includes an invitation to drink of waters provided by the Lord (55:1). The desolation/exile of God's people has been described in terms of a garden that has no water (1:30) and a people who are thirsty (5:13). In the vision of restoration in Isaiah, this condition is remedied by the gift of water. The imagery of the water is rich and multivalent, but contains an important link with the Spirit. This is perceived in the language about turning wilderness into fruitful land by means of water and the Spirit. In chapter 32, it is the Spirit that is poured on the people that will turn wilderness into fruitful land (32:15 ἕως ἂν ἐπέλθῃ ἐφ' ὑμᾶς πνεῦμα ἀφ' ὕψηλοῦ. καὶ ἔσται ἔρημος ὁ Χερμελ, καὶ ὁ Χερμελ εἰς δρυμὸν λογισθήσεται), whereas in chapter 35 the promise of God's salvation is pictured as the wilderness blossoming (35:1-7) that involves water flowing in the wilderness and streams in the desert (35:6-7 ὅτι ἐρράγη ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ ὕδωρ καὶ φάραγξ ἐν γῆ διψώσῃ, καὶ ἡ ἄνυδρος ἔσται εἰς ἔλῃ, καὶ εἰς τὴν διψῶσαν γῆν πηγὴ ὕδατος ἔσται). This link between the water and the Spirit is present in other texts also. Furthermore, the water transforming barren land (ἔρημος) into fruitfulness is intimately connected with the transformation of the barrenness (ἔρημος) of the woman in Isa 54:1. The Spirit is the agent of restoration in transforming the desolation, and thus it is also plausible to view the Spirit at work in generating the many children in Isa 54:1. This connection is confirmed in the following analysis.

In chapter 41, Israel is comforted by recalling her choosing as the offspring of Abraham (41:8 Σὺ δέ, Ἰσραηλ, παῖς μου Ἰακωβ, ὃν ἐξελεξάμην, σπέρμα Ἀβρααμ). Then Israel is promised God's help as the redeemer (41:13-14). The ensuing restoration is described by the providence of abundant water that transforms the thirsty land (41:18). This connection between the offspring of Abraham and the “waters” that signal restoration becomes evident and expressed also in terms of the Spirit in Isa 44.

Chapter 44 addresses Israel as God's servant, whom he formed from the womb (44:1-2), echoing the origins of the people in the birth of Isaac from Sarah (see 4.3.2),

but now focusing on God's re-generative activity in the restoration of the new people that is elaborated in vv. 3-5. She is not to fear, for God will give water for the thirsty, to those walking in the dry places (44:3 ὅτι ἐγὼ δώσω ὕδωρ ἐν δίψει τοῖς πορευομένοις ἐν ἀνύδρῳ). The metaphor of the water is explained by the proclamation that God will pour his Spirit upon Israel's offspring (ἐπιθήσω τὸ πνεῦμά μου ἐπὶ τὸ σπέρμα σου), which in turn conveys the Lord's blessing on Israel's children (καὶ τὰς εὐλογίας μου ἐπὶ τὰ τέκνα σου) (44:3).⁴⁸² This is a key moment in understanding the role of the Spirit in the formation of the new people of God. First, it confirms that the rich use of the water metaphor in Isaiah can be taken to refer to the Spirit of the Lord. Second, it connects the Spirit, seed, children and blessing in a theologically significant way. The generative role of the Spirit in the formation of the new people of God is further elaborated, as the pouring of the Spirit produces the restored people of God who “spring up like grass” and “willows by the streams” (44:4). These people identify as the Lord's own, and name themselves after Jacob-Israel (44:5 οὗτος ἐρεῖ Τοῦ θεοῦ εἰμι, καὶ οὗτος βοήσεται ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰακωβ, καὶ ἕτερος ἐπιγράψει Τοῦ θεοῦ εἰμι, ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰσραηλ). Blenkinsopp asserts that the descriptions in 44:5 “can only be understood as proselytes ... who have joined themselves to Yahveh.”⁴⁸³ Hence, this passage claims that the provision of the Spirit is integral in the formation and identification of the restored people of God that includes people from other nations. This connects with the Abrahamic promise in Gen 12:3, 18:18, 22:18, and its development in 35:11. Thus, Lee is correct in perceiving here a prophetic envisioning of the fulfilment of the Abrahamic promise of blessing to the nations:

The promise in Gen 35:11, which is a development of the Abrahamic blessing for the nations, that, Jacob, who was renamed Israel, shall become 'a nation and a company of nation', is finally fulfilled at the eschatological restoration of Israel.⁴⁸⁴

Isaiah 63 is another important chapter that talks about the Spirit in the life of God's people.⁴⁸⁵ As the days of old (exodus) are remembered, the Spirit's role is

⁴⁸² Lee understands the parallelism between the Spirit and blessing to develop the thought and not simply as two lines that are equated, i.e. the Spirit is the blessing. (*The Blessing of Abraham, the Spirit, and Justification in Galatians*, 115–116). See discussion on this in 6.3.2.

⁴⁸³ Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 233. Cf. Koole, *Isaiah III, Vol 1/Isaiah 40-48*, 366. Also Wonsuk Ma: “It is certainly unnatural for any Israelite born to have a need to call himself Jacob, or to add the name Israel to his own. The speakers must be non-Israelites who witness the work of the life-giving spirit within Israel and are convinced by the absoluteness of Yahweh and the turn to him.” (*Until the Spirit Comes: The Spirit of God in the Book of Isaiah* [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999], 87.)

⁴⁸⁴ Lee, *The Blessing of Abraham*, 194; cf. Childs, *Isaiah*, 230. Blenkinsopp: “the Abrahamic blessing runs like a strong undercurrent throughout this entire second part of the book” (*Isaiah 40-55*, 233).

⁴⁸⁵ Isa 63 is significant in the development of the understanding of the Holy Spirit in Israel's Scripture (see Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56-66*, 261).

recognised as an integral part in the life of the people. The Lord⁴⁸⁶ saved his people from affliction, because of his love and compassion, but the people disobeyed and provoked his Holy Spirit, and therefore, by opposing God, he became their enemy (63:10). The memories of old provoke a further question: where is the one who set his Spirit among them (63:11 ποῦ ἐστὶν ὁ θεὸς ἐν αὐτοῖς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον), who gave the Spirit that led his people (63:14 κατέβη πνεῦμα παρὰ κυρίου καὶ ὠδήγησεν αὐτούς; οὕτως ἤγαγες τὸν λαόν σου)?⁴⁸⁷ These questions act as a lament of the present condition, in which “divine involvement at the present time” is absent.⁴⁸⁸ The Spirit is remembered as the hallmark of God's people. Surprisingly, when the people now in need of divine assistance ask to the Lord to look upon them in mercy (63:15), they appeal to him directly as the father (63:16 σὺ γὰρ ἡμῶν εἶ πατήρ). Even if the patriarchs (Abraham and Israel/Jacob) would not recognise them, the Lord is asked to be the father of a people who have become as if not his people (63:16 ὅτι Αβρααμ οὐκ ἔγνων ἡμᾶς, καὶ Ἰσραὴλ οὐκ ἐπέγνων ἡμᾶς, ἀλλὰ σὺ, κύριε, πατήρ ἡμῶν; 19 ἐγενόμεθα ὡς τὸ ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς, ὅτε οὐκ ἠρξασ ἡμῶν οὐδὲ ἐπεκλήθη τὸ ὄνομά σου ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς). This is a confession of a people who sense that their unfaithfulness would not allow them to be recognised as offspring of Abraham or the people of Israel. As Koole notes: “this means that the congregation in its present situation can no longer appeal to its natural ancestry ... this requires a new covenant.”⁴⁸⁹ It is a call for a new beginning, deliverance and re-formation of a people who need the mercy of the Father and the restored presence of his Spirit to become the true people of God.

4.3.5 The Servant and the Generation of the Community of Servants

As I noted in my analysis of the immediate context of Isa 54:1, it is the servant in 52:13-53:12 that brings about the restoration pictured in chs. 54-55. I also pointed out that the servant's work generates the many children of the barren woman who are later described as the community of servants in 54:17.⁴⁹⁰

Before I take up the texts that directly speak of the servant or many servants, I

486 LXX is emphatic that it was not an angel (63:9 οὐ πρέσβυς οὐδὲ ἄγγελος, ἀλλ’ αὐτὸς κύριος ἔσωσεν αὐτούς); *pace* MT that designates it as an angel (אֱלֹהִים יְהוָה יִצְחָק וְיִשְׂרָאֵל).

487 Cf. Blenkinsopp: “the first step toward restoring the broken relationship between people and their God is to remember” (*Isaiah 56-66*, 261).

488 Ibid.

489 Koole, *Isaiah III, Vol.3/Isaiah 56-66*, 378.

490 Cf. Laato on the connection and development from the servant's many offspring in Isa 53:10 to the many servants in 54:17 (*About Zion*, 156, 160–161).

briefly discuss the movement in Isaiah from the expectation of a messianic figure to the servant. Chapter 11 introduces an expectation of a future “Davidic” king (11:1) who is anointed by the Spirit (11:2-3) to execute the saving justice of God (11:4). His justice brings about conditions of unprecedented peace that are pictured like a new creation: the wolf grazing with the lamb etc. (11:5-9). Moreover, the “new creation” conditions are the result of the entire earth having been filled with the knowledge of the Lord (11:9). This vision of restoration in Isa 11 shares in the same pattern as 54:1 in its context: the future “Davidic messiah” brings about restoration in peace and the knowledge of God. But what happens to this expectation of the Davidic messiah? Williamson observes that God's kingship comes to the fore in the latter part of the book, and human kingship disappears, as far as Israel is concerned.⁴⁹¹ Furthermore, the covenant with David's house is understood to have been extended/transferred to all Israel according to Isa 55:3 – the movement of “democratization of the monarchy.”⁴⁹² But this is limited in its context (55:4-5) to refer to the role of a witness to the nations.⁴⁹³ Hence, the pattern of God-king-people is transformed to God-people-nations.⁴⁹⁴ It is in this transition that Israel becomes called the servant, a title that was used of the king in Israel (cf. Psalm 89).⁴⁹⁵ This connection between the kingly role and the servant is reflected in the presentation of the servant in 42:1-4 in “royal guise.”⁴⁹⁶ Although there is movement from the role of the king to the people becoming the servant, the vision of the king and his task continues through this transition. This is anchored in the vision of God as king in Isa 6.⁴⁹⁷ Thus, the role of the servant (collective people) is to witness – to represent – the interests of God the King in the ultimate vision of restoration that is about a new “ideal society” that consists of faithfulness, righteousness and peace.⁴⁹⁸

With this understanding of the transition from the role of the king to the people as the servant, I turn to the analysis of the texts about the servant. In chapter 41, Israel is

491 Williamson, *Variations*, 4.

492 Ibid., 5, 7–8; commenting on 55:3-5: “the covenant with David is here potentially transferred to the people as a whole” (Ibid., 117). Cf. Goldingay, *The Message of Isaiah 40-55*, 97. Michael Fishbane also notices in Isa 55:1-5, what he calls, “a nationalization of the promises to David as formulated in Ps.89” (*Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985], 495).

493 Williamson, *Variations*, 119.

494 Ibid., 123–124; Williamson suggests that Isa 55:3-5 offers a way to understand the nationalistic-universalistic tension in Isaiah (holding together both dimensions): the purpose is that blessing/salvation reaches the nations; this is mediated by the people Israel, who thus enjoys a privileged relationship with God and a costly responsibility; also the nations have privileges (potential to enjoy the blessings) and responsibilities (obedience and submission to God's chosen mediator) (Ibid., 127).

495 Williamson, *Variations*, 129.

496 Ibid., 132–134.

497 Ibid., 9.

498 Ibid., 20.

comforted by recalling her calling: Σὺ δέ, Ἰσραηλ, παῖς μου Ἰακωβ, ὃν ἐξελεξάμην, σπέρμα Ἀβρααμ, ὃν ἠγάπησα (41:8). Israel is designated as the servant, being the offspring of Abraham and God's chosen one. The next verse directs attention to the future reality of restoration – a theological reality with which historical reality must catch up:⁴⁹⁹ Israel is the servant that was gathered from the uttermost parts of the earth (41:9). She is not to be afraid for she has been redeemed and made secure (41:10-14).

The description of Israel as God's servant continues in chapter 42.⁵⁰⁰ Now, in addition to Israel being designated as the chosen servant of the Lord, she is pictured as anointed by the Spirit to bring justice to the nations (42:1 ἔδωκα τὸ πνεῦμά μου ἐπ' αὐτόν, κρίσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἐξοίσει),⁵⁰¹ echoing the description of the “Davidic messiah” in Isa 11.⁵⁰² In a surprising move, the servant delivers justice not by a mighty display of power but in meekness (42:2-3). She/he will shine forth and not be broken in the task of establishing justice on the earth, and his law becomes the hope of the nations (42:4 ἐπὶ τῷ νόμῳ αὐτοῦ ἔθνη ἐλπιοῦσιν).⁵⁰³ Justice is the note that dominates the description of the servant's work in 42:1-4, and Koole defines the justice envisioned here as “the realization of God's rule, the advent of the kingdom in which God is recognized, obeyed and praised.”⁵⁰⁴ The Lord promises to uphold his servant and give him as a covenant for a race/family (LXX γένος; MT כּוּנֵן), a light to the nations (εἰς φῶς ἔθνῶν): to open blind eyes and bring out those in bonds who sit in darkness (42:6-7).

This description of the servant's task is ascribed to Israel, but as an ideal.⁵⁰⁵ The

499 Cf. Goldingay, *The Message of Isaiah 40-55*, 103.

500 The LXX translator makes the identity of the servant clear by the terms Jacob and Israel (42:1 Ἰακωβ ὁ παῖς μου, ἀντιλήμψομαι αὐτοῦ Ἰσραηλ ὁ ἐκλεκτός μου) that do not appear in the MT (יְהוָה יִפְתָּח לִּי וְיִצְאֵנִי מִן הַמִּצְרַיִם וְיִצְרֵם לִּי וְיִצְרֵם לִּי וְיִצְרֵם לִּי). This is most likely due to the translator's attempt to translate by giving the sense of the text rather than a slavish literal translation. The context from 41 supplies these designations.

501 Ekblad's analysis concludes that “the LXX presents κρίσις as justice and the victory of righteousness in a world of injustice and darkness” (Eugene Robert Ekblad, *Isaiah's Servant Poems According to the Septuagint: An Exegetical and Theological Study* [Leuven: Peeters, 1999], 278).

502 This description of the servant renders the possibility of interpreting it in a Messianic sense (Koole, *Isaiah III, Vol 1/Isaiah 40-48*, 210). This is possible, but I resist the “quick” identification of 42:1-9 with a Messiah, and rather follow the development of the theme of the servant that provides a “narrative scheme” for identifying the servant in relation to Israel.

503 Thus the Göttingen edition, which corresponds with the MT: וְיִצְרֵם לִּי וְיִצְרֵם לִּי וְיִצְרֵם לִּי. Rahlfs has ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ ἔθνη ἐλπιοῦσιν.

504 Koole, *Isaiah III, Vol 1/Isaiah 40-48*, 208.

505 Blenkinsopp, who argues that the servant in 42:1-9 refers to Cyrus, also recognizes that it could be about an “ideal Israel” or an individual who speaks and acts for Israel (*Isaiah 40-55*, 210–211). I prefer to follow the LXX translator's example in identifying the servant in 42:1-9 from its literary context. Cf. Childs: “for anyone who takes the larger literary context seriously, there can be no avoiding the obvious implication that *in some way* Israel is the servant who is named in 42:1” (*Isaiah*, 325; emphasis original). However, Childs recognises that this opens “enormous interpretive problems” (Ibid.). Hence, it is appealing to identify here a servant who has a function towards Israel rather than being Israel herself. Nevertheless, it is worth pursuing the more difficult task of following the lead of the LXX, and inquire how the servant in 42 can be identified as Israel.

development in the theme of the servant unfolds how this ideal vision is reached. However, the description of the servant's task to open blind eyes and release captives in 42:6-7 already anticipates that the servant in Isa 42 somehow also serves Israel's restoration. Hence, the ideal picture of Israel as the servant in Isa 42 is complicated, which reflects the development of the theme in Isa 49, and ultimately in 53.

After the servant's description, the Lord is depicted going out like a mighty man of war (42:13) to deliver his people; to lead the blind in a way they do not know and turn darkness into light (42:13-16). The blind people in darkness turn out to be those who have turned away from the Lord to worship idols (42:17). In fact, the glorious picture of the servant has turned into a picture of the servant being blind and deaf; though Israel has seen, she has not observed, had eyes but not perceived (42:18-20). Furthermore, she is blind and deaf because she has not understood that exile was the Lord's doing on account of her sin – her resistance to walk in his ways and to listen to his Law (42:23-25). But this is not the end of Israel's story as the servant. The scene shifts again to the theological reality of restoration; Israel is not to fear for the Lord has redeemed her and called her by name to be his (43:1). Because of his love for her, the Lord gathers and calls his people from the ends of the earth (43:4-6). God establishes the blind and deaf people as his witness – his servant – who is now to know, believe, and understand that it is only the Lord who saves (43:8-12). They are called not to remember former things, but behold the new thing God is doing – redemption and restoration (43:18-20). Despite Israel's burdening of the Lord with her sin (43:24 ἐν ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις σου καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἀδικίαις σου προέστην σου),⁵⁰⁶ the Lord promises forgiveness (43:25; cf. 44:21-22). Furthermore, the restoration of Israel as God's servant is the result of the Spirit being poured on her offspring (44:1-5; see 4.3.4). Hence, in this intriguing section of chs. 41-44, the servant is designated as Israel, but she only becomes the true servant who fulfils her calling as God's “Spirit anointed witness” to the nations (cf. 42:1-9) after God has delivered her from her own blindness, deafness and imprisonment in darkness, and has re-formed her by the Spirit.⁵⁰⁷

In the process of restoring Israel to her true calling as God's servant, Cyrus is named as a historical figure who was anointed for the task of restoring the people

⁵⁰⁶ The meaning of the LXX is obscure (reflected in the NETS translation: in your sins and iniquities I have stood before you). The MT is more explicit that the sins and iniquities have burdened the Lord אֲדָהּ הַעֲבֹדָתִי בְּחַטָּאוֹתֶיךָ הוֹנֵעַתִּי בְּעוֹנֹתֶיךָ (note the irony in the use of עֲבָד).

⁵⁰⁷ Cf. Laato, who claims that “according to 42:1 and 61:1 Yhwh's Spirit rests upon his loyal servant. Isa 59:21 promises that this Spirit will come upon all the righteous who share in the covenant that the loyal servant will establish.” (*About Zion*, 167–168.)

(44:28-45:13). Hence, God uses another “servant” – an anointed figure – for the sake of the servant Israel (45:4 ἔνεκεν Ἰακωβ τοῦ παιδός μου καὶ Ἰσραηλ τοῦ ἐκλεκτοῦ μου ἐγὼ καλέσω σε).⁵⁰⁸ But the reception of Cyrus – a Gentile king – as an agent of restoration is not obvious (45:9-10). God, who made the earth and humankind, declares to have raised Cyrus for the task of restoring his people (45:12-13). Cyrus' role towards Israel is a historical precedent that highlights the need for another “servant” to serve the purpose of restoring Israel to become the servant. After chapter 48, Cyrus fades from the purview of the book to make room for the “suffering servant.”⁵⁰⁹ Nevertheless, he provides a paradigm for what follows.

Williamson argues that Isa 49 is a pivotal chapter where there is a transfer of the servant's role from Israel to someone else, and a shift in context and tone from 40-48 to 49-55.⁵¹⁰ After Israel has been designated as the Lord's servant in 49:1-3 (49:3 καὶ εἶπέν μοι Δοῦλός μου εἶ σύ, Ἰσραηλ, καὶ ἐν σοὶ δοξασθήσομαι),⁵¹¹ surprisingly, the servant in 49:5-9 has the task to gather Israel back to God (49:6 ... τοῦ στῆσαι τὰς φυλὰς Ἰακωβ καὶ τὴν διασπορὰν τοῦ Ἰσραηλ ἐπιστρέψαι), and offer light and salvation to the ends of the earth (49:6 ... ἰδοὺ τέθεικά σε εἰς φῶς ἔθνων τοῦ εἶναί σε εἰς σωτηρίαν ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς). Furthermore, the servant is given as a covenant to the nations (49:8 ἔδωκά σε εἰς διαθήκην ἔθνων)⁵¹² to deliver them from their bonds, and bring them out of darkness (49:9). In between these “two” servants, is an expression of a sense of failure or frustration in the servant's work (49:4a Κενῶς ἔκοπίασα καὶ εἰς μάταιον καὶ εἰς οὐθὲν ἔδωκα τὴν ἰσχύν μου), that moves to a more hopeful tone of expectation (49:4b διὰ τοῦτο ἡ κρίσις μου παρὰ κυρίῳ, καὶ ὁ πόνος μου ἐναντίον τοῦ θεοῦ μου). This movement from the servant in 49:1-3 to the servant in 49:5-9f. via

⁵⁰⁸ However, as Goldingay points out, the actual term “servant” is not used of Cyrus, as it is kept for “figures with a part to play in other aspects of Yhwh's purpose than the ones involving Cyrus” (*The Message of Isaiah 40-55*, 368).

⁵⁰⁹ Childs, *Isaiah*, 352.

⁵¹⁰ Williamson, *Variations*, 147–152. I do not agree with Williamson's suggestion that the servant's role has been transferred to the prophet or a group that has responded to his message. I prefer not to engage in speculative historical reconstruction, but rather focus on what can be understood by following the text: transferral of the task to another servant whose identity is not given (cf. Childs, *Isaiah*, 385).

⁵¹¹ Some argue that rather than Israel being designated as the servant here, it is the new servant who is designated as Israel, and thus the whole description is about this new servant without a transfer taking place within the movement in 49:1-9 (e.g. Childs, *Isaiah*, 384; Williamson, *Variations*, 151). The difference comes from reading “Israel” with different syntactical meanings (the MT and LXX are similar here). It can be read as a vocative “O Israel;” or in apposition: “you are my servant, Israel;” or as predicative: “you are my servant, you are Israel” (Childs, *Isaiah*, 384). I perceive it in apposition for contextual reasons (see below).

⁵¹² The LXX assigns the servant as a covenant to the *nations* (ἔδωκά σε εἰς διαθήκην ἔθνων), whereas the MT designates the covenant to the *people* (עָבַדְתִּיךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ). This is an interesting move by a translator that is sometimes accused of a nationalistic agenda (see e.g. Baer, “It's All about Us!”).

verse 4 has caused much puzzle.⁵¹³ Whether or not the movement from one servant (Israel) to another takes place within 49:1-9 or is presupposed in it, what is important for our purpose, is to note that the servant's role is transferred from Israel to someone else closely identified with her. As Ekblad concludes:

the LXX of Isaiah 49:1-7 is an extremely enigmatic text. Its Greek translators sought to take seriously the title of the servant often attributed to Israel. At the same time they wrestled deeply with the impossibility of the servant, (or perhaps some other figure alluded to by the text), actually being Israel.⁵¹⁴

I have earlier offered an analysis on how the servant's work in Isa 52:13-53:12 leads to the vision of restoration in Isa 54. I now situate it in the overall narrative scheme of the servant in Isaiah. This passage has attracted a lot of attention and differing proposals for the identification of the servant.⁵¹⁵ My reading of Isa 52:13-53:12 follows the movement that ascribes the role of the servant to someone other than Israel for the purpose of the restoration of Israel, which has implications for the nations. As the “narrative of the servant” in chapters 41-44 demonstrates, Israel needs God's deliverance from bondage and sin to become the servant she is meant to be. She cannot serve herself in this purpose. In Isa 45, God's act of deliverance is given a historical precedent in Cyrus; he is God's agent to serve the purpose of restoring the servant Israel. Both Cyrus and the servant in 52:13-53:12 are received by a sense of astonishment. In addition, I suggest that Isa 49 (especially the LXX) encapsulates the narrative scheme: the failure of the servant Israel to bring about her own restoration occasions the designation of “another servant” to the task of her restoration, and to extend salvation to

513 The difficulty in the perceived contradiction between v. 3 and vv. 5-6 has caused some earlier commentators even to delete Israel from verse 3 without real textual evidence (e.g. Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 209). Although Childs (*Isaiah*, 383-385), Koole (*Isaiah III, Vol.2/Isaiah 49-55*, 11-13) and Williamson (*Variations*, 150-151) argue that it is the same servant in both vv. 1-3 and 5-9, who is a new servant that is designated as Israel (but not replacing Israel), I still perceive that 49:1-9 includes the transition from Israel as the servant to another servant. The weakness in my reading is the content of verse 4 that expresses frustration that could imply an attempt at trying to be the right kind of servant but seeing no results, in contrast to the failure of Israel to be the servant due to her sin that has been made clear in the previous passages. But it could also be understood as Israel's failure, or sense of frustration in bringing about her own restoration (cf. Isa 37:3; 49:14), which is then addressed in the following verses that introduce a new servant that can accomplish it, and the larger task also to communicate salvation to the nations. Hence, I perceive that this passage summarises the narrative of the servant Israel who needs another servant to restore her and take salvation to the nations that was perceived in chs. 41-44 and 45.

514 Ekblad, *Isaiah's Servant Poems*, 122.

515 Randall Heskett collects a helpful review of the different approaches and suggestions for the identity of the servant in Isa 52:13-53:12: Servant as Israel; individual distinct from Israel; Moses; Cyrus; Prophet Second Isaiah; Messianic (*Messianism within the Scriptural Scroll of Isaiah* [New York; London: T&T Clark, 2007], 133-152). Christopher Seitz adds to the list the option that Isa 52:13-53:12 is about personified Zion (*Zion's Final Destiny: The Development of the Book of Isaiah: A Reassessment of Isaiah 36-39* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991], 203-205). The diversity can partially be explained by variety in approach/method: e.g. is it about historical reconstruction?; is the passage read as a separate “servant song” in connection with the other “servant songs,” or in the context of the whole book of Isaiah?

the nations. It is in this context that the servant in 52:13-53:12 is introduced. This is *the* servant who acts on God's behalf (the “arm of the Lord,” cf. 52:10) to bear the sins of the people, and to bring about restoration of a new community of servants that is envisioned in chapter 54. Hence, Isa 54:1 encapsulates the narrative of restoration that is centred on the servant. This is highlighted in the following analysis of the movement from the one servant to the many servants.⁵¹⁶

The shift from the one servant to the many servants begins in Isa 54:17.⁵¹⁷ It is characteristic of the last section of the book to speak of servants in the plural rather than of a singular servant in conjunction with making a sharp distinction within Israel between the responsive faithful and the disobedient.⁵¹⁸ Hence, Williamson speaks of a move from a “collective singular” to a “plurality of individuals;” not the nation as a whole, but those who seek the Lord are the servants of the Lord.⁵¹⁹ Yet the many servants are not only from among Israel. In chapter 56, the foreigners who “attach” themselves to the Lord (56:6 τοῖς ἀλλογενέσι τοῖς προσκειμένοις κυρίῳ) are to be his male and female servants (τοῦ εἶναι αὐτῷ εἰς δούλους καὶ δούλας).⁵²⁰ They have free access to the holy mountain where there is a house of prayer for all the nations (56:7).

The greatest concentration of the language of “many servants” is in Isa 65. But first, the LXX states that it is because of a singular servant that the Lord will not destroy all the people (65:8 οὕτως ποιήσω ἔνεκεν τοῦ δουλεύοντός μοι).⁵²¹ Hence, there is hope that the offspring of Jacob and Judah, or moreover God's chosen ones and servants, will inherit the holy mountain to dwell there (65:9 καὶ ἐξάξω τὸ ἐξ Ἰακωβ σπέρμα καὶ τὸ ἐξ Ἰουδα, καὶ κληρονομήσει τὸ ὄρος τὸ ἅγιόν μου, καὶ κληρονομήσουσιν οἱ ἐκλεκτοί μου καὶ οἱ δούλοι μου καὶ κατοικήσουσιν ἐκεῖ). Hence, following the LXX, we have again in Isa 65 the pattern of a servant generating the “seed” that are the servants who inherit future restoration. Furthermore, as Koole perceptively points out, “the emphasis is not on national privilege but on individual election and personal servanthood.”⁵²² This fact is highlighted, as, in contrast, those who

516 Isa 61:1-7 is another text about an “anointed figure.” The description of his task (61:1-2) is full of echoes from the anointed “Davidic messiah” in Isa 11, and the servant in chs. 41-44, 45, 49 and 52:13-53:12: “a character who somehow gathers to himself every available role in deuterio-Isaiah related to the work of announcing and inaugurating God's salvation” (Williamson, *Variations*, 184).

517 Cf. Blenkinsopp who argues that 54:17 “serves to introduce a major theme in the last section and functions as an important editorial link between sections” (*Isaiah 40-55*, 366).

518 Cf. Williamson, *Variations*, 192.

519 *Ibid.*, 194.

520 The MT does not distinguish between male and female servants; לְעַבְדֵי יְהוָה.

521 The MT has the plural pointing with a first person singular suffix עָבַדְתִּי. It is not difficult to imagine the LXX translator rendering it as a singular servant from an unpointed Hebrew text.

522 Koole, *Isaiah III, Vol.3/Isaiah 56-66*, 431.

forsake the Lord and disregard the holy mountain will be destroyed (65:11-12). This distinction between the servants and the ones being destroyed comes to sharp focus in 65:13-14 with pronouncements of blessings on those who serve the Lord and “curses” on those who have forsaken the Lord.⁵²³ Those who are under destruction leave their “name” to the chosen ones as a reminder of the destiny of those who forsake the Lord (65:15). The chosen ones are the servants who will receive a “new name” (65:15 τοῖς δὲ δουλεύουσιν αὐτῷ κληθήσεται ὄνομα καινόν, cf. 62:2), and inherit a “new creation” (65:17-25). The giving of a new name is “symbolic of a new epoch” that continues the trajectory of restoration as the new thing that God does (cf. e.g. 43:18-19), with this section envisioning an eschatological scenario that moves the destiny of the servants “from the historical to the metahistorical plane.”⁵²⁴

These observations about the generation of the plurality of servants indicate the direction in the next section where I deepen the discussion concerning the identity of the many children of the barren-made-fruitful woman in Isa 54:1 with focused attention on the nations' inclusion in restoration.

4.3.6 The Identity of the Many Children and the Nations' Inclusion

In the vision of restoration in Isa 54, the many children of the barren woman cause the need to enlarge her tent (54:1-2), and her offspring will inherit the nations (54:3). As the vision develops to the imagery of the city, proselytes/strangers are said to come to the restored city because of God (54:15). In the following, I analyse the identity of the many children with focus on the complex vision about the inclusion of the nations.

The promise of restoration begins in chapter one where Judah/Jerusalem is initially rebuked for her rebellion (1:1-4), and her land is depicted as desolate and devoured (1:7-8). If the Lord had not left some offspring, Jerusalem's fate would have been like that of Sodom and Gomorrah (1:9). Jerusalem's close comparison with the sinful cities continues with the address to leaders of Sodom and people of Gomorrah that refer to the leaders and inhabitants of Jerusalem/Judah (1:10). This connection “dissolves any distinction between Israel and the nations based on superior

⁵²³ Cf. Laato: “Isa 65:13-15 makes a final distinction between the two groups; the groups of ‘my servants’ and the groups of ‘you’ who have abandoned Yhwh and his proclamation of salvation” (*About Zion*, 163).

⁵²⁴ Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66*, 281–283.

righteousness.”⁵²⁵ The discrepancy of Judah's sin and continued life of worship is revealed (1:11-15), and followed by a call to repentance (1:16-17). The offer of forgiveness and the call to obedience would result in “eating the good of the land” (1:18-19), but if she refuses and rebels, she shall be “eaten by the sword” (1:20). Hence, inclusion in restoration is conditional even for the people of Judah. Furthermore, although Zion shall be saved, those who forsake the Lord shall perish, and be put to shame because of idolatry (1:27-31), highlighting the division within Israel with respect to salvation and judgment.⁵²⁶ Where chapter one narrows the line of inclusion within Israel, chapter two widens it to encompass the nations. As Zion is restored and exalted above all other mountains, all the nations are pictured coming to her to be taught by the Lord (2:2-3). Thus, the vision of restoration in the opening chapters of Isaiah makes it clear that inclusion in the restored community is not obvious for the Israelite, and opens the prospect for people of other nations to be also included.⁵²⁷

Chapter 19 describes God's judgments on Egypt and its turning to the Lord (19:1-22). Furthermore, people from Assyria and Egypt, who have turned to the Lord, are joined in the blessing of Israel (implying her restoration) as God's people (19:25 Εὐλογημένος ὁ λαός μου ὁ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ καὶ ὁ ἐν Ἀσσυρίοις καὶ ἡ κληρονομία μου Ἰσραηλ).⁵²⁸ The LXX rendering highlights that it is not the nations as a whole, but those that have turned to the Lord that are reckoned to be included in God's people.

The “apocalyptic section” of Isaiah describes the restoration of Israel with universal and cosmic consequences. The Lord, who reigns from Zion, judges the impious and evil people, and elevates the poor and oppressed (24:23-25:5). Chapter 25 describes the Lord making a “feast” for all the nations on Zion (25:6 καὶ ποιήσει κύριος σαβαωθ πᾶσι τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος τοῦτο). On that day, people rejoice in

⁵²⁵ Ekblad, *Isaiah's Servant Poems*, 283.

⁵²⁶ Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 187.

⁵²⁷ The implication of Israel's restoration on the Gentiles is not always depicted in positive tones. E.g. in chapter 14, the Lord promises, in his compassion, that he will again choose and bring Israel back (14:1). Foreigners join Israel and attach themselves to the house of Jacob (14:1 ὁ γῶρας προστεθήσεται πρὸς αὐτοὺς καὶ προστεθήσεται πρὸς τὸν οἶκον Ἰακωβ). But this time, the foreigners who have been former oppressors now become Israel's slaves over whom they shall rule (14:2).

⁵²⁸ The LXX could just mean that the blessing is to “my inheritance Israel” (“my people who are in Egypt and in Assyria, indeed my inheritance Israel”), and not necessarily Egyptians and Assyrians. Thus Seeligmann: “the countries Egypt and Assyria, as the recipients of God's blessing, in the Hebrew text have been replaced in the Greek by the diaspora groups in Egypt and Mesopotamia” (Isaac Leo Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah: A Discussion of Its Problems* [Leiden: Brill, 1948], 117). But this is unlikely due to the context that describes Egyptians turning to the Lord. It is better to view the translator specifying that it is not the nations as a whole, but only those in them that have turned to the Lord. The option remains also to read the sense as: blessed be my people who are in Egypt and in Assyria, indeed they are my inheritance Israel. Nevertheless, the MT remains much stronger and explicit in stating that Egypt is God's people and Assyria the work of his hands אֱשׂוּר וְנַגְלָתִי יִשְׂרָאֵל.

God's salvation (25:9), but at the expense of the Moabites whose pride has been brought low (25:10-12). Chapter 26 states that the people who keep righteousness and faith, and have hoped in the Lord, will enter the city (26:2-4). In contrast, the oppressors of Israel, the ungodly and impious, are destroyed (26:10-15, 21). Chapter 27 places the emphasis on the gathering of the scattered and oppressed people of Israel from among the nations (27:12 ὑμεῖς δὲ συναγάγετε τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραὴλ κατὰ ἓνα ἓνα). They will come and worship the Lord on the holy mountain at Jerusalem (27:13). Hence, the “apocalyptic vision” of restoration emphasises the salvation of God's oppressed people Israel, and the nations are placed primarily under judgement. But these categories are not purely nationalistic, as the focus of salvation is on the oppressed people who have hoped in God, and judgment is on the boastful ungodly oppressors.

In the context of restoring Israel to be God's servant, the restored people in chapter 43 are the scattered offspring of Israel who are being regathered (43:1-7). As Cyrus is designated the anointed agent of Israel's deliverance and restoration, the aim is that other nations recognise that there is no other God but the Lord (45:6). Furthermore, people of other nations (Egypt, Cush, Sabeans) – former slave-owners – become Israel's slaves in chains, recognising that God is in Israel (45:14).⁵²⁹ All who oppose God shall be put to shame, but Israel is saved with everlasting salvation (45:16-17). However, invitation to salvation is extended to the ends of the earth (45:22 ἐπιστράφητε πρὸς με καὶ σωθήσεσθε, οἱ ἀπ’ ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς). Indeed, righteousness will proceed from the mouth of the Lord as words that shall not return back (45:23). The words of righteousness are proven effectual in the future reality (cf. 55:11) when every knee shall bow before the Lord and every tongue confess to God (45:23).⁵³⁰ As Blenkinsopp remarks, Isaiah is not a universalist when presenting a universal offer of salvation; it is not an offer of “unconditional universal salvation, without some form of confession of faith.”⁵³¹ The content of the confession is given in the next verse: Δικαιοσύνη καὶ δόξα πρὸς αὐτὸν ἤξουσιν, καὶ αἰσχυθήσονται πάντες οἱ ἀφορίζοντες ἑαυτοὺς (45:24). It is a recognition of dependence on God. It is all those who have turned to the Lord that are made righteous by the Lord (ἀπὸ κυρίου δικαιοθήσονται), indeed all the seed of

529 Cf. Koole, *Isaiah III, Vol 1/Isaiah 40-48*, 463.

530 Cf. Childs, *Isaiah*, 297. There is question whether the word of righteousness is a word of promise or command; and whether the confession is willing or forced (see Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 262–263). For me, v. 22 sets the tone to be about an invitation for salvation, and hence I read the next verses as promise of righteousness and the willing response of those who have turned to the Lord.

531 Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 257. Blenkinsopp defines the universalism in Isa 45:22-25 thus: “the universalism in question is therefore the claim of universal jurisdiction and dominion advanced on behalf of Yahveh and based on his creation of the world and direction of the course of history” (Ibid., 262).

Israel (those who have joined in the confession of faith) is glorified (45:25).⁵³² In this vision of restoration, monotheism and the universal offer of salvation are connected. The people being saved are the ones who recognise the sovereignty of God. In contrast, those who oppose or separate themselves from God are excluded. These categories of inclusion and exclusion transcend national/ethnic boundaries, and have the potential to create a new community of a shared confession.

The vision of restoration in chapter 49 resembles the note in 54:2-3: when the Lord delivers and restores Zion, she will be too crowded for her inhabitants (49:19-20). Zion wonders where all the people have come from (49:21). The Lord answers that it is he who signals the nations to bring her sons and daughters (49:22). Foreign kings and queens have been “foster fathers and mothers” who now bow down to Zion (49:23). Then Zion knows that the Lord is the Lord, and those who wait for him shall not be put to shame (49:23). The Lord will surely save Zion's children and judge her oppressors (49:25-26). Here the focus is on gathering the sons and daughters of Zion, and the nations are included as servants to that purpose. This is an example of the “common promise that Israel's humbling by the nations will be systematically reversed.”⁵³³

Chapter 51 addresses those who pursue righteousness and seek the Lord (51:1 Ἀκούσατέ μου, οἱ διώκοντες τὸ δίκαιον καὶ ζητοῦντες τὸν κύριον), i.e. the people aligning themselves with the servant of ch. 49 (cf. 50:10 Τίς ἐν ὑμῖν ὁ φοβούμενος τὸν κύριον; ἀκουσάτω τῆς φωνῆς τοῦ παιδὸς αὐτοῦ).⁵³⁴ As Koole summarises: “decisive now is the relationship with the person and work of the Servant, 50:10f.”⁵³⁵ They are to look to Abraham their father and to Sarah who bore them, and are reminded that Abraham was but one when he was called that the Lord might bless and multiply him (51:2). The Lord will send out his law and justice as a light to the peoples (51:4; cf. 2:3). As the Lord's salvation goes out, the nations and islands hope for him and wait for his “arm” (51:5). Thus, in line with the Abrahamic promise (Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:17-18), as the Lord restores Zion, the saving “arm” of the Lord is extended to the nations.

Chapter 56 begins a new section, in which the hope of restoration is reflected on

⁵³² Cf. Childs: “the ‘offspring of Israel’ is now defined in terms of those who find in God their righteousness and strength” (*Isaiah*, 356).

⁵³³ Goldingay, *The Message of Isaiah 40-55*, 392.

⁵³⁴ Blenkinsopp notes the connection from 50:10 to 51:1, but interprets the servant as the prophet, and hence perceives the addressees as “the well disposed among the prophet's audience addressed in the previous passage” (*Isaiah 40-55*, 325).

⁵³⁵ Koole, *Isaiah III, Vol.2/Isaiah 49-55*, 138. Koole concludes: “in the drama of chaps. 40-55, after the opposition to the divine word in 42:18ff.; 45:9ff.; 48:1ff., a division emerges within Israel, which goes together with the prospect of universal salvation” (Ibid.). Childs is also emphatic on the identification of the people with the servant (*Isaiah*, 402).

in the context of partial/complicated fulfilment. The Lord promises to bring all those who keep the Sabbath and his covenant to his holy mountain (56:1-7). This includes the stranger and eunuch (56:3). The eunuch, who keeps the Sabbath and covenant, is promised an especially esteemed position in the house of the Lord (56:4-5). The foreigner, who attaches himself to the Lord to serve him is promised a place as a servant (56:6). Thus, the Lord's house shall be called the house of prayer for all peoples (56:7 ὁ γὰρ οἶκός μου οἶκος προσευχῆς κληθήσεται πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν). The inclusion of people from other nations is also expressed in the added gathering of a group (56:8b συναΐξω ἐπ' αὐτὸν συναγωγῆν) besides the exiles of Israel (56:8a) – a possible reference to the foreigners being joined into the faithful remnant of Israel.⁵³⁶ These verses envision a faithful community that consists of Israelites and people from other nations joining in the worship of the Lord. As Childs recognises:

the point is made decisively that the 'servants' can include foreigners and outcasts who line themselves with the law of God over against the rebels and sinners within and without Israel who continue to resist his will.⁵³⁷

Callaway presses the point even further:

The prophet challenges the accepted categories of blessed and cursed, elect and outcast; precisely he who is excluded from worship turns out to be the one who receives the blessing. The 'barren' one who keeps the law is in fact the fruitful one.⁵³⁸

Where chapter 56 blurred the categories for who can be included in the people of God, chapter 58 complicates the line of what it means to be the faithful/righteous restored people of God. It begins by an emphatic command to declare the sins of Israel to them (58:1). Yet these are people who seem to do righteousness (58:2 ὡς λαὸς δικαιοσύνην πεποιτηκώς). Hence they ask: why does God not look to their fasting and humbling (58:3)? The Lord answers that their fasting is not of the kind he is looking for; their action is self seeking and oppressive to others (58:3). He then outlines the content of real fasting – caring for those in need (58:6-7),⁵³⁹ and if the people would practise this, their restoration would be real (58:8-12). The focus shifts then to the true practice of Sabbath (58:13). The people are called to abandon their own self-seeking practice, and to truly hallow the day, and delight in the Lord's Sabbath, and thus trust (LXX) /

⁵³⁶ MT 56:8 אֶקְרָא עָלָיו לְהַקְרִיבוּ אֵלָיו lit. again/adding I will gather to him to those who have been gathered to him (cf. Williamson, *Variations*, 197).

⁵³⁷ Childs, *Isaiah*, 458.

⁵³⁸ Callaway, *Sing, O Barren One*, 92–93.

⁵³⁹ Fishbane argues that this is not about social concern in self-referential terms, but about the reapplication of the rules and regulations concerning the Day of Atonement (Lev 16; 23:24-32) (*Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 305).

delight (MT) in the Lord (58:14).⁵⁴⁰ If they do this, they will be given/fed the inheritance of Jacob – the provision of the land (58:14). Hence, it is not an outward observance of the Law that satisfies the Lord and secures the inheritance of restoration. God desires a people who trust in him and live in true accordance with righteousness and compassion.

In chapter 60, Jerusalem is called to shine the light of the glory of the Lord. It includes the dimension of mediating divine revelation to others.⁵⁴¹ This light is set in contrast to the darkness in the world – the absence of salvation (60:2a ἰδοὺ σκότος καὶ γνόφος καλύψει γῆν ἐπ’ ἔθνη).⁵⁴² Although the glory of God is manifested and concentrated on the new restored Jerusalem (60:2b ἡ δόξα αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ σὲ ὀφθήσεται), the nations are not left in darkness but shall come to her light – “the salvation of fellowship with God”⁵⁴³ (60:3 καὶ πορεύσονται βασιλεῖς τῷ φωτί σου καὶ ἔθνη τῆ λαμπρότητί σου)⁵⁴⁴ – echoing the vision in Isa 2:2-3.⁵⁴⁵ The people from other nations can be understood as included among the children of the new restored Jerusalem (60:4 ἰδὲ συνηγμένα τὰ τέκνα σου ἰδοὺ ἤκασιν πάντες οἱ υἱοὶ σου μακρόθεν, καὶ αἱ θυγατέρες σου ἐπ’ ὤμων ἀρθήσονται; cf. 56:8).⁵⁴⁶ This reading is supported by the development of the thought in vv. 5-6. With the returning of the children of Jerusalem comes also the wealth of the nations (60:5-6) that is brought joyfully with proclamation of the good news of the Lord's salvation (60:6 τὸ σωτήριον κυρίου εὐαγγελιοῦνται)⁵⁴⁷ – the nations' transition from darkness to light (60:3). The nations' offerings include

540 Koole notes the contrast between the “delighting in the Sabbath” and the torments and mourning rituals of the fasting (58:5), and the self-seeking enriching of the self (58:13) (*Isaiah III, Vol.3/Isaiah 56-66*, 156). The point is, according to Koole, that “the value of these activities can be played down, because well-being and salvation are not brought about by man himself but by God's blessing” (Ibid.).

541 Koole, *Isaiah III, Vol.3/Isaiah 56-66*, 223.

542 Ibid., 224; cf. Childs, *Isaiah*, 496.

543 Koole, *Isaiah III, Vol.3/Isaiah 56-66*, 225. Cf. Laato, *About Zion*, 155.

544 The LXX has an interchanged order from the MT in referring to kings and peoples: לְנָגַהּ וְרָקָהּ (cf. Ottley, *The Book of Isaiah According to the Septuagint*, 2:366).

545 See Fishbane (*Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 498), for a demonstration of ch. 60 picking up of the themes from 2:1-4 (cf. Childs, *Isaiah*, 496). Koole notes that some juxtapose “the pilgrimage of the nations” in ch. 2 with the picture of “Israel's position of power” in ch. 60 (*Isaiah III, Vol.3/Isaiah 56-66*, 225). This is understandable in light of vv. 10-16, but does not take seriously enough the main emphasis of the nations being drawn to the light of God's salvation, and the difference made between the peoples that come in and those that refuse (vv. 12-14).

546 There is debate whether the children of Jerusalem/Zion here refer to the nations or the dispersed of Israel (see Koole, *Isaiah III, Vol.3/Isaiah 56-66*, 226). Koole argues that both are in view when this verse is taken in its context (vv. 4b and 9b referring to the dispersed of Israel; 5b and 6 to the nations) (Ibid.). I agree, although I perceive more focus on the returning of the dispersed of Israel, but nevertheless including the nations in the process and in salvation (cf. 60:3, 6). Hence, it is possible to understand the nations being included in *all* the children of Jerusalem, but it is not clear. Blenkinsopp views the passage to be primarily about the “repatriation of diaspora Jews,” and the nations are in a subservient role (*Isaiah 56-66*, 212–216), but he neglects any notions of the nations' joyful entry and participation in salvation.

547 The MT has the nations proclaiming the praises of the Lord: וְהִתְהַלְּלוּ לְפָנֵי יְהוָה יְבִישׁוּרִי.

acceptable sacrifices in the Lord's house of prayer (60:7; cf. 56:7 and 66:23). The nations also bring back the dispersed of Israel (60:8-9), which is an act of eschatological reversal from wrath to mercy, from being destroyed by foreign nations to having the foreigners build the city walls up again (60:10).⁵⁴⁸ The nations' involvement in the restored city receives even more nuances, as some come in with their wealth (60:11), and others are humbled, or face destruction because they were either former oppressors (60:14), or now refuse to serve the restored Jerusalem/Zion (60:12).⁵⁴⁹ Hence, the vision of restoration in chapter 60 opens the gates of the restored Jerusalem wide open for the people of other nations to enter into God's light and salvation, but their inclusion in salvation is not self-evident. The emphasis on eschatological reversal places the nations in a subservient role to Israel's regathering, as former oppressors become the new servants, and those who refuse to submit to the “new” Jerusalem are destroyed. Thus, although the gates of the restored Jerusalem have been opened, they remain shut for those who refuse to recognise its glory. Consequently, the categories for inclusion or exclusion transcend national boundaries, as Childs concludes:

the polarity, which is consistent throughout Third Isaiah, is between those who turn to Yahweh, including foreigners, and those who resist God's will ... judgment is decreed for those peoples, including Israelites, who oppose God's salvation.⁵⁵⁰

Characteristically for the last section of the book, after the hopes of salvation set forth in ch. 62, the people cry out to God in despair, as the city is in desolation (63:15; 64:9-10). In all this, the people think the Lord has kept silent (64:11). But the Lord answers in chapter 65, and declares that he became visible and was found by those who did not seek him; he said “here I am” to a nation that did not call my name (65:1 εἶπα Ἰδοὺ εἰμι, τῷ ἔθνει οἷ οὐκ ἐκάλεσαν τὸ ὄνομά μου)⁵⁵¹ – referring to the people of Israel who have just declared that they were as if not his people (63:19). The Lord says

⁵⁴⁸ Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66*, 214. Koole encapsulates the note well: “the formerly hostile nations come to rebuild the ‘eternal ruins’ (58:12; 61:4) which they themselves caused” (*Isaiah III, Vol.3/Isaiah 56–66*, 238). Childs argues that to view the picture (in vv. 8-9) as “crude postexilic nationalism” misses the theocentric theological point, in which “Zion is understood as the restored divine city” and “its splendor is identified with the rendering of honor to God” (*Isaiah*, 497). To prevent a one-sided reading of the roles in restoration, chapter 61 describes those who mourn for Zion rebuilding the ancient ruins (61:4), in contrast to the foreigners in 60:12. Blenkinsopp attributes the discrepancy in the description of the rebuilding of the walls (60:12; 61:4; 62:6) to the lack of unity in authorship (*Isaiah 56–66*, 214). But speculations on authorship are unnecessary, as it can be due to the different passages reflecting different emphases on the future restoration. Also, Childs resists the demand of “logical consistency” from a poetic text, and goes as far as calling it “excessively rationalistic and pedestrian” (*Isaiah*, 494).

⁵⁴⁹ Koole points out that the *οἱ τοὶ ταπεινωσάντων σε καὶ παροξυνάντων σε* in 60:14 does not necessarily refer only to people from other nations but can also include the oppression within Israel that has been exposed in 58:6-10 and implied in 60:18 (*Isaiah III, Vol.3/Isaiah 56–66*, 245).

⁵⁵⁰ Childs, *Isaiah*, 498.

⁵⁵¹ MT has the passive (Pual): *לֹא-לְנַפְשׁוֹ אֵין-קָרָא בְּשֵׁמִי* (people that was not called by my name).

he has stretched his hand all day long to a disobedient and rebellious people who walk in their sin (65:2). This vision of restoration provides a paradigmatic move: the Lord reveals himself to a non-people – to a sinful, rebellious and idolatrous people. This refers to Israel, but also offers a point of identification for other “non-peoples.”

In chapter 66, the Lord articulates what he is looking for: not a temple, but for the humble that tremble at his words (66:1-2).⁵⁵² In contrast, God will repay those who offer sacrifices in vain, because they did not hear him (66:3-4). All those who love Jerusalem are to rejoice with her (66:10). The Lord will provide comfort to those who worship (LXX) / serve (MT) him (66:13-14). In contrast, the Lord comes in fire against those who disobey him (LXX) / his enemies (MT), and the idolaters shall be destroyed (66:14-17). Here, the focus is on Israel, but with a distinction within; the Lord looks with acceptance at the humble that listen to him, but is against those who disobey him.

In the concluding section that provides a “summary of eschatological themes that occur throughout the entire book of Isaiah,”⁵⁵³ the Lord comes to gather all the nations and tongues to see his glory (66:18 ἔρχομαι συναγαγεῖν πάντα τὰ ἔθνη καὶ τὰς γλώσσας, καὶ ἤξουσιν καὶ ὄψονται τὴν δόξαν μου).⁵⁵⁴ Then he sends people from among the saved (those from among the nations that were gathered in the previous verse)⁵⁵⁵ to proclaim God's glory to the nations who have not heard God's name or seen his glory (66:19). They will bring “your brothers” from all the nations as a gift to the Lord (66:20 καὶ ἄξουσιν τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς ὑμῶν ἐκ πάντων τῶν ἐθνῶν δῶρον κυρίῳ), most likely referring to the dispersed of Israel.⁵⁵⁶ Nevertheless, the ultimate aim of this multidimensional gathering is that “all flesh” shall come to worship in Jerusalem (66:23 ἤξει πᾶσα σὰρξ ἐνώπιόν μου προσκυνῆσαι ἐν Ἱερουσαλημ). In contrast, those who transgress against the Lord do not make it to the holy mountain but lie destroyed on the ground (66:24) as a warning sign and a reminder that “Isaiah is the book which preaches

552 Blenkinsopp suggests that the description of the group in 61:2 could refer to a “marginalized group in the community . . . these people have been expelled or excommunicated . . . ostracism, loss of civil and religious rights, would have resulted in economic destitution, consistent with the profile of the one on whom, in 66:1-2, YHWH looks with favor” (*Isaiah 56–66*, 296–297). Although Blenkinsopp's view is based on a speculative historical reconstruction of the conditions of the post-exilic community, it highlights the issue of division within Israel in regard to inclusion in the people accepted by the Lord.

553 Childs, *Isaiah*, 542.

554 Koole notes that in the history of interpretation the purpose of this gathering of the nations has been seen as “the divinely intended attack on the holy city by Gog and Magog, which would end in their destruction,” but argues that this view is not supported by the use of gathering language in the second main section of Isaiah, where it is “always in a favorable sense” (*Isaiah III, Vol.3/Isaiah 56–66*, 517–518).

555 Cf. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66*, 314; Koole, *Isaiah III, Vol.3/Isaiah 56–66*, 520.

556 Koole, *Isaiah III, Vol.3/Isaiah 56–66*, 523.

salvation and also penitence.”⁵⁵⁷ Although the final concluding section maintains the categories of Israel and the nations, the restored community dissolves the distinction, as it is comprised of people from the nations and Israel who respond to the proclamation of God's self disclosure (glory), and as all flesh join in the worship of the one God.

As Schultz has pointed out, the canonical framing of the book of Isaiah by the parallel sections of chs, 1-2 and 65-66 is an important hermeneutical key for navigating the complexity in the material about the nations' role in Israel's restoration.⁵⁵⁸ This guides the reading of Isaiah to a more universal direction, because the beginning and end envision an “unhindered access of Gentiles from many nations to divine instruction and to the worship of Yahweh in the temple.”⁵⁵⁹

Besides the guide from the canonical framing of the book, I perceive that the key to reading Isaiah in relation to the nations is its nuanced view of inclusion in the restored community that transcends the traditional dichotomy of a nationalistic versus universalistic focus. As I have demonstrated in the analysis of several texts, the categories of those being saved and those being excluded transcend national boundaries: Israel or the nations. Hence, I agree with Williamson who claims that the last two chapters in Isaiah signal a major transition (not just in Isaiah but in the whole Hebrew Bible), in which the identity of the people of God is being identified theologically rather than nationally.⁵⁶⁰ The Lord looks both in Israel and among the nations to those who hear his word and respond (66). Also, the new restored humanity consists of those who join in the confession that God alone gives righteousness and glory to those who turn to him (45). It is those who oppose him in Israel and among the nations that face judgment. Furthermore, Israel's deliverance from exile is presented as an act of mercy and compassion rather than an act of obligation that God has towards his special people. The statement in 65:1 about God appearing to a people who were not his, referring to Israel (63:19), brings hope also to others who are not originally called God's people. Hence, when the nations see this act of mercy and the Lord's glory in it, they are drawn to its light. Israel's salvation and restoration can be viewed as a paradigmatic event that opens the way for other similarly sinful people to receive mercy and be included in the people of God. This, I perceive, is the theological potential Isaiah offers. Also, the book

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid., 531.

⁵⁵⁸ Richard L. Schultz, “Nationalism and Universalism in Isaiah,” in *Interpreting Isaiah*, 131. See also Laato (*About Zion*, 163–164) for a similar approach, and Childs (*Isaiah*, 22) on the beginning and end of Isaiah forming an inclusio.

⁵⁵⁹ Schultz, “Nationalism and Universalism in Isaiah,” 143.

⁵⁶⁰ Williamson, *Variations*, 194–195.

appeals to Abraham as a paradigm of God's ability to form his people again from the “barrenness” of her desolation. In accordance with the Abrahamic promise, the blessing of inclusion in the restored people of God is extended to all the nations by the servant of the Lord – the “arm” of salvation.

4.4 Conclusions

The aim of this chapter has been to explore the theological potential in Isaiah’s vision of restoration, as it is encapsulated by Isa 54:1 in its immediate context, with regard to the themes that correlate with Paul’s interests in Gal 4:21-5:1. The analysis has not been a comprehensive exploration of the meaning potential of Isaiah nor a comparative study of its appropriation by different Jewish interpreters. I have simply attempted to follow the lead of Paul’s special interests to explore how the Isaianic textual matrix resonates with Paul’s convictions. The purpose has been to gain textual proficiency with the pertinent material in the book of Isaiah for a robust and in-depth intertextual reading of Gal 4:21-5:1 in ch. 6.

My analysis of the immediate context and the thematic intratextual matrix of Isa 54:1 has demonstrated that the verse Paul quotes in Gal 4:27 is “pregnant” with theological themes that run through the book of Isaiah. The barren woman giving birth to many children entails its own narrative of restoration as God's regenerative activity to form a new people of God – re-create humanity (1:2; 42; 44; 49; 51; 66). It is also integrally connected with the “narrative of the servant” (11; 41-44; 45; 49; 52:13-53:12; 54:17; 56; 61; 65) and the provision of the Spirit (44; 55; 63) that are both placed in key roles in the generation of the “many children” who are identified as “children of Sarah” (51:2; 44; 54:1) and the restored community of the “Jerusalem above” (2; 24-27; 51-52; 54:11-13; 60; 66).

The barren woman with many children is intimately connected with the vision of restoring a desolate city to new glory. The vision of the “Jerusalem above” in chapter two sets in motion the expectation of the coming of God's kingdom (24-27; 52). It is about a new community of people that live in the presence of God (2; 4; 66), and are taught to live in his ways (2; 54:13; 66) to reflect and represent the character of God – justice and mercy (42; 54:14; 58; 66) – for the light and ongoing redemption of the world (42; 66). The “Jerusalem above” is the metropolis – the “mother city” – of all

who have received the revelation of the servant of the Lord (52:10; 53:1), and have come in their thirst to drink of the waters (44:3-5; 55:1) – the Spirit – that the Lord gives as a gift of grace (55:1). Those who enter the city have also entered the reality of “new creation” (43; 55; 66).

The identification of the barren woman's many children wrestles with the theme of the nations' inclusion. The material is diverse and resonates with different and sometimes conflicting voices (positive: 2; 19; 52; 66; mixed: 24-27; 45; 60-61; negative: 14; 49; 52; 56). The canonical form of Isaiah provides landmarks to navigate the crosscurrents. The beginning (1-2) and end of the book (65-66) mark the route that dissolves the dichotomy between the nationalistic and universalistic dimensions. The “many children” – the regenerated people of God – are ultimately neither Israelites nor people of other nations, but people that have turned to the Lord from their own ways (1; 19; 55; 66), and have responded with humility and trust to the offer of salvation (55; 66) – they depend on God for righteousness and glory (45). But, more importantly, it is the “narrative of the servant” that defines the “many children” who inherit the promise of restoration; their existence and identity are derived from their relationship to the servant (49-51; 53-54; 61) and the Spirit (44; 63). Isaiah's vision of the restored community is not so much about the *who* (Israelites and/or the nations), as it is about the *how* (God's generative activity via the servant and Spirit) – it is the *how* that determines the *who*.

The vision of restoration is intimately connected with the Abrahamic promise (29:22, 44; 48; 51; 54). Restoration, as the generation of a new humanity, is understood as the fulfilment of the programme set in motion with Abraham: many descendants and blessing that extends to the nations. Isa 54:1 echoes the first movement of the birth of Isaac from barren Sarah, and connects it with the hope and reality of restoration that includes the nations within the scope of divine blessing. The echo of the Abrahamic promise of blessing to the nations is heard in the frequent reference to all the nations being included in restoration (e.g. 2:2; 25:6; 56:7; 66:18). Nevertheless, the regenerated people ultimately appeal to God, rather than to Abraham, as their Father (63), as they owe their existence to his mercy (54; 55; 63) and direct divine action (66) rather than their ancestral heritage or any other sense of fittingness and worth.

Chapter 5. Paul's Allegorical Practice in Galatians 4:21-5:1

This thesis has progressed to its climax. I am now in a position to analyse first Paul's hermeneutic, as I address in this chapter the questions of how and why Paul conducts his allegorical reading of Scripture in Gal 4:21-5:1. To set Paul's allegorical practice into a theoretical framework and a historical context, I discuss in 5.1 the phenomenon of allegory in the Hellenistic and Jewish worlds before and around the time of Paul with special reference to the famous allegorist Philo of Alexandria. In my analysis of Paul's allegorical practice in 5.2, I also draw on some insights from studies on Rabbinic interpretation (*midrash*). After laying a foundation for understanding Paul's application of the scriptural intertexts (5.2-5), I proceed in ch. 6 to undertake a reading of Gal 4:21-5:1 in conversation with the theological potential of the intertexts that were analysed in chs. 3 and 4. The aim is to discern the theological vision and logic of the passage, and to demonstrate how it focuses the theology of the whole letter.

5.1 Context for Paul's Allegorical Practice

Defining allegory is not a simple matter, since there is no one type of allegory, but more of a spectrum: “[n]ot only does allegory lie on a spectrum, and cannot be sharply differentiated from other figures of speech, but there is allegory and allegory.”⁵⁶¹ Due to this variety, the purpose in discussing allegory here is not to impose a tightly defined category on Paul, but to discuss some general features of allegory that establishes a theoretical framework and a historical context for analysing Paul's allegorical practice.

⁵⁶¹ Frances Young, “Allegory and the Ethics of Reading,” in *The Open Text: New Directions for Biblical Studies?*, ed. Francis Watson (London: SCM Press, 1993), 112. Because of the wide spectrum in allegorical practice, typology is also best understood as “simply one species of allegory” – “a certain subpractice” (David Dawson, *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in Ancient Alexandria* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992], 16). Dawson claims that the modern preference for typology over allegory is ultimately a theological one that is motivated by “a desire to preserve the historicity of the persons and events depicted in the Hebrew scripture” (Ibid., 15). Furthermore, the desire to preserve the “types” and not have them “negated and replaced by corresponding Christian ‘antitypes’” is connected to questions about continuity between the Old and New Testaments and Judaism and Christianity, as well as concerns about preserving the “concrete reality of divine action and self-identification (i.e., revelation) in history” (Ibid.). Hence, the allegory in Gal 4:21-5:1 presents a perplexing situation that I attend to in ch. 6: “In the present ‘allegory’, however, there is a forcible inversion of the analogy which is unparalleled elsewhere in Paul. Whereas in other typological passages the OT account is left intact, the argument here is up against the historical fact that Isaac was the ancestor of the Jews, whereas Ishmael's descendants were Gentiles.” (F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* [Exeter; Grand Rapids: Paternoster; Eerdmans, 1982], 218.)

The term allegory stems from Greek language, and is composed of ἄλλος (other) and ἀγορεύειν (to speak in public) to give the sense of “other speaking.”⁵⁶² From this is derived the classical definition of allegory: to say something other than what one seems to say.⁵⁶³ The actual Greek noun ἀλληγορία came to use in the Roman period, and was still regarded as a new term by Plutarch at the end of the first century CE (*Quamodo adolescens poetas audire debeat*, Stephanus 19e-f).⁵⁶⁴ But the roots of the allegorical mode of thinking go further back (at least fourth century BCE), and it is related to terms such as symbol, *hyponoia* (“under-meaning”), and enigma.⁵⁶⁵ As a literary trope, it is closely related to metaphor, and is sometimes described as an extended metaphor,⁵⁶⁶ or composed of metaphors.⁵⁶⁷ What distinguishes allegory from metaphor, Dawson explains, is its narrative dimension.⁵⁶⁸ Narrative also distinguishes allegory from personification (*prosopopoeia*, “endows non-human entities ... with human attributes”) and etymology (searching out “the history of a word or name by distinguishing its components and tracing them back to their primordial forms in some ancestral language for the purpose of discovering an original or fundamental meaning”) that are often part of allegory, but not of themselves allegory.⁵⁶⁹ All of these: metaphor, personification and etymology, are “tools of the allegorist,” but “only when the allegorist uses such tools to compose or interpret a narrative do we have allegory.”⁵⁷⁰ With these general notes on allegory, I now turn to discuss the practice of allegorical interpretation, or allegoresis.

5.1.1 The Relationship between Text and Allegorical Interpretation

There are two related aspects to the practice of “other speaking:” allegorical composition and allegorical interpretation (allegoresis). Allegorical composition denotes “writing with double meaning,” whereas allegoresis is about

explaining a work, or a figure in myth, or any created entity, as if there were an other sense to

⁵⁶² Dawson, *Allegorical Readers*, 2.

⁵⁶³ *Ibid.*, 3; Jon Whitman, *Allegory: The Dynamics of an Ancient and Medieval Technique* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 2.

⁵⁶⁴ Rita Copeland and Peter T. Struck, *The Cambridge Companion to Allegory* (Cambridge; New York: CUP, 2010), 2. See also discussion in Luc Brisson, *How Philosophers Saved Myths: Allegorical Interpretation and Classical Mythology* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 56–61.

⁵⁶⁵ Copeland and Struck, *The Cambridge Companion to Allegory*, 2; Brisson, *How Philosophers Saved Myths*, 58–59.

⁵⁶⁶ Copeland and Struck, *The Cambridge Companion to Allegory*, 2.

⁵⁶⁷ Dawson, *Allegorical Readers*, 5.

⁵⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 3–5.

⁵⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁵⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

which it referred, that is presuming the work or figure to be encoded with meaning intended by the author or a higher spiritual authority.⁵⁷¹

Berek makes a more pointed distinction between these two modes of allegory in terms of intentionality. He understands that allegorical composition is intentionally allegorical, whereas allegoresis is the “allegorizing of a text whose author's intention did not clearly call for such interpretation.”⁵⁷² However, the relationship between the text and its allegoresis requires a more nuanced approach, in which even the concepts of authorial intention and meaning in text need to be opened up. It is not to be assumed that an allegorical interpreter conceptualises “the author” in a similar way to historical critical scholarship. As the quotation above from the *Cambridge Companion to Allegory* already suggests, the interpreter might presume that the allegorical meaning of a text is intended by a higher spiritual authority rather than the human author whose name the text bears. Or, as is the case with Philo, the conception of what an author intended might differ from modern notions (see 5.1.3). However, modern scholarship also recognises that it is difficult to make claims about the intentions of “the author,” since they are not accessible to later interpreters beyond the level of the text, and even there they are not self-evident.⁵⁷³ Thus, even with a focus on the text, it is problematic to talk simply about interpretation as a “procedure that uncovers meaning hidden in text,” or “drawing forth the meaning it somehow ‘contains’.”⁵⁷⁴ Rather, a text is subject to a range of readings that are opened by the rich semantic potential of any text, and depend on the readers' own contexts and interests.⁵⁷⁵ Hence, I focus my analysis of Paul's allegoresis in Gal

571 Copeland and Struck, *The Cambridge Companion to Allegory*, 1–2. Gerhard Sellin also understands that allegoresis is based on the assumption that the text is allegorical (Gerhard Sellin, *Allegorie - Metapher - Mythos - Schrift: Beiträge zur Religiösen Sprache im Neuen Testament und in seiner Umwelt*, Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus / Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments 90 [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011], 12).

572 Peter Berek, “Interpretation, Allegory, and Allegoresis,” *College English* 40, no. 2 (1978): 123. Also, “Allegory is one of a number of literary modes whereby writers intentionally say one thing while meaning another; allegoresis is the name of an interpretive technique by which readers can assert meanings for texts which may differ from what their authors intended those texts to mean” (Ibid., 118). Berek also distinguishes allegoresis from the interpretation of an allegorical composition (Ibid.).

573 See e.g. Frances Young's discussion on the difficulty in making the distinction between “compositional allegory and allegorical interpretation,” in which the main problem is the “weight this puts on authorial intention and the difficulty, in some cases, of identifying the ‘plain sense’” (“Allegory and the Ethics of Reading,” 112).

574 Dawson, *Allegorical Readers*, 5.

575 Cf. Ibid.; also Jon Whitman, ed., *Interpretation and Allegory: Antiquity to the Modern Period* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000), 34–35; and Sellin: “Jede Aussage hat neben einer autorbewussten Intention Konnotationen, Ober- und Untertöne, die nicht einfach in der bewussten Autorintention angelegt sind. Ein Text kann mehrere Lesarten erfordern.” (*Allegorie - Metapher - Mythos - Schrift*, 18). However, Berek's point is still valid that *genre* is an indication of authorial intention: “Statements about genre, it seems to me, are ultimately reducible to statements about what the author of a work intended us to take it as” (“Interpretation, Allegory, and Allegoresis,” 119).

4:21-5:1 on the relationship between the meaning potential of the scriptural intertexts and Paul's reading of them without making claims about authorial intentions concerning the intertexts.

Whitman describes the relationship between text and its allegorical reading in terms of *correspondence* and *divergence*. Allegory, Whitman claims, is based on the tension between the apparent (“literal”) and actual meanings (“allegorical”) that are simultaneously comparable to one another, and yet must diverge.⁵⁷⁶ Thus, allegorical interpretation of a text establishes a correspondence between an apparent meaning of the text and the claimed actual meaning that contains necessarily a level of obliqueness that requires a “series of divergences or transfers,” by which the “allegorical interpretation repeatedly departs from the apparent meaning of the text, reinterpreting it in order to sustain a correspondence.”⁵⁷⁷ Young has developed Whitman's insights further, and states that “the crucial differences between forms of allegorical reading lie in the way in which the correspondences and divergences are conceived.”⁵⁷⁸ She describes ancient conceptions about language, and how they elucidate the “different perceptions of how a text might represent or refer to something other than itself.”⁵⁷⁹ This representation, Young observes, “may occur through genuine likeness or analogy, an ‘ikon’ or image, or it may occur by a symbol, something unlike which stands for the reality.”⁵⁸⁰ Thus, Young distinguishes between *ikonik* and *symbolic* allegory:

Ikonik allegory would find a higher degree of correspondence between the various features of the text, the passage or narrative as a whole reflecting or mirroring in the narrative structure the ‘undersense’ adduced;⁵⁸¹

whereas,

Symbolic exegesis would tend to focus on particular verbal ‘tokens’ which consistently signify specific heavenly realities in the scriptures taken as a whole, but at the level of particular passages may produce a more piecemeal and apparently arbitrary meaning.⁵⁸²

These categories are more helpful to my purposes than, e.g. the distinction between allegory and typology, since they succinctly capture the nature of the relationship between text and its allegoresis in terms of varying degrees of correspondence and divergence.

⁵⁷⁶ Whitman, *Allegory*, 2.

⁵⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 3–4.

⁵⁷⁸ Young, “Allegory and the Ethics of Reading,” 113.

⁵⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 114.

⁵⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸² *Ibid.*

The analysis of the relationship between the text and its allegoresis can be developed a step further to probe at the interpreter's theological/ideological programme. Barr distinguishes between two systems at play in allegoresis: the text and the “system into which the interpretation runs out,” which he names as the *resultant system*.⁵⁸³ Rather than methodological questions, Barr argues, it is the questions about the resultant systems that distinguish different allegorical interpretations.⁵⁸⁴ Hence, Barr first asks, whether the resultant system is resultant at all; is it “entirely known before the interpreter begins;”⁵⁸⁵ or is it derived to some degree from the text?⁵⁸⁶ In Paul's case, it is related to the question whether the scriptures he interacts with in Gal 4:21-5:1 are formative for his theology or only auxiliary. Second, and a related question asks, whether the resultant system is *homogeneous* or *heterogeneous*; does the interpretation belong to the same or different “world of thought?”⁵⁸⁷ A heterogeneous resultant system is usually “drawn from quite alien areas of thought,” whereas a homogeneous system can be understood as “grown up” from the textual matrix it interprets.⁵⁸⁸ Where the heterogeneous system can be criticised for being a foreign imposition on a text, the homogeneous system can be probed as to whether or not what it contains is found in the text it interprets (cf. more iconic), or is only supported generally by the larger textual matrix it seeks to draw from (cf. more symbolic).⁵⁸⁹

5.1.2 The Socio-cultural Function of Allegory

It is possible to take the question of how allegory is related to the author's theological/ideological programme to an other level: What is its socio-cultural function? What is it designed to achieve? One view of allegory understands it as a mode of interpretation that attempts to save a text:

⁵⁸³ James Barr, *Old and New in Interpretation: A Study of the Two Testaments*, Currie lectures 1964 (London: S.C.M. Press, 1966), 108.

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁶ Berek perceives that allegoresis is totally guided by an already established frame: “The allegorizing reader begins with the premise that he or she already knows what truths or ideas the text will embody;” and “The allegorizer of Scripture ‘reads’ with spectacles fashioned of his or her own certainties, and sees ‘facts’ invisible to those looking through other lenses” (“Interpretation, Allegory, and Allegoresis,” 125). Barr allows some room for both: “The fact that the resultant system is in some way ‘known’ beforehand may not necessarily alter the fact that the organization and development of this system may be noticeably affected through it being ‘found’ as the meaning of a particular text” (*Old and New in Interpretation*, 109).

⁵⁸⁷ Barr, *Old and New in Interpretation*, 115–116.

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid., 116.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid.

The impulse to allegoresis is conservative in the root sense of the word: an impulse to conserve or preserve a high valuation on text and ideas that apparently contradict one another without being forced to acknowledge an inconsistency in one's beliefs.⁵⁹⁰

Berek gives as an example of this the Greeks' treatment of Homer when his writings were found to contain inadequate or scandalous philosophy.⁵⁹¹ He then makes a claim with regard to Scripture:

In the case of Scripture especially, the impulse to conservation expresses itself in large part as an impulse towards perceiving internal consistency. ... figural interpretation is in large measure designed to reinterpret Old Testament narrative and doctrine in the light of a new dispensation that gives the appearance of contradicting it.⁵⁹²

Dawson also recognises this mode in allegory, and describes it in terms of “domesticating a text,” i.e. bringing a text to line up with cultural expectations by neutralising “the culturally deviant meanings of the literal text, replacing them with culturally obvious meanings.”⁵⁹³ But rather than allegory being solely a conservative agent, Dawson proposes that it can also function as a culturally revisionary force.

Dawson's approach asks how allegory functions not only “as a way of reading texts, but as a way of using that reading to reinterpret culture and society.”⁵⁹⁴ Hence, he understands that “[a]ncient allegorical compositions and interpretations constituted fields on which struggles between competitive proposals for thought and action took place.”⁵⁹⁵ At the heart of this competition stands the question of what constitutes the *literal reading*. Dawson suggests that rather than being an inherent quality of the text, the idea of a literal sense is “the product of a conventional, customary reading,” and as such it “is simply an honorific title given to a kind of meaning that is culturally expected and automatically recognized by readers.”⁵⁹⁶ An allegorical reading, by its

590 Berek, “Interpretation, Allegory, and Allegoresis,” 124.

591 Ibid.; cf. Samuel Sandmel: [with allegory] “they [Stoics] weeded out of the Homeric legends what they deemed unseemly” (*Philo of Alexandria: An Introduction* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1979], 19).

592 Berek, “Interpretation, Allegory, and Allegoresis,” 125.

593 Dawson, *Allegorical Readers*, 10. Also Bruns: “allegory is a good example of what is called ‘radical interpretation’, that is, not free interpretation, but the interpretation of a text or corpus that has been resituated within an alien conceptual framework. Allegory presupposes a cultural situation in which the literal interpretation of a text would be as incomprehensible as a literal translation of it.” (“Midrash and Allegory: The Beginnings of Scriptural Interpretation,” 637.)

594 Dawson, *Allegorical Readers*, 1.

595 Ibid., 2.

596 Ibid., 8. Barr attributes the text more independence, and argues that it is exactly a written text that “created and held open the possibility of real change,” because, as a written text, “it was *given* to succeeding generations.” Hence, although certain readings could have gained dominance, the text could offer the potential for challenge: “the text remains as a potential witness against the interpretation unless the text is actually rewritten to fit the interpretation, and the original text lost or destroyed. The mere existence of the text therefore keeps open the possibility of a challenge to its accepted interpretation.” (*Old and New in Interpretation*, 137.)

definition (“other speaking”), is designed to challenge the customary reading, as the meaning it proposes to the text receives “its identity precisely by its contrast with this customary or expected meaning.”⁵⁹⁷ But while this allegorical “something else” is a challenge to the reigning construction of the literal sense, it is also potentially a newly emerging literal sense for the reading community that accepts it as the new obvious and expected reading – the “actual” rather than the “other” meaning.⁵⁹⁸ This revision of the literal sense has the potential of being a “*counterhegemonic force*” that aims to change prevailing cultural ideals or “reigning assumptions.”⁵⁹⁹ Dawson identifies that these forces are present when “a religious community struggles with itself, as emerging forces seek to subvert or overthrow well-entrenched traditional points of view.”⁶⁰⁰

I propose that Paul's allegoresis in Gal 4:21-5:1 functions both in a conservative mode and as a counterhegemonic force. It is conservative in its attempt to demonstrate internal consistency between the scriptures of Israel and the new act of God in Christ and the Spirit that is embracing also the Gentiles. But Paul's allegorical interpretation is also counterhegemonic, as it challenges traditional interpretations of the Abraham narrative vis-à-vis Israel and the Gentiles. The tension between conservation and subversion is reflected in the opening question of Gal 4:21-5:1, which at the same time appeals to the authority of the Scripture (law) and also challenges the way it is being heard: “you who want to be under the Law, do you not listen to the law?” The new subversive reading Paul is offering does not necessarily originate from the pressure to answer the opposition,⁶⁰¹ but can equally be understood to emerge from his own revelatory experience (Gal 1:11-16) and consequent re-reading. Analysing how Paul operates in reading the “law” allegorically to express his understanding of the gospel opens to us the theological vision and logic in his defence for constructing a new social reality of the “children of promise” that comprise the “Jerusalem above” community.

⁵⁹⁷ Dawson, *Allegorical Readers*, 8. The allegorical reader is in fact saying: “You may say that this text means one thing; it does not mean that, but rather something else” (Ibid.).

⁵⁹⁸ Dawson, *Allegorical Readers*, 8.

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid., 9.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid., 9–10.

⁶⁰¹ This view is reflected in the influential essay by C. K. Barrett: “This is a part of the Old Testament that Paul would have been unlikely to introduce of his own accord; its value from his point of view is anything but obvious, and the method of interpretation is unusual with him. It stands in the epistle because his opponents had used it and he could not escape it.” (“The Allegory of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar in the Argument of Galatians,” in *Rechtfertigung: Festschrift für Ernst Käsemann zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Johannes Friedrich et al., [Tübingen: Göttingen: Mohr; Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1976], 10; see also de Boer, *Galatians*, 286–287; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 199–200; Martyn, *Galatians*, 449–450). Whether or not there is an element of response, it is important to recognise that Paul does not go to the Genesis narrative because he is forced to deal with it. I demonstrate in chs. 5-6 that both Genesis and Isaiah are foundational and formative texts for Paul's theology.

5.1.3 Philo's Allegorical Practice

To be able to appreciate the distinctive features in Paul's allegorical practice, I analyse in this section the work of a famous Jewish exegete and allegorist, Philo (c. 20 BCE - c. 50 CE). He lived in Alexandria around the time of Paul as part of a historical Jewish community that had a large measure of autonomy, e.g. in terms of allowing them to follow the Jewish law.⁶⁰² Philo's involvement and loyalty to his Jewish community is reflected in his role of leading the delegation of Jews that was sent to Rome from Alexandria in 40 CE to plead their cause (Philo writes about this in *Against Flaccus* and *On the Embassy to Gaius*).⁶⁰³ Philo was also thoroughly Greek; he had received a broad Greek education that is evidenced by his excellent use of Greek language, literary forms and rhetoric, and his in-depth knowledge of Greek thought.⁶⁰⁴ The way Philo navigates these two worlds, Jewish and Greek, creates the dynamic to Philo's allegorical practice, which is evidenced in his extensive body of written work (collected in 12 Loeb volumes) that consist mainly of biblical exposition in the forms of commentary, retelling of biblical narratives (rewriting the Pentateuch), and questions and answers.⁶⁰⁵

Philo's comments on Abraham's departure from Chaldea towards the promised land in obedience to the divine call in Gen 12:1, are illustrative of his approach:

The aforesaid emigrations, if one is to be guided by the literal expressions of the scripture, were performed by a wise man; but if we look to the laws of allegory (οἱ ἐν ἀλληγορίᾳ νόμοι), by a soul devoted to virtue and busied in the search after the true God. (*Abr.* 68; translation by Yonge)

This example describes how Philo distinguishes between the literal and the allegorical level of meaning in the text of Scripture. As an observant Jew, who believed that the prescriptions of the Torah were to be kept in their details (*Migr.* 89-94), Philo does not use allegory to do away with the literal level.⁶⁰⁶ The following example from Philo's comments on the same event of Abraham's migration opens up the system that his allegorical interpretation runs into:

⁶⁰² Sandmel, *Philo of Alexandria*, 6–7. For a fuller discussion on Jews in Alexandria, see John M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE - 117 CE)* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 19–81.

⁶⁰³ George W. E. Nickelsburg, "Philo among Greeks, Jews and Christians," in *Philo und das Neue Testament: wechselseitige Wahrnehmungen; I. Internationales Symposium zum Corpus Judaico-Hellenisticum, 1. - 4. Mai 2003, Eisenach/Jena*, ed. Roland Deines and Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr, WUNT 172 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 57.

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁵ Peder Borgen, "Philo of Alexandria as Exegete," in *A History of Biblical Interpretation: The Ancient Period*, ed. Alan J Hauser and Duane Frederick Watson, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 114–43.

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid., 55.

Therefore, having now given both explanations, the literal one as concerning the man, and the allegorical (ὑπόνοια) one relating to the soul, we have shown that both the man and the mind are deserving of love; inasmuch as the one is obedient to the sacred oracles, and because of their influence submits to be torn away from things which it is hard to part; and the mind deserves to be loved because it has not submitted to be for ever deceived and to abide permanently with the essences perceptible by the outward senses, thinking the visible world the greatest and first of gods, but soaring upwards with its reason it has beheld another nature better than that which is visible, that, namely, which is appreciable only by the intellect; and also that being who is at the same time the Creator and ruler of both. (*Abr.* 88; translation by Yonge)

Here Philo makes distinctions between the man and the soul, between the visible, sense perceptible world (ὁ ὄρατος κόσμος), and the other nature (φύσις) that is apprehended by the intellect (νοητός). This approach displays the deep seated influence of Greek philosophy in Philo's reading of Israel's scriptures, but with the conviction that the God of Israel is the Creator of both the visible and noetic worlds. Thus, Sandmel's description is apt: Philo is a "sort of Platonist" and also a "kind of Stoic" as he represents "the first major blend of Judaism and Hellenism."⁶⁰⁷

Greek philosophy provides Philo with the ontological framework that underlies his allegorical practice: "Philo's allegorical method was rooted in a theory of (Stoically revised) Platonic ontology."⁶⁰⁸ Greek philosophy also shapes what Sandmel calls Philo's "grand Allegory," a unifying system, into which individual allegorical items fit.⁶⁰⁹ The "grand Allegory" has to do with Philo's conception of a spiritual journey towards perfection that corresponds with the narrative shape of the Pentateuch that is transposed to "an account of the contemporary, personal experience of every man [sic]."⁶¹⁰ The content of the spiritual journey is derived from Greek thought, as described by Sandmel:

Man's higher mind, if properly used, can so regiment the senses and passions that the soul can be freed from bodily domination. Spiritual perfection is the successful arrival by an individual to the point at which his soul is completely freed from the baleful influence of his body.⁶¹¹

Sandmel perceives that the universalising of the biblical accounts so that they concern the contemporary experience of all humans amounts to the dissolving of history in Scripture.⁶¹² This seems like an overstatement, since Philo recognises that the literal

⁶⁰⁷ Sandmel, *Philo of Alexandria*, 4.

⁶⁰⁸ Stefan Nordgaard Svendsen, *Allegory Transformed: The Appropriation of Philonic Hermeneutics in the Letter to the Hebrews*, WUNT 2. 269 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 39; see pp. 28-36 for a full discussion on how Platonism and Stoicism are reflected in Philo.

⁶⁰⁹ Sandmel, *Philo of Alexandria*, 24

⁶¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 24

⁶¹¹ *Ibid.*, 25

⁶¹² *Ibid.*, 24-25

level in Scripture describes real historical accounts of Israel's past (cf. *Abr.* 68 and 88).⁶¹³ Nevertheless, Philo's focus on the noetic vision necessarily transcends history, and thus Philo's allegoresis does not have a history of salvation, or a promise-fulfilment framework.

Philo's allegoresis incorporates Platonic and Stoic exegetical methods, which were already part of the tradition of Alexandrian Jews such as Aristobulus and Pseudo-Aristeas.⁶¹⁴ However, even though there is a formal similarity between Stoic and Philonic allegory, there is also an important difference. The need to seek for a deeper meaning in the text was connected for the Stoics with the need to go behind the literal level of the Greek poets to uncover a wisdom that the poets themselves were unaware of, whereas for Philo it was about capturing the original Mosaic vision that was *intentionally* invested in the text:

... the Stoics considered the Greek classics allegorizable because they passed on traces of primitive wisdom, although their authors were unaware of it. Philo's view of the bible differs significantly. In his opinion, Moses the author of the Pentateuch, had achieved the summit of philosophical insight and was fully aware of the truths he enclosed within his writings.⁶¹⁵

Moses's authority and authorship, Philonically conceived, stand thus at the centre of Philo's allegorical approach.⁶¹⁶ Philo perceives Moses as someone who reached the noetic vision that is embedded in his writing (*Mos.* 1:158). Allegoresis gives Philo the ability to uncover this vision from the scriptural text, but this allegorical ability is also predicated on his own revelatory experiences, or ascents of the soul (*Migr.* 34-35; *Spec.* 3.1-6; *Somn.* 2.250-54; *Cher.* 27-28).⁶¹⁷

The way Philo perceives Moses and the content of the allegorical meaning in the Torah amounts to what Nordgaard Svendsen calls a reversal of intellectual history; by ascribing to Moses the original noetic vision that precedes all of the Greek philosophers by centuries, Philo, following Aristobulus, actually claims that "Greek philosophers picked up inspiration from the law-giver and copied his insights into their works" (e.g. *Leg.All.* 1:108; *Her.* 214; *Prob.* 57; *Somn.* 1.58).⁶¹⁸ To support his claim for the priority

⁶¹³ Noordgaard Svendsen, *Allegory Transformed*, 38-39

⁶¹⁴ Sterling, Gregory E., "The Place of Philo of Alexandria in the Study of Christian Origins," in *Philo und das Neue Testament*, 32-34.

⁶¹⁵ Nordgaard Svendsen, *Allegory Transformed*, 38.

⁶¹⁶ Cf. Nickelsburg's argument that Philo's focus on the five books of Moses "reflects the centrality of the Torah in the Jewish religion in general, but also indicates Philo's high regard for Moses as the supreme revealer of God and God's will" ("Philo among Greeks, Jews and Christians," 56).

⁶¹⁷ Borgen, "Philo of Alexandria as Exegete," 1:121-22. See also a detailed discussion on these texts in Sze-kar Wan, "Charismatic Exegesis: Philo and Paul Compared," *SPhiloA* 6 (1994): 54-71.

⁶¹⁸ Nordgaard Svendsen, *Allegory Transformed*, 48. See also Dawson, *Allegorical Readers*, 109-12.

and superiority of Mosaic revelation, Philo argues that the Greek philosophers' disagreements are due to the inadequacy of human cognition to penetrate true wisdom, which, by contrast, was given to Moses by divine revelation (*Her.* 246-248).⁶¹⁹

Dawson connects Philo's strategy to subsume Greek philosophy into the field of Mosaic revelation to the socio-cultural function of his allegoresis, in which "Moses' writing could thus become the basis for a revisionary stance toward the dominant, Hellenistic culture."⁶²⁰ This revisionary stance has a double aim: to guide highly Hellenized Jews to be faithful in the practice of Judaism that is paradoxically also "the most authentic way to be Greek,"⁶²¹ and to demonstrate to critics of Judaism, such as Apion, "that the Jewish people was not intellectually degenerate. ... and that the Jewish people's loyalty towards their peculiar customs was not an expression of philosophical inanity."⁶²² Thus, on the socio-cultural level, Philo did not aim to make Judaism more Hellenistic, but to make Hellenism more Jewish. This is reflected in Philo's tendency to define "universal Hellenistic ideals in terms of Jewish particularity," e.g., connecting the problem of the passions distorting reason to the problem of not following the Jewish law.⁶²³ Philo's universal "eschatological vision" is also defined in terms of Jewish particularity, as he anticipates a time when the Jewish law, which is "stamped with the seal of nature itself" (*Mos.* 2.14), will eclipse other nations' own customs just as the "light of the sun obscures that of the stars" (*Mos.* 2.43-44).⁶²⁴ Thus, Dawson concludes:

Rather than an effort to transform Jewish texts and history into Greco-Roman philosophy and sociopolitical structures, Philo's work was a bold hermeneutical and sociopolitical bid for the right of Jews to define authentic Hellenism. Rather than simply giving scripture 'other' meanings, Philo read scripture as Moses' rewritten version of the host culture's meanings. The resulting reinscription of the world was brought about by Philo's allegorical reading of Jewish scripture, a reading through which he announced that all authentic intellectual and cultural wisdom, as well as the plot of world history, had been first written by Moses.⁶²⁵

Dawson's conclusion seems apt with regard to the socio-cultural function of Philo's allegorical practice. But, when analysing the actual hermeneutic in Philo's allegorical reading of Israel's scriptures, Sandmel's assessment rings true: "by resorting to the use of allegory, he is enabled to read Platonic and Stoic ideas into Scripture."⁶²⁶

619 Nordgaard Svendsen, *Allegory Transformed*, 49.

620 Dawson, *Allegorical Readers*, 73.

621 *Ibid.*, 118.

622 Nordgaard Svendsen, *Allegory Transformed*, 48.

623 Dawson, *Allegorical Readers*, 120.

624 *Ibid.*, 122.

625 *Ibid.*, 126.

626 Sandmel, *Philo of Alexandria*, 28.

Thus, Philo's attainment of Greek philosophical insights (by education and personal "revelatory" experience) lead him to find, allegorically, the noetic vision in the text of Scripture. This philosophically (and psychologically) constructed resultant system does not grow out from the text but is actually the presupposition that he operates with. However, Philo would himself claim that his philosophical system is homogenous with the world of thought in the scriptures, since Moses's revelation is in his view the original true wisdom that Greek philosophy emulates.⁶²⁷ Whether or not Philo's system is homogenous with the scriptures depends on accepting or rejecting this premise.

With regard to correspondence and divergence between Philo's allegorical meaning and the text of Scripture, it seems that correspondence is found mainly on the level of narrative sequence,⁶²⁸ but his philosophical system diverges significantly on the level of the content and themes that the narrative itself is concerned with.⁶²⁹ The way Philo operates with the Abraham narrative is a good example of this; the narrative sequence about Sarah's role in giving Hagar to Abraham and then asking her to be expelled is important for Philo's construction of the role of encyclical studies in the spiritual journey of the soul towards true virtue:

But we must give our belief to another woman, such as it was ordained that Sarah should be, Sarah being in a figure the governing virtue; and the wise Abraham was guided by her, when she recommended him such actions as were good. For before this time, when he was not yet perfect, but even before his name was changed, he gave his attention to subjects of lofty philosophical speculation; and she, knowing that he could not produce anything out of perfect virtue, counselled him to raise children out of her handmaid, that is to say out of encyclical instruction, out of Agar, which name being interpreted means a dwelling near; for he who meditates dwelling in perfect virtue, before his name is enrolled among the citizens of that state, dwells among the encyclical studies, in order that through their instrumentality he may make his approaches at liberty towards perfect virtue. After that, when he saw that he was now become perfect, and was now able to become a father, although he himself was full of gratitude towards those studies, by means of which he had been recommended to virtue, and thought it hard to renounce them; he was well inclined to be appeased by an oracle from God which laid this command on him. 'In everything which Sarah says, do thou obey her voice.' Let that be a law to every one of us to do whatever seems good to virtue; for if we are willing to submit to everything which virtue recommends we shall be happy. (*Leg.All.* 3:244-245; translation by Yonge)

⁶²⁷ Cf. Sandmel: "But Philo would never have admitted reading Plato into Scripture; he would have insisted that the Platonism and Stoicism came out of Scripture" (Ibid.).

⁶²⁸ Cf. Sandmel: "The adhesive that binds together what Philo presents allegorically is the narrative nature of the Pentateuch." (Ibid., 24).

⁶²⁹ Cf. Sandmel: "Philo uses allegory beyond what he can deduce from Scripture and connect with it. He also uses allegory to invest meanings he can read into Scripture so as to find there the proof for the often novel and profound insights that are his." (Ibid., 28.)

Philo manages the transformations of meaning from the literal to the allegorical level with techniques, such as etymology (as is the case above with Hagar's name), finding hidden meaning in numbers (see the example below), and by latching on to details of the text.⁶³⁰ Thus, Philo's allegorical reading is more symbolic on the level of content, but more ikonic by corresponding closely with the narrative frame of the text. There is also a level of occasional intertextual reading, or what Dawson calls "'intratextual allegorization' in which he [Philo] strives to validate scriptural meaning in some sense by scripture rather than by his imagination or by Stoic philosophical doctrine alone."⁶³¹ Philo's discussion on Gen 4:15 is a comprehensive example of the transformation of meaning and of Philo's strategies to manage the divergences between the literal and allegorical sense that includes the "intertextual" dimension.⁶³² Philo begins from the detail in the text about Cain and the "sevenfold punishment" to move to the allegorical meaning of the seven senses, and then supports his idea of the purification of the senses in subjection to the Jewish law by reading this text "intertextually" with the story of Noah and the deluge:

And God says, he 'who slays Cain shall suffer sevenfold.' But I do not know what analogy this real meaning of this expression bears to the literal interpretation of it, 'He shall suffer sevenfold.' For he has not said what is to be sevenfold, nor has he described the sort of penalty, nor by what means such penalty is excused or paid. Therefore, one must suppose that all these things are said figuratively (τροπικώτερον) and allegorically (δι' ὑπονοιῶν); and perhaps what God means to set before us here is something of this sort. The irrational part of the soul is divided into seven parts, the senses of seeing, of smelling, of hearing, of tasting, and of touch, the organs of speech, and the organs of generation. If, therefore, any one were to slay the eighth, that is to say, Cain, the ruler of them all, he would also paralyse all the seven. ...

Now these seven senses are unpolluted and pure in the soul of the wise man, and here also they are found worthy of honour. But in that of the foolish man they are impure and polluted, and as I said before, punished, that is, they are worthy of punishment and chastisement. At all events, when the Creator determined to purify the earth by means of water, and that the soul should receive purification of all its unspeakable offences, having washed off and effaced its pollutions after the fashion of a holy purification, he recommended him who was found to be a just man, who was not borne away the violence of the deluge, to enter into the ark, that is to say, into the vessel containing the soul, namely, the body, and to lead into it 'seven of all clean beasts, male and female,' thinking it proper that virtuous reason should employ all the pure parts of the irrational portion of man. And this injunction which the lawgiver laid down, is of necessity applicable to all wise men; for they have their sense of sight purified, their sense of hearing

630 Cf. Borgen, "Philo of Alexandria as Exegete," 1:122–25.

631 Dawson, *Allegorical Readers*, 105.

632 Cf. *Ibid.*, 104–5.

thoroughly examined, and so on with all the rest of their outward senses. Accordingly, they have the faculty of speech free from all spot or stain, and their appetites which prompt them to indulge the passions in a state of due subjection to the law. (*Det.* 166-171; translation by Yonge).

In conclusion, Philo's allegorical practice is a combination of Scriptural reflection (close literal reading) with a strong centrality of the Torah (and Mosaic authorship) and its interpretation from the perspective of Greek philosophical thought. For Philo, the allegorical meaning does not negate the literal, but, since the allegorical level aims to make the meaning contemporaneous and universal to all humans, it transcends history. The ability to penetrate the allegorical level of meaning is claimed to be based on Philo's revelatory experience, ascents of the soul, that corresponds with Philo's conception of the Mosaic noetic vision. However, a critical analysis would struggle to follow the claim that Philo's resultant philosophical system stems from the text, or would be homogenous with the world of thought in Israel's scriptures. There is also an element of intertextual construction in Philo's allegoresis, although it seems that the allegorical meaning is not derived from the matrix of scriptural intertexts, but rather from the Greek philosophical tradition that is reframed within Jewish particularity.

I have provided an analysis of Philo's allegorical practice as a point of departure to appreciate the distinctive features in Paul's approach. I will argue below that as with Philo, so also with Paul, a claimed revelatory experience occasions or enables the discerning of the allegorical level of meaning in the text of Scripture that departs from a conventional literal reading. But whereas the allegorical meaning in Philo's system seems to grow out and represent a different world of thought to that of the scriptures, Paul is actually interested in the themes and content of the scriptural text, and focused on appropriating the scriptural promises to the new situation occasioned by the Christ-event. This is also why Paul operates more on a historical level with the fulfilment of God's promises and its implications for the Jews and Gentiles. For Philo, the historical level is not pertinent, since what matters more is the meaning that transcends the contingencies of time and place. Nevertheless, Philo is not a pure Platonist, as he upholds the significance of the historical people of the Jews with their particular laws, and has a sense of eschatological destiny for the Law in relation to other nations. Paul is also engaged in configuring the role of the Mosaic Law in the new eschatological age. But where Philo uses the argument about the congruity of the Jewish law with the Greek ideal of natural order to expect the universal practice of the Law in its concrete form,

Paul can be seen to transform the meaning of the Law and its fulfilment in a more radical way. Ironically, I will demonstrate in ch. 6 how Paul uses the resources in Israel's own tradition, the scriptures, to defend his vision and logic that removes the Law from the centre stage and yet finds fulfilment for what the Law could not itself deliver. Furthermore, I will argue below that intertextuality, which seems to be only an auxiliary feature in Philo's allegorical practice, is the most distinctive and essential aspect in Paul's allegoresis in Gal 4:21-5:1. Yet, as the Hellenistic noetic vision extends the field of interpretation beyond the scriptures for Philo, so also does the revelatory Christ experience expand the field of making meaning for Paul. Just how this is conceived, and how it shapes Paul's allegorical practice is what I now turn to.

5.2 Paul's Allegorical Practice and Intertextuality

The opening question in Gal 4:21: "you who want to be under the Law, do you not hear the law," is a call to adopt the right interpretative practice in order to relate rightly to the Mosaic Law (see 2.2). What follows from this question is crucial for capturing Paul's hermeneutical strategy, since Paul goes on to model the hermeneutic he wants his readers to adopt (cf. 4:12).⁶³³ Paul's explicit statement about his own practice being allegorical (4:24) provides the entry point for analysing his hermeneutic here.

Boyarin has argued that Paul's allegorical mode of reading Scripture is indicative of his theological programme (see 1.1.5). Boyarin's Paul has a Hellenistic vision that is predicated on the flesh-spirit duality, where the body is particular but spirit universal.⁶³⁴ Similarly, Boyarin claims that Paul's hermeneutic is dualistic, and thus allegorical; language is composed of outer material signs (signifiers) and inner spiritual significations.⁶³⁵ Although Boyarin's construction of Paul's hermeneutic would apply better to Philo than to Paul, I begin my discussion on Paul's allegoresis from his claims.

Boyarin understands Paul's allegorical interpretation as a movement away from the level of the text (signifier) to a reality beyond it (signified). This is in sharp contrast with his understanding of the Rabbinic mode of interpretation (midrash). The contrast Boyarin sets up between these two modes of interpretation is a helpful analytical tool

⁶³³ Cf. Watson: "he is inviting them to participate with him in a responsible interpretation of this [Genesis] text" (*PHF*, 190).

⁶³⁴ Boyarin, *A Radical Jew*, 7.

⁶³⁵ *Ibid.*

for approaching the nature of Paul's allegorical practice. Boyarin claims that Rabbinic midrash is intertextual rather than allegorical.⁶³⁶ In other words, midrash is an intertextual reading that makes meaning on the level of texts rather than using the text(s) as a pointer to meaning on another level:

what characterizes midrash is an understanding of interpretation not as the translating of a text to a higher or deeper level of signification, or, to use a different metaphor, the pairing of a signifier with a signified, but rather, as the laying bare of an intertextual connection between two signifiers which mutually read each other.⁶³⁷

Boyarin connects the Rabbinic preference for intertextuality over allegory to the status of the Torah as the ultimate reference point: “[f]or the Rabbis of the midrash, the highest reality, other than God Himself, of course, is the Torah – that is, a text, not an abstract idea.”⁶³⁸ However, a more nuanced understanding of the concept of the Torah in Rabbinic interpretation actually opens the idea of intertextuality in ways that resemble Paul's allegorical practice.

Bruns asserts that midrash is engaged in *contemporising* the Torah: “[t]he sense of Torah is the sense in which it applies to the life and conduct of those who live under its power;” and “[t]he text is always contemporary with its readers or listeners, that is, always oriented towards the time and circumstances of the interpreter.”⁶³⁹ This results in the *extension of the concept of the Torah* to include the interpretative community and its traditions:

[t]he word Torah, and therefore its power and authority, extends itself to include not only the original books of Moses but also the Mishnah, the Talmuds and Aggadot as well. In other words, the Torah is constituted as an open canon. To be sure, the letters of the original scriptures are fixed, but they are not dead. Openness here has to be construed as the openness of what is written; that is, its applicability to the time of its interpretation, its need for actualization.⁶⁴⁰

The openness in the “canon” of the Torah extends the intertextual field of Rabbinic interpretation to encompass not only the text of Scripture (Books of Moses, the Prophets and Writings), but also the Rabbinic dialogue – “the traditions of the fathers.” This is an important qualifier to Boyarin's insistence that midrash does not move beyond the text. The intertextual practice of midrash moves beyond the field of Scripture, since the

⁶³⁶ Daniel Boyarin, “The Song of Songs: Lock or Key? Intertextuality, Allegory and Midrash,” in *The Book and the Text: The Bible and Literary Theory*, ed. Regina M. Schwartz (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1990), 226.

⁶³⁷ *Ibid.*, 223.

⁶³⁸ Boyarin, “The Song of Songs: Lock or Key?,” 226.

⁶³⁹ Gerald L. Bruns, “The Hermeneutics of Midrash,” in *The Book and the Text*, 191.

⁶⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 201. Not everyone agrees with this view, see e.g. Gary G. Porton, “Rabbinic Midrash,” in *A History of Biblical Interpretation*, 198–224.

Rabbinic dialogue participates in some sense in the authority of the Torah. Bruns explains this in terms of the unity of the *written* and *oral* Torah:

[Rabbinic interpretations] are modes of participation in the dialogue with Torah, such that the words of the wise as they engage the Torah cannot be isolated from the words of Torah itself. Hence the rabbinic tradition – which perhaps extends all the way back to the Pharisees and beyond them to the priestly Ezra – concerning the unity of the written and oral Torah. The meaning and authority of the word *Torah* extends itself to include not only the original Pentateuch, followed by the Prophets and Writings, but also the Mishnah, the Talmudic commentaries on the Mishnah, and the whole tradition of midrash.⁶⁴¹

These two moves in the Rabbinic interpretative practice (midrash) – the extension of the intertextual field and its predication on the contemporising drive – provide a point of comparison to analyse Paul's allegorical practice in Gal 4:21-5:1.

I argue that Paul's allegorical practice is essentially intertextual, but, as with the Rabbis, so also is Paul's intertextual interpretative field extended, and similarly predicated on the need to contemporise. As we observe what Paul does after his initial question in Gal 4:21, we get a sense of how Paul extends the intertextual field. To counter the Galatians' desire to come “under the Law (νόμος),” Paul asks the Galatians to listen to what the “law” (νόμος) really says – to interpret it right (4:21).⁶⁴² What follows this question reveals how Paul extends the sphere of the “law.” For Paul, the second mention of “law” here is not simply a reference to the Torah, but a reference to the “intertextual field,” or “revelatory field,” in which he constructs meaning – the right understanding of the Law. Initially, it includes not only the books of Moses (Torah), but also the prophetic revelation in Isaiah (Isa 54:1 quoted in Gal 4:27).⁶⁴³ But even that is not its limit. The totality of revelation that comprises the “law”⁶⁴⁴ is ultimately centred

641 Gerald L. Bruns, “Midrash and Allegory: The Beginnings of Scriptural Interpretation,” in *The Literary Guide to the Bible*, ed. Robert Alter and Frank Kermode (London: Fontana, 1989), 632.

642 Many commentators note Paul's play with a double sense of νόμος here, and read it so that the first instance refers to the Mosaic legislation/commands of Scripture and the second either to the Pentateuch (e.g. F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1982), 215; Moo, *Galatians*, 297; Rohde, *an die Galater*, 192–193), or to Scripture as a whole (e.g. de Boer, *Galatians*, 291; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 206–207; Vouga, *An die Galater*, 115). Martyn goes further in recognising that this is the first positive reference to the Law that reflects “Paul's conviction that with the advent of Christ the Law is revealed to be a *complex entity* (cf. Rom 3:21) having the voice with which it pronounces a curse (3:10), but having also the gospel voice with which it speaks God's promise (3:8, 11; 4:27; cf. 5:14; 6:2 ...)” (*Galatians*, 433). This is a good observation, but not a sufficient analysis of what follows. I suggest that the full sense of Paul's second use of νόμος here becomes clear only as we follow what he actually does. For discussion on the complexity in Paul's use of the term “νόμος,” see the two essays by Heikki Räisänen, “The ‘Law’ of Faith and the Spirit,” and “Paul's Word-Play on ‘νόμος’: A Linguistic Study,” in *Jesus, Paul and Torah: Collected Essays* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015).

643 The extension of the Torah to include also prophetic revelation can already be perceived in the book of Isaiah (e.g. Isa 2 and 58).

644 Cf. Eisenbaum who recognises the possibility that, for Paul, the “νόμος” “constitutes the sum of

on the reality of Christ that is signalled in the concluding exhortation of the passage (5:1) and eventually in reference to the “law” of Christ (6:2 νόμος τοῦ Χριστοῦ; cf. 1 Cor 9:21).⁶⁴⁵ Thus, Paul's allegoresis is intertextual, in which the intertextual revelatory field (“νόμος”) is extended beyond the Scripture to include the revelatory experience of Christ.

When Paul expounds his allegorical other sense of Scripture (see 5.3 for discussion on 4:24 [ἅτινά ἐστιν ἀλληγορούμενα]), he derives it from the extended revelatory field that he has come to embrace. In other words, Paul does not read the Abraham narrative only together with the Isaianic vision of restoration (4:27), but also in light of the generative activity of God in Christ (5:1) and the Spirit (4:29). Hence, Paul's hermeneutic has a dialogical dynamic between Scripture and experience (Paul's experience of the risen Jesus [1:1, 11-16] and the Spirit in the Gentile mission [3:1-5]), in which he reads Scripture within the total revelation of God that has at its gravitational centre the Christ-event. Paul believes that Scripture and the revelation of Christ belong to the same revelatory field. With this premise, he reads Scripture in light of Christ and interprets the Christ-event in light of Scripture.⁶⁴⁶ Both forms of revelation function as signifiers that participate in the same divine reality.⁶⁴⁷

With this understanding of Paul's allegoresis, it is possible to argue that the resultant system (theology) in it is not heterogenous; it does not originate from or move

God's revelation to God's people” (*Paul Was Not a Christian*, 168).

⁶⁴⁵ The expression “law of Christ” has generated multiple views for its meaning. For discussions on the wide range of possibilities (that are not mutually exclusive) and evaluation of them, see Barclay, *Obedying*, 126–135; and de Boer, *Galatians*, 378–381. In his recent work, Barclay helpfully narrows the options for understanding the relationship between the “law of Christ” and the Torah in terms of 1) the “law of Christ” is “an allusion to the Torah, reconfigured in Christ,” or 2) it represents a “Pauline wordplay, akin to his insistence in 1 Corinthians 9:20-21 that he is neither ‘under the law’ (ὕπὸ νόμον) nor lawless in relation to God (ἄνομος θεοῦ), but ‘lawfully beholden to Christ’ (ἐννομος Χριστοῦ)” (*Paul and the Gift*, 431). I see value in both views. The first rightly recognises the hermeneutical impact of the Christ-event that maintains some level of continuity with the Torah (fulfilment) in the new reality brought about by the Christ-event. The second view rightly emphasises the centrality of Christ in Paul's theology and ethics. Additionally, Dunn argues that the “law of Christ” also refers to the influence of Jesus's own teaching and example concerning the Torah: “Paul drew his attitude to the law from Jesus. ... And it was no doubt this teaching and that example which Paul had in mind when he spoke of the 'law of Christ (Gal 6.2).” (*Jesus, Paul, and the Gospels* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011], 114.) This is historically plausible (Paul being aware of the Jesus tradition; cf. 1 Cor 11; 15), and complements my focus on the influence of the Christ-event reconfiguring Paul's understanding of the Law. It is also possible that the concept of the “law of Christ” has some roots in the matrix of Isaiah where it is the servant who becomes the law for the restored people (Isa 42:4), who are taught by God the new way of life in the “Jerusalem above” (Isa 2:3; 54:13).

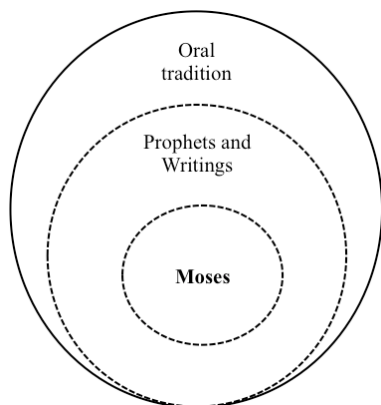
⁶⁴⁶ Cf. Watson, *PHF*, 15–16.

⁶⁴⁷ Cf. Childs: “Scripture is a divine vehicle bearing testimony to theological reality. Its truth is thus not tied to its linguistic form, but it can be extended to embrace a fuller divine reality only partially manifested in the original form.” (*The Church's Guide for Reading Paul: The Canonical Shaping of the Pauline Corpus* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008], 190.)

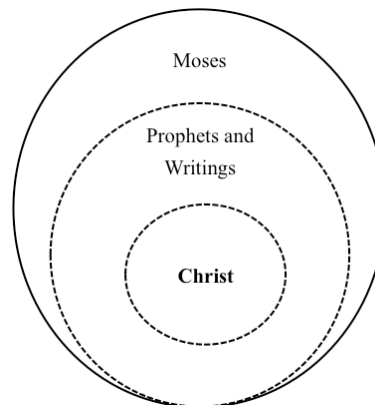
to alien terrain, as is the case arguably with Philo's Hellenistic vision and Greek philosophy. Instead, Paul's system is homogenous, because it emerges out of the matrix of divine revelation in Scripture and in Christ – both belong to the same world of thought. The difference from Rabbinic midrash is that Paul displaces Mosaic revelation from the centre of gravity by the revelation of Christ, and, rather than extending the intertextual field to include the “traditions of the fathers” (i.e. oral Torah and Rabbinic dialogue), it includes the experience of Christ and the Spirit to give a promise-fulfilment shape to the intertextual field of the “νόμος” (see Figure 2.). Furthermore, as I will demonstrate in 5.3-5 and ch. 6, Paul's allegoresis is more ikonic than Philo's, because the allegorical meaning is facilitated to a greater measure by the meaning potential in the Abraham narrative itself, especially as it is read within the enlarged intertextual field. Hence, convictions concerning the nature of the Christ-event ultimately determine whether Paul's resultant system is homogenous or heterogenous with Israel's scriptures.

Figure 2. The “intertextual fields” in Rabbinic midrash and Paul's allegoresis

Rabbinic midrash – the intertextual field



Paul's allegoresis – the intertextual field



The extension of Paul's intertextual interpretative field stems from the necessity to contemporise. But unlike the open-endedness of the Rabbinic contemporising, or Philo's universal contemporising, Paul operates more in the mode of *Pesher* that is associated with the Qumran community,⁶⁴⁸ in which “the text is related to one moment only, a moment thought of as occurring near the end of time.”⁶⁴⁹ Paul's emphasis on the

648 For discussion on the different Jewish interpretive practices in the first century, see Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids / Vancouver: Eerdmans / Regent College Publishing, 1999 [first edition was published in 1975 by Eerdmans]), 6–35.

649 Bruns, “Midrash and Allegory” 634. Longenecker: “Qumran distinguishes itself from rabbinic interpretation, for while in the talmudic literature there is a contemporizing treatment of Holy Writ that seeks to make God's Word relevant to the present circumstances and ongoing situations, among the Dead

revelatory experience of Christ (ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) (1:11-16) is an indication of his understanding of his place in time for hearing the Scripture. The cross and resurrection of Jesus form the nexus for the tension between the “present evil age” (1:4) and the “new creation” (6:14-15). The Christ-event has taken place, for Paul, at the “fullness of time” (4:4),⁶⁵⁰ and it occasions a turn in time that gives a new angle for interpreting Scripture. Paul hears the Scripture now in the context of the in-breaking of the new creation that on one level (anthropology/cosmology) results in a sharp break between the new age and the present evil age (apocalyptic emphasis), but on an other level (divine action/purpose)⁶⁵¹ retains a sense of continuity: the new is understood as a fulfilment of the promises given in the old age (covenantal emphasis).⁶⁵² Both the Abrahamic promise of blessing to all nations (Gen 12:3; 22:18) and the Isaianic promise of restoration (Isa 54:1), envisaged as new creation (e.g. Isa 43; 54:11-12; 65), are now being realised in Christ and the Spirit (Gal 3:8, 14, 29; 4:4-7, 29; 5:1; 6:14-15). The alignment of Scripture and the experience of Christ and the Spirit is predicated on this perceived promise-fulfilment matrix.⁶⁵³ Since both the promise and its fulfilment are configured as part of the same divine action, they are also part of the same divine revelatory field. The perception that the Christ-event participates in the same divine revelation that Paul attributes to Scripture is evidenced in the way Paul conflates time; the revelation of the gospel of Christ was already foreseen by Scripture (προϊδοῦσα δὲ ἢ γραφῇ), and pre-proclaimed (προεσηγγερίσαστο) in the promise to Abraham (3:8). Time is not understood simply as linear historical progression; the past, present, and future can be conflated within the same divine reality, as the future gospel of Christ was already present in the past promise to Abraham.

Sea covenants the biblical texts were looked on from the perspective of imminent apocalyptic fulfilment” (*Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, 25).

650 Dunn understand the “fullness of time” with a covenantal emphasis as an “eschatological climax” (*Galatians*, 214), whereas Martyn takes it with an apocalyptic emphasis as indicating a “stepping on the scene” or a “punctiliar liberation” (*Galatians*, 389). These categories can be confusing, since both continuity and discontinuity are present in Paul on different levels (see discussion below).

651 I like Wischmeyer's preference for using the concept *die Geschichte Gottes mit der Menschheit* rather than *Heilsgeschichte* (“Wie kommt Abraham in den Galaterbrief?,” 135), because it captures better Paul's emphasis on divine action in the continuity of his purposes.

652 This is the essence of apocalyptic for Wright, who combines both the apocalyptic and the covenantal emphases in referring to the “apocalyptic nature of Paul's covenantal theology” (“Gospel and Theology in Galatians [1994],” 91). I agree with Wright that it is essential to understand that the coming of the new does not come out of the blue or to destroy everything old, but, as in Isaiah, the new creation is the fulfilment of God's covenantal promise (*Ibid.*).

653 Dawson's critique of Boyarin highlights that Boyarin misses Paul's insistence that the divine action in Christ accounts for the fulfilment of the divine promise in Scripture: “[w]hile ‘promise’ might describe the pledge of an agent to perform a future action, in Boyarin's reading it becomes a term used to denote the abstract meaning of a textual signifier” (John David Dawson, *Christian Figural Reading and the Fashioning of Identity* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002], 25).

Now that I have argued that Paul's allegorical mode is essentially intertextual, I further substantiate this claim by analysing how the intertexts lend themselves to Paul's allegorical application. I first consolidate the sense of the prefigurative potential in the Abraham narrative that emerged during my analysis in chapter three, and note the significance in Isaiah's re-appropriation of the pattern of the Abrahamic promise in its theological programme (5.3). This leads me to a discussion on how best to understand the hermeneutical role of the Isaianic vision of restoration in Paul's allegoresis (5.4-5).

5.3 The Broader Horizon of Meaning in the Abraham Narrative

The only instance in the LXX and the New Testament where the word allegory is used occurs in Gal 4:24 (ἄτινά ἐστιν ἀλληγορούμενα), and its meaning here is debated. The present passive participial form of the verb ἀλληγορέω has been taken either with an emphasis on text reception as a reference to Paul's allegorical reading (“these things are now interpreted allegorically”),⁶⁵⁴ or with an emphasis on text production as a reference to the actual quality of the text (“these things are said/written allegorically”).⁶⁵⁵ Both Sellin⁶⁵⁶ and di Mattei⁶⁵⁷ have argued persuasively from Greek sources that the best sense of the passive participle is the latter. Yet the latter does not exclude the former, which can be understood to follow from the latter. Hence, I think that it is best to take the statement in Gal 4:24 with both senses: Paul claims that his allegorical reading is actually predicated on the allegorical quality of the text. In other words, Paul is making allegorical correspondences with the Abraham narrative, because he believes the text has inherent (divinely endowed) potential to speak beyond its initial horizon (cf. Gal 3:8). Attributing an allegorical level of meaning to a scriptural text that does not claim to be allegorical can seem arbitrary or forced, but, as my analysis of the Abraham narrative has indicated, Paul's approach might actually be in tune with the character of the text that is already constructed with a broader horizon of meaning.⁶⁵⁸

654 E.g. Longenecker, *Galatians*, 208–210.

655 E.g. Oepke, *an die Galater*, 148; Mußner, *Der Galaterbrief*, 139; Burton, *Galatians*, 253–257. Burton makes an important qualification here: “[t]he assertion pertains not to the original sense of the passage, what the writer meant when he wrote it, nor to the current or proper interpretation of the words, but to the character of the utterances as they stand in the scripture” (Ibid., 253). Cf. Paul's framing of an individual passage as the voice of Scripture in Gal 4:30.

656 Sellin, “Hagar und Sara,” 66–67.

657 Di Mattei, “Paul's Allegory” 106–109.

658 Cf. Watson's note that “an ‘allegorical dimension’ is already built into the Genesis redaction, in

During my analysis of the Abraham narrative in chapter three, I noted its prefigurative potential (e.g. Hagar's oppression [with Ishmael in her womb] by Sarah, and God attending to it, prefigures, ironically, Israel's oppression in Egypt). This is one of the elements that invest the text with potential to speak beyond its initial confines. One trigger that alerts us to this potential is the prophetic vision given to Abraham about the future of the people that includes servitude and consequent release and return to the land (Gen 15:12-21). Many scholars have recognised this prefigurative potential of the Abraham narrative. Cassuto perceives that the composition of the Abraham narrative had the motive to teach, among other things,

how the events of Abraham's life paralleled the destiny of the people of Israel, in the sense that the experiences of the sires prefigured those of the scions; and how the reader may conclude from this that the history of the Israelites was not the result of chance, but the execution of plans that were predetermined from the beginning by God's will and were foreshadowed from the first in the events that befell the primogenitor of the people.⁶⁵⁹

Levenson echoes the same sentiment:

As the father of the Jewish people, he [Abraham] is not simply their biological progenitor ... , he is also the founder of Judaism itself – the first Jew, as it were – and the man whose life in some mysterious ways pre-enacts the experience of the Jewish people, who are his descendants and who are to walk in trails he blazed.⁶⁶⁰

Kawashima agrees that the narrative does not present Abraham merely as a biological progenitor of the people (“as ancestral cause to national effect”), but has a “non-historical, non causal” dimension by which he symbolises or prefigures Israel's life.⁶⁶¹

He detects that this prefigurative dimension has affinities with allegory:

[t]o the extent that the Patriarchal History reflects certain historical realities of, say, preexilic Israel, one might loosely compare it to political allegory, or at least discern within it a number of vaguely allegorical elements.⁶⁶²

But how are the “vaguely allegorical elements” present in the narrative, and how do they lend themselves to re-appropriation and extension of meaning? Alter offers a tool for analysing this in his treatment of the function of the Sodom episode in the Abraham narrative and beyond:

the way the Sodom episode reaches back multifariously into the Abraham narrative, and further still to the Deluge and ultimately to the creation story, and forward to the future history of Israel,

the form of an overarching theological perspective on the traditional narrative material” (*PHF*, 189, footnote 48).

⁶⁵⁹ Cassuto, *Genesis*, 299–300.

⁶⁶⁰ Levenson, *Inheriting Abraham*, 3.

⁶⁶¹ Robert S. Kawashima, “Literary Analysis,” in *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation*, ed. Craig A. Evans, Joel N. Lohr, and David L. Petersen (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 90.

⁶⁶² *Ibid.*

suggest that there is elaborate if irregular *design* in this large complex of stories. It might be better to think of it less as structure than as *finely patterned texture*, in which seemingly disparate pieces are woven together, with juxtaposed segments producing among them *a pattern that will be repeated elsewhere with complicated variations*.⁶⁶³

Alter expresses the allegorical element in the narrative in terms of a “finely patterned texture” that offers “a pattern” that is repeated (with variations). He stresses the importance of recognising the “patterns of motifs, symbols, and themes, keywords, key phrases, and plots,” or else “we are likely to under-read the individual episodes and grasp at best imperfectly the *broader horizon of meaning* towards which the biblical writers mean to lead us.”⁶⁶⁴ This is a helpful insight for thinking about the way Paul appropriates the Abraham narrative allegorically. Paul is interested in the “pattern” in the birth of Abraham's two sons (4:22-24, 28-29), as he follows the broader horizon of meaning to which the text points in terms of the identity of God's people. Hence, Paul's allegorical engagement with the text is in tune with the narrative's “finely patterned texture.” Furthermore, I argue below that Paul utilises the Abraham narrative's broader horizon of meaning by reading it with a text that has done exactly the same, Isaiah,⁶⁶⁵ and situates the Christ-event on that matrix to capture its significance for all humanity.

We can further develop the idea of the “broader horizon of meaning” in the Abrahamic narrative with Childs, as he explains it in terms of prophecy and eschatology that stretches the promise-fulfilment pattern beyond the confines of its initial setting in Genesis to a wider canonical context:

within the canonical context of the book of Genesis the promises to the patriarchs have been clearly assigned a different role [to that of imminent fulfilment]. This new interpretation has been realized by means of several explicit passages (15:13) and by the larger framework into which the promises have been ordered. The divine words of assurance have been set within *an eschatological pattern of prophecy and fulfilment* which now stretches from Abraham to Joshua. The promises function only as a prelude to the coming exodus, and *extend into the distant future*. The canonical effect of this new role for the ancient patriarchal promises is far reaching. All the individual stories of the Fathers have now been *framed within the bracket of eschatology*.⁶⁶⁶

This eschatological potential of the Abrahamic promise is realised in the book of Isaiah where it is re-appropriated within the vision, or promise, of restoration (e.g. Isa 51:1-2, 54:1-3). Isaiah reinterprets the Abrahamic promise of a multitude of descendants like

⁶⁶³ Alter, “Sodom as Nexus,” 159; emphasis added.

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid., 159–160; emphasis added.

⁶⁶⁵ Cf. di Mattei: “[t]he function of Paul's allegorical use of the Genesis narrative therefore is thus [sic] also in imitation of how Paul might have envisioned Isaiah using the same narrative” (“Paul's Allegory,” 119).

⁶⁶⁶ Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, 151.

sand on the shore in terms of the remnant (Isa 10:20-23; cf. Paul quoting it in Rom 9:27-28),⁶⁶⁷ and the promise of blessing to all the nations (Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18) in terms of all the nations being within the scope of the restored people of God (e.g. Isa 2:2; 25:6; 56:7; 66:18). In fact, this connection strengthens the conclusion that the vision of restoration in Isaiah is not simply about the restoration of Israel, but is situated within the larger narrative of Scripture and the purpose of God for the re-creation of humanity. Furthermore, the allegorical potential in the pattern of a barren woman giving birth contrary to nature in Genesis (Sarah giving birth to Isaac) is repeated in Isaiah in the theme of the barren woman giving birth to many children as a symbol of restoration that includes the Gentiles. Thus, Paul's claim about the allegorical quality of the Abraham narrative can be understood partly as an extension of the eschatological pattern of prophecy and fulfilment that is facilitated by Isaiah's re-appropriation of the Abrahamic promise that is being realised in the (re)generation of the people of God by the gift of Christ and the Spirit. But the eschatological reading of the Abrahamic promise with an Isaianic lense should not be done at the expense of neglecting the theological potential in the Abraham narrative itself. I turn next to the dynamic between these two texts in Gal 4:21-5:1.

5.4 Reading the Abraham Narrative and Isaiah Together in Galatians 4:21-5:1

The above discussion has already indicated the direction in my understanding of Paul's allegoresis in Gal 4:21-5:1. I perceive that it is essentially intertextual, and capitalises on the intra-Scriptural dynamic in the connection between the Abrahamic narrative and the Isaianic vision of restoration. I now enter the discussion on how the relative weight of each intertext has been perceived, and thus how to understand what guides or controls Paul's allegorical construction in Gal 4:21-5:1.

The nature of scholarship is such that one can hardly focus on all the relevant aspects at the same time in analysing a text, which is true also of this work. Hence, there are many studies that focus either on the role of the Abraham narrative,⁶⁶⁸ or on the role

⁶⁶⁷ See Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Opening the Sealed Book: Interpretations of the Book of Isaiah in Late Antiquity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 205, 227–230. I did not focus on the idea of the remnant in my own analysis of Isaiah.

⁶⁶⁸ E.g. Matthew Y. Emerson, "Arbitrary Allegory, Typical Typology, or Intertextual Interpretation? Paul's Use of the Pentateuch in Galatians 4:21–31," *BTB* 43 (2013): 14–22; Stephen E. Fowl, "Who Can Read Abraham's Story? Allegory and Interpretive Power in Galatians.," *JSNT* no. 55 (1994): 77–95; Mark

of Isaiah in Galatians in general,⁶⁶⁹ and 4:21-5:1 in particular.⁶⁷⁰ My attempt is to hold these two together, as I understand that Paul reads the Abraham narrative *together with* Isaiah's vision of restoration in the new situation brought about by the revelation of Christ – *both* carry theological weight for Paul.

I have already noted Thiessen's one-sided focus on the Abraham narrative to the exclusion of the Isaianic matrix (see 1.1.3; 1.3). The same is true of Walter Hansen's influential work on Paul's use of the Abraham narrative in Galatians. He observes the following moves in Paul's allegorical practice in Gal 4:21-31:

- 1) the correspondence between Hagar and Sinai is built on an etymological and geographical argument, in which the name Hagar is connected with the location of Sinai in Arabia;
- 2) the correspondence between Sinai and “present Jerusalem” is built partly on word-association, but mainly on the troublemakers' identification with Jerusalem (their mother), the “proud repository of the traditions of the Sinaitic covenant;”
- 3) the connecting theme of slavery between Sinai and “present Jerusalem” refers to the binding element in Torah observance;
- 4) the “Jerusalem above” as a mother relates to Paul's aim to identify the Galatians with Sarah, which
- 5) is established by the quotation of Isa 54:1.⁶⁷¹

It is clear that in Hansen's view the Abraham narrative dominates in Paul's hermeneutic; the Isaiah quotation serves the Galatians' connection with Sarah rather than moves the horizon beyond the Abraham narrative to the Isaianic vision of restoration.⁶⁷² The problem is that it does not follow how the text of Isaiah is actually brought into the argument. Isa 54:1 is not introduced to support that Sarah is the mother of the Galatian believers, but rather that it is the “Jerusalem above” (4:26-27). Only because this is so are the Galatian believers also children of promise “like Isaac” (4:28) (see 2.2; 6.3.1).

Consequently, the limitation of coming to Gal 4:21-5:1 with a heavy emphasis on the Genesis narrative is in its inability to adequately account for the central pivotal

Gignilliat, “Paul, Allegory, and the Plain Sense of Scripture: Galatians 4:21-31,” *JTI* 2 (2008): 135–146; Jeremy Punt, “Revealing Rereading. Part 1: Pauline Allegory in Galatians 4:21-5:1,” *Neotestamentica* 40 (2006): 87–100; Jeremy Punt, “Revealing Rereading. Part 2: Paul and the Wives of the Father of Faith in Galatians 4:21-5:1,” *Neotestamentica* 40 (2006): 101–118.

⁶⁶⁹ E.g. Harmon, *She Must*.

⁶⁷⁰ E.g. Willitts, “Isa 54,1 in Gal 4,24b-27”; see more examples below.

⁶⁷¹ Hansen, *Abraham in Galatians*, 147–150.

⁶⁷² Hansen notes in passing also that the “Jerusalem above” refers to an eschatological heavenly city that is understood by Paul to be a present reality (*Ibid.*, 149–150). However, this does not have much weight in his overall reading of the passage.

point about the two Jerusalems (4:25-26) (see 2.2). It also relies on a reconstruction of Paul's opponents' position, and portrays Paul in defensive mode responding to the opponents' arsenal, e.g. the opponents are assumed to have called Jerusalem their mother, and hence, Paul uses the language of mother to refer to the Jerusalem above.⁶⁷³ Furthermore, it places significant weight on the etymological/geographical argument in 4:25a in establishing the connection between Hagar and Sinai/Law.⁶⁷⁴ If such a substantial piece of the argument is built purely on etymological/geographical grounds, Paul can rightly be accused of arbitrary tactics, and understood as operating in defensive mode trying to rescue texts from his opponents for his own purposes. But, if it can be demonstrated that the texts that Paul is drawing from have more profound theological potential to lend to Paul's application, then it is more plausible to imagine that a deeper theological reflection undergirds the allegorical correspondence between Hagar and the Law. I demonstrate this in section 6.4 with a reading of Gal 4:21-5:1 not only in light of the theological potential in the Abraham narrative, but also with the Isaianic material.

Rather than viewing Isa 54:1 as an add-on text to support the argument that is primarily controlled by the Abraham narrative, there has recently been increasing focus on the role of Isa 54:1 as a hermeneutical key.⁶⁷⁵ De Boer argues that Paul used Isa 54:1 as his unique lens to interpret the Genesis story,⁶⁷⁶ and claims that “Paul's reflection on Isa 54:1 from the perspective of the gospel and in light of developments in Galatia prompted his allegorical-typological interpretation of the Genesis account in the first place.”⁶⁷⁷ His main thesis is that Paul's quotation of Isaiah 54:1 gives his interpretation of the Abraham narrative “an eschatological dimension.”⁶⁷⁸ Thus, as Gal 4:21-5:1 has the appearance of the Abraham narrative dominating in the flow of the text, it is a case of the “cart coming before the horse,” because it is really the Isaiah passage (horse) that has guided Paul's interpretation of the Abraham narrative (cart).⁶⁷⁹ De Boer builds this

673 Ibid., 148. Similarly Mußner, *Der Galaterbrief*, 325, 327.

674 Hansen, *Abraham in Galatians*, 148.

675 E.g. Robert L. Brawley, “Contextuality, Intertextuality, and the Hendiadic Relationship of Promise and Law in Galatians,” *ZNW* 93 (2002): 99–119; Brendan SJ Byrne, “Jerusalems Above and Below: A Critique of J. L. Martyn's Interpretation of the Hagar–Sarah Allegory in Gal 4.21–5.1,” *NTS* 60 (2014): 215–31; Martinus C de Boer, “Paul's Quotation of Isaiah 54.1 in Galatians 4.27,” *NTS* 50 (2004): 370–389; Di Mattei, “Paul's Allegory”; Eastman, *Recovering*, 137–160; Jobes, “Jerusalem, Our Mother.”

676 De Boer, “Paul's Quotation,” 388.

677 Ibid., 389.

678 Ibid., 370. Di Mattei has argued that Paul's reading of Isa 54:1 with the Abraham narrative reflects the *haftarah* practice (Isa 54:1 used as the *haftarah* of Gen 16:1 in the Palestinian triennial reading cycle) that also sought to eschatologise the Torah (“Paul's Allegory,” 114–115). Whether the *haftarah* is later to Paul or reflects a tradition already available to Paul, it confirms that the connection between Isa 54:1 and the Abraham narrative was common currency.

679 De Boer, “Paul's Quotation,” 388–389.

view on the sense that Paul was thoroughly familiar with “Second Isaiah” and made use of it “to articulate his own christologically shaped apocalyptic eschatology and his own apostolic vocation at the turn of the ages.”⁶⁸⁰ However, since de Boer reads Galatians similarly to Martyn from a strong apocalyptic-eschatological framework, its presuppositional role causes de Boer to elevate it above the role of Isaiah – it becomes the driver of the Isaianic horse. Hence, de Boer understands that “the Isaian text is thus brought by Paul into the service of his christologically determined apocalyptic eschatology.”⁶⁸¹ Besides relegating the Abraham narrative to the rather passive role of the “cart,” de Boer's emphasis on Paul's Christologically re-ordered reading of (Deutero) Isaiah causes Paul's dialogical hermeneutic (Scripture-experience) to become too much a one-way conversation.⁶⁸²

Another configuration of the role of Isa 54:1 in Gal 4:21-5:1 that raises further issues for consideration is by Jobs.⁶⁸³ She sets out to explore how the quotation of Isa 54:1 in Gal 4:27 can help in capturing “the operative hermeneutical principle(s)” and “the logical flow of Paul's argument.”⁶⁸⁴ Jobs conducts the exploration “within the context of the newly created intertextual space” that involves Isaiah and Galatians, but also the Abraham narrative.⁶⁸⁵ With this approach, Jobs follows how the theme of barrenness in the Genesis account of Sarah is developed by Isaiah and appropriated by Paul.⁶⁸⁶ Jobs perceives that in transforming the theme of barrenness, “Isaiah merges the concepts of seed, inheritance, and covenant with the operation of the Holy Spirit.”⁶⁸⁷ These concepts resound in turn integrally in the argument of Galatians (chs. 3-4), and thus “echoes of Isaiah's proclamation resonate within Paul's argument.”⁶⁸⁸ Hence, she argues that “Paul's citation of Isa 54:1 sets up waves of resonance with Isaiah's proclamation of the suffering servant and Jerusalem's future that ripple through the entire *probatio* of Gal 3:1-4:31.”⁶⁸⁹ The importance of the Christ-event for Paul's hermeneutic comes to the fore as Jobs argues that the premise for the link between

680 Ibid., 388.

681 Ibid., 378.

682 De Boer: “Paul's argument is based rather on christologically informed authoritative *interpretation* of Scripture. It is doubtful that 'Scripture' has any authority for Paul apart from Christ, who enables Paul to read it in a radically new way...” (*Galatians*, 288, emphasis original).

683 Jobs, “Jerusalem, Our Mother.” Although her work is not the most recent, it is the most fully developed example of an intertextual approach that emphasises the hermeneutical role of Isa 54:1.

684 Ibid., 300–301.

685 Ibid., 304–306.

686 Ibid., 306.

687 Ibid., 311.

688 Ibid., 312.

689 Ibid., 313.

4:26 (Jerusalem above, our mother) and 4:28 (Galatian Christians) is that “the barren one of Isa 54:1 has in fact given birth.”⁶⁹⁰ What signals the realisation of “Isaiah's prophetic metaphor of a miraculous birth to the barren one is the resurrection of Christ.”⁶⁹¹ Thus, in using Isa 54:1 as part of his argument from Scripture, Paul is correcting a faulty hermeneutic that attempts to read the Genesis narrative and apply it directly to the situation of the Galatians “without considering the intervening revelation of Isaiah that had transformed the Genesis material and, most importantly, without reference to the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”⁶⁹²

Although Jobes work is impressive, not all have been convinced. Willitts questions Jobes's intertextual method, and is sceptical about the focus on echoes in the “new intertextual space” at the intersection of the intertexts (Abraham and Isaiah) and the text of Galatians.⁶⁹³ In listening to the intertextual echoes, Willitts laments that Jobes has neglected the more concrete ground of the immediate context of Isa 54:1.⁶⁹⁴ To correct this, Willitts offers his own reading that focuses on the meaning of Isa 54:1 in its immediate context that reflects the overall frame of Isaiah's “tale of two cities” – the pre-exilic and the restored Jerusalem.⁶⁹⁵ Although Willitts limits the context of Isa 54:1 to its immediate context instead of the intertextual thematic one, he extends its hermeneutical role beyond that of Jobes. Echoing the works of Sellin (“Hagar und Sara”) and de Boer (“Paul's Quotation”), he locates Isa 54:1 at the heart of Gal 4:21-5:1, and claims that it exerts hermeneutical priority over the Abraham narrative to the extent that the Abraham narrative becomes a mere “concrete visual aid” of the truth that Isa 54:1 communicates.⁶⁹⁶ Again, as was the case with de Boer, the one-sidedness in Willitts' approach highlights the need to evaluate and allocate proper weight to both intertexts, as they contribute to the understanding of the logic in the allegorical correspondences that Paul makes in Gal 4:21-5:1. Yet the criticism that Willitts directs at the dangers of too creative readings in the “intertextual space” requires attention.⁶⁹⁷

690 Ibid., 314.

691 Ibid., 314–315. She notes that Isaiah connects barrenness with death, and miraculous birth with resurrection (e.g. Isa 26:17-19), and claims that the connection between birth and resurrection is also seen in Paul, e.g. Rom 1:4 (Jesus attains sonship by resurrection) and Col 1:18 (firstborn from the dead). Paul also associates Sarah's barrenness with death and the birth of Isaac with resurrection in Rom 4:17-25.

692 Ibid., 318.

693 Willitts, “Isa 54,1 in Gal 4,24b-27,” 191, see the extensive discussion in footnote 11.

694 Ibid.

695 Ibid., 192–197.

696 Ibid., 192.

697 See also the recent criticism of Paul Foster, “Echoes without Resonance: Critiquing Certain Aspects of Recent Scholarly Trends in the Study of the Jewish Scriptures in the New Testament,” *JSNT* 38 (2015): 96–111.

This calls for some control mechanism to determine the strength and significance of the connections between the texts (Abraham, Isaiah and Galatians). I develop my controls at the beginning of chapter 6.

Finally, I consider the implications of Harmon's rather ambitious contribution, in which he connects Paul's use of Isa 54:1 in Gal 4:21-5:1 to the larger scheme of Paul's use of Isa 51-54 in Gal 3-4. He argues that the whole presentation of Abraham in Gal 3-4 is crafted to some extent with the framework of Isa 51-54 in mind, and that Isa 51:1-8 (in Gal 3:6-9) and Isa 54 (in Gal 4:21-5:1) function as the bookends.⁶⁹⁸ Consequently, Paul's use of Isa 54:1 in Gal 4:27 is the climax to the whole argument in Gal 3-4.⁶⁹⁹ Thus, Isa 54:1 is not only central to Gal 4:21-5:1, but “it exerts hermeneutical control over the entirety of Gal 3:1-5:1.”⁷⁰⁰ This is because the allusions and echoes of Isaiah 51-54 that have been in the background thus far “break forth into the open for all to see” in the citation of Isa 54:1.⁷⁰¹ Finally, he suggests that the implications of the citation of Isa 54:1 in Gal 4:27 “signals to the reader a deeper and sustained engagement with Isaiah,” which means, for Harmon, that Isaiah provides the narrative substructure for the whole letter to the Galatians (especially chs. 1-4).⁷⁰² Harmon's work raises the stakes in the intertextual reading of Gal 4:21-5:1, since the one quotation of Isaiah in Gal 4:27 has the potential to lead to the recognition of the fuller extent of the Isaianic influence in the theology of Galatians. The problem with this is an over enthusiasm to elevate Isaiah's voice with the consequence of not attending enough to the other voices (e.g. the Abraham narrative). Hence, to realise the potential of Gal 4:21-5:1 for focusing the theology of Galatians, I analyse in ch. 6 Paul's allegoresis in Gal 4:21-5:1 with a robust approach that accords due weight to each involved text.

5.5 The Broader Horizon of Meaning in the Exile-Restoration Paradigm in Isaiah

I noted in my structural analysis (2.2) the strategic positioning of Paul's quotation of Isa 54:1 in relation to the two key identifications of the Galatian believers – belonging to the “Jerusalem above” and being “children of promise like Isaac.” In the previous

⁶⁹⁸ Harmon, *She Must*, 186.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid., 198.

⁷⁰¹ Ibid.

⁷⁰² Ibid., 257–258.

section, I developed the argument for recognising the quotation's importance in Paul's hermeneutic with de Boer, Jobes, Willitts, and Harmon. But before applying these insights into the reading of Gal 4:21-5:1, I discuss the potential of the exile-restoration paradigm that is present in Isa 54:1 for Paul's re-appropriation in the "fullness of time."

As I analysed the vision of restoration in the book of Isaiah in chapter 4, I joined the view that perceives movement within the book, in which the initial prophetic message of Isaiah is re-appropriated in new contexts. The new contexts are reflected in the three main sections of the book (1-39 pre-exilic; 40-55 exile/promise of return; 56-66 after exile/partial return), and yet the re-appropriated material is not limited to its respective sections, since elements of the later developments have also been brought to bear on the earlier material in the process of the formation of the final form of the book (e.g. Isa 2). The main thing about the movement is its eschatologising thrust.⁷⁰³ This is especially evident in the framing of the book (Isa 1-2 and 65-66), by which the vision of restoration is moved to another level that is not fixed directly to the initial historical experience of exile and partial return. It is the eschatologising of the Isaianic vision of restoration and the symbolic language used to represent it that open its broader horizon of meaning for theological re-appropriation. I presently develop both of these claims.

Blenkinsopp has explored how the "detachment of the exile from its historical moorings" and its "symbolic representation" contribute to its function as a locus of theological reflection.⁷⁰⁴ He argues that, with these two developments, the exile and promise of restoration in Isaiah provided the matrix for different Jewish sectarian groups to configure their identity:

Exile from which a few return as the core of a new people is the Isaianic concept which proved to be most productive and generative for the future.

... It anticipates the creation of a new people to prepare for the final intervention of God in the affairs of Israel and human affairs in general, the final showdown.

... it is therefore open to becoming quite explicitly an eschatological concept. As such, it provided a powerful impulse not only to the development of a sectarian and apocalyptic way of thinking, evident already in the book of Isaiah itself, but also to the actual formation of eschatological and apocalyptic sects throughout the period of the Second Temple.⁷⁰⁵

⁷⁰³ For Blenkinsopp, one indication of the eschatologising thrust in Isaiah is the formula "'on that day,' which redirects them [oracles on Egypt in Isa 19] to a future very different from the unsatisfactory present" (*Opening the Sealed Book*, 7). This eschatologising is not unique to Isaiah, but is a feature that is present in the whole corpus of the prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the twelve) (see, *Ibid.*, 5–6).

⁷⁰⁴ Blenkinsopp, *Opening*, 231; also: "It is a curious fact that, while the biblical narrative provides practically no information on the exile as a historical episode, the exile as symbolic representation, as idea, is fully developed" (*Ibid.*, 230).

⁷⁰⁵ Blenkinsopp, *Opening*, 226–227. An example of this general tendency to understand the present

Similarly, the symbolic representation of Isaiah's exile-restoration paradigm can be understood as providing a “cognitive map” for the early Christian movement to make sense of the Christ event and its implications:

as appropriated and interpreted by the first generation of Christians, the book of Isaiah came to serve as a grid or *cognitive map* by means of which they could articulate their sense of the unique character of their founder and chart the direction in which their destiny was leading them.⁷⁰⁶

I use the idea of the “cognitive map,” as I draw together material from my analysis of Isaiah and explore how the exile-restoration paradigm is symbolically represented in it, which in turn offers a matrix for Paul's theological reflection.

The one metaphor used of the exile-restoration paradigm that is explicitly present in Gal 4:21-5:1 is the barren woman giving birth from Isa 54:1. As I argued in my analysis of Isaiah, the two women in Isa 54:1 represent the pre-exilic Jerusalem and the promised restored Jerusalem. Thus, the “tale of two cities” and the imagery of rebuilding the city (Isa 54:11-12 and related texts) – a vision for the restored Jerusalem (e.g. Isa 2) – are intimately connected with the barren woman giving birth, and potentially correspond with Paul's two Jerusalems in Gal 4:25-26 (see 6.2). The representative function of Jerusalem/Zion is more complex, since the idea of rebuilding a city is on one level about a concrete reality and not about symbolic representation. But, as I observed in my analysis of Isaiah, the language used of the new restored city elevates it to a symbolic level. The city functions as a symbolic representation of the restored presence and rule of God among the new restored community (see 4.3.3). Furthermore, the heightened language used in association with the restored Jerusalem gives it affinity with the idea of new creation (Isa 54:11-12; 65). Hence, the reference to two Jerusalems and to the barren-made-fruitful woman in Gal 4:21-5:1 can be understood as re-appropriations of the Isaianic exile-restoration paradigm. But there is a double distance to the historical experience of the exile and partial return: first, there is the *theological interpretation in the book of Isaiah* that is represented in the symbolic language it uses, and second, there is *Paul's theological reflection on the symbols in Isaiah* and their re-appropriation in the new situation occasioned by the Christ-event.

in light of the past experience of exile and return is 4 Ezra, in which the vision accounts are “backdated to the exilic period” (Ibid., 231). In fact, 4 Ezra uses the events from the historical time of Ezra as a paradigm for dealing with the destruction of the temple at 70 CE (this idea is suggested in a paper given by Markus Lau, “*Rauchende Trümmer*” – *Die Zerstörung des Jerusalemer Tempels 70 n. Chr.*, in Mainz, Germany, 16.7.2015).

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid., 136; emphasis added. Blenkinsopp believes this dependence on Isaiah goes back to Jesus himself (Ibid., 136–137).

The theological interpretation in Isaiah extends also into the condition that leads to exile. The concrete events of exile and partial return become a matrix for reflection that addresses deeper realities than the immediate problems of the devastation of the city and the exile of the people. The problem that leads to exile is sin, as defined in relation to the Law and prophetic revelation (Isa 1:2-17; 42:24-25; 48:18-19; 58; 59 cf. Rom 3:9-18). Blindness and obduracy are related to sin (Isa 6; 41-43; 48:1-8). These keep the people in captivity/slavery outside of the inheritance of the restoration reality. It is the narrative of the servant that brings together this level of theological reflection; the suffering servant in Isa 53 deals with the people's sin in order to deliver and restore the blind and captive Israel to be the servant she is called to be (Isa 42; 49; see 4.3.5). However, the theological interpretation in Isaiah reaches its most potent category in describing the exilic condition as death and restoration as resurrection (Isa 26:18-19). The categories that are used in Isaiah to reflect on the crisis of exile and the hope of restoration offer a complex matrix where the symbolic and concrete levels are blurred.

As Levenson traces the background of Jewish theology on resurrection partly to the language and theology of restoration, he points out the important interconnectedness between the different symbols/metaphors (I use these interchangeably) that are used of exile and restoration, and also between the symbolic level and its reference to reality:

Barrenness, exile, loss of children, abandonment by one's husband (either through divorce or through death), estrangement from God, death – all could function as metaphors for the others in the list. To these must be added slavery, of course, which often appears in connection with them, especially with death.⁷⁰⁷

To us, it is natural to describe the language of widowhood and remarriage, of the loss of the divine husband and his miraculous, triumphant return, and of the restoration of vanished children (or the birth of their replacements) as metaphorical, as I have indeed done above. For Israel or Zion is not literally a wife, their God does not literally die, and the return from exile and repopulation of the Promised Land is not a matter of literal birth. Sometimes, however, this distinction of the literal and the metaphorical can lead us astray, causing us to miss the deep interconnections internal to ancient Israel's culture but foreign to us. The sources in the Hebrew Bible ... have a definition of death and of life broader than ours. That is why they can see exile, for example, as death and repatriation as life ... death and life in the Hebrew Bible are often best seen as relational events and are for the selfsame reason inseparable from the personal circumstances of those described as living or as dead.⁷⁰⁸

Levenson's analysis of the interconnectedness of the metaphors and their relation to reality in terms of the embedded relational element is instructive. He uses it primarily to

⁷⁰⁷ Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel*, 161.

⁷⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 154.

emphasise the social relatedness of the individual for understanding the language of death and life, but I think the observation also points to the unifying element underlying the symbolic language about exile and restoration in general. In essence, the exile-restoration paradigm refers to a condition of being inside or outside in relation to promised “inheritance” (Isa 53:11-13; 54:3, 17). This is true also in relation to God (exile as Godforsakenness),⁷⁰⁹ but even that is expressed with reference to inheritance of the land or the city – being in or out of the land/city reflects the people's relationship with God.⁷¹⁰

Morales has also convincingly argued that the representative language of death and resurrection for the exile-restoration paradigm (in Ezekiel) is what Paul capitalises on, especially via the reality of the resurrection of Jesus and the giving of the Spirit:

Paul appeals to the Spirit as a sign of the inauguration of the restoration of Israel promised by the prophets and anticipated by some during the second temple period. Paul's interpretation however, does not simply reproduce these expectations, but rather radically transforms them through the death and resurrection of Jesus. Just as the resurrection of Jesus completes the transformation of the metaphorical language of Ezekiel from a symbol of return from exile into literal, bodily resurrection, so, too, does it complete the transformation of the language of the dead bones from a symbol for the exile into a literal reference to death, the true problem with the Law.⁷¹¹

This highlights the central hermeneutical role of Christ's resurrection (cf. Jobes; 5.4) and the giving of the Spirit that signal the reality of restoration when they are placed in the matrix of the symbolic representation of it in Isaiah and other texts of Scripture.⁷¹² They also configure the “cognitive map” in the direction that makes the symbols (death-resurrection) the reality and the concrete (exile-return) the symbol. This is a dialogical hermeneutic, in which Isaiah (among others) provides the matrix to read the experience of the risen Christ and the Spirit as God's eschatological restoration. At the same time, it is Christ and the Spirit that push the reading of Isaiah beyond the concrete walls of Jerusalem to emphasise the generation of a new restored community.

709 Blenkinsopp: “The dark side of the experience of exile can be expressed metaphorically in many different ways. In biblical texts, the Babylonian exile is the time of Godforsakenness, the time when the God of Israel moved away from his people.” (*Opening*, 242.) In this context, Blenkinsopp examines particularly Isa 54:7-8 (Ibid., 243).

710 The relational language of covenant (Isa 49:8 the servant as covenant; 54:10 covenant of peace; 55:3 Davidic covenant) and righteousness (Isa 54:13-14, 17) that is used about inclusion in the inheritance/restoration are also potential contacts to Paul's application of the exile-restoration paradigm.

711 Rodrigo Jose Morales, *The Spirit and the Restoration of Israel: New Exodus and New Creation Motifs in Galatians*, WUNT 2. 282 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 79.

712 Morales surveys a wider array of Scripture (other prophets and Deuteronomy) in establishing an understanding of the transformation of the exile-restoration paradigm in Paul's use primarily with the categories of life and death. With my limited focus on Isaiah and the Abraham narrative, I cannot incorporate the wider material of Scripture that is pertinent for this (e.g. Deuteronomy).

With these observations about the eschatologising of the vision of restoration in Isaiah and the symbolic representation of the exile-restoration paradigm, I have indicated my understanding of the hermeneutic in Paul's re-appropriation of the theological potential in Isaiah. At this point, I want to clarify one of the implications of this. When I refer to Paul using the Isaianic exile-restoration paradigm, I am not referring to his understanding about a prior sense of an extended exile on a continuous narrative of Israel. Whether or not Paul or some other Jews thought that Israel was experiencing an ongoing or extended exile on a historical or symbolical level, is not my point.⁷¹³ My point is that the theological interpretation about the exile and promise of restoration in Isaiah provides a theological matrix (“cognitive map”) that functions as a pattern or a paradigm for Paul to re-apply to the Christ-event and the giving of the Spirit.⁷¹⁴ To be sure, the Christ-event is, for Paul, the real and unique fulfilment of the Abrahamic promise of blessing in terms of the Isaianic promise of restoration (see 6.3), and thus, it is only through the resurrection of Jesus and in the giving of the Spirit that this eschatological hope is being realised. In this sense, restoration is not a pattern that is repeated in history. But it does not necessarily follow that the time before the “fulness of time” – the inauguration of restoration by Christ – is a period of an extended exile. For Paul, the Christ-event is the new centre of reality that determines what constitutes alienation, and what amounts to inclusion in restoration. Being outside of Christ is the realm of alienation whether or not that condition is preceded by a sense of an ongoing exile (however conceived), and whether or not one is a Jew or a Gentile. To be included in the restoration people is predicated on belonging to Christ. In order to avoid confusion and the attribution of an ongoing sense to the exile-restoration scheme in Paul's theological reflection, I choose to refer to the alienation-restoration paradigm when discussing the exile-restoration matrix in Paul.

⁷¹³ Wright offers evidence that some Jews indeed thought of living in an ongoing or extended exile (PFG, 139–162).

⁷¹⁴ Starling's assessment of Second Temple Jewish texts recognises the possibility that there is not always a sense of a continuing exile, but that the exile can also function as a matrix that was “typologically” reapplied to a new situation: “The pattern of citations that we have surveyed supports the view that for a variety of writers across the spectrum of Second Temple Judaism, the promises of Israel's restoration in the exilic prophets were understood as having been at best only partially fulfilled in the return under Cyrus, and that the plight of Israel in the Second Temple period could be described as a continuing exile or *typological second exile*” (David Ian Starling, *Not My People: Gentiles As Exiles in Pauline Hermeneutics* [Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter & Co, 2011], 33, emphasis added). I also think that the NT portrays different ways how the idea of exile is re-appropriated; e.g. Matthew seems to place it into a continuous narrative culminating in Christ (Mt 1:1-17), but 1 Peter seems to apply it as a pattern to describe the existence of believers (Jews and Gentiles) who live in the aftermath of the resurrection of Jesus and wait for final salvation (1 Pt 1:1-17).

Chapter 6. Configuring The Theological Vision and Logic of Galatians from the Vantage Point of 4:21-5:1

I have argued thus far that Gal 4:21-5:1 offers a unique vantage point for configuring Paul's theological vision and logic in Galatians (ch. 2). I have also argued that Gal 4:21-5:1 is best read in tune with Paul's dynamic hermeneutical matrix that is formed by the experience of the risen Christ and the gift of the Spirit together with the scriptures of Israel, especially the Abraham narrative and Isaiah (section 2.2 and ch. 5). In this chapter, I demonstrate that Paul's understanding of the gospel – the good news of what God is doing in the world through Christ and the Spirit – is integrally connected with the Abrahamic promise of blessing to the nations and Isaiah's vision of restoration, and that it can be expressed as a vision for the re-creation of humanity that has implications for both Jews and Gentiles.

6.1 Method for an Intertextual Reading of Galatians 4:21-5:1

Before I embark on my reading of Gal 4:21-5:1 and the configuration of Paul's theological vision and logic in Galatians therein, I establish here the criteria by which I evaluate the presence of the scriptural matrix in Paul's text – the intertextual relations. The aim is to have a robust method to determine how Paul draws from the theological potential in the texts he interacts with in Gal 4:21-5:1. Underlying my criteria are some of Hays's criteria for determining the presence of scriptural echoes (although I do not use the category in my discussion) in Paul's text.⁷¹⁵

⁷¹⁵ Hays, *Echoes*, 29–32. This reference applies to the discussion below on the three criteria I use from Hays. I choose to explain only three of Hays' seven criteria at this point. Some of the criteria are discussed elsewhere (*historical plausibility*, i.e. could Paul or his recipients be thought to have picked up the references to Scripture is discussed below; also *satisfaction* is discussed below). *Availability* is not a necessary criterion in my work, since my analysis focuses only on texts that are clearly available to Paul (portions of Scripture he uses, and not e.g. texts of Philo), and most likely also to the recipients of his letter (access and familiarity with the LXX). *History of interpretation* is a criterion that comes up in a limited way in my discussion with relevant scholarship.

I prefer not to use the categories of allusion or echoes in my approach, since they can be misleading in relation to the focus of my analysis. As Hays explains, allusions are often connected to intentional intertextual relations (intended by the author and assumed to be recognisable by the readers), whereas an echo is a metaphor for an allusion that does not depend on intentionality (Ibid., 29). Hays himself makes no systematic distinction between an echo and an allusion: “*allusion* is used of obvious intertextual references, *echo* of subtler ones” (Ibid.). Allusion can be a misleading category, since my focus is not on what scriptural connections Paul intended his readers to pick up, but on how the scriptural matrix can be perceived to inform Paul's theological vision and logic that is reflected in the text. It is also difficult to be

- a) *Volume* refers to the degree of identifiability of the textual relation in terms of verbal links and similarity in syntactical patterns. The volume of the intertextual connection depends also on the prominence the intertext has in Scripture (i.e. is it an important text?) and the rhetorical stress that Paul gives it.
- b) *Recurrence* refers to the frequency with which a text is cited or referred to by Paul. If there is evidence that a certain text / section of Scripture is important to Paul, detecting an intertext from the same context is more probable.
- c) *Thematic coherence* has to do with the fit between the intertext and Paul's text: How does the intertext fit in Paul's argument? Do the ideas or images in the intertext illuminate Paul's text? I would also add to this the idea of *logical correspondence*, which focuses on the correspondence between the internal logic in the line of thought expressed in the intertext and in Paul's text. This last criterion of thematic coherence and logical correspondence is not simply about identifying connections, as it relies on an interpretation of the intertext and Paul's text to establish coherence or correspondence.⁷¹⁶ Hence, to be able to execute my intertextual reading, I have carried out interpretations of both the Abraham narrative in Genesis (ch. 3) and the vision of restoration in Isaiah (ch. 4), as well as an initial analysis of Paul's text in Galatians (ch. 2).

With these criteria in mind, I regard as *certain* the presence of those intertexts that are made explicit by quotations and leave no room for doubt. The next level are *very likely* (probable) intertexts that are *intimately* connected with the texts whose presence has been made explicit by quotations, and are supported by both *verbal and conceptual* links as well as thematic coherence/logical correspondence. On the third level are *likely* (plausible) intertexts that are *somehow* related to the explicit intertexts, and are supported by *conceptual* connections, and have thematic coherence/logical correspondence. Finally, there are *possible* influences of intertexts that lack direct evidence on the surface of the text, but operate on the level of textual substructure. Yet they have thematic coherence/logical correspondence, and are reasonable to infer due to their connection with the explicit intertexts and their ability to deepen the reading.

certain about the intentions of the author in general, as Hays expresses it: "from this distance in time, however, it is difficult to distinguish between intentional and unintentional intertextual references in Paul" (*Conversion*, 29). Echo could be a useful category for the more subtle relations between the texts, but, since my focus is on a range of relations from certain to possible, I find it unnecessary.

⁷¹⁶ Hays, *Echoes*, 30.

These criteria are about identifying textual connections, but they are not adequate for determining to what extent these texts have influenced Paul (thematic coherence/logical correspondence move in that direction), i.e. how much have the content and context of the related intertexts shaped Paul's thought? I have given some evidence at the beginning of chapter four that supports the view that Paul is not a superficial reader of Scripture, but that he operates contextually in tune with the thematic connections within Scripture and with the narrative shape of the material. I presently explain how this view impacts my reading of Paul.

Riffaterre has argued that the need for interpretative help from an intertext arises from “the need to fill out the text's gaps, spell out its implications and find out what rules of idiolectic grammar account for the text's departure from logic, from accepted usage”⁷¹⁷ Furthermore, he suggests that when an intertext is signalled by a quotation or an allusion, the intertext acts as the *key to the text's interpretation*, in which case the *context of the intertext* also becomes significant.⁷¹⁸ I agree, and my view on the influence of the content and context of the texts Paul interacts with is more of a maximalist than a minimalist one.⁷¹⁹ I perceive that Paul's thought is thoroughly immersed in Scripture, which is indicated by the high frequency and volume of its presence in Paul's letters (especially in Galatians, Romans, and the Corinthian correspondence).⁷²⁰ This is why I explore the maximal theological potential in the texts of Scripture that are indicated in Paul's text in order to capture Paul's vision and follow his logic.⁷²¹ Nevertheless, I recognise that the proof of the pudding lies in the satisfaction that a reading offers, i.e. in its power to explain the text – to capture its force and flow.

⁷¹⁷ Michael Riffaterre, “Compulsory Reader Response: The Intertextual Drive,” in *Intertextuality: Theories and Practices*, ed. Michael Worton and Judith Still (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 57.

⁷¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 70.

⁷¹⁹ See the discussion in Watson, *PHF*, 491–501. Watson describes a minimalist and maximalist view thus: “Maximalists think that scripture is profoundly important to Paul; minimalists think that it matters to him only superficially. Maximalists tend to argue that Paul's texts are full of scriptural allusions, even where explicit citations are lacking. They believe that a citation of an individual text is intended to evoke the entire scriptural context from which it was taken. Minimalists believe that Paul is usually unconcerned about the contexts of the texts he cites. They argue that he often cites texts because he is forced to do so by opponents, not because he really wants to.” (*Ibid.*, 491–492.)

⁷²⁰ Cf. Hays: “to interpret Paul discerningly, we must recognize the embeddedness of his discourse in scriptural language (or the embeddedness of scriptural language in his discourse) and explore the rhetorical and theological effects created by the intertextual relationship between his letters and their scriptural precursors” (*Conversion*, 29).

⁷²¹ I recognise that Paul's context for reading Scripture seems to be all of Scripture rather than individual passages or books (e.g. he connects texts from different books as they relate to a theme). But, since certain books play an especially prominent role in Paul's thought (e.g. Isa and Gen), it is reasonable to think that Paul is influenced by the theological potential that is communicated by the books as a whole.

With these notes on my method, I now analyse Paul's allegorical engagement with Scripture in Gal 4:21-5:1 with an intertextual reading that simultaneously configures Paul's theological vision and logic in the whole letter.

6.2 Vision of Restoration and the Alienation-Restoration Paradigm

In my structural analysis of Gal 4:21-5:1 (see 2.2), I identified the “Jerusalem above” as one of the two key identifications (the other is “children of promise;” discussed in 6.3) that Paul assigns for the Galatian believers in Christ together with himself – she is *our* mother (4:26). It is set in contrast to the “present Jerusalem,” and together they form the central pivotal point of the passage. I argue in the following that both the “present Jerusalem” and the “Jerusalem above” are intimately linked with the Isaianic matrix and point to the significance of the vision of restoration and the alienation-restoration paradigm in Paul's thought. Hence, I begin my reading of Gal 4:21-5:1 with an analysis of these two designations.

6.2.1 The Jerusalem above

It is certain that the “Jerusalem above” in Gal 4:26 is somehow related to the quotation from Isa 54:1 in the following verse that is introduced as the reason (4:27 *γέγραπται γάρ*) for the “Jerusalem above” being the mother of the Galatian believers with Paul.⁷²² Since the two women in Isa 54:1 represent the “tale of two cities” that is introduced in Isa 1-2 (see 4.2 and 4.3.3),⁷²³ I argue that it is very likely that Paul has crafted his central point in the argument with reference to these intimately related texts and possibly with other texts that relate to the same theme in Isaiah.⁷²⁴ The relationship between Paul's text and Isa 1-2 is established also by verbal and conceptual links. Paul's designation of the

⁷²² Cf. de Boer, *Galatians*, 302–303; Oepke, *an die Galater*, 151–152; Vouga, *An die Galater*, 115.

⁷²³ Cf. Willitts, “Isa 54,1 in Gal 4,24b-27,” 192–197. Also Eastman, *Recovering*, 147; Jobes, “Jerusalem, Our Mother,” 310–311. *Pace* de Boer who argues that the two women in Isa 54:1 represent Jerusalem and Babylon, and thus provide for Paul a foil to make the “present” and “above” Jerusalems the “polar opposites” (*Galatians*, 302–304).

⁷²⁴ Paul's notion of a “present” and “above” Jerusalem is usually connected with the Jewish apocalyptic tradition of a heavenly Jerusalem that is the counterpart to the earthly one (e.g. Dunn, *Galatians*, 253–254; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 212–215; Moo, *Galatians*, 304–305; Mußner, *Der Galaterbrief*, 325–326). This is helpful in shedding light on one aspect of the cultural milieu that Paul is located in, but is not sufficient with regard to the *particular* matrix of Scripture Paul draws from, and the *particular way* Paul is situated in relation to this tradition. For more discussion, see below.

“Jerusalem above” as a *mother* (μήτηρ) resembles the description of the promised restored Jerusalem as a *mother-city* (μητρόπολις) in Isa 1:26.⁷²⁵ Furthermore, the idea of Paul's Jerusalem being *above* (ἄνω Ἱερουσαλήμ) has close correspondence with the vision of the eschatological restored Jerusalem on top of Mount Zion being *far above* (ὑπεράνω) any other city/mountain in Isa 2:2.⁷²⁶ These connections make it very likely that at least the “Jerusalem above” is related to the idea of the restored Jerusalem in Isaiah. But, as the quotation of Isa 54:1 suggests, it is also likely that the alienation-restoration paradigm that is present in the figures of the two women is also informing the construction of the “present Jerusalem” in slavery versus the “Jerusalem above” that is free. But before I explore the theological implications of this dimension, I present other connections between Paul's text and Isaiah that relate to the theme of the “Jerusalem above.”

6.2.2 The New Creation

The vision of the restored Jerusalem is intimately connected with the theme of *new creation* in Isaiah (see 4.3.3). The language used about the new restored city in Isa 54:11-17 resembles the language in Isa 60:17-19 and 65:17-18, and they, together with the vision in Isa 2:2-4, suggest that it is conceptualised as a “new creation” event. Hence, I argue that it is very likely that both the “Jerusalem above” in Gal 4:26 and the “new creation” in 6:15 stem from the Isaianic matrix that connects them both to the vision of restoration.⁷²⁷ Not only are these two themes intimately connected in Isaiah, but the language Paul uses in association with the “new creation” in Gal 6:15-16 has links to Isa 54:10, which is situated in the context of both the two women in Isa 54:1 and the description of the restoration of the city with “new creation” language in Isa 54:11-17.⁷²⁸ Right after elevating the “new creation” as the new reality that relativises

⁷²⁵ Noted also by Jobes, “Jerusalem, Our Mother,” 310.

⁷²⁶ Also Scott (*Paul and the Nations*, 132–133) and Fredriksen (“Judaism, the Circumcision of Gentiles, and Apocalyptic Hope: Another Look at Galatians 1 and 2,” *JTS* 42 [1991]: 532–64, especially pgs. 544–545, 564) recognise Isa 2 (and // Micah 4) as part of Paul's scriptural matrix in his general vision about Gentile inclusion in the end times. I move further from these general notions by demonstrating how integrally Isa 1-2 relate with Isa 54:1, and how they impact Paul's vision and logic.

⁷²⁷ Cf. Harmon, *She Must*, 218, 228-236. Pace Longenecker for whom 6:15 is a “traditional maxim” taken over by Paul to sum up his message in Galatians (*Galatians*, 295–296). Martyn connects the idea of “new creation” to the apocalyptic tradition, but recognises that “[t]he roots of the motif lie in Isa 65:17-25” (*Galatians*, 565, note 64).

⁷²⁸ Cf. Wright, *PFQ*, 1150–1151; G. K. Beale, “Peace and Mercy Upon the Israel of God: The Old Testament Background of Galatians 6,16b,” *Biblica* 80 (1999): 204–23. I, however, do not agree with them that this indicates that the “Israel of God” refers to “the believing church” (see discussion in 6.3.1).

the boundaries of circumcision and uncircumcision (6:15), Paul proclaims peace (εἰρήνη) on those who align with the “canon” of “new creation,” and prays/hopes for mercy (ἔλεος) on the “Israel of God” (6:16 καὶ ὅσοι τῷ κανόνι τούτῳ στοιχήσουσιν, εἰρήνη ἐπ’ αὐτούς καὶ ἔλεος καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰσραὴλ τοῦ θεοῦ).⁷²⁹ Both peace and mercy are central in Isa 54:10 (οὐδὲ τὸ παρ’ ἐμοῦ σοι ἔλεος ἐκλείψει οὐδὲ ἡ διαθήκη τῆς εἰρήνης σου οὐ μὴ μεταστῆ). Since these two words do not occur together usually in Paul’s greetings or benedictions,⁷³⁰ their peculiar combination and the reference to the “Israel of God” support the view that Paul is here drawing from the language of restoration in Isaiah that is integrally related to God’s dealings with Israel that has implications also for the Gentiles. Thus, both the “Jerusalem above” and “new creation” very likely have their roots in the Isaianic matrix, and both are connected to its vision of restoration.⁷³¹ Furthermore, in both Isaiah and Paul, this theological vision has implications for both Israel and the Gentiles in a way that transcends these traditional boundaries – circumcision or uncircumcision do not count in the new reality of restoration (Gal 5:6; 6:15-16; for this notion in Isaiah, see 4.3.6).

6.2.3 The Kingdom of God

I discuss here one more concept in Paul’s letter to the Galatians that is closely connected with the “Jerusalem above” and the Isaianic vision of restoration: the *kingdom of God*

⁷²⁹ Views are divided whether 1) to separate the benediction of peace to the group that has aligned itself with the “canon” of “new creation,” and the prayer for mercy to another group called the “Israel of God” (Burton, *Galatians*, 357–358; de Boer, *Galatians*, 403–405; Dunn, *Galatians*, 343–346; Susan Grove Eastman, “Israel and the Mercy of God: A Re-Reading of Galatians 6.16 and Romans 9–11,” *NTS* 56 [2010]: 367–95), or 2) to view them both as addressing one single entity that is the “new creation” people described also as the “Israel of God” (Betz, *Galatians*, 320–323; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 297–299; Wright, *PFG*, 1148–1151). There is also a third option that views the double blessing as intended initially on the Galatians (with the hope that they will align with Paul’s “canon”) that is then extended also for Paul’s fellow Jews as a future hope (Mußner, *Der Galaterbrief*, 416–417; he emphasises the future form of στοιχήσουσιν). I side with view 1, and sympathise with the 3rd option. This is a minority position, but it does take full note of the peculiar syntax (third καί, and double use of ἐπί), the choice of words (ἔλεος instead of χάρις; cf. 6:18) and their ordering (peace before mercy; cf. 1:3). The separation of peace and mercy reflects to me that Paul invokes peace on those who are already in the “new creation,” i.e. restoration, and prays for mercy on those who are yet to be regenerated by it to enter the inheritance (cf. Bachmann’s argument that ἔλεος is related to “the problem of Israel” and has “eschatological” connotations” [*Anti-Judaism in Galatians?*, 109–110]; similarly Mußner, *Der Galaterbrief*, 416). The issue here is closely tied with the identity of the “Israel of God” (see discussion in 6.3.1).

⁷³⁰ Bachmann, *Anti-Judaism in Galatians?*, 115–116; Eastman, “Israel and the Mercy of God,” 155–156.

⁷³¹ Cf. Horbury: “‘new creation’ in Paul should probably therefore be reckoned as another reflection of the set of interpretations and expectations concerning Zion” (*Messianism*, 214; also pgs, 192, 194).

(5:21).⁷³² Again, these two concepts are linked both in the text of Isaiah and in Galatians. As I have argued, Isaiah's vision of the restoration of the city is at heart about the restoration of the presence and rule of God among his regenerated people (see 4.3.3). Especially, the language about the kingdom of God in Isa 52:7-9 is intimately connected with the vision of restoration in Isa 54:1, and thus I argue that it is likely that it is part of the matrix that underlies Paul's conception of the gospel in relation to the reality of the kingdom of God. The proclamation of the good news to Zion about the coming reign of God (Βασιλεύσει σου ὁ θεός) in Isa 52:7 is connected in its context to the tale of two cities; the good news is directed to captive Zion/Jerusalem (Isa 52:2 αἰχμάλωτος θυγάτηρ Σιών) who is to be transformed by God's act of mercy in delivering her (Isa 52:8-9). The language of breaking forth with joy (ῥηξάτω εὐφροσύνην) and the transformation of the desolate/barren Jerusalem (τὰ ἔρημα Ἱερουσαλημ) in Isa 52:9 connects the imagery of the coming of the kingdom of God closely with the infertile woman in Isa 54:1 who is also exhorted to break forth in joy (Εὐφράνθητι, ῥήξον) as her barrenness (ἐρήμος) is to be transformed into fruitfulness by God's act of mercy in delivering her (54:4-10).

Before I demonstrate how the link between Isa 52:7-9 and 54:1 is reflected in Galatians, I note the explicit presence of Isa 52:7 in Romans 10:15, where Paul applies Isaiah's words about the proclamation of the good news to his current context, in which the good news of Jesus is proclaimed both to the Jews and Gentiles (Rom 10:11-13), but with special emphasis on Israel (Rom 10:1; 16-21). Hence, we know that this text is important to Paul. I perceive that the intimate connection between the coming of God's kingdom in Isa 52:7-9 and the figure of the barren-made-fruitful-woman in 54:1, which is about the restoration of Jerusalem (“above”), is also reflected in Galatians.

In Gal 5:21, Paul connects his warning/prediction that those who practise the works of the flesh do/will not inherit the kingdom of God to something that he has said before (ἃ προλέγω ὑμῖν, καθὼς προεἶπον ὅτι οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες βασιλείαν θεοῦ οὐ κληρονομήσουσιν). It is very likely that the moment in the past when he had

⁷³² Betz connects 5:21 to a shared tradition of “primitive Christian catechetical instruction,” because the language about the Kingdom of God is quite non-Pauline, and the sense of inheritance here (“enter into”) “is in some tension with Paul's theology” (*Galatians*, 284–285). Similarly, Longenecker, *Galatians*, 258; Martyn, *Galatians*, 497–498; and de Boer, *Galatians*, 360–361. De Boer perceives a misfit between Paul's talk of inheritance in relation to the Kingdom of God and what has come before, because Paul has earlier spoken about inheritance “only in connection with the fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham in the gift of the Spirit (3:18, 29; 4:1, 7, 30)” (*Ibid.*, 361; cf. Vouga, *An die Galater*, 138). The perception of misfit here is quite unnecessary. I demonstrate below that all of these belong quite naturally to Paul's theology, if it is viewed from the perspective of the restoration vision in the Isaianic matrix.

iterated the same warning occurred just seconds before, as Gal 4:29-30 was read.⁷³³ The similar concern in both of these moments in the letter makes this probable. In both, the argument is about the incompatibility between Spirit and flesh (4:29 ἀλλ' ὡςπερ τότε ὁ κατὰ σάρκα γεννηθεὶς ἐδίδωκεν τὸν κατὰ πνεῦμα, οὕτως καὶ νῦν; cf. 5:17 ἢ γὰρ σὰρξ ἐπιθυμεῖ κατὰ τοῦ πνεύματος, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα κατὰ τῆς σαρκός, ταῦτα γὰρ ἀλλήλοις ἀντίκειται), and in both, that which is connected with flesh cannot share in the inheritance (4:30 οὐ γὰρ μὴ κληρονομήσει ὁ υἱὸς τῆς παιδίσκης [σάρξ]; cf. 5:21 οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα [τὰ ἔργα τῆς σαρκός] πράσσοντες βασιλείαν θεοῦ οὐ κληρονομήσουσιν). These correspondences do not seem accidental but rather intended, and thus indicate that Gal 4:21-5:1 already prepares for what follows in the letter, and, conversely, that the statement in 5:21 does refer back to the punchline (4:29-30) in the argument in 4:21-5:1. This link between Gal 5:21 and 4:29-30 supports the connection between the concepts of the kingdom of God and the “Jerusalem above,” and suggests that both concepts describe the reality to which the “inheritance” refers.

6.2.4 Inheritance and Inaugurated Restoration

As I have analysed in section 4.2, the restoration reality that is presented in the immediate context of Isa 54:1 is described in 54:17 as the *inheritance* of the Lord's servants (LXX ἔστι κληρονομία τοῖς θεραπεύουσιν κύριον; MT הַיְהוָה יִרְבֶּה עַלְמָהּ וְהָיָה לָהּ). Furthermore, this inheritance is also connected with righteousness, as it is those included in the inheritance who are also righteous (Isa 54:17 καὶ ὑμεῖς ἔσεσθέ μοι δίκαιοι). I argue that the conception of the restoration reality as the inheritance of God's righteous ones in Isaiah is also reflected in the conception of the inheritance in Gal 4:21-5:1, and coheres with the development of the theme of righteousness in the letter, in which it becomes defined in terms of “sonship” and inheritance (see 2.1). The scriptural command in Gal 4:30 is an indirect exhortation to the Galatians that portrays the decision they face in terms of “casting out” the slave woman and her son (4:30a)

⁷³³ Others usually connect it with what Paul has taught the Galatians when he has been earlier with them (e.g. the commentators mentioned in the previous footnote). Longenecker recognises the possibility that it could refer to something that Paul has said before “in the immediate context of the letter,” but suggests only 1:9 as a possible candidate (*Galatians*, 258). My suggestion that Paul is referring to 4:29-30 is supported by a similar phenomenon in Gal 1:6-9, where Paul says again in 1:9 (ὡς προειρήκαμεν καὶ ἄρτι πάλιν λέγω· εἴ τις ὑμᾶς εὐαγγελίζεται παρ' ὁ παρελάβετε, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω) what he had already said in 1:8 (ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐὰν ἡμεῖς ἢ ἄγγελος ἐξ οὐρανοῦ εὐαγγελίζηται [ὑμῖν] παρ' ὁ εὐηγγελισάμεθα ὑμῖν, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω).

that allegorically represent life under the Law (see 2.2 and 6.4).⁷³⁴ The reason for casting away the desire, and for resisting the pressure, to come under the Law is the fact that the son of the “slave woman” cannot share in the *inheritance* of the son of the “free woman” (4:30b). The exclusion of the child of the “slave woman” from the inheritance of the child of the “free woman” is also the (theo)logical reason why the Galatians, and other believers in Christ (“we”) are to identify as children of the “free woman” rather than the “slave woman” (4:31; see 2.2). It is important to emphasise that, at this point in the flow of thought, the “slave woman” and the “free woman” are no longer a direct reference to Hagar and Sarah in the Genesis narrative (as they still were in 4:22-23, see 2.2) – a point that is enforced by Paul's own modification of the Genesis quotation in 4:30 where he replaces Sarah's voice (“my son Isaac”) with the reference to the “free woman” (“son of the free woman”). The Genesis narrative is being read allegorically (4:24) together with the Isaianic matrix of the two Jerusalems (4:25-27). Hence, the slave woman and the free woman are a reference to what they allegorically represent. Hagar represents the covenant from Sinai and the “present Jerusalem” (4:25). Contrary to what could be expected, Paul never names Sarah in the other covenantal line. What stands in her place is the mother “Jerusalem above” who is free (4:26), and who is described by the image in Isa 54:1 of the barren-made-fruitful-woman (4:27). Sure enough, the free woman retains an association with Sarah (the importance is in the pattern of Isaac's birth from Sarah; see 6.3.1), but Paul's burden is not to connect the believers to Sarah as their mother, but rather to the “Jerusalem above” – *she* is our mother. Similarly, although the inheritance in 4:30 is connected to the theme of being an heir to the Abrahamic promise (3:[8]/18-29; 4:1-7), it moves also beyond that in Paul's allegorical appropriation of the Abrahamic promise that is read together with Isaiah.⁷³⁵ Consequently, I understand the logic thus: since the Galatians *have been included in the inheritance* of the restoration people as children of the “free woman” – the “Jerusalem above” that is free (4:26) – and as “children of promise,” they should not identify with the slave woman – the “present Jerusalem” that leads to slavery. In other words, the Galatians are not to come under the Law because it represents the reality outside of the

⁷³⁴ Eastman argues that the singular imperatives in 4:27 and 4:30 are not directed as commands at the Galatians, but rather “depict for the Galatians the contrasting destinies of the children of the free woman and the children of the slave” (*Recovering*, 132–133). I agree with her emphasis that they depict destinies, but maintain that 4:30 not only depicts, but also indirectly calls for a decision on the Galatians' part in relation to the inheritance. This is so because at this point in the passage the biblical actors in 4:30 have allegorical referents that point to the decision the Galatians face.

⁷³⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, 137–155. Others usually emphasise here the Abrahamic promise (Longenecker, *Galatians*, 218), and the connection to Sarah (Betz, *Galatians*, 251; Moo, *Galatians*, 312–313).

inheritance that they have already entered into as children of the “Jerusalem above.” They need to recognise who they already are to know what they should not become. Hence, I claim that the “Jerusalem above” and the related concepts of the “kingdom of God” and “new creation” describe the restoration reality that is, for Paul, the inheritance of God's regenerated people.

I have now argued that the “Jerusalem above” connects Paul's theological vision to the vision of restoration in Isaiah, as it is encapsulated in Isa 54:1 with its interrelated texts. But I want to deepen the discussion by exploring whether the “Jerusalem above” in Gal 4:26 should be taken with an emphasis on the future or on the present, and whether it refers to a heavenly city or to something else in a symbolic way.⁷³⁶

Horbury has analysed Paul's “Jerusalem above” in relation to other Jewish expectations concerning the Jerusalem prophecies in Scripture, and thereby argues that Paul had a vision of a literal future heavenly city coming to earth. He describes how in Paul's cultural milieu the Jerusalem prophecies were “remembered in prayer and sacred song, and thought of collectively” with requests for the fulfilment of prophecy.⁷³⁷ He gives evidence of such expectations in Tobit, Ecclesiasticus, the Hebrew Apostrophe to Zion from Qumran Cave 11, Sibylline Oracles, 2 Maccabees, and the Amidah (18 benedictions).⁷³⁸ A good representative is the prayer from the Psalms of Solomon: “may the Lord perform what he has spoken concerning Israel and Jerusalem” (11:8).⁷³⁹ Horbury also perceives that Isa 2:2-4; 49:14-26; 54; 59:16-60:22; 62; 65:17-25; 66:5-24 are part of the scriptural matrix underlying such hopes.⁷⁴⁰ Yet he reckons that Gal 4:27 is “the earliest clear witness to the notion of a heavenly Jerusalem,” but “the expectation of a divinely-prepared holy place above was already well established in Paul's time” and is “consonant with hope for an ultimate full divine glorification of Jerusalem on earth.”⁷⁴¹ Thus, Horbury maintains that Paul's “Jerusalem above” looks to the future: “Paul envisaged a coming messianic reign in the divinely prepared Jerusalem.”⁷⁴² The

⁷³⁶ Many commentators equate the “Jerusalem above” with a heavenly Jerusalem, as a concrete counterpart of the earthly city to be revealed in the future, or as a spiritual “city:” e.g. Betz, *Galatians*, 246–247; Dunn, *Galatians*, 253–254; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 213–214; Oepke, *an die Galater*, 151; see also Andrew T. Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet: Studies in the Role of the Heavenly Dimension in Paul's Thought with Special Reference to His Eschatology*, SNTS 43 (Cambridge: CUP, 1981), 9–32.

⁷³⁷ Horbury, *Messianism*, 192.

⁷³⁸ Ibid.

⁷³⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁴¹ Ibid., 197.

⁷⁴² Ibid., 218. Also: “in Gal 4:26-30 (quoting Isa 54:1 ‘Rejoice, O barren’) and Rom 11:26-27 (quoting Isa 59:20-21 in the form ‘a redeemer shall come from Zion’) Paul envisaged a coming messianic reign in the divinely prepared Jerusalem” (William Horbury, “Land, Sanctuary and Worship,” in *Early*

future orientation of the “Jerusalem above” is expressed, in Horbury's analysis, in the contrast to “present Jerusalem” and with the links to promise and inheritance.⁷⁴³

Horbury's grasp of the Second Temple Jewish literature is impressive, but I think that a closer reading of Galatians resists such a tight correspondence between Paul's vision in the letter and other hopes for a future descent of a heavenly city. What distinguishes Paul from some other Jewish expectations is his experience and conviction that a turn in the ages has already begun (4:4), and that the awaited eschatological realities have made their way into the present, changing the configuration of the cosmos for Paul (6:14-15). It is true that Paul can have a heavenly orientation in the believers' identity, and a future expectation for a full consummation of the eschatological glory (e.g. Phil 3:20-21), but I perceive that in Galatians Paul's emphasis is on the present implications of the already inaugurated eschatological age. This is indicated in Gal 4:26 in the fact that the mother “Jerusalem above” has already given birth – she *is* our mother.⁷⁴⁴ Similarly, the “new creation” has already become the determinative reality for Paul's view of the world/humanity, and has refocused what now counts for inclusion in the community that is shaped by the cross of Christ (6:14-16). Also, as Mußner perceptively notes, living in alignment (στοιχέω) with the standard of the new creation (6:15-16) is connected to Paul's exhortation to align (στοιχέω) with the reality of the Spirit (5:25), which has the implication that “der neue Maßstab ist das Pneuma, in dem die neue Schöpfung sich vor allem zeigt... ”⁷⁴⁵ The restoration reality – “new creation” – is already present in the Spirit. Thus, both the “Jerusalem above” and the “new creation” have a clear emphasis on the already inaugurated restoration.⁷⁴⁶

But what about the kingdom of God? Here the evidence is divided, which reflects the already-not-yet shape of Paul's eschatology. Since, as I have argued above, the kingdom of God in Gal 5:21 is intimately connected with the concerns that are present in the context of the “Jerusalem above” (flesh-Spirit, inheritance), it could be

Christian Thought in Its Jewish Context, ed. John M. G. Barclay and John Sweet [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996], 219–220).

⁷⁴³ Horbury, *Messianism*, 221.

⁷⁴⁴ Cf. Mußner, *Der Galaterbrief*, 326.

⁷⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 415–416; quotation from pg. 416.

⁷⁴⁶ Cf. Charles H. Cosgrove: “[a]t this point cosmic and eschatological dualism intersect, so that the *present manifestation of the future*, embodied in the community itself, is understood as owing its life to the world above. Although the language of a new or restored Jerusalem is not employed, the use of Is. 54:1 suggests the thought” (“The Law Has Given Sarah No Children [Gal 4:21-30],” *Novum Testamentum*, July 1, 1987, 231; emphasis added). Also, de Boer, “Paul’s Quotation,” 374–375. Wagner is in general agreement with this emphasis: “Paul finds in the message of Christ that he proclaims to gentiles the realization of Isaiah's visions of redemption” (“Isaiah in Romans and Galatians,” 130).

argued that it also shares in the present emphasis of the inheritance in 4:26-31. Even the future form of the verb to inherit (κληρονομήσουσιν) in Gal 5:21 could be taken with an “imperative” force (they shall not inherit) in line with the sense it has in 4:30 (the son of the slave woman shall by no means inherit [κληρονομήσει]).⁷⁴⁷ But this would be to neglect the other vital connection 5:21 has in the letter. The same concern about the outcome of living in line either with the Spirit or with the flesh in Gal 5:17-21 is reflected in 6:7-10, where “sowing into the flesh” results in “reaping” corruption, and “sowing into the Spirit” results in “reaping” eternal life (ζωὴ αἰώνιος). The moment of reaping refers to a future time, which calls for perseverance in the present (6:9-10). This future oriented hope is reflected also in Paul's succinct statement about eagerly waiting for the hope of righteousness (5:5 ἡμεῖς γὰρ πνεύματι ἐκ πίστεως ἐλπίδα δικαιοσύνης ἀπεκδεχόμεθα).⁷⁴⁸ Hence, although the “Jerusalem above” in Gal 4:26 has a clear focus on the already inaugurated restoration reality, it does not exhaust Paul's hope for the fulness of the rule of God awaited in the future, even in Galatians.

6.2.5 Present Jerusalem–Jerusalem Above and the Alienation-Restoration Paradigm

As I have argued, the restored Jerusalem functions in Isaiah as a symbolic description of the restoration reality that consists of a community which experiences and represents the presence and reign of God (see 4.3.3).⁷⁴⁹ Hence, I also argue that the “Jerusalem above,”

⁷⁴⁷ Daniel Wallace explains that the imperative force of the future form is usually found in the quotations of Scripture in the NT (reflecting a literal translation of Hebrew), but it is also known in classical Greek (*Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996], 569). See also discussion in BDF §362 and §387.

⁷⁴⁸ I agree with Betz that the condensed statement in 5:5 consists of abbreviated ideas that Paul has made earlier in the letter (*Galatians*, 261–262; cf. de Boer, *Galatians*, 315; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 228–229). The future oriented sense is found in the expression “eagerly waiting” (ἀπεκδέχομαι) that connotes eschatological anticipation in Paul (cf. Rom 8:19, 23, 25; 1 Cor 1:7; Phil 3:20) (de Boer, *Galatians*, 316; Moo, *Galatians*, 327). The genitive construction “hope of righteousness” is best taken as the hoped-for righteousness rather than the hope that comes from righteousness (Barclay, *Gift*, 392; de Boer, *Galatians*, 316). However, there is a tension between the present and future sense in righteousness. Mußner emphasises that both the present and future dimensions look at the one salvation in Christ, and concludes: “Die Zukunft erschließt dem Glaubenden endgültig, was ihm in der Gegenwart schon geschenkt ist” (*Der Galaterbrief*, 351). I follow his lead, but modify it, as my analysis points to taking righteousness with the meaning of inclusion in the restoration people, and thus I read the hope of righteousness as the future hope of the completion of the process of restoration that has already begun (cf. 5:6; 6:15-16).

⁷⁴⁹ Heinrich Schlier connects the Jerusalem above tightly with the church: “Für ihn [Paulus] ist also der neue Äon, das himmlische Jerusalem, schon gegenwärtig in der christlichen Kirche. Diese ist ihm das himmlische Jerusalem in seinen Kindern.” (*Der Brief an die Galater*, 12. Auflage [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962], 223.) Mußner is more hesitant: “Wenn 'das obere Jerusalem' aber schon 'unsere Mutter' ist, dann hat es 'irgendwie' mit der Kirche zu tun, dem irdischen Sammlungsort der Gläubigen, auch wenn 'das obere Jerusalem' und die Kirche nicht einfach identisch (gar im Sinn einer

with the supporting quotation from Isa 54:1, functions for Paul as a shorthand for the restoration reality described in Isaiah, into which believers in Christ have already entered as their inheritance. They have been generated into a new community, a new social reality, that needs to reflect the “new creation” identity rather than the present reality of the old cosmos with its categories for identifying the people of God (6:14-16). Because the “Jerusalem above” is closely connected with the idea of “new creation,” Paul’s vision of the gospel is about the re-creation of humanity that has a cosmic scope.

How does this conception of the “Jerusalem above” in Gal 4:26 help in understanding the “present Jerusalem” in Gal 4:25?⁷⁵⁰ As I have indicated already, I perceive that the “present Jerusalem” and the “Jerusalem above” reflect the “tale of two cities” in Isaiah 54:1 and Isa 1-2 (with related texts). Paul’s “present Jerusalem” is described as being in slavery with her children (4:25), and as corresponding with the covenant from Sinai that also leads to slavery (4:24). This resembles the theological interpretation in Isaiah, where it is the Law, or more accurately *violation* of the Law, that leads to “slavery,” or captivity in exile (e.g. Isa 1:2-17; 42:24-25; 48:18-19). Exile is God’s act of judgment (e.g. LXX Isa 66:9; see 4.3.2), in which the Law operates as the agent of judgment. Furthermore, failure to respond to the revelation of God’s new act of restoration keeps the people outside of the full inheritance of the restoration reality (Isa 50:10; 65-66). The conceptual and logical correspondences make it likely

triumphalistischen Ekklesiologie) sind” (*Der Galaterbrief*, 326). This is still problematic, since, even though the believers in Jesus become eventually known as the church as distinct from Judaism, it is necessary to emphasise that what Paul envisions here is in continuity with the Jewish matrix, as a fulfilment of the hope of Israel that is by design larger than the Jews.

⁷⁵⁰ In the identification of the “Jerusalem above” and the “present Jerusalem,” I disagree with the position that is argued influentially by Martyn that they refer to two different Gentile missions: Paul’s “circumcision-free” mission and the “Law-observant” mission promulgated by the Jerusalem church (“A Tale of Two Churches,” in *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997]; similarly de Boer, *Galatians*, 285–310). It is true that the Galatians might hear an echo from Paul’s earlier reference to Jerusalem in the letter, but that would not necessarily support Martyn’s argument that rests on a negative portrayal of the Jerusalem church, in which the leaders (at least James) are implicated in the activity of the “false brothers” – the circumcision party. But, rather than merging the positions of the Jerusalem church and the “false brothers,” Paul keeps them separate, and emphasises that the Jerusalem church leaders support his Gentile mission (2:1-10; although Peter is inconsistent in Antioch, 2:11-14). I do not resist a social dimension – real groups that reflect different theological views – with the two Jerusalems, but I disagree with limiting these to the social level with speculative historical reconstruction. For further critique of Martyn’s (and others) reading, see Barclay, *Gift*, 417, footnote 64.

That Paul is not referring to the concrete city of Jerusalem could also be indicated by the observation that he is using a different spelling of Jerusalem in 4:25-26 (Ἱερουσαλήμ) to what he uses in 1:17, 18 and 2:1 in reference to the geographical Jerusalem (Ἱεροσόλυμα) (cf. Bruce, *Galatians*, 220; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 213). The spelling in 4:25-26 reflects the language of the LXX (e.g. Isa 1:1 and 2:1), which could indicate scriptural influence in Paul’s designation here (cf. de Boer, *Galatians*, 297). De Boer also suggests that Paul’s use of the *feminine* form over the neuter “facilitates his allegorical-typological interpretation of ‘Hagar’ and ‘Sarah’” (Ibid.). Yet we should not make too much of the different spellings, since Paul can use Ἱερουσαλήμ also in reference to the geographical Jerusalem in Rom 15:19, 25, 26, 31.

that the alienation-restoration paradigm in Isaiah underlies Paul's construction of the “present Jerusalem”–“Jerusalem above” dichotomy. Furthermore, I argue that, as in Isaiah, so also in Paul the state of alienation refers to a realm outside the “inheritance,” which is associated with sin and slavery (see 5.5). Thus, the “present Jerusalem” in Galatians is best approached in connection with the “present evil age” that is marked by sin (1:4) rather than with a direct equation to Judaism, or to the competing Gentile mission that claimed the support of the Jerusalem church.⁷⁵¹ The “present Jerusalem” functions as a symbol for existence outside the inheritance of the reality of restoration; it is about the sphere of existence that has not received the revelation of the Son, i.e. has not allowed Christ to define the νόμος (see 5.2), and thus, has not recognised/followed the implications of the coming of Christ and the giving of the Spirit that have opened the gates of the “Jerusalem above” and generated a “new creation” community.

The logic of the alienation-restoration paradigm that configures slavery and freedom in relation to the Law and inheritance is the key to reading Paul's logic in Gal 4:21-5:1, and consequently in the other passages in Galatians where the same or related concepts are discussed (especially in 4:1-7 [slavery, sonship, inheritance] and 3:10-14 [curse, righteousness, blessing, Spirit]; I discuss these texts in 6.3). To capture better how the concepts of slavery, freedom and inheritance work together with the other themes in the framework of the two covenants in Gal 4:21-5:1, I first explore the identification of the Galatian believers as “children of promise” in the pattern of Isaac (6.3), the connection between Hagar and Sinai (6.4), the role of Christ as the Isaianic servant in the covenant of promise (6.5), and Paul's identification with the divine generative activity in Christ (6.6), which then lead to a synthesis of my reading of Gal 4:21-5:1 and of the configuration of the theological vision and logic of the letter (6.7).

6.3 Children of Promise in the Pattern of Isaac

The logic of Paul's argument in Gal 4:26-4:28 can be discerned thus: those who belong to the “Jerusalem above” (4:26) are also “children of promise” (4:28), because of Isa 54:1 (4:27).⁷⁵² In other words, the children of the mother “Jerusalem above” are

⁷⁵¹ Pace Mußner, *Der Galaterbrief*, 325.

⁷⁵² Cf. Jobes, “Jerusalem, Our Mother,” 302–303, 313. Pace Schlier: “Der Zusammenhang von V. 26 und 28 ist durch V. 27 nur unterbrochen worden ...” (*an die Galater*, 226).

described also as the “children of promise” κατὰ Ἰσαάκ (the possible sense of κατὰ is explored below), because they are children of the barren-made-fruitful-woman of Isa 54:1. To be able to follow this logic, I first draw on the theological potential in the Abraham narrative for the designation of being children of promise κατὰ Ἰσαάκ, and then follow how the Isaianic promise of restoration facilitates ascribing a title closely connected with the identity of Israel now also to the Gentile believers in Christ.

6.3.1 The Pattern of Isaac's Birth and the Abrahamic-Isaianic Promise

It is certain that Paul is crafting his argument about two kinds of “children” in Gal 4:21-5:1 on the matrix of the narrative about the birth of Abraham's two sons (4:22 Ἀβραάμ δύο υἱοὺς ἔσχεν). To be more specific, it is very likely that the matrix of Gen 17 and related texts is pivotal for Paul's understanding of the “children of promise” κατὰ Ἰσαάκ and its implication for the identity of God's people.⁷⁵³ We know from Romans that Gen 17 is significant for Paul in respect to Abraham being the “father of many nations” (Rom 4:9-18), and that texts which are intimately related with it, or work out from the tension in Gen 17, are important in relation to Isaac being the paradigm for the identity of God's people – the children of promise (Rom 9:6-9 οὐ γὰρ πάντες οἱ ἐξ Ἰσραὴλ οὗτοι Ἰσραήλ· οὐδ' ὅτι εἰσὶν σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ πάντες τέκνα, ἀλλ' ἐν Ἰσαάκ κληθήσεται σοι σπέρμα [Gen 21:12]. τοῦτ' ἔστιν, οὐ τὰ τέκνα τῆς σαρκὸς ταῦτα τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλὰ τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας λογίζεται εἰς σπέρμα. ἐπαγγελίας γὰρ ὁ λόγος οὗτος· κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν τοῦτον ἐλεύσομαι καὶ ἔσται τῇ Σάρρᾳ υἱός [Gen 18:10]). I will also argue later (section 6.4) that Gen 17 is very likely the primary matrix for Paul's construal of the two covenants in Gal 4:21-5:1. Hence, I focus here on how Gen 17, with related texts, informs the meaning of κατὰ Ἰσαάκ in the designation of the “children of promise.”

As I have argued, Gen 17 is an important culmination point in the narrative about Abraham's two sons as they relate to the promise of the “great nation” and blessing for all the nations (see 3.4 and 3.5). The contrast between Ishmael and Isaac as two alternative construals of the great nation – Israel – is played out most clearly in Gen 17. As the promise of an heir to Abraham is specified to come from Sarah (17:15-19), Abraham laughs (17:17). The absurdity of the promise is emphasised, when it is repeated to Sarah in Gen 18 at a stage when she is not only barren but also past

⁷⁵³ Cf. Watson, *PHF*, 187–190.

menopause (18:11). Hence, also Sarah laughs (18:12-15). The laughter of disbelief turns into the laughter of rejoicing when God acts to fulfil his promise and Isaac is born (21:1-7). The theme of laughter invests the son of promise with a name that has theological significance: Isaac (he laughs) (21:3-7). Isaac's name epitomises the theology of the people of God as the “Israel of God.” It signifies the realisation of both total human insufficiency and absolute dependence on the performative power of God's promise to generate the people of God; the people according to the pattern of Isaac are as much “children of laughter” as they are “children of promise.” Gen 17 also explains the exclusion of Ishmael from inheriting the promise of the true “great nation” that culminates in his expulsion, on which Paul capitalises in his citing of Gen 21:10 in Gal 4:30. It is specified in Gen 17:19-20 that only Isaac counts as an heir of the covenant between God and his special people (cf. 21:12), who also carry the “seed” of the promise of blessing for all the peoples (17:15-16; 22:17-18; 35:11; 49:10, see 3.4). Ishmael does not count even though he is Abraham's physical seed and is circumcised (17:20-21, 25-26). Ishmael is everything that Isaac is, except that he is not a son of promise. They are born of different mothers, and it is the manner of their births that has the final verdict on who inherits the promise of the true “great nation.” Ishmael is born out of “flesh” – out of theologically reasoned human potential (16:2) that can conform to requirements of physical lineage and the law of circumcision.⁷⁵⁴ Only Isaac is generated by the power of God's promise rather than by human potential. This is what ultimately counts for the identity of God's people.

When Paul designates the Galatian believers as children of promise *κατὰ Ἰσαάκ*, he is drawing from the theological potential in the *pattern of Isaac's birth* and its significance for inclusion in the people of God.⁷⁵⁵ Isaac is for Paul the paradigm for being generated by the power of God's promise in contrast to Ishmael who represents generation by the “flesh” (4:23). This accords with the opening of Paul's letter that underscores the divine origin of his gospel (1:1) that is not according to human pattern (1:11 οὐκ ἔστιν κατὰ ἄνθρωπον), i.e. it “is at odds with the normative conventions

⁷⁵⁴ Pace Thiessen, who argues that the main factor that excludes Ishmael from the covenant is his wrongly dated circumcision (see discussion in 3.5)

⁷⁵⁵ Cf. Martyn, *Galatians*, 443–444. At this point, I agree with Martyn that Paul is not drawing a linear connection from Abraham to the Galatians, but is focused on the *pattern* in Isaac's birth. For Eastman this indicates that “Paul tells his converts that their continuity with the family tree of Abraham comes solely through the continuity of promise” (*Recovering*, 140). This is true, but does not exclude the role the Torah plays in Paul's retelling of Israel's story with the alienation-restoration paradigm that has implications also for the Galatians.

that govern human systems of value.⁷⁵⁶ Furthermore, in light of the contrast to Ishmael that Paul highlights in Gal 4:21-5:1, Isaac represents the essential characteristic of the people of God that has the potential to open the identity of God's people to include uncircumcised people outside of the Abrahamic physical seed as heirs of the inheritance and blessing of Abraham.⁷⁵⁷ But it is vital at this point to follow Paul's moves closely to avoid construing his logic with emphasis on continuity in the identity of the covenant people without recognising the “rupture” that Isa 54:1 brings into the storyline.

What is crucial for Paul is the connection in the pattern of Isaac's birth and the pattern in the promise of restoration in Isa 54:1 – the *barren* is made fruitful. This pattern de-emphasises natural (physical descent) or linear (undisturbed continuation of covenant) continuity, and instead emphasises divine regenerative activity as the defining factor in the identity of the people of God (see 4.3.2). This logic is also reflected in Gal 3:26-29, where it is on the condition of being “sons” of God (3:26 Πάντες γὰρ υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἐστε διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ) that the Galatians can also be reckoned as “seed” of Abraham, that is, heirs according to the promise (3:29 εἰ δὲ ὑμεῖς Χριστοῦ, ἄρα τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ σπέρμα ἐστέ, κατ’ ἐπαγγελίαν κληρονόμοι).⁷⁵⁸ The logic that defies linear continuity is encapsulated in Isa 54:1 in the fact that it is exactly *because the woman is barren* that she will have more children than she would have, if she had remained as the woman who always had a husband (cf. Isa 66:7-9). This is the logic in the alienation-restoration paradigm. It is Israel's alienation and the promise of restoration that redefines her identity theologically rather than ethnically (see 4.3.6). Israel's experience of alienation joins her with the nations – she is made in effect a non-people (Isa 63:19; 65:1). She cannot appeal to Abrahamic ancestry (Isa 63:16) or adherence to Law (e.g. Isa 58) as the reason for restoration. Her restoration depends on God's mercy (Isa 54:7-10; 55:1), and on her responsiveness to God's regenerative promise (Isa 50:10; 51:1; 53:1; 65:1-3; 66). The barrenness of the woman – the alienation of Israel – opens the possibility for other non-peoples to be generated from their “barrenness” – alienation – into the life of the new restored people of God.

⁷⁵⁶ Barclay, *Gift*, 355.

⁷⁵⁷ What is not essential can be relativised, since what is essential can be counted more important than the non-essential (cf. Rom 2:25-29; Phil 3:3). Unfortunately, the contrast that Paul sets between Ishmael and Isaac has been applied directly to equate the Jews with Ishmael and Gentile believers in Christ with Isaac (e.g. Rohde, *an die Galater*, 203). I argue in this chapter for a more nuanced approach.

⁷⁵⁸ Pace Thiessen's prioritising of the genealogical connection with Abraham: “those who are in Christ, and those who are thus seed and sons of Abraham, are also sons of God (Gal 3:26). Those who receive the *pneuma* of Christ become not only sons of Abraham, but also sons of God, since Christ is both the seed of Abraham and the son of God (Gal 4:6).” (*Gentile Problem*, 154–155.)

Starling's analysis of Paul's application of texts of Scripture that are initially addressed to the exiles of Israel to the Gentiles (he looks at Isa 54:1 in Gal 4:27, as well as the Scripture catena in 2 Cor 6:16-18; and Hos 1:10 and 2:23 in Rom 9:25-26; [also Isa 57:19 in Eph 2:17]),⁷⁵⁹ supports my proposal that the alienation-restoration logic in Isa 54:1 facilitates for Paul the inclusion of Gentiles in the “children of promise.”

But even more can be said about the theological potential in Isaiah to facilitate the move to name the Gentiles as “children of promise” in the pattern of Isaac. Because the designation “children of promise” follows from the Galatians being children of the “Jerusalem above” according to Isa 54:1, the *promise* in Gal 4:28 does not refer only to the Abrahamic promise about the birth of Isaac. Rather, the promise refers to the Abrahamic promise of blessing to all the nations (cf. Gal 3:8) *as it is re-appropriated in Isaiah's vision of restoration.*⁷⁶⁰ Hence, the promise refers to the composite Abraham-Isaiah promise, or composite blessing-restoration promise. As I argued in the thematic intratextual analysis of Isaiah (4.3), the vision of restoration is intimately connected with the Abrahamic promise of many descendants and blessing that extends to all the nations (Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:17-18; 35:11; cf. e.g. Isa 41; 44; 51; 54; see also 5.3). Furthermore, the barren-made-fruitful-woman is also about the vision of the restored city (Isa 2; 60 and 66), in which the language of the Abrahamic promise echoes far and wide; it is πάντα τὰ ἔθνη that are in the scope of the “inheritance” in the restored city – the regenerated community of God's people (see 4.3.3).

It is important to re-emphasise that, although the barren-made-fruitful-woman participates in the pattern of Sarah giving birth to Isaac, she is not named as Sarah by Paul. Rather, she is the “Jerusalem above” mother. Hence, the two designations of the identity of the Galatian believers (together with Paul) are intimately connected. They are “children of promise” according to the pattern of Isaac exactly because they are children of the barren-made-fruitful-woman who are the restoration people of the “Jerusalem above.” The theological implication of this is that Paul resists the view that Gentiles are to be joined to Israel according to the pattern of Ishmael – “according to the flesh” – by the means of their circumcision and adoption of the Law from Sinai (coming “under the Law”). The Gentiles are not to join the “present Jerusalem,” which is reflected in the Jewish community that is outside of the reality of restoration effected in

⁷⁵⁹ Starling, *Not My People*.

⁷⁶⁰ Most commentators discuss the promise in 4:28 only in reference to the Abrahamic promise (e.g. Betz, *Galatians*, 249; de Boer, *Galatians*, 305–306; Dunn, *Galatians*, 255–256; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 216; Rohde, *an die Galater*, 202–203).

Christ and the Spirit, since what matters for Paul is inclusion in the regenerated “new creation” people that is not predicated on circumcision or physical lineage from Abraham, but on divine generation (see Figure 3 below). This is why Paul also hopes/prays that his kinsmen the Jews, whose very fleshly existence is derived out of the power of God's promise in the birth of their patriarch Isaac, would be reached by the mercy offered in Christ (6:16). Hence, Paul can designate the “natural” descendants of Abraham as the “Israel of God,”⁷⁶¹ and simultaneously hope for the mercy of restoration that would “justify” her as such, but only as his fellow Jews also respond to the promissory act of God in Christ and the Spirit (cf. 2:16) that regenerates them to be, not only children of the initial promise to Abraham, but also children of the promise of restoration (see Figure 3).

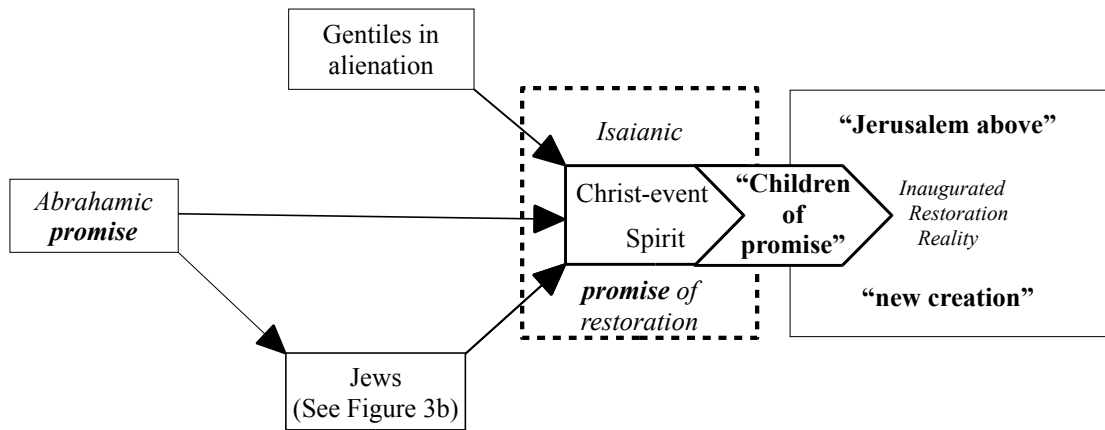
761 The identity of the “Israel of God” is a highly debated question (for a good introduction to the alternative views, see de Boer, *Galatians*, 405–410). I agree with Bachman (*Anti-Judaism in Galatians?*, 101–123), Eastman (“Israel and the Mercy of God”), and Barclay (*Gift*, 418–421) that the Israel of God is Paul's reference to the Jewish people (especially those still outside of Christ).

De Boer argues that the “Israel of God” is a reference to the Law-observing Jewish Christians who are also causing the trouble in Galatia. Thus, Paul's invocation of mercy is seen resulting from his realisation “that what he has written in v. 15, which is a summary of his argument from 2:15 onward, could be construed as *God's* rejection of the law-abiding church of Jerusalem and of its proper mission (to the Jews not to Gentiles) ... For this church and all those who identify themselves with its present posture, Paul nevertheless invokes a blessing of mercy (*eleos*), which is God's compassion toward his disobedient people (cf. Exod 34:6-7; Isa 49:13) ...” (*Galatians*, 408, emphasis original) This is not convincing, since it implicates the Jerusalem church behind the troublemakers mission in Galatia. This would be against the picture in 2:1-10. Also, Paul has earlier associated the Jewish Christians in the churches of Judea among the “churches of God” (1:13-23) reserving the designation “Israel of God” to something else.

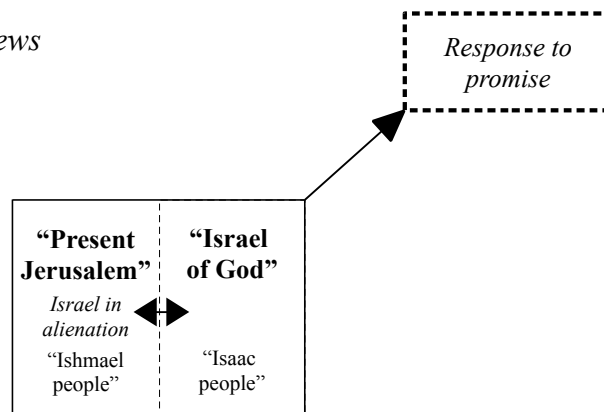
The majority view is to read “Israel of God” as referring to the “new creation” people of 6:15 – the believers in Christ of both Jews and Gentiles. This view is represented by Martyn and Wright (also e.g. Oepke, *an die Galater*, 204–205; Schlier, *an die Galater*, 283). For both, the decisive issue is the overall argument of the letter. For Martyn, the key is the addition *of God*, by which Paul defines what he means by Israel here. It is the Israel that is brought into being by God's promise of the singular seed, Christ (3:16), who then defines the new people of God who are the collective seed in Christ (3:29). (*Galatians*, 574–577.) For Wright, the decisive factor is Paul's emphasis on relativising the distinction between Jew and Gentile, and the creation of the one worldwide people of Abraham in Christ (*PFG*, 1142–1151). These are plausible readings. Yet I sense that Paul's peculiar expression and choice of words in 6:16 signal that something unexpected can be expected. Paul indicates that he still has a special concern for his kinsmen in the flesh, which he opens up more fully in Rom 9-11 (cf. Mußner: “So deutet der Apostel in Gal 6, 16 schon an, was er dann in Röm 9-11 explizieren wird. Paulus hat sein Volk nie vergessen” [*Der Galaterbrief*, 417]).

Figure 3. Schematic presentation of the generation of the “children of promise”

3a General view



3b Focus on the Jews



This paradoxical construction of Paul's logic that the "Israel of God" refers to the physical descendants of Abraham, but at the same time she is only "justified" as such by her response to the new promissory act of God in Christ, is reflected also in Paul's logic in Gal 4:1-7.⁷⁶² There the "heir" – Israel – is at the same time recognised as a son (implied) and the heir (4:1-3), but also in need of redemption and "adoption" (4:4-5) (see 6.3.3) to be included in the inheritance – the restoration reality – of the sons of God (4:6-7). In other words, the heir is a "son," but also a "slave" until he receives the

⁷⁶² Wright's reading of 3:14 has similar logic, which leads him to modify Sanders's categories: "At this point the categories of 'getting in' and 'staying in', ..., seem to need more nuances: 'getting back in', for instance, or 'staying in when it looked as though one had been ejected'. Israel's peculiar plight is that, through the exile, she has been, in one sense, still inside the covenant and, in another, outside it. Gentiles simply come in, from nowhere; Jews have their membership renewed, brought back to life, by sharing the death and resurrection of their Messiah." (*Climax*, 155; emphasis original.)

inheritance. If Israel's status as the “son,” who is the heir, is only realised by divine redemption, it is not unimaginable to perceive that Paul thinks that the “Israel of God” is proved, or better yet, regenerated to be the “Israel of God” by her response to divine mercy in Christ. Thus, Paul holds that dependence on divine promise in the offer of mercy in Christ is decisive also for the Jews in determining whether they become who they truly are (Isaac people) in their inclusion in the “new creation” people of the “Jerusalem above.” A failure to respond to the divine revelation in the Son is a failure to live up to Israel's true character according to the pattern of Isaac, and thus a construction of the identity of Israel (by the Jew or the Judaizing Gentile) according to the flesh (the Ishmael alternative), which results in the status of slavery – alienation – in the “present Jerusalem” (see Figure 3b).

6.3.2 Promise of Restoration and Generation by the Spirit

The above analysis about the composite character of the promise (Abraham-Isaiah) in Paul's designation of the Galatian believers' identity as “children of promise” can be further developed, as we follow closely the move that Paul makes in describing the birth of Isaac in contrast to Ishmael. Paul describes Isaac's birth first in terms of having taken place by the promise (4:23 δι' ἐπαγγελίας) in contrast to the birth of Ishmael that was according to the flesh (4:23 κατὰ σάρκα). But, on the second occasion, Paul pits the two sons against each other in terms of the one being born according to flesh and the other according to Spirit (κατὰ πνεῦμα) (4:29). On a rhetorical level, the explication of the promise in terms of the Spirit is most likely due to the more direct application of the tension between Ishmael and Isaac to the situation with the Galatians (4:29 οὕτως καὶ νῦν).⁷⁶³ The Spirit is connected to the generative line of the promise with an emphasis on the incompatibility between being generated by the Spirit or by flesh. This is reminiscent of Paul's earlier emphasis on the Galatians' reception of the Spirit as the reason why they should not attempt to complement their life as God's people by the flesh (3:3 οὕτως ἀνόητοί ἐστε, ἐναρξάμενοι πνεύματι νῦν σαρκὶ ἐπιτελείσθε;),

⁷⁶³ Cf. de Boer, *Galatians*, 306. Earlier view over the “persecution” in the Galatians' context saw it in terms of the (unbelieving) Jews persecuting Christians (e.g. Betz, *Galatians*, 250; Rohde, *an die Galater*, 204; Schlier, *an die Galater*, 226–227; however, Burton already recognised that it had more to do with Paul's opponents [*Galatians*, 266]). The discussion has rightly moved away from portraying the persecution in terms of Jews vs. Christians, and focused on Paul's opponents' imposition of the Law over the Gentile Galatians (cf. Gal 5:11-12) (e.g. Longenecker, *Galatians*, 216–217; Martyn, *Galatians*, 444–445). Yet I maintain that Paul's focus is primarily on the theological level where it is connected to the polarity between Spirit and flesh that is the focus in 3:1-5 and in 5:16-6:10.

which is connected with their desire to come “under the Law,” to practise the “works of the Law” (3:2). The tension between flesh and Spirit in Gal 4:29 also anticipates the major role these categories play in Gal 5:13-26 where, however, the works of the flesh do not resemble the “works of the Law,” but rather corrupted practices that describe a totally opposite way of life to that lived by the Spirit (see discussion in 6.6).

In addition to the rhetorical reason, I perceive that it is also significant that the reference to generation by the Spirit in Gal 4:29 follows the Isa 54:1 quotation (4:27) and the identification of the Galatian believers with the pattern of the birth of Isaac (4:28). Hence, I suggest that the reference to the one generated by the Spirit functions as a reference to the “allegorical Isaac” who now represents the Galatian believers (among others). Furthermore, I reckon that this logic is facilitated by the Isaianic matrix. The logic can be summarised thus: the Galatians are identified as “children of promise” (4:28) who are generated by the Spirit (4:29), and, as such, are included in the inheritance (4:30), which means that they are also children of the “free woman” (4:31) that refers back to the mother “Jerusalem above” (4:26) – the restoration reality according to Isa 54:1. Hence, I explore the role of the Spirit in Paul's logic with the help of the Isaianic matrix that is connected with the vision of restoration in Isa 54:1.

I have argued that the transformation of barrenness into fruitfulness (many children) in the image of the woman in Isa 54:1 is intimately connected with the theme of the Spirit's generative activity that is often imaged in Isaiah by waters transforming barren/desolate land into fertile blossoming that resembles new creation (e.g. Isa 35:1-7; 41:18; 43:18-21; see 4.3.4). One key text in this regard is Isa 44:1-5. It is very likely that this text has influenced Paul in his conception of the Spirit mediating the Abrahamic promise of blessing to all the nations, which is understood via the Isaianic matrix as inclusion in the restored people of God. We can perceive the influence of Isa 44:1-5 initially in Gal 3:14, which leads us to recognise its impact also in the logic of Gal 4:21-5:1. Isaiah 44:1-5 is about regenerating Israel as God's people. It first looks back to how God formed her from the womb (Isa 44:1-2), in order to assure her of God's ability to re-form her by the Spirit (Isa 44:3-5). The pattern in the birth of Isaac (which is also repeated with variations in the birth of Jacob and his sons) is the paradigm for connecting the performative power of God's promise with the activity of the Spirit in the generation of a people. The language of providing water for the thirsty (44:3a) is explicated in the next line by the promise of placing the Spirit on Israel's seed (44:3b ἐπιθήσω τὸ πνεῦμά μου ἐπὶ τὸ σπέρμα σου) that is developed with the theme

of blessing on her children (44:3c καὶ τὰς εὐλογίας μου ἐπὶ τὰ τέκνα σου). This results in, or better yet, the blessing consists of, the children “springing up” like grass or willows by the waters (44:4). These newly generated children identify themselves as belonging to God, and take on the name Israel (44:5). This refers to the re-formation of Israel from a non-people (cf. Isa 63:10-19) that has the potential for including Gentiles, which amounts to the fulfilment of the Abrahamic promise of blessing (see 4.3.4).

The thematic coherence/logical correspondence together with conceptual and verbal links between Isa 44:3 and Gal 3:14 make it very likely that Isa 44:1-5 is the matrix for Paul's concluding statement in Gal 3:14 about the blessing of Abraham reaching the Gentiles that is conceived in terms of the reception of the promised Spirit (ἵνα εἰς τὰ ἔθνη ἡ εὐλογία τοῦ Ἀβραάμ γένηται ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ἵνα τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος λάβωμεν διὰ τῆς πίστεως).⁷⁶⁴ The two key concepts of blessing and the Spirit are paralleled in the same way in Isa 44:3 and in Gal 3:14 in connection with the formation of the new people of God (the aim of the argument about the Abrahamic promise of blessing in 3:8 is expressed in 3:28-29 in terms of the re-formed people of God).⁷⁶⁵ The Isaianic connection has also the power to explain Paul's move to correlate the Abrahamic blessing with the promise of the Spirit. The promise of the Spirit is not found in the Abraham narrative itself, but it is an integral feature of the Isaianic vision of restoration that is conceived as a fulfilment of the Abrahamic promise of blessing to all the nations.⁷⁶⁶ Furthermore, the Isaianic matrix suggests that the Spirit functions as one generative means to bring the Gentiles into the blessing of the

⁷⁶⁴ Cf. Lee, *The Blessing of Abraham*, 194; Harmon, *She Must*, 146–148; Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, 182–183; Morales, *The Spirit and the Restoration of Israel*, 181–183. Also, though not developed, de Boer, *Galatians*, 215; Moo, *Galatians*, 216. Pace Watson: “The text [Genesis] is clearly a 'promise', but only in the light of Christian faith and experience can the content of the promise be identified as the giving of the Spirit” (*PHF*, 176).

⁷⁶⁵ The two ἵνα clauses in Gal 3:14 express the purpose/result from the statement in 3:13 (Χριστὸς ἡμᾶς ἐξηγόρασεν ἐκ τῆς κατάρσας τοῦ νόμου). The second ἵνα clause is best viewed as a co-ordinate with the first (in apposition) that does not depend on the first (as if the blessing to the Gentiles would be the prerequisite for the reception of the Spirit): “Die beiden Zweckbestimmungen sind koordiniert, abhängig vom Hauptsatz. Die zweite erklärt und ergänzt die erste.” (Oepke, *an die Galater*, 109.) Cf. Betz, *Galatians*, 152; Bruce, *Galatians*, 167; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 123; Vouga, *An die Galater*, 77. This is a case of parallelism, in which the second clause advances/enlarges the first. Hence, Paul does not simply equate the blessing and Spirit, so that the blessing would consist of the Spirit (pace de Boer, *Galatians*, 215). Rather, the Spirit is the “mediator” of the blessing that consists of “righteousness” (cf. Burton, *Galatians*, 175; Lee, *The Blessing of Abraham*, 193–198; Watson, *PHF*, 173) that is defined in Galatians as generation/ inclusion into the restored people of God (see 2.1).

⁷⁶⁶ Pace Thiessen, who dismisses the possibility that Isa 44:1-3 underlies the logic of Gal 3:14, because it is addressed to Jacob/Israel rather than Abraham, and because Paul does not explicitly refer to Isaiah here (*Gentile Problem*, 131–132). Instead, Thiessen argues that the promise of the *pneuma* is found in the Abraham narrative, although implicitly, in the promise of Abraham having descendants as the stars (see 1.1.3). Thiessen's proposal is possible, but hardly more plausible than understanding that Paul reads the Abraham narrative together with Isaiah, as he explicitly does in Gal 4:21-5:1.

inheritance of the restoration reality. Hence, I understand that Gal 3:14 is another moment, besides 4:21-5:1, where Paul reads the Abraham narrative together with Isaiah to arrive at the conclusion that the Abrahamic promise of blessing to all the nations is being fulfilled in the gift of the Spirit, which is both a means for and a sign of inclusion in the restored community of God's people.

Although Paul's argument in Gal 3:6-14 includes a catena of Scripture (Deut, Hab, and Lev cited in Gal 3:10-13), the argument is bracketed by engagement with the Abraham narrative at the start (Gen 15:6 in Gal 3:6; Gen 12:3; 18:18 in Gal 3:8) and by the concluding statement that is very likely influenced by Isa 44:1-5 (Gal 3:14). Hence, while Paul works here with a wider contour of Scripture that is configured in terms of the promise and Law,⁷⁶⁷ the Isaianic matrix is again part of the pattern that describes Israel's experience and its implications for the Gentiles in terms of the alienation-restoration (here curse-blessing) paradigm configured by the gift of the Spirit.⁷⁶⁸ Thus, due to the corresponding logic between Isa 44:1-5, Gal 3:14, and 4:21-5:1, it is very likely that Isa 44:1-5 is part of the matrix for including the Spirit in the generative line of the promise that makes the Gentile Galatians "children of promise" and members of the restored people of God – the children of the "Jerusalem above."

There is yet another text in Isaiah that I regard as a likely matrix for Paul's conception of the Spirit as one key generative agent of the restored people of God. I have analysed in section 4.3.4 how the Spirit is presented as the hallmark of the people of God in Isa 63, although it is expressed via the negative present experience. The lack of divine involvement is lamented in terms of the Spirit's absence. The people remember how the exodus generation provoked the Holy Spirit by disobedience turning God into their enemy (63:10), and recognise that they have now degenerated to a status that would practically disqualify them from being the special people of God (63:19). In their plight, they remember the exodus and how God had placed his Spirit among them (πρὸ

⁷⁶⁷ For Paul's construal of the promise-Law pattern in Scripture, see Watson, *PHF*.

⁷⁶⁸ Wright represents an alternative construal to Watson's, in which he reads Gal 3:6-14 and the scriptures referred to there within a covenantal framework with an exile/curse-renewal of covenant/restoration scheme (*Climax*, 137–156; *PGF* 860-867). For Wright's critique of Watson's construction, see *PGF*, 1456–1471. For Watson's discussion on the differences between his approach and Wright, see *PHF*, xxvi–xxxv. The core of their disagreement is in part about the existence of an overarching or underlying (covenantal) narrative (metanarrative) in Paul's reading of Israel's Scripture (see also Watson, "Is There a Story in These Texts?," in *Narrative Dynamics in Paul: A Critical Assessment*, ed. Bruce W. Longenecker [Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002], 231–239). But even more it is about the shape of this narrative; whether or not there is an unbroken continuity of Israel's story to Christ. I present in this thesis a mediated position that perceives more elements in the story than Watson presently has developed (namely from the Isaianic matrix), but also finds less of a sense of an ongoing or extended exile than Wright.

ἐστιν ὁ θεὸς ἐν αὐτοῖς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον;) to lead them (κατέβη πνεῦμα παρὰ κυρίου καὶ ὠδήγησεν αὐτούς) (63:11-14). These people appeal to God's mercy to deliver and lead them to inherit even a little portion of the “holy mountain” (ἵνα μικρὸν κληρονομήσωμεν τοῦ ὄρους τοῦ ἁγίου σου) (63:15-18). In their appeal, the people call explicitly on God as their Father to be their deliverer; they do not appeal to their Abrahamic ancestry or their pedigree as Israelites, but seek directly the mercy of the Father to restore them (63:16 σὺ γὰρ ἡμῶν εἶ πατήρ, ὅτι Αβρααμ οὐκ ἔγνω ἡμᾶς, καὶ Ἰσραηλ οὐκ ἐπέγνω ἡμᾶς· ἀλλὰ σὺ, κύριε, πατήρ ἡμῶν ῥύσαι ἡμᾶς).

I perceive that there are conceptual and logical correspondences between Isa 63:11-18 and Gal 4:4-7, which make it likely that this text in Isaiah is part of the matrix that informs Paul's understanding of the role of the Spirit in generating the restored people of God.⁷⁶⁹ The logical and conceptual correspondence between Isaiah and Paul is reflected in the emphasis on God as the Father acting to deliver (Isa 63:16 ῥύομαι) or redeem (Gal 4:5 ἐξαγοράζω) the alienated people (enmity and abandonment in Isaiah; slavery in Galatians) to a new status as heirs (inherit a portion of the holy mountain in Isaiah; being heirs in Galatians). In contrast to the lament in Isa 63, the regenerated children of God in Galatians enjoy the Spirit's presence that affirms their status with the cry of the child: *Abba*, Father (4:6). Furthermore, Isa 63 has the potential to be applied to the Gentiles, since it offers the hope for alienated people to be restored by the mercy of God without appeal to any prior sense of worth or status. Hence, it is likely that in Gal 4:4-7 Paul interweaves the Gentiles into the story of Israel's restoration with reflection on the theological potential in the Isaianic matrix, which is also the case in the Spirit's role in generating the “children of promise” in Gal 4:21-5:1.

6.3.3 Integrating the Gentiles into the Recalibrated Story of Israel

The recalibration of the story of Israel with the alienation-restoration paradigm integrates the Gentiles into its scope, which is reflected in Paul's puzzling use of the first

⁷⁶⁹ Wright emphasises the role of the exodus/new exodus narrative here (*PFG*, 656–658, 876-879). I agree, but would stress more than Wright that Paul reads the exodus narrative together with its re-appropriation in Isaiah's vision of restoration (new exodus) that has the Spirit as a key element in it. Harmon identifies an echo or thematic parallelism between Isa 63 and Paul's conception of being led by the Spirit in Gal 5:18 (*She Must*, 221–225). This supports my argument that Isa 63 is a text Paul has reflected on with regard to the Spirit's role in the life of the people of God. I recognise that the context of Greco-Roman adoption and inheritance practices must also be considered as adding meaning to Gal 4:1-7, but I cannot pursue it here. For a good treatment of this dimension, see James C. Walters, “Paul, Adoption, and Inheritance,” in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook*, ed. J. Paul Sampley (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2003), 42–76.

(“we”) and second (“you”) person plural pronouns and verbal forms.⁷⁷⁰ Some instances of his use of the first person plural are straightforward: in Gal 1:8-9 and 2:5 it is a clear reference to Paul and his associates; in 2:15-17 it is a clear reference to Jewish believers in Christ; and in 1:4; 5:5; 5:25 and 6:9 it is a general reference to Jewish and Gentile believers in Christ. But it is more challenging to follow Paul's logic with the “we/us” in chapters three and four.

I begin from Gal 4:21-5:1. Paul uses the second person plural “you” to direct his address to the Galatian believers in 4:21 (“you who ... do you not”), 28 (“you are”)⁷⁷¹ and 5:1 (“you stand!”), but his use of the “we/us” in 4:26 (“our mother”),⁷⁷² 31 (“we are not”) and 5:1 (“Christ has set us free”) connects the direct address to the Galatians with the bigger story that includes at least Paul, and most likely also other Jewish believers in Christ.⁷⁷³ The inclusive “we” is an indication that the Galatian Gentile believers (not excluding the possibility that there are also Jewish believers among the congregations) are joined into the story of Israel's redemption according to the alienation-restoration paradigm. Because they are (“you are”) children of the promise of blessing and restoration according to the pattern of Isaac (4:28), they have also become participants in the “we” together with Jewish believers in Christ who are not children of the “slave

⁷⁷⁰ This is a well recognised puzzle; see Barclay, *Gift*, 419–420, footnotes 70 and 71; de Boer, *Galatians*, 209–210, 256–261; T. L. Donaldson, “The ‘Curse of the Law’ and the Inclusion of the Gentiles: Galatians 3. 13–14,” *NTS* 32 (1986): 94–112; Johnson Hodge, *If Sons*, 70–71, 123 with note 35; Martyn, *Galatians*, 334–336; Moo, *Galatians*, 211–214; Thiessen, *Gentile Problem*, 130. The question here is whether Paul's use of the “we/us” in Gal 3:13-14; 3:23-29; 4:1-7 refers to the Jews/Jewish believers (Barclay and Donaldson), or is about Paul's identification with the Gentile believers (Johnson Hodge and Thiessen), or a reference to a universal “we” (de Boer, Martyn, and Moo). The position I argue below starts from the recognition of the Jewish priority in the “we,” but moves towards the universal “we,” as the Jew-Gentile distinction is blurred because the Gentiles are integrated into the story of Israel retrospectively (cf. Hays: “in both cases [Gal 3:13-14 and 4:3-6] the formulation moves from an initial division between “us” and “them” toward a final inclusive “we” which makes no distinction between Jew and Gentile...” [*The Faith of Jesus Christ*, 108]). It seems to be characteristic of the RNPP to exclude the Jews from Paul's “we.” Johnson Hodge connects the use of the Gentiles+Paul “we” to the “fictive” construction of Gentile genealogy that connects them to Abraham (*If Sons*, 123 with note 35, 79-91). This has some resemblance to what I express in terms of Paul integrating Gentile Galatians into the story of Israel. But why should Paul's emphasis on the implications of Israel's story on the Gentiles remove the Jews from the purview of Paul's retelling of his/their own story?

⁷⁷¹ Many manuscripts have “we” (ἡμεῖς) here (e.g. \aleph , A, C, D², K, L, P, Ψ , majority text, lat, sy, bo); most likely to harmonise with the use of the first person plural in 4:26 and 31. The reading Ὑμεῖς is supported e.g. by P⁴⁶, B, D*, F, G, 0261^{vid}, b, sa.

⁷⁷² The apparently later addition of πάντων (πάντων ἡμῶν) further highlights this as an inclusive statement (the addition is attested in e.g. \aleph^2 , A, C³, K, L, P, majority text, vg^{mss}, sy^h; text without πάντων is found in e.g. P⁴⁶, \aleph^* , B, C*, D, F, G, lat, sy^{hmg}, co).

⁷⁷³ Dunn takes the 1st person plural in vv. 26 and 31 as including all who have “born in accordance with the Spirit [iv.29], Jew as well as Gentile,” since the new “heavenly reality” is not constrained by “ethnic and fleshly considerations” (*Galatians*, 254, 259). Betz reads the “our mother” in v. 26 as Paul's way of taking up polemically a famous Jewish dictum “and claims it for the Christians” (*Galatians*, 247–248). This demonstrates that there are theological implications from how Paul's use of the “we” and “you” is understood.

woman” – belonging to the “present Jerusalem” – but whose mother is the “Jerusalem above” – belonging to the restored people of God. The underlying logic is about regenerating the restoration people that applies both to the Jews and Gentiles. With these initial insights from Gal 4:21-5:1, I now turn to other passages that play on the shifts between the Jewish “we” and the Gentile “you,” and their modification by the impact of the construction of a new inclusive “we.”

In Gal 3:13, the “us” who have been redeemed from the curse of the Law (Χριστὸς ἡμᾶς ἐξηγόρασεν ἐκ τῆς κατάρας τοῦ νόμου) most naturally refers to the Jews who have been under the covenant from Sinai.⁷⁷⁴ But it has an indirect address also to the Gentile Galatians who desire to come under the Law (4:21), since the curse of the Law applies to all who live out from the Law (3:10 Ὅσοι γὰρ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου εἰσίν, ὑπὸ κατάραν εἰσίν).⁷⁷⁵ Yet the “us” in 3:13 retains its primary reference to the Jews and the story of their redemption, as it is the reality of Israel's restoration that has already begun, which has occasioned the extension of the Abrahamic blessing to the Gentiles (3:14a).⁷⁷⁶ Furthermore, the inclusion of both the Jew and Gentile in the sphere of restoration has created the new “we” who are the recipients of the promise of the Spirit on the mutually shared ground of faith in Christ (3:14b ἵνα τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος λάβωμεν διὰ τῆς πίστεως).⁷⁷⁷

⁷⁷⁴ Cf. Wright, *Climax*, 143. *Pace* Thiessen who claims that Gal 3:10-14 is focused solely on Gentiles; the curse relates to Gentiles who attempt to keep the Law (*Gentile Problem*, 106). However, in applying his address to “whosoever” (3:10), Paul does not limit his address as neatly as the RNPP does. Also, the texts that Paul cites in discussing the curse of the Law (especially Deut 27:26 in Gal 3:10) apply directly to Israel's life under the Law and only indirectly to Gentiles desiring to come under the Law. Cf. Donaldson: “Only Israel is under this curse, because only Israel is ‘under law’. But because of the way in which Israel's plight is related to the universal human plight, the redemption of Israel from the curse of the law can have universal consequences.” (“The ‘Curse of the Law’” 105.) Paul's paradigmatic speech in 2:15-21 sets the precedent for his use of the Jewish “we” (vv. 15-17), even as he aims to curb the Gentile desire to come under the Law. Cf. Donaldson: “[i]f a distinction between Jewish and Gentile groups is made in the statement of the thesis (2.15-21), we should not be surprised to find such a distinction appearing in the arguments used to support the thesis (3.1-4.7)” (*Ibid.*, 97; cf. Barclay, *Gift*, 419).

⁷⁷⁵ Cf. Schlier: “Ὅσοι begründet die Tatsache, daß es dabei keine Ausnahme gibt: alle, welche, oder wieviele, welche vgl. Röm 2₁₂” (*an die Galater*, 132).

⁷⁷⁶ Schlier resists any logical flow from a Jewish “we” to an inclusive “we” in vv. 13-14 (he only perceives that the Jews are somehow a *type* of those who are under the Law), as he emphasises that both the Jew and Gentile are equally under the curse of the Law and in need of redemption (*Ibid.*, 136–137). This is true in relation to the outcome, but misses the underlying logic in how Paul integrates the Gentiles into the story of Israel. Bachmann is better in tune with Paul's logic, as he claims that the use of the first person plural in reference to Jews/Jewish Christians reflects Paul's “orientation toward the history of redemption, which maintains the priority of Judaism, even while he emphasizes the dependence of also the Jews (or Jewish Christians) on Christ and on forgiveness of sins (esp. 2:16-17, 20d, 21b). This priority remains also decisive in 3:1-4:7, because here also (with the exception only of 3:14b and 4:6b), as in 2:15-17a, the first person plural is used of Jews (or Jewish Christians), so that in 3:1-14, in 3:15-29, and in 4:1-7 the salvation event asserted for the Jews is expressed as the prerequisite for what – for this reason – can also be effective for the Gentiles (see esp. 3:14, 26-29; 4:6-7).” (*Anti-Judaism*, 105.)

⁷⁷⁷ The fact that the two ἵνα clauses appear to be in apposition does not necessarily mean that the “we” in 3:14b refers only to the Gentiles in 3:14a (*pace* Thiessen, *Gentile Problem*, 130). I also do not

The movement from the redemption of the Jews to the inclusion of the Gentiles in the restoration of Israel is expressed in Gal 3:23-29 with emphasis on Gentile inclusion in the new people of God. Paul first outlines the Jewish reality of life before and after Christ in terms of the “we” having been under the guardianship of the Law (ὕπὸ νόμον ἐφρουρούμεθα συγκλειόμενοι) until the coming of faith in Christ that brings righteousness was revealed (εἰς τὴν μέλλουσαν πίστιν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι ... ἵνα ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοθῶμεν) (3:23-25).⁷⁷⁸ Because dependence (faith) on Christ for inclusion in the restoration reality (righteousness) is true for the Jews, it is more so also for the Gentiles (that is also the point in 2:15f.). Hence, the Gentiles – “you” – are included in the new people of God by their inclusion in Christ (3:27-29).⁷⁷⁹ However, the clear demarcation of the “we” (Jew) and “you” (Gentile) is blurred by the new inclusive “you all” who are the children of God through faith in Christ (3:26 Πάντες γὰρ υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἐστε διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ), that is, by their new identity that has emerged from baptism into Christ (3:27). The new identity in Christ is reflected in the new social reality that is expressed in the programmatic statement about the oneness of the re-created humanity that relativises the boundaries, and divests of symbolic capital the status symbols of the old cosmos, the Jew-Gentile distinction included (Gal 3:28; cf. 5:6; 6:14-16).⁷⁸⁰

Similarly, as Paul retells the story of Israel in Gal 4:1-5 in terms of the heir who, while being under-aged, is compared to the status of a slave until the fulness of time, the Gentiles, who are now also counted in the “seed” of Abraham as heirs according to the pattern of the promise (3:29), are also to identify with the story *retrospectively* – the recalibrated story of Israel is now also their story.⁷⁸¹ Hence, the Jewish story about

follow Wright's suggestion that the “we” in 3:14b refers specifically to Jewish believers in Christ (*Climax*, 154–155). The reception of the Spirit by the Gentile believers has just been highlighted in 3:1-5, and the Spirit is one prime actor in generating the one new restored people of God (cf. Gal 4:1-7).

778 The Jewish “we” is at its clearest here, since the Gentiles have not been under the Law but are only now desiring to come under it (Gal 4:21) (cf. Barclay, *Gift*, 419, footnote 71; *pace* Martyn who contends that all are somehow under the *power* of the Law [*Galatians*, 362]). De Boer is cautious in recognising the primary Jewish reference, and simultaneous universal implication: “Paul may perhaps have Jews particularly in view, at least in the first instance, but if so he uses their situation ‘under the law’ to be representative of the situation of all humankind...” (*Galatians*, 238). I contend that the universalising implication in Paul's use of the “we” comes rather from Paul's conviction that all are under *Sin* (Gal 3:22) (see discussion below).

779 The shift to the “you” here is sometimes explained by Paul's recourse to baptismal tradition (e.g. de Boer, *Galatians*, 237, 242-247). The baptismal tradition is a possible source here, but does not exclude the possibility that Paul's use of the “you” also incorporates the Gentile Galatians to Israel's story.

780 Cf. Barclay, *Gift*, 396–397. See also Martyn who understands 3:28 as a declaration of the death of the old cosmos, and an implied reference to the new creation (*Galatians*, 376–377).

781 Moo also observes the link from 3:29-4:1 with the word *heir*, and comments: “Both situations [described in 3:24-25 and 4:1-2] illustrate the position of Israel (and by extension, the Galatians) before Christ, when they were ‘under the law’” (*Galatians*, 258).

redemption/adoption of the “we” who have been under the Law (4:5 ἵνα τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον ἐξαγοράσῃ, ἵνα τὴν υἰοθεσίαν ἀπολάβωμεν)⁷⁸² has a wider application to represent the reality of all humanity being under the “elements of the cosmos” (4:3 οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς, ὅτε ἡμεν νήπιοι, ὑπὸ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου ἤμεθα δεδουλωμένοι). Terence Donaldson expresses this aspect well:

Israel, the people of the law, thus functions as a kind of representative sample of the whole. Their plight is no different from the plight of the whole of humankind, but through the operation of the law in their situation that plight is thrown into sharp relief. Being under νόμος is a special way of being under τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου, because only under the former can the true nature of the bondage to the latter be clearly seen.⁷⁸³

Even as the address is again directed to the Gentile recipients – “you” (4:6a Ὅτι δέ ἐστε υἱοί) – both the Jew and Gentile are in the scope of the newly generated children of God – the new inclusive “we” – who have the witness of the Spirit (4:6b ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν ...).⁷⁸⁴

Thus, the new inclusive “we” of the restoration people, and the recalibration of the story of Israel according to the alienation-restoration paradigm modify for Paul also the old categories of the Jewish “we” and Gentile “you.” As the Jews are also within the scope of the address to the new “you all,” so also are the Gentiles implicated in the old “we” who are no longer to derive their identity from the Law. The blurring of the old categories of the “we” and “you” is reflected in, and indeed stems from, Paul's realisation of the universal scope of both the problem and the solution. Everything/one is under sin (3:22a), and no human/flesh – neither Jewish nor Gentile – is made righteous by the Law, and hence all – the “we” and the “you” – depend on faith in

782 The two ἵνα clauses in 4:5 reflect the construction in 3:14 (see discussion above), and yet in this context the second ἵνα clause can be understood to depend on the first, thus creating a sequence rather than parallelism (cf. Betz, *Galatians*, 208; Bruce, *Galatians*, 197; *pace* de Boer who understands that the first emphasises purpose and the second result [*Galatians*, 264]). I understand that the first ἵνα clause presents redemption especially in relation to the Jews (those under the Law) that has implications also for the Gentiles, and hence the second clause represents the new restoration reality that includes both Jews and Gentiles among those who have received their status as “sons” of God (cf. Betz, *Galatians*, 208; Dunn, *Galatians*, 216–217). Others take both clauses as referring to Jews/Jewish believers (Longenecker, *Galatians*, 172), or to Jews and Gentiles together (Burton, *Galatians*, 219; de Boer, *Galatians*, 264–265; Moo, *Galatians*, 266–267).

783 Donaldson, “The ‘Curse of the Law’” 104.

784 The manuscript evidence reflects the potentially confusing way Paul uses the 1st and second person references, as some manuscripts (e.g. D², K, L, Ψ, majority text, vg^{cl}, Syriac, bo^{pl}) have in 4:6b ὑμῶν instead of ἡμῶν (attested in e.g. P⁴⁶, Ⳑ, A, B, C, D, F, G, P, lat, sa, bo^{pl}) to harmonise with 4:6a. The other difficulty with 4:6 has to do with the sense of the ὅτι (see discussion in Betz, *Galatians*, 209–210; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 173). I agree with de Boer's reading that the ὅτι does not mean that the reception of the Spirit is somehow dependent on achieving first the status of a “son,” but rather that “for Paul the sonship of believers becomes evident in the experienced fact that God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into their collective hearts” (de Boer, *Galatians*, 265). Similarly, Dunn translates the sense thus: “and in that you are sons ...” (*Galatians*, 219).

Christ for righteousness (2:16), that is, depend on the promissory act of God in Christ and the Spirit for inclusion in the restored people of God. The people of the new inclusive “we” derive their identity – “those who believe” – from their response to the promise (3:22 ἵνα ἡ ἐπαγγελία ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δοθῇ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν).

I have explored in 6.3 how Paul capitalises on the pattern of Isaac's birth in the logic of Gal 4:21-5:1. I argued that Paul does *not* use it to connect the Gentile believers in Christ directly to Sarah as their mother, and thus bolster their identity in the family of Abraham. Rather, he focuses on divine generation in the line of promise that consists of the Abrahamic promise of blessing to the nations and its re-appropriation in the Isaianic promise of restoration. This defines both the *promise* as the composite Abrahamic-Isaianic promise and the *people* of promise as those who receive the blessing of Abraham in their inclusion in the restoration people envisioned with Isaiah as the “Jerusalem above” community. Thus, Paul's logic emphasises divine generation and participation in the restoration promise as the defining factor in inheriting also the Abrahamic promise of blessing as inclusion in God's people. The Isaianic matrix also facilitates the integration of the Spirit into the line of promise as the generative means by which God re-forms the alienated people into the new people of God that includes both Jews and Gentiles – recreated humanity. I have also demonstrated how Paul's recalibration of the story of Israel according to the vision of restoration and the logic of the alienation-restoration paradigm reshapes the old categories of the Jewish “we” and Gentile “you,” and creates the new inclusive “we” of the people who have responded to the divine performance of the promise. In the following, I analyse Paul's contrastive covenantal line that capitalises on the theological potential in the birth of Ishmael from Hagar to make it correspond with Sinai (6.4) before I return to the covenant of promise as it is ultimately defined in relation to Christ (6.5).

6.4 Hagar and the Covenant from Sinai that Leads to Slavery

One of the puzzling questions in the covenantal line that proceeds from Sinai and leads to slavery (4:24) is the correspondence it has with Hagar (4:24 ἥτις ἐστὶν Ἀγάρ) and with the “present Jerusalem” (4:25 συστοιχεῖ δὲ τῇ νῦν Ἱερουσαλήμ). To capture the logic here, I start from Paul's correlation of Sinai with Hagar by analysing the role that

the explanatory note in 4:25a plays in this allegorical correspondence before exploring how the theological potential in the Abraham narrative and Isaiah can explain it.

Both Hansen (see 5.4) and di Mattei have suggested that an etymological argument in 4:25a is the major ground for Paul's allegorical correspondence between Hagar and Sinai (Law).⁷⁸⁵ Although there is uncertainty about the original text form (see 2.2), my structural analysis supports the note as an intrinsic part of the text, and hence I offer an explanation about the function of the note in relation to the two strongest candidates for the possible original text form identified by Carlson: 1) τὸ γὰρ Σινᾶ ὄρος ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ Ἀραβίᾳ; 2) τὸ δὲ Ἀγὰρ Σινᾶ ὄρος ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ Ἀραβίᾳ.⁷⁸⁶ As di Mattei observes, the one constant in all the variations at the beginning of this sentence is the article τό.⁷⁸⁷ With text form one, it refers either to the composite Sinai-mountain (“for the Sinai-mountain is in Arabia”) or to Sinai (“for [the] Sinai is a mountain in Arabia”). With text form two, there is a discrepancy, since the neuter article τό does not correspond with the natural gender of Hagar. Hence, it must refer to something other than her person. Di Mattei argues that it establishes the etymological/geographical argument between the *name* Hagar and the mountainous region to which Hagar fled that is named *Hagra* in the Targums Pseudo-Jonathan and Onkelos on Gen 16:7.⁷⁸⁸ Furthermore, drawing on the work of McNamara, he suggests that there is a link with Sinai, which was believed in some Jewish traditions to be in the area of Petra where Hagar was also thought to have fled.⁷⁸⁹ These connections are possible, but require several steps from various Jewish traditions that weaken the argument. Also, as McNamara and those who draw from his work recognise, these connections are hardly accessible to the Gentile recipients of Paul's letter (unless Paul had explicitly explained them). However, this does not mean Paul could not have been aware of them, as McNamara concludes:

[o]ne may legitimately ask if the Galatians can be expected to have understood such a reference to Jewish tradition. They probably did not. But this would not weaken the strength of the argument, since at times, particularly in moments of heightened tension, Paul seems to have written from the abundance of his own mind rather than from what his readers would be expected to know.⁷⁹⁰

785 Di Mattei: “The allegory of Hagar as the covenant from Sinai rests on the wordplay which Paul inherently saw in the name ‘Hagar’” (“Paul's Allegory” 111–114; citation from pg. 113).

786 Carlson, “For Sinai.”

787 Di Mattei, “Paul's Allegory,” 111.

788 Ibid., 112.

789 Ibid.

790 Martin McNamara, *Targum and New Testament: Collected Essays* [Mohr Siebeck, 2011], 476;

Whatever we think of the plausibility of these Jewish traditions informing Paul's connection between Hagar, Sinai and Arabia, the one thing that seems firm in both text forms is the importance of locating at least Sinai in the region of Arabia. It is also plausible to find support for connecting Hagar with Arabia, and thus also with Sinai, from either the above mentioned Jewish traditions, or from a more straightforward logic. Since Hagar's descendants were associated with the Arabs,⁷⁹¹ it also provides an affinity with Hagar and Sinai, which is identified with Arabia: "Sinai is located in the Hagar country."⁷⁹²

Borgen provides another explanation for how the explanatory remark in 4:25a with text form two functions in establishing the correspondence between Hagar and Sinai. He argues that rather than the τό referring to the name Hagar, it functions as an "exegetical quotation mark" that refers back to the *allegorical meaning* given to Hagar in v. 24.⁷⁹³ Hence, it is not primarily an etymological or geographical connection, but Hagar is used as a type – *the Hagar covenant* – for the covenant of Sinai:

[t]he equation in v.25a 'Now 'Hagar' is Mount Sinai in Arabia,' is then based on the similar nature of Hagar's identification with the covenant/the Law and Mount Sinai's identification with the Law of Moses.⁷⁹⁴

Furthermore, Borgen uses Philo (especially *Abr.* 251) to arrive at the view that

Hagar was the type of pagan who was characterized as a Hebrew because she chose the Law as her way of life. Similarly, Mount Sinai, which was part of pagan Arabia, became the Mountain of the Law of Moses.⁷⁹⁵

I agree with Borgen that the connection between Hagar and Sinai is established on the allegorical level, in which Hagar represents the covenant of the Law. This is true with or without the explanatory note in 4:25a, and irrespective of the text form of the note, since the connection is already made in 4:24. But taking the explanatory note into account, it could be a moment where Paul displays his own geographical knowledge that he acquired during his stay in Arabia (1:17), and/or that he employs an allegorical device to "startle" his recipients, which invites them to seek for a "deeper meaning."⁷⁹⁶

the essay "τὸ δὲ [Ἀγάρ] Σινᾶ ὄρος ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ Ἀραβίᾳ (Gal 4:25): Paul and Petra" appeared originally as an article in *Milltown Studies* 2 [1978], 24-41.

791 The "Hagrites" are referred to as an Arab group in 1 Ch 5:10, 19f.; 27:31; Ps 83:6 (Bruce, *Galatians*, 220).

792 Wright, "Paul, Arabia and Elijah (Galatians 1.17)," 158.

793 Peder Borgen, "Some Hebrew and Pagan Features in Philo's and Paul's Interpretation of Hagar and Ishmael," in *The New Testament and Hellenistic Judaism*, ed. Peder Borgen and Søren Giversen (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1995), 158–159.

794 *Ibid.*, 159.

795 *Ibid.*

796 Cf. Davis, "Allegorically Speaking."

But rather than perceiving Philo as the primary intertext to provide the key for understanding *how* Hagar represents life under the Law (a pagan who chose the Law), I suggest that Paul invites his readers to seek for the deeper meaning from the theological potential in the explicitly signalled intertexts of the Abraham narrative and Isaiah. This does not exclude other possible influences on Paul, but I would make them the secondary port of call in case more explanatory power is required.

I reckon that it is very likely that Paul constructs the two covenants on the template that Gen 17 offers him. As I have demonstrated in section 3.4, the language in Gen 17 is such that the promise to Abraham about him becoming a father to many nations – mediator of blessing to all the nations – (17:1-6; cf. 12:3), can be taken as a distinct and yet related covenant from that of the covenant of circumcision that focuses on marking out the special people – the great nation (17:10-14). This juxtaposing of “two covenants” in Gen 17 resembles closely Paul’s juxtaposing of promise and Law in Galatians in general (3:6-4:7), and particularly in the contrast between the two covenants in 4:21-5:1.⁷⁹⁷ Not only are the two covenants of Gal 4:21-5:1 reflected in Gen 17, but the focus and polarity between Abraham’s two sons is the theological key for configuring these two covenants in both Gal 4:21-5:1 and Gen 17 (with related texts). Besides these close conceptual and logical correspondences, we also know of Paul’s interest in Gen 17 from Romans ch. 4 (see 6.3.1). Thus, Gen 17 is the prime candidate for Paul’s construction of the two covenants in Gal 4:21-5:1.

The Sinai covenant that Paul speaks of in Gal 4:24 is connected to the covenant of circumcision in Gen 17, since the logic in both is to mark out the special people from among the other peoples (Exod 19:5-6; see 3.5). Circumcision and the obligation to follow the Sinaitic Law are also intimately connected in Paul’s understanding (Gal 5:3 μαρτύρομαι δὲ πάλιν παντὶ ἀνθρώπῳ περιτεμνομένῳ ὅτι ὀφειλέτης ἐστὶν ὅλον τὸν νόμον ποιῆσαι).⁷⁹⁸ I focus first on the potential in the Genesis narrative to present Hagar and Ishmael as representatives of the covenant of circumcision/Sinai, and then

⁷⁹⁷ De Boer suggests something similar, yet without exploring the theological potential that this matrix opens up: “Paul evidently distinguishes the covenant of promise in Gen 15:18; 17:1-8 from the covenant of circumcision in Gen 17:9-14, regarding them as two separate covenants” (*Galatians*, 298).

⁷⁹⁸ I disagree with Thiessen that πάλιν in 5:3 refers back to 4:21-31 and with the interpretation that the requirement to perform the whole Law refers to the impossibility of the Gentiles to conform with the requirement of the eighth-day circumcision (*Gentile Problem*, 94–95). De Boer (with Martyn and Dunn) argues convincingly that it refers back to 5:2 emphasising the point made there (*Galatians*, 312–313; cf. Schlier, *an die Galater*, 231; *pace* Burton, who maintains that it refers to what Paul has said during an earlier visit [*Galatians*, 274–275], and Betz for whom it is a reference to the Galatians’ ongoing failure to grasp what they are doing [*Galatians*, 259]). It is also possible that the πάλιν refers back to 3:10 (the linking word is ποιέω) and Paul’s view that living out from the Law is about doing all the Law, which leads under a curse (see discussion below, and in 6.5).

connect it with the potential in Isaiah to perceive how Paul can claim that life under the Law leads to slavery.

The connection between Hagar and Sinai consists, for Paul, of the reality that both generate children for slavery (see 2.2). Since it is possible to view Hagar's child Ishmael as an alternative construal of the identity of the “great nation” (see 3.3.1; 3.5), it is also possible to trace in Ishmael a construction of Israel under the covenant of circumcision. Already when Ishmael is in Hagar's womb, he represents Israel's life in slavery. Sarah's harsh treatment of Hagar results in her fleeing to the wilderness. It is there that the boy receives his name, which carries both the recognition of oppression and the hope of God attending to it (Gen 16:11 καὶ καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰσμαηλ, ὅτι ἐπήκουσεν κύριος τῆ ταπεινώσει σου). This episode has the potential to prefigure Israel's slavery in Egypt (see 3.3.1). Thus, we have a first indication that Hagar-Ishmael represents something of Israel's existence that is related to slavery/oppression. But the prefigurative function of Hagar-Ishmael is developed even further. In Gen 17, it becomes clear that, although Ishmael is circumcised, and thus potentially part of the covenant of circumcision, he is nevertheless excluded from the covenant of the special people (17:16-21), and finally expelled outside of the inheritance (21:10). This has the potential to prefigure, for Paul, the reality of life under the covenant from Sinai that leads to slavery – existence outside of inheritance. As Hagar gave birth to a son who, though a son of Abraham and circumcised, ended up outside of the inheritance, so also Sinai gives birth to a people that are Abraham's descendants and marked by circumcision, but yet can remain outside of the inheritance. The way this works for Paul as an argument that Sinai leads to slavery is predicated on the intimate connection that exists between the concept of slavery and the reality of being outside of inheritance (see 5.5), which is also expressed in the theological logic in Gal 4:21-5:1 (cf. 4:1-7) where slavery and exclusion from inheritance are connected in the figure of Ishmael: Hagar/Sinai gives birth to slavery – “Ishmael” – (4:24); the “son of the slave woman” – “Ishmael” – is excluded from the inheritance (4:30).

But there is even more in the connection between the figure of Hagar and the Law from Sinai. As Paul emphasises Hagar's status as a “slave woman” (παιδίσκη), so he also refers to the Law as a “slave” custodian (3:24 παιδαγωγός; a function of a slave),⁷⁹⁹ as Hagar was “enslaved,” so also is the Law implicated in the condition of

⁷⁹⁹ The παιδαγωγός was distinct from the teacher (διδάσκαλος), and had only an indirect role in education in terms of protection, guardianship, and discipline (e.g. Betz, *Galatians*, 177–178; Bruce,

slavery for Paul. Thus, the Law not only leads to slavery, but it is also itself “enslaved.” The Law does not contain the generative potential to make alive (3:21), but rather, it is constrained by the condition of all things being under sin (3:22 ἀλλὰ συνέκλεισεν ἡ γραφή τὰ πάντα ὑπὸ ἁμαρτίαν).⁸⁰⁰ Schlatter captures well this aspect in the connection between Hagar and the Law, as he emphasises that: “der wesentliche Grund liegt darin, daß das Gesetz so wenig als die Hagar ein freies Kind gebären kann.”⁸⁰¹ The Law does not bring about “new creation,” but is itself bound by the conditions of the “present evil age.” Hence, Paul can talk about coming under the Law as being the same as coming under the “basic elements of the cosmos” (4:3-5 ὅτε ἡμεν νήπιοι, ὑπὸ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου ἤμεθα δεδουλωμένοι· ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου, ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός, γενόμενον ὑπὸ νόμον, ἵνα τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον ἐξαγοράσῃ; 4:8 πῶς ἐπιστρέφετε πάλιν ἐπὶ τὰ ἀσθενῆ καὶ πτωχὰ στοιχεῖα οἷς πάλιν ἄνωθεν δουλεύειν θέλετε;).⁸⁰² The Law and the “elements” are not the same, but the Law is bound by the condition of the cosmos and humanity that is described as being enslaved to the “elements.” The Law does not operate above the “elements” that are under the corruption of sin, neither can it lead out

Galatians, 182–183; de Boer, *Galatians*, 240–241; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 146–148).

⁸⁰⁰ Paul uses here the expression ἡ γραφή that raises the questions, is it here a metonym for God or for the Law, and, if so, is God or the Law responsible for the plight of humanity? (see de Boer, *Galatians*, 234–235); Longenecker, *Galatians*, 144). I agree with de Boer that the ἡ γραφή is a reference to the witness of Scripture: “Paul now, as in 3:8, solemnly summons ‘the Scripture’ as a witness for his own theology, against the new preachers and their optimistic view of the law” (*Galatians*, 234–235). I do not think it is just a reference to the previous text of Scripture (Deut 27:26) he cited in 3:10 (*pace* Burton, *Galatians*, 195–196; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 144), as it most likely refers to a wider sense of how Paul reads Scripture. Dunn points towards this, and suggests that Rom 3:9-18 and the catena of Scripture cited there could be what Paul had earlier used in his preaching among the Galatians, and thus a possible reference here (*Galatians*, 194). Also, I agree with de Boer that τὰ πάντα includes also the Law in some sense being under the power of sin (*Galatians*, 234–235; *pace* the view that it is only a reference to humanity, e.g. Longenecker, *Galatians*, 144–145), but via the logic that humanity’s condition under sin compromises the Law’s ability to make alive (cf. Rom 8:3). The hermeneutical-theological framework advanced in this thesis points to Paul’s particular reading of the witness of the Scripture, which includes the theological interpretation of Israel’s experience of exile, that removes the possibility for anyone to claim a special status above sin (cf. Gal 2:16) – the alienation-restoration paradigm levels the playing field. Thus, as in 4:21, Paul again constrains the function of the Law, and confidence in the Law, by an extended reading of the witness of the Scripture that has Christ as the defining centre (3:22b).

⁸⁰¹ Adolf Schlatter, *Die Briefe an die Galater, Epheser, Kolosser und Philemon* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1987), 121.

⁸⁰² Barclay writes wisely about the connection that Paul establishes between pagan practices, the Law and the στοιχεῖα: “He is not claiming that pagan worship and Torah-observance are substantially identical; nor does he identify the στοιχεῖα either with the ‘non-Gods’ of the pagan pantheon or with the Torah itself. He is simply stating (though this ‘simply’ is shocking enough) that, from his perspective, pagan religious practice and life under the rule of the Torah may be classified in the same category of subjection to the στοιχεῖα of the world.” (*Gift*, 409.) *Pace* Wright who argues that Israel’s use of the Torah in a nationalistically restricted way – “idolization of nation, soil, and blood” – is in some way “quasi-paganism”: “That is why, in 4:8-11, the ex-pagan Galatians Christians are warned that if they become circumcised, that is, become ethnically Jewish, they will in effect be reverting to paganism. They will be embracing again religion of the *stoicheia*” (“Gospel and Theology in Galatians (1994),” 87–88.)

from this condition of slavery. Thus, Paul perceives that the Law is limited in its potential and its function. It cannot produce what it demands: righteousness; that is, it cannot lead into the inheritance of the freedom of the “Jerusalem above.” This logic is present in Gal 4:1-7, where being under the guardianship of the Law does not lead into the inheritance; the inheritance is reached by divine agency (διὰ θεοῦ) in generating the “sons” who are made heirs by the redemption in the Son and the gift of the Spirit.

I have explored above the potential in the Abraham narrative to construe Hagar-Ishmael as prefiguring Israel's life under the Law of Sinai that can only generate children to slavery/outside of the inheritance. But I do not think that Paul began there. Certainly, Paul finds in the figures of Hagar and Ishmael a matrix that corresponds with the view that the Law leads to slavery, and is bound by the conditions of slavery, but the realisation of that view emerged for him from the present realities that the coming of Christ and the gift of the Spirit instigated, which Paul configures in terms of the “present Jerusalem” and the “Jerusalem above.” Hence, I perceive that the alienation-restoration paradigm in Isaiah is the most potent for Paul's theological reflection about the role of the Law leading to slavery. Furthermore, Paul's experience of the risen Christ and the Spirit brings the focal point of the alienation-restoration paradigm to the point of Christ's death and resurrection (1:1-4; 6:14-15); Paul reads Scripture from the perspective of the revelation of the son (1:13-14), and the sending of the son in the fulness of time (4:4). It is the reality of inaugurated restoration that configures existence outside of it as being the realm of alienation – slavery. Thus, it is Paul's understanding of the “covenant of promise” that reconfigures the covenant of Sinai. It is to this that I turn next to deepen the discussion on why Paul perceives that coming under the Law is incongruous with living in the covenant of promise.

6.5 The Role of Christ as the Isaianic Servant in the Covenant of Promise

As I argued in my structural analysis (2.2), the other covenant that is not named in Gal 4:21-5:1 can be identified from the chiasmic structure of the passage as the covenant of promise. This is supported by Paul's explicit identification of the Abrahamic promise as a covenant in Gal 3:17. The covenant of promise in Gal 4:21-5:1 is the generative line that the Galatians are called to align with, and consequently to resist the compulsion to

construct their identity according to the covenant from Sinai. The “Jerusalem above” functions as the focal point for the generative line of the promise, and Isa 54:1 is the text that links Paul's argument with Isaiah's vision of restoration. I have argued above that the promise in Gal 4:28 carries theological weight from both the Abrahamic promise of blessing to the nations and the Isaianic promise of restoration, and as such it is about the re-creation of humanity. I now develop more fully Paul's construction of the covenant of promise with reference to the role of Christ as the Isaianic servant.

As I argued in the previous section, Paul very likely constructs the two covenants in Gal 4:21-5:1 on the matrix that Gen 17 provides. The covenant of promise in Gen 17 is about mediating blessing to all the nations that is focused on Isaac and the “seed” that is identified with him and his posterity in Gen 17:16; 22:17-18; 35:10-11; and 49:10 (see 3.4). Accordingly, one dimension in Paul's conception of the covenant of promise in Galatians is related to the Abrahamic promise of blessing (Gal 3:8, 15-18) that is mediated by Christ as the “seed” of Abraham (3:16).⁸⁰³ Christ is the one who ultimately defines the covenant of promise also in Gal 4:21-5:1. As I have argued in my structural analysis in 2.2, I regard Paul's statement in Gal 5:1 to be a conclusion to the passage that begins at 4:21 (it is also a transitional verse), which points to the defining role that Christ has in the covenant of promise. Since the promise is not defined only in terms of the Abrahamic promise, but also in terms its re-appropriation in the Isaianic vision of restoration (see 6.3), I argue in the following that Paul's presentation of the liberating work of Christ to be the reason to oppose the “yoke of slavery” (5:1) – the compulsion/desire to come under the Law (4:21) – is very likely configured with the help of the Isaianic servant, especially as depicted in Isa 52:13-53:12 (Isa 53 for short).

Watson offers the first level of evidence for the influence of the Isaianic servant on Paul's understanding of the work of Christ in general, as he demonstrates Paul to be indebted in language about Christ to the LXX translation of Isa 53.⁸⁰⁴ Watson notes the textual connections between LXX Isa 53 and Paul's letter to the Romans: Isa 52:15 is

⁸⁰³ See 3.4 and especially footnote 348, for some ideas how the scriptural matrix in Gen can facilitate the move towards identifying the “seed” with a messianic figure. This can be combined with the potential in the Isaianic matrix where there is movement from the Davidic messiah to the singular servant who effects the restoration that is conceived also as a fulfilment of the Abrahamic promise of blessing to all the nations (see 4.3.5). Space does not permit me to fully develop these ideas within this thesis, but only to focus here on how Paul conceives the role of Christ in terms of the Isaianic servant.

⁸⁰⁴ Watson speaks of the LXX translation of Isa 53 as “mistranslation,” which he defines in terms of a “paraphrase” that introduces “new semantic possibilities that cannot unambiguously be derived from the Hebrew” (“Mistranslation and the Death of Christ: Isaiah 53 LXX and Its Pauline Reception,” in *Translating the New Testament: Text, Translation, Theology*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Mark J. Boda [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009], 215–216).

quoted in Rom 15:21; Isa 53:1 is quoted in Rom 10:16; Isa 53:12 is probably alluded to in Rom 4:25.⁸⁰⁵ This establishes the fact that Paul can identify Christ with the servant of Isa 53 (especially by his reading of Isa 52:15). Watson also suggests that the *verbatim* quotation of the passages directly connected with the “fourth servant song” (Isa 53:1 in Rom 10:16 and Isa 54:1 in Gal 4:27) signal the great significance ascribed to Isa 53.⁸⁰⁶ However, the main part of Watson's analysis explores how Isa 53 “served as a lexical and semantic resource or reservoir from which terms, phrases, or concepts can be freely drawn and adapted to new uses.”⁸⁰⁷ He argues that the *περὶ ἡμῶν* in Isa 53:4 is the source for Paul's understanding of Christ's death *ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν* – the preference to substitute *περὶ* by *ὑπὲρ* emphasising “its vicarious connotations” – (Rom 8:32; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 3:13) and its variants (*ὑπὲρ ἁσεβῶν* Rom 5:6; *ὑπὲρ οὗ* Rom 14:15; *ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν* 1 Cor 11:24; *ὑπὲρ πάντων* 2 Cor 5:14; *ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ* Gal 2:20).⁸⁰⁸ Watson is clear that “without this text [Isa 53], there would be no basis for the claim that what took place in Christ's death took place ‘for us’.”⁸⁰⁹ Thus, the evidence suggests for Watson that “Isaiah 53 was foundational for Paul's thinking and language about the death of Christ, and its foundational status is evident from the traditional terminology derived from it.”⁸¹⁰

Building on Watson's analysis about the general dependence of Paul's language about Christ on Isa 53, I focus here on how the connection between Christ and the Isaianic servant is present in Gal 4:21-5:1. My argument is based on conceptual connections and the corresponding logic between the connection from the servant in Isa 53 to the vision of restoration in 54:1 and from Paul's conception of the liberating work of Christ (Gal 5:1) to the generation of the children of the mother “Jerusalem above”

805 Ibid., 233. He also discusses the debate whether Paul's citations, allusions or use of language “retain links with their original scriptural contexts, or whether they are wholly integrated into their new contexts” (Ibid., 234). After careful analysis, Watson concludes that “it is hard to maintain that Paul's citations sever links with the original scriptural context” (Ibid., 240). Watson substantiates his claim by observing that Paul cites five verses of the twelve verses between Isa 52:5 and 53:1 (52:5, 7, 11, 15; 53:1); on one occasion, two of these are cited together (Rom 10:15-16 cites Isa 52:7 and 53:1); on another occasion (Rom 15:21), the use of the Isa 52:15 is “clearly derived from its original context;” in addition, “[t]here are thematic unities in Paul's readings of these texts and of Isa 54:1” (Ibid.).

806 Watson, “Mistranslation,” 239–241.

807 Ibid., 234.

808 Ibid., 242–243.

809 Ibid., 243.

810 Ibid., 248, footnote 65. Watson's conclusion challenges the influential work of Morna Hooker who concluded that “we found little evidence that the identification of Jesus with the Servant played any great part in the thinking of St Paul, ..., and no proof that it was known to them at all” (*Jesus and the Servant: The Influence of the Servant Concept of Deutero-Isaiah in the New Testament* [London: SPCK, 1959], 127). Hooker's analysis included a section titled “Various words echoing the vocabulary of the fourth Song” (Ibid., 121–123), but was limited in scope (it looked only at *παραδίωμι, οἱ πολλοί, δίκαιός*) and lacked the thorough and sweeping analysis exemplified by Watson.

(4:26).⁸¹¹ I have argued that the servant's work in Isa 53 enables the generation of the children of the barren-made-fruitful woman of Isa 54:1 (see 4.2; 4.3.5). In Galatians, it is the freedom that Christ delivers that is the foundation for the freedom of the mother “Jerusalem above” that denotes the restoration community according to the quotation of Isa 54:1 in Gal 4:27. In Isaiah, the servant deals with the sins of the people to restore them – to heal and bring them back to God (53:5-6). The *many* whose sins the servant bears to make them righteous (53:10-12) turn out to be the *many* children of the barren-made-fruitful-woman of Isa 54:1. This represents a deep level of theological reflection in Isaiah, in which the servant deals with the root of the problem of alienation – sin – to bring about restoration. Similarly, Paul describes the work of Christ in Galatians in terms of him dealing with sin (1:4), delivering from curse (3:13), and transforming slaves into “sons” and heirs (4:4-7). In Gal 5:1, the freedom to which Christ sets free retains a connection to all of these aspects, yet in 5:1 the specific focus is on the freedom that Christ offers in contrast to the “yoke of slavery” that the Law is implicated in.⁸¹² I claim that the Isaianic matrix, and especially the alienation-restoration paradigm, aids in capturing the logic that underlies this statement.

I summarise here my discussion from chapter four about the roles of the servant and the Law in the alienation-restoration paradigm in Isaiah (see 4.3.5). In the Isaianic matrix, the role of the servant is to deliver the blind and captive servant Israel (41-44; 49; 53) so that she can become who she is called to be, a light to the nations (ch. 42). Thus, it is another servant who sets the captive servant Israel free. This deliverance is not depicted as God's response to a Law-observant people, but it is dependent on the response of Israel and the nations to the revelation of God's salvation via the servant (53:1). The Law is not the hope of deliverance and restoration, which is an act of God's

⁸¹¹ Horbury looks at the Targum of Isaiah and later Christian authors (e.g. Justin Martyr) who link Isa 53 and 54 and argues that “the two chapters are likely to have been read in sequence by Paul, who would then naturally understand 54 as a messianic city of restoration” (*Messianism*, 221). The importance of this connection for Paul has been perceived also by others: e.g. Harmon, *She Must*, 156–160; Jobes, “Jerusalem, Our Mother,” 312–313; Wright, *PFQ*, 1137–1138. Hays is unnecessarily cautious at this point asking only in a note: “... is the Suffering Servant figure – who 'opened not his mouth' – to be seen standing silently behind the text [Paul's citation of Isa 54:1 in Gal 4:27]?” (*Echoes*, 120, note 92).

⁸¹² The “yoke of slavery” is mostly understood in reference to the Law (possibly subverting an existing positive idiom about the “yoke of the Law”) (Bruce, *Galatians*, 226–227; de Boer, *Galatians*, 309; Dunn, *Galatians*, 262–263). However, due to the word “again” in 5:1b with reference to the Galatians' experience, the Law is placed to a wider field of slavery. Thus, Longenecker (*Galatians*, 224–225) and Moo (*Galatians*, 320–321) include here τὰ στοιχέια τοῦ κόσμου. Betz extends the “yoke of slavery” to include both “taking up the yoke of the Jewish Torah (5:2-12) and the corruption by the flesh (5:13-24)” (*Galatians*, 258). I prefer to use the expression “the Law is implicated in the conditions of slavery” to highlight that the Law is not the cause of slavery as such, but is itself bound by the condition of humanity (and cosmos) that is under sin (3:22). See 6.4.

mercy (54:7-10) in the extension of the “arm” of salvation (52:10; 53:1) to undeserving people (63:19; 65:1). Hence, the Law is not a liberating agent but a cursing element (exile) due to the people's sin (blindness and obduracy). The problem is sin not the Law, but the Law cannot help the blind and captive people. It is only the servant who brings deliverance from sin and bondage to regenerate the people of God.

Paul expresses a similar understanding about the role that the Law plays in the plight of Israel's alienation, and its inability to offer the hope of restoration, which is then ascribed to the work of the servant. In Gal 3:6-14, Paul constructs the role of the Law in contrast to the blessing promised to Abraham. The Law is described as a cursing agent (3:10; the Law brings curse on those who do not *do* all the Law; cf. 5:3),⁸¹³ and Christ as the one who redeemed Israel (“us”) from the curse of the Law (3:13)⁸¹⁴ to

813 The logic in 3:10 is difficult and debated; how does the Law procure curse on those who are ἐξ ἔργων νόμου? (see Moo, *Galatians*, 201–205). To simplify, a traditional Reformation reading takes the ἐξ ἔργων νόμου with the general reference to performing the commands of the Law, and constructs the logic either in terms of the whole mode of *doing* being antithetical to the way of faith in attaining righteousness (cf. 3:10b-12) (e.g. Bruce, *Galatians*, 159–161; Luther, *Galatians*, 244–247), or with the implied idea that no one actually does/can do *everything* in the Law (cf. 5:3) that amounts to a violation of the Law (e.g. Burton, *Galatians*, 164; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 117–118; Oepke, *an die Galater*, 105). The NPP reading (Dunn) takes the ἐξ ἔργων νόμου here as a reference to those who put “too much weight on the distinctiveness of the Jews from Gentiles” and the problem being that the “restrictiveness of covenant grace” is in some sense “being false to the covenant” that amounts to putting oneself outside of the terms of the covenant, and thus under its curse (*Galatians*, 172–173). Wright emphasises here Israel's story and the curse being on Israel as a whole rather than on individual transgressors, and that it takes the form of Israel's extended exile (*Climax*, 144–148; *PFG*, 863–867). See also James Scott's detailed article on the scriptural matrix (especially Deut 27-32 and Dan 9) and the Jewish tradition framing the curse in terms of an “extended exile” that is only resolved by God's final intervention, i.e. restoration (“‘For as Many as are of Works of the Law are under a Curse’ [Galatians 3.10],” in *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel* [1993]). I agree with Wright and Scott that Israel's story, which includes the exile, is the correct starting point here, but also embrace something of the traditional reading that takes better account of the contrast Paul sets here between doing and faith (cf. 3:11-12). These are connected to Paul's flesh-Spirit antithesis (3:1-5; 4:29), and to the Ishmael-Isaac alternatives in constructing the identity of God's people (4:22-31). Hence, I perceive that Paul's deeper logic is about faith as dependence on the promise – now enacted in Christ and the Spirit – being the only mode of existence that leads to the inheritance of restoration (righteousness): “God's eschatological act of salvation is to be the foundation, origin and goal of all human living and acting” (Watson, *PHF*, 149). Relying on the “flesh,” or *doing* the Law, is thus about false confidence/boasting in natural/normal conventions of worth/status rather than depending on the gift of God in Christ (cf. Gal 6:12-14; Phil 3:3-9).

814 As with 3:10, so also here with 3:13 opinion is divided concerning what is the *curse* that Christ redeems from by becoming a *curse* for “us”/on “our” behalf. Luther's focus is on sin and judgement on it: “For we are sinners and thieves, and therefore guilty of death and everlasting damnation. But Christ took all our sins upon him, and for them died upon the cross... .” (*Galatians*, 269.) Longenecker follows Luther and takes this as “an exchange curse” in terms of the Law's punishment on transgressors (*Galatians*, 123). Dunn moves away from the category of sin, and frames the exchange in terms of exclusion and inclusion in the people of God: “To affirm that the crucified Jesus was cursed by God, therefore, was tantamount to saying that he had been put outside of the covenant, outside the people of God. Which also meant (this is the implicit corollary) that God's resurrection of Jesus signified God's acceptance of the ‘outsider’, the cursed law-breaker, the Gentile sinner.” (*Galatians*, 178.) For Wright, Christ crucified is the climactic event that deals with the curse of the exile: “The crucifixion of the Messiah is, one might say, the *quintessence* of the curse of exile, and its climactic act” (*Climax*, 151, emphasis original; see also *PFG*, 865–867). Again, I agree that the matrix here is Israel's story and even the paradigm of exile, but maintain that the traditional reading of Christ's death being an atoning sacrifice

enable the blessing to reach also the Gentiles via the gift of the Spirit that marks the reformed people of God (3:14; see 6.3.2-3). As Wright and Scott have argued, the logic here fits the pattern of sin-exile-restoration, in which Christ has the crucial role of dealing with the curse of “exile” and inaugurating the restoration.⁸¹⁵ However, I am not convinced of the necessity to construct Paul's logic with the prior sense of an ongoing/extended exile that Christ comes to resolve, but I rather emphasise that the exile functions as a theological matrix that Paul reflects upon in light of the Christ-event. I maintain that what is more important to Paul is the theological interpretation of Israel's experience of exile (by Isaiah and others) that transposes it to a symbolic level,⁸¹⁶ in which it becomes a paradigm for addressing the deeper problem with Israel and humanity that is about sin, slavery and death – alienation from God (see 5.5).

Accordingly, Paul never speaks of exile as such in Galatians, but uses categories that can be taken as reflections on the theological interpretation of it: barrenness (4:27), curse (3:10), sin (1:4), slavery (4:1-10), and death with reference to Christ (1:1-4). With this position I attempt to avoid the two extremes: the emphasis on an *ongoing/extended* exile, at one end of the spectrum, and, at the other end, the apocalyptic emphasis that perceives *no real role* for Israel's story by suggesting that Paul's categories of curse and blessing constitute the “apocalyptic antinomy that *came into being* with Christ.”⁸¹⁷

The contrasting role of the Law to the promise is further developed in Gal 3:21-4:7. The Law is not opposed to the promise, but simply lacks the generative power of the promise; it cannot make alive or lead into righteousness (3:21).⁸¹⁸ Thus, Paul perceives that the Law functioned as a custodian with temporal and “soteriological” limitations until the revelation of faith (3:23-25), that is, until the promise was enacted in the coming of Christ that evokes the response of faith that leads into righteousness (3:22, 24) – Christ generates the “sons of God” who participate (ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ) by

on account of sin can also be read from that matrix where sin is exposed in Israel's story in relation to the Law, which, by extension, also reflects the general human condition in sin (Gal 1:4; 3:22).

815 Scott, “For as Many as are”; Wright, *Climax*, 137–156; PFG 860–867.

816 Scott's quote from Peter R. Ackroyd (*Exile and Restoration: A Study of Hebrew Thought of the Sixth Century BC* [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969], 242) suggests that he recognises that the extended sense of exile moves it to a more symbolic level: “Here [Dan 9] the exile is no longer an historic event to be dated to one period; it is much nearer to being a condition from which only the final age will bring release. Though bound to the historical reality of an exile which actually took place in the sixth century, the experience of exile *as such* had become a symbol of a period, viewed in terms of punishment but also in terms of promise... ” (“For as Many as Are,” 200; emphasis original.)

817 De Boer, *Galatians*, 198, emphasis added.

818 For Paul, it is not enough that the Law prescribes provisions for atonement (as emphasised by Sanders and the RNPP), since the fundamental problem is not the removal of sins, but the transformation of the human condition by generating the new creation – Paul's gospel is about the re-creation of humanity that moves beyond the forgiveness of sins.

faith (διὰ τῆς πίστεως) in the restoration reality (3:26).⁸¹⁹ Paul explains the same process immediately afterwards in terms of deliverance from slavery into sonship and inheritance (4:1-7). Again, the Law is pictured as implicated under the conditions of slavery (4:1-5), and Christ is presented as the one who enacts the divine promise by redeeming those who were under the Law (Israel) with the implication that also the Gentiles have been included in the re-formed people of God who are the recipients of the Spirit, and heirs according to the pattern of the promise (4:4-7) (see 6.3.2-3).

Paul's logic moves partly from solution to plight, as it is the resurrected Christ who reveals the true state of affairs. Christ determines for Paul the beginning and the shape of the restoration community. It is being in Christ that makes alive and leads into the freedom of the "Jerusalem above." Thus, being outside of Christ means being outside of the inheritance of the restoration reality, and hence, being in alienation and in slavery. Due to the inability of the Law to lead into the inheritance of the "Jerusalem above," Paul designates a role for it that recognises its limitation. The Law is not the plight, sin is. But since the Law cannot bring freedom – deliver from the "present evil age" – it is seen as implicated in the condition of slavery rather than offering the solution. Hence, although the influence of the Isaianic matrix is not made explicit in Galatians 3:6-14; 21-24; and 4:1-7 that configure the role of the Law and Christ similarly to the alienation-restoration paradigm in Isaiah, it is possible that the Isaianic matrix functions on the level of a substructure that surfaces in Gal 4:21-5:1.⁸²⁰

In the next section (6.6) I explore Paul's identification with Christ as the Isaianic servant and its impact on Paul's mission. This gives further support for the perception of the influence of the Isaianic servant on Paul's conception of the work of Christ.⁸²¹

⁸¹⁹ Gal 3:22-26 is a famously difficult passage for understanding the relationship between faith and Christ. This passage is also a focal point for a "third view" on the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate, which suggests that, rather than limiting the discussion to Christ being either the subject or the object of faith, both faith and Christ ("Christ-faith") are to be connected to an eschatological event that creates a new sphere of influence in which the believer in Christ participates (see Benjamin Schliesser, "Christ-Faith' as an Eschatological Event (Galatians 3.23-26): A 'Third View' on Πίστις Χριστοῦ," *JSNT* 38 (2016): 277–300). This view focuses on the time references in 3:23-26 ("coming" and "being revealed") that correspond with the arrival of the fullness of time and the sending of the Son in 4:4. This feeds into my own reading that emphasises Christ as the "actor" in the narrative of divine promise (rather than the narrative of πίστις, *pace* Hays), and I take faith as the human response to that divine act/event. I understand that Paul's point in Galatians is about faith being the mode that connects us to the divine performance of the promise. Thus, just like Abraham responded with faith to the divine promise (3:6), so also now the divine performance of the promise in Christ calls for a similar response of faith (3:7-9, 22).

⁸²⁰ Cf. the elaborate, but at times stretched, argument of Harmon, *She Must*, 133–203. My presentation of Paul's argument and the correspondence it has with the logic of the alienation-restoration paradigm in Isaiah is limited, and it is by no means exclusive of the influence of the pentateuch (see Watson and Wright). Yet the pentateuchal influence is not sufficient in explaining some aspects in the logic, e.g. the role of the Spirit and Christ.

⁸²¹ There is also the possibility that the association of the servant and covenant in Isaiah (42:6 and

6.6 Paul's Labour Pains and the Formation of the Restoration Community

I have argued above that Paul's re-proclamation of the gospel in Galatians is driven by the vision of the re-creation of humanity as it stems from the Abrahamic promise of blessing and Isaiah's vision of restoration that has been inaugurated by the generative activity of God in Christ and the Spirit. I have also demonstrated that Paul configures the work of Christ in terms of the Isaianic servant who generates the restoration community envisioned in Isa 54:1. I now explore how Paul identifies with the work of Christ, and how it shapes his mission, as I ask: what is Paul in labour pains for (4:19)?

I have argued in my structural analysis (see 2.1) that Gal 4:19-20 signal Paul's burden for writing the letter, which leads directly into 4:21-5:1 making it a passage that carries much weight in focusing Paul's communication. In 4:19, Paul speaks to the Galatians as his children for whom he is again in labour pains until Christ is formed in/among them (τέκνα μου, οὐς πάλιν ᾠδίνω μέχρις οὗ μορφωθῆ Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν). As Martyn, Eastman and Gaventa have rightly argued, the language of labour is connected to Paul's mission and to an apocalyptic vision.⁸²² I develop their insights further, as I explore the potential in the scriptural matrix that Paul works with when he expresses his mission, especially in relation to Jesus as the Isaianic servant.

Paul's labour pains for his children in Gal 4:19 anticipates the Isaianic image of the barren-woman in 4:27 who has not had labour pains prior to giving birth to the many children (ῥῆξον καὶ βόησον, ἢ οὐκ ᾠδίνουσα· ὅτι πολλὰ τὰ τέκνα ...).⁸²³ Whether the woman experiences labour pains in giving birth to the many children or not is not known, but what is emphasised is the miraculous nature of her giving of birth; it is about divine generation that defies natural order (cf. Isa 66:7-9). In fact, underlying the barren woman's giving of birth are the divine labour pains (Isa 42:14 ἐκαρτέρησα ὡς ἡ τίκτουσα; cf. 45:10)⁸²⁴ that are ultimately expressed in the suffering of the servant in Isa 53 (see 4.3.2 and 4.3.5). The point is that the restoration children in Isa 54:1 are generated by divine action, in which the servant in Isa 53 has the defining role. As we

49:8) could be part of the matrix for connecting Christ with the idea of a covenant.

⁸²² Beverly R. Gaventa, "The Maternity of Paul: An Exegetical Study of Galatians 4:19," in *The Conversation Continues: Studies in Paul & John, In Honor of J. Louis Martyn*, ed. Robert T. Fortna and Beverly Roberts Gaventa (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990); Beverly R. Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 29–39; Martyn, *Galatians*, 426–431; Eastman, *Recovering*, 89–126.

⁸²³ Eastman works also with this connection, but emphasises the difference between Paul's labour pains and the barren woman of Isa 54:1 not having pains (*Recovering*, 155–160).

⁸²⁴ Cf. Harmon, *She Must*, 168–173. Harmon focuses here on Isa 45:7-11.

follow this line of inquiry further in Galatians, it becomes more plausible that Paul conceives his own mission in terms of identifying with the mission of the Isaianic servant who acts out the divine labour pains that generate the restoration community.

Paul's identification with Christ the Isaianic servant does not begin by his own initiative. It is God's sovereign pleasure to reveal the Son to Paul, which reshapes Paul's own identity and his sense of mission (1:15-16).⁸²⁵ The language Paul uses about the calling that issued from the revelatory experience reflects the language of the servant in Isa 49,⁸²⁶ which is a passage that prepares the move towards Isa 53 where the portrait of the servant who serves Israel and the nations is developed further (see 4.3.5). Paul's description of being set apart from the mother's womb and being called by grace (Gal 1:15 ὁ ἀφορίσας με ἐκ κοιλίας μητρός καὶ καλέσας διὰ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ), can reflect Israel's (as the initial servant) recognition of being given a name from the mother's womb (Isa 49:1 ἐκ κοιλίας μητρός μου ἐκάλεσε τὸ ὄνομά μου), but more likely it refers to the other servant's (distinct yet related to Israel; i.e. a messianic servant figure) formation from the womb to be the servant of the Lord for the purpose of gathering Israel and being a light to the nations, to bring salvation to the ends of the earth (Isa 49:5 ὁ πλάσας με ἐκ κοιλίας δούλον ἑαυτῷ τοῦ συναγαγεῖν τὸν Ιακωβ καὶ Ἰσραηλ πρὸς αὐτόν; 49:6 ἰδοὺ τέθεικά σε εἰς φῶς ἐθνῶν τοῦ εἶναί σε εἰς σωτηρίαν ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς; cf. Acts 13:47). The influence of the description of the servant in Isa 49 on Paul's conception of his mission is supported also by the sense of a shared purpose in both to glorify God (Gal 1:24 καὶ ἐδόξαζον ἐν ἐμοὶ τὸν θεόν; cf. Isa 49:3 καὶ ἐν σοὶ δοξασθήσομαι), and the shared experience of frustration in the task of the servant (Gal 4:11 φοβοῦμαι ὑμᾶς μὴ πως εἰκῆ κεκοπίακα εἰς ὑμᾶς; cf. Isa 49:4 καὶ ἐγὼ εἶπα Κενῶς ἐκοπίασα καὶ εἰς μάταιον καὶ εἰς οὐθὲν ἔδωκα τὴν ἰσχύν μου). Furthermore, both the servant's and Paul's missions are set in the context of

⁸²⁵ The modern discussion whether to describe Paul's experience of the revelation of the Son in Gal 1:15-16 as his conversion or calling was initiated by Stendahl's essay: "Call Rather than Conversion", in *Paul among Jews and Gentiles*. If by conversion we mean a change of religion, i.e. from Judaism to Christianity, it, to be sure, is not an apt description. It certainly is more about a predetermined calling that is now put into effect: to proclaim the gospel of the Son of God among the Gentiles (1:16). But it issues more than a calling. Something happens also to Paul's own identity: "... in seinem Inneren eine grundstürzende Umwälzung hervorrief" (Oepke, *an die Galater*, 61). See also Stephen J. Chester's discussion on Paul's use of καλέω with reference to "conversion," or "the new role/identity created by that calling" (*Conversion at Corinth: Perspectives on Conversion in Paul's Theology and the Corinthian Church* [London; New York: T&T Clark, 2005], 59–112, quotation from pg. 61).

⁸²⁶ This has been noted by many, e.g. Roy E. Ciampa, *The Presence and Function of Scripture in Galatians 1 and 2*, WUNT 102 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 111–118; Harmon, *She Must*, 78–80; Wilk, *Die Bedeutung*, 397–398. It is also suggested that the language here might also echo Jeremiah's call (Jer 1:5), but, due to the prominence of the Isaianic matrix, and the rather negative tone in Jeremiah's "mission" (Jer 1:10), I think that the Isaianic matrix is primary (cf. de Boer, *Galatians*, 90–91).

the vision of restoration that is expressed with the language of generating children for a mother (Isa 49:21 καὶ ἐρεῖς ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου Τίς ἐγέννησέ μοι τούτους; ἐγὼ δὲ ἄτεκνος καὶ χήρα; Isa 49:14-23; Gal 4:19, 27), which is intimately related to Isa 54:1-3. These verbal, conceptual and thematic correspondences make it very likely that Paul's sense of mission was shaped by the servant's task described in Isa 49. Furthermore, the development in the description of the servant's mission from Isa 49 to Isa 53 is also reflected in Paul's identification with Christ and his representation of the gospel.

Paul's emphasis on receiving the gospel by revelation (1:15-16) already reflects the conception of his mission in terms of identifying with the Isaianic servant in Isa 53 – the “arm of the Lord” who is made known by revelation (53:1). This identification with Christ as the Isaianic servant becomes more prominent as we follow Paul's presentation of his own transformation of identity and the shape of his gospel mission. In the climax of Paul's speech in Gal 2, Paul explains how his response of faith to the revelation of the Son has made him a “new creation” – “it is no longer I who live but Christ in me” (2:20a).⁸²⁷ He no longer seeks righteousness from the Law, in fact, he has died to the Law in order to live to God (2:16-19).⁸²⁸ He has experienced his own “Isaac moment,” in which he has been stripped from his trust in his advances in Judaism (1:13-14),⁸²⁹ that is, from all his previous tokens of status and worth – living *out of* the flesh (Ishmael) – to now, while still living *in* his Jewish body,⁸³⁰ living *out of* dependence on God: “the life I now live in the flesh, I live in faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me” (2:20b; cf. 2:16). The Son of God, who as the Isaianic servant had given himself up on the cross due to “our” sin – Paul included – to bring deliverance from the “present evil age” (1:4), and redemption from the curse of the Law (3:13), has become the defining centre in Paul's identity. Thus, the revelation of the Son has transformed Paul's identity to the extent that he not only proclaims the gospel with

⁸²⁷ Barclay discusses this as the “reconstitution of the self,” and explores how Paul's narration of his own transformation functions paradigmatically in the letter (“Paul's Story: Theology as Testimony,” in *Narrative Dynamics in Paul*, 142–144).

⁸²⁸ Betz proposes that in 2:19-20 Paul sets forth “the basic elements of his own theological position” in the form of the thesis that he will develop in the letter (*Galatians*, 121–126). Commentators generally agree that the concise statements that Paul makes in the first person in Gal 2:19-20 anticipate their fuller treatment in the letter, and thus their meaning is derived in relation to our reading of those (e.g. Longenecker, *Galatians*, 91; Moo, *Galatians*, 167–172). This is also my approach.

⁸²⁹ On Paul's advances in Judaism, see Ciampa, *The Presence*, 106–111; de Boer, *Galatians*, 84–89.

⁸³⁰ Commentators usually take the σάρξ in 2:20b as a general reference to bodily existence (e.g. Burton, *Galatians*, 138; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 93; Moo, *Galatians*, 171). I perceive that Paul alludes back to where he started in 2:15-16 (note the πᾶσα σάρξ at the end of v. 16), now highlighting that his construction of self and the world has changed so that, while he still lives in his Jewish flesh, he depends on Christ rather than any other token of status or worth (cf. Phil 3:3-9) (cf. Dunn, *Galatians*, 146).

words, but also embodies it. The revelation of the Son *to* Paul results in the revelation of the Son *in* Paul (1:16 ἀποκαλύψαι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν ἐμοί).⁸³¹

As Paul reminds the Galatians of their initial reception of the gospel, he reminds them of Christ being portrayed before their eyes as crucified (3:1 οἷς κατ' ὀφθαλμοὺς Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς προεγράφη ἐσταυρωμένος). The portrait of Christ crucified is on one level evoked by Paul's proclamation of Christ crucified.⁸³² But it is possible that the crucified Christ was also made visible in Paul's bodily presence. Paul came to the Galatians due to bodily weakness,⁸³³ and yet they received him as Christ Jesus (4:13-14): “[t]he enfeebled Paul was, for them, a representative, even a personification, of the crucified Christ whom he placarded (3:1).”⁸³⁴ Paul's own suffering in the ministry of the gospel had marked him as the servant (“slave”) of Christ (6:17 ἐγὼ γὰρ τὰ στίγματα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματί μου βαστάζω).⁸³⁵ Thus, the Galatians' reception of Paul reflected their reception of the gospel of the suffering servant – Christ crucified.

In referring to their reception of the message that Paul represented, which delivered the promise of the Spirit, Paul uses the peculiar expression ἀκοὴ πίστεως twice (3:2 ἐξ ἔργων νόμου τὸ πνεῦμα ἐλάβετε ἢ ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως; 3:5 ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἢ ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως).⁸³⁶ This expression resonates with the question in Isa 53:1, which has to do with believing the message that is about the revelation of the “arm of the Lord” who is the suffering servant of Isa 53 (τίς ἐπίστευσε τῇ ἀκοῇ ἡμῶν; καὶ ὁ βραχίον κυρίου τίνοι ἀπεκαλύφθη;).⁸³⁷ We know from Paul's quotation of Isa 53:1 in Rom 10:16 that this text is important for Paul in explaining the necessity of the response of faith to the gospel. In Rom 10:16-17 (Ἄλλ' οὐ πάντες ὑπήκουσαν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ.

831 The Greek expression ἐν ἐμοί can be taken with the sense *to me*, *in me*, or *by/through me* (see de Boer, *Galatians*, 92). I take the potential here to indicate a movement, in which the Son is first revealed *to* Paul, and then the Son is also revealed *in* Paul. Some resist the translation *in me* because they sense in it some form of a mystical experience, i.e. subjective revelation (e.g. Ibid.; Mußner, *Der Galaterbrief*, 86–87). This is unnecessary, since it can also indicate that Paul comes to embody the gospel.

832 Cf. Longenecker, *Galatians*, 100–101; Moo, *Galatians*, 181–182; Rohde, *an die Galater*, 129.

833 For δι' ἀσθένειαν indicating reason, see Schlier, *an die Galater*, 210.

834 Barclay, “Paul's Story,” 145. There is much speculation about the nature of Paul's ἀσθένεια τῆς σαρκός (cf. 2 Cor 12:7) (see discussions in Burton, *Galatians*, 238–239; Eastman, *Recovering*, 100–108). Some perceive a reference to physical sickness (Schlier, *an die Galater*, 210–211; Dunn [*Galatians*, 233–236] and Moo [*Galatians*, 282–286] see it as some kind of eye problem; cf. 4:14–15), whereas Eastman has argued a strong case for taking it as a reference to Paul's suffering that had left its marks on Paul (cf. 6:17). I agree with Eastman, as her view fits best with Paul's emphasis on his condition somehow representing Christ (4:14; cf. 3:1), and the marks of Jesus on his body in 6:17.

835 Schlier points out that τὰ στίγματα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ signifies Paul's identification as a “slave” of Christ, and refers to his suffering (*an die Galater*, 284–285; similarly Rohde, *an die Galater*, 279–280).

836 For discussion on the various possibilities to interpret Paul's use of ἀκοὴ πίστεως see de Boer, *Galatians*, 173–177; Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, 124–132; and Sam K. Williams, “The Hearing of Faith: ΑΚΟΗ ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ in Galatians 3,” *NTS* 35 (1989): 82–93.

837 Cf. Jobes, “Jerusalem, Our Mother,” 312–313; Harmon, *She Must*, 129–130.

Ἡσαΐας γὰρ λέγει κύριε, τίς ἐπίστευσεν τῇ ἀκοῇ ἡμῶν; ἄρα ἡ πίστις ἐξ ἀκοῆς, ἡ δὲ ἀκοή διὰ ῥήματος Χριστοῦ), Paul connects ἀκοή initially to the message he proclaims about Christ (passive sense), but also, as Harmon astutely observes, to the active sense of hearing the message of Christ that evokes believing (cf. Rom 10:14).⁸³⁸ Hence, the definition of ἀκοή πίστεως in Gal 3:2 and 5 is best given in light of the text it most likely refers to, Isa 53:1, and Paul's application of it elsewhere. This gives it the sense: “the hearing of the message that you believed,” that points ultimately to Christ as the object of faith, but retains its focus on the active sense of hearing and believing the gospel (cf. Abraham's faith in 3:6, and the contrast between works and faith in 3:10-12).

The conceptual and thematic correspondence between Gal 3:1-5 and Isa 53 further supports my argument that the Isaianic servant informs Paul's understanding of his mission as a representation of the work of Christ. Paul represents in his mission the revelation of the Son as the Isaianic servant, and the Galatians' reception of Paul and their faith in his message about Christ (cf. 3:22-26) has led them into the inheritance of restoration by the generative power of the Spirit. Thus, Paul's labour pains are about participating in the work of God in Christ and the Spirit, so that the promise carried in the proclamation of the gospel can perform what God is after.

Paul is *again* in labour pains (4:19) because of the danger that the distorted gospel would lead the Galatians away from the generative and sustaining power of the promise – the grace of Christ (5:2-4). As Paul embodied the gospel in his initial visit among the Galatians, so also now with the letter that he writes his own narrative embodies the message he desires to communicate to the Galatians – the Galatians are to become like Paul (4:12).⁸³⁹ Paul's own transformation of identity from one that was afforded to him by the Law to become a person who depends on Christ is part of the antidote to curb the Galatians' desire to come under the Law. If Paul had needed to be made alive by dying to the Law of Moses (νόμος) by the revelation of Christ (νόμος) (2:19 ἐγὼ γὰρ διὰ νόμου νόμῳ ἀπέθανον, ἵνα θεῷ ζήσω. Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι; cf. 6:14-15),⁸⁴⁰ how much more are the Galatians to reject their desire to come under the

⁸³⁸ Harmon, *She Must*, 131–132.

⁸³⁹ Cf. Barclay, “Paul's Story,” 145.

⁸⁴⁰ Betz identifies 2:19a as an *crux interpretum* due to its abbreviated form that must be decoded (*Galatians*, 122). Moo identifies that especially difficult is the expression “through the law” (*Galatians*, 169). Commentators look for help from the rest of the letter (e.g. Vouga understands it in light of 3:13 [*An die Galater*, 61]), or other letters (especially Rom 6-7), but I know only of Augustine to have recognised the similar tension set within the concept of the law (law “against” Law) in 4:21, but having utilised the potential rather differently to how I perceive it: “through the same law, understood spiritually, they might die to carnal observances of the law” (Augustine in Eric Antone Plumer, *Augustine's Commentary on Galatians* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003], 149). The last line Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι supports

Sinaitic Law by embracing fully the revelation of Christ (4:21, see 5.2) and allow it to define the people of God. The transformation of identity and the recalibration of the law by Christ results in a new conception of community – the re-created humanity.

Christ had found form in Paul (2:19-20), and now Paul was in labour pains that Christ would also find *form* among the Galatians (4:19). The Galatians have been set free by Christ (5:1); they have been generated into the restoration reality of the “Jerusalem above” community (4:26-27). Now they are to learn to live out from their “new creation” identity in the freedom of the restored people of God (5:13). The theological vision of restoration must be translated into social practice.⁸⁴¹ Paul (and the Jerusalem church leaders; 2:3) had endured “labour pains” in his defence for the appropriate social practice that aligns with the new reality – the “truth of the Gospel” – in Jerusalem with the challenge of the “false brothers” who pressed the case for Gentile (Titus) circumcision (2:3-5), which Paul interpreted as an attempt to “enslave” those who lived in the “freedom in Christ” (2:4 διὰ δὲ τοὺς παρεισάκτους ψευδαδέλφους, οἵτινες παρεισήλθον κατασκοπήσαι τὴν ἐλευθερίαν ἡμῶν ἣν ἔχομεν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ἵνα ἡμᾶς καταδουλώσουσιν). He had also taken a stand for embracing the full implications of the “truth of the gospel” in Antioch against the “hypocrisy” of Peter, Barnabas and other Jews whose actions (separating from table fellowship) implicitly compelled the Gentiles to Judaize in order to be fully counted in the fellowship of the people of God (2:11-14). Now the Galatians must also align their social practice with the reality of life as the re-created humanity. Circumcision or uncircumcision are not to receive the weight they do in the way the cosmos is conceived and community constructed outside of the reality of restoration – outside the revelation of Christ (5:6; 6:14-16). What determines the identity of the restoration community is “new creation” (6:15), and what guides the new community is faith expressed in love (5:6), according to the pattern of Christ who gave himself up to the cross for the sake of the other in love (2:20). The Galatians have been generated by faith in what Paul represents: Christ the Isaianic servant who was crucified. Now the Galatians need to reflect the character of

my reading that the law by which Paul has died to the Law of Moses refers to the revelation of Christ, by which Paul's identity is remade, his hermeneutic is recalibrated, and the cosmos is reordered.

841 Cf. Barclay: “Social practice is, for Paul, the necessary expression of the Christ-gift, and it will now become clear that non-competitive communities, ordered by a new calibration of worth, realize and help define the Christ-event as an unconditioned gift. ‘The truth of the good news’ (2:14) is ineffective unless it ‘takes place’ within communities whose behavior instantiates its novelty. Galatians 5:13-6:10 seems designed both to describe and to encourage that social expression of the good news.” (*Gift*, 425.) Also Vouga: “Die vorausgesetzte Implikation ist, daß sich die Freiheit in einem Verhalten, das durch den Geist bestimmt ist, in der gegenseitigen Liebe aktualisiert” (*An die Galater*, 127).

Christ the servant in their communities. They are to become a community of servants who serve one another in love (5:13 διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης δουλεύετε ἀλλήλοις). This vision is thoroughly Isaianic in its shape. In Isaiah, the servant generates the restoration community that is described as the community of servants (Isa 54:17; see 4.3.5).

As Paul identified with the cross of Christ (2:19 Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι), so also are the Galatians to construct their identity and life in community from the cross of Christ (5:24 οἱ δὲ τοῦ Χριστοῦ [Ἰησοῦ] τὴν σάρκα ἐσταύρωσαν σὺν τοῖς παθήμασιν καὶ ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις). Christ's cross and resurrection has generated them into the life in the Spirit; the Galatians have received the Spirit by faith in Christ (3:1-5). Thus, Paul calls the Galatians to finish as they have begun. They have been divinely generated, and now they need to learn to live in ongoing dependence on divine sufficiency – “as you have life in the Spirit, so also live in line with the Spirit” (5:25). The exhortation to align with the Spirit is a call to live in line with the vision and reality of restoration that is antithetical to living according to the “flesh.”⁸⁴² Identity and life that is patterned according to “Ishmael” belongs to the sphere of the flesh, and it can be expressed even in the righteous zeal, or in the boasting about status and human potential that doing the Law affords to both the Jew and the Judaizing Gentile (1:13-14; 2:15; 6:12-13; cf. Phil 3:3-6). This is not the purpose of the Law, but an expression of its weakness to deal with the condition of humanity whose claim even for righteousness and Law observance can be corrupted by sin (cf. Isa 58). Thus, flesh is a complex category that describes the sphere of existence that is under the corruption of sin, and does not align with the vision of the re-created humanity (5:19-21) – flesh is the condition of alienated humanity living in an old cosmos. Life in the Spirit is the realm of existence for the re-created humanity – the restoration people – that is antithetical to the flesh, but not in opposition with the intention of the Law (5:23 κατὰ τῶν τοιούτων οὐκ ἔστιν νόμος). Yet it is beyond the reach, or regulatory sphere, of the Mosaic Law

842 For general discussion on the challenges in defining Paul's use of the term “flesh,” see Barclay, *Obeying*, 178–215. Paul's language that describes the flesh in personified ways (the desires of the flesh) leads Schlier to describe it as a personal power (*an die Galater*, 249). Martyn transposes this notion to the level of a cosmic battle: “This actor is not a mere component of the human being, a person's flesh as distinguished from his spirit. The flesh is rather a supra-human power, indeed an inimical, martial power seeking to establish a military base of operations in the Galatian churches, with the intention of destroying them as genuine communities” (*Galatians*, 483; similarly de Boer, *Galatians*, 335–339.) I find this misdirected (see the criticism in Barclay, *Gift*, 427), and take as my starting point Barclay's definition of “flesh” that describes it in terms of a sphere of existence: “Like 'the present evile age' (1:4), 'the flesh' represents the environment of all human agency untransformed by the Spirit – including life under the Torah, which was incapable of 'creating life' because of the power of sin (3:21-22)” (*Ibid.*, 426). I develop this by placing it within the framework of the restoration vision.

that cannot make alive – deliver the Spirit (5:18 εἰ δὲ πνεύματι ἄγεσθε, οὐκ ἐστὲ ὑπὸ νόμον).⁸⁴³ As Christ delivers people from the condition of bondage/alienation (5:1), he also delivers the Law from its enslavement to the condition of sinful humanity. When the Jew and Gentile are generated to be the children of the promise of restoration, they are called to live in love (5:13), which is a fulfilment of what the Law envisaged (5:14 ὁ γὰρ πᾶς νόμος ἐν ἐνὶ λόγῳ πεπλήρωται, ἐν τῷ ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν) that is now enabled by the Spirit (5:16, 22-23) and defined by Christ to be the way of life for the re-created humanity (6:2 Ἀλλήλων τὰ βάρη βαστάζετε καὶ οὕτως ἀναπληρώσετε τὸν νόμον τοῦ Χριστοῦ).⁸⁴⁴

6.7 Synthesis

I first present a sequential reading of Gal 4:21-5:1 that outlines the movement of the argument and highlights the key insights gained from my structural, hermeneutical, and intertextual analysis. I then synthesise the discussion from the above sections to configure Paul's theological vision and logic by the two contrastive generative lines.

6.7.1 Sequential Reading of Galatians 4:21-5:1

My structural analysis has demonstrated that Paul's thought in the central section of Gal 4:21-5:1 (vv. 24-28) is constructed in a chiastic fashion. The argument moves towards and out from the central pivotal point that is about the two Jerusalems. This centre exerts its influence on the allegorical construction of the passage, and guides the proper identification of the allegorical figures of the “slave woman” and the “free woman.” The

843 Cf. Oliver O'Donovan: “This, I take Paul to say of the virtues, 'is the kind of thing that lies beyond the scope of the law'” (“Flesh and Spirit,” in *Galatians and Christian Theology*, 282).

844 For discussion on the difficulties and options in interpreting 5:14 and 6:2 see Barclay, *Obeying*, 125–142. I hold that the νόμος in 5:14 refers to the Mosaic Law, which he immediately cites (Lev 19:18) (cf. Barclay; *pace* de Boer, *Galatians*, 344–345, for whom it refers to Scripture that contains Law and promises), and that Paul is making here the initial and limited point that the intention of the Law is fulfilled (“total realization and accomplishment of the law's demand” [Barclay, *Obeying*, 139]) in living out the one commandment to love (cf. Rom 13:8, 10) (cf. Rohde, *an die Galater*, 229–230). Paul goes on to develop the thought that this intention of the Law is fulfilled in the way of life that is now defined by Christ and empowered by the Spirit. Barclay makes the important observation that Paul is in 5:14 and 6:2 deliberately choosing a term ([ἀνα]πληρώω; contra 5:3) that makes the distinction that “Christians do not 'observe' the law” and yet “they 'fulfil' it through the one love-command and as it is redefined as the 'law of Christ'” that allows him simultaneously to “establish his point without wholly compromising his statements elsewhere...” (*Obeying*, 142; cf. de Boer, *Galatians*, 345).

chiastic structure also enables the identification of the two covenants as the covenant from Sinai and the covenant of promise, that is confirmed by Paul's treatment of these themes similarly elsewhere in the letter (especially 3:15-18). With these key structural insights in mind, I offer a sequential reading of Gal 4:21-5:1.

Paul's question in Gal 4:21 already indicates the strategy of the argument: "tell me, you who desire to be under the Law, do you not listen to the law?" The compulsion to align with the covenant from Sinai is to be rejected, because the Law must be recalibrated in the new intertextual revelatory field that has been extended by the revelation of Christ. Thus, in what follows, Paul reads the Abraham narrative together with Isaiah in line with the reality of the Christ-event to argue that coming under the Law is not the way to be included in the restoration people, but rather, that it is counterproductive to participation in the re-created humanity.

He first schematically summarises the Genesis narrative about the birth of Abraham's two sons from the "slave woman" and the "free woman" (4:22) with focus on the manner of their births – one is born according to flesh and the other by a promise (4:23). This presentation highlights the central themes that Paul will further develop: slavery-freedom and flesh-promise. Paul then explains that he treats the story of the birth of Abraham's two sons on an "allegorical" level, in which the story has a broader horizon of meaning that speaks about two different covenants (4:24). These two covenants become the governing framework of the argument.

The first covenant is clearly identified as the covenant from Sinai, which now corresponds with the realities associated with Hagar (4:24). The connection between Hagar and Sinai is established initially on a geographical level: both Hagar and Sinai meet in Arabia (4:25a). But, this surprising connection is designed to "startle," and lead into a quest for a deeper meaning. The primary link between Hagar and Sinai is the shared theme of slavery (4:24, 25b), and the deeper level of meaning in this connection is built on the scriptural matrix formed by the Abraham narrative and Isaiah. The potential of Hagar to represent Israel's life under the Law that leads to slavery draws partly from the narrative of Ishmael's birth. Genesis portrays Ishmael as an alternative construal of the identity of Israel, which focuses on natural human potential that conforms to the requirements of physical descent and circumcision in the identity of God's people. It also suggests that the oppression of Hagar/Ishmael prefigures Israel's slavery in Egypt, and that the configuration of Israel according to the pattern of Ishmael results in exclusion from the inheritance. Hagar represents the covenant of the Law also

in her status as the “slave woman” that corresponds with Paul's conception of the Law being “enslaved” – being limited in its ability to produce righteousness by the condition of sinful humanity (3:21-22). But this is only part of the matrix that underlies Paul's logic. The Isaianic vision of restoration that surfaces in the quotation of Isa 54:1 in Gal 4:27 makes its presence felt already in the correspondence that Paul makes with the Hagar-Sinai covenant and the “present Jerusalem,” which Paul perceives also to be in slavery with her children (4:25b). The term “present Jerusalem” stems from the Isaianic matrix of the “tale of two cities” that is re-appropriated by Paul to refer to the condition of alienation/slavery outside of the inheritance of the restoration reality inaugurated in the sending of the Son and the giving of the Spirit. Thus, already with the first covenantal line, Paul demonstrates how he argues against coming under the Law with a reading of the Genesis narrative together with Isaiah in light of the Christ-event.

Paul's hermeneutical strategy, logic and the theological vision that drives the argument are opened more fully in the moves that he makes next. Paul aligns himself and the Galatian believers with the mother “Jerusalem above” that is free (4:26). The “Jerusalem above” is their mother, because they are identified as the children of the barren-made-fruitful woman of Isa 54:1 (4:27). Both the “Jerusalem above” and the children of the barren-made-fruitful woman connect Paul's vision with the Isaianic vision of the restored, regenerated people of God. The vision of the regenerated people in Isa 54:1 is patterned on the birth of Isaac from the barren Sarah. Hence, the Galatian believers are also designated children of promise according to the pattern of Isaac's birth (4:28). This pattern emphasises divine generation as the essential feature in the identification of God's people. The promise refers both to the Abrahamic promise of blessing to the nations and its re-appropriation in the Isaianic vision as inclusion in the regenerated restoration people that is defined theologically rather than ethnically.

The Isaianic influence on the line of promise is also perceived in the following characterisation in the allegorical re-appropriation of Abraham's two sons who represent the tension that the Galatians' face. The Galatian believers are now represented by the “allegorical” Isaac who is described as having been generated by the Spirit (4:29) as an extension of the earlier category of promise (4:23). The Spirit is not an element in the Abraham narrative, but is an integral part of the Isaianic vision of the regeneration of the restoration people. Hence, Paul configures the gift of the Spirit, which the Galatians have received (3:2-5; 4:6), into the line of the promise with the help of the Isaianic vision of restoration.

The following exhortation to “cast out the slave woman and her child” (4:30) must also be read in light of the allegorical correspondences that have been established earlier. This exhortation draws the Galatians to a place of decision that is about constructing their identity and aligning their lives rightly in light of the outcome of the two contrastive generative lines: the inheritance. The slave woman and her child refer to Hagar-Ishmael, but only as they represent the covenant from Sinai. Paul's point is that the covenant from Sinai does not lead into the inheritance (4:30), and hence the compulsion to come under the Law must be rejected. It is only the generative line of the promise that leads to the inheritance. Hence, the Galatians are not to identify with the “slave woman” (4:31), who is Hagar as she represents the covenant from Sinai that defines the “present Jerusalem” (4:24-25). They are to identify with the “free woman” (4:31), which is a reference to Sarah only indirectly, as she represents the pattern of the promise that generates the children of the allegorical “free woman” – the mother “Jerusalem above” who is free (4:26). This means that the inheritance is about inclusion in the restored people of God – the “Jerusalem above” community – and exclusion from the inheritance is a reference to the reality of being outside of restoration – the “present Jerusalem.” Furthermore, slavery and freedom are also defined in relation to the inheritance. Slavery is a condition of alienation – being outside of the inheritance of restoration. Freedom is the inheritance of inclusion in the restored people of God.

Finally, Paul concludes his argument with reference to Christ (5:1). Inclusion and exclusion in the freedom of the inheritance of restoration are ultimately determined in relation to Christ, whose role is configured as the Isaianic servant who generates the children of the barren woman – the heirs of the “Jerusalem above.” Hence, Paul concludes by urging the Galatians to stand firm in the reality of restoration – freedom – that Christ has delivered them into, and not to submit to the “yoke of slavery” (5:1) that coming under the Law would imply.

6.7.2 Configuration of the Theological Vision and Logic of Galatians

I now give a synthesised discussion to bring together insights from the above sections and to deepen the understanding of the central themes of Galatians within the framework of the two covenants as two contrastive generative lines for construing the identity of God's people. The key for configuring the two generative lines is to work out from the pivotal point of the contrast between the “present Jerusalem” and the

“Jerusalem above” in Gal 4:25-26. The “Jerusalem above” designates the inheritance of the restoration reality that is envisioned in Isaiah as the fulfilment of the Abrahamic promise of blessing that includes all the nations in the regenerated people of God. Since both the Abrahamic promise of blessing and the Isaianic vision of restoration have all of humanity in view and a cosmic scope (see 3.2; 4.3.3 and 4.3.6), Paul's vision about the “Jerusalem above” community is a vision of the re-creation of humanity and the restructuring of the cosmos. This vision defines Paul's gospel and drives his mission.

The “present Jerusalem” refers to a reality outside of the regenerated community. Thus, it is not about Judaism as such, or directly about a competing Gentile mission, although they can both potentially represent a configuration of the people and cosmos that has not (fully) embraced the impact of the gospel – the revelation of the Son and the inauguration of restoration. The “present Jerusalem” is about a configuration of the people of God according to the νόμος of Moses (Sinai covenant), which has not been recalibrated by the νόμος of Christ (4:21 and 6:2; see 5.2).

The categories of slavery and freedom are configured in relation to the inheritance of the restoration reality. Freedom is inclusion in the inheritance. Slavery is alienation outside of the inheritance of restoration. But these categories reach deeper. Freedom is also about deliverance from sin in the “present evil age” (1:4), and generation into “new creation” in the Spirit (5:16-25). Slavery, by contrast, is a condition of sin, that is, a life that is not in line with the νόμος that is defined by Christ (4:21; 6:2), nor in line with the “canon” of “new creation” that shapes a new community (6:14-16). Thus, they become also categories for the social vision Paul has for the “new creation” people (2:4; 5:13). Freedom means to live in line with the full implications of the work of Christ and the giving of the Spirit that have inaugurated the restoration reality. Slavery denotes a social practice that upholds the divisions that are embedded in the construction of reality (cosmos) outside of “new creation” (3:28; 6:14-15).

The logic of inclusion in the new people of God is configured by the alienation-restoration paradigm in Isaiah (Isa 54:1 in Gal 4:27) and the corresponding pattern in the birth of Abraham's two sons (4:22). The alienation-restoration paradigm is ultimately mapped on to the Christ-event, and vice versa. Isaiah's theological interpretation of Israel's exile and the promise of restoration provides the matrix for configuring the present condition of Israel and the nations in relation to the Christ-event. Christ delivers into freedom (5:1); he delivers humanity from the state of alienation into the life of the restored people of God. Israel's alienation – reflected in the

category of the “present Jerusalem” – is realised by her violation of the “law,” that is, her resistance towards the divine revelation in Christ. Israel's restoration is envisioned as an act of mercy – the offer of divine grace in the work of Christ as the Isaianic servant. Israel's restoration depends on her response to the offer of mercy and not in her right to be included by virtue of ancestry or existing covenant of circumcision (2:16; 6:16). The offer of mercy opens the door also for the alienated/“sinful” Gentiles (2:15-16). The configuration of Israel's identity with an emphasis on physical descent and the covenant of circumcision conforms to the realities associated with Ishmael, which does not lead to the inheritance of the Abrahamic promise, as interpreted by Isaiah in terms of inclusion in the restored people of God. This configuration compels the Gentiles, contrary to the “truth of the gospel,” to align with Israel *κατὰ σάρκα* – according to the pattern of Ishmael – by circumcision and adoption of the law from Sinai. Inclusion is patterned on the birth of Isaac, which leads to dependence on the God of promise who has acted in Christ and the Spirit.

The generative line of the promise is primary for Paul. It is the realities associated with the promise that determine Paul's view of the covenant from Sinai. In this respect Paul works from solution to plight. The generative line of the promise is anchored in the work of Christ that Paul configures by the Isaianic servant. Christ deals with the root of alienation, sin (1:4; 3:13), and generates the children of the “free woman” who are the heirs of the restoration community. Connected with the work of Christ is the generative activity of the Spirit (4:29; cf. 4:4-7) that enables the life of the new people of God. Paul perceives a pattern in the divine activity in Christ and the Spirit that corresponds with the birth of Isaac, on the one hand, and the vision of restoration that is imaged by the barren woman being made fruitful, on the other hand. Promise is the category that summarises for Paul the divine generative activity. *God* acts in the line of promise. *He sends* the Son as the Christ who delivers from slavery. *He supplies* the Spirit that enables the life of the new people of God. The community of the “Jerusalem above” are a people *of God*. Divine generation into the restoration community determines for Paul also the inheritance of the Abrahamic promise of blessing. Those who have responded to the act of divine promise in Christ have been generated by the Spirit to be the children of the “Jerusalem above,” and are thus “children of promise.”

The other generative line is set in contrast to the line of promise. It is not evil, but it is limited in its ability to generate what God intends. This generative line

originates from Sinai, which represents the regulatory sphere of the Law, as much as it represents also the boundaries that circumcision sets in the flesh of the Sinai-covenant people. Thus, the generative means in this covenant is described by “flesh,” which refers to the identification of the people of God that focuses on physical descent from Abraham and circumcision, but also to human potential in doing the Law (3:10-12) that is corrupted by sin (3:22). This line is patterned in the birth of Ishmael. He is the product of flesh; an act of theologically reasoned human potential. Ishmael is Abraham's descendant, he is circumcised, but yet outside of the inheritance. He does not count, because he is not generated by the promise. Ishmael leaves room for human boasting that upholds conformity with the expected ordering of the cosmos and dependence on human potential (6:13-14). He is not a “child of laughter” – Isaac – that unsettles the natural order and empties the sense of human potential in generating what God is after. Hence, he cannot be a “child of promise.” The category of flesh reaches beyond physical descent and circumcision, and refers to an identity that is derived from human being and doing in relation to the Law and the conventional ordering of the cosmos. The limitation of this generative line is in its inability to lead into the life of the restoration community and to conform with the canon of “new creation.”

The above charted theological vision about the re-creation of humanity and the logic of mercy in the generative line of the promise are the reason why Paul calls the Galatians to a place of decision; to embrace and align with their identity as the restoration community, and to resist the desire/pressure to validate their inclusion in the people of God according to the Mosaic Law and expected ordering of cosmos/society. This is why Paul is in labour pains (4:19). Paul's mission joins in the divine generative activity for the formation of a community that is shaped by the cross of Christ and empowered by the Spirit. The Galatians need to maintain their dependence on the God of promise by ongoing trust in the grace of Christ (2:16, 20-21; 5:2-4), and reliance on the empowering presence of the Spirit in the life of the re-created humanity (5:13-6:10).

Chapter 7. Conclusions

It is time to close the circle with this thesis, and to use the insights gained from the analysis in chapters 2-6 to return to the key questions articulated in my introduction. Following the division of the questions into the structural, hermeneutical and theological categories, my discussion below moves from the structural to the hermeneutical, which offers the unique perspective of this work to engage with the theological questions.

I began the argument of this thesis by analysing the structure of the letter to the Galatians (2.1). This established the grounds for taking Gal 4:21-5:1 as the vantage point for configuring Paul's theological vision and logic in the whole letter. This vantage point has two major implications for the quest to configure the theology of Galatians. First, Gal 4:21-5:1 reveals Paul's key *hermeneutical strategy* for redressing the application of the Law in the new situation brought about by the Christ-event and the giving of the Spirit. By attending to this, we locate Paul's theological matrix, capture his theological vision and logic, and discern the shape of Paul's retelling of Israel's story. Second, and partially following from the first, but also because the passage functions as the climax for the preceding development of the themes and as a bridge to what follows it, it is at this point in the argument that *the important themes can best be defined*: e.g. what does righteousness refer to, what is the promise about, and what does the inheritance point to? I discuss below both of these implications.

I argued in 5.2 that Paul's hermeneutical strategy becomes visible by analysing his allegorical practice in Gal 4:21-5:1. In contrast to Boyarin, I argued that Paul's allegorical mode is essentially intertextual, in which the interpretative field is extended to encompass the revelatory impact of the Christ-event. Hence, rather than discovering Hellenistic matrix (Philo) underlying Paul's theological vision and logic (Boyarin), we find Paul grounding his understanding of the gospel by drawing from the resources of Israel's scriptures as they are reconfigured by the Christ-event. But it is possible to be more precise about the form of the dialogical matrix of Scripture and the experience of Christ and the Spirit, and how it shapes Paul's theological vision and logic.

I have argued in 5.4 that an integral feature in Paul's intertextual practice is his reading of the Abraham narrative *together* with Isaiah. Together these texts shape Paul's theological vision to be about the divine generation of the restoration people that can be

understood as the re-creation of humanity. The Abrahamic promise of blessing to all the nations has as its purpose the “spiritual renewal of humanity” that becomes apparent from the context from which the Abraham narrative emerges (see 3.2). The promised blessing that extends to all the nations is envisioned ultimately in terms of their inclusion in the people of God (see 3.4). This is the foundational promise to which Paul anchors the gospel (Gal 3:8). But the initial promise receives a new dimension from its re-appropriation in the Isaianic promise of restoration that has Israel and all the nations in its scope. This interplay between the Abrahamic promise and the Isaianic vision of restoration is brought to the surface in the quotation of Isa 54:1 in Gal 4:27 that offers the logic for integrating the Galatian believers among the children of promise according to the pattern of Isaac (4:28). The alienation-restoration paradigm that underlies the imagery of the barren-made-fruitful woman (Isa 54:1) corresponds with the pattern in the birth of Isaac. Both highlight the necessity of divine generation for inclusion in the people of God. This does not apply only to the Gentiles (*pace* RNPP), since the defining factor for inclusion in the people of God is inclusion in the restoration people – the “Jerusalem above” community (4:26). For Paul, a natural or “supernatural” connection to Abraham is not the point (*pace* Thiessen), as it is rather participation in the “new creation” that is the determining “canon” for inclusion in the regenerated “Israel of God” (6:14-16). For this, both the Jew and Gentile are dependent on the divine performance of the promise in Christ and the Spirit. Responding in faith to the revelation of Christ is the only means by which the regenerative act of God transfers any human being into the inheritance of the restoration reality.

The above description of my configuration of Paul's theological vision that is about divine generation of the restoration people is encapsulated in Gal 4:21-5:1 by the concept of the *Jerusalem above*. Unlike many commentators, I argued in 6.2 that this term is not a reference to a future heavenly city but rather derives its meaning from the Isaianic matrix of the “tale of two cities” that is expressed in Isa 54:1 with the figures of the two women, and that is introduced in the opening two chapters of the book of Isaiah. Thus, the *Jerusalem above* denotes in Paul the inauguration of the restoration reality that is about the restored presence and rule of God among the community of the regenerated people of God comprised of both Jews and Gentiles.

From this vantage point, I also argued in 6.2 that it is possible to detect the hermeneutical influence of the Isaianic vision in other strategic moments in the letter. In 6:15, Paul highlights that the reality of *new creation* relativises the value of

circumcision and uncircumcision. Inheriting the *kingdom of God* (5:21) extends the vision towards a fuller future realisation that is the source of motivation and cause for exhortation to align fully with life in the Spirit (5:16-25; 6:7-10). I argued that both of these concepts stem from the Isaianic vision of restoration, and have intimate links with Isa 54:1. Moreover, I demonstrated in 6.3.2-3 how the influence of the Isaianic vision can also be detected in the way Paul envisions the Spirit as part of the fulfilment of the Abrahamic promise of blessing that creates the new inclusive “we” of the recipients of the Spirit in 3:14 (cf. Isa 44:1-5). This blurs the distinction between the Jewish “we” and Gentile “you” in the argument of the letter, while retaining Jewish “priority” in the story of Israel's restoration that includes the Gentiles. Similarly, the theological vision and logic in Gal 4:4-7 reflects the restoration matrix in Isa 63. Here, Paul presents his vision for the regeneration of the “sons” of God who consist of both the Jews and Gentiles that have received the Spirit of the Son, and have been made heirs of the restoration reality that is not predicated on a genealogical connection to Abraham but rather on the divine act of mercy that unites humanity as one family of the *Abba*, Father. Hence, Paul's reading of the Abraham narrative together with Isaiah gives his retelling of Israel's story its unique shape that is best captured by the notion of incongruent grace.

Incongruent grace is the defining feature in the shape of Paul's retelling of Israel's story that integrates the Gentiles into its scope. I agree with Barclay that Paul's own experience of being called by this grace (1:13-16) initially generated the conception of the Christ-gift as being incongruous with the recipients' worth. Yet, as Paul works out the implications of his revelatory experience of Christ, the role of the scriptures of Israel can be perceived as more formative for the understanding of Paul's own mission and the “truth of the gospel” than Barclay has explored.

I have demonstrated in ch. 3 how the incongruence of divine “calling in grace” is ingrained in Israel's foundational story of the birth of Isaac. God chooses the childless Abraham with a sterile wife as the unfitting candidate to carry forward the promise of a “great nation” and blessing to all the nations (Gen 11:30; 12:1-3). The birth of Isaac from the barren womb of Sarah is an act of incongruence: a most unlikely and unnatural event that establishes the paradigm for the character of God's people (Gen 17-18). What is established with Isaac as being essential for the identity of God's people is further emphasised by setting it in contrast to Ishmael who is portrayed in the narrative as an alternative construal of the “great nation” that issues out of theologically reasoned human potential, and is focused on natural descent and conformity to the requirement of

circumcision, and yet is outside of the inheritance (Gen 16-21; cf. Gal 4:22-31). Unlike the character of Ishmael, God's people are, like Isaac, “children of laughter;” they are a people who have been stripped from any claim for natural fittingness, or possessing the potential to perform what God is after, and thus become a people who totally depend on the God who calls and provides (Gen 21-22). I argued in 6.3.1 that this is part of the matrix that shapes Paul's vision and logic that works out the identity of the restoration people as *children of promise* according to the pattern of Isaac (4:28). Thus, Paul capitalises on the foundational promise to Abraham that is by design subversive towards the categories of fittingness and worth. This is also true of the restoration promise.

I demonstrated in chapter 4, that the logic of mercy is central in the Isaianic vision of restoration. Israel's inclusion in restoration is not predicated on Abrahamic ancestry or success with the Law. Rather, her failure to follow the Law led her to the realm of exile, where she becomes in fact a non-people comparable to the other nations (Isa 1; 63:19; 65:1). The promise of her restoration is envisioned as an act of divine mercy that subverts human calculations of worth (Isa 54:7-10; 55:1). It is again an act of performing the unlikely, gracing the unworthy – the barren woman has more children than the one who is married (Isa 54:1). Since this is true for Israel in her state of alienation, it holds the promise of being true also for other non-peoples. This is why Paul can incorporate the Gentiles as recipients of Israel's promises of restoration: the “Jerusalem above” is *our* mother (4:26).

The resurrection of Christ and the gift of the Spirit, as experienced especially among the Gentiles, signalled for Paul that the reality of restoration had begun. Thus, on the one hand, Paul maps the Christ-event onto the matrix of the Isaianic vision of restoration. But, on the other hand, the vision of restoration, and especially the alienation-restoration paradigm, is also mapped onto the Christ-event. Alienation is now the realm outside of the revelation of Christ, which is denoted by the concept of the *present Jerusalem* (4:25). Inclusion in restoration is now defined by dependence on the divine performance of the promise in Christ (5:1) and the Spirit (4:29) – faith in Christ. Hence, it is not necessary to configure Paul's theological vision and logic by insisting, as Wright does, on an underlying sense of Israel's ongoing or extended exile. Rather, irrespective of whether or not there was a sense of an ongoing or extended exile, the sphere of alienation from God is re-conceptualised in Paul's new frame of reference – the Christ-event.

However, as Wright correctly emphasises, Paul's conception of the role of Christ is not independent of the scriptural matrix. Rather, the direction from Scripture to Christ in Paul's dialogical hermeneutic is formative for Paul's Christology. Thus, both Martyn and Barclay overemphasise the discontinuity of Christ from the story of Israel, as they perceive a connection between the Abrahamic promise and the coming of Christ without any substantial development in the story in between (punctiliar emphasis). This misses, e.g., the theological potential that the Isaianic servant provides for Paul's conception of the work of Christ. I argued in 6.5 that this notion is present in Gal 4:21-5:1 where Christ defines the covenant of promise. The freedom that Christ has delivered (5:1) is the restoration reality – the “Jerusalem above” that is free – and thus, just as the servant in Isa 53 generates the children of the barren woman in Isa 54:1, so also Christ is the one who generates the children of restoration. Paul's conception of Christ as the Isaianic servant became even more evident as I followed, in 6.6, how Paul's identification with Christ shapes his own sense of mission and defines his labour pains (4:19) as participation in the divine “labour” through the servant and the Spirit to generate the restoration community that lives as a community of servants (5:13) within the law defined by the servant – the “law of Christ” (6:2; cf. Isa 42:4, only the LXX).

The above results of my analysis of Paul's hermeneutic, his theological vision and logic, and the shape of his retelling of Israel's story give the unique perspective for my work to engage with the other theological questions raised in the introduction.

The starting point for my configuration of Paul's view about the *Law* begins from his hermeneutical move in Gal 4:21 that plays on two senses of νόμος (the Mosaic Law/Torah and the totality of revelation). In Gal 4:21-5:1, Paul extends the divine revelatory field to recalibrate the understanding of νόμος. Furthermore, I argued in 5.2 that Paul's interpretative framework (intertextual field) does not give the Mosaic Torah priority or an independent status, but subsumes it under the “law of Christ,” thus placing the revelatory Christ-event at the centre of gravity and reading the Torah in the context of the Prophets, especially Isaiah. I suspect that the disjunction between Paul's former zeal for the Law in accordance with the interpretative tradition of the fathers and his revelatory experience of Christ (1:13-16; Paul became an enemy of God with his zeal for the Law) generated this new hermeneutic. I argued in 6.6 that its results are perceived in Paul's own reconstituted identity, in which the new Christ-defined-law

occasioned the radical break (death) to his old understanding and application of the Law and a reorientation (resurrection) in his living for God (2:19). This is one of the ways in which Paul tells his own narrative as a paradigm for the Galatians to adopt (cf. 4:12).

Even with the sense of the radical break with his past and the Law as he knew it, Paul finds that the νόμος is in fact very much more alive than he earlier experienced it. For Paul, the intention of the Law to produce righteousness – right-relatedness both to God and in community – is fulfilled by its “death and resurrection” with Christ. I demonstrated in 6.6 how Paul conceives that the Law is fulfilled in the service of love (5:13-14) that is modelled in the act of the Son who gave himself for the sake of the other (1:4; 2:20). Furthermore, this kind of loving service is only possible by the power of the Spirit (5:17) that is received by faith in Christ (3:1-5). This sets the Law free from its own bondage as well as sets the people free from the Law as the “yoke of slavery.” Before elaborating on Paul's connection between Law and slavery, I summarise the hermeneutical move that transforms Paul's conception of the Law:

- 1) the Law with a capital L – denoting the Mosaic Law – “dies” as it is subsumed under the law with a lower case l – denoting the totality of revelation now defined by the Christ-event,
- 2) but the Law comes through the “death,” yet without the capital L, as its intention to produce righteousness is now fulfilled by the people who live according to the law of Christ in loving service by the power of the Spirit.

Thus, there is a sense in Paul, in which not only the people are rescued from the curse of the Law, but also the Law *itself* is rescued from the condition of slavery that it is implicated in. In 6.4, I approached the connection between slavery and Law from the connection Paul sets up between Hagar and Sinai and the “present Jerusalem” (4:24-25), which functions as a short hand for the reality outside of the inheritance of the restoration reality (see 6.2.5). From this vantage point, I argued that, like the Hagar-Ishmael configuration led outside of the inheritance (4:30), and just as Israel's life under the Law resulted in exile, so also Paul perceives the Law as a condemning agent due to people's sin (3:10-13, curse/alienation). But like the status of Hagar, so also is the Law itself enslaved, i.e. it is implicated under the condition of sin, and thus incapable of offering the remedy – to make alive and produce righteousness (3:21-22). Again, Paul came to this realisation after his own experience of being generated into the “new creation,” which was not due to his Law-observant status but by the grace given to him

in Christ. Now Paul operates within the “law of Christ” (6:2), and calls the Galatians to do the same with the confidence that the Law is not against such practice (5:23). Living within the “law of Christ” is exclusive of living under the Law of Moses, and yet is also its fulfilment. This is the paradox of the letter to the Galatians that can be best approached from the vantage point of Gal 4:21-5:1.

My work offers also some more nuance to the discussion about the meaning of *righteousness*. Together with Martyn, my work indicates that justification is about more than forgiveness of sins for the individual, as it includes the dimension of deliverance from enslavement. Yet, unlike Martyn, I do not configure the categories of slavery and freedom within the matrix of religion vs. the apocalyptic deliverance of God, but rather within the matrix of the alienation-restoration paradigm. In Paul's conceptual world, *slavery* is the condition outside of inheritance (4:1-3), and thus denotes the condition of alienation from the reality of restoration (4:24-31) that is marked by sin (3:22). *Freedom* is the condition of being delivered into the reality of restoration by Christ and the life-giving power of the Spirit (4:26-5:1, cf. 4:4-7).

However, even as my approach moves beyond Martyn's apocalyptic perspective, and also the traditional Reformation construction of righteousness as the imputation of the benefits of Christ on the believer, it does not settle with the constructions of either the NPP/RNPP without modifications. As my structural analysis in 2.1 has demonstrated, Paul develops the theme of righteousness until it climaxes in 4:21-5:1. Righteousness is not a self-explanatory concept; it needs to be filled with content. Paul does exactly so, as he moves along in the argument in Galatians. Thus, the NPP is correct in emphasising that righteousness is essentially about “sonship” and inheritance that denote membership in God's people. But rather than being primarily about membership in the one worldwide Abrahamic family, I have argued in 6.2 that the inheritance is ultimately about participation in the restoration reality – membership in the “Jerusalem above” community. Yes, to be sure, this is also about the inheritance of the Abrahamic promise of blessing to all the nations, but *only* as it is mediated by the Isaianic promise of restoration. This has the impact of introducing the theologically significant “rupture” of incongruent grace in the form of the alienation-restoration paradigm into the covenantal trajectory envisioned by the RNPP or Wright.

In contrast to the RNPP emphasis, Paul does not remain in the position that he

assumes (only to subvert it) in his extended speech to “Peter,” which regards only the Gentiles as sinners and the Jews as the righteous covenant people (2:15). In Paul's reconfigured cosmos, all flesh – Jewish and Gentile – depend on faith in Christ for righteousness (2:16). Both Jew and Gentile need to respond to the promissory act of God in Christ and the Spirit that (re)generates them into the people of the “Jerusalem above.” Thus, the Jewish people are also justified as the “Israel of God,” only if they again respond like Abraham to the divine promise, or better yet, if they are regenerated according to the pattern of Isaac to inherit the reality of restoration (see 6.3.1). With regard to Wright's covenantal trajectory, I have already suggested above how it is modified by the notion of incongruent grace that provides the deeper logic for understanding why the Torah is not just outdated in its function to adjudicate membership in the people of God – to demarcate righteousness. Yet despite my modifications of Wright's configuration, I perceive that we are in essential agreement that the heart of justification is participation in the reconstituted people of God.

Overall, I have demonstrated throughout this thesis that a reading of Galatians from the vantage point of Gal 4:21-5:1 has integrative power. In 2.1, I followed how the development of the important themes is brought together in 4:21-5:1. Accordingly, I presented in 6.7 a synthesis of my configuration of Paul's theological vision and logic in Galatians by a reading of 4:21-5:1 that presented how the important themes are coordinated with the construction of the two covenant structure.

Finally, as with the review of the six different perspectives in the introduction, so I also pose to my own work the focusing question of how my configuration of Paul's theological vision and logic explains Paul's resistance to Gentile circumcision. In my view, the answer to why Paul opposed the “distorted gospel” operates on three levels:

- 1) *Inadequate hermeneutic*; it does not accord the revelation of Christ enough power to recalibrate the Law. Paul resists Gentile circumcision because it leads to life under the law as the Law from Sinai and not as the law of Christ. This is a failure to (fully) embrace the revelation of the Son and its implication on the reading of Scripture (4:21). It resists the impact of the cross and resurrection of Jesus in its power to restructure individual identity (2:19-21), and reshape cosmos and community (6:14-16) according to the law of Christ (6:2).

2) *Limited vision*; it does not align with the reality of restoration that has already begun. Paul resists Gentile circumcision because it is against the vision of the re-created humanity that is to live as the “Jerusalem above” community.

Circumcision would give weight to distinctions that are made obsolete in the “new creation.” Circumcision or uncircumcision do not carry weight in identifying the newly generated people of God, since generation to be the “Jerusalem above” people is not predicated on such categories.

3) *Misleading logic*; it configures the identity and life of the people of God according to the flesh that is antithetical to the incongruent grace of Christ and the life of the Spirit that emphasise the sufficiency of divine generative activity that does not give regard to the recipients' worth or require complementation by “flesh.” Paul resists Gentile circumcision also, because it would lead to life under the Law with the danger of attempting to fulfil the Law *in the flesh* by means of circumcision and *doing* the requirement of the Law to secure membership in the people of God. This is a “yoke” that does not produce what it prescribes (2:15-16; 3:10; cf. Acts 15:10); it is reckoned limited due to its inability to make alive (3:21-22). If the Law has been impotent in leading Paul and other Jews into the reality of restoration, it cannot be the means for Gentile participation in “new creation” life either. God's people are the “children of laughter” (4:28), the unlikely people who emerge from the barrenness of their alienation in dependence on the divine performance of the promise that leads to the fulfilment of the law as the “law of Christ” in the power of the Spirit (5:13-25; 6:2). Coming under the Law is a “yoke of slavery” because it displaces dependence on the grace of Christ (5:2-4), and thus severs from the inheritance of the “Jerusalem above.”

I now make some *evaluations* of the present work and give suggestions for *further research*. I deem that this thesis has successfully demonstrated the validity of its claim that Gal 4:21-5:1 offers an unparalleled vantage point for configuring Paul's theological vision and logic in the letter to the Galatians. Yet it is by no means a complete reading nor the final word on the epistle. My contribution to the study of Galatians and Paul's theology comes from the analysis of Paul's dialogical hermeneutical practice that operates within the matrix formed by the experience of

Christ and the Spirit, and the scriptures of Israel. My approach incorporates an analysis of the theological potential of both of the two key intertexts of the Abraham narrative and Isaiah. I am not aware of any other work that has focused so extensively on both of these two major texts in Paul's theological matrix to harvest their joint potential for configuring Paul's theological vision and logic. My configuration is not totally new, as it continues the trend to read Paul within his Jewish matrix in conversation with Scripture. Yet it has been able to combine the strengths from both Wright's creative work on the scriptural matrix underlying Paul's narrative theology and Barclay's masterful construction of the deep logic of incongruent grace that shapes Paul's retelling of Israel's story in a unique way. The critical integration and modification of these two major perspectives in my own reading is one of the achievements of this work.

The limitations of this study are manifold, of which I mention here only a few. My focus on Gal 4:21-5:1 has led me to explore the major key in Paul's hermeneutic, but I have not been able to incorporate all the various texts of Scripture that are part of Paul's theological matrix in Galatians, and thus have not analysed the larger contour of Paul's reading of Scripture. Paul's mind seems to be able to hold much more together than one doctoral thesis can focus on. It would be a worthwhile further research project to critically integrate the insights from this work and from others who have looked at different aspects of Paul's engagement with Scripture in Galatians (Eastman, Ciampa, Harmon, Watson, Wright, etc.), and produce a work under a modified title from Ciampa: *The Presence and Function on Scripture in Galatians*. A more modest project could take as its focal point Gal 3:6-14 that includes a concentration of the Scripture's presence.

My research has focused exclusively on Galatians, and thus the results have not been placed on the larger canvas of the Pauline corpus to evaluate whether my configuration of Paul's theological vision and logic would either be confirmed or challenged by the material in his other letters. As Gal 4:21-5:1 quite naturally leads to a conversation with Rom 9-11 (cf. Wolter), this would be a good place to start.⁸⁴⁵ Furthermore, since the expectation of Israel's future restoration in Rom 11 has been the reason for Donaldson to reject the "eschatological pilgrimage" vision (which is premised on the scheme that when Israel is restored then the Gentiles are included in

⁸⁴⁵ A more comprehensive analysis could look at the different ways Israel's story is integrated into Paul's arguments in Galatians and Romans (see e.g. the different configurations of Bruce W. Longenecker, "Sharing in Their Spiritual Blessings?: The Stories of Israel in Galatians and Romans," in *Narrative Dynamics in Paul*; and Morna D. Hooker, "'Heirs of Abraham': The Gentiles' Role in Israel's Story – A Response to Bruce W. Longenecker," in *Narrative Dynamics in Paul*).

salvation) as the driving conviction for Paul's Gentile mission,⁸⁴⁶ it would be important to evaluate whether my reading of Paul's theological vision in Galatians can be reconciled with the apparent future expectation of Israel's full salvation, i.e. restoration. I give here some reflections for exploring the possibilities to integrate the seemingly different scheme in Rom 9-11 with my reading of Gal 4:21-5:1. Although both texts combine the theological potential from the paradigmatic birth of Isaac (Rom 9:6-9) and the vision of restoration in Isaiah (Rom 9:27-33; 10:14-21; 11:26-27) in their argument, I suspect that there is a different focus in these texts. In Gal 4:21-5:1, Paul's burden is to highlight that the reality of restoration has been inaugurated, which necessitates a new position on the Mosaic Law and a new social practice. In Rom 9-11, Paul spells out what he only hinted at in Gal 6:16 that he expects the *process* of restoration to move on to its fulfilment, in which all Israel – “the Israel of God” – would be included, as the promise of God – the restorative mercy offered in Christ – finally finds the response of faith not only from the remnant but also from the rest. I suggest that Isa 66 (especially vv. 18-20) could provide a clue for how Paul both works from a sense of an inaugurated restoration and still expects an ongoing movement towards its full realisation.

A more complete inquiry into Paul's theological vision and logic could adopt a canonical reading of Paul that incorporates all the letters attributed to Paul in the Christian canon and Luke's portrayal of Paul in the book of Acts to evaluate whether the central discoveries of this research find resonance or need modification. I suspect that both would be true in a fuller picture of Paul's theology and mission. Yet I am confident that the central construction of this thesis would remain valid. I dare to suggest that the coherent core in Paul's theology is his conviction that the divine promise to Abraham, as understood by its re-appropriation in the vision of Isaiah, is the Creator God's commitment to humanity and the whole cosmos that blessing and restoration will have the final word over curse and alienation, and that the promise is designed to generate the “children of laughter” – a regenerated people of God from both Jews and Gentiles who depend on Christ and the Spirit in their life together as the re-created humanity.

⁸⁴⁶ Terence L. Donaldson, *Paul and the Gentiles: Remapping the Apostle's Convictional World* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 187–197; Donaldson changed his position from what he proposed in 1986 in “The ‘Curse of the Law’ and the Inclusion of the Gentiles.”

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