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ABOUNDING IN GENEROSITY: A STUDY OF *CHARIS* IN 2 CORINTHIANS 8-9

By Gary Webster Griffith

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Submitted in Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

University of Durham

Department of Theology and Religion

2005

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ABSTRACT

The Apostle Paul establishes the underlying theme of "grace" for his discussion of the collection for the saints in Jerusalem in 2 Corinthians 8-9 through the abundant and diverse use of the term *charis*. The aim of this thesis is to examine Paul's usage of *charis* in 2 Corinthians 8-9 in light of usage within the benefit exchange conventions of the Graeco-Roman world. The objective is to determine the relevance of such terminology and its theological significance for giving and receiving, specifically the giving and receiving involved in the collection for the saints in Jerusalem.

The thesis initially surveys recent studies that address the topic of Graeco-Roman benefaction and reciprocity, including the secular use of *charis*. Next, a model of benefit exchange proposed by the Stoic philosopher Seneca is examined and compared with expressions of giving and receiving in Paul. Following this, relevant passages in Paul that use *charis* outside of 2 Corinthians 8-9 are examined with special attention given to the exegesis of Romans 5.15-21. Second Corinthians 8-9 is then examined with a view toward understanding Paul's use of *charis* in discussing the collection. Special attention is given to the topics of "Willingness, Equality and Reciprocity" in 2 Cor. 8.10-15, and "Grace and Thanksgiving" in 2 Cor. 9.11-15.

The results of this study show that in 2 Corinthians 8-9 Paul's main concern was not to persuade the Corinthians to give toward the collection. Rather, his concern was to persuade them to give themselves completely to God in submission to the power of his grace. When they did this, the Corinthians would then find themselves equipped to contribute, both from a generous attitude and from sufficient resources. Thus for Paul, the collection is an expression of the grace that the participants – both givers and recipients – had received from God.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis embodies the results of my own work, that it has been composed by myself and that it does not include work that has been presented for a degree in this or any other university. All quotations have been acknowledged in the footnotes.

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PREFACE

I should not have been surprised that a study of grace could be so rich or that it would have such an impact on me personally. My interest in this topic was aroused when I first became aware of Paul's diverse use of *charis* terminology in 2 Corinthians 8-9, which is only evident as one compares the Greek and English texts. Why had Paul chosen to use this word so frequently and with such apparent variety of meanings within these two chapters that relate to the collection for the saints in Jerusalem? I was intrigued by fact that, although grace is central to Paul's soteriology, the majority of occurrences of *charis* in 2 Corinthians 8-9 did not seem to abound with theological significance. My research in writing this thesis has revealed to me the depth of the significance of Paul's use of this term as he offers exhortation to the Corinthians in connection with the collection. It has also enriched my awareness of the abundance and empowering of God's grace in a way that will forever impact my Christian life.

Without question, my most significant guide along the path of this doctoral process has been my supervisor, Professor John Barclay. The combination of his gentle manner and superb scholarship has not only made it a joy to study under his guidance, but has provided me with an invaluable opportunity to learn. He has stimulated and encouraged me as he has challenged me to think to greater depths and to probe the limits of my understanding of a topic as profound as grace. His patience is certainly the result of his own submission to the power of God's grace and his supervision is a benefit for which I can only offer gratitude to God.

My appreciation is also extended to my colleagues at SEND International and at the Bulgarian Evangelical Theological Institute in Sofia for allowing my absence from Bulgaria these years in order to complete this thesis. I also return an abundance of thanksgiving to God for all who have offered the sponsorship that has made this doctoral study possible.

Several good friends have sacrificed countless hours in proofreading my material. Again my gratitude overflows for this labor of love provided by Sue Dudley, Dave Finch, Clif Moberg and Iain Morrison. I offer special gratitude for Iain Morrison who engaged with me on the various topics of research along the way. His helpful dialog, thought provoking questions, challenging comments, and unceasing encouragement all contributed in significant ways to the completion of this thesis.

I am grateful for my parents who have provided continuous support and encouragement over the years.

My warmest appreciation goes to my family, who have tolerated my absence so often during this journey. Stephen and David have become quite disciplined in allowing their Daddy uninterrupted hours of quiet in his study, and yet have always been available to play during study breaks! The day for which they have long awaited, the completion of "Daddy's book", as they have come to refer to my doctoral thesis, has finally come. Thank you, Stephen and David, for your patience!

And finally, to my wife, Karen, I can only offer back my love for all that she has sacrificed in maintaining the family and the home, especially during the final months of writing. Her unceasing ability to provide care for me and our family during this period in our lives is beyond what any husband could hope for. She has also been an invaluable help in proofreading and making suggestions with regard to my writing. I gained keen insights into my topic whenever I would overhear her describing my research to her friends!

"Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!"

Gary Griffith
Kirkintilloch, Scotland
April 2005

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ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ACNT	Augsburg Commentaries on the New Testament
AnBib	Analecta biblica
ASV	American Standard Version, 1901
AThR	*Anglican Theological Review*
ATJ	*Ashland Theological Journal*
BDAG	Bauer, W., F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3d ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
BDF	Funk, Robert W. *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other early Christian Literature*. Translation and revision of F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *Grammatik des Neutestamentlichen Griechisch*, Göttingen,[9-10] 1954-59. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1961.
BFT	Biblical Foundations in Theology
BJRL	*Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BNZW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
BZ	*Biblische Zeitschrift*
CSSH	*Comparative Studies in Society and History*
CTM	*Concordia Theological Monthly*
CurTM	*Currents in Theology and Mission*
CV	Communio Viatorum
DBM	*Deltio Biblikon Meleton*
DNTB	*Dictionary of New Testament Background*
DPL	*Dictionary of Paul and his Letters*
EmJ	*Emmaus Journal*
EpRev	*Epworth Review*
ESV	English Standard Version, 2001
ETR	*Études théologiques et religieuses*
EvQ	*Evangelical Quarterly*
Exp	*The Expositor*
FB	Forschung zur Bibel

HCSB	Holman Christian Standard Bible, 2003
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
ICC	International Critical Commentary
Int	*Interpretation*
ITS	*Indian Theological Studies*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JR	*Journal of Religion*
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
KJV	King James Version
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LEC	Library of Early Christianity
NAB	New American Bible, 1991
NASB	New American Standard Bible, 1995
Neot	*Neotestamentica*
NET	New English Translation, 2003
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NIV	New International Version. 1984
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version, 1989
NSBT	New Studies in Biblical Theology
NTAbh	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
RB	*Revue Biblique*
ResQ	*Restoration Quarterly*
ScrB	Scripture Bulletin
SBLit	Studies in Biblical Literature
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SNTW	Studies of the New Testament and Its World
SP	Sacra Pagina

SUNT	Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments
SVTQ	*St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*
TDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament
UCPCP	*University of California Publications in Classical Philology*
UNT	Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
WW	*Word & World*
ZNW	*Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche*

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction[1]

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, chapters 8-9 of Paul's second letter to the Corinthians have been increasingly drawing the attention of four scholarly endeavors: (1) the history of the collection for Jerusalem and of Paul's relationship to Corinth; (2) Paul's theology of grace and his use of χάρις terminology; (3) Paul and gift giving within the context of Graeco-Roman benefit exchange; and (4) Paul's use of rhetoric in persuasive arguments. The fact that 2 Corinthians 8-9 lies at the crossroads of historical, theological, sociocultural, and rhetorical analysis in Pauline studies makes it truly a fascinating text. Even so, Paul's abundant and yet varied use of χάρις in these two chapters has to a great degree been neglected with regard to its theological significance as an underlying motive for the collection for the saints in Jerusalem. Paul's use of χάρις terminology is not haphazard, and a comparison with Graeco-Roman usage reveals both similarities and differences in the way that he utilizes the vocabulary. The aim of this thesis is to examine the theologically weighted occurrences of χάρις terminology in 2 Corinthians 8-9 in light of usage within the benefit exchange conventions of Graeco-Roman discourse. The objective is to determine the relevance of such terminology and its theological significance for giving and receiving, specifically the giving and receiving involved in the collection for the saints in Jerusalem. I will be following an integrated approach utilizing theological and sociocultural analysis, (2) and (3) above, in characterizing Paul's theology of grace and giving in these two

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[1] With regard to citations in this thesis, all references to commentaries on 2 Corinthians will include only the author's name and page number. In the bibliography, commentaries on 2 Corinthians are listed separately for easy reference. All other citations follow Turabian style. Greek translations are mine unless otherwise stated.

chapters. Relevant historical aspects of the collection will also be integrated into my study but an analysis of Paul's use of rhetoric is beyond the scope of this thesis.[2]

1.2. Highlighting the Issue

The term χάρις occurs ten times in 2 Corinthians 8-9, which is a higher concentration of usage than anywhere else in Paul's writings, or, for that matter,

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[2] Although a rhetorical analysis of 2 Cor. 8-9 is beyond my present focus, I want to point out that there has been an increasing amount of scholarly interest in this approach. Caution must be exercised, however, in applying rhetorical analysis to Paul's letters. It is still questioned whether it is appropriate to apply the divisions of forensic rhetoric to epistolary contexts, and even so, whether Paul would have been sufficiently familiar with rhetoric to structure his letters in this way (see Thrall, 37). When referring to rhetorical analysis or rhetorical criticism, one needs to be careful to be precise in the use of terminology. "Rhetorical" can have different meanings in different eras and in different contexts, as S. Porter points out in his introduction to a collection of essays from the Heidelberg Conference on Rhetoric and the NT (Stanley E. Porter and Thomas H Olbricht, eds., *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference*, JSNTSup 90 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 21). Clearly, careful research is needed in this area; in recent decades, rhetorical analysis has been used by different scholars to reach entirely opposite conclusions. For example, regarding the unity of 2 Corinthians, some use it to disprove the letter's unity. H. D. Betz, in his commentary on 2 Cor. 8-9, by using rhetorical analysis to structure the two chapters, concludes that 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 were independently written and that each consists of fragments of original letters, (Betz, 129-40). G. A. Kennedy on the other hand by using rhetorical analysis concludes that chs. 8 and 9 form "a complete rhetorical unit of the deliberative species" (George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 91). F. W. Hughes similarly uses rhetorical criticism to defend the unity of a fragmentary "Letter D" (2 Cor. 2.14-6.13 + 7.2-4), and thus the non-integrity of 2 Corinthians (Frank W. Hughes, "Rhetorical Criticism and the Corinthian Correspondence", in *The Rhetorical analysis of Scripture: Essays from the 1995 London Conference*, eds. S. E. Porter and T. H. Olbricht 146 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 336-50). Other scholars, however, use the same rhetorical practices from the ancient world in support of the unity of 2 Corinthians (see Frances Young and David F. Ford, *Meaning and Truth in 2 Corinthians*, BFT (London: SPCK, 1987), esp. 43, and the following commentaries which apply rhetorical criticism to their studies of 2 Corinthians: Danker, esp. 143; Witherington, esp. 331, 337). In an independent study, Kieran O'Mahony uses ancient rhetorical analysis "to investigate the potential of Hellenistic rhetoric for our understanding of Pauline persuasion, using as a test case, 2 Corinthians 8-9" (Kieran J. O'Mahony, *Pauline Persuasion: A Sounding in 2 Corinthians 8-9*, JSNTSup 199 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 14). O'Mahony concludes that it is likely that Paul had been well educated in Hellenistic rhetoric, and that 2 Corinthians 8-9 is the written form of a speech Paul had given numerous times, here adapted for the Corinthians. That rhetorical analysis finds varied applications and produces varied results is obvious.

anywhere in all of the New Testament.[3] What is of particular interest, however, is the fact that Paul's use of the term χάρις is so varied here. This is especially evident if we consider the diversity of ways in which χάρις is translated by modern English versions in these two chapters (see Table 1.1 below).

Table 1.1. Diversity in Translation of χάρις in 2 Corinthians 8-9

Greek phrase from corresponding verse in 2 Cor. 8-9	Corresponding English Translation of χάρις					
	KJV	NIV (1984)	NRSV (1989)	NASB (1995)	NET (2003)	HCSB (2003)
τὴν **χάριν** τοῦ θεοῦ (8.1)	*grace*	*grace*	*grace*	*grace*	*grace*	*grace*
τὴν **χάριν** καὶ τὴν κοινωνίαν (8.4)	*gift*	*privilege*	*privilege*	*favor*	*blessing*	*privilege*
τὴν **χάριν** ταύτην (8.6)	*grace*	*act of grace*	*generous undertaking*	*gracious work*	*act of kindness*	*grace*
ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ **χάριτι** (8.7)	*grace*	*grace of giving*	*generous undertaking*	*gracious work*	*act of kindness*	*grace*
τὴν **χάριν** τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (8.9)	*grace*	*grace*	*generous act*	*grace*	*grace*	*grace*
Χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ (8.16)	*thanks*	*I thank*	*thanks*	*thanks*	*thanks*	*thanks*
σὺν τῇ **χάριτι** ταύτῃ (8.19)	*grace*	*offering*	*generous undertaking*	*gracious work*	*generous gift*	*gift*
πᾶσαν **χάριν** (9.8)	*grace*	*grace*	*blessing*	*grace*	*grace*	*grace*
διὰ τὴν ὑπερβάλλουσαν **χάριν** τοῦ θεοῦ (9.14)	*grace*	*grace*	*grace*	*grace*	*grace*	*grace*
Χάρις τῷ θεῷ (9.15)	*thanks*	*thanks*	*thanks*	*thanks*	*thanks*	*thanks*

Initial observations from Table 1.1 reveal that in four instances χάρις is consistently translated "grace":[4] the "grace of God" in 8.1, the "grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" in 8.9, "all grace" in 9.8 and the "surpassing grace of God" in 9.14. In each case the translators have either specified or implied that *divine* grace is intended. In these four verses, the rendering of χάρις as "grace" is straightforward; the deeper

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[3] In addition to these ten occurrences of χάρις, the cognate εὐχαριστία occurs twice in 2 Corinthians 8-9.

[4] The only exceptions are the NRSV renderings "generous act" and "blessing" in 8.9 and 9.8, respectively.

significance of the term, however, will be drawn out through the exegesis of the various passages. In two instances χάρις is translated "thanks" in the phrase χάρις τῷ θεῷ, again consistently translated across the board in these versions.

It is the remaining four occurrences of χάρις in 8.4, 6, 7, 19, in conjunction with the previous six instances that make this passage so intriguing. This variety of renderings for χάρις indicates the diversity of senses the term can be used to convey. What is of interest to my research, however, is not that χάρις can convey such a variety of senses, but that it occurs so often, and yet with such diversity, in such a short space of text. It is certainly no coincidence that Paul has chosen to use χάρις so frequently, yet diversely, in this discussion regarding the collection. My aim is to understand the reasons why he has done so.

The centrality of grace in Paul's theology is universally recognized, and a key text relating to Pauline grace is that of Romans 5-6. As in 2 Corinthians 8-9, the term χάρις also occurs ten times in these two chapters in Romans, but on a per word basis, it occurs with less frequency than in 2 Corinthians 8-9.[5] Of course Romans 5-6 is part of a wider discussion, but for the sake of comparison with 2 Corinthians 8-9, the English renderings of χάρις can also be compared in these two chapters in Romans using the same English versions from the table above. In contrast to the varied translations in 2 Corinthians 8-9, the *only* English rendering for χάρις in Romans 5-6 is "grace", with the one exception of Rom. 6.17,[6] where it is used to convey "thanks" to God in a common Hellenistic expression which also occurs twice in 2 Corinthians 8-9. Paul's reason for using χάρις as a central term in his discussion with the Corinthians regarding the collection is clearly different from that of Romans 5-6. In the latter, Paul's theology of grace is central to his discussion of the superiority of grace over sin, while in 2 Corinthians 8-9 grace is applied to the practical matter of giving. If grace is so central to Paul's theology, and if χάρις is the term that he uses to convey grace, what theological purpose does he have in mind through the frequent use of χάρις in 2 Corinthians 8-9? What theological significance does Paul attach to the collection project by allowing the term χάρις to permeate his discussion? Or, more generally stated, what

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[5] Using Accordance Bible Software (Accordance 6.4, OakTree Software, Altamonte Springs, Fla., 2004), the frequency of occurrence of χάρις in 2 Corinthians 8-9 is calculated as 14.4 occurrences per 1000 words, while in Romans 5-6 it is only 12.5 per 1000.

[6] The same phrase occurs again in Rom. 7.25.

theological significance does Paul assign to the practical matter of giving? I believe the answers to these questions can be found through an integrated analysis which considers Paul's theology of grace as well as χάρις usage in the Graeco-Roman sociocultural context of benefit exchange.

1.3. The Collection for the Saints in Jerusalem[7]

Although this thesis is not primarily concerned with the collection, I want to present some relevant issues and significant research from the past century to set the stage for my work. The collection for the saints in Jerusalem was a project undertaken by Paul among the believing communities he founded around the Mediterranean basin with the aim of supplying financial relief to the church in Jerusalem. Scholars recognize that the collection, mentioned explicitly in 1 Cor. 16.1-4, 2 Corinthians 8-9 and Rom. 15.25-27, occupied a significant amount of time and effort in Paul's later ministry years.[8] Much research on the collection, often included in broader studies, is limited to an historical study of the events mentioned in the respective passages.[9] Others have undertaken more focused attempts at better discerning the origin and motives lying behind this charitable effort.[10]

1.3.1. The Origin of the Collection

I stated above that Paul explicitly discusses the collection in three passages. In 1 Cor. 16.1-4, he clarifies the means by which he intends the Corinthians to set aside funds, offering instructions he has previously given to the Galatians. He also asks the Corinthians to appoint delegates for the collection's delivery to Jerusalem. In 2 Corinthians 8-9, where it seems that the Corinthians have reneged on their original

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[7] In different texts that mention this undertaking, the project is variously referred to as "the collection for the saints" (1 Cor. 16.1), a "ministry to the saints" (2 Cor. 8.4; 9.1) and a contribution for "the poor among the saints in Jerusalem" (Rom. 15.27). In my study, therefore, I will often refer to "the collection for the saints in Jerusalem" simply as "the collection". In this thesis I do not use "the saints" in the biblical sense as a general designation for believers (οἱ ἅγιοι). Thus, when it is used unqualified, "the saints" refers to the recipients of the collection.

[8] The issue of the connection of Gal. 2.10 with the collection will be addressed below.

[9] Early examples include: W. J. Conybeare and J. S. Howson, *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul* (London: Longman, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1853), 1.236, 2.120-21; W. M. Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1895), 48-60; 286-88.

[10] See examples as presented in support of the ensuing discussion.

commitment to contribute, Paul finds it necessary to motivate them to follow through on their promise. When writing Rom. 15.25-27, Paul indicates that Macedonia and Achaia have already contributed toward the collection, and he tells of his plan to deliver their gifts to Jerusalem. A fourth passage, which is often discussed as a "collection passage", is Gal. 2.10. In Gal. 2.1-10, Paul describes the meeting at Jerusalem at which he and Barnabas receive acknowledgement of their mission to the Gentiles, and are granted the "right hand of fellowship" from the Jerusalem leaders. Paul concludes in verse 10 by saying, the Jerusalem leaders only asked them "to remember the poor", which Paul says he was eager to do.

This reference to "remembering the poor" has often been assumed to reflect an agreement that lies behind the origin of the collection project, an agreement between the Jerusalem leaders and Paul (together with Barnabas) that the latter would collect funds to help relieve the poverty of the Jerusalem believers. Many commentators, simply accepting this to be the case, discuss the collection without making any effort to defend this assumption.[11] For several reasons, however, this assumption is rightly questioned. First, in none of the explicit collection passages does Paul connect the project to an agreement between himself and the Jerusalem leaders. Secondly, a relief offering had apparently already been delivered to Jerusalem from Antioch, and the request in Gal. 2.9-10 to "remember the poor" was directed toward Paul and Barnabas as representatives of the Antioch church. Therefore, the present subjunctive μνημονεύωμεν in the phrase "that we remember the poor" may have been a request to continue such benevolent activity. If this request were specifically directed toward the Antioch church, then the intent would have been for this community to continue to provide aid for the poor believers in Jerusalem. It is just as possible, however, that the Jerusalem leaders, having acknowledged Paul's mission to Gentiles in general, were not directing their request only to Antioch, but were asking that Paul provide aid to the needy wherever he encountered them as part of sharing the Christian gospel among

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[11] Representative of this *assumption* is the unsupported comment by Larry Hurtado: "It is, of course, well known that the Jerusalem collection is mentioned in Gal 2:10 . . . ;" Larry W. Hurtado, "The Jerusalem Collection and the Book of Galatians", *JSNT* 5 (1979): 50. For Hurtado, this assumption is the basis for his entire article. See also Lambrecht, 142; Best, 75; Francis Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles: A Sociological Approach*, SNTSMS 55 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 174-75; J. R. Willis, "Collection", in *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church*, ed. J. Hastings (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1915), 223-25.

Gentiles.[12] Thirdly, it has been argued that when Paul distanced himself from the Antioch community as a result of the conflict described in Gal. 2.11-14, he would no longer have been obliged by an agreement between the Jerusalem leaders and the Antioch church, if indeed Gal. 2.10 were the basis for such an agreement. In other words, the collection project that Paul later initiated could not be viewed as having originated in any such agreement. Fourthly, Karl Holl has proposed that "the poor" is a self-designation for the believers in Jerusalem who, because of their higher status as Jewish believers in the mother church, imposed a tax upon the Gentile communities, forcing them to acknowledge their indebtedness to Jerusalem. Holl's thesis regarding "the poor" as a designation for "the saints" of Jerusalem has been shown to be unlikely, however, making an agreement between Paul and the Jerusalem leaders in the form of a tax to raise funds for the Jerusalem community also untenable.[13] Finally, if the collection had originated in an agreement with the Jerusalem leaders, Paul should have had no reason to doubt that the offering would be accepted upon its delivery. In writing to the Romans, however, he is compelled to ask for their prayers, that his service of delivering the collection would prove acceptable to the saints in Jerusalem (ἡ διακονία μου ἡ εἰς Ἰερουσαλὴμ εὐπρόσδεκτος τοῖς ἁγίοις γένηται; Rom. 15.31).

It is more likely that the intent of the request to "remember the poor" in Gal. 2.10 was a plea for the famine relief aid from Antioch to continue, but the request may have planted the seed in Paul's mind which later came to fruition in the form of the voluntary collection project he organized. I find the arguments above to distance Gal. 2.10 from the origin of the collection project to be convincing, and therefore the relevance of Gal. 2.10 for my study is doubtful.[14]

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[12] For a proposal regarding this latter view, see Bruce Longenecker, "'Remember the poor' (Gal. 2:10): A 'Non-Centripetal' Reading of an Apostolic Stipulation", paper presented at the British NT Conference (Edinburgh, 2-4 Sept 2004). F. Clarke interprets Gal. 2.10a to mean that the Jerusalem leaders supported Paul's mission to the Gentiles "*provided that the poor were the focus of mission*"; Fern K. T. Clarke, "'Remembering the Poor': Does Galatians 2.10a allude to the Collection?" *ScrB* 31, no. 1 (Jan 2001): 28 (emphasis in original). Thus remembering the poor was not an agreement for supplying the needs of the saints in Jerusalem, but was a condition that the Gentile mission have as its focus the poor and needy.

[13] Karl Holl, "Der Kirchenbegriff des Paulus in seinem Verhältnis zu dem der Urgemeinde", in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1928), 58-62. For a convincing refutation of Holl's argument, see Leander E. Keck, "The Poor among the Saints in the New Testament", *ZNW* 56 (1965): 54-78.

[14] Support for distancing Gal. 2.10 from the collection dates back as far as Vernon Bartlet, "Only Let Us Be Mindful of the Poor", *Exp* 5/9 (1899): 218-25. Most

1.3.2. Motives for the Collection

Four primary motives have been suggested as potentially lying behind the collection for the saints in Jerusalem: the collection (1) as an act of philanthropy; (2) as a means of promoting unity in the church between Gentile and Jewish believers; (3) as an eschatological act; and (4) as the repayment of a debt. In the course of this thesis, I will add a fifth motive for the collection, the motive of *grace*, which I will show accounts for Paul's abundant use of χάρις in 2 Corinthians 8-9.

1.3.2.1. The motive of philanthropy

The most obvious motive is that of providing relief for the Jerusalem Christian community. Paul, having been aware of the situation of poverty in Jerusalem, organized a voluntary collection from among the Gentile churches he founded in order to help relieve the suffering.[15] As the only motivation explicitly mentioned by Paul, the provision of financial aid may rightly be considered the primary motive for the collection.[16]

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arguments view Gal. 2.10 in connection with the relief aid provided by Antioch: see A. J. M. Wedderburn, *The Reasons for Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1988, 1991), 37-47; Nicholas Taylor, *Paul, Antioch and Jerusalem: A Study in Relationships and Authority in Earliest Christianity*, JSNTSup 66 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 198-99; J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 33A (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 223-28; François Vouga, *An die Galater*, HNT 10 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 49-50; Thrall, 504-12; A. J. M. Wedderburn, "Paul's Collection: Chronology and History", *NTS* 48, no. 1 (2002): 96-101; Longenecker, "A 'Non-Centripetal' Reading". Another view that also separates Gal. 2.10 from the collection project is that of L. Legrand who views the request for Paul to "remember the poor" as much more than a request for financial aid. With separate Jewish and Gentile missions in operation, there was the risk of increasing conflict between the two groups. The charge for Paul to remember the poor of Jerusalem was thus a charge to carry out his mission in such a way that would maintain positive relations between the two groups. By "remembering the poor", he was to keep the Jewish believers in mind as he carried out his mission. To provide financial assistance would have been a secondary meaning or outworking of the first. See Lucien Legrand, "That We Remember the Poor: The Conclusion of the Jerusalem Synod According to Gal 2:10", *ITS* 32, no. 1/2 (March/June 1995): 161-73.

[15] Although there is reason to doubt Gal. 2.10 as the origin of the collection, it seems likely that "the poor" here refers to the socioeconomic situation of the Jerusalem believers. Their need is likewise referred to in 2 Cor. 8.14, 9.12, and in Rom. 15.26 it is clear that the collection is aimed at helping "the poor among the saints in Jerusalem".

[16] In Barrett's words, "There should be little doubt that the primary significance of the collection in Paul's eyes was that it brought financial help from Gentile Christians who, though not wealthy, were relatively better off, to Jewish Christians in Jerusalem who were poor"; Barrett, 27.

1.3.2.2. The motive of unity

It has been universally understood that Paul viewed the collection as a means of bridging the gap that existed between the Jewish believers in Palestine and those of the Gentile communities established by Paul. Such a contribution from the Gentile communities for the needs of those in the "mother church" in Jerusalem would be a large step toward establishing unity between the two groups. Recent scholars as well as those writing in previous centuries have recognized this underlying motive.[17] This motive of unifying the different groups of believers has been proposed from different standpoints. The Gentiles' contribution, when viewed as the return of a debt, i.e. a material return for spiritual benefits received through Jerusalem (Rom 15.27), is seen as solidifying the relationship between Jerusalem and the believing Gentiles.[18] Nicholas Taylor speculates that Antioch and Jerusalem had established a harmonious relationship, evidenced by the famine relief provided by Antioch for Jerusalem (Acts 11.27-30) and Jerusalem's request for the church in Antioch to continue remembering the Jerusalem poor (Gal. 2.10). Taylor suggests that, based on this relationship, Paul desired to establish a similar rapport between his churches and the community in Jerusalem, and that the collection may have been conceived with this objective in mind.[19] In any event, such a contribution for the needs of the believers in Jerusalem, when viewed as an act of love performed by the Gentile communities, would evidence the grace of God at work in them – God's presence among the Gentiles – and would serve to help unify the two groups.[20]

1.3.2.3. The eschatological motive

A third motive is found in Johannes Munck's proposal that Paul viewed the delivery of the collection to Jerusalem by delegates of the Gentile communities as fulfilling eschatological prophecies that would move the Jews to jealousy resulting in

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[17] See Conybeare and Howson, *Life and Epistles* (vol. 2), 121; Abraham J. Malherbe, "The Corinthian Contribution", *ResQ* 3 (1959): 227; Furnish, 411.

[18] Malherbe, "Corinthian Contribution", 225; C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, ICC (London: T&T Clark, 1975, 1979), 773; Thrall, 514; Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 905-06.

[19] Taylor, *Paul, Antioch and Jerusalem*, 199.

[20] It has also been suggested that Paul viewed the collection as a means for fostering unity within the separate Gentile communities, specifically Corinth. See Malherbe, "Corinthian Contribution", 225, n. 18.

their conversion.[21] Although accepted by many,[22] this proposal has been challenged as improbable for the following reasons. Paul does not mention this eschatological motif (or refer to any of the pertinent Old Testament passages)[23] when discussing the collection, nor does he mention the collection as contributing to the eschatological motif in Romans 9-11. If Paul had believed that the delivery of the collection would be the eschatological event that would move Israel to jealousy and conversion, this would mean that the "fullness of the Gentiles" would have been accomplished (Rom. 11.25). In other words, Paul's mission to the Gentiles would need to have been completed by the time the collection was delivered to Jerusalem. In writing to the Romans, however, Paul tells of his plans to continue his mission with a new work in Spain, and thus he does not seem to envision the imminent completion of his mission. For these reasons it seems unlikely that Paul would have had this eschatological perspective in mind for the collection.[24]

1.3.2.4. The motive of obligation

A fourth motive is based on Paul's comments in Rom. 15.26-27 where the collection is portrayed as the repayment of a debt. Paul writes that although the churches in Macedonia and Achaia were "pleased" (εὐδόκησαν) to make a contribution toward the collection, they were also "indebted" (ὀφειλέται εἰσὶν) to do so, "for if the Gentiles shared in spiritual things, they are obliged also to minister to them [the believers in Jerusalem] in material things" (εἰ γὰρ τοῖς πνευματικοῖς αὐτῶν ἐκοινώνησαν τὰ ἔθνη, ὀφείλουσιν καὶ ἐν τοῖς σαρκικοῖς λειτουργῆσαι αὐτοῖς; 15.27). Abraham Malherbe emphasizes the reciprocal nature of the Gentiles' contributions, and says, "For Paul it is quite reasonable that beneficiaries of spiritual blessings should reciprocate with material blessings. The Gentiles are actually in debt to the Jews, because they share in their spiritual blessings, and they can be expected to respond with material gifts".[25] Malherbe further equates the "reciprocity" of Rom.

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[21] Johannes Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*, trans. F. Clarke (London: SCM, 1954, 1959), 301-305.

[22] Dieter Georgi, *Remembering the Poor: The History of Paul's Collection for Jerusalem* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1992), 72-73; Keith F. Nickle, *The Collection: A Study in Paul's Strategy*, SBT 48 (London: SCM, 1966), 129-42; Furnish, 412.

[23] Isa. 2.2-3; 60.5-6; Mic. 4.1-2.

[24] For more detailed discussion of the challenge to Munck's proposal, see Thrall, 512-13; Harris, 98-99.

[25] Malherbe, "Corinthian Contribution", 224-25.

15.26-27 with the "equality" Paul mentions in 2 Cor. 8.13-14.[26] In fact, Malherbe suggests that by discussing the collection in terms of "grace" in 2 Corinthians 8-9, Paul is essentially using the same concept of reciprocity as in Rom. 15.26-27.[27] I believe it is more appropriate to interpret Paul's use of grace terminology as emphasizing the voluntary nature of the collection, rather than as emphasizing obligation, and therefore I do not agree with Malherbe's suggestions here. The issue of reciprocity and obligation will be further addressed in §7.3 below.

1.3.3. Previous Studies of the Collection

Two of the most significant works to date on the collection are Dieter Georgi's *Remembering the Poor,* which first appeared in German in 1965,[28] and Keith Nickle's *The Collection: A Study in Paul's Strategy*, published just one year later in 1966. Other important works on the subject include Burkhard Beckheuer's *Paulus und Jerusalem: Kollekte und Mission im theologischen Denken des Heidenapostels* and Stephan Joubert's *Paul as Benefactor*.[29] Joubert's work incorporates socio-historical research in a theological study of the collection and thus is relevant to my own work. Because of Joubert's approach I will discuss his work in Chapter 2, while I give attention to Nickle and Georgi here.

1.3.3.1. Keith Nickle, The Collection: A Study in Paul's Strategy

Nickle views the collection as "the first venture which was consciously inaugurated for the purpose of restoring the disrupted unity of the Church".[30] He first surveys the texts which address the collection. Next, he considers analogies to the collection in contemporary Judaism. Finally, he discusses the collection's theological significance. In his *heilsgeschichtliche* approach he finds significance in the collection

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[26] Malherbe, "Corinthian Contribution", 224, n. 17.
[27] Malherbe, "Corinthian Contribution", 229.
[28] Dieter Georgi, *Die Geschichte der Kollekte des Paulus für Jerusalem* (Hamburg-Bergstedt: Herbert Reich, 1965), was later published in English as Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, and then revised in German under a new title (the German translation of the English title), Dieter Georgi, *Der Armen zu gedenken: Die Geschichte der Kollekte des Paulus für Jerusalem*, 2nd rev. & exp. ed. (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1994).
[29] Burkhard Beckheuer, *Paulus und Jerusalem: Kollekte und Mission im theologischen Denken des Heidenapostels* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1997); Stephan Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor: Reciprocity, Strategy and Theological Reflection in Paul's Collection*, WUNT II/124 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000).
[30] Nickle, *Collection*, 9.

as an instrument intended to prod unbelieving Jews to profess faith in Christ, a purpose for which the collection proved to be a great failure. Nickle concludes that the project was a success, however, both as a work of Christian charity and as a demonstration of unity between Jewish and Gentile communities. An important contribution of Nickle's work is his consideration of the Jewish temple tax as a model for the collection. Although there are significant differences between the temple tax and Paul's implementation of the collection, the numerous similarities strongly suggest that Paul may have borrowed conceptually from the tax, both in its administrative implementation and in its symbolic significance for Jews in the diaspora.[31]

1.3.3.2. Dieter Georgi, Remembering the Poor: The History of Paul's Collection for Jerusalem

Georgi traces the history of the collection through an exegesis of passages from Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Romans and Philippians. Beginning with an analysis of the Jerusalem conference and what Georgi determines was the original beginning for the collection in the "contractual accord"[32] of Gal. 2.10, his reconstruction consists of a number of starts and stops for the collection, with different motives and reasons lying behind the different stages. Georgi interprets the charge "to remember the poor" to mean that the Gentile congregation of Antioch with whom the agreement was originally made ought "to honor the demonstrative eschatological status of the congregation at Jerusalem and to assist that congregation both morally and economically".[33] In other words, the original request was not simply for economic assistance. With regard to 2 Corinthians 8-9, Paul was concerned to see the grace of God at work in the inner lives of the Corinthian believers, as it had been with the Macedonians. When Paul restarted the collection as an independent project, he had in mind the collection serving a unifying function for the Gentile communities and Jerusalem: "Paul was eager to show that his mission had resulted, not in the establishment of some disintegrated clubs, but in genuine communities willing to remember in gratitude their origin and, hence, were bound to the church as an ecumenical body".[34]

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[31] Nickle, *Collection*, 74-93, 99.
[32] Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 31.
[33] Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 42.
[34] Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 55.

1.3.3.3. Other studies of the Collection

The collection has been the topic of research for postgraduates in the past, and continues to be so.[35] Likewise, numerous works draw out practical implications from studies of the collection.[36] As an activity involving communities in diverse locations and appearing in several of Paul's letters, the collection becomes potentially quite useful in attempting to compile chronology, and over the years many scholars have applied the evidence of the collection in proposing various chronologies of Paul's life and ministry.[37] The importance of the role that the collection plays in Pauline studies is

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[35] A sampling of dissertations includes those of Wilbur M. Franklin, *Die Kollekte des Paulus* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1938); Hinton F. Folsom, "Paul's Collection for the Jerusalem Christians" (Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1949); and more recently, Richard Gordon Thompson, "Paul's Collection for the Jerusalem Church and the Inclusion of the Gentiles" (Th.M. thesis, Regent College, 2000). More specialized undertakings related to the collection include Steven S. H. Chang, "Fund-Raising in Corinth: A Socio-Economic Study of the Corinthian Church, the Collection and 2 Corinthians" (Ph.D. diss., University of Aberdeen, 2000); Debbie Watson, "Paul's Collection in Light of Motivations and Mechanisms for Aid to the Poor in the Graeco-Roman and Jewish World" (Ph.D. diss., University of Durham, Forthcoming).

[36] F. Rendall, "The Pauline Collection for the Saints", *Exp* 4/8 (1893): 321-36; Oscar Cullmann, "The Early Church and the Ecumenical Problem", *AThR* 40, no. 3-4 (1958): 181-89, 294-301; (see also Oscar Cullmann, *A Message to Catholics and Protestants* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959).); Klaus Berger, "Almosen für Israel", *NTS* 23 (1977): 180-204; Salvatore Garofalo, "Un chef d'oeuvre pastoral de Paul: la collecte", in *Paul de Tarse; apotre du notre temps*, ed. G. Benelli (Rome: Abbaye de S Paul, 1979): 575-93; Wilhelm C. Linss, "The First World Hunger Appeal", *CurTM* 12 (Aug 1985): 211-19; David Horrell, "Paul's Collection: Resources for a Materialist Theology", *EpRev* 22, no. 2 (May 1995): 74-83; Alexander Strauch, "The Interdependence of Local Churches", *EmJ* 6, no. 2 (Win 1997): 189-212; and James Chacko, "Collection in the Early Church", *ETR* 24, no. 2 (2000): 177-83.

[37] See E. Bernard Allo, "La portée de la collecte pour Jérusalem dans les plans de Saint Paul", *RB* 45 (1936): 529-37; John Knox, "'Fourteen Years Later' – A Note on the Pauline Chronology", *JR* 16 (1936): 341-49; John Knox, "The Pauline Chronology", *JBL* 58 (1939); John Knox, *Chapters in a Life of Paul* (London: A & C Black, 1950, 1954); Paul S. Minear, "The Jerusalem Fund and the Pauline Chronology", *AThR* 25 (1943): 389-96; Charles H. Buck, Jr., "The Collection for the Saints", *HTR* 43, no. 1 (Jan 1950): 1-27; S. Dockx, "Chronologie paulinienne de l'année de la grande collecte", *RB* 81 (Apr 1974): 183-95; Gerd Lüdemann, *Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles: Studies in Chronology*, trans. F. S. Jones (London: SCM, 1980, 1984); J. Louis Martyn, "The Collections for the Jerusalem Church and the Chronological Place of Galatians in the Pauline Letter Corpus", in *Galatians*, AB 33A (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 222-28. Wedderburn, "Paul's Collection": 95-110, takes a new look at Pauline chronology from a perspective that separates the collection from the "agreement" of Gal. 2.9-10. An integral part of Georgi's work, *Remembering the Poor*, entails establishing the chronology of events connected with the collection.

highlighted by the fact that numerous commentaries address the issue in the introductory material, while others include a separate article or excursus which examines the collection.[38]

1.4. Studies of "Grace" and the Collection

Although virtually every study of the collection highlights "grace" as a significant element in 2 Corinthians 8-9, no study has adequately explored the full significance of Paul's use of χάρις as a motivation for the project. Below are some of the contributions and deficiencies of scholarship in this area.

1.4.1. χάρις in Nickle's The Collection

Nickle's discussion of χάρις with regard to the collection is based on the understanding of God's grace in Christ as the essence of Paul's theology.[39] His discussion of χάρις is limited to two sections in Chapter 4: The Theological Significance of the Collection. One section where χάρις is discussed is concerned with Christian charity,[40] while the other pertains to the eschatological significance of the collection.[41] Since the Greek term χάρις does not exclusively mean "grace",[42] Nickle's use of terminology is a bit precarious: the subheading in each section is "χάρις", while in the discussion, he uses the English term "grace". It seems clear enough that when he

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[38] C. K. Barrett, "III. Special Problems; (b) The Collection", in *Second Corinthians*, BNTC 8 (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1973), 25-28; Hans Dieter Betz, "Excursus: The Collection for Jerusalem", in *Galatians*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 103; Victor Paul Furnish, "The Collection Project in Paul's Ministry", in *II Corinthians*, AB 32A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984), 409-13; Ralph P. Martin, "Excursus: Note on the Pauline Collection", in *2 Corinthians*, WBC 40 (Waco, TX: Word, 1986), 256-58; Ben Witherington, III, "A Closer Look: Paul and the Collection", in *Conflict and Community in Corinth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 428-28; Martyn, "Collections", 222-28; J. Paul Sampley, "Excursus: The Jerusalem Conference and the Collection for the Poor", in *The New Interpreter's Bible* 11 (Nashville: Abingdon, 2000), 113-15; Margaret E. Thrall, "Introduction [to the Collection Chapters of 2 Cor. 8.1-9.15]", in *2 Corinthians*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 503-20; Murray J. Harris, "Paul's Collection for Jerusalem", in *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 87-101. See also Scot McKnight, "Collection for the Saints", in *DPL*, eds. G. F. Hawthorne and R. P. Martin (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993), 143-47.

[39] Nickle, *Collection*, 109.

[40] Nickle, *Collection*, 109-10.

[41] Nickle, *Collection*, 135-36.

[42] The various uses of χάρις will be discussed in the course of this thesis, but the meanings attributed to it include *favor, goodwill, gift* and *thanks*, in addition to *grace*; BDAG, s.v. χάρις.

surrounds grace with quotation marks, he means χάρις, but since he does include Greek throughout his book, these particular discussions would have been enhanced by using the Greek rather than the English term. In Paul's discussion of the collection, particularly in 2 Corinthians 8-9 where he uses χάρις ten times to convey a variety of meanings, it is precisely the ambiguity of the term that enriches his discussion, a point which is all but lost in Nickle's consideration of "grace".

Nickle finds the term χάρις[43] *applied to* the collection, but without probing the depths of the significance of *why* Paul gives the term such a key role in 2 Corinthians 8-9.[44] For Nickle, even in Paul's varied use of the term in connection with the collection, χάρις is "always closely related to the free gift of redemption in Jesus Christ",[45] although he fails to explain *how* Paul's diverse uses of χάρις are related to "the free gift". In Nickle's understanding of the eschatological significance of the collection, the collection serves both "as a verification of the grace of Paul's ministry and evidence that the grace of God had been given to the Gentiles",[46] the latter contributing toward moving the Jews to jealousy and then conversion through the eschatological promises. Nickle finds Paul's use of "grace" as applied to the collection rooted in the Jewish usage of the Old Testament in connection with the covenantal relationship between God and man. It would be helpful, however, if he discussed this in more detail or offered Old Testament examples to correlate with Paul's usage.

In summary, Nickle identifies Paul's varied use of χάρις with regard to the collection, and he links Paul's use of the term to the free gift of redemption in Jesus Christ. He implies that the use of the term χάρις contributes to the significance of the collection as an act of Christian charity, but he fails to develop this point. In connection with the eschatological significance, Nickle finds that the collection, as evidence of the surpassing grace of God in the Gentiles, was an instrument of the saving grace of God to Israel. Nickle does not consider other potential influences upon Paul's use of the term, such as that of the Graeco-Roman world. His discussion of the collection passages would be enhanced by detailed exegesis, which would allow him to draw out more of

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[43] Where Nickle's biblical citations make it clear that by "grace" he means occurrences of χάρις I have chosen to use the Greek term to avoid the ambiguity discussed above.

[44] Nickle, *Collection*, 110.

[45] Nickle, *Collection*, 136.

[46] Nickle, *Collection*, 136.

the theological significance of Paul's uses of χάρις. Nickle's book has made a significant contribution to collection studies but leaves the door wide open for further work regarding Paul's use of χάρις in connection with the collection project.

1.4.2. χάρις in Georgi's Remembering the Poor

Georgi finds the significance of Paul's use of χάρις in 2 Corinthians 8-9 in the fact that the Macedonians' initiative in participating in the project was not at Paul's bidding, but rather occurred "as if it were a gesture of grace performed by God for the sake of the Macedonians (8.1)".[47] Until this particular visit to Macedonia, the collection had been Paul's undertaking, his initiative. The Macedonians, however, surprised Paul by themselves taking the initiative in requesting to participate (8.4), which Paul could only attribute to the grace of God at work in them. It is for this reason, says Georgi, that Paul made χάρις the very *leitmotif* of 2 Corinthians 8-9, for, at least among the Macedonians, "the collection originated in and was performed by the grace of God".[48] Thus, it was the grace of God effecting the Macedonians' motivation that resulted in their involvement: "The true subject matter under debate [in 2 Cor. 8.1-5] is the inner involvement of the Macedonian congregation and the foundation of their involvement in God's own action".[49] Georgi finds Paul substantiating this fact with the Christological formula of 8.9, thus enabling the grace of God seen at work in the Macedonians to apply to the Corinthians as well. "The χάρις referred to here", writes Georgi, "is interrelated with everything called χάρις elsewhere in chapters 8 and 9 that refers to the collection".[50] I am not convinced that Paul only chose to use χάρις terminology after witnessing the Macedonians' God-initiated involvement in the collection, and I will argue that Paul's use of χάρις to refer to the Corinthians' collection gift in 1 Cor. 16.3 suggests that he already thought of the project as a work of grace. The fact, however, that Georgi can say that the grace of God lies behind the entire endeavor, and therefore the use of χάρις as the *leitmotiv* in these two chapters is appropriate, draws us closer to the full significance of the term's usage.

Georgi's insights regarding the interrelatedness of the shades of meanings of χάρις in 2 Corinthians 8-9, the emphasis on the work of God's grace upon the inner

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[47] Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 72.
[48] Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 72.
[49] Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 81.
[50] Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 83.

motivations of the giver, and the central place of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in the discussion all appear, at first glance, to point at the heart of the issue. His exegesis of 8.13-14, however, reveals that Georgi actually has in mind something much more subtle. He understands ἰσότης (8.13-14) from the perspective of Hellenistic-Jewish wisdom, where this term for *equality* takes on causative force, so that the phrase ἐξ ἰσότητος (v. 13) approaches in meaning ἐκ θεοῦ and becomes equivalent to ἐκ χάριτος. In this discussion, it seems that this cosmic principle or force approaches what Georgi calls "grace" (but not χάρις). In this context, all involvement in the collection may be seen as a "work of grace", that is, an empowering by the causative force.[51] Paul's various uses of χάρις in 2 Corinthians 8-9 thus reflect the influence of this cosmic force enabling believers to participate in and benefit from the collection. For Georgi, this "grace" becomes both the motivation and the "theological meaning" behind the collection.[52]

Although many of Georgi's comments regarding χάρις and the involvement of the Macedonians and the Corinthians in the collection are quite helpful when considered independent of this Hellenistic-Jewish wisdom interpretation, I do not see Paul's use of χάρις reflecting the influence of this causative force in terms of empowering grace. In my exegesis of 2 Cor. 8.13-14, I will argue against his view of ἰσότης and offer my own interpretation of what Paul means by "equality".

1.4.3. Other Studies of Grace

While some of the classical works on grace, such as those by Manson and Moffatt, provide biblical studies of the concept in the New Testament and in Paul,[53] these studies are limited by their approach and lack of consideration of social, cultural and other possible influences on Paul's thinking and terminology.[54] Others, however,

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[51] Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 82.

[52] See Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 84-91.

[53] Such as W. M. Manson, "Grace in the New Testament", in *The Doctrine of Grace*, ed. W. T. Whitley (London: SCM, 1932), and James Moffatt, *Grace in the New Testament* (New York: Long & Smith, 1932).

[54] Even studies relatively more recent, such as E. E. Flack, "The Concept of Grace in Biblical Thought", in *Biblical Studies in Memory of H. C. Alleman*, eds. J. M. Myers, O. Reimherr, and H. N. Bream (Locust Valley, NY: J. J. Agustin, 1960), 137-54, attempt to separate Paul's understanding of grace from the surrounding world: "Paul's idea of grace is not . . . a heritage from Hellenistic Judaism, the mystery religions, or the Hermetica, but a rich reality of his own personal experience of Christ" (Flack, "Concept of Grace", 147).

such as Wetter, have been more astute in looking for influences on Paul's thinking regarding grace in the realm of the world in which he lived,[55] but of course do not have the benefit of more recent scholarship.

Over the years there have been a number of more specialized studies on the topic of grace by Walter Grundmann (1958), Raymond Surburg (1958), Thomas Schulz (1971), Michael Theobald (1982), Dieter Zeller (1990), Brad Eastman (1999), and Stephen Turnbull (2004),[56] to name a few, each study making a contribution in its own right. None, however, adequately addresses Paul's use of χάρις in 2 Corinthians 8-9.

More recently, however, there has been an interest in the practices of giving and receiving in terms of Graeco-Roman patronage and benefaction. Frederick Danker has done a great service by examining the inscriptions for benefaction terminology and drawing attention to the occurrences of these terms in the New Testament.[57] Although he identifies χάρις as a key term, his discussions fall short of a satisfactory study of the relevance of the term as it applies to Paul's discussions of the collection. David deSilva recognizes that the writers and readers of the New Testament, being already familiar with the use of χάρις in a secular sense, would be unlikely to completely disregard such concepts, even when presented with entirely new dimensions of grace in the gospel message.[58] DeSilva helpfully identifies the Graeco-Roman concepts of grace, and suggests how they would have influenced the thinking about grace as it is discussed in the New Testament. James Harrison has also made a significant contribution to the

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[55] Gillis P. Wetter, *Charis: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des ältesten Christentums*, UNT 5 (Leipzig: Oscar Brandstetter, 1913), is one of the first to look for parallels with Paul's usage in the inscriptions. See also Manson, "Grace", 38-39.

[56] Walter Grundmann, "Die Übermacht der Gnade: Eine Studie zur Theologie des Paulus", *NovT* 2 (1958): 50-72; Raymond F. Surburg, "Pauline Charis: A Philological, Exegetical, and Dogmatic Study", *CTM* 29 (1958): 721-41, 812-22; Thomas N. Schulz, *The Meaning of Charis in the New Testament* (Genova: Laterna, 1971); Michael Theobald, *Die überströmende Gnade: Studien zu einem paulinischen Motivfeld*, FB 22 (Würzburg: Echter, 1982); Dieter Zeller, *Charis bei Philon und Paulus*, SBS 142 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1990); Brad Eastman, *The Significance of Grace in the Letters of Paul*, SBLit 11 (New York: Peter Lang, 1999); Stephen K. Turnbull, "The 2003-2004 Essay Prize for Doctoral Candidates: Grace and Gift in Luther and Paul", *WW* 24, no. 3 (Summer 2004): 305-14. See also A. Boyd Luter, Jr., "Grace", in *DPL*, eds. G. F. Hawthorne and R. P. Martin (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993), 372-74.

[57] Frederick W. Danker, *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Graeco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field* (St. Louis: Clayton Publishing House, 1982).

[58] David A. deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000).

study of grace by considering Paul's grace language in its Graeco-Roman context.[59] All of these resources provide significant background material, but fall short of satisfactorily integrating their findings in Graeco-Roman discourse with Paul's use of χάρις in his discussion of the collection in 2 Corinthians 8-9.[60]

1.5. The Approach of this Present Work

A significant amount of research has in the past been applied both to the collection project and to Paul's theology of grace. In this thesis I will combine these topics by incorporating recent contributions in the area of socio-historical studies which have shed new light on the use of χάρις terminology in the Graeco-Roman world. The collection project was a matter of giving and receiving – common practices in a world where benefit exchange was an essential element of society and where χάρις was a common benefaction term. Paul uses the term χάρις abundantly in 2 Corinthians 8-9 along with other common Graeco-Roman benefaction vocabulary. How, then, does Paul's discussion of giving and receiving as it relates to the collection, and specifically his use of χάρις terminology, both correspond to and deviate from the Graeco-Roman conventions of benefit exchange? Since *grace* is theologically foundational to Paul's theology, what, if anything, is unique regarding Paul's use of χάρις terminology as it relates to the collection? What difference, if any, does divine grace make in the giving (and receiving) involved in the collection, or for that matter, in all Christian giving (and receiving)?

To arrive at the answers to these and other questions posed above, my study will proceed as follows. The following chapter, Chapter 2, will survey recent studies that address the topic of Graeco-Roman benefaction and reciprocity, including secular usage of χάρις. In Chapter 3, a model of benefit exchange proposed by the Stoic philosopher Seneca will be examined, from which comparison will be made with Paul's expressions of giving and receiving with regard to the collection. Seneca's model, which he presented as the ideal, is by no means definitive of Graeco-Roman benefaction. I have chosen to use Seneca since, among the philosophers, his discussion of benefit exchange is the most coherent and systematic. The Seneca model provides a framework within which a Pauline model can be discussed. Having considered the Graeco-Roman

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[59] James R. Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace in its Graeco-Roman Context*, WUNT II/172 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003).

[60] These works will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

environment of benefit exchange from both primary and secondary sources, the following chapters examine 2 Corinthians 8-9 with a view toward understanding Paul's use of χάρις in discussing the collection. Chapter 4 examines relevant passages where Paul uses χάρις outside of 2 Corinthians 8-9. Significant attention is given to the exegesis of Romans 5.15-21, where a model of Pauline "χάρις-exchange" is proposed. In Chapters 5 and 6, the relevant sections of 2 Corinthians 8-9 are examined in detail, with the exception of two sections which are dealt with independently in the subsequent chapters. Chapter 7 addresses "equality and reciprocity" in 2 Cor. 8.10-15, a passage from which the key term χάρις is absent, but which addresses important issues related to benefit exchange in the context of Paul's discussion of the collection. The topic of Chapter 8 is "grace and thanksgiving" and involves a detailed analysis of 2 Cor. 9.11-15. With the close of Chapter 8, my study is complete, except for the conclusion in Chapter 9.

I will show that in 2 Corinthians 8-9 Paul's primary concern was not to persuade the Corinthians to give toward the collection. Rather, he desired to persuade them to give themselves completely to God in submission to the power of his grace. When they did this, the Corinthians would then find themselves equipped to contribute, both spiritually and materially – both from a generous attitude and from sufficient resources. We will see that all giving is a means of expressing grace; since God is the hidden partner involved through his grace in every act of gift exchange, the term χάρις was entirely appropriate for Paul to use when discussing the collection. By using χάρις in ways familiar to his readers through secular benefit exchange, his readers would understand his message, while at the same time recognizing his unique applications of the term. Thus for Paul, the theological motive for the collection was found in grace: the collection was to be an expression of the grace that the participants – both givers and recipients – had received from God. Paul's application of χάρις in the discussion of 2 Corinthians 8-9 would show that God's grace enables believers to abound in generosity and that the collection, rather than offering an example of benefit exchange, would be a demonstration of "surplus exchange", resulting in equality in the body of Christ.

1.6. The Unity of 2 Corinthians 8-9

Partition theories abound with regard to 2 Corinthians,[61] but perhaps the most significant issues are (1) whether chapters 8 and 9 were written independently of each other, (2) whether chapters 8 and 9 were written as part of a single letter together with chapters 1-7, and (3) how chapters 10-13 relate to the rest of 2 Corinthians.

Several of the arguments promoted in support of viewing chapters 8 and 9 as independent compositions relate to the opening verses in chapter 9. It is argued that chapter 9 begins a discussion of the collection which seems to take up the issue anew. This is supported by the phrase περὶ μὲν γάρ, which, it is argued, would be expected to introduce a new subject rather than continue one already under discussion, akin to Paul's use of περὶ δέ to introduce new topics in 1 Corinthians.[62] Against this it is said, that in light of Paul's frequent use of περὶ δέ, the phrase περὶ μὲν γάρ would in fact be very unusual to introduce a new topic. Instead, the opposite is argued, that the phrase actually supports the connection between the two chapters.[63] γάρ is said to refer back to 8.24 and introduces the reason for Paul's request there, while μέν looks forward to δέ in 9.3: "For (γάρ) although . . . it is superfluous for me to be writing to you like this (since [γάρ] I know your eager willingness which I am boasting about . . .), yet (δέ) I am sending the brothers . . . (9.1-3).[64]

In 9.1, the collection is described as ἡ διακονία ἡ εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους, precisely the same phrase used to introduce the topic of the collection in 8.4. In references to the collection subsequent to 8.4, however, Paul uses the demonstrative pronoun οὗτος as a qualifier (cf. 8.6, 7, 17, 20). If chapter 9 were simply a continuation of the discussion in chapter 8, it is argued, we would expect the use of οὗτος with a more abbreviated reference to the collection, such as αὕτη διακονία.[65] Margaret Thrall points out that subsequent references to the collection in chapter 9 occurring after the full description in verse 1 (9.5, 12, 13) are also qualified with οὗτος. Examination of these subsequent references in 9.5, 12, 13, however, reveals that they are hardly simple substitutions of

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[61] See Betz, 3-36, for a thorough treatment of the history of scholarship regarding the unity of 2 Corinthians with particular attention given to issues related to chs. 8 and 9.

[62] See 1 Cor. 7.1, 25; 8.1; 12.1; 16.1, 12. Cf. also 1 Thess. 4.9; 5.1.

[63] For convincing support of περὶ μὲν γάρ used in the continuation of a discussion as evidenced from extra-biblical literature, see Stanley K. Stowers, "*Peri men gar* and the Integrity of 2 Cor 8 and 9", *NovT* 32 (Oct 1990): 340-48.

[64] Harris, 27.

[65] Bultmann (1976), 258.

the full reference in 9.1, but are appropriate to the context of each verse. Regarding the full reference in 9.1, it is not unreasonable to suggest that Paul simply wanted to give fresh emphasis to the topic under discussion, having not mentioned it as such since 8.4. Therefore, where a shorter designation for the collection such as αὕτη διακονία would have been entirely appropriate, the full description is certainly not unreasonable.[66]

Some argue that περισσόν suggests that 9.1 begins an independent treatment of the collection.[67] Others, however, are able to show how this too supports a continuation of the topic from chapter 8.[68]

It is pointed out that in 9.2, Paul says he has boasted to the Macedonians of the Corinthians' willingness and zeal toward the collection, but that in 8.1-5 Paul had used the Macedonians' enthusiasm as an example to motivate the Corinthians, and that these two are incompatible in the account as it stands. The opposing argument, however, suggests that when Paul boasted to the Macedonians, it was of the Corinthians' initial zeal, which had since waned, and that as a result of that boasting, the Macedonians were motivated to participate. The Macedonians' enthusiastic response is then what Paul reports in 8.1-5. Against the suggestion that chapter 8 was written specifically to believers in Corinth, but that chapter 9 was a circular letter written to all throughout Achaia (cf. 9.2) who were to participate in the collection, it can be argued that Achaia in 9.2 parallels the more general geographic reference to the province of Macedonia in the same verse. By referring to Achaia, Paul could indeed have in mind all in the province who had committed to the collection, or Achaia could simply be a more general way of referring to the Corinthians.

As I mentioned in note 2 above, rhetorical analysis has been used both to support and to argue against the unity of chapters 8 and 9. In general, those who apply the divisions of ancient rhetoric to the book as a whole find the approach supporting the unity of 2 Corinthians,[69] while those who apply the approach to chapters 8 and 9 separately, conclude that the two chapters are independent compositions.[70] Kieran

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[66] Furnish, 429

[67] Windisch, 269; Bultmann (1976), 258; Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 77.

[68] See suggestion by Harris referenced in note 64 above.

[69] Young and Ford, *Meaning and Truth*, 43; Danker, 121; Witherington, 412.

[70] As noted above, where Betz, 129-40, concludes that chs. 8 and 9 were written as independent letters, Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 91 finds the two chapters comprising a complete rhetorical unit.

O'Mahony, however, although applying Betz's approach of rhetorical analysis to the two chapters *together*,finds support for their unity, rather than against it, as does Betz.[71]

There is a fair amount of evidence both in favor of and against the unity of 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, and scholarship is divided between the two positions.[72] I am not persuaded that the arguments against unity are insurmountable and will therefore operate on the assumption that 2 Corinthians 8-9 contains a coherent discussion, with the hope that my thesis will further support this assumption.[73]

Assuming the unity of chapters 1-7, chapters 8-9 follow on well, despite the change in tone ("from apologetic to exhortation")[74] which reflects the change in subject and purpose. Several factors link chapter 8 back to chapter 7. Paul follows up his expressions of confidence to the Corinthians in 7.4-16 with his appeal for them to complete the collection in chapter 8. The theme of *eagerness* in 7.11-12, where it is the Corinthians' eagerness for Paul's ministry, is repeated in 8.2-5, where it is described as the Macedonians' attitude toward their participation in the collection, made explicit in 8.8. Likewise, the Corinthians' eagerness is mentioned again as support for Paul's appeal for them to complete their part in the collection (8.7). After Titus has appeared in a very positive light in chapter 7, especially with regard to his relationship with the Corinthians (7.6-7, 13-15), it is only natural that Paul would be sending him back to Corinth (8.6), especially in view of his God-given eagerness for them (8.15-16).[75] Thus, Paul's discussion of the collection in chapters 8-9 forms a natural progression from chapter 7 and enables us to view chapters 1-9 as a unit. The relationship between chapters 10-13 and the rest of 2 Corinthians is still very much disputed among scholars, but these chapters do not impact my study.

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[71] See O'Mahony's conclusions: O'Mahony, *Pauline Persuasion*, 164-82.

[72] Arguing against the unity of the two chapters are Windisch, Bultmann, Georgi, Betz and Thrall, while those who uphold it include Hughes, Bruce, Furnish, Martin, Barclay and Harris.

[73] For more in-depth discussions of the integrity of 2 Corinthians see Windisch, 286-88; Furnish, 429-33; Thrall, 3-49; Harris, 8-51.

[74] Harris, 29.

[75] See Furnish, 408.

CHAPTER 2

RECENT STUDIES OF ΧΑΡΙΣ IN ITS GRAECO-ROMAN CONTEXT

2.1. Introduction

During the past thirty years, as part of the increased application of socio-historical approaches to New Testament research, a progression of studies has appeared focusing on *benefaction* in the Graeco-Roman world. On parallel tracks, there have also been renewed interests both in the collection for Jerusalem and in Paul's theology of grace. In this chapter I want to trace the progression of research on the subject of χάρις in its Graeco-Roman context, highlighting the recent relevant studies and identifying what still needs to be done in this area with regard to the collection. I will not refer to every work that addresses benefaction in the Graeco-Roman world, nor will I include every discussion of grace; I only consider those works which make the most significant contributions to the study of χάρις in the benefaction context of the Graeco-Roman world.[1]

It is appropriate and helpful first to say a word about terminology. In connection with studies of giving and receiving in the Graeco-Roman world, one encounters references to "benefaction", to "euergetism", and to "patronage" and "patron-client relations". Modern writers sometimes appear to use these terms interchangeably, which, although potentially confusing for the reader, probably reflects the reality of the way the terms had come to be used by the first century AD. Generally, *Roman patronage* during the Roman Republic and early Empire referred more to an individualized and vertical phenomenon, with one party bound to another through specific transactions or the assumption of particular obligations. *Greek benefaction* generally reflected corporate

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[1] For a survey of modern scholarship on Graeco-Roman benefaction in connection with grace and reciprocity in New Testament studies, see Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 3-13.

activity on a horizontal level between a benefactor and his fellow citizens. Euergetism is usually synonymous with benefaction,[2] although some writers distinguish between the two. By the first century AD, however, much ambiguity is found in references to patronage and benefaction: where earlier writings distinguish between Greek benefaction and Roman patronage, by the first century writers also refer to Greek *patronage* and Roman *benefaction*, blurring earlier distinctions.[3] In my discussions, where either a Greek or Roman influence is to be emphasized, I will qualify my terminology. Otherwise, with regard to discussions pertaining to the first century AD, I use both patronage and benefaction terminology when discussing the phenomenon of gift- or benefit-exchange.

2.2. Benefaction and Patronage Studies

I will now consider the contributions of nine scholars to the studies of Graeco-Roman benefaction/patronage and χάρις usage in Paul.

2.2.1. Early Studies of Benefaction and Reciprocity – S. C. Mott

One of the earliest recent scholars[4] to take up the study of benefaction is Stephen Mott in his Ph.D. dissertation, "The Greek Benefactor and Deliverance from Moral distress".[5] Mott examines the use of σωτήρ as a term for Hellenistic benefactors and discusses a range of benefaction terminology. Following this, in an article published in 1975 entitled "The Power of Giving and Receiving: Reciprocity in Hellenistic Benevolence",[6] he examines reciprocity in benefactor relationships in the Classical and Hellenistic periods. In this study, Mott identifies obligations of reciprocity in benefactor relationships among humans and between humans and the gods as an essential element

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[2] Euergetism derives from εὐεργέτης, "benefactor".

[3] Hendrix helpfully clarifies this confusion in Holland Hendrix, "Benefactor/Patron Networks in the Urban Environment: Evidence from Thessalonica", *Semeia* 56 (1991): 40. Stephan Joubert, "One Form of Social Exchange or Two? 'Euergetism,' Patronage, and Testament Studies", *BTB* 31, no. 1 (Spr 2001): 17-25, highlights the distinctions between earlier Roman benefaction and Greek patronage. See also his discussions of patronage and benefaction in Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 22-58.

[4] See Harrison's survey of scholarship mentioned above (note 1) for works from the early twentieth century which identify references to χάρις in the honorific inscriptions.

[5] Stephen Charles Mott, "The Greek Benefactor and Deliverance from Moral distress" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1971).

[6] Stephen Charles Mott, "The Power of Giving and Receiving: Reciprocity in Hellenistic Benevolence", in *Current issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation*, ed. G. F. Hawthorne (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 60-71.

that binds Graeco-Roman society together. Although this study makes a very significant contribution to the topic of reciprocity in the ancient world and opens the door for further research, it is only in Mott's later *Biblical Ethics and Social Change*[7] that he applies his findings to the New Testament by linking the significance of χάρις in Graeco-Roman benefaction usage to its usage in Paul. As the title of this book suggests, Mott's focus is on social action, and he concludes: "God's grace towards us is to find expression in our grace to the poor".[8] He identifies χάρις as an appropriate term for Paul's discussions regarding giving, since the term can be applied both to the benefactor's gift and to the recipient's gratitude. Yet he also points out the insufficiency of the Graeco-Roman term, because, he says, grace entails more than reciprocity. According to Mott, grace in 2 Corinthians 8-9 remains God's power, and as such flows through its recipients and emerges as their own grace, in this case toward the poor in Jerusalem. "God's benevolent act does not merely 'inspire' the response, it actually creates the ability to respond – it is both the reason and the power for the response".[9] As a result of this ambiguity, Mott finds it difficult to determine whether the "grace" Paul mentions in 2 Cor. 9.8 and 9.14 is God's grace or that of the believers. Mott's comments and terminology here need further clarification, which a more detailed exegesis of the appropriate passages could provide.

In *Biblical Ethics*, Mott's discussion of χάρις in 2 Corinthians 8-9 serves to open the door for further research regarding the connection between Pauline χάρις and the term's usage in the Graeco-Roman world. Mott's conclusion that giving to the poor is rooted in God's grace given to believers applies well to the purpose of his book. He has shown how inherent ambiguity in the term χάρις makes it an appropriate choice for Paul to use to express both the giving of gifts and the expressing of gratitude. Mott has provided a great service in associating χάρις with reciprocity; although as Mott says, for Paul, χάρις implies "more than reciprocity" – it is God's power at work in believers. A more detailed look at the use of χάρις in 2 Corinthians 8-9 and elsewhere in Paul, through more thorough exegesis, should illustrate broader implications of God's grace, including how this "power" actually relates to χάρις as a gift. Thus, the work of

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[7] Stephen Charles Mott, *Biblical Ethics and Social Change* (New York / Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).

[8] Mott, *Biblical Ethics*, 31.

[9] Mott, *Biblical Ethics*, 32.

Mott sets the stage for further exegetical study of χάρις, particularly in 2 Corinthians 8-9, based on its Graeco-Roman benefaction context.

2.2.2. Benefactor Terminology in the Honorific Inscriptions – F. W. Danker

A work that has made a significant contribution to the study of benefaction terminology in connection with the New Testament is Frederick Danker's *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Graeco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field*. In this work, Danker provides translations of fifty-three texts, mostly Greek, which illustrate the span of benefactor references during the six centuries leading up to and including the reign of Caesar Augustus. In his analysis, Danker first identifies from the inscriptions key terms which are used to describe the common characteristics of benefactors, from which he creates a "profile of benefactors". He discusses relevant New Testament texts where these terms occur in an attempt to determine whether these passages make use of the Graeco-Roman benefactor model. He similarly identifies types of benefits conferred by benefactors and the range of responses that are offered in return. Again, he applies these findings to specific New Testament passages. Nowhere, however, does Danker offer firm conclusions from his findings in connection with the New Testament. He makes suggestions based on his results, but the significant contribution of his work is the compilation of the translated inscriptions and the identification of key benefactor characteristics and terminology. It seems the firm conclusions have been left for subsequent scholars to substantiate.

Not surprisingly, Danker finds 2 Corinthians 8-9 replete with benefactor terminology (χάρις, σπουδή, προθυμία, δίδωμι ἑαυτόν, λειτουργός, χορηγέω), classifying chapter 8 as a "motivational response to benefactions",[10] which offers stimulation to further generosity. A common reason for the public bestowal of honors was that such action stimulated generosity in others. Thus, Paul praises the Macedonians in 2 Cor. 8.1-5 for their generous contribution toward the collection – their response to divine benefactions received (8.1) – as a means of stimulating the Corinthians likewise to give. In line with this, Danker highlights the plethora of terms used by Paul in 2 Corinthians 8-9 which fall within the benefactor semantic field.[11] The contribution that Danker makes to my study is the identification of associated benefactor terms which occur in 2 Corinthians 8-9 and elsewhere in Paul's writings in

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[10] See Danker, *Benefactor*, 437.
[11] Danker, *Benefactor*, 437-38.

connection with the collection. Danker's identification of these benefaction terms which occur together in Paul's discussion related to the collection, along with the recognition of their widespread use over such a broad span of time in antiquity, lends support to the validity of considering Paul's discussion within a benefaction context. Although Danker addresses many terms individually in his study, and makes reference to several occurrences of χάρις as a benefactor term,[12] it is surprising that a more in-depth discussion of χάρις and its varied usage in the benefactor semantic field does not find its way into Danker's work.

As with any such study that uses a particular lens for interpreting the New Testament, caution must be exercised so as not to find things which simply are not there.[13] Danker's work in *Benefactor* offers a significant resource to scholars who continue to apply findings from Graeco-Roman benefaction to New Testament studies, and I am indebted to him for his work as a necessary stone in the foundation for my own research.[14]

Subsequently, Danker applies his findings from *Benefactor* to his commentary on 2 Corinthians, where he interprets Paul's discussion of the collection in 2 Corinthians 8-9 within the context of Graeco-Roman benefaction. He concludes that "beneficence and reciprocity are dominant structural motifs" for the entire letter.[15] On this basis, Danker supports the unity of chapters 8-9 along with the previous seven chapters, having concluded that Paul's discussion of the collection continues within the same structural motif of the preceding chapters. Having previously identified the key

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[12] Examples of χάρις used as benefactor terminology include Gal. 2.21, which Danker translates: "I do not nullify God's benefaction (χάρις)" (Danker, *Benefactor*, 334), and 1 Pet. 5.12, which Danker says "includes a reference to God as benefactor (χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ)" (Danker, *Benefactor*, 453). See also his description of 2 Corinthians 8-9 in Danker, *Benefactor*, 437-38.

[13] Mott similarly cautions against forcing benefactor interpretations on New Testament words simply because they appear on the list of terms which make up Danker's semantic field, words which may have begun to be absorbed into new semantic fields through their use in Christian contexts; Stephen Charles Mott, review of *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Graeco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field*, by F. W. Danker, *JBL* 104, no. 4 (Dec 1984): 672-75.

[14] Danker himself has continued to apply his findings from the Graeco-Roman benefactor system to biblical studies. See Frederick W. Danker, "Bridging St. Paul and the Apostolic Fathers: A Study in Reciprocity", *CurTM* 15 (1988): 84-94; F. W. Danker and R. Jewett, "Jesus as the Apocalyptic Benefactor in Second Thessalonians", in *The Thessalonian Correspondence*, ed. R. F. Collins (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990), 486-98.

[15] Danker, 116.

benefaction terms in *Benefactor*, he notes Paul's use of χάρις in 2 Corinthians 8-9, particularly Paul's ensuing word play with the term throughout the discussion. In reference to benefaction, he not only identifies God as the "Great Benefactor" and Christ as the "benefactor of benefactors", but he also reverses a common notion of Paul as beneficiary of the Corinthians who desire to support him financially, instead identifying Paul as the Corinthians' benefactor who mediates the privilege of their participation in the collection.

Although Danker clearly places the collection in a framework of benefaction, his discussions of χάρις within this context in 2 Corinthians 8-9, while helpful, are, as in *Benefactor*, lacking. While pointing out the repeated use of the term and its significance from Graeco-Roman usage, he does not clearly identify each occurrence of χάρις, which is especially notable with regard to the absence of discussion of the theologically significant usage in 8.9.[16] Granted, this work is a commentary, and not a monograph on grace; however, the central place of χάρις as the thread that ties Paul's entire discussion together must not be overlooked, especially once the term's place in Greco-Roman benefaction has been identified. Danker has made a contribution in making the connection between the Graeco-Roman usage of χάρις in its benefaction context and Paul's use of the term with regard to the collection in 2 Corinthians 8-9. Yet while he has noted the importance of χάρις in this discussion, he, like others, has left the door open for further pursuance of the deeper significance of χάρις as it is used by Paul in these two chapters.

2.2.3. Patronage and Graeco-Roman Social Conventions for Understanding Paul – P. Marshall

Peter Marshall, in *Enmity in Corinth*,[17] examines Paul's relationship with the Corinthians in terms of Graeco-Roman social conventions. His aim is to understand the cause of enmity against Paul, and toward this end Marshall considers aspects of friendship and enmity, first in the Graeco-Roman world, and then as portrayed in the New Testament and specifically in the Pauline letters. I include this discussion of *Enmity in Corinth* here because Marshall's analysis of Paul's use of Graeco-Roman

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[16] He also fails to point out that it is χάρις that is used in 8.16 to express thanks to God. He does identify this use of χάρις in 9.15, but without referencing the same usage in 8.16.

[17] Peter Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth: Social Conventions in Paul's Relations with the Corinthians*, WUNT II/23 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1987).

social conventions is of particular interest to my study, even though it does not include a discussion of χάρις usage.

Marshall relates friendship in the Graeco-Roman world to relationships involving giving and receiving. In his characterization of gift exchange, he frequently refers to Seneca's *De Beneficiis*. He also relies on Marcel Mauss' anthropological findings that gift exchange is universal and "forms the whole basis of friendly relations and exchange of any kind".[18] Marshall summarizes Mauss as saying that the institution of giving involves three obligations: the obligation to give gifts, the obligation to receive them and the obligation to reciprocate. The fulfillment of these obligations is what establishes friendship. Since the bestowal of a gift is intended to enhance the donor's status, in order not to lose face the recipient must reciprocate with an even greater demonstration of generosity than his benefactor had shown him. Mauss claims that characterization of gift exchange is universal, and indeed Marshall finds evidence of the giving and receiving of gifts for establishing friendship and affirming status dating from the earliest Greek literature on through to that of the Graeco-Roman world. Thus gift exchange forms the basis for all friendships, although it can become agonistic as one seeks to outdo the generosity of his benefactor in an effort to enhance his own status.[19]

As a subset of friendship, Marshall discusses relationships of patronage.[20] Normally the socially inferior person who had need of the aid of a more powerful friend initiated the relationship. In return for gratitude, this client either committed himself to the patron's protection or received from him some benefit or service. The client's return of gratitude frequently involved a permanent obligation to render service and provide support in whatever way his patron might require. Although these relationships were often described as friendship and gave the appearance of equality between the two parties, in fact it was an unequal relationship. Marshall discusses patronage in an attempt to identify Paul's "friendships" as relationships of reciprocity and obligation. For my study, I will be considering whether obligation and reciprocity are social factors that influenced the collection.

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[18] Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth*, 1, referring to Mauss' conclusions in Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies* (New York, London: W. W. Norton, 1990).

[19] See Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth*, 1-34.

[20] Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth*, 143-47.

Marshall also gives attention to "giving and receiving" in Paul, particularly in Philippians chapter 4. In Phil. 4.15 Paul writes, "But you yourselves also know, Philippians, that in the early preaching of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving (εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήμψεως) except for you alone". Marshall agrees with scholars who suggest that many of the terms Paul uses throughout this discussion often occur in commercial contexts.[21] Thus, "Paul's use of commercial language seems to be quite deliberate and sustained and it is possible that he is viewing the gifts which he has received in terms of an investment by the Philippians upon which God will pay interest".[22] As noted above, Marshall finds friendship consisting in three elements, two of which are contained in the phrase δόσις καὶ λῆμψις, and he therefore concludes that when used together these two terms can become an idiom for friendship. Therefore, despite the fact that much of this terminology is used in commercial language, Marshall concludes that "the entire phrase, κοινωνεῖν εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήμψεως, is an idiomatic expression indicating friendship".[23] Thus, he is not surprised to find friendship often discussed by Graeco-Roman writers using commercial language and ideas.[24] I would underline Marshall's implication that we need not limit Paul's use of language here either to commercial nuances or to friendship. Marshall seems right to conclude that Paul has cleverly utilized social conventions familiar to the Philippians to portray his relationship with them. Marshall's conclusion here is also suggestive for me to consider whether Paul has similarly used familiar social conventions of benefit exchange in his discussion of the collection and use of χάρις in 2 Corinthians 8-9. This I will explore in the chapters ahead.

2.2.4. Patronage and Social Network Analysis – J. K. Chow

John Chow's purpose in *Patronage and Power* is "to investigate some of the behavioural problems in the church at Corinth in light of the phenomenon of

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[21] See Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth*, 157-64.

[22] Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth*, 159. The "interest" paid by God comes from 4.17, ὁ καρπὸς ὁ πλεονάζων εἰς λόγον ὑμῶν ("the fruit that increases to your account").

[23] Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth*, 163.

[24] For example, he finds Seneca using commercial language to describe the relationships involved in benefit exchange throughout *De Beneficiis*. See Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth*, 161, esp. n. 41.

patronage".[25] He portrays patronage through a characterization of patron-client relations, which Chow describes as agreed-upon by social anthropologists, social scientists and political scientists.[26] To evaluate patron-client relations in Corinth, Chow utilizes the methodology of social network analysis, which views interpersonal roles as part of a wider network of social relationships. Social network analysis operates on the principle that every personal relationship, or link, can potentially influence every other link within a network. The analysis of the various links within a network can yield insights, for example, into the power structures existing within the network. Chow utilizes several "working principles of network analysis"[27] to understand patron-client relationships at Corinth.

Chow first identifies the patron-client relationships that he concludes would likely have existed in first-century Corinth. He next applies the principles of network analysis to the relationships which make up the interpersonal social network within the Corinthian church, as discernible from 1 Corinthians. From this analysis Chow concludes that Paul was facing opposition from some rich and powerful patrons in the church when he wrote 1 Corinthians. He further concludes that powerful patrons involved in patron-client relations within the church are the cause of the problems that Paul addresses in this letter. The directives that Paul issues in 1 Corinthians are intended to bring relationships in the church back into proper balance, redirecting them away from the vertical hierarchical structure intrinsic in patron-client relationships, back to relationships which are horizontal in nature. With regard to the collection in 1 Cor. 16.1-4, Chow suggests that Paul's instructions to the Corinthians are specifically intended to help reestablish horizontal relationships within the church. For this reason, each member of the Corinthian church is to set aside weekly funds for the collection, voluntarily, as each is able (1 Cor. 16.2).[28] Chow suggests that there may have been a few rich patrons in the church who were willing to make significant contributions

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[25] John K. Chow, *Patronage and Power: A Study of Social Networks in Corinth*, JSNTSup 75 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 28.

[26] Chow, *Patronage and Power*, 30-33. Chow's primary source for these characteristics is S. N. Eisenstadt and Louis Roniger, "Patron-Client Relations as a Model of Structuring Social Exchange", *CSSH* 22, no. 1 (Jan 1980): 42-77.

[27] See Chow, *Patronage and Power*, 34-35, for his explanation of the principles he applies.

[28] Since Paul has previously given these same instructions to the Galatians (1 Cor. 16.1), does this imply that Paul may have faced a similar problem with patrons in the churches of Galatia, and that there as well, participation in the collection helped to resolve the issue? Chow does not address this question.

toward the collection, but allowing them to do so would deny the poorer members the chance to participate in any significant way, and would have deprived them of the honor they would receive by participating. Chow suggests that Paul's instructions for the Corinthians to select representatives to carry their gift to Jerusalem was likewise intended to be a community-building exercise as they united together to choose the representatives (16.3).[29]

In this way Chow uses social network analysis to examine patronage relations in Corinth. His study differs from my own in that he is concerned with specific types of relationships in order to determine power structures. My interest, however, lies with the structures of giving and receiving within benefaction contexts, and to what extent Paul follows the conventions of Graeco-Roman benefaction in talking about contributing toward the collection. While Chow's consideration of patronage networks in Corinth builds on previous socio-historical works that have established the significance of patronage and benefaction in the Graeco-Roman world and in the New Testament, he does not consider this context in connection with 2 Corinthians 8-9, nor does he discuss specific benefaction/patronage terminology such as χάρις.

2.2.5. Graeco-Roman Conventions of Gift-Exchange – G. W. Peterman

Gerald Peterman, in *Paul's Gift from Philippi*,[30] uses Graeco-Roman conventions of gift-exchange to address what he considers the paradoxical behavior of the apostle Paul, who, while acknowledging his right to receive material support from the churches he founded and among which he ministered, appears to apply this principle inconsistently. Although he accepts financial assistance from the Philippians (Phil. 4.10-19), he adamantly refuses to do so from the Corinthians (2 Cor. 11.9). At the same time, Paul's response to the gifts received from the Philippians appears aloof. Peterman, while suggesting that there may also have been other theological, ethical or pastoral reasons for this apparently inconsistent and perplexing behavior of Paul, chooses to examine Paul's actions from a social perspective. Peterman argues that while Paul operated in a world influenced by "a deeply embedded system of social obligations",[31] which influenced both Graeco-Roman and Jewish social action, yet it was his

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[29] Chow, *Patronage and Power*, 185-86.

[30] Gerald W. Peterman, *Paul's Gift from Philippi: Conventions of Gift-Exchange and Christian Giving*, SNTSMS 92 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[31] Peterman, *Paul's Gift*, 8.

unwavering commitment to the gospel that resulted in what at times might seem perplexing behavior on the apostle's part. Peterman concludes that, in connection with giving and receiving, when faced with issues of social reciprocity, Paul always gives priority to the advancement of the gospel. Thus, where social reciprocity demanded that Paul accept support from congregations with which he was working, if accepting such support might hinder the advance of the gospel, Paul chose rather to go against the conventions of society, even at the expense of his own personal comfort.

Peterman is consequently concerned to identify the conventions of social reciprocity involved in "giving and receiving" in the first-century world throughout which Paul planted churches.[32] Peterman assumes that while Paul would have been deeply influenced by the conventions of Graeco-Roman society, he also, as a Pharisee and committed Jew, would hold social views influenced by the Old Testament. To understand how Paul would have viewed giving and receiving, Peterman examines the practices of giving and receiving in Jewish literature and in the Graeco-Roman world. His conclusion from an examination of relevant passages in the Old Testament and extra-biblical Jewish literature is that the Old Testament offers two perspectives. One is found in the didactic texts, where reward is the motivation for giving to those in need, reward not in the form of a return from the recipient to the giver but in the form of blessings from God. Therefore, giving involves a "social triangle" in which gifts are bestowed on the recipient, for which God offers a return blessing, either individually to the giver, or corporately to the entire nation of Israel. The second perspective is found in narrative texts, which illustrate the practice of giving and receiving according to normal conventions of social reciprocity, i.e. the recipient of gifts offers a return directly to the giver. With regard to this latter perspective, Peterman finds no mention of God's involvement in the process.[33]

In later extra-biblical Jewish writings social reciprocity appears more clearly as a prescribed social convention: those who receive goodwill are obligated to return goodwill in the same form as it was received. Especially in the writings of Josephus and Philo, Peterman finds an ever-decreasing reference to God as the one who repays

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[32] The phrase "giving and receiving" (δόσις καὶ λήμψις) from Phil. 4.15 becomes the catchphrase which Peterman uses to examine the conventions of social reciprocity.

[33] Of course, is it not possible that God is indeed involved, that the recipient's return to the giver is itself a blessing from the Lord? The texts that Peterman cites, however, illustrate the return purely in human terms.

human acts of charity; the conventions of social reciprocity appear even further integrated into Jewish society. In Peterman's survey of Jewish sources from the Old Testament to Philo and Josephus, the implication is that practices of giving and receiving are increasingly influenced by the conventions of social reciprocity in the surrounding society, which means less motivation to give coming from the promise of divine reward, and greater emphasis on the expectations and obligations of a return from the human recipient. Peterman's conclusion is that by Paul's day, social reciprocity as a convention was widespread among the Jews. And yet, although Paul would have recognized these conventions, he did not feel bound to follow them; he gave higher priority to the role of the gospel, which at times forced him to go against that which social reciprocity demanded.

Peterman also gives considerable treatment to conventions of giving and receiving in the Graeco-Roman world. Although he considers numerous Greek and Roman sources, he utilizes Seneca's *De Beneficiis* most extensively as a guide to understanding conventions of social reciprocity. Among Peterman's findings are the following aspects of social reciprocity: (1) social relationships are established by giving gifts or extending favors; (2) such benefits can be exchanged between individuals, between groups, and between individuals and groups; (3) the recipient of a gift or favor is placed under obligation to respond with a counter-gift or favor, the latter being an expected expression of gratitude; (4) the terminology of commercial contexts is often used to describe social relationships of giving and receiving; (5) divine reward does not enter into Graeco-Roman social reciprocity.[34]

Of interest to my work is Peterman's chapter on Jewish literature and his suggestion of the "hellenization" of the Old Testament traditions. Peterman provides much better evidence than does Joubert, whom I consider below, in defending the practice of social reciprocity among the Jews of the first century. Peterman's aim is to identify the social reciprocity context of the first-century world where Paul planted churches as the background to Paul's acceptance/refusal of support from his churches. Key to Peterman's discussion is his interpretation of κοινωνία terms in Phil. 1.5 and 4.15, and, regarding the collection, in Rom. 15.25-27 and 2 Corinthians 8-9. His discussion of the collection, however, is primarily limited to the use of κοινωνία in

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[34] See Peterman, *Paul's Gift*, 88-89, for all of his conclusions.

Rom. 15.26,[35] and he gives no attention to χάρις or its usage. Peterman also does not discuss benefaction/patronage in his study, instead speaking more broadly of "social reciprocity". As background for his consideration of giving and receiving in Philippians, Peterman addresses social reciprocity in Jewish and Graeco-Roman contexts. His analysis of the trend toward the inclusion of social reciprocity conventions in later Judaism is insightful, and his analysis of the Graeco-Roman situation confirms what others have found regarding principles of reciprocity. Peterman's examination of giving and receiving in Philippians makes a contribution since the letter has not otherwise been given significant attention from a socio-historical perspective. With regard to my study, Peterman does not discuss the collection in 2 Corinthians 8-9, nor does he engage in a discussion of χάρις or other specific benefaction terminology usage.

2.2.6. Patronage, χάρις and the New Testament – D. A. deSilva

Whether as documented in his more focused and academic study of New Testament backgrounds,[36] presented in popular form for laity[37] or applied to interpretation in commentary form,[38] David deSilva presents the Graeco-Roman context of benefaction and patronage as essential to understanding the world of the New Testament, and thus the New Testament documents themselves. Where some scholars try to draw distinctions between patronage and benefaction in the Hellenistic and Roman worlds, deSilva helpfully shows that both Greek benefaction and Roman patronage share a common ethos of reciprocity regarding the conventions to be followed by the giver and recipient. As was noted above, although benefaction

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[35] See also, Gerald W. Peterman, "Romans 15.26: Make a Contribution or Establish Fellowship?" *NTS* 40 (1994): 457-63, where Peterman argues for the meaning "establish fellowship" for κοινωνίαν τινὰ ποιήσασθαι in Rom. 15.26. I argue later, however, that Paul was encouraging the Corinthians to understand that they *already* had fellowship with the Jerusalem believers by the very fact of the common grace they had received in Christ, and that Paul was simply urging them to act in accordance with that fellowship.

[36] See Chapter 3: "Patronage & Reciprocity: The Social Context of Grace", and Chapter 4: "Patronage & Grace in the New Testament", in deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity*. These two chapters were previously published as David A. deSilva, "Patronage and Reciprocity: The Context of Grace in the New Testament", *ATJ* 31 (1999): 32-84. See also David A. deSilva, "Patronage", in *DNTB*, eds. C. A. Evans and S. E. Porter (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000), 766-71.

[37] David A. deSilva, "Grace: The Favor of God", Chapter 1 in *New Testament Themes* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2001).

[38] David A. deSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Epistle "to the Hebrews"* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000).

generally referred to civic or public gifts and patronage was private in nature, by the first century AD there was often considerable ambiguity in usage between the terms.[39]

DeSilva is one of the first scholars to emphasize the central role of χάρις in the benefaction conventions of the Graeco-Roman world and to stress the implications of its Graeco-Roman usage for New Testament studies. He offers a clear explanation from the Graeco-Roman context of the varied use of χάρις in benefaction terminology, clearly delineating the three-fold use of the term which allowed χάρις to denote the "favorable disposition" of the patron, the "gift" itself, and the appropriate "response of gratitude" directed from the recipient back to the benefactor.[40] He stresses that prior to Paul's writings, the sense which the readers of his letters would have associated with χάρις was not theological, but sociological – related to the giving and receiving of gifts and applied to relationships of reciprocity between humans, and between humans and the gods. DeSilva's evidence comes primarily from the Greek and Latin philosophers and he frequently cites Aristotle, Dio Chrysostom, Seneca and Cicero.

Not only does deSilva show the implications of this Graeco-Roman background for χάρις, but he seems to interpret the entire New Testament in a framework of patronage. In *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity*, he outlines the several ways he sees God as Benefactor and Patron of mankind.[41] Jesus too is a divine benefactor, or, more specifically, a *broker* who mediates benefits between God and man.[42] In presenting the socio-rhetorical strategy of his commentary on Hebrews, deSilva says, "The author of Hebrews makes extensive use of the social code of reciprocity, the mutual expectations and obligations of patrons and clients", and deSilva speaks of "responding to the divine Benefactor".[43] Although it is interesting to suggest viewing these relationships in the context of patronage, it would seem more prudent to limit the applicability of benefaction motifs in the New Testament to contexts that reflect structural similarities with Graeco-Roman usage and where specific benefaction terminology is used. To

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[39] Joubert discusses distinctions between Greek benefaction and Roman patronage, but admits that by the first century there was considerable overlap between the two. Hendrix clarifies the ambiguity that existed by the first century AD. See §2.1, note 3.

[40] As has already been seen, other scholars, such as Mott, tend to identify only two uses of χάρις, as gift and gratitude. DeSilva's three elements of favor, gift and gratitude are discussed by Seneca, as I show in Chapter 3.

[41] DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity*, 126-33.

[42] DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity*, 133-41.

[43] DeSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude*, 59.

characterize God's/Christ's relationship with man as *chiefly* one of benefactor-beneficiary imposes the Graeco-Roman concept on the divine-human relationship. It is, however, extremely helpful to understand the Graeco-Roman usage of χάρις, and to view its New Testament usage in consideration of the benefaction context, particularly as it is used in conjunction with other benefaction terminology, as in 2 Corinthians 8-9. DeSilva implies that there is no usage of χάρις outside of a benefaction context and that every occurrence in the New Testament derives from Graeco-Roman benefaction usage. Certainly the term occurred in other usages in the New Testament and other sources of influence should be considered, such as the Septuagint, which may have informed its use in the New Testament in non-benefaction contexts.[44]

DeSilva devotes the most attention to divine patronage, but he also speaks of human beneficence in terms of Christian giving. He finds Paul redefining motives for giving; a Christian does not give in order to put the recipient under obligation, but because God has given, and as a faithful act of service to God. DeSilva highlights the Jerusalem collection as "perhaps the most prominent act of beneficence among churches in the New Testament",[45] and places it within the benefaction context. He references, however, only a couple of uses of χάρις in 2 Corinthians 8-9, which is surprising considering his emphasis on the term in the wider conventions of Graeco-Roman patronage. Similarly, in his other writings, although deSilva does an excellent job of delineating χάρις in the Graeco-Roman benefaction context, he stops short of drawing out the implications of its usage through the exegesis of specific passages, such as 2 Corinthians 8-9.

2.2.7. Paul and the Jerusalem Leaders as Benefactors and Beneficiaries – S. Joubert

Stephan Joubert, in *Paul as Benefactor*,[46] is one of the first scholars to undertake an independent study of the collection for the saints in Jerusalem from the perspective of the social conventions of benefit exchange in the Graeco-Roman world. Joubert states as his aim "to investigate the interaction between various social and theological facets concerning the collection".[47] His strategy includes initially determining an

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[44] See note 13, where Mott cautions against forcing benefaction interpretations on all occurrences of such New Testament words such as χάρις.

[45] DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity*, 154.

[46] Stephan Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor: Reciprocity, Strategy and Theological Reflection in Paul's Collection*, WUNT II/124 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000).

[47] Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 5.

"interpretive framework" for evaluating the collection based on Graeco-Roman forms of social exchange. In light of this interpretive framework, he then seeks to identify the "theological perspectives" of the various players involved in the collection, namely, Paul, the Jerusalem leaders, the Jerusalem church, and the Pauline communities. As the basis for identifying his interpretive framework, Joubert considers benefaction and patronage in the ancient Roman and Hellenistic worlds. He isolates some of the distinctive features of these two social practices, which, according to Joubert, continue to be identifiable during the first century. Characteristic of Roman patronage is its voluntary nature and the fact that it occurred between individuals of differing social status or between individuals and groups of people having a different social status. Joubert distinguishes Hellenistic benefaction from Roman patronage in that the former involves the obligations inherent in reciprocity. Based on the Aristotelian model, benefaction is initiated by a noble or someone in the upper classes who then exchanges either civic benefits for the collective good of the benefactor's fellow citizens or personal benefits with individuals of the same status as the benefactor. Joubert finds that although patronage originated in the Roman world and benefaction was initially Hellenistic, by the first century, aspects of both patronage and benefaction were integrated into Graeco-Roman society. Joubert suggests that the social exchange involved in the Jerusalem collection might be best referred to as "interpersonal benefaction", since it involves exchange between individuals, as with patronage, but also the obligations of reciprocity entailed in benefaction. Joubert then makes extensive use of Seneca's descriptions of benefit exchange in *De Beneficiis*, from which he derives the framework he uses to evaluate the Jerusalem collection.

Joubert applies his interpretive framework primarily to four texts which he identifies with the collection: Gal. 2.9-10; Rom. 15.25-27; 1 Cor. 16.1-4; and 2 Corinthians 8-9.

According to Joubert, interpersonal benefaction was perhaps the one truly universal form of social exchange in the ancient world, practiced by the Greeks, the Romans, and within ancient Jewish society. Regarding the practice of benefit exchange within ancient Jewish society, Joubert points to examples of gift exchange in the Old Testament and the Jewish custom of giving alms to the poor. From this scant evidence, Joubert attempts to persuade his readers that benefit exchange and the obligations of reciprocity would have been recognized conventions among Jewish communities during the first century, and thus among the Jewish leaders of the Jerusalem church. It is quite

a huge leap in Joubert's argument, however, to equate these examples from ancient Israel with the practices of patronage and benefaction of the first-century world. This is unfortunate for Joubert, because a significant part of his argument hinges upon this assertion.[48] It is Joubert's contention that the Jerusalem leaders would have understood their approval of Paul's mission to the Gentiles in Gal. 2.9 as a benefit bestowed upon Paul which obliged Paul to offer a benefit in return. The leaders' suggestion in 2.10 that Paul and Barnabas "remember the poor" was, according to Joubert, their request that Paul reciprocate by providing financial relief for the poor in Jerusalem. Paul thus recognized the Jerusalem leaders as his benefactor, and accepted the obligation they imposed upon him. Not having the resources himself he eventually turned to the believing Gentile communities he established and convinced them that they, as spiritual beneficiaries of the Jerusalem church (Rom. 15.27), were under obligation to reciprocate. This they could do by offering a gift to help provide relief for the poor in Jerusalem.

In a rather complex application of benefaction conventions to various relationships related to the collection, Joubert thus applies the framework of benefit exchange on two levels. On one level, the obligations inherent in benefit exchange provide the motivation for organizing the collection, since, according to Joubert, Paul is under obligation to return a benefit to his benefactors, the leaders of the Jerusalem church. In response to the leaders' request Paul agrees to "remember the poor" by providing financial aid to the poor among the believers in Jerusalem. On another level, benefit exchange provides the motivation for the implementation of the collection project. The Gentile believers are under obligation to the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem who have bestowed upon them spiritual benefits and so must reciprocate. It is divine grace that has initiated these spiritual benefits, such that the collection offering by the various believing Gentile communities serves both as a repayment of a debt of gratitude to God for his grace and as an expression of gratitude to the church in Jerusalem for the spiritual benefits received from them.[49] Thus, from the standpoint of the Gentile

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[48] As we have seen above, Peterman offers much more complete evidence in support of benefaction being practiced within Jewish society in the first century. Joubert does refer to Peterman in his footnotes, whom he acknowledges offers "more fully documented evidence from a variety of Jewish texts" (Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 94, n. 79); however, as crucial as this point is to Joubert's argument, one might expect to find the supporting evidence included.

[49] See Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 201.

Christians, Joubert's interpretive framework for the collection identifies them as beneficiaries of Jerusalem, who must reciprocate with a gift.

Joubert includes mention of χάρις in his discussion of the relevant passages related to the collection, particularly 2 Corinthians 8-9, often referring to χάρις as "God's active grace".[50] Through his interpretive framework of benefit exchange, Joubert then concludes that "the bestowal of God's active grace sets a chain of positive events in motion in the lives of the recipients, and all those who are assisted by them, eventually increasing God's honour and glory".[51]

Joubert's work has much to offer to Pauline studies from a socio-historical standpoint and particularly to this present study of grace and reciprocity in 2 Corinthians 8-9. There are also some areas that he touches on which need further exploring, as well as a number of shortcomings in his work. Joubert's work on patronage and benefaction usefully identifies key differences between the two social practices in the Graeco-Roman world. His choice of Seneca, a contemporary of Paul, as a source for comparing benefit exchange in the Graeco-Roman world with that of Paul is helpful, although Joubert does not exploit this model as thoroughly as he might. He uses it to develop a skeleton framework from which to interpret Paul, but it would be helpful to compare the two in more detail. This is what I propose to do in the following chapter. In Joubert's interpretation of 2 Corinthians 8-9 he could have drawn out even more of the aspects of benefit exchange, particularly by focusing more on the particular benefaction terminology used by Paul. Joubert does mention many benefaction terms but as with his discussions of χάρις, which should be a key term in this work, he mentions them without sufficiently exploring their significance, usage elsewhere in Paul, or particular usage in benefaction contexts. He does mention the "active χάρις of God" as "the key concept to explain the nature of God's presence within the Pauline communities, as well as the impact of his presence on the successful completion of the collection",[52] but greater consideration of χάρις as it is used in the Graeco-Roman world of benefaction would contribute to Joubert's work. Paul's writings reflect a greater critique of the Graeco-Roman conventions of benefit exchange than Joubert suggests. A key aspect which he does identify is that reciprocity in benefit exchange normally involves only two parties, the benefactor and the recipient, while for Paul, in

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[50] Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 152.
[51] Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 201.
[52] Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 201.

connection with the collection, three parties are involved: God, the various Pauline believing communities, and the church in Jerusalem. What Joubert seems to overlook, however, is Paul's emphasis on voluntary giving. Joubert places emphasis on the obligations of reciprocity; Paul still speaks of reciprocity and its implied obligations, but he re-casts these in the context of Christian κοινωνία which is enabled by χάρις in such a way that what is socially obligatory in fact becomes voluntary.

2.2.8. Thanksgiving and Patronage – D. W. Pao

David Pao's book, *Thanksgiving: An Investigation of a Pauline Theme*,[53] examines Pauline expressions of thanksgiving in light of the covenantal traditions of the Old Testament. Pao concludes that it is within these covenantal traditions that Paul's expressions of thanksgiving are based. It is the appendix to his book, where he examines thanksgiving in Paul against the conventions of gratitude in the Graeco-Roman benefaction system, that is of interest to me here.[54] As do others, Pao acknowledges differences between Greek benefaction and Roman patronage, but says that gratitude functions similarly at the center of both systems, and therefore he includes both under the designation patron-client networks.[55]

In the Graeco-Roman world, Pao finds reciprocity at the heart of all patron-client networks; the exchange of benefits was always accompanied by the expectation of an appropriate return. Divine-human relationships were also characterized within the conventions of the patron-client framework, which Pao finds illustrated by Seneca.[56] Pao says that this framework was taken up by Josephus, who describes the relationship between God and his people Israel, not in Old Testament covenantal language, but with the language of patron-client networks.[57]

Because of the differences in status and economic means, the recipients of benefits in the Graeco-Roman world were not strictly expected to return a favor commensurate to the one received. Instead, an obligatory return of gratitude was expected. Humans were likewise obliged to offer a return of gratitude to the gods for

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[53] David W. Pao, *Thanksgiving: An Investigation of a Pauline Theme*, NSBT 13 (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002).

[54] See "Pauline thanksgiving and the Greco-Roman benefaction system", in Pao, *Thanksgiving*, 165-73.

[55] Pao, *Thanksgiving*, 166.

[56] Pao, *Thanksgiving*, 167, where he quotes from Seneca *De Beneficiis* 2.30.1.

[57] See Peterman's similar comments in §2.2.5 above.

benefits received, since there is nothing of which the gods have need. Within the conventions of reciprocity, the favor of gratitude bestowed upon the gods obliged the gods to respond with a future return. In this way, "thanksgiving becomes a way to repay the deities with the anticipation of further acts of grace".[58]

Recognizing formal and conceptual similarities between the Pauline thanksgivings and the expressions of gratitude in the patron-client system, Pao concludes that it is "probable that the Pauline language of thanksgiving had been understood within the context of the patronage system".[59] He also finds, however, significant differences between the two: Where the Pauline thanksgivings reflect covenantal themes, there are no such parallels in the Graeco-Roman context. Pao shows earlier in his book that the Pauline thanksgivings reflect a temporal framework in which past, present and future reference is made to Old Testament covenantal traditions, affirming the God of Israel as active in the history of his people.[60] He points out that this affirmation of a personal deity who cares for his people is lacking in the expressions of gratitude in the Graeco-Roman world of patronage. Finally, the lack of an ethical focus in the Graeco-Roman system sets that system apart from Paul, where "the ethical focus in terms of God-centeredness in the Pauline call to thanksgiving together with the emphasis on the identity of the people of God, is again better understood within a covenantal context".[61] Pao also finds thanksgiving in Paul incompatible with the principle of reciprocity that forms the foundation of the Graeco-Roman patronage system. Because of God's gracious nature, the appropriate human response to his grace is worship, and "to label the life of worship merely a 'return' is insufficient at best".[62]

Pao acknowledges similarities between expressions of thanksgiving in Paul and gratitude in the Graeco-Roman patronage system. Where he finds the Pauline thanksgivings rooted in the recognition of God's faithfulness to his covenantal promises, however, in the Graeco-Roman system of patronage, gratitude forms an integral part of the conventions of reciprocity. Pao claims these two are incompatible. His perspective on Pauline thanksgiving as drawing attention to covenantal traditions is helpful, but may be a bit narrow in implying that this is the only motif for Paul's

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[58] Pao, *Thanksgiving*, 169.
[59] Pao, *Thanksgiving*, 170.
[60] See Pao, *Thanksgiving*, chs. 3-5.
[61] Pao, *Thanksgiving*, 171.
[62] Pao, *Thanksgiving*, 172.

expression. Certainly any mechanical expression of gratitude as a strict obligatory return, as in the Graeco-Roman system, is overshadowed by Paul's emphasis on grace. A broader consideration of such expressions of gratitude in the benefaction system in light of a more detailed analysis of 2 Corinthians 8-9 and other passages potentially reflecting influence from the Graeco-Roman world of benefaction may reveal more similarities between Paul and the Graeco-Roman system than Pao has allowed.

2.2.9. Χάρις in the Graeco-Roman Context and in Paul – J. R. Harrison

James Harrison observes that modern scholarship, while focusing on the theological significance of χάρις as a "timeless construct", has for the most part ignored the background of the usage of χάρις in its Graeco-Roman context. As a result, according to Harrison, we are left with a limited and incomplete picture of what Paul had in mind when writing to his churches about divine and human grace. In *Paul's Language of Grace in its Graeco-Roman Context*,[63] Harrison contends that the Graeco-Roman benefaction context of χάρις is the backdrop for Paul's understanding of both divine and human grace: "Paul's language of grace would have been assessed by his auditors against the Hellenistic reciprocity system that shaped the rituals of giving and receiving throughout the eastern Mediterranean basin".[64] Although recognizing limitations in utilizing a social-scientific approach, Harrison looks to the social sciences for insights in identifying some of the issues that need to be considered in order to understand grace in the first century and in Paul.

To justify his thesis, Harrison first demonstrates the prevalence of benefaction ideology in the eastern Mediterranean basin where Paul planted churches, and then shows that χάρις is consistently used in that context. After an examination of χάρις usage in connection with benefaction terminology in the inscriptions, the papyri, the Jewish writings of the first-century, and the Greek and Roman philosophers, Harrison not surprisingly finds the term used with the sense of "favor" or "grace". More significantly, he also finds it widely used in benefaction contexts as the central term for "favors" conferred by benefactors to their beneficiaries and of the favor or gratitude returned to benefactors for gifts received.[65] This frequent use of χάρις in benefaction

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[63] James R. Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace in its Graeco-Roman Context*, WUNT II/172 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003).

[64] Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 1.

[65] Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 63.

and reciprocity contexts suggests the likelihood that Paul's readers in the eastern Mediterranean basin would have at least recognized χάρις as part of the benefaction semantic field, and most likely would have assessed Paul's usage of the term in light of benefaction conventions.

As with other more recent studies of Graeco-Roman benefaction, Harrison discusses Seneca where he includes the philosophers as sources for understanding the use of χάρις and its role in benefaction. Unlike Peterman, deSilva, and Pao, however, Harrison recognizes that while Seneca helps us understand what benefit exchange entailed in antiquity, his primary concern was to correct society's misunderstandings of the practice: "Seneca is very sensitive to the complexity of benefaction relationships. He therefore seeks to endorse the traditional reciprocation ethos, while alerting his readers to the abuses of the system and the potential for personal insult if inexpertly handled".[66]

Turning to Paul, Harrison specifies Pauline usage of χάρις in terms of divine and human beneficence (χάρις).[67] Based on this distinction he interprets Pauline usage against that of Graeco-Roman benefaction. He concludes that Paul is more accommodating of contemporary Graeco-Roman benefaction terminology with regard to human beneficence than with divine beneficence. Paul clearly presents divine beneficence as distinct from that of the Graeco-Roman world where it was mediated through the sacrificial cult, where unsolicited divine grace was rare, and where it was not a motivation for beneficence toward others.[68] Harrison finds that where Graeco-Roman reciprocity demands commensurate return, Paul stresses that divine grace is "unilateral" and cannot be requited. The proper response to such grace is demonstrated in the believer's ethical behavior. It is a moral response rather than a material or cultic return of favor or gratitude.

In its social context, Harrison finds that Paul locates divine grace within the honor-shame motif. Where benefaction in the Graeco-Roman world demanded granting requisite honor to one's benefactor (e.g. the gods), Paul presents God as a "dishonored benefactor", whose beneficiaries refuse to acknowledge and honor Him for his grace-

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[66] Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 205. Harrison finds that both Seneca and Cicero "closely scrutinize the motivation of the benefactor"; Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 208.

[67] Harrison devotes one chapter each to divine and human beneficence; see Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, chs. 6, 7.

[68] Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 349.

gifts.[69] His ultimate grace-gift is the gift of his Son whose death made possible the status of righteousness for all who accept it, and who himself was a dishonored benefactor because of the shame he experienced in going to the cross. According to Harrison, Paul clarifies the relationship between divine and human beneficence by way of the "impoverished benefactor" motif in 2 Cor. 8.9. In the ancient world, while benefactors may have "impoverished" themselves by giving generously, they always maintained financial reserves upon which to rely. Christ, however, *took on* poverty (πτωχός, as a beggar, and not simply a πένης, one of limited resources), giving up his riches for the sake of his beneficiaries. It is questionable, however, whether the Corinthian readers would have readily recognized this impoverished benefactor imagery from the few examples that Harrison cites from the philosophical literature (Harrison himself admits that the evidence is "sparse").[70] While Harrison regards this recognition of the impoverished benefactor imagery as significant to his argument, it need not be; depiction of the self-impoverishment of Christ, the divine Benefactor, was sufficiently contrary to the conventions of Graeco-Roman benefaction to elicit the attention of Paul's readers. The result of Christ's act was a reversal in status, both for himself in going from rich to poor and for his beneficiaries, who as a result of his poverty, become rich.

The most unique aspect of Pauline divine grace against that of the Graeco-Roman world, according to Harrison, is that Paul distinguishes God from *the gods* as one who is engaged with humanity, that is, he engages with those to whom he grants benefits. God's grace "animates and impels human beneficence".[71] The prime Pauline example that Harrison offers is Paul's collection for the saints in Jerusalem, particularly as addressed in 2 Corinthians 8-9. According to Harrison, the reason for Paul's profuse use of χάρις terminology and his emphasis on the voluntariness of grace in these two chapters is that the Corinthians were potentially becoming entrapped in the obligations of benefaction. Having delayed in offering their previously promised contribution toward the collection, they were feeling the pressure of obligation, and Paul feared that they might contribute, not out of gratitude for divine grace received, but out of a sense of obligation imposed by the Graeco-Roman reciprocity system.

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[69] Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 214-15.

[70] See his discussion of the Impoverished Benefactor Motif, Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 250-56.

[71] Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 285.

Harrison concludes that Paul chose χάρις as his key term for both divine and human grace because it allowed him to communicate the "gospel of grace" both at a theological and a social level, both within and against the conventions of Graeco-Roman reciprocity. Harrison's study of Graeco-Roman usage of χάρις greatly enriches our understanding of the background of Paul's use of the term in view of his and his readers' familiarity with the conventions of giving and receiving. Overall, the evidence supports Harrison's conclusion that the Graeco-Roman benefaction context of χάρις lies behind Paul's understanding and usage of the term. I would point out, however, that caution must be exercised so that we are not tempted to impose the benefaction motif on every Pauline usage of the term. While Harrison demonstrates that Graeco-Roman benefaction *may* lie behind each of Paul's uses of χάρις, I emphasize that careful exegesis is required in order to determine whether Paul indeed may intend for benefaction concepts to play a role in any specific argument. A good example where Paul does penetrate his argument with strands of benefaction ideology through the use of χάρις is found in his discussion of the collection in 2 Corinthians 8-9, and Harrison does well to highlight this example.

Harrison insists that God's grace differs from that of Graeco-Roman divine beneficence in that the former is "unilateral" and that "Any implication of reciprocity that might distort the unilateral nature of covenantal grace in Christ was ruthlessly expunged by the apostle".[72] Harrison is correct that God's grace is "unilateral" in the sense that it differs from the benefits of the Graeco-Roman deities who, through cultic offerings, could be put under obligation to offer benefits and to return gratitude to their human devotees. If, in addition to meaning that God is the initiator of grace, the term "unilateral" also implies that God gives his grace with no expectation of a response or that his grace carries no obligation – i.e. that *no* sense of reciprocity is involved – then I would have to disagree. In 2 Corinthians 8-9 Paul makes clear that God's grace demands a response, such as sharing from one's abundance with others who are in need, and returning "grace" to God in the form of thanksgiving. God's gifts of grace, although not a requital, nonetheless invite a response, which implies reciprocity.[73] Rather than

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[72] Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 348-49.

[73] Richard Seaford clarifies this point: "generosity . . . that is *not* an act of requital may nevertheless, if requited, be said with hindsight to belong to a pattern of reciprocity"; Richard Seaford, "Introduction", in *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece*, eds. C. Gill and N. Postlethwaite (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 2.

debate the word unilateral, perhaps a more descriptive term for God's grace would be that it is *engaging*; God's grace engages the recipients in action by initiating the further propagation of grace through giving and God-directed thanksgiving. Therefore, in this regard it is possible to speak of reciprocity with regard to God's grace, not that God reciprocates what we have done, but that the recipients of his grace reciprocate by responding with moral behavior, by passing on "grace" to others through giving, and by returning "grace" to God in the form of thanksgiving. This return is not commensurate with the grace received, for our giving could never match the abundance of God's grace, but we offer a heartfelt response nonetheless.

Without a doubt, Harrison's work makes a significant contribution to Pauline studies, both in adding to discussions of the first-century world of benefaction, and in the contribution it makes to the Pauline theology of grace. With regard to χάρις usage in Paul, although it may be helpful to distinguish between divine and human "beneficence", particularly in comparing Paul's usage to the conventions of the Graeco-Roman world, in making this distinction an important element is overlooked: the convergence of divine and human grace in Paul's usage. This seems to be an essential element of Paul's discussion in 2 Corinthians 8-9; as the distinctions between God's "grace" given to believers blur with the "grace" that believers share with one another, we begin to grasp Paul's point, a point which he also makes in 1 Cor. 15.10, "I labored, yet not I, but the grace of God with me". The distinction between the gracious activities of believers and the grace that God bestows, are in fact difficult to ascertain. Without saying more at this point, I will wait to draw out my conclusions regarding the implications of Paul's use of χάρις, particularly in 2 Corinthians 8-9, in the chapters ahead.

2.3. Conclusion: Recent Studies of χάρις

Having considered the works of these nine scholars, what is the picture that emerges of the environment of giving and receiving in the Graeco-Roman world? In ancient society, social conventions of interdependence had developed, variously referred to as "benefaction", "patronage", "social reciprocity", "interpersonal benefaction" and "benefit- or gift-exchange" – depending on the geography, period in history, and the writer. By the first century AD when the apostle Paul was planting churches and corresponding with those churches, the Graeco-Roman society in which he worked and ministered was dependent upon the exchange of benefits. At the heart of

this "system" were the unspoken obligations of reciprocity – *do ut des*; one bestowed benefits in order to receive something in return. Such benefaction penetrated all of society, including the relations between man and his gods. Every member of society was to some degree involved in the giving and receiving of gifts or favors, and therefore members of society were under obligation to one another. Likewise, men were obliged to their gods and the gods were similarly put under obligation to those offering them both sacrifices and returns of gratitude.

The terminology of benefit exchange included the term χάρις, which was used to convey at least two and probably three aspects of the exchange: the favorable disposition of the bestower of the benefit, the benefit itself, and the response of gratitude.

I have already pointed out Paul's prolific use of the term χάρις in 2 Corinthians 8-9. The general consensus of the scholars reviewed in this chapter is that Graeco-Roman benefaction at least to some degree influenced Paul's use of χάρις. To what degree his use of the term implied conventions of reciprocity in connection with the collection is, however, debatable. Some of the scholars considered were inclined toward various broad generalizations, such as that all Pauline uses of χάρις reflect the benefaction motif, or that Paul in no way implies any sort of reciprocity in his use of the term. As blanket statements, these generalizations must be challenged, and as I have suggested throughout this chapter, the proper way to do so is to do what these scholars for the most part have not done, a thorough exegesis of 2 Corinthians 8-9 with a view to understanding Paul's varied use of χάρις in connection with the collection.

These scholars have considered Graeco-Roman benefaction in various lights and have laid a good foundation for understanding Paul's use of χάρις within that context. Marshall, Peterman, deSilva, Joubert and Harrison have all used Seneca's depiction of benefit exchange to offer an understanding of this aspect of the Graeco-Roman world, and rightly so as I will show in Chapter 3. Although Seneca has been mentioned by several scholars, none uses his "model" as a basis for comparison with the Pauline picture of "benefit exchange" we find in his writings.[74] Therefore, I proceed in the next chapter to present the model of benefit exchange as defined by Seneca, and then use it as a basis for characterizing a Pauline paradigm.

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[74] Joubert's "framework for interpretation" is, however, based on Seneca.

CHAPTER 3

PARADIGMS OF GIVING AND RECEIVING

3.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter I surveyed recent scholarship that demonstrates the relevance of Graeco-Roman benefaction to Pauline studies. Harrison in particular has provided strong evidence to suggest that Paul's understanding of gift giving makes sense in the Graeco-Roman context. In this chapter I will focus on the exchange of *benefits*[1] as discussed by the Stoic philosopher Seneca, with a view toward understanding patterns of giving and receiving in Paul, particularly in 2 Corinthians 8-9. Several of the scholars surveyed in Chapter 2 have made sporadic use of Seneca, but none has done so in sufficient depth or detail. In choosing to analyze Seneca, I do not presume to suggest that Paul and Seneca say the same things or that they adopt the same structures of thought. As a critic and a philosopher Seneca is a good analyst of the structures of benefactions in Graeco-Roman antiquity. His ideas can therefore be usefully compared to what hints Paul gives about the structures of his thought with regard to gift giving. Seneca presents perhaps the most complete discussion of "benefit exchange" of any writer in the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Against contemporary practices which viewed benefit exchange as a means for self-gain, Seneca projects an ideal which places more emphasis on the attitudes of the giver and the receiver than it does on the actual benefits exchanged.

I begin this discussion by examining the topic of benefit exchange as discussed by Seneca in *De Beneficiis* and *Epistulae Morales* 81. Then I contrast what Paul has to say about giving and receiving benefits with the model of Seneca. Finally, I present a Pauline paradigm for the giving and receiving of benefits, which reflects Paul's

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[1] See §3.2 below for a definition of "benefit".

portrayal of the giving and receiving of χάρις.

Lucius Annaeus Seneca (*c.* 4 BC-AD 65) was born in Spain, and later in life concluded his political career as Nero's chief advisor. After retirement, during which time he wrote many of his works, he was finally forced by Nero to take his own life for alleged participation in the Pisonian conspiracy. Even the casual reader will note similarities between the writings of Seneca and those of the apostle Paul. There also exist fourteen apocryphal letters supposed to have been written between Seneca and Paul (eight letters attributed to Seneca, six to Paul).[2]

3.2. Seneca and Benefit Exchange[3]

A "benefit" may be described as something bestowed upon another person taking the form of a gift or as rendered in the form of honor, protection of life, advice, influence, or some other service. The exchange of benefits in Seneca's day was taken for granted as an integral part of society and was an essential element of Graeco-Roman *friendship*. Friendship included any interpersonal relationships that could be established through the exchange of benefits.[4] In this sense Seneca can speak of benefits conferred

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[2] See Chapter 1 in J. N. Sevenster, *Paul and Seneca* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1961), for a discussion of the views on whether the letters are authentic, although Sevenster concludes they could not be.

[3] Seneca addresses questions related to the morality of giving and receiving in the seven books of *De Beneficiis*. The first four books comprise a more technical discussion of the proper practice of benefit exchange and were written in the mid to late 50's of the first century AD , while the last three address more practical questions and were written toward the end of Seneca's life. Perhaps after writing the first four books Seneca felt inclined to tone down his admonitions toward the ideal by providing advice pertaining to concrete situations. This may explain some of the inconsistencies between statements in Books 1-4 and Books 5-7. In the later books, Seneca offers the explanation that he had intentionally used hyperbole in his earlier ideal characterization of benefit exchange in order to achieve his desired result: "We overstate some rules in order that in the end they may reach their true value. . . . Hyperbole never expects to attain all that it ventures, but asserts the incredible in order to arrive at the credible. When we say: 'Let him who gives a benefit forget it,' we mean: 'Let him seem to have forgotten it; let not his memory of it appear or obtrude'. When we say that we ought not to demand the repayment of a benefit, we do not banish every demand for repayment" (Seneca *Ben.* 7.32.1-3; All translations are from Basore, LCL, unless otherwise specified). A more concise treatment of benefits is found in Seneca *Epistulae Morales* 81, written in AD 64 after the publication of the first four, and perhaps postdating all seven books of *De Beneficiis.* (Dates are from J. W. Basore (LCL), "Introduction", in Seneca *Ben.*, vii-viii.)

[4] "Friendship was . . . more formalized among the ancients than among ourselves; a good friendship was a good piece of business"; William Hardy Alexander, "Lucius

between parents and their children, just as Aristotle speaks of friendship between parents and children.[5] Seneca asserts that there is need to establish principles regarding the proper way to exchange benefits: "What we need is a discussion of benefits and the rules for a practice that constitutes the chief bond of human society; . . . we need to be taught to give willingly, to receive willingly, to return willingly" (1.4.2-3).[6] Thus, in a broad sense, the exchange of benefits was "the chief bond of human society" (1.4.2), while on the personal level it was "a common bond that binds two persons together" (6.41.2). The problems associated with benefit exchange seem to a great degree to be rooted in the lack of gratitude offered in return for a benefit received, and thus Seneca discusses extensively how gratitude ought to be expressed, as well as the proper manner of conveying a benefit, which actually encourages the response of gratitude.

A simple model of benefit exchange is represented in Figure 3.1. In the following paragraphs I consider the various elements of this diagram based on Seneca's discussions.

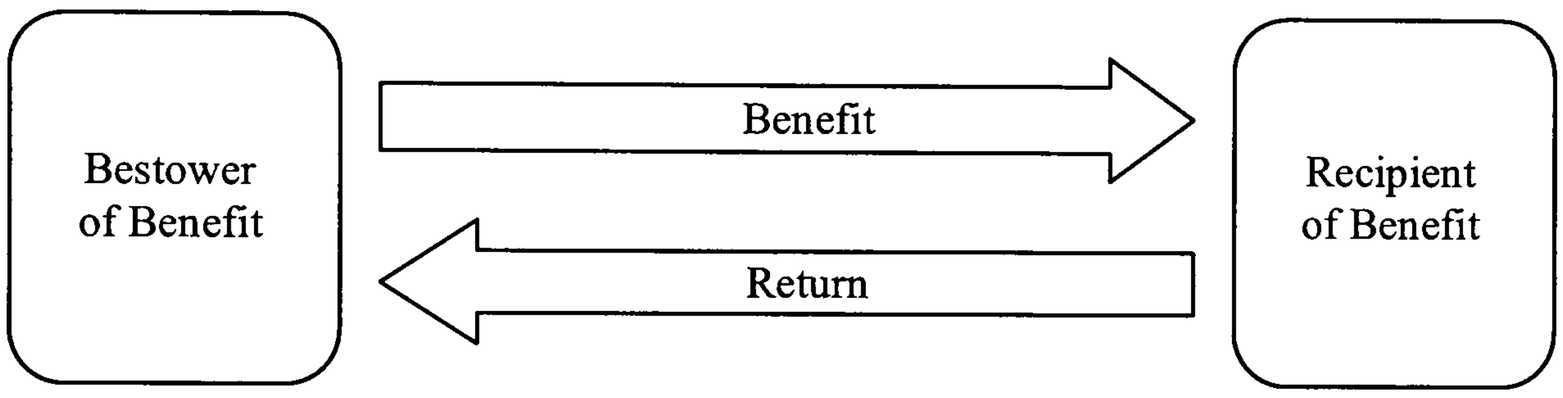

Figure 3.1. Simple Model of Benefit Exchange

3.2.1. What is *a Benefit?*

Seneca addresses what he perceives to be a misunderstanding of the nature of benefits. According to Seneca, while a benefit does consist of the object or service bestowed, its value is much greater than the value of that which is bestowed, for the essence of the benefit lies in the *intention* with which it is given. "What counts is not what is done or given, but the spirit of the action, because a benefit consists, not in what

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Annaeus Seneca *De Beneficiis* Libri VII: The Text Emended and Explained", in *UCPCP* 14 (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1950), 3.

[5] Aristotle discusses a broad range of interpersonal relationships under the rubric "friendship". For Aristotle, the designation friendship applies to all forms of affirmative relationships within society, whether personal or familial, economic, or between ruler and subjects. See Aristotle *The Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 8, for his discussion on friendship.

[6] Seneca references in this chapter are to *De Beneficiis*, unless otherwise specified.

is done or given, but in the intention of the giver or doer" (1.6.1). Thus for Seneca, the essence of the benefit consists not in the service performed, but in the goodwill of the one bestowing it, since for the Stoics, virtue is the only good, and virtue relates to one's intentions. Seneca distinguishes the actual benefit from the service performed, in that the benefit is something inherently good, while the service performed is neither good nor evil. It follows that the greatness of the gift does not determine the greatness of the benefit, for even a small gift given with the right intention may convey a great benefit. Likewise, one who does not have great wealth is not restrained from bestowing great benefits. *De Beneficiis* is addressed to Seneca's fictitious dialog partner, Aebutius Liberalis, with whom Seneca discusses the common misconceptions regarding the true sense of a benefit and the correct ways to give, receive, and return benefits. Liberalis himself appears to represent the ideal benefactor (5.1.3) and, apparently also, the good and wise man.[7] It is not the wise man, however, who needs this instruction, for "none but the wise man knows how to make return for a favor; moreover, none but the wise man knows how to confer a benefit" (*Ep.* 81.10). For Seneca, the "wise man" is the "good man" whose wisdom enables him to perform virtuous deeds, and all true benefits are virtuous deeds.

The word "benefit" is consistently used by Seneca to refer both to the intention of the giver and to the object bestowed. As some words can be used in different ways, for example, the word "foot" may refer to a person's foot, the foot of a bed, or the foot of a mountain,[8] so too a benefit may refer to either the intention of the gift or the gift itself. "A 'benefit' . . . is both a beneficent act and likewise the object itself which is given by means of the aforesaid act, as money, a house, the robe of office; the two things bear the same name, but they are very different in their import and operation" (2.34.5).

Seneca classifies benefits according to three categories: what is necessary, what is useful, and what is pleasurable.[9] The "necessary benefits" (such as a man's family,

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[7] The wise man is discussed in more detail in Seneca *Ep.* 81.

[8] In Seneca's actual illustration, he says that a foot may be possessed by a person, a couch, a sail, and a poem; see Seneca *Ben.* 2.34.2.

[9] This is reminiscent of Aristotle's three things that serve as a basis for friendship: goodness, utility, and pleasure (Aristotle *Eth. Nic.* 8.2). For Aristotle, goodness is the basis for the ideal friendship as it is manifested through the conveyance of goodwill to another. This represents friendship based on virtue, and is possible only between "good

the saving of a man's life, "and all other things to which the mind becomes so attached that to be robbed of them seems to it more serious than to be robbed of life"; 1.11.4) are those things which support life. The "useful benefits" (adequate wealth, public office), and the "pleasurable benefits" taken together are those things which adorn or equip life.

"A benefit is a useful service, but not every useful service is a benefit" (4.29.2), writes Seneca. Therefore Seneca offers two conditions which must be met in order to produce a benefit. The first is that the service must be considered sufficiently important, although he offers no criteria for determining the relative importance of services.[10] The second condition, the more important of the two, is that the bestower's motive must be in the interest of the one for whom the benefit is destined, such that "I should deem him worthy of it, should bestow it willingly and derive pleasure from my gift" (4.29.3). It seems that if one's motive is right and his intention is truly toward goodwill, the "importance" of the actual gift (i.e. Seneca's first condition) becomes much less relevant. Perception, it seems, would overrule these conditions since Seneca later says that if both the giver and the receiver consider something a benefit, then it is indeed a benefit (cf. 5.13.4). In any case, he later qualifies a benefit as something which is conveyed, first of all intentionally, and secondly in a kind and friendly way (6.7.2).

Another characteristic of a benefit is that it endures. Even if the object is taken away, lost, or destroyed, the goodwill remains in the form of the memory of the benefit. Conversely, any object or service that remains with its owner cannot be considered a benefit. Until it is given away, it is no more than a possession. Hence Seneca quotes the famous words of Mark Antony, "Whatever I have given, that I still possess!" (6.3.1).

Seneca makes one further distinction regarding types of benefits, which I will consider in more detail later, but suffice it to be mentioned here. "Benefits are of two kinds – one, the perfect and true benefit, which only a wise man can give to none but a wise man; the other, the everyday, common sort, in which we ignorant men have dealings with each other"[11] (7.17.1).

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men" (8.3.6). Similarly for Seneca, as we have already seen, the essence of a benefit conveyed to another is the goodwill or intention which lies behind it.

[10] As examples of small gifts not worthy of being considered benefits Seneca includes a morsel of bread and tossing someone a coin. In view of these examples, perhaps he lists "importance" as a condition in order to avoid allowing small acts of charity in response to begging, for example, to qualify as benefits.

[11] Again echoes can be detected of Aristotle and his "true friendship" that can exist only between "good/virtuous men".

It is evident that for Seneca benefits are not restricted to spontaneous gifts. Benefits may be sought after as well by anyone who has the desire for, or need of, a particular item or service. That which is sought, however, is not the *true* benefit (that is, goodwill), but the object through which the benefit will be expressed. In this case, one might even say that he who seeks a benefit from another is himself conveying a benefit to the one from whom he is seeking it in offering his potential benefactor the opportunity to extend goodwill, in the form of a benefit, to him!

To summarize: for Seneca, a benefit consists in a favor or service bestowed upon another with the condition that it is an act of goodwill whose motive is in the best interest of the recipient and which is pleasurable to convey. Seneca emphasizes the priority of the intention that lies behind the benefit, over the gift conveyed, although it is clear that no benefit would exist without the accompanying gift or service. In other words, "The true benefit lies in the intention; the service is but the manifestation of it".[12] Seneca clearly focuses on the attitude of the giver and for this reason it is not surprising that his discussion of actual benefit-gifts is limited.

3.2.2. How Should a Benefit Be Given?

Seneca's "golden rule" for giving benefits is, "Let us give in the manner that would have been acceptable if we were receiving" (2.1.1), and "above all, let us give willingly, promptly, and without any hesitation" (2.1.2). Although it is common for men to seek benefits when they have need, it is best to anticipate another's need. The one who bestows a benefit can preserve the honor of the one in need by discerning and anticipating his need and conferring the benefit before he asks.

> Though a man gives promptly, his benefit has been given too late if it has been given upon request. Therefore we ought to divine each man's desire, and, when we have discovered it, he ought to be freed from the grievous necessity of making a request; the benefit that takes the initiative, you may be sure, will be one that is agreeable and destined to live in the heart. If we are not so fortunate as to anticipate the asker, let us cut him off from using many words; in order that we may appear to have been, not asked, but merely informed, let us promise at once and prove by our very haste that we were about to act even before we were solicited (2.2.1-2).

The gift ought to be given in such a way that the recipient feels a greater regard for the giver than the actual gift he has received. In this way the bestowing of benefits contributes toward the building of friendships (cf. 2.3.3), and benefits can be given for

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[12] See explanatory note by Basore (LCL), Seneca *Ben.*, 22, note a.

the express purpose of establishing friendship (2.1.1; cf. 2.18.5).

Some benefits are more appropriately given publicly ("those that it is glorious to obtain"; 2.9.1), some privately ("those that do not give promotion or prestige, yet come to the rescue of bodily infirmity, of poverty, of disgrace"; 2.9.2). There are occasions when a benefit should be given anonymously (if the recipient "is ashamed to be helped, if what we bestow gives offense unless it is concealed"; 2.10.4), but this is not the norm, since it hinders the pleasure of the giver in witnessing the willingness of the recipient, and prevents the benefit from being used to create friendship.

Benefits should not be given pridefully, should not be advertised, and the bestower should not make constant remembrance of his beneficence. The giver should forget that he has given while the recipient should always remember. "In the case of a benefit, this is a binding rule for the two who are concerned – the one should straightway forget that it was given, the other should never forget that it was received" (2.10.4). If the giver "forgets" that he has given, then he is not tempted to destroy the virtue of giving with thoughts of expectation of a return. The recipient, however, in never forgetting what he has received, allows his feelings of gratitude to endure. And the giver should enjoy giving more than he enjoys receiving, just as one should enjoy returning a benefit more than he enjoys receiving it.[13]

Any gift bestowed must be appropriate both for the giver to give and for the recipient to receive. The one bestowing a benefit must take into consideration the character of the person to whom he is giving, for "if it is not becoming for the man to accept the gift, neither is it becoming for you to give it; the relation of the two in point of character and rank is taken into account, and since virtue is everywhere a mean,[14] excess and defect are equally an error" (2.16.2).

Another essential aspect of the act of bestowing a benefit is that it must not hinder the recipient's response of gratitude. On the contrary, the manner in which a benefit is bestowed should inspire gratitude in the recipient; this is the desired response of the one bestowing a benefit. Hence, the one bestowing the benefit does not seek a return, except for the return of gratitude. Just as it is virtuous for the giver to give with the right motives in his heart, so it is virtuous for the recipient to respond with gratitude, and if the giver can inspire this, he has truly been a virtuous giver. Seneca offers the

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[13] Seneca *Ep.* 81.10, 17.
[14] Regarding virtue as a "mean", see Aristotle *Eth. Nic.* 2.6.15-17.

example of playing ball to aid his commentary on gift giving – the giving of an appropriate gift which encourages the response of gratitude in the recipient: when playing ball, the success of the game depends both on the one throwing the ball and on the one catching it. The skill of each must be taken into consideration. When a skilled thrower throws to someone less skilled at catching, he throws more carefully, more delicately, and expects a less skilled return. When the catcher is himself also quite skilled, the thrower can throw harder and expect a strong return.

> The good player, however, must of necessity use one method of hurling the ball to a partner who is a long way off, and another to one who is near at hand. The same condition applies to a benefit. Unless this is suited to the character of both, the one who gives and the one who receives, it will neither leave the hands of the one, nor reach the hands of the other in the proper manner. . . . In the case of benefits, some men need to be taught, and we should show that we are satisfied if they try, if they dare, if they are willing. But we ourselves are most often the cause of ingratitude in others, and we encourage them to be ungrateful, just as if our benefits could be great only when it was impossible to return gratitude for them! It is as if some spiteful player should purposely try to discomfit his fellow-player, to the detriment of the game, of course, which can be carried on only in a spirit of co-operation. . . . But how much better, how much more kindly would it be to aim at having the recipients also do regularly their part, to encourage a belief in the possibility of repaying with gratitude, to put a kindly interpretation upon all that they do, to listen to words of thanks as if they were an actual return, to show oneself complaisant to the extent of wishing that the one upon whom the obligation was laid should also be freed from it. . . . In the case of a benefit it is as right to accept a return, as it is wrong to demand it. The best man is he who gives readily, never demands any return, rejoices if a return is made, who in all sincerity forgets what he has bestowed, and accepts a return in the spirit of one accepting a benefit (2.17.3-7).

Bestowing benefits is an integral part of friendship, and the exchange of benefits establishes equality between friends. The interests of both must be taken into account, however, so that when one bestows a benefit on another, he does not thereby put himself in a position of need. "Since the sum total of friendship consists in putting a friend on an equality with ourselves, consideration must be given at the same time to the interests of both. I shall give to him if he is in need, yet not to the extent of bringing need upon myself; I shall come to his aid if he is at the point of ruin, yet not to the extent of bringing ruin upon myself, unless by so doing I shall purchase the safety of a great man or a great cause" (2.15.1).

It is also important to choose carefully the manner in which a benefit is given – when to give it, to whom, how, and why. "For reason should be applied to everything we do; and no gift can be a benefit unless it is given with reason, since every virtuous

act is accompanied by reason" (4.10.2). Seneca places particular emphasis on choosing an appropriate person upon whom to bestow a benefit. "I choose a person who will be grateful, not one who is likely to make a return. . . . It is to the heart that my estimate is directed" (4.10.4-5). "I shall choose a man who is upright, sincere, mindful, grateful, who keeps his hands from another man's property, who is not greedily attached to his own, who is kind to others" (4.11.1). "I shall give my benefit to the man who in all probability will be grateful" (4.33.3). A response of gratitude is the desired response when bestowing a benefit, and for this reason, a man who is likely to be grateful is the type of man to whom a benefit should be bestowed.

In summary, according to Seneca, benefits ought to be bestowed willingly and skillfully, and to the degree it is possible, in anticipation of the needs of others. The recipient should be chosen carefully and should be one who is likely to receive the benefit with gratitude. Seneca emphasizes that the *intention* of giver is the essence of the benefit, reflecting the virtue of the action. Of equal importance is the response that the giving inspires in the recipient, for the giver has the power both to hinder and to encourage a response of gratitude. It is this response of gratitude that the one bestowing a benefit seeks as the return for his gift; the act of giving ought to inspire virtue in the recipient.

Stoic philosophy stands in agreement with Aristotle that "character cannot be divorced from action",[15] and therefore doing the right thing is all-important because the virtuous man *will* do the right and proper thing. Even more important than actually doing what is right, however, is having the *intention* to do what is right, even if one is prohibited from acting. Thus Seneca's characterization of the proper way to bestow a benefit is indeed consistent with Stoic belief. The one bestowing a benefit is to act as a virtuous man should act, he is to do the proper thing, having the right intention. R. W. Sharples characterizes Stoic virtue as being "a matter of making the right selections in the situation in which you find yourself, even if your power to achieve anything in material terms is restricted"[16] and, again, we find this to be consistent with Seneca's ideal benefactor. When bestowing a benefit, his concern is only the bestowal, since whether he receives anything material in return is out of his control. He does, however, do all that he can to inspire a response of gratitude in the recipient, which materially

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[15] R. W. Sharples, *Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics: An Introduction to Hellenistic Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1996; reprint, 1999), 82.

[16] Sharples, *Hellenistic Philosophy*, 110.

costs the recipient nothing, for such action is virtuous and *is* within the giver's control. For this reason he chooses wisely to whom he will confer a benefit, and given the choice, will only do so upon one who is likely to show gratitude in return.

3.2.3. How Should a Benefit Be Received?

As with the giving of a benefit, so also it should be received in a virtuous manner. "It is always hard to attain to Virtue", explains Seneca, "for there must be, not merely achievement, but achievement through reason. Along the whole path of life Reason must be our guide, all our acts, from the smallest to the greatest, must follow her counsel; as she prompts, so also must we give" (2.18.2). "Reason" leads Seneca to conclude that it is not necessary to receive a benefit from just anyone, but reason should be followed in choosing our benefactors carefully, to the extent that it is possible. The people from whom we ought to receive are "those to whom we could have given", but he says it takes "even greater discernment to find a man to whom we ought to owe, than one on whom we ought to bestow, a benefit" (2.18.3).

The question naturally arises, is it possible for us to choose our benefactors? Seneca anticipates this question and so explains that sometimes it is possible, while at other times we are subject to "benefits" that are forced upon us, which, in fact are not benefits at all. "If it is for you to decide whether you are willing or not, you will weigh the matter thoroughly in your mind; if necessity removes any possibility of choice, you will realize that it is for you, not to accept, but to obey" (2.18.7). If you do not have the opportunity to receive it willingly, then it is not a benefit.

Seneca explains that in describing the manner by which men are to give and receive benefits, he is not talking about "the ideal wise man", "but of the man who with all his imperfections desires to follow the perfect path, yet has passions that often are reluctant to obey" (2.18.4). And since not all men bestowing benefits are such "ideal wise men",

> It is necessary for me to choose the person from whom I wish to receive a benefit; and, in truth, I must be far more careful in selecting my creditor for a benefit than a creditor for a loan. For to the latter I shall have to return the same amount that I have received, and, when I have returned it, I have paid all my debt and am free; but to the other I must make an additional payment,[17] and, even after I have paid my debt of gratitude, the bond between us still holds; for,

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[17] I will discuss below the "interest" that must be retuned in addition to the repayment of the "benefit" principal.

> just when I have finished paying it, I am obliged to begin again, and friendship endures[18]; and, as I would not admit an unworthy man to my friendship, so neither would I admit one who is unworthy to the most sacred privilege of benefits, from which friendship springs (2.18.5).[19]

Seneca packs much into this one paragraph, and I want briefly to comment on several points.

First let us consider Aristotle, who in distinguishing status in society, identifies degrees of "greatness" in men based not on virtue alone but also on nobility. The "liberal man" (ὁ ἐλευθέριος) gives not because he has an abundance, but because it is noble to do so. The nobility of the "magnificent man" (ὁ μεγαλοπρεπής) lies in his greater possession of wealth, from which he is able to give more magnificently. Aristotle's "ideal man", however, is the most noble of all; he is the "great-souled man" (ὁ μεγαλόψυχος), who is both wealthy and of noble birth, and who exchanges benefits with other great-souled men. Although for Aristotle it is possible and even encouraged for men who are less fortunate to attain to virtue, the degree to which one is able to live virtuously depends on one's status within society.[20] For Seneca, at least in *De Beneficiis*, there is no such distinction. Slaves may be virtuous and therefore may confer benefits, even upon their masters (3.19.4). Children may confer them upon their parents, even conferring greater benefits on their parents than they receive from them (3.35.5). When it pertains to virtue and the bestowing of benefits, there are no class distinctions. Within society, although all men are equal, all men are capable of virtue, any man is able to bestow a benefit on another. All men are not, however, morally equal. "We all spring from the same source, have the same origin; no man is more noble than another except in so far as the nature of one man is more upright and more capable of good actions" (3.28.1). Seneca clearly differentiates between the "ideal wise man"[21] and the ordinary man, "the man with all his imperfections". The ideal wise man stands in a category by himself, and very few stand with him.[22] Even Seneca does not include

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[18] "I.e., the lasting quality of friendship protracts the payment of gratitude"; see Basore, Seneca *Ben.*, 88, note a.

[19] Further on he says, in passing, "Friendship . . . is a bond between equals" (2.21.2).

[20] For Aristotle's discussions concerning ὁ ἐλευθέριος, ὁ μεγαλοπρεπής and ὁ μεγαλόψυχος see Aristotle *Eth. Nic.* 4.1-4.3.

[21] The ideal wise man is he to whom "every duty is also a pleasure, who rules over his own spirit, and imposes upon himself any law that he pleases, and always observes any that he has imposed" (2.18.4).

[22] As Sharples, *Hellenistic Philosophy*, 106, confirms, "the Stoic sage is as rare as the phoenix".

himself in this elite group.[23] It is not the ideal wise man, however, to whom Seneca addresses his instructions on benefits; rather, it is to the "man with all his imperfections" – the common man who is "bad" in the Stoic sense and inclined toward ingratitude.[24] This man "desires to follow the perfect path, yet has passions that often are reluctant to obey" (2.18.4). Seneca thus believes in the depravity of mankind; that all are inclined toward doing wrong.[25] And he is quick to include himself in his audience as one who has need of his own teaching.

Second, when Seneca says that friendship springs from "the sacred privilege" of benefit exchange, we see again that friendship and benefit exchange are intertwined. In fact, friendship finds its roots in the bestowal of benefits. That friendship and benefit exchange involve reciprocity is evident when he says, "just when I have finished paying my debt of gratitude, I am obliged to begin again" (2.18.5) and "every obligation that involves people makes an equal demand on both" (2.18.1). And so we see how bestowing benefits is considered "the chief bond of human society" (1.4.2). "For how else do we live in security if it is not that we help each other by an exchange of good offices? It is only through the interchange of benefits that life becomes in some measure equipped and fortified against sudden disasters" (4.18.1-2). It is through "fellowship" (*societas*) that humans standing together are able to survive. "God has given to [man] two things, reason and fellowship which, from being a creature at the mercy of others, make him the most powerful of all" (4.18.2). This fellowship is maintained through the bonds of conferring benefits and returning gratitude. Therefore, "ingratitude is something to be avoided in itself because there is nothing that so effectually disrupts and destroys the human race as this vice" (4.18.1). So human society is held together by the bonds established through the exchange of benefits. It is not through the commercial exchange of valued commodities, but the concern for the best interests of one another and the return of gratitude that bind hearts together. As men exchange benefits they are together able to defend themselves against disaster and danger (due to the course of Seneca's "Nature") and are able to seek their common welfare through the exchange of

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[23] As evidence that he does not consider himself to be among the ideal wise men, Seneca says elsewhere when discussing ingratitude, "while those who do not even profess to be grateful are blameworthy, so also are we" (1.1.4).

[24] According to Seneca, all men may be considered "bad" or "fools", and therefore possess every vice, or at least have the potential for possessing every vice (cf. 4.26.3). The true wise man seems to have risen above this state, having achieved "the Happy Life" through philosophy. Cf. 3.33.5 and Basore, Seneca *Ben.*, 194, note a.

[25] "We are universally ungrateful . . . all are ungodly" (5.17.3).

needed services when some suffer loss (due to the outworking of "Fortune").

Thirdly, the exchange of benefits is not simply an economic matter.[26] Because of the bond of friendship, returning a benefit is more involved than repaying a loan. Once the loan is repaid in full the transaction is completed, but in the returning of the benefit a new cycle begins. Seneca does not spell this out in detail, but implies that the return offered against the original benefit would itself be a new benefit, thus necessitating a return by the original benefactor. Perhaps Seneca does not dwell on this ongoing cycle, either because it is implied throughout his discussions, or perhaps simply because of his Stoic perspective and emphasis on the virtue of the intention rather than the exchange of services.

Just as I showed earlier that Seneca warns one not to bestow a benefit that will result in him falling into need himself, so too he states that one should not accept a benefit even from a worthy man if for him to receive it the giver might suffer because of having given it (2.21.3).

Seneca emphasizes that whenever possible, those receiving benefits should choose to receive them from worthy men. Presumably this means that whenever a benefit is sought, the seeker should be discerning in choosing a potential benefactor who is worthy, just as one ought to choose wisely upon whom to bestow benefits.[27] When a benefit is received, it should be received with gratitude, which Seneca summarizes as follows: "When we have decided that we ought to accept, let us accept cheerfully, professing our pleasure and letting the giver have proof of it in order that he may reap instant reward; for, as it is a legitimate source of happiness to see a friend happy, it is a more legitimate one to have made him so. Let us show how grateful we are for the blessing that has come to us by pouring forth our feelings, and let us bear witness to them, not merely in the hearing of the giver, but everywhere. He who receives a benefit with gratitude repays the first installment on his debt" (2.22.1).

3.2.4. How Should a Benefit Be Returned?

According to Seneca, the ultimate return for a benefit is gratitude, a theme which is quite pervasive throughout *De Beneficiis* (as well as in *Ep.* 81). Gratitude is viewed

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[26] I address this in more detail below in §3.2.4.

[27] See §3.2.2 with regard to choosing an appropriate person upon whom to bestow a benefit.

both as the proper attitude of the one receiving the benefit and as the actual return offered for the benefit. Even if a man does not have the means to offer a gift in return, he can always return the gift of gratitude, simply by receiving the benefit joyfully. "The very moment you have been placed under obligation, you can match favor for favor with any man if you wish to do so; for he who receives a benefit gladly has already returned it" (2.30.2).

Seneca calls this one of the "paradoxes of the Stoic school" (2.31.1), that when a benefit is received gladly, it has already been returned. Gratitude is an act of the will, and for the Stoics it is through one's mind and reason that one can determine his well-being. "A man is grateful who only wishes to be so, and has none besides himself to bear witness to this desire" (4.21.4). So by choosing to be grateful one chooses a path of happiness, one chooses virtue. Thus, the return of gratitude is virtuous since it is within the recipient's control. The return of a gift or service may not be possible for him, and so is not a virtue. When a man bestows a benefit, according to Seneca, his aim is "to be of service and to give pleasure to the one to whom he gives. If he accomplishes what he wished, if his intention is conveyed to me and stirs in me a joyful response, he gets what he sought. For he had no wish that I should give him anything in exchange. Otherwise, it would have been, not a benefaction, but a bargaining" (2.31.2). The fulfillment of the service conveyed is to give pleasure to the recipient. Since for the Stoics, pleasure resides in virtue, the way that the recipient experiences this pleasure is through the virtuous response of gratitude. If in response to the benefit bestowed gratitude is returned, then the bestower has seen the goal of his benefit realized: the recipient has acted virtuously, he has received the benefit gladly, he has experienced the pleasure of gratitude. "He who gives a benefit wishes it to be gratefully accepted; if it is cheerfully received he gets what he wanted . . . for the chief mark of [a benefit] is that it carries no thought of return" (2.31.3). The response of gratitude is just as much the aim of a benefactor as it is the desire of a recipient. Each must "do what is proper", which, for the bestower of the benefit means to give with the right intention, thereby inspiring gratitude in the recipient. For the recipient, the virtuous response is the response of gratitude. The key resides in the choice of will, for the one bestowing – in choosing the right motive in giving, for the recipient – in choosing to respond with gratitude. For the bestower, the intention cannot be conveyed without the accompanying service, while for the recipient, no return service is necessary for him to receive his benefit gladly.

Although Seneca clearly differentiates a benefit from a loan, which carries with

it the obligation of repayment, he also compares benefits to loans in that both should be repaid with interest. "Ungrateful men", he writes, ". . . have to pay their creditors both capital and interest, but they think that benefits are currency which they can use without interest. . . . A man is an ingrate if he repays a favor without interest" (*Ep.* 81.18). And what is the interest that must be paid on the return of a benefit? It is gratitude – the return of the benefactor's goodwill. This further illustrates the importance Seneca places on the return of gratitude. With a loan, more interest means a greater return; the principal is non-negotiable, but the value of the loan increases as the interest increases. For Seneca, the "interest" of gratitude represents the essential value of the return. For this reason, the man who makes a return with the intent of only repaying the object of the benefit is ungrateful.

Seneca offers three principal causes of ingratitude: pride, greed, and jealousy. The ungrateful person is the one who does not recognize from where he has received even the most essential things, for example, his life. Even in good and magnificent things received from "the gods" the ingrate will find something lacking. And "if a man scorns the highest benefits, to whom will he respond with gratitude, what gift will he deem either great or worthy of being returned?" (2.30.1). "Whoever, therefore, teaches men to be grateful, pleads the cause both of men and of the gods, to whom, although there is no thing that they have need of since they have been placed beyond all desire, we can nevertheless offer our gratitude" (2.30.2). If, then, a man is unable to be grateful for the greatest and most obvious of benefits, those received from the gods, he will not be able to express gratitude for the benefits received from men. And whereas no one could ever offer a material return to the gods that would match the greatness of their benefits – and the gods would never expect such a return – the return of gratitude is sufficient, both to gods and therefore to men, in return for benefits bestowed.

Following the previous discussion, one might think that Seneca would say that no return gift is necessary. Although the emphasis is clearly on the recipient accepting the benefactor's gift with gratitude, it does remain for him to offer a return gift as well. I have already mentioned that there are two aspects of a benefit: the act of giving and the accompanying gift or service. When the recipient acknowledges the act of giving with gratitude, he has repaid "the first debt", and the benefit has accomplished its purpose. As for the gift received, it too ought to be repaid. "The benefit that is accomplished by an act has been repaid by our gratitude if we give it friendly welcome; the other, which consists of some object, we have not yet returned, but we shall have the desire to return

it. Goodwill we have repaid with goodwill; for the object we still owe an object. And so, although we say that he who receives a benefit gladly has repaid it, we, nevertheless, also bid him return some gift similar to the one he received" (2.35.1).[28] Seneca says that after having received a benefit with gratitude, the recipient is still in debt and "still bound to repay gratitude even after he has repaid it" (cf. 2.35.3).

In Figure 3.2 below, I offer a revised model of benefit exchange, in which the two aspects of a benefit are clearly illustrated. The one bestowing a benefit conveys the true intention of the benefit by his expression of goodwill. The benefit only becomes realized, however, through the accompanying gift or service he provides. As for the recipient, he returns the goodwill – the true benefit – by accepting the benefit gladly, thus returning gratitude. Having paid this "first debt", he then awaits an appropriate

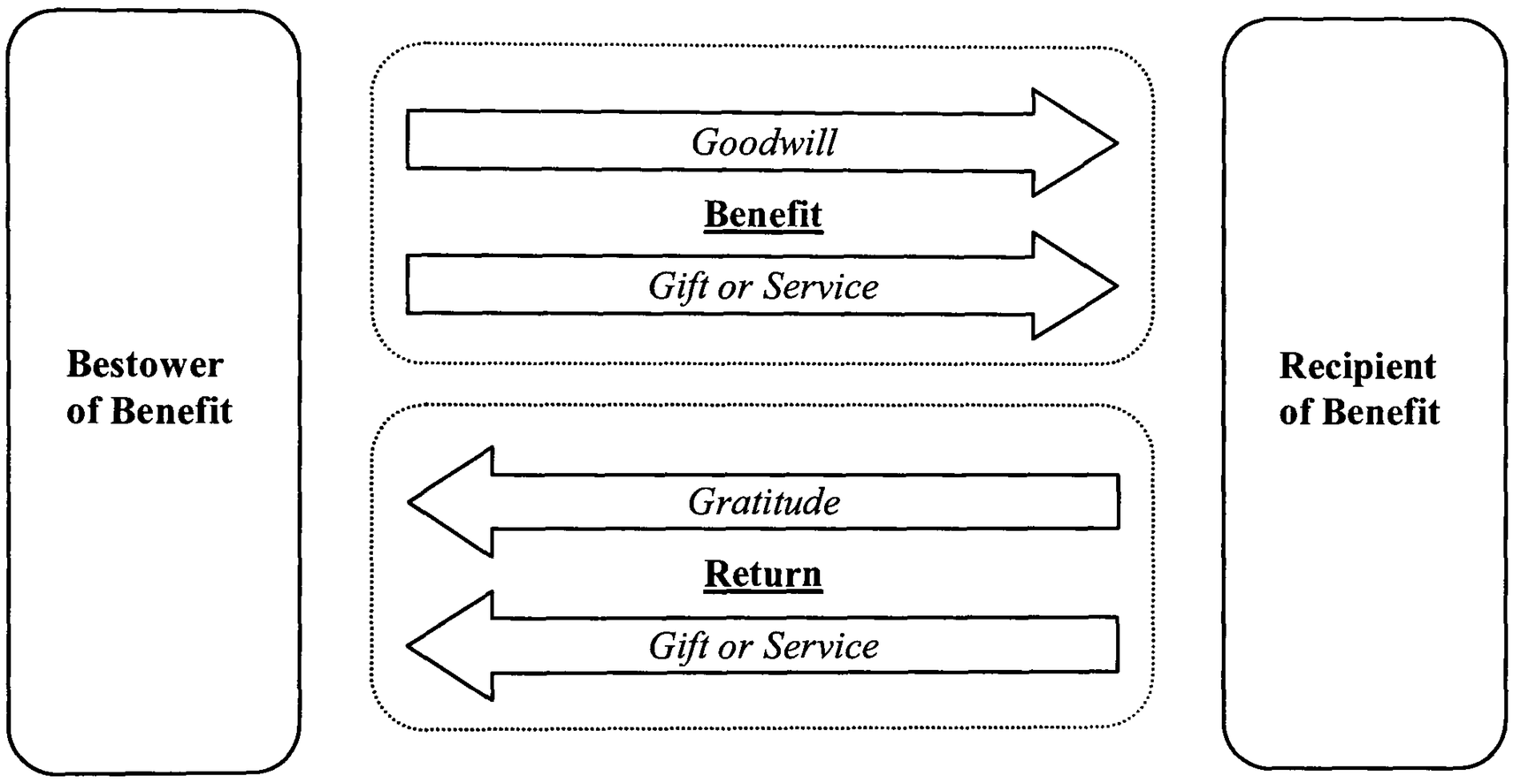

Figure 3.2. Revised Model of Benefit Exchange

time to repay the service as well. The benefactor, having conveyed his benefit, anticipates its joyful acceptance, and when this occurs, considers it repaid through the expression of gratitude. The recipient, having repaid the debt of gratitude, still remains in debt, until which time he returns an appropriate service to his benefactor. The "bond of friendship" having been established and the circle completed, the original benefactor then becomes the recipient, and must accept the return service gladly as a benefit which he himself will have to return. In this way, the material return becomes a new benefit,

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[28] Although Seneca here says that the return gift should be similar to the one received, he no doubt means similar in value, for it is recognized that a benefit is usually bestowed because the recipient has no way of acquiring it himself. The equality of benefits can therefore be difficult to discern: "Since benefits may be given in one form and repaid in another, it is difficult to establish their equality" (3.9.3).

and so the cycle continues.[29] Seneca illustrates this cycle with reference to Chrysippus's "three Graces" who dance in a circle with interlocked arms: "a benefit passing in its course from hand to hand returns nevertheless to the giver, the beauty of the whole is destroyed if the course is anywhere broken, and it has most beauty if it is continuous and maintains an uninterrupted succession" (1.3.4).

The question arises as to situations when a benefit cannot be repaid. To support that he would bestow a benefit without hesitation on someone he knows cannot repay, Seneca offers the example of a shipwrecked stranger who receives benefits in the form of a fully equipped ship, enabling the stranger to return to his home. "He leaves us scarcely knowing who was the author of his salvation, and, expecting never more to see our faces again, he deputes the gods to be our debtors, and prays that they may repay the favor in his stead" (4.11.3). Knowing that he will never see his benefactors again, having repaid his first debt of gratitude, he realizes he will have no opportunity to make full return. So he beseeches the gods to make return for him. Knowing that there is still a debt to pay, he appeals to them to fulfill his obligation. His hope that the return will be made lies in his belief that the gods are pleased with the return of a benefit and his confidence that they are able to supply it for him abundantly. Since Seneca mentions the gods here, one might expect him to have referred to this stranger as offering a similar expression of gratitude to the gods as he had to the direct bestowers of the gift he received. Seneca, however, makes no mention of this. This seems to suggest that Seneca does not connect the gods in any way with acts of human benefaction. We shall see a very different picture when we turn to Paul.

3.2.5. On What Basis Should Benefits Be Bestowed?

Clearly, the motivation for conferring benefits is not economic gain, for the bestower of a benefit is never to give with the expectation of a return.[30] Within the self-referential ethics of the Stoics, the ultimate life of "happiness" is equivalent to the life

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[29] Seneca does not explicitly describe reciprocity as a perpetual process and does not stress that the original benefactor is indebted to respond to the return of his gift as if he had received a benefit. This is implied, however, in the overall process, particularly when he says, "just when I have finished paying [the return], I am obliged to begin again, and friendship endures" (2.18.5), and again, "Even after [my benefits] are returned, they must be given again" (4.13.3).

[30] At least in the ideal case. In reality, benefits were given as favors to be returned, and Seneca describes appropriate situations for requesting a return and strategies for doing so. See 5.20.6-5.25.6.

of virtue. Thus the primary motivation for conferring a benefit is that it is virtuous to do so and thereby contributes to one's happiness. "The reward for all the virtues lies in the virtues themselves. For they are not practiced with a view to recompense; the wages of a good deed is to have done it" (*Ep.* 81.19; 4.1.3). And since a benefit is a virtuous act, its reward lies in the act of bestowing it. A man gives benefits because it is the right thing to do and because he receives pleasure in helping others: "content with giving pleasure to one human being, I shall give with the single purpose of doing what I ought" (4.11.1; cf. 4.11.6). He also does it for the reward of a good conscience (4.12.4). "The motive that leads to the giving of a benefit is not greedy nor mean, but is humane and generous, a desire to give even when one has already given, and to add new and fresh gifts to old ones, having as its sole aim the working of as much good as it can for him upon whom it bestows" (4.14.3). "There is, inherent in the thing itself, some peculiar power that compels us to give benefits, first, because we ought, then, because we have already given them. . . . We continue to bestow because we have already bestowed" (4.15.3-4). Thus the motive for bestowing benefits is that of doing a virtuous deed.

3.2.6. Seneca, Benefits, and the Gods

The Stoic pantheistic view of "God" is not overly evident in *De Beneficiis*; "the gods", however, are often an integral part of the discussions. Seneca's view of "God" is typically unspecific as can be seen in the variety of ways he refers to "God" / "the gods". Although he uses a variety of names he says "Any name that you choose will be properly applied to him if it connotes some force that operates in the domain of heaven" (4.7.2). "So, if you like, speak of Nature, Fate, Fortune, but all these are names of the same God, who uses his power in various ways" (4.8.3). Besides these names, along with "God" and "the gods" we also encounter "our Father", "Divine Reason" and "the most bountiful spring". He is also "Father Liber", "Hercules" and "Mercury". "Father Liber, because he is the father of all things, he who first discovered the seminal power that is able to subserve life through pleasure; Hercules, because his power is invincible, and whenever it shall have grown weary with fulfilling its works, shall return into primal fire; Mercury, because to him belong reason and number and order and knowledge" (4.8.1). "God" is said to be omniscient (4.32.1; 5.25.4) and is associated with the heavenly bodies (6.23.1-8).

Seneca says "the gods are constrained by no external force, but that their own will is a law to them for all time" (6.23.1). He is here referring to the original creation,

when the gods set the universe in motion to support life on earth. The gods chose to submit themselves to the laws that maintain this order for the benefit of mankind. The gods also have showered man with benefits: the benefit of life, of a beautiful dwelling place, and in bestowing on him the greatest honor of all – a place next to themselves making him lord of the earth. Although creation exists primarily for their benefit, and there is no possibility of man offering an equivalent return for the many great blessings he receives, the gods nonetheless continue to pour out benefits upon mankind.

I have shown that Seneca's motivation for bestowing benefits is the virtue of the act. A further reason that Seneca offers is that it is exemplified by the gods. For every aspect of conferring benefits that we have considered, Seneca offers an illustration using the gods. The gods bestow benefits without any expectation of return despite constant shows of ingratitude.[31] They anticipate needs and pour out blessings, sometimes in response to prayers, sometimes when they are not sought. These blessings are timely and aid man in times of great need (4.4.2). We have seen that Seneca argues that the motive for giving benefits is not self-serving. If it were, the gods would have no basis for pouring out their benefits on man since he is unable to offer them a worthy return. Therefore, since the gods confer benefits solely for the sake of the recipients (humans), human benefactors likewise should offer benefits only for the sake of their beneficiaries. Some claim, argues Seneca, in an ongoing debate with the Epicureans, that the gods do not give benefits. But, he continues, such men are ignorant, for why else would men practice "this madness of addressing divinities that were deaf and gods that were ineffectual, unless [they] were conscious of their benefits" (4.4.2)? So the gods demonstrate that benefits should be given with no thought of personal gain but with only the interests of the recipient in mind.

I have shown above (§3.2.6) that Seneca also uses the example of the gods to show that a response of gratitude is a sufficient return for a benefit received. There is

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[31] Similarly, Seneca encourages people to continue to offer benefits, even though ungrateful people will be encountered. In *Epistulae Morales* 81 he responds to one who complains that he frequently encounters ungrateful recipients. Seneca says that, indeed, such will be the case. He implies that this will happen often (*Ep.* 81.1). One must go on giving, however, for "caution can effect nothing but to make you ungenerous" (81.1). The only way to avoid such danger (ungrateful people) would be to avoid conferring benefits altogether. Seneca replies that it is much better to continue to confer benefits, even in the face of a few or many ungrateful people, than to stop doing so. "It is better to get no return than to confer no benefits" (81.2). (One does not know ahead-of-time who will or might not become grateful or be ungrateful.)

nothing the gods need from man nor is there any advantage they might seek from him. Since there is nothing worthy that man can offer – no object or service – the return of gratitude alone *must* suffice.

When asked whether one should bestow benefits on someone known to be an ingrate, Seneca again replies with reference to the gods:

> Do as the gods, those glorious authors of all things, do; they begin to give benefits to him who knows them not, and persist in giving them to those who are ungrateful. . . . The gods do not cease to heap their benefits upon those who are doubtful about the source of benefits, but distribute their blessings among the nations and peoples with unbroken uniformity. . . . Let us imitate them; let us give, even if many of our gifts have been given in vain; nonetheless, let us give to still others, nay, even to those at whose hands we have suffered loss (7.31.2, 4, 5).

For Seneca it is the pattern of the gods that serves as man's example in bestowing benefits, and men are to imitate them as they confer benefits on one another. The gods, "possessing only the power of doing good" (7.31.4), offer for Seneca the example of virtue in doing what is right by pursuing the welfare of others through the conferral of benefits, and in persisting to confer them, even in the face of ingratitude, while expecting nothing in return. The gods have also illustrated how the response of gratitude is a sufficient return when one has nothing more worthy to offer.

In summary, Seneca says, "God bestows upon us very many and very great benefits, with no thought of any return, since he has no need of having anything bestowed, nor are we capable of bestowing anything on him; consequently, a benefit is something that is desirable in itself. It has in view only the advantage of the recipient; so, putting aside all interests of our own, let us aim solely at this" (4.9.1).

3.3. Paul and Benefit Exchange

While endorsing the conventions of benefit exchange, Seneca encourages a more idealistic practice which places greater emphasis on the attitudes of the participants than the actual benefits they exchange. I have shown in the previous chapter that several recent scholars utilize Seneca's *De Beneficiis* in characterizing Graeco-Roman benefit exchange,[32] although not all acknowledge that Seneca's purpose is not simply to describe the practice, but to critique it. As Paul discussed giving and receiving with regard to the collection he would have assumed that his readers possessed a certain

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[32] See discussions of Marshall, Peterman, deSilva, Joubert, Pao and Harrison, §§2.2.

understanding of the conventions of giving advocated by the society of their day. Similarly to Seneca, Paul desired to correct misunderstandings, yet his perspective on giving and receiving among Christians deviated from that of Seneca. Where Seneca was interested in providing an ideal toward which his fellow citizens might strive, the motivation for which was the achievement of virtue, Paul addresses not only the importance of a proper attitude with regard to giving, but also the source which makes this attitude realizable – the grace of God. Having characterized benefit exchange above as portrayed in Seneca's model, I now turn my attention to Paul, and will structure my discussion according to the same categories I used in considering Seneca.

What follows in this chapter is only a provisional outline of the structures of thought in 2 Corinthians 8-9. These first impressions will be confirmed and expanded upon in the following chapters through the analysis of χάρις in 2 Corinthians 8-9.

3.3.1. What Constitutes a Benefit for Paul?

Where Seneca's *De Beneficiis* consists in a treatise on benefaction, Paul does not in his letters set out to define a rigid model of giving and receiving. Rather, in addressing issues within his various congregations, he reveals to us his perspective on both divine and human "benefaction". The benefit conveyed is χάρις, which is exchanged between human, and divine and human benefactors and beneficiaries. I proffer the question, however, whether it is appropriate to use the terms "benefit" and "benefaction" in relation to the bestowal of gifts and/or χάρις in Paul's writings. At this stage, I will proceed with the assumption that the terminology of "benefit exchange" *is* appropriate for discussing the bestowal and acceptance of χάρις (gifts), at least in the broad sense that any gift entails the conveyance of a benefit. I intend to show that the similarities between the phenomenon of benefit exchange in Seneca and that of giving and receiving χάρις in Paul do indeed justify referring to the latter as a form of benefit exchange. Whereas the similarities serve as a launching point, it is the differences that are of particular interest to my study. What differentiated "χάρις exchange" for Paul from Graeco-Roman benefit exchange as described by Seneca, and what is the significance of the differences in terms of understanding grace and giving in the Christian context?

3.3.1.1. The ambiguity of terms

Seneca intentionally uses the term *beneficium* with different senses, sometimes to refer to the bestower's intention of goodwill, at other times to refer to the gift or service conveyed. He seems to delight in this ambiguity, for it aids him in blurring the distinction between the giver's intention and the gift as the manifestation of that intention. In like fashion the Greek term χάρις in the first century was used in a variety of senses.[33] Prior to Paul, the term already conveyed different meanings in different cultural contexts, whether classical Greek, Roman or Jewish. In addition, the referents symbolized by χάρις not only vary between cultures, but also take on new meanings in different eras. While Paul infuses the term with new significance, in the New Testament it also continues to occur in at least some of its prior usages. At the heart of my study is Paul's diversity of usage of χάρις in 2 Corinthians 8-9.

It certainly is not unusual for a lexical symbol to be used with different referents. Normally the context is sufficient to distinguish the meaning, as Seneca's example makes clear with the word "foot" used to refer to a person's foot, the foot of the bed, and so on. What might be considered unusual is for such a term to be used with different referents in close proximity within a given context, leading to potential ambiguity. Seneca, however, has done precisely this, as demonstrated by his use of *beneficium* in discussing benefit exchange. Thus the style of Paul's varied usage of χάρις, both within 2 Corinthians 8-9 and elsewhere in his writings, is not without precedent. It only remains for the exegete to interpret the various meanings in phrases such as: "the χάρις of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 8.9), "the χάρις given to me" (Rom. 12.3; 15.15), and "see to it that you abound also in this χάρις" (2 Cor. 8.7). Just as Seneca intentionally uses the term "benefit" with different meanings, even within a single context, so too does Paul seemingly use χάρις with different senses, both in 2 Corinthians 8-9 and elsewhere.

Unlike Seneca, Paul does not classify gifts or benefits, nor does he state conditions for what constitutes a benefit. However, if we accept Harrison's conclusion that Paul's discussion of the giving and receiving of χάρις is rooted in Graeco-Roman

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[33] The various uses of χάρις will be discussed in connection with Paul's use of the term. See Chapters 4-6.

conventions of benefit exchange, and it seems reasonable to do so,[34] then it will be safe to assume that Paul's readers would have been well versed in the concepts and terminology of its practices. In this case, there would be no reason for Paul to define the conventions of benefit exchange for his readers.[35] I have shown that for Seneca the gift must be deemed "sufficiently important", and the benefactor's motive must be in the interest of the beneficiary. Overarching these criteria, the act of giving should be pleasurable for the giver. The pleasure-producing criterion is connected to virtue and derives from Aristotelian thought, where the ultimate end for man is happiness, and the pursuit of virtue and pleasure are means to that end.[36] The motivation for Paul is, rather, the acknowledgment of benefits received from a greater Benefactor. Certainly Paul would say that in giving a benefit one is acting in the interest of the recipient (speaking here of human benefactors). But ultimately, his or her motive is rooted in the One from whom he or she has received grace, such that the bestowal of benefits serves both as a tangible expression of gratitude, and follows the example of divine benefaction expressed through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

3.3.1.2. The pursuit of benefits

Seneca states that while it is appropriate for someone in need to solicit benefits, it is better for the one bestowing them to anticipate the need, and to give before the potential benefactor makes request. Paul does not address pursuing benefits or asking for grace, nor does he speak about anticipating another's need. For him, emphasis is always on the bestowing of grace in return for that which has already been received; we share "grace" with others because of the grace we have experienced/received from God through the Lord Jesus Christ. The manner in which we bestow such benefits derives from the way in which God has bestowed his benefits upon us. Although God is able to abound all grace for every need (2 Cor. 9.8), Paul never implies that the Christian should request grace from God, as if God's grace may or may not be granted, for this

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[34] See §2.2.9 where I discuss this conclusion from Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*.

[35] Where Seneca presents benefit exchange in its ideal form, that which Paul would have assumed familiar to his readers would have been benefit exchange as it was currently being practiced. Although the actual practice during the first century no doubt would have deviated from Seneca's ideal, the philosopher's model nonetheless provides a standard for comparison against which the Christian ideal of giving and receiving as presented by Paul may be characterized.

[36] Cf. Aristotle *Eth. Nic.* 1.7.5.

would suggest the possibility that the Christian may or may not receive sufficient grace for any need. Rather, the Christian is to assume the receipt of sufficient grace from God, and to act in faith without the excuse that he or she is incapable due to a lack of provision from God.

3.3.1.3. The two aspects of a benefit

I have shown that for Seneca, a benefit conveyed has two aspects: the goodwill of the one bestowing it, and the actual gift or service which is conveyed. One's intention is of utmost importance to Seneca, for "the true benefit lies in the intention; the service is but the manifestation of it".[37] It can likewise be said that for Paul a benefit consists in the two aspects of goodwill and the thing bestowed. In terms of divine beneficence, this is illustrated in Rom. 5.15 in the ultimate "benefit" conveyed to us by God in Christ. The "free gift" (χάρισμα) consists in both the "grace of God" (ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ) and the gift which is the gracious offering of Jesus Christ (ἡ δωρεὰ ἐν χάριτι τῇ τοῦ ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ). God's grace (χάρις) is his *goodwill*, which is tangibly expressed in the *gift* (δωρεά) given for mankind – Christ's death on the cross. In 5.17 God's twofold "benefit" is restated as "grace and the gift of righteousness" (ἡ χάρις καὶ ἡ δωρεὰ τῆς δικαιοσύνης).[38] Human beneficence in Paul also consists in both goodwill and gift. The Macedonians' contribution – their gift – was accompanied by great earnestness (σπουδή), as well as an abundance of joy (ἡ περισσεία τῆς χαρᾶς) and a wealth of sincere generosity (τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς ἁπλότητος; 2 Cor. 8.2).[39] With regard to the Corinthians, Paul desires them to give their gift with an "eager willingness" (ἡ προθυμία τοῦ θέλειν; 8.11; cf. 9.2) and zeal (ζῆλος; 9.2). They are to give cheerfully (ἱλαρὸν γὰρ δότην ἀγαπᾷ ὁ θεός; 9.7), and in such a way that their gift conveys a blessing (εὐλογία; 9.5). They are to give from generous hearts (ἁπλότης; 9.11, 13), and having done all of this, their gift will serve as the proof of their sincere Christian love (ἀγάπη; 8.8, 24). For Paul, especially in relation to the Corinthians, the goodwill is actually *love*, such that a benefit consists in love as the motivation for giving, together with the gift which is given. In this case, all of the attitudes of zeal, willingness, joy, generosity, and so on are simply manifestations of the

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[37] Basore, Seneca *Ben.*, 22, note a.

[38] See my full discussion of grace and the free gift in Romans 5 in §4.2.1.

[39] See §5.3.3 below for the discussion of my translation of ἁπλότης as "sincere generosity".

goodwill aspect of the benefit, that is of love. If these attitudes are sincerely present in the giver, then the gift will truly be conveyed as a benefit and will bring about the desired result. Only the grace of God can effectively produce such benefits.

For Paul, then, χάρις may appropriately be termed a "benefit". As with Seneca and his use of the term *beneficium*, Paul likewise uses χάρις to refer to both human and divine benefits. I demonstrated earlier that, for Seneca, a benefit consists in a favor or service bestowed upon another – with the condition that it is an act of goodwill whose motive is in the best interest of the recipient and which is pleasurable to convey. For Paul, the bestowal of χάρις is also an act of goodwill for the benefit of the recipient. The motivation for conveying such "benefits" lies in the great benefits we have received from God in Christ, and while acts of grace are done for the benefit of the recipient, they are ultimately performed as expressions of gratitude to God and as means of sharing the grace we have received from him with others. For Seneca the conveyance of a benefit is pleasurable for the one bestowing it. For the Christian there is great joy both in recognizing the grace received from God in Christ and in sharing God's grace with others through the conveyance of some "benefit".

3.3.2. Paul and the Giving of Benefits

3.3.2.1. The attitude of the giver

For Seneca the attitude of the one bestowing benefits should be to "give willingly, promptly, and without any hesitation" (2.1.2). In 2 Cor. 8.1-5, Paul uses the example of the Macedonians to convey the proper attitude of the giver, and throughout 2 Corinthians 8-9 he alludes to the type of attitude expected of the Corinthians. I mentioned above (§3.3.1.3) some aspects of a giver's attitude according to Paul. He indicates that giving to others is a demonstration of Christian love (2 Cor. 8.8, 24), and should be done voluntarily (αὐθαίρετος; 2 Cor. 8.3), with great earnestness (σουδή; 8.8), eagerness (προθυμία; 8.11-12, 9.2) and zeal (ζῆλος; 9.2), sincerity or generosity (ἁπλότης; 8.2; 9.11, 13), and from a cheerful heart (9.7).[40] Although Paul offers examples of sacrificial giving in 8.9 where Christ through his self-impoverishment made others "rich", and in 8.3 as illustrated by the Macedonians, who gave not only according to their ability but beyond their ability (8.3), like Seneca, Paul does not

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[40] Cf. Acts 20.35 where in Luke's account Paul attributes the following words to the Lord Jesus, "It is more blessed to give than to receive".

demand that gifts be sacrificial. This becomes clear through his comment in 8.13 to the Corinthians, "it is not that there may be relief for others and hardship for you, but by way of equality". Thus Paul does not insist that giving must be sacrificial. Like Paul, Seneca also has a concern for equality, which he likewise shares when discussing non-sacrificial giving. Seneca views the exchange of benefits as a means of establishing equal status between the giver and the receiver, and for this reason says to avoid sacrificial giving which would disrupt such equality: "I shall give to him if he is in need, yet not to the extent of bringing need upon myself; I shall come to his aid if he is at the point of ruin, yet not to the extent of bringing ruin upon myself" (2.15.1). Where Seneca says that benefits ought to be given "willingly, promptly, and without any hesitation", Paul would likely be in agreement, since he is critical of the Corinthians who had initially been quite willing to give, but then delayed the giving of their gift, having become seemingly ambivalent toward their initial promise.

3.3.2.2. Benefits as expressions of fellowship

Seneca encourages benefactors to anticipate others' needs, thus enabling the recipients to avoid the shame of having to pursue benefits. In the case of the collection for Jerusalem, Paul is the one who has ascertained the need, and as a result has instigated the collection project for meeting the need from his churches; he is the one in pursuit of the benefits for the sake of those in need.[41] This is not to say that Paul's only or even primary motive for the collection is simply the provision for the physical needs of the poor in Jerusalem. Paul's motives for the collection have been extensively discussed,[42] but here the focus is on the actual benefit and its conveyance. Where Seneca suggests anticipating the need in order to help the recipient avoid a potential position of shame, Paul is concerned that the collection serve as an expression of fellowship between believing communities.

3.3.2.3. Recognizing God as the ultimate Giver

Seneca says that benefits should be given in such a way that the recipient feels a greater regard for the giver than for the actual gift. For Paul, too, with human benefits, less emphasis is placed on the actual gift. Rather than feeling great regard for the

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[41] Thus, Paul is serving as a "broker" of benefits. See further discussion in §3.3.2.7 below.

[42] See §1.3 above.

immediate giver, however, Paul directs attention toward God as the ultimate Giver; it is to him that the return of gratitude is ultimately made (2 Cor. 9.12). Thus, in recognition that all gifts ultimately come from him, it is to God that the return of gratitude should be expressed. A human return is to be expected as well, and it is acceptable for a material return to follow a spiritual benefit, or vice versa (Rom. 15.27; 1 Cor. 9.11; 2 Cor. 9.14).[43] Paul, therefore, tells the Corinthians to expect some form of return from the saints in Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8.14).

3.3.2.4. The priority of intention

Seneca places greater value on the intention or motive of the giver than on the actual gift bestowed. For Seneca, all-important is whether the motive of the giver and the manner in which the benefit is bestowed encourages a response of gratitude by the recipient. Bestowing benefits is a virtuous act if it produces a virtuous result, that result being the response of gratitude. For the Stoics, virtue is the highest attainable good. For Seneca, therefore, the bestowing of benefits is not philanthropy, i.e. deeds of generosity to help improve the situation of another. Benefaction is, rather, the *doing* of virtue. The bestowal of a benefit is (intended to be) a virtuous act, as is its reception by the one on whom it is bestowed. If the bestower fails in producing the virtuous response of gratitude in the recipient then a benefit has not been bestowed, a virtuous act has not been performed. The actual gift is primarily symbolic of the benefit: the intention of the one bestowing the benefit is of primary importance.

In a similar fashion, Paul places greater emphasis on the intention of the giver than on the size of the gift. Paul heartily affirms the Macedonians' contribution toward the collection, not because of the size of their gift, which in all probability was not very large, but because of the enthusiasm and self-sacrificing nature with which it was given. When Paul tells the Corinthians that their contribution is not to put them in a position of hardship, this suggests that the Corinthians recognized that the need in Jerusalem was much greater than the Corinthians alone could supply. Paul tells them that their gift, even if it does not meet the entire need, if given willingly, will be acceptable. "For if the willingness (προθυμία) is present, it is acceptable (εὐπρόσδεκτος) according to what one has, and not according to what one does not have" (8.12). To whom is such giving

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[43] In 2 Cor. 9.14 Paul envisions the grateful saints in Jerusalem not only expressing their gratitude to God (v. 13) but also offering the return of prayer in behalf of the Corinthians.

acceptable? To God, the One from whom all gifts are ultimately received, who ultimately receives the gratitude for every gift bestowed.

3.3.2.5. Virtue versus righteousness

The test of the proper bestowal of a benefit for Seneca is whether its bestowal is a virtuous act, and whether it produces the return of gratitude. For Paul, too, as a gift is given with the right attitude it not only serves as the proof of the giver's love (8.8, 24), but also results in gratitude directed to God. For Seneca, acts of bestowing benefits are virtuous acts. For Paul, giving is a demonstration of righteousness (δικαισούνη; 9.10). For Seneca, virtues performed make the person virtuous, while for Paul, Christians bestow benefits on fellow Christians as an expression of righteousness, the righteousness they have already received through the gift of God's grace (Rom. 5.17).

3.3.2.6. Relying on God's grace

Seneca emphasizes the power the bestower of a benefit has to encourage or hinder the response of gratitude in the recipient. In 2 Cor. 9:10-15 Paul anticipates the results of the Corinthians' faithful participation in the collection, even though these results are seemingly out of his and the Corinthians' control. He speaks assuredly in the present tense that the Corinthians' contribution will produce an overflow of thanksgiving to God. It is as if it is an inevitable characteristic of grace that, if grace is allowed to produce willing and cheerful giving, an unavoidable chain reaction is set in place which will return grace to God in the form of thanksgiving. For Seneca, the bestower of a benefit formulates his giving around his potential recipient. He chooses a worthy recipient who is likely to return gratitude for the benefit received, and then strategically conveys his benefit so as to arouse that response of gratitude. For Paul, since the motivation for the right bestowal of benefits (χάρις) lies in the benefits (χάρις) that believers have already received from God, once believers have fully embraced the grace they have already received, the chain reaction is set in motion – they will not be able *not* to pass on grace to others. Rather than looking for a worthy recipient, as Christians become aware of others in need, they may rely on God's grace to enable them to contribute toward the need.

3.3.2.7. Paul as a broker of benefits

So in contrast to Paul, Seneca encourages those giving benefits to choose carefully to whom they will give, choosing only "worthy" beneficiaries who are likely

to express gratitude in return (and not who necessarily are likely to offer a return gift). In Paul's discussions, the issue of choosing a beneficiary does not arise. Paul has already chosen the beneficiaries for the collection project; it is not at the discretion of the Corinthians or other contributing communities. In this way Paul takes on the role of broker[44] serving as the middle man between the Jerusalem saints and the Corinthians. The Corinthians as benefactors do not interact directly with the Jerusalem saints who are the beneficiaries. Paul, rather, is the one who has discerned the needs of the saints in Jerusalem and thus chosen the beneficiaries. With regard to the Corinthians as benefactors, Paul strives to incite in them the proper attitude of giving: that they might give from the right motivation, give in such a way as to encourage a response of gratitude, and that they give with the willingness they had initially expressed. Paul is also recognized as a broker by the Macedonians, who in 2 Cor. 8.4 plead with him for the privilege of participating in the collection ministry. In this way, Paul functions as a broker of benefits in exchanges of human beneficence. Since ultimately all benefits are derived from God, and the process of benefit exchange is initiated through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, one might also say that Paul functions as a broker of divine benefits as he proclaims the message of grace to unbelievers.[45] The brokerage relationships in this latter case are, however, clearly different than those discussed above.

3.3.3. Giving and Friendship in Paul

For Seneca, friendship (*amicitia*) and fellowship (*societas*) hold society together. The exchange of benefits establishes and maintains friendship. The proper bestowal of

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[44] The "broker" or mediator "acts as a patron, but his or her primary gift to the client is access to a more suitable or powerful patron. This second patron will be a friend (in the technical sense) of the broker, a member of the broker's family or the broker's own patron. . . . Brokerage occurs also between friends and associates in private life. A familiar example appears in Paul's letter to Philemon, in which Paul approaches his friend Philemon on behalf of Paul's new client, Onesimus: 'if you consider me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me' (Phlm 17)"; see deSilva, "Patronage", 767.

[45] See Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 126-27, 139, where he compares Paul's role as an apostle in mediating divine benefactions to believers with that of the broker in patron-client relationships.

benefits removes status differences and creates equality: "the sum total of friendship consists in putting a friend on an equality with ourselves" (2.15.1).[46]

Seneca uses the ball-throwing illustration to show that a bestower of benefits has the ability to establish a relationship of equality by accommodating his "giving" to what is appropriate for the recipient.[47] This allows the recipient to avoid feeling uncomfortable, manipulated, or denigrated. The giver creates an atmosphere of equality (presumably applying to a giver who bestows benefits to an unequal of lower status), which for Seneca means, "to encourage a belief in the possibility of repaying with gratitude" (2.17.6). Seneca differs in this from Aristotle who does not allow differing levels of status to be "equalized". For Paul, the situation is different in yet another sense, since κοινωνία within the body of Christ implies a sense of spiritual equality. Thus gift giving or the bestowal of benefits meets needs within an existing community; it is not meant as a means of establishing relationships.

For Seneca, since the exchange of benefits establishes enduring relationships, it is important to choose carefully to whom to give benefits and from whom to receive them. For Paul, however, the bestowing of benefits is not for the purpose of establishing a relationship; the Corinthians already have fellowship with the Jerusalem saints through their common relationship to God in Christ. The collection is instead an expression of this κοινωνία that already exists between the Corinthians and their fellow brothers and sisters in Christ in Jerusalem. The collection gift will certainly strengthen the relationship, but since the believers in Jerusalem are fellow Christians, they are therefore "worthy" recipients. In fact, in terms of benefaction, the Gentiles (e.g. the Corinthians) had already received *spiritual* benefits from Jerusalem (Rom. 15.25-27), and were thus obliged to reciprocate. Just as the Corinthians had not selected the beneficiaries of their gift, neither had the Jerusalem saints chosen the Gentiles as recipients of spiritual grace through them. In the former case, Paul was the broker between the Corinthians and Jerusalem. In the latter, God himself served not only as the ultimate source of the benefits, but also as the "broker" of the grace that passed on to the Gentiles by way of the Jews.

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[46] For a more in-depth discussion of Graeco-Roman conventions of friendship and friendship as portrayed in Paul's letters, see Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth*, 1-34, 133-64.

[47] See §3.2.2 above.

For Seneca, benefit exchange both establishes friendship and maintains fellowship; for Paul, God is the Benefactor whose benefits (χάρις) in Christ establish the fellowship (κοινωνία) common to all believers. The collection offering is then but an expression of that fellowship, maintaining and strengthening the relationship between the contributors to the collection and the recipients in Jerusalem. Because of the commonality of the fellowship within the body of Christ, the contribution for the saints in Jerusalem benefits not only those in Jerusalem, but *all* of the body of Christ (2 Cor. 9.13).[48]

Seneca also cautions against ingratitude as "something to be avoided in itself because there is nothing that so effectually disrupts and destroys the human race as this vice" (4.18.1). Since for Seneca the exchange of benefits is the bond that holds society together, it is all-important to ensure that the process of benefit exchange continues unhindered. For this reason it is important for the one bestowing benefits to choose carefully to whom he will give and to give only to someone who is likely to offer a return of gratitude, for it is this virtuous return act which maintains the continuity of the exchange. Paul, too, places great emphasis on gratitude: in 2 Cor. 9.11-15 it is the desired outcome when the Jerusalem saints receive the collection gifts (see also 2 Cor. 4.15). The result of χάρις is the return of χάρις/εὐχαριστία to God; to neglect experiencing or expressing gratitude will only hinder the further spread of grace.

3.3.4. Paul and the Receiving of Benefits

In the Pauline model, how are "benefits", that is "grace", to be received? Just as it is key for the bestower of the benefit to recognize that God is the source of the grace that is being passed on, so too, in order for the recipient to receive a benefit, he or she must recognize that ultimately every gift comes from God. God chooses individuals as instruments through whom to convey his benefits, and so the recipient must recognize the individual as the instrument through which God's gift has come. For Seneca, a return of gratitude must be offered to the one from whom the gift has been received. Likewise for Paul, gratitude is expressed to the One with whom all gifts originate. Thus the ultimate gratitude for the collection gifts is given to God as praise and thanksgiving.

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[48] Thus when Paul writes that the Jerusalem saints will glorify God, "for the sincerity of [the Corinthians'] fellowship/contribution (κοινωνία) unto them [the Jerusalem saints] and unto all (εἰς πάντας)", Paul is stressing that not only the Jewish believers in Jerusalem will benefit, but indeed, the entire body of Christ benefits from such an expression of grace.

Paul describes the reception of the collection offering by Jerusalem as resulting in an overflow of thanksgiving to God (9.12). Besides this return of thanksgiving, Paul also anticipates a material return to the Corinthians at some time in the future (8.14). The Pauline model of "benefit exchange", therefore, differs from that of Seneca: where Seneca's model involves two parties (the bestower of the benefit and recipient who returns gratitude), Paul's model involves three. The bestower conveys his benefit to the recipient who "returns" his gratitude to God, and also reciprocates with a "benefit" to his human benefactor.

On several occasions Paul refers to benefits (χάρις) received from God but without setting down guidelines regarding the manner of receiving them. In Rom. 5.17 Paul states that the ones who will reign in life through Christ are οἱ τὴν περισσείαν τῆς χάριτος καὶ τῆς δωρεᾶς τῆς δικαιοσύνης λαμβάνοντες. Elsewhere, Christians are recipients of spiritual gifts (χαρίσματα) through the giving of God's grace (Rom. 12.6; 1 Cor. 1.4-7; 12.7-11). And, as I will explore in Chapter 4, Paul himself received authority and power from God through the grace given to him (Rom. 12.3; 15.15; 1 Cor. 15.10; 2 Cor. 12.9).

Along the same lines as the advice given by Seneca, Paul chose from whom he personally would receive "benefits". On certain occasions Paul accepted material assistance, while at other times he did not. Paul had accepted gifts from the Philippians after initially preaching the gospel there (Phil. 4.15-16), and apparently again when he was in prison (4.10). On the other hand, he was adamant in not accepting gifts from the Corinthians (1 Cor. 9.18; 2 Cor. 11.7-9), even accepting them from the churches of Macedonia while ministering in Corinth (11.9). For Paul, it was expedient that he allow the Macedonians to support him in his ministry, yet he denied the Corinthians the opportunity to do so. Therefore, while Paul does not address how other Christians ought to receive benefits, with regard to himself he does illustrate Seneca's principle of discriminately choosing one's benefactors. This raises an interesting proposition related to the Jerusalem collection: what would happen if the saints in Jerusalem rejected the Gentile Christian communities' gift, thereby rejecting them as benefactors? Although in 2 Cor. 8.14 and 9.13-14 Paul confidently asserts that the collection gift will be heartily received, and even returned in some form (8.14), yet in writing to the Romans he

expresses concern that some in Jerusalem might not find the gift acceptable (Rom. 15.30-31).[49]

3.3.5. Paul and the Return of Benefits

For Seneca, just as the bestowing of a benefit involves two aspects, the goodwill of the benefactor and the actual gift, so too the return must be twofold. When the initial benefit is received with gratitude, the gratitude itself becomes the "goodwill return". This is then to be followed up with an appropriate gift or service, thus completing the return (and serving as the bestowal of a new benefit which itself must be returned!).

Paul also describes the return of benefits as consisting in two aspects, gratitude, or the nonmaterial part, and an object or service which is the return gift. As with Seneca, for Paul, the return of gratitude is of primary importance over the actual return gift. There is, however, a significant difference which lies in the Pauline understanding that any benefit bestowed, any gift received, ultimately comes from God. For Paul, the proper return of gratitude is directed in the first place as thanksgiving (εὐχαριστία) to God. Paul foresees that the Corinthians' collection gift will produce overflowing thanksgiving and glory to God (2 Cor. 9.11, 12, 13). And, as with Seneca, at some time in the future there will also be an appropriate return "gift" (8.14).

For Paul, then, as for Seneca, the return of a benefit is twofold. In the first place, recognizing that ultimately every gift comes from God, the return of gratitude is directed to God in expressions of thanksgiving. In the second place, there is also a return benefit; the Jerusalem saints, having expressed their thanks to God, pray for their benefactors the Corinthians (9.14), and it is expected that when the Corinthians experience some sort of need, the Jerusalem saints will in like manner contribute toward their need (8.14).

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[49] Some might argue that Paul's agreement to "remember the Poor" in Gal. 2.10 established the fact that the church in Jerusalem was willing to accept gifts from the Gentile communities, thereby establishing that Jerusalem had "chosen", or at least agreed to, the Gentiles communities as their benefactors. Where some scholars may feel that they have strong arguments to show that Gal. 2.10 is the basis for the collection project, I have shown that these arguments are not as sound as their proponents might suggest (see §1.3.1 above). To further suggest that, at the meeting of Galatians 2, the leaders of the Jerusalem church had effectively chosen to allow the Gentile communities to serve as their benefactors is even less tenable. It seems more plausible that Paul initially was optimistic that the collection gift would be acceptable, but that his confidence may have begun to wane by the time he mentioned the deliverance of the Macedonian and Achaian contributions to Jerusalem in Rom. 15.31.

3.4. Paul, Seneca, and Benefit Exchange

It is notable that Seneca does not use grace terminology with regard to conferring benefits. It is, however, the response of *gratia* (gratitude) that is desirable, from the standpoint both of the one bestowing the benefit and of the recipient. We saw in Chapter 2 that χάρις was an integral part of the Greek terminology of benefaction, patron-client relationships, and friendship in the first century Graeco-Roman world. It is not surprising, therefore, to find *gratia* used in Seneca as the proper response to benefits received.

3.4.1. Meeting Christian Needs from Right Motives

For Paul, as for Seneca, a "benefit" consists in two elements: The first is the attitude of the giver together with the manner in which the gift is given, while the second is the actual gift conveyed. In terms of human beneficence, in 2 Corinthians 8-9 Paul's concern for the Corinthians is that they make a contribution toward the collection for the saints in Jerusalem. Paul does not issue an outright command to the Corinthians, because he wishes their gift to be voluntary. If they send a gift but do not do so willingly, it will not be a true benefit, it will not be pleasing to God (2 Cor. 8.12; 9.7). Thus Paul is concerned that they contribute, because this is how he envisions needs being met within the body of Christ. He is also concerned, however, that they give from right motives and with a right attitude. For Paul, then, something is a benefit if it consists of a gift that is given in goodwill. The example of the Macedonians illustrates that the goodwill with which benefits should be given may be demonstrated by the joy of those who give, their generosity, their willingness, their earnestness and zeal in giving. These are all manifestations of the true goodwill which is in fact love. The Corinthians' collection gift will demonstrate the genuineness of their love both to the saints in Jerusalem and to other Christian communities (2 Cor. 8.8, 24). The benefit conveyed from the bestower to the recipient, then, consists in the following two elements: it is motivated by love, and it is demonstrated through an actual gift.

3.4.2. All Benefits as Benefits from God

For Paul, the bestowal of benefits has yet another aspect. The benefits that believers convey are actually an extension of benefits that they have already received from God. Prior to acting as a human benefactor, the believer is first a beneficiary of

divine benefits. For the Macedonians, it was the grace of God given to them that enabled them in turn to give to the saints in Jerusalem.

Christians first become beneficiaries of the grace of God, which then enables them to give to others. The benefit conveyed by God's grace both enables the believer to demonstrate goodwill (love) – *and* supplies the means for the gift conveyed. The Macedonians were enabled to contribute to the collection because of the grace of God given to them (2 Cor. 8.1). As a result, they gave generously with great joy, even from their meager resources (8.3). Paul likewise assured the Corinthians that God's grace would supply them in such a way that they would have an abundance from which to give (9.8). As with human beneficence, divine beneficence also consists of two aspects. The *gift* of God's grace is salvation for mankind: the righteousness that man receives through Christ's death on the cross. This is at the initiative of God's grace or goodwill – his love (8.1, 9; Rom. 5.15, 17). God continues to convey benefits to believers through his grace (his love or goodwill) in the form of spiritual gifts (Rom. 12.6; 1 Cor. 4.-7; 12.7-11), power and authority (Rom. 12.3; 15.15; 1 Cor. 15.10; 2 Cor. 12.9). The benefits that Christians share with one another – love and gifts – are an extension of the grace received from God and an expression of the fellowship they share in Christ. Enablement for such giving necessitates faith and reliance on the God who supplies the grace required.

The underlying importance of bestowing benefits for Seneca is the virtue of the practice. The example was provided by his understanding of the manner in which the gods pour out benefits on mankind. Seneca presents the ideal system of benefit exchange, apparently to address problems within the society of his day. If benefaction were being practiced as it should, if indeed it was proving successful as the "chief bond of human society", then there would be no reason for him to address the subject. But benefaction was not being practiced as it should. Ingratitude, instead, was the predominant attitude, which was creating strife within society.[50] So Seneca promotes ideal benefaction as the means for unifying society. On the one hand, his solution promotes the virtue of men and enables them to seek the individual happiness that the philosophers promoted, while at the same time it proposes an ethic that entailed looking out for the interests of others. Men conferred benefits on each other because it was the

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[50] Seneca writes, "Among all our many and great vices, none is so common as ingratitude"; Seneca *Ben.* 1.1.2.

right thing to do, as defined by the philosophers. The system promoted each man's happiness and welfare, that of the benevolent benefactor who derived his happiness from giving selflessly and hopefully receiving gratitude in return, and that of the grateful recipient who only had to receive his benefit gladly in order to experience the pleasure of receiving.

3.4.3. The Basis of Bestowing Benefits

Where Seneca says that men should confer benefits in the same way that the gods confer them on man, Paul says that Christians should confer benefits *because* they have been the recipients of God's benefits in Christ. Seneca distinguishes the "ideal wise man" from the ordinary man "with all his imperfections". It is the latter who needs to strive to follow the pattern of the gods in bestowing and receiving benefits, and it is the latter to whom Seneca addresses his words. The former, the "good man", is himself able only to do good; therefore he is the ideal benefactor. Presumably this good man has achieved his "goodness" through philosophy. He has trained his mind to follow only virtue and he thereby always does what is right. He is a good man because he does what is good, and conversely, he does what is good because he is a good man. As Seneca says, "A good man is unable to fail to do what he does; for unless he did it, he would not be a good man. And, therefore, a good man gives a benefit, not because he does what he ought to do, but because it is not possible for him not to do what he ought to do" (6.21.2). The good man does not need to be instructed to bestow benefits.

Perhaps surprisingly, Paul's argument in 2 Corinthians 8-9 follows similar reasoning. The ideal Christian who lives by the grace of God is unable to fail at doing certain things.[51] Paul offers a real example in the Macedonians, among whom the grace of God had been at work in such a way that they could not restrain themselves from making a contribution toward the needs of the saints in Jerusalem, even though they themselves were experiencing tribulations and were in deep poverty. Because of God's grace at work in and through them, they were unable to fail at giving. Paul therefore writes to the Corinthians, encouraging them to allow the grace of God to work in a similar way among them. Paul does not compel them to give. Rather he desires them to experience God's grace in such a way that they will be unable to fail at giving!

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[51] Might Seneca's "ideal wise man", who always does what is right, be realized in the "Spirit-filled" Christian?

3.4.4. Expressing Gratitude to God

Seneca emphasizes *gratia*, gratitude, as the correct response to a benefit received. The reason that it is the correct response is that gratitude is virtuous. Since men are unable to offer a worthy return to the gods that would match the benefits bestowed, Seneca argues, men can do nothing in return but express their gratitude. Therefore, since the proper way to respond to benefits received from the gods is with gratitude, men should likewise return gratitude to those from whom they receive earthly benefits.

Paul, however, argues quite differently. Yes, the Christian is to be grateful to God for all his benefits and so offers thanks to him. But Christians recognize that every true benefit ultimately comes from God and so are grateful to him for all benefits, regardless of their source. Similarly, Seneca's motive for bestowing benefits is that it is virtuous to do so. For Paul, Christians are to bestow χάρις (benefits) upon others because God has bestowed χάρις upon them! Although the exchange of benefits among believers is an expression of their fellowship, which it also serves to strengthen, it is only possible as God is recognized as the vital link. Human relationships do not exist as they are intended without God being a part of the process, recognized as the one who supplies that which binds them together, and as the one to whom the gratitude is returned for all that is received. Human relationships are not intended to be two-way, but three-way with God as the third, integral link.

3.5. A Pauline Paradigm of Giving and Receiving Based on 2 Corinthians 8-9

I began this chapter by giving significant attention to the ideal conventions of benefit exchange as discussed by the Stoic philosopher Seneca. I then proposed a provisional outline of the giving and receiving of χάρις in 2 Corinthians 8-9 based on the Seneca model. The similarities between the giving and receiving of benefits in Seneca and the giving and receiving of χάρις in Paul justify us discussing χάρις in Paul within the framework of Graeco-Roman benefit exchange.

While Seneca's benefit exchange model has been quite helpful to consider, Paul does not offer enough information to produce an equivalent model. It is possible, however, to propose a Pauline paradigm for the giving and receiving of benefits/χάρις. Before I discuss such a paradigm, I will summarize the presuppositions upon which benefit exchange is based in Seneca, followed by a similar summary for Paul.

3.5.1. The Fundamentals of Benefit Exchange for Seneca

For Seneca, the ultimate purpose in the exchanging of benefits is virtue, the doing of good. The one bestowing a benefit does so as a virtuous deed and in such a way that the recipient is moved to a virtuous response, the response of gratitude. The term "benefit" is used to refer both to the bestower's intention of goodwill and to the gift or service he provides. Although not stated, it is understood that a return is to be expected, consisting in an initial expression of gratitude, and followed by an appropriate gift or service. The return then serves as a new benefit, and so the cycle continues. In this way, the granting and return of benefits becomes the bond which holds society together, as each party, in performing his or her virtuous deeds promotes virtue in the other in a seemingly endless cycle. The basis for exchanging benefits is the example provided by the gods who have everything, and who choose to supply benefits to humans, who could never reciprocate in kind. Since human beneficiaries are unable to offer an equivalent return, the one thing that they can offer the gods in return is gratitude.

3.5.2. The Fundamentals of Benefit Exchange for Paul

For Paul, the giving of benefits is rooted in grace given to men by God. The initial act of grace is God's gift in the death and resurrection of Christ. God continues to bestow grace on believers in various forms of spiritual enablement: spiritual gifts, power, and authority.[52] Thus, where Seneca mentions the gods as an example of bestowing benefits to be imitated, for Paul, God's bestowal of grace in Christ is *the* basis for all benefits shared between believers. God's grace in Christ is the source of grace, the motivation for sharing it, as well as the example to be followed. As with Seneca regarding the term "benefit", χάρις for Paul can refer both to the goodwill of the giver and to the actual gift given. Besides the fact that God has initiated the bestowal of grace in the death and resurrection of Christ, all acts of Christian beneficence are means for bestowing divine grace. God, through his grace given to believers, both enables the "goodwill" and supplies the substance of the benefits conveyed. Where virtue is the basis for bestowing benefits in Seneca, it is righteousness that underlies χάρις and its bestowal in Paul. The initial act of grace in Christ produced the gift of

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[52] The various ways Paul mentions God bestowing his grace will be addressed in Chapter 4.

righteousness in believers, and it is from this position of righteousness that believers are enabled to share benefits with one another.

3.5.3. Unique Aspects of the Pauline Paradigm

The most significant divergence from the Seneca model in the Pauline paradigm is in the "return" of benefits. In Seneca, reciprocity is expected between the one bestowing and the one receiving benefits. In Paul, however, a third party is involved: the One from whom all benefits ultimately derive. Unlike in the Seneca model, God is intricately involved in the giving and receiving of benefits among Christians. As the ultimate initiator of benefits, God is also the ultimate recipient of the return of gratitude. Therefore, Paul says that the Corinthians' collection gift will result in an overflow of thanksgivings to God (2 Cor. 9.11-12). The saints in Jerusalem will pray for the Corinthians, and they will acknowledge the grace of God at work in them, but Paul does not say that they will express gratitude to the Corinthians. Rather, the thanks go to God.

The saints in Jerusalem offer their thanksgiving to God for the collection gift they have received from the Corinthians. Because of the equality and unity that exists in the body of Christ, benefits may be "returned" to members other than those from whom they have been received. As one believer or community of believers receives benefits from another, the return may be made in the form of a gift to a different individual or community who is in need. The Macedonians received grace from God (8.1), and as a result, they offered their collection gift to meet the needs of the saints in Jerusalem.

3.6. Conclusion: Paradigms of Giving and Receiving

Seneca acknowledges a model of benefit exchange which he proceeds to critique. The basic model would have been known within the Graeco-Roman world of the first century, the context of the Gentile churches from which Paul was seeking to gather a collection for the saints in Jerusalem. The similarities between Seneca's model and Paul's discussion of giving, primarily in 2 Corinthians 8-9, justify us talking about giving and receiving in Paul against the framework of the Seneca model of benefit exchange. Doing so helps us identify ways in which Paul's understanding of Christian giving and receiving differs from conventions of the Graeco-Roman world. For Paul, all giving and receiving is rooted in God's gift in Christ. For Paul, reciprocity is not obligatory as it is for Seneca. Where for Seneca a return of gratitude to the benefactor must be accompanied by a return gift, for Paul the gratitude is directed to God, from

whom all gifts are ultimately received. A return gift may be made to the initial giver, but it likewise may be given to someone else within the body of Christ who is in need. For Seneca, benefit exchange establishes and maintains fellowship. For Paul, benefit exchange is an expression of the fellowship already established among believers by God in Christ. Since all believers are part of the same body of Christ, the entire body benefits when any of the individual members benefits. In this way, the "return" of a benefit to someone different than from where the initial gift had come provides equal benefit to all members of the body. The gratitude is always expressed to God, for he is the ultimate Benefactor of any gift bestowed.

Paul's readers would have recognized his discussion in 2 Corinthians 8-9 as relating to the practices of Graeco-Roman benefit exchange. They also would have likely recognized how Paul distinguishes Christian "χάρις exchange" from Graeco-Roman conventions, the underlying difference being the foundational role of the grace of God as the basis for and enablement of the giving and receiving of all benefits.

Analysis of Seneca's commentary on benefit exchange has provided the basis for reaching these preliminary conclusions. In the following chapters I focus on Paul's use of χάρις, and I investigate the structures of his thought on gift exchange in light of this focus.

CHAPTER 4

PAUL'S USAGE OF ΧΑΡΙΣ OUTSIDE 2 CORINTHIANS 8-9

4.1. Introduction

In Chapters 2-3, I discussed giving and receiving in the Graeco-Roman world in terms of the conventions of benefaction, and in Chapter 3, I proposed a paradigm of giving and receiving based on Paul's discussion of the collection for Jerusalem. From this point on I direct our attention to Paul's use of the term χάρις. Subsequent chapters will be dedicated to the term's usage in 2 Corinthians 8-9, while in this chapter I undertake an examination of Paul's use of χάρις elsewhere in his letters. I will not examine every χάρις text in Paul, but only those that relate to giving and receiving, which therefore contribute to understanding the term as it is used in 2 Corinthians 8-9.[1]

In this chapter I classify Paul's use of χάρις according to two categories. The first category, "χάρις Freely Given: Grace as Gift", includes those usages which emphasize the gift aspect of "grace" from the perspective of the giver: grace that is *given*. In the second category, "χάρις Received: Grace as Empowerment", the emphasis is on "grace" *received* for a specific purpose. I noted in Chapter 1 that just as there is a high concentration of χάρις usage in 2 Corinthians 8-9, so the term likewise occurs an equally high number of times in Romans 5-6. Therefore this latter passage, particularly Rom. 5.15-21, will be given considerable attention in this chapter.[2]

4.2. χάρις Freely Given: Grace As Gift

The concepts of "grace" and "gift" are frequently linked together in Paul as he

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[1] For a recent exegetical survey of grace and χάρις usage in Paul, see Eastman, *The Significance of Grace*.

[2] Surburg, "Pauline Charis", 740, elaborates on a distinction by Manson between χάρις in its primary sense as referring to divine intervention as apposed to the derived or applied sense which involves man's reception of it; cf. Manson, "Grace", 48.

uses the following gift-words to express the gift-nature of grace: (1) δωρεά is used in each of its five Pauline occurrences to convey the gift-nature of the grace of God.[3] (2) Paul uses the adverbial form δωρεάν in Rom. 3.24 to describe the manner in which God's grace is given. δωρεάν is the single term among these gift-words which is also found used in Paul apart from its usage in connection with χάρις.[4] (3) The single occurrence of δῶρημα in Paul (Rom. 5.16) also references God's grace as a gift. (4) The noun δῶρον appears only once in the Pauline literature (Eph. 2.8), where it is used to describe salvation by grace through faith as a "gift". (5) The term χάρισμα, clearly part of the χάρις word group, appears only in the Pauline literature in the New Testament, with the single exception of 1 Pet. 4.10. It is normally used either in a general sense to refer to God's free gift of salvation – a manifestation of his grace (Rom. 5.15, 16; 6.23; 11.29) or to refer to God's grace given to individuals for specific purposes (Rom. 12.6; 1 Cor. 1.7; 7.7; 12.4, 9, 28, 30; 1 Tim. 4.14; 2 Tim. 1.6).[5] In summary, the use of "gift" terminology in Paul is almost exclusively restricted to discussions related to the grace of God, describing God's grace as a "free gift" or expressing that it is freely given.[6] As noted above, of the several terms used to express "gift" in Paul, only δωρεάν ever appears in a context not directly related to the grace of God. Usage of χάρισμα always denotes an imparting of God's grace, and while this term is never used in direct combination with χάρις, as are the other gift terms, it may at times be used in its place.[7] It is notable that while χάρισμα occurs several times in Romans 5-6, the term is absent from Paul's discussion in 2 Corinthians 8-9.

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[3] Rom. 5.15, 17; 2 Cor. 9.15; Eph. 3.7; 4.7. The Romans and 2 Corinthians passages will be discussed below. See : "the word δωρεάν . . . emphasizes the gift-character of grace".

[4] Of the four occurrences of δωρεάν in Paul, three occur in passages that do not explicitly relate to the grace of God: 2 Cor. 11.7; Gal. 2.21; and 2 Thess. 3.8.

[5] Regarding the use of χάρισμα, particularly in Rom. 1.11, James D. G. Dunn, *Romans*, WBC 38 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1988), 30, says, "As the form of the word implies, χάρισμα denotes an embodiment of grace (χάρις), the concrete expression of God's generous and powerful concern for his human creation, so that it can be used of any act or utterance which is a means of divine grace, a medium through which God's graciousness is experienced, whether the thought is of the totality of what God has given by means of Christ (5:15-16; 6:23; cf. 11:29; 2 Cor. 1:11), or more often of particular ministries, occasional or regular (12:6; 1 Cor. 1:7; 7:7; 12:4, 9, 28, 30-31; cf. 1 Pet. 4:10)".

[6] Of course if a gift is not "free", then it is not actually a gift. Thus it might be more accurate to say that the use of these "gift" terms emphasizes the free nature of God's grace, thereby characterizing it as a gift.

[7] See Wetter, *Charis*, 169.

4.2.1. Grace Expressed As Gift in Romans 5

The most explicit portrayal of grace in terms of gift occurs in Rom. 5.15-17. In this passage a rich variety of gift terminology is woven into the discussion that contrasts the results of the actions of the first Adam with those of the Last, Christ Jesus. Paul does not attempt to establish the grace of God as a gift – he rather assumes its gift-nature; but by utilizing gift terminology, he emphasizes God's grace expressed through the free gift of righteousness: justification for believers. A precursor to this discussion is found in 3.24 where Paul says sinners are justified *freely*: δικαιούμενοι δωρεὰν τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρώσεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. Justification is the gift of God's grace, demonstrated through the redemption brought about in Christ. The adverb δωρεάν describes the gift-nature of "his grace" (ἡ αὐτοῦ χάρις), that it is *freely given*. Although Paul's use of χάρις and δωρεάν together is somewhat redundant, since grace, in order to be grace, must be free (cf. Rom 11.6), the terms "support and confirm each other",[8] and thus serve to double the emphasis of Paul's point.[9]

The discussion begins in Rom. 5.1-11 where Paul reflects on the many benefits conferred to believers through God's grace. He first refers to the grace of God as a realm into which believers enter and "stand" (v. 2). Those rejoicing in this realm rejoice in the future hope of the glory of God. The love of God has been poured out into their hearts through the giving of the Holy Spirit (v. 5). God's grace is demonstrated through Christ's death for sinners – even while they continued in their sin (vv. 6, 8). The result of Christ's death is justification, salvation from the wrath of God, reconciliation to God (vv. 9-10). These are the benefits of God's grace made available through the death of Christ on the cross.

In 5.12 Paul introduces Adam into the discussion as the one through whom sin and death entered the world. Having begun to expound on the similarities between Adam and Christ (v. 12), Paul interrupts the flow of his discussion with a regression (vv. 13-17) on the dissimilarities between the results of Adam's transgression and that which came about in Christ. It is within this regression (particularly in vv. 15-17) that we find the variety of gift words associated with χάρις, which Paul uses to elaborate on the gift-nature of the grace of God.

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[8] Cranfield, *Romans*, 206.
[9] Dunn, *Romans*, 168.

In 5.15 Paul writes, ἀλλ᾽ οὐχ ὡς τὸ παράπτωμα, οὕτως καὶ τὸ χάρισμα ("But the free gift is not like the transgression . . ."). Where the transgression resulted in sin and thus death for all men, God's intervening act of grace, described here with χάρισμα ("free gift") results in righteousness and eternal life for all who believe. This is again expressed with χάρισμα in 6.23: τὰ γὰρ ὀψώνια τῆς ἁμαρτίας θάνατος, τὸ δὲ χάρισμα τοῦ θεοῦ ζωὴ αἰώνιος ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν. Scholars have debated whether the gift designated χάρισμα in 5.15 refers to God's gift of the status of righteousness for believers,[10] or whether Paul has in mind the gift to mankind of Christ dying on the cross.[11] The structure of this passage, however, elucidates Paul's meaning, and I will explore this further below. χάρισμα is a rare word before Paul, but he uses it to denote concrete manifestations of God's grace,[12] normally bestowed upon individuals, and often associated with spiritual gifts. Barrett notes that Paul uses χάρισμα here to express "the actualization of grace",[13] that is, the tangible manifestation of the grace of God. Just as παραπτώματα are tangible manifestations of sin, so too God's grace is manifest in different ways, and such manifestations are often referred to as χάρισματα. This χάρισμα is elaborated on in the second half of the same verse.

Paul makes the first in a series of five comparisons here in Rom. 5.15. The first comparison is actually the contrast we have just seen between τὸ παράπτωμα and τὸ χάρισμα. Up to this point in this chapter, Paul has not explicitly associated grace with gift terms, and so the mention of "the free gift" here might initially seem unclear. But having outlined the numerous benefits of God's grace in the first eleven verses of the chapter, it seems that the "free gift" refers to all of them. To use Barrett's phrase again for χάρισμα, it is the "actualization of grace". This includes all that has been made possible through the death of Christ on the cross: the free gift of justification realized through faith (5.1); free access (προσαγωγή) into the realm of grace through faith (v. 2); the gift of the Holy Spirit and the love of God poured out in the hearts of believers (v. 5); and reconciliation to God (v. 10). And so looking back at the previous verses,

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[10] Cranfield, *Romans*, 284.

[11] Moo, *Romans*, 335.

[12] It is generally regarded as not differing significantly from χάρις in meaning except for the distinction that "it denotes the result of χάρις viewed as an action"; Hans Conzelmann, "χάρις, χαρίζομαι, κτλ", *TDNT* 9:403.

[13] C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, BNTC (London: A & C Black, 1957), 113.

this manifestation of the grace of God – τὸ χάρισμα – includes all the benefits granted to believers through Christ's death. Looking ahead to the rest of verse 15, Paul further specifies the free gift. There is a parallel structure between the first half (v. 15a) and the second half (v. 15b) of the verse. In 5.15a, the terms παράπτωμα and χάρισμα are placed in contrast to each other. These terms each have corresponding explanatory phrases in 5.15b, the parallel to 5.15a, which consists in a conditional sentence. In the protasis of 5.15b, the term παράπτωμα is specified as τὸ τοῦ ἑνὸς παράπτωμα ("the transgression of the one man"), while χάρισμα is expounded in the apodosis as ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡ δωρεὰ ἐν χάριτι τῇ τοῦ ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου ᾽Ιησοῦ Χριστοῦ ("the grace of God and the gift in the grace which is that of the one man Jesus Christ").[14] Thus Paul portrays χάρισμα as consisting of two parts: ἡ χάρις [τοῦ θεοῦ] and ἡ δωρεά, which will be further illustrated in a diagram below.

In English, when we speak of some gift, that gift may be viewed as something to be given or something to be received. If someone enters my house and sees a wrapped present on my table, he may ask, "What is this?", to which I reply, "It is a gift". The next question may well be, "Is it something you received our something you will give to someone else?" In verse 15, the gift (ἡ δωρεά) is viewed as something which is given, which is suggested by the fact that it makes up part of the subject of the sentence, the verb being ἐπερίσσευσεν. The term δωρεά appears again in verse 17, but this time in reference to a gift received, where it modifies the direct object περισσείαν. In verse 15, what is this gift (δωρεά) that is given? Paul expresses it as ἡ δωρεὰ ἐν χάριτι τῇ τοῦ ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου ᾽Ιησοῦ Χριστοῦ ("the gift in the grace which is that of the one man Jesus Christ"; v. 15b). The article τῇ might seem puzzling here, since, if Paul had

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[14] Grammatically, the prepositional phrase ἐν χάριτι τῇ τοῦ ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου ᾽Ιησοῦ Χριστοῦ could be taken to modify either ἡ δωρεά or the verb ἐπερίσσευσεν. In the latter case, ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡ δωρεά forms a hendiadys, elaborating on the gift nature of the grace of God, which abounds to the many through the grace of the one man Jesus Christ. The primary argument for this view is the parallel structure with the phrase τῷ τοῦ ἑνὸς παραπτώματι, which modifies the verb ἀπέθανον in the protasis of the conditional sentence. It is then argued that the similarly structured phrase, ἐν χάριτι τῇ τοῦ ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου ᾽Ιησοῦ Χριστοῦ, should likewise modify the verb of the apodosis, ἐπερίσσευσεν. As pointed out by Cranfield, however, "there is no strict syntactical parallelism between the protasis and apodosis in the second part of this verse and so an argument based on parallelism between the protasis and apodosis would not sustain this"; Cranfield, *Romans*, 285. The word order might better support the former rendering, and in this case, "the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ" is seen as an elaboration on χάρισμα in the first part of the verse.

simply wished to express the notion, "in the grace of the one man Jesus Christ", the article would be unnecessary.[15] The syntax seems to be emphatic, however, doubly emphasizing, together with the genitive phrase, that the grace mentioned is that of Christ. The gift (δωρεά) is itself "the grace of the one man Jesus Christ", it is the particular manifestation of the grace of God through Christ's death on the cross, which makes available "the gift of righteousness" (v. 17) to all who will receive it. I will show later that Paul makes similar reference to the death and resurrection of Christ in 2 Cor. 8.9 as "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ". The connection between the grace of God in Rom. 5.15 and the death and resurrection of Christ is central in this chapter. From the beginning of the chapter, all that relates to grace is "through our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 1). It is through him that access is obtained into "this grace in which we stand" (v. 2). Grace is for the ungodly, for whom Christ died (v. 6). Jesus' death is a demonstration of God's grace, in that he died while we were still sinners (8). His death is further an act of God's grace as the provision by which sinners escape the wrath of God (v. 9). At every step in Paul's argument, the act of Jesus Christ is at the center; it is the means by which the grace of God is demonstrated (τῇ τοῦ ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (v. 15); διὰ τοῦ ἑνὸς Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (v. 17); διὰ τῆς ὑπακοῆς τοῦ ἑνός (v. 19); διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν (v. 21)). The conclusion can only be that the gift aspect of God's grace is that gift he has given to all mankind in sending his only Son to the cross.

This pattern is repeated in verses 16-17. As verse 15 begins with a contrast, so does verse 16: οὐχ ὡς δι ἑνὸς ἁμαρτήσαντος τὸ δώρημα ("The gift (δῶρημα) is not like [that which came about] through the one who sinned"). Where Paul used χάρισμα to refer to the free gift in verse 15 in contrast to παράπτωμα, in verse 16 he uses the rare δῶρημα, also implied to be in contrast to παράπτωμα (the implied work of ὁ ἁμαρτήσας). δῶρημα is an interesting choice, and although it occurs only here and in Jas. 1.17 in the New Testament (and only in Sir. 34.15 in the LXX), this cognate to δῶρον is certainly appropriate, especially since it fits the pattern of –μα words used throughout the verse and extended passage.[16] Paul could have used χάρισμα again, but perhaps he wanted to vary the usage since he would soon use χάρισμα to elaborate on the contrast set up at the beginning of this verse. The emphasis in the second part of

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[15] See the similar construction in Gal. 2.20, ἐν πίστει . . . τῇ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ, which Dunn describes as "more cumbersome than usual"; James D. G. Dunn, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, BNTC (London: A & C Black, 1993), 146.

[16] The series of –μα words in this passage includes δῶρημα, κρίμα, κατάκριμα, χάρισμα, παράπτωμα and δικαίωμα. See BDF §488(3).

verse 16 is on the results (κατάκριμα / δικαίωμα) of the respective actions from the first part of the verse (δώρημα / [παράπτωμα]). The one παράπτωμα led to judgment resulting in condemnation (one transgression was sufficient to receive the judgment that resulted in condemnation), while the χάρισμα followed from many παραπτώματα and resulted in justification (δικαίωμα)[17]. The contrast clearly emphasizes the gracious nature of the gift; the former παράπτωμα received the judgment it was due: condemnation, while the latter instead received not a punishment, but the free gift of justification. Thus Adam was justly recompensed for his transgression with judgment and condemnation. God's treatment of the multitude of sins however is with grace – not only to forgive, but through his grace and the grace-gift of his Son, to provide actual justification.

Verse 17 contains a conditional sentence in which the protasis-apodosis structure corresponds exactly with that of verse 15: in both verses the protasis begins with, εἰ γὰρ τῷ τοῦ ἑνὸς παραπτώματι . . . (which corresponds word for word in verses 15 and 17), while in each case the apodosis begins with πολλῷ μᾶλλον ("how much more"). The contrast between Adam's transgression and the grace of God is maintained in both verses. "The one" is repeatedly stressed as the culprit that brought about death for all men through judgment and condemnation. Paul seems almost to use "the one man" (i.e. Adam) and "the one transgression" (Adam's sin) interchangeably. The repeated use of "the one" (and the resulting ambiguity)[18] for both Adam and his transgression, as well as for Christ and his act of righteousness, suggests that Paul may intentionally desire to blur the distinction between the person and the act, so as to identify Adam entirely with his sin/transgression/disobedience, thereby also identifying Christ entirely with his [grace]/deed of righteousness/obedience.

The apodosis of verse 17 again makes reference to the χάρισμα (implicitly) in reference to those who receive it: οἱ τὴν περισσείαν τῆς χάριτος καὶ τῆς δωρεᾶς

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[17] We might expect to see δικαίωσις (cf. 5.18) or δικαιοσύνη (cf. 5.17, 21) here, rather than δικαίωμα, but it seems that Paul is maintaining the cadence of the succession of –μα nouns.

[18] The repeated use of εἷς in the genitive (ἑνός; 12 times in Rom. 5.12-19), especially when unqualified, adds potential ambiguity as to whether reference is to "the one man" (τοῦ ἑνὸς [ἀνθρώπου]), i.e. Adam, or to the "one transgression" (τοῦ ἑνὸς [παραπτώματος]), since the genitive forms for the masculine and neuter are the same. Christ is three times referred to as "the one"; in two cases (5.15, 17) he is named, and in the third (5.19), the context clearly indicates a contrast between Adam and Christ.

τῆς δικαιοσύνης λαμβάνοντες. The "abundance" (περισσεία) looks back to verse 15 where ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡ δωρεὰ ἐν χάριτι ". . . abound (περισσεύω) to the many". As in verse 15, so in verse 17, the gift is delineated in two parts, grace (ἡ χάρις) and the gift (ἡ δωρεά). Where in verse 15 δωρεά was "the gift in the grace of the one man Jesus Christ", in verse 17 it is simply "the gift of righteousness". It is notable that in the New Testament δωρεά always refers to a divine gift,[19] and in the Pauline literature the word is in each and every occurrence used in conjunction with χάρις. In verse 15, "the grace of God and the gift in the grace of the one man Jesus Christ", abound (περισσεύω) to the many, while in verse 17, "the many" are qualified as οἱ τὴν περισσείαν τῆς χάριτος καὶ τῆς δωρεᾶς τῆς δικαιοσύνης λαμβάνοντες. Where verse 15 focuses on the "free gift" that is *given*, which abounds to the many, in verse 17, the emphasis is on the "free gift" *received*, the "abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness". The abundance is for those who "receive" the gift. They are the ones who are justified, to whom grace abounds, who are made righteous. It is they who will reign in life through Jesus Christ.

In summary, we see that Paul sets up a contrast in verse 15a between τὸ παράπτωμα and τὸ χάρισμα, upon which he expounds through the repetition of parallel structures in the remainder of verse 15 and on into verses 16 and 17. τὸ παράπτωμα is identified as "the transgression of the one", that is, of Adam, both in 5.15b and in 5.17, while τὸ χάρισμα is delineated into two aspects, one focusing on χάρις, and the other, on δωρεά, and this too is generally maintained from verse 15 to verse 17. These relationships are illustrated below in Figure 4.1.

It is the gift of righteousness that is all-important for Paul, but he cannot bring himself to mention it without doing so in connection with God's grace. Therefore, when he equates χάρισμα with ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡ δωρεὰ τῆς δικαιοσύνης (combining elements from both verses 15 and 17), he is saying that this "free gift is the grace of God specifically conveyed as the gift of righteousness". Thus, ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ in verse 15 is the broader dynamic of God's grace, while ἡ δωρεὰ ἐν χάριτι τῇ

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[19] Aside from the three usages in Rom. 5.15, 17 and 2 Cor. 9.15, δωρεά is used in the following constructions in the NT: "gift of God" (John 4.10; Acts 8.20); "gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2.38; 10.45; 11.17); "gift of God's grace", (Eph. 3.7; 4.7); "heavenly gift" (Heb. 6.4).

τοῦ ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is the specific manifestation of his grace in sending Jesus to the cross.[20] In verse 15 it is described as "the gift in the grace of the

5.15a	τὸ παράπτωμα	τὸ χάρισμα
	⇓	⇓
5.15b	τὸ τοῦ ἑνὸς παράπτωμα	ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡ δωρεὰ ἐν χάριτι τῇ τοῦ ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
	⇓	⇓
5.17	τὸ τοῦ ἑνὸς παράπτωμα	ἡ χάρις καὶ ἡ δωρεὰ τῆς δικαιοσύνης

Figure 4.1. Corresponding Parts in the Parallel Structures of Rom. 5.15, 17

one man Jesus Christ" while in verse 17 it is "the gift of righteousness". Paul, therefore, expresses the "free gift" (χάρισμα) as consisting in two aspects: the active working of the dynamic of the grace of God and its specific manifestation in the gift of the righteousness made possible through the death of Christ. We see a distinction between Paul's general references to the grace of God, and the specific outworkings in terms of the gift. χάρις in this passage refers to the more general "grace of God", while Paul uses more specific "gift terms" (χάρισμα, δῶρημα, δωρεά) to discuss its specific manifestations. This more general use of χάρις in connection with the specific work of Christ is consistent with its usage throughout Romans 5. In 5.1-2, it is through Jesus Christ that we have access to the realm of "this grace in which we stand". In 5.15, 17 the free gift (χάρισμα) is expressed not only in terms of (ἡ χάρις [τοῦ θεοῦ], but also as ἡ δωρεὰ . . . τοῦ ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ and ἡ δωρεὰ τῆς δικαιοσύνης. In 5.21, Paul writes that χάρις reigns διὰ δικαιοσύνης . . . διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν.

Paul's portrayal of the free gift as consisting in two aspects mentioned above parallels Seneca's two-fold description of benefits. Where Paul describes the free gift in terms of the active dynamic of God's grace and the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ, Seneca speaks of benefits consisting in the goodwill of the giver and the object that it is given. In §3.3.1.3 I pointed out this parallel between Paul's description of God's free gift in Rom. 5.15 and the Seneca model. Although we have seen significant differences between Seneca's model of benefit exchange and Paul's discussions of grace and giving, this point of correspondence between Seneca and Paul's portrayal of the grace

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[20] See Moo, *Romans*, 96.

of God encourages us to consider whether each occurrence of χάρις might reveal some aspect of the two-fold nature of a gift.

Characteristic of God's grace is that it abounds (περισσεύω; 5.15) and it is received in abundance (περισσεία; Rom. 5.17), thus counteracting the impact of sin. Even when sin increases, Paul makes it clear that grace more than compensates, for where sin abounds (πλεονάζω; 5.20), grace *super*abounds (ὑπερπερισσεύω; 5.20) in order to completely overcome sin. This association of abundance with grace we will encounter again in the following chapters when I discuss Paul's use of χάρις in 2 Corinthians 8-9.

It is notable that having discussed God's grace in terms of the wonderful free gift, Paul nowhere in this passage expresses thanksgiving for the gift. This is particularly notable since it would be perfectly normal to express such thanksgiving with the word χάρις. What a fitting conclusion this would have been to this discussion! But in reality the discussion is not concluded at the end of chapter 5. In 5.1-12 Paul refers to the recipients of the benefits of salvation in the first person plural: "*We* have been justified by faith" (5.1), etc. When he discusses grace in terms of gift, comparing it to the effects of Adam's sin, Paul is impersonal and in fact ambiguous, speaking of the affects toward *all men*. He then returns the discussion to the personal level in chapter 6 by speaking again in the first person plural, placing both himself and his readers under the same umbrella of grace. And it is in this section of the discussion that he expresses his thanks – χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ – that his readers had turned from their sin and had become obedient to the gospel message (6.17; see also 7.25).[21]

4.2.2. Summary: χάρις As Gift in Romans 5

In Romans chapter 5 Paul demonstrates the supremacy of the dynamic of the grace of God over the dynamic of sin at work in humanity. Sin, which entered the world through the transgression of Adam, spread to all mankind and brought with it the judgment of death, and as a result, "death reigned" (5.17). Adam's one sin received its rightful judgment and as sin spread to all mankind, so too did death. The dynamic of the grace of God, however, is far superior to that of sin. God's grace was manifest through

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[21] Although such an expression of thanksgiving is often used to introduce a main theme in letters (see 2 Cor. 8.16 and comments in Thrall, 188-89, and Paul Schubert, *Form and Function of the Pauline Thanksgivings*, BZNW (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1939), 54-55), Rom. 6.17-18 seems to be a concluding statement (cf. 2 Cor. 9.15). See further my discussion of χάρις used to express thanks in §8.2.1.

the death of Christ and thereby brought righteousness to all who would receive it. This gracious dynamic is evident, in that where Adam's one sin brought upon himself and all humanity judgment, through God's free gift forgiveness was granted for the multitude of humanity's sins and through grace thereby conveyed righteousness. The supremacy of God's grace is evident, in that where sin increased, grace super-abounded in order to overcome sin entirely.

The grace of God is something abstract and is thereby difficult fully to comprehend or to explain in specific terms. For this reason Paul speaks in terms of its effects, in terms of the gift that it provides. Thus χάρις is characterized in three ways in Romans chapter 5. At the beginning of the chapter, χάρις is mentioned as a *realm* to which believers have access through Christ – ἡ χάρις αὕτη ἐν ᾗ ἑστήκαμεν (5.2). Then the *gift-nature* of χάρις is drawn out and emphasized as Paul discusses grace (without using the term χάρις) by describing its many wonderful benefits (5.2-11), and then compares and contrasts the "deeds" and effects of Adam and Christ (5.12-14). In 5.15-17, he utilizes a variety of gift terms (χάρισμα, δωρεά, δῶρημα) to show that the dynamic of the grace of God is manifest as a free gift. Finally, in verses 20-21, χάρις is actually *personified* as an entity which "super-abounds", thus overcoming sin (5.20), and having achieved this victory over sin, χάρις "reigns" (5.21). Sin had reigned in death, but now χάρις reigns "through righteousness, unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord" (5.21). Where in 5.15 Paul talked about χάρις as "the grace of God", at the end of the chapter χάρις has become an empowering force that reigns. Conveyed as "the gift of our Lord Jesus Christ" (5.15) and the "gift of righteousness" (5.17), allowing those who receive it to "reign in life" (5.17), χάρις itself reigns "through righteousness, unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord" (5.21).

Therefore, in Romans 5, the grace of God is not portrayed as a gift per se, although Paul speaks of God's grace being conveyed as would a gift. Perhaps it is better described as "the dynamic of God in the mode of giving", the manifestation of which consists in the gift that God passes on to believers through Christ's death on the cross.

My aim in this section has been to show how Paul portrays the gift nature of χάρις using a variety of gift terms, thus illustrating the multifaceted aspect of χάρις. Especially important with regard to 2 Corinthians 8-9 is the fact that although the issue addressed there concerns financial giving, while the topic of Romans 5 is soteriological, both texts rely heavily on the use of the term χάρις and both texts involve aspects of giving. The Romans passage concerns divine giving, where the passage in 2 Corinthians

focuses on human giving. When I discuss 2 Corinthians 8-9 in Chapters 5-6 in light of the above discussion of Romans 5, we may find that these two passages have more in common than might initially be thought, not the least of which is the fact that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is central to each discussion.

4.3. χάρις Received – Grace as Empowerment

We have seen how "grace" can be understood as a gift in relation to salvation. Primarily found discussed in Romans in this sense (3.24; 5.15-21; 6.23),[22] this is grace given as a gift, available to all and resulting in justification for those who receive it. It is the gift of righteousness, given/accomplished through the death of Christ on the cross. When talking about "grace as gift", as in Rom. 5.15-21, the gift is universally available, and focus is on the gift from the perspective of the giver. That is, "grace as gift" is God's gift of salvation through Christ for all mankind. In the following discussion of grace as power, the focus is rather on the gift of grace from the perspective of the recipients, the "grace which is given" (ἡ χάρις ἡ δοθεῖσα), that is, that which is practically received through "grace" by specific individuals or communities. In Rom. 5.17 reference was made to "those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift". Now we will consider specific grace received by individuals, manifest as empowerment for service.[23]

4.3.1. χάρις Given As Authority

On four occasions Paul speaks of the grace that he has received, which gives him special authority in the churches he has established: Gal. 2.9; 1 Cor. 3.10; Rom. 12.3; 15.15.

4.3.1.1. Galatians 2.9

In Gal. 2.9, in describing his meeting with the leaders of the Jerusalem church, Paul says that the "pillars", James, Cephas and John, recognized "the grace that had been given to me" (ἡ χάρις ἡ δοθεῖσά μοι), and as a result "gave to me and Barnabas

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[22] In Rom. 6.23 the "gift" is expressed as χάρισμα.

[23] Schulz, *Charis in the New Testament*, 59, likewise discusses "*charis* as power", describing it as "divine influence or influences which seem to operate from within the Christian nature . . . ," which are "the results of [God's] favor in Christian character and conduct". While Schulz is right in identifying the power aspect of χάρις, I find it in this sense given more purposefully as *empowerment* rather than simply as an influence. See my ensuing discussion.

the right hand of fellowship". As the Jerusalem leaders scrutinized Paul's ministry, they reached the conclusion that his divine commissioning to take the gospel to the Gentiles was as valid as Peter's was to the Jews. Their decision came from the recognition that Paul had been carrying out his ministry under God's authority, expressed by Paul as ἡ χάρις [τοῦ θεοῦ] ἡ δοθεῖσά μοι). It was this recognition of "grace" as the authority Paul had received from God that validated his apostolic ministry. For Paul, it was traceable back to his calling: "[God] . . . called me διὰ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ" (Gal. 1.15). Dunn connects Paul's commissioning at this point with empowerment for ministry: "The thought is of the divine commissioning as an actual empowering (1.15), whose effectiveness was not of himself; at this point "grace" (χάρις) approaches the sense of "charism" (χάρισμα) – charism as the expression and embodiment of grace in word or action".[24] I would suggest that in fact, this authority of Paul's was a χάρισμα,[25] a specific manifestation of God's grace in Paul's calling as an apostle to preach the gospel among Gentiles and to establish believing Gentile communities. Indeed, "apostleship" is listed among the spiritual gifts in 1 Cor. 12.28.[26] Paul, however, nowhere expresses grace he has personally received as a χάρισμα[27] and, in fact, never speaks of himself as possessing or having received χαρίσματα.[28] Instead he speaks of the χάρις he has received from God, especially when referring to his apostolic authority.

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[24] Dunn, *Galatians*, 108.

[25] As we have already noted, χάρισμα occurs only 17 times in the NT, and only once outside of the Pauline literature. The main distinction from χάρις is that χάρισμα denotes the manifestation or result of χάρις. Paul normally uses χάρισμα in contexts where grace is prominent, and as we have seen, three times the gift aspect of χάρις is emphasized (Rom. 5.15, 16; 6.23), but most commonly to refer to grace received in terms of "spiritual gifts".

[26] See Paul's self-claim of apostleship in Rom. 1.5. Cf. Eph. 4.11. See also comment by Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 137-37, in connection with 1 Cor. 3.10, which is discussed below.

[27] Dunn, *Romans*, 17, suggests that Paul may have deliberately avoided the word χάρισμα in such instances in order to distinguish, for example, his gift of apostleship (cf. Rom. 1.5), from other χαρίσματα.

[28] Paul says that he speaks in tongues more than all the Corinthians, but without explicitly using χάρισμα. Perhaps the closest allusion to him possessing a χάρισμα is in 1 Cor. 7.7: "But I desire all men to be as I am; but each has his own χάρισμα from God".

4.3.1.2. 1 Corinthians 3.10

In 1 Corinthians 3.10, using the metaphor of a building to describe the Christian community at Corinth, Paul says that he laid the foundation, κατὰ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι, that foundation being Jesus Christ (v. 11). In Gal. 2.9 Paul spoke of the χάρις given to him in terms of his apostolic calling to the Gentiles. Now he refers to the χάρις he has received specifically for establishing the Christian community in Corinth. Presumably, this is the same apostolic authority, but the point is that he appeals to that authority, not only when relating to other Christian leaders, but also within the very communities he has established. As in Gal. 2.9, Paul might also have expressed himself here using χάρισμα instead of χάρις, in the sense that the authority he received is a manifestation of the grace of God. I showed above, however, that Paul did not use the terminology in this way. As a further illustration of the overlapping sense of χάρις and χάρισμα, we may consider 1 Cor. 1.4-7. In verse 4 Paul gives thanks for ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ given to the Corinthians and then refers to the manifestation of that χάρις as χαρίσματα in verse 7. Just as God had given χάρις to the Corinthians in the form of χαρίσματα, he also gave χάρις to Paul in his apostolic gift of establishing believing Gentile communities.[29]

4.3.1.3. Romans 12.3; 15.15

In Romans, Paul uses the expression "the grace given to me" twice (12.3; 15.15) as an appeal to his apostolic authority for the instruction he is offering his Roman readers. This follows from the initial declaration of his apostolic calling in 1.5, where he refers to the χάρις καὶ ἀποστολή he has received "to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles".[30] "Grace" and "apostleship" may be taken together here as a hendiadys: "denoting the grace, or undeserved favor, of apostleship" (cf. 1.1).[31] Accordingly in 12.3 Paul reminds his readers again of his apostolic calling – the authority he has from God – when he writes, "For διὰ τῆς χάριτος τῆς δοθείσης μοι

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[29] "Here it [χάρις] would refer especially to his apostolic task of founding churches"; Fee, *First Corinthians*, 137-38.

[30] Rom. 1.5: ". . . through whom *we* have received grace and apostleship . . ." (emphasis mine). Whether the first person plural here is meant to be "editorial" (Cranfield, *Romans*, 65; Moo, *Romans*, 65), or literal (Dunn, *Romans*, 16) is not crucial for our discussion. The important point is that Paul has been called as an apostle (1.1) and he connects his apostleship, his ministry to the Gentiles, with grace received through Jesus Christ (vv. 4-5).

[31] Cranfield, *Romans*, 65; Dunn, *Romans*, 17; Moo, *Romans*, 51.

I say to everyone among you . . . .” And when he begins to draw the letter to a close in 15.15, he again reminds them: “I have written boldly to you . . . διὰ τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ“. Having never met these Roman believers, it is important for Paul formally to establish his authority with them. The authority Paul had, he had received through the grace of God.

4.3.1.4. Summary: χάρις given to Paul as authority

In Gal. 2.9; 1 Cor. 3.10; and Rom. 12.3; 15.15, Paul refers to the “grace that was given to him” as an appeal to the authority he has from God for his apostolic ministry to the Gentiles.[32] This aspect of “grace” is clearly to be differentiated from the universal gift of grace for “all who receive it” (Rom 5.17). This “grace” is given specifically to Paul, not that others might not receive similar “grace”, but Paul stresses here God’s grace given to him as authority for his ministry. In Rom. 12.3, Paul speaks of the grace he has received as his apostolic authority to instruct the Roman Christians. But he is at the same time drawing attention to the fact that just as he has received grace to be an apostle, all of the believers in Rome have likewise received spiritual endowments for ministering to one another. Thus in 12.5-6 he says, “We who are many are one body in Christ, each of us members of one another, having gifts (χαρίσματα) that differ according to the grace (χάρις) given to us”.[33] His Roman readers have received χαρίσματα through the χάρις given to them, as has Paul. These gifts enable them to minister to one another; in fact, the body of Christ in Rome is dependent upon the common use of each believer’s individual gifts. Within this context, Paul demonstrates the exercise of his apostolic gift among them by the instruction he offers the Romans, beginning in 12.3. This mutual dependence is likewise discussed in 1 Corinthians 12, where Paul writes of the manifestation of the Spirit to individuals for the common good (12.7). The grace of God is “given” to individual believers and the body of Christ is dependent upon each of its members utilizing their individual χαρίσματα.

In Romans 5 we saw the grace of God manifested as the gift of righteousness, a gift which is available to all who will receive it through Christ. I suggested that the emphasis on “grace” in Romans 5 is more upon *that which is given* – the gift available to all who might receive it. There, Paul stresses the availability of this “grace” to all mankind, that is, to all who have not yet received it. The emphasis in the passages we

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[32] See also Eph. 3.2, 7, 8.
[33] See also 1 Cor. 1.4-7.

have considered in this present section, "the grace given to me" and χαρίσματα received by individuals, emphasizes the *results* of grace received. It is presupposed that these "recipients" have previously received the χάρισμα of Rom. 5.15, 17, that is, through Christ they have received the gift of righteousness, and are already thus believers. We see then, that Paul can use the same word, χάρις, to refer both to the gift of God's grace leading to salvation, and to the manifestations of God's grace which provide believers with empowerment for ministry within the body of Christ.

4.3.2. χάρις Given As Power

4.3.2.1. 1 Corinthians 15

Turning now to 1 Corinthians 15, in the opening verses, Paul reminds the Corinthians of the centrality of Christ's resurrection in the gospel message. In including himself among the apostolic witnesses to the resurrection, he cannot help but reflect on the role of God's grace in his own life. Having been the chief persecutor of the church prior to his conversion, Paul considered himself "the least of the apostles", who was not fit to be called an apostle (15.9), but recognized that it was only by God's grace:

> χάριτι δὲ θεοῦ εἰμι ὅ εἰμι, καὶ ἡ χάρις αὐτοῦ ἡ εἰς ἐμὲ οὐ κενὴ ἐγενήθη, ἀλλὰ περισσότερον αὐτῶν πάντων ἐκοπίασα, οὐκ ἐγὼ δὲ ἀλλὰ ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ ἡ σὺν ἐμοί (15.10).

When Paul says "he is what he is by the grace of God", he may have in mind the gift of God's grace which brought about his conversion, but certainly not exclusively. Clearly, reference is to Paul's apostleship and the role of the grace of God in his apostolic calling.[34] And along with his calling, it refers to the ability to carry out that calling, "the grace of God with me". Paul is aware of his complete dependence upon God and the grace of God, both for his salvation *and* for his ministry. We see here the first explicit reference to grace as power – God's power at work in Paul, enabling Paul to labor in ministry for ultimate effectiveness. Paul recognizes that any success in his ministry has not come about from his own efforts (οὐκ ἐγώ), but as a result of God's grace. And yet he also recognizes that his own effort is involved, for through his personal effort God's grace provided the power that brought about the results. It is

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[34] And so Fee, *First Corinthians*, 735, writes, "'grace' in this sentence does not so much refer to God's gracious favor on behalf of sinners, although that is not very far behind, but in a way similar to 1:4 to the concrete expression of that grace in his apostleship".

inconceivable for Paul to distinguish between his own efforts and the grace of God at work through him, and so he struggles with precisely how to express it, as Sandra Polaski's paraphrase of verse 10 illustrates: "God's grace is at work in Paul, so Paul works – no, God works – no, it is Paul who has seen to it that God's grace has been effective in his life – no, all is God's action".[35]

4.3.2.2. 2 Corinthians 12

Looking ahead to 2 Corinthians 12 and Paul's "boasting" regarding certain revelations he has received, his boasting being provoked by the situation at Corinth, Paul says he entreated the Lord three times to remove his "thorn in the flesh". Paul says the Lord replied, ἀρκεῖ σοι ἡ χάρις μου, ἡ γὰρ δύναμις ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ τελεῖται (12.9). As a result, Paul says that he would much rather boast about his weaknesses, ἵνα ἐπισκηνώσῃ ἐπ' ἐμὲ ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Here grace is the answer to Paul's weakness. It is the grace of Christ that provides the compensation for Paul's weakness, through the power of Christ dwelling in him. χάρις and δύναμις are closely synonymous in this verse.[36] While Paul had in mind grace sufficient for him regarding his thorn in the flesh, he certainly would have also agreed that God's grace is sufficiently powerful for the "weaknesses" of any Christian.[37]

4.3.2.3. Summary: χάρις given as power

In these last two passages we see most clearly the association between the grace of God and power, particularly illustrated in the life of the apostle Paul. The grace of God becomes God's power at work in/through Paul as he carries out his ministry. He also would probably not exclude in 1 Corinthians 15 and 2 Corinthians 12 "grace" – the grace of God or Christ[38] – as the free gift which provided his justification. As further support for Paul's use of χάρις with the sense of power, John Nolland has shown that

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[35] Sandra Hack Polaski, *Paul and the Discourse of Power* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 114.

[36] See Thrall, 823; Furnish, 530; Martin, 420, who all agree.

[37] For an example of grace as power personified, see Rom. 5.21: οὕτως καὶ ἡ χάρις βασιλεύσῃ διὰ δικαιοσύνης εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν. Cf. Zeller, *Charis Bei Philon*, 158.

[38] Regarding the distinction between the grace of God and the grace of Christ in 2 Cor. 12.9, Thrall hardly distinguishes the two: the grace of Christ is an expression of God's love for mankind; Thrall, 821-22. Similarly Furnish hesitates in making a distinction: "for the power of Christ and the power of God are inseparably linked in the apostle's thinking"; Furnish, 530.

the use of χάρις to denote power can be traced back to classical Greek and can be found in the Septuagint.[39]

4.3.3. Summary: χάρις As Authority and Power

In this section we have seen Paul referring to the "grace given to me" or the "grace given to you/us". In each case, the result was indicated as a special bestowal of grace to the recipient, such that these uses of χάρις would be similar to χάρισμα in meaning. Although Paul never uses χάρισμα when referring to "the grace given to me", he seemingly could have. In each case grace implies power, "enabling power" as the manifestation of God's grace for some purpose. Whether demonstrated in Paul as he carried out his apostolic ministry of preaching the gospel and planting churches among the Gentiles, or whether in the form of "spiritual gifts" active within a given community of Christians, effective grace involves divine empowerment at work through believers. Divine grace provides that which a person cannot on his own accomplish or attain. Such divine generosity naturally implies the conveyance of some enabling power. For if the result, the manifestation of grace, appears as the accomplishment of something beyond what man himself can accomplish, there must necessarily be an enabling source, a power, which brings about that result.

When Paul writes in Rom. 1.5 that through Jesus Christ he has received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles, he is speaking of the authority he has received for his apostolic ministry to the Gentiles. How, then, does this authority relate to power? It is helpful to remember the simple illustration of a policeman directing traffic at a four-way junction. The policeman has the authority to put up his hand and stop the traffic coming from any one direction so that the traffic from another direction may proceed. If the traffic consists of a line of lorries, the policeman does not in himself have the physical strength to stop them. However, under the law – and the authority he has to enforce the law – he has the legal power to stop the lorries. If the lorry drivers are in submission to the law, they will acknowledge the policeman's authority and will come to a halt. In this way, through the authority entrusted to him, the policeman demonstrates effective power in stopping the traffic – power which he does not possess in and of himself, but power that he receives through the authority given to him.

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[39] John Nolland, "Grace as Power", *NovT* 28, no. 1 (1986): 26-31, offers examples from Homer, Pindar, Euripides, Sophocles and several examples from the LXX.

Thus, "authority" suggests the presence of some "power" beyond itself. When Paul appeals to the χάρις given to him, that is, the authority entrusted to him by God, whether to establish believing communities, to bring about the obedience of faith among the Gentiles, or to write authoritatively instructive letters to churches, he is appealing to the enabling power that God provides to accomplish these things. Paul does not have in himself the power to establish effective believing communities, to bring about the obedience of faith, or to write authoritatively life-changing letters. He does, however, have the authority to minister in these areas, and if the people he addresses submit to his God-given authority,[40] they are in effect submitting to God, and God's power will work through Paul to accomplish God's purposes.[41] As Paul conducts his ministry, his life is wholly defined by grace, since he has no other appeal for the power to carry out his ministry, except to appeal to God. God grants χάρις to Paul in the form of enabling power, and when those to whom he is ministering submit by faith to his authority, they are submitting to the authority of God and are in effect accepting the "grace" of God. When they submit to God (through, for example, Paul's instructions) they enable God's power to work within them.

4.4. Other Usages of χάρις

Although the subject of this chapter is Paul's use of χάρις in texts other than 2 Corinthians 8-9, the purpose is to consider texts which contribute to our understanding of his usage in 2 Corinthians 8-9. For this reason, I am not addressing every use of χάρις in Paul, nor am I attempting to classify all uses of the term. I do want to mention briefly, however, several additional usages.

The first is the use of χάρις in the opening and closing Pauline benedictions. Using an adapted epistolary style, every Pauline letter opens with some form of the "Grace and peace" greeting, while each closes with some form of the Pauline "grace" wish. Paul's choice of χάρις in these benedictions certainly reflects the central place of

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[40] Cf. 2 Cor. 8.5 where Paul writes that the Macedonians "gave themselves to God and to us", thereby submitting to the authority God had given to Paul.

[41] In Eph. 3.7 we see the expression of χάρις, both in terms of the authority it conveys, and the power which lies behind that authority: ἐγενήθην διάκονος κατὰ τὴν δωρεὰν τῆς χάριτος τοῦ θεοῦ τῆς δοθείσης μοι κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ.

grace in his own theology.[42] Since these uses do not directly relate to giving and receiving, however, I will not devote attention to them in this thesis.[43]

An occurrence of χάρις that is of particular interest to my study is Paul's use of the term in 1 Cor. 16.3. Since I discuss this usage in Chapter 5, I will only mention it here. In 1 Cor. 16.1-4 Paul offers the Corinthians instructions regarding how to gather their collection offering. He tells them to set aside a certain amount each week. He also instructs them to appoint some from their community who will deliver their "gift" (χάρις) to Jerusalem after Paul arrives in Corinth. In this usage, Paul uses χάρις in a common Graeco-Roman benefaction usage to denote the Corinthians' gracious gift to the believers in Jerusalem. There may be an echo here of Paul's usage of the term in 1 Corinthians 15, and I will discuss this and the potential significance below (see §5.4.1.2 below).

Another use of χάρις I wish only to mention at this point is that of χάρις to express thanksgiving. In Chapter 2 we saw that χάρις was particularly appropriate for discussing giving and receiving since it could be used not only to convey a gift given (as well as the attitude of the giver), but also the return of gratitude – thanksgiving. Paul adapts the Graeco-Roman expression of χάρις as thanks directed to the gods in the formula χάρις τῷ θεῷ, which he uses on several occasions: Rom. 6.17; 7.25; 1 Cor. 15.57; 2 Cor. 2.24; 8.16; 9.15.[44] The term χάρις is also used in 1 Cor. 10.30, apparently as a reference to a thanksgiving prayer before meals.[45]

4.5. Conclusion: Paul's Usage of χάρις Elsewhere in His Letters

In this chapter I have considered a number of varied usages of the term χάρις in Paul's writings, saving the discussions of the term in 2 Corinthians 8-9 for the following chapters. The word occurs one hundred times in the Pauline literature (including the ten occurrences in 2 Cor. 8-9), and my discussion of the diversity of the semantic field of

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[42] Judith Lieu argues that Paul likely initiated the epistolary use of these formulas; see Judith Lieu, "'Grace to You and Peace': The Apostle's Greeting", *BJRL* 68 (1985): 161-78.

[43] For more on the Pauline benedictions, see Moffatt, *Grace*, 136-46, Stanley K. Stowers, *Letter Writing in Graeco-Roman Antiquity*, LEC (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986); Terence Y. Mullins, "Formulas in New Testament Epistles", *JBL* 91 (1972): 380-89.

[44] See above at the end of §4.2.1 and below in §8.2.1 where the formula will be discussed in more detail.

[45] Fee, *First Corinthians*, 487.

χάρις could easily be expanded. The passages considered have been chosen to illustrate the word's diversity in anticipation of the relevance to 2 Corinthians 8-9. Through the variety of ways Paul uses χάρις we can conclude that he finds the term both dynamic and elastic. Sometimes χάρις almost takes on lifelike qualities enabling it to conquer and reign. In its basic sense, Paul refers to ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ as God's dynamic presence or potential energy, looking for places to convey its generosity. We could endlessly discuss and speculate on the grace of God as a divine characteristic or attitude, but in the New Testament we only encounter grace when it is active and manifest in accomplishing God's works in and through his people.

I now turn to 2 Corinthians 8-9 to examine Paul's use of χάρις there.

CHAPTER 5

PAUL'S USE OF ΧΑΡΙΣ IN 2 CORINTHIANS 8-9: PART 1

In Chapter 4, I considered Paul's use of χάρις in a variety of contexts outside of 2 Corinthians 8-9. Building on the evidence found in Chapter 4, in this chapter and the next, I turn to 2 Corinthians 8-9 in order to examine the apostle's use of χάρις there. Because of the volume of material involved, I have divided the discussion of 2 Corinthians 8-9 into two parts, which appear in Chapters 5 and 6. I have also isolated two sections of the text for detailed consideration in subsequent chapters. Therefore, Chapter 7, "Equality and Reciprocity", is devoted to 2 Cor. 8.10-15, and Chapter 8, "Grace and Thanksgiving", addresses primarily 2 Cor. 9.11-15.

5.1. Introduction

Paul pens the words of 2 Corinthians after passing through stormy waters in his relationship with the Corinthians, but feeling reconciled to the community as a result of Titus's recent visit (7.6-16). In chapters 8-9 Paul encourages the Corinthians to follow through on their previous commitment to contribute toward the collection for the saints in Jerusalem. Taking these two chapters together as a single unit,[1] Paul's discussion may be divided into four sections. (1) Paul begins chapter 8 with a testimony of the Macedonians' unexpected and eager participation in this project (8.1-5). (2) He then appeals directly to the Corinthians to follow through on their previous commitment (8.6-15). (3) In a recommendation section he mentions his co-workers in this project (8.16-9.5) and pressures the Corinthians even further to prepare their gift (9.1-5). (4) Finally, Paul concludes with some theological perspectives on giving, which he hopes will ultimately persuade his readers (9.6-15). Following a survey of the occurrences of

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[1] See the discussion in §1.6.

χάρις in 2 Corinthians 8-9, this four-fold division will serve as the outline of my discussion in this present chapter and in Chapter 6.

With regard to the extensive use of χάρις in these chapters, we see that the term frames the entire discussion: Chapter 8 opens with reference to the χάρις of God given in the Macedonian churches (8.1) while chapter 9 concludes with χάρις returned to God – as thanksgiving – for his "unspeakable gift" (9.15). The flow of the argument begins with divine χάρις given to the Macedonians (8.1) and contains reference to the χάρις of Christ (8.9). The assurance of the availability and effectiveness of this χάρις for the Corinthians is stated and illustrated with scriptural allusions and examples. The discussion demonstrates "divine χάρις" transformed into "human χάρις" passed on from one believing community to another. In the end, χάρις is returned to God in the form of thanksgiving for his divine gift forming an *inclusio* and thus completing the "circle of χάρις".

5.2. Survey of χάρις in 2 Corinthians 8-9

As I have previously noted, Paul uses the word χάρις ten times in 2 Corinthians 8-9. In this section I will briefly survey these ten occurrences in preparation for the more detailed discussion that follows.

In the first verse of chapter 8 Paul mentions χάρις given to the Macedonians: Γνωρίζομεν δὲ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν δεδομένην ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Μακεδονίας. In the verses that follow, Paul describes the outcome of this χάρις as the generous and enthusiastic contribution by the Macedonian believers toward the collection project, despite their poverty and afflictions.

The next occurrence of χάρις is in 8.4 where it is used quite differently than in 8.1. Here, the Macedonians plead with Paul[2] for τὴν χάριν καὶ τὴν κοινωνίαν τῆς διακονίας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους. Many English translations reflect an interpretation of χάρις used in its basic, non-theological sense, i.e. denoting "privilege"[3] or "favor",[4] and this verse in particular contributes to the diversity of usage of the term in these two chapters.

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[2] Literally, Paul writes, δεόμενοι ἡμῶν, "beseeching *us*", which may include his coworkers as well.

[3] NRSV, NIV.

[4] NASB.

Three times in 2 Corinthians 8 χάρις appears in the phrase ἡ χάρις ταύτη (8.6, 7, 19). After having reported to the Corinthians the Macedonians' response to the grace of God (vv. 1-5), in verse 6 Paul says he encouraged Titus, that Titus might ἐπιτελέσῃ εἰς ὑμᾶς καὶ τὴν χάριν ταύτην. Paul uses the phrase again in verse 7 to exhort the Corinthians: ἵνα καὶ ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ χάριτι περισσεύητε. Later in the chapter when Paul commends the two co-workers who will accompany Titus to Corinth, he mentions "the brother", who has been appointed by "the churches" to travel with Paul as a co-worker σὺν τῇ χάριτι ταύτῃ. As Paul's concern in 2 Corinthians 8-9 is the collection for the saints (8.4; 9.1), the context suggests that these three uses of the phrase ἡ χάρις ταύτη are a means of referring to that project. Again we encounter a usage of χάρις which is clearly distinct from the two occurrences considered above.

The next occurrence of χάρις is in 8.9: γινώσκετε γὰρ τὴν χάριν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν᾽ Ιησοῦ Χριστοῦ . . . . This usage is clearly theological and in the discussion below I will consider its significance and relationship to "the grace of God" in verse 8.1.

Twice in 2 Corinthians 8-9 Paul uses the term χάρις in a formula expressing gratitude to God, χάρις τῷ θεῷ, in 8.16 and again in 9.15. In the former passage, it expresses gratitude to God for the eagerness he has put in the heart of Titus toward the Corinthians, while in 9.15, it is used more generally to express gratitude to God for ἡ ἀνεκδιήγητος αὐτοῦ δωρεά. This usage of χάρις to express gratitude to God is not uncommon in Paul and will be discussed in Chapter 8.[5]

The term χάρις occurs also in 9.8 where Paul writes, δυνατεῖ δὲ ὁ θεὸς πᾶσαν χάριν περισσεῦσαι εἰς ὑμᾶς, ἵνα ἐν παντὶ πάντοτε πᾶσαν αὐτάρκειαν ἔχοντες περισσεύητε εἰς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθόν. χάρις here is portrayed as something that can be imparted by God, which enables believers to perform good deeds. Whether this is the same divine χάρις that was poured out in the Macedonian churches in 8.1 will be explored below.

Finally, in 9.14 Paul writes that the believers in Jerusalem, as a result of the Corinthians' gift, will pray for them and will yearn for them διὰ τὴν ὑπερβάλλουσαν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐφ᾽ ὑμῖν. This seems to presume the Corinthians' eventual participation in the collection project, and attributes their generosity to a recognizable working of God's grace in them.

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[5] See other occurrences referenced in 4.4 above.

In summary, there are three usages of χάρις that recur within the two chapters: (1) divine χάρις, i.e. the grace of God (8.1; 9.14) or of Christ (8.9); (2) the phrase αὕτη ἡ χάρις (8.6, 7, 19); and (3) χάρις as thanksgiving offered to God (8.16; 9.15). The two remaining occurrences stand alone in their usage: (4) χάρις which God is able to abound for every good work of the believer (9.8); and (5) χάρις as favor or privilege (8.4). The diversity of Paul's usage of χάρις in these two chapters rivals, if not exceeds, the diversity of his usage of the word throughout his remaining extant writings.

What does Paul intend by using this same term in such diverse ways in these two chapters? What is significant about Paul's use of χάρις within this context of giving as opposed to his usage of the term elsewhere? How is the usage of χάρις here similar to the way Paul uses the term elsewhere and in what ways does it differ? These questions will be addressed in the following exegesis.

5.3. Testimony of Divine Grace at Work in the Macedonians (8.1-5)

Paul's desire is for the Corinthians to follow through with their previously promised contribution toward the collection. To help motivate them he employs a number of rhetorical devices, beginning in verses 1-5 with a challenging description of the unexpected enthusiasm with which the Macedonians had themselves made a generous contribution. Paul subtly compares the Corinthians' situation to that of the Macedonians; unlike the Corinthians who were relatively well off, the Macedonians were experiencing afflictions and poverty.[6] Despite this, they were filled with an abundance of joy, which completely overshadowed their troubles and overflowed into a wealth of generosity (8.2). They gave, Paul writes, even beyond their ability, and they did so at their own initiative (αὐθαίρετοι; 8.3). In an ironic paradox, these who themselves were poor begged Paul – not for aid to relieve their own poverty – but for the privilege of helping to relieve the poverty of others (8.4).

5.3.1. Grace as Divine Empowerment

This amazing display of generosity in the midst of poverty Paul attributes to "the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia" (8.1). Although Paul describes what the Macedonians have done by expressing it in terms of human generosity, it was in fact only possible because of God's grace. *Divine* grace, poured out

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[6] See Betz, 50, for a description of the economic plight of the Macedonians.

upon the Macedonians, enabled *human* grace, the selfless and generous actions of the Macedonians to help relieve the suffering of others, even while they themselves were experiencing hardship. Therefore, Paul writes to the Corinthians that he wants to make known to them,[7] not in the first place the (human) generosity of the Macedonians, but the *divine* grace of God given to Macedonians, which they allowed to work in them and through them in this way.

The phrase ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ occurs twice in 2 Corinthians 8-9: here in 8.1, and again in 9.14 as the ἡ ὑπερβάλλουσα χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ ἐφ' ὑμῖν. Where the grace of God in 8.1 concerns the Macedonians, in 9.14 it relates to the Corinthians; Paul refers to the outworking of God's grace among the Corinthians, which will be evident when they complete their collection offering. We have seen the grace of God portrayed as a gift in Romans 5.15, 17, the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ and the gift of righteousness. This gift was in connection with the salvation that is granted by the gift of God's grace through faith. The context here in 2 Corinthians 8-9, however, is different from that of Romans 5. In 2 Corinthians 8-9 the issue is not one of salvation; there is no emphasis on χάρις as *saving grace*. Paul's use of the term in these two chapters, however, is consistent with the way he refers to "grace given" on the several occasions discussed above.[8] Grace "given" as it is referred to here in 8.1 and elsewhere refers to a manifestation of the grace of God which provides divine enablement for those who receive it. It is grace as divine *empowerment*. Here among the Macedonian communities it is this divine empowerment producing results in the Macedonians that surprised even Paul (cf. 8.5). Despite their afflictions and poverty, the Macedonian believers experienced abundant joy. Despite their poverty, they contributed generously to help the suffering believers in Jerusalem.

When Paul tells the Corinthians in 8.1 that he wants to make known to them the grace given in the Macedonian churches, he is not supposing that they would have doubted that the Macedonians had been recipients of God's grace; as believers they had experienced grace in the form of the gift of righteousness. When Paul preached the

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[7] Paul actually writes in 8.1, "*We* make known to you" (γνωρίζομεν). The first person plural may include Paul and his co-workers or it may simply be an editorial plural. In either case it can be assumed that Paul is the voice behind these words.

[8] In §4.3.1 I discussed grace given to Paul as the basis of his authority in writing to the Gentile churches he planted (Rom. 12.3; 15.15; 1 Cor. 3.10; Gal. 2.9; Eph. 3.2, 7, 8); the grace given to individuals as spiritual gifts (Rom. 12.6; Eph. 4.7; cf. 1 Cor. 12.4, 11); and grace given to entire communities (1 Cor. 1.4; 2 Cor. 8.1).

gospel among the Corinthians, he would have presented the gospel message in terms of "the grace of God and the gift of grace" – Christ's death on the cross for them. This "gift of grace" stands behind every statement where Paul refers to "the grace of God which was given . . . ." That is, in every instance where Paul refers to grace in terms of the empowerment it provides ("grace given"), it is assumed that the gift of grace ("the gift of righteousness") has already been received. The "gift of grace" in Christ is the initial grace-infusion that results in believing individuals and communities, which also makes possible the outworking of God's empowering grace upon them. This initial grace-infusion is mentioned in 8.9 as the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and thus will be further discussed below.

5.3.2. Grace and Abundance

Having introduced this section in verse 1 and stated his purpose of informing the Corinthians of God's grace at work among the Macedonians, Paul proceeds in the following verses to elaborate on the outworking of this grace. The evidence is seen in verse 2, that in the midst of "poverty", God's grace results in "riches"; where there is "lack", his grace produces "abundance". The theme of abundance (περισσεία) is often associated with grace in Paul as we have seen in Romans 5 where grace "abounded to the many" (περισσεύω; 5.15), resulting in an "abundance of grace" (περισσεία; 5.17) for those who receive it.[9] We shall also see below that Paul hopes that the outworking of grace for the Corinthians will be that their περίσσευμα will contribute toward the ὑστέρημα of the Jerusalem saints, and vice versa. Likewise, when Paul describes the results of the grace of God at work in the Macedonians, he speaks of "ἡ περισσεία of their joy, which together with their deep poverty ἐπερίσσευσεν in the wealth of their generosity" (8.2). Paul does not say that grace produced material wealth for the Macedonians, but rather that it resulted in τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς ἁπλότητος. Paul uses economic terminology metaphorically to express the results of God's grace. That which resulted was not the "riches", but the "sincere generosity", which is understood by taking the genitive phrase τῆς ἁπλότητος epexegetically – the wealth which consisted in their sincere generosity.[10]

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[9] See also Rom. 5.20; 1 Cor. 15.10; 2 Cor. 1.12; 4.15; 8.7; 9.8.
[10] See Furnish, 400.

5.3.3. Sincere Generosity

The term ἁπλότης, occurring in 8.2, appears again in 9.11, 13. Although the basic meaning of the word is *simplicity, sincerity, uprightness, frankness*, it might be argued that the context demands a meaning of *liberality* with an emphasis on the size of the gift.[11] Most modern English translations seemingly reflect such a translation (NRSV, NIV: *generosity* in all three instances; NASB, NKJV: *liberality*). For several reasons, however, it seems best *not* to understand ἁπλότης quantitatively. In the first place, the basic meaning of the word does not support such a translation. Although lexica do offer *liberality* as a possible meaning, the supporting evidence is from these passages in 2 Corinthians 8-9 together with Rom. 12.8.[12] Even BDAG, although listing *liberality* as a possible meaning, concludes: "this sense is in dispute, and it is [probable] that [meaning] 1 in the sense of *sincere concern, simple goodness* is sufficient for all these [passages, i.e. Rom. 12.8; 2 Cor. 8.2; 9.11, 13]".[13] Besides this, there are no other clear uses of the term in either the New Testament or the Septuagint supporting such a meaning.[14] The context of 2 Corinthians 8-9 actually argues against translating ἁπλότης *liberality* since Paul is clearly more concerned with the attitude of the giver than he is with the size of the gift.[15] Georgi draws out this element when he notes that the involvement of the grace of God as the impetus for the Macedonians' involvement directs Paul's emphasis away from the external organization of the collection to an emphasis on the "the inner involvement of the Macedonian congregation and the foundation of their involvement in God's own action".[16] Finally, the Macedonians were

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[11] BDAG, s.v. ἁπλότης; O. Bauernfeind, "ἁπλοῦς, ἁπλότης", *TDNT* 1:386-87.

[12] See Thrall, 523.

[13] BDAG, s.v. ἁπλότης.

[14] ἁπλότης only occurs in the Pauline literature in the NT (Rom. 12.8; 2 Cor. 1.12; 8.2; 9.11, 13; 11.3; Eph. 6.5; Col. 3.22). It is found six times in the LXX (2 Kgdms. [2 Sam] 15.11; 1 Chr. 29.17; 1 Mac. 2.37, 60; 3 Mac. 3.21; Wis. 1.1). It is possible to argue that the occurrence in 3 Macc. 3.21 refers to *liberality*, but this is certainly not necessary: διά τε τὴν συμμαχίαν καὶ τὰ πεπιστευμένα μετὰ ἁπλότητος αὐτοῖς.

[15] Cf. 2 Cor. 8.13; 9.7.

[16] Dieter Georgi, *Remembering the Poor: The History of Paul's Collection for Jerusalem* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1992), 81. Likewise, with regard to Paul's use of ἁπλότης, whether in 2 Cor. 8.2; 9.11, 13, or in Rom. 12.8, Nickle comments, "When Paul used the phrase in connection with charitable giving, it was to refer to the motivating attitude of concern for the Christian brother which gave impulse to the act, and not to the actual amount given;" Keith F. Nickle, *The Collection: A Study in Paul's Strategy*, SBT 48 (London: SCM, 1966), 104.

poor and would have been unable to give liberally, i.e. to give a large gift. They did give sacrificially, but their gift would not have been described as liberal.

A common usage of ἁπλότης both in the Septuagint and in the New Testament is in the phrase ἁπλότης καρδίας.[17] It seems likely that in 2 Cor. 8.2 Paul wishes to stress the sincerity of the Macedonians' hearts as they gave, perhaps intending to echo this phrase through his use of the word. With this in mind, an appropriate rendering for ἁπλότης here could be "sincerity" or even "generosity", meaning "generosity of heart" and not necessarily the size of the gift. Joseph Amstutz, in his monograph *ΑΠΛΟΤΗΣ*, argues that what Paul has in mind here is an attitude of simple-mindedness toward giving, resulting in a spontaneous response.[18] Although Amstutz may try too hard to retain the basic sense of "simplicity" for ἁπλότης, he is to be commended for not forcing the sense "liberality" on this use of term, instead stressing the sincerity of the Macedonians' actions.[19] Allo suggests that it is "simple generosity, without calculation",[20] while Hughes offers the meaning: "true open-heartedness and generosity towards others in which there is *no duplicity* of motive".[21] Plummer says, "St. Paul speaks of the richness, not of their gifts, which could not have been large, but of their minds. Munificence is measured, not by the amount given, but by the will of the giver".[22] I suggest therefore rendering ἁπλότης in these passages (8.2; 9.11, 13) "sincere generosity", stressing the heartfelt sincerity of the giver over the quantity of the gift.

5.3.4. The Privilege of Participation

In 2 Cor. 8.4 Paul describes the Macedonians as having "pleaded with us . . . :" δεόμενοι ἡμῶν τὴν χάριν καὶ τὴν κοινωνίαν τῆς διακονίας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους. Does Paul use χάρις here in a theological sense or is it to be understood simply as "favor" or "privilege"?[23] What is the significance of and connection between χάρις,

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[17] 1 Chr. 29.17; Wis. 1.1; Eph. 6.5; Col. 3.22.

[18] Joseph Amstutz, *ΑΠΛΟΤΗΣ: Eine begriffsgeschichtliche Studie zum jüdisch-christlichen Griechisch*, Theophaneia 19 (Bonn: Peter Hanstein, 1968), 103-104.

[19] Meyer, 381, similarly says that ἁπλότης here does not mean "bountifulness, but singleness, simplicity of heart".

[20] Allo, 212.

[21] Hughes, 289, n. 7 (emphasis in original).

[22] Plummer, 234.

[23] Moule, 82, understands the Macedonians as asking Paul to do them a favor by delivering their "grace-prompted" collection to Jerusalem for them. Meyer, 344, has

κοινωνία and διακονία in this passage? It seems clear enough that the phrase ἡ διακονία ἡ εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους refers to the collection "for the saints", since precisely the same phrase appears in 9.1, and the variation, ἡ λογεία ἡ εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους, occurs in 1 Cor. 16.1.[24] Regarding the use of χάρις here in 2 Cor. 8.4, we must bear in mind that this is Paul's term; the text does not reflect a direct quote by the Macedonians and it is difficult to know whether Paul might be mirroring their terminology or simply paraphrasing their desire with language he finds appropriate to his argument. If he is using the Macedonians' own terminology, this would argue for χάρις in its profane sense as "favor" or "privilege". On the other hand, if Paul himself has chosen this word, then we can only assume he has selected it carefully, in line with his overarching theme of grace in this discussion. Perhaps the Macedonians unwittingly used it in making their appeal, and Paul could not help but seize the opportunity to include it in his letter to the Corinthians to convey the sense both of the Macedonians' innocent request and the theological significance of their participation in the collection as an outworking of divine grace. In either case, Paul has chosen to use it here, and because of his underlying theme of grace, we must assume that even the seemingly profane usages of χάρις in this passage are meant to cause the readers to ponder potential theological significance.

The accusative forms χάριν and κοινωνίαν in 8.4 could be taken as accusatives of reference as reflected in the translation of the ASV: "beseeching us with much entreaty in regard of this grace and the fellowship in the ministering to the saints".[25] Contextually this would make the sense of "favor" / "privilege" for χάρις unlikely, instead implying that ἡ χάρις refers to the collection project itself, perhaps as a "gracious work".[26] This, however, is unlikely for two reasons. Indeed, Paul had

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"kindness" here for χάρις: they beseeched Paul for "kindness" in allowing them to participate in the collection. According to A. E. Harvey, *Renewal Through Suffering: A Study of 2 Corinthians*, SNTW (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 80-91, Paul avoids speaking of contributions toward the collection by referring to the project as a favor which the contributors are granting to the saints in Jerusalem. Such an interpretation certainly minimizes any connection between God's grace and participation in the collection.

[24] See also ἡ διακονία αὕτη (2 Cor. 9.13), and Paul's reference to his delivery of the collection as ἡ διακονία μου ἡ εἰς Ἰερουσαλήμ (Rom. 15.31).

[25] The ASV inserts the word "this" in "this grace" where it does not appear in the Greek.

[26] As in Windisch, 246, where he refers to it as a *Gnadenwerk*. Calvin, 108, translating "grace" has in mind reference to the collection. Gillis P. Wetter, *Charis: Ein*

previously used χάρις to refer to the Corinthians' eventual collection gift in 1 Cor. 16.3, but there it was "your gift" (ἡ χάρις ὑμῶν), the Corinthians' own contribution, and did not refer to the overall project. Second, since this would be Paul's first reference to the overall collection undertaking using χάρις, it might be expected that he would further qualify it, perhaps as he soon will do in 8.6, 7, as "*this* grace" (ἡ χάρις αὕτη).

It is more likely that χάριν and κοινωνίαν form a hendiadys,[27] comprising the direct object of the participle δεόμενοι: "beseeching us for the privilege of partnership in this ministry for the saints".[28] κοινωνία terms are often associated with the collection,[29] expressing the common idea of mutuality in ministry, as brought about through dispensed χαρίσματα. Paul expresses this clearly in Romans 12, where, after having referred to the grace given *to him* which gave him authority to instruct the believers in Rome (12.3), he likewise spoke of "spiritual gifts, which differ according to the grace given *to us*" (χαρίσματα κατὰ τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσαν ἡμῖν διάφορα; 12.6). After delineating numerous "gifts" (12.6-8), Paul then offers a series of overall exhortations regarding how these gifts ought to be practiced in the Christian community. It is not surprising that one of these ways is by "contributing to the needs of the saints" (ταῖς χρείαις τῶν ἁγίων κοινωνοῦντες; 12.13). When Paul discusses the grace of God given in terms of χαρίσματα, he discusses their use within the Christian community, and presumably had in mind in Romans 12 within the community or communities in Rome. The body of Christ extends beyond individual local communities, however, to include communities in diverse locations. If all are part of the same body, certainly the principles that apply to individual believers ministering within their own local body using the grace they have received could likewise be applied to entire local communities, using the grace given to them, to minister to other believing communities who have need. This is precisely what we see demonstrated by the

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Beitrag zur Geschichte des ältesten Christentums, UNT 5 (Leipzig: Oscar Brandstetter, 1913), 211, simply takes χάρις here as *Gabe*, "gift" (and similarly in 8.19), referring to the collection.

[27] Heinrich Seesemann, *Der Begriff KOINWNIA im Neuen Testament* (Gießen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1933), 68.

[28] See Hughes, 291-92, n. 11, and Furnish, 402, for an elaboration of this construction as hendiadys. Even if τὴν κοινωνίαν is taken as epexegetic, "beseeching us for the privilege, that is, partnership in this ministry", the sense is not much affected. See also James R. Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace in its Graeco-Roman Context*, WUNT II/172 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 295-96.

[29] Rom. 15.26, 27 (κοινωνέω); 2 Cor. 8.4; 9.13. Cf. also 2 Cor. 8.23 (κοινωνός).

Macedonian believers. The grace of God at work in them stimulated them to want to contribute to the needs of another believing community.

We shall see that Paul seizes this opportunity to explain to the Corinthians, who had previously been instructed on how the various members of "the body" are dependent one upon another for mutual support (1 Cor. 12), to encourage them to contribute toward the needs of the saints in Jerusalem, and to expect some form of reciprocal return (2 Cor. 8.13-14; see Chapter 7). Thus, just as God gives his grace to individuals so that they might minister to one another within a local body, so too he gives his grace to entire communities who, in turn, can minister to each other's needs. Such community interdependence not only provides a way to share resources in order to meet needs, but at the same time strengthens the overall body of Christ, and it provides opportunities for God to receive glory and thanksgiving.

Thus it appears that 2 Cor. 8.4 illustrates that one outworking of the grace of God among the Macedonians is their begging for the "privilege" of participation in this ministry to the saints. Paul probably uses the word χάρις in this verse as a play on words – that which has become a privilege for the Macedonians is freely granted to them through the grace of God. Their desire to *serve* others whom they have never met is an outworking of the grace of God; their desire to *partner* with fellow believers whom they have never met is likewise an outworking of the grace of God. The irony, as I earlier pointed out, is that the Macedonians who are themselves poverty stricken and suffering afflictions are begging for "favor/grace", not favor toward themselves to have their own needs met, but favor in the privilege of being given the opportunity to help contribute toward the needs of others (cf. Rom. 12.13: ταῖς χρείαις τῶν ἁγίων κοινωνοῦντες). Those who were in fact a living demonstration of the χάρις of God, were beseeching Paul for χάρις!

5.3.5. The priority of self-giving

Having just written of the Macedonians pleading for the privilege to participate in the collection, in 8.5 Paul indicates that their participation exceeded even his own expectations: καὶ οὐ καθὼς ἠλπίσαμεν ἀλλὰ ἑαυτοὺς ἔδωκαν πρῶτον τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ ἡμῖν διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ. The use of ἐλπίζω here has been equated in meaning with προσδοκάω, "expect", and thus οὐ καθὼς ἠλπίσαμεν may be translated: "not as

we had expected".[30] Paul apparently had not solicited the Macedonians' participation in the collection since he reports that they had begged for the privilege to contribute (v. 4).[31] Although the collection project was for Paul a major undertaking, he may have hesitated in asking them to contribute since he knew of their poverty, and since they had already sent gifts to Paul to help meet his own personal needs (2 Cor. 11.9). Yet having become aware of the collection, the Macedonians, at their own initiative (αὐθαίρετος; 8.3), desired to contribute.[32] Their level of commitment exceeded even what Paul might have expected from them, not only in the amount of their financial gift, but in their commitment to the Lord as well.[33] The emphatic word position of ἑαυτούς stresses that it was *themselves* that the Macedonians offered in the first place (ἑαυτοὺς ἔδωκαν πρῶτον). That πρῶτον does not imply a temporal or sequential giving of themselves, first to the Lord and then to Paul, is supported by the absence of ἔπειτα after πρῶτον as Furnish points out.[34] Furnish, however, hastily concludes from this that τῷ κυρίῳ and ἡμῖν are to be separated, distinguishing the Macedonians' self-giving to the Lord from their self-giving to Paul. I suggest, rather, taking "to the Lord" and "to us" together: "in the first place they entrusted themselves to the Lord and to us [as his apostles]". Paul's point is that the Macedonians gave themselves before they gave their money.[35] The phrase διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ is often associated with Paul's apostleship and thus the recognition of his God-given authority.[36] Thus when Paul says the Macedonians "gave themselves first to the Lord and to us", he means that they fully submitted themselves to the Lord, which, in recognizing Paul's apostolic authority, meant likewise submitting to Paul as well. In 8.1-5 emphasis is on the grace of God given to the Macedonians. Therefore, in giving themselves to the Lord, the Macedonians are in effect submitting to the power of God's grace, allowing his grace to

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[30] See Windisch, 247. BDAG also offers the meaning *expect*, but prefers *hope, hope for*; s.v. ἐλπίζω.

[31] Harris, 566, writes, "Neither Paul nor anyone else had urged or pressured them to participate (v. 3). In fact, their involvement had resulted from *their* urging Paul to grant their earnest request to be permitted to participate" (emphasis in original).

[32] Calvin, 108.

[33] Although $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$ and a few other witnesses have τῷ θεῷ instead of τῷ κυρίῳ in 8.5, Thrall is probably correct saying that τῷ θεῷ is unlikely the original since the repetition of θεός (τῷ θεῷ . . . διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ) would be awkward; see Thrall, 526, n. 130. See also Martin, 255.

[34] Furnish, 402.

[35] Thrall, 526, paraphrasing Barrett, 221.

[36] 2 Cor. 1.1. See also Windisch, 248; Martin, 255; Hafemann, 333; Thrall, 527.

work in them, in this case resulting in generous hearts from which they contributed to the collection.

5.3.6. Summary: Grace at work in the Macedonians

In verses 1-5 the use of χάρις relates to the grace of God given in the Macedonian churches. The outworking of this grace is demonstrated in the "two stunning paradoxes – joy in the midst of testing and affliction, and generosity in spite of affliction and poverty".[37] A certain ambiguity hovers over the discussion regarding who or what activated this display of "grace". Was the Macedonians' zeal and generosity simply a joyful response to the grace of God that they had experienced in their salvation? Or was the grace of God at work in them in such a way that enabled them to act beyond their natural means? In other words, was their participation in the collection simply a response of gratitude to God or was it a result of God's empowerment through his grace given to them? The latter might be seen along the lines of the χαρίσματα as manifestations of God's grace in believers – a *divine working*, while the former would be viewed strictly as a human response of gratitude. Nonetheless, Paul's discussion allows for ambiguity regarding the Macedonians involvement, whether it was as a result of their own effort or God's work within them. I will now consider this ambiguity in more detail.

The answer to this ambiguity seems to lie in Paul's perception of how the grace of God "worked" in and through himself. I discussed this earlier in §4.3.2.1 with regard to 1 Cor. 15.10, where Paul describes his work as an apostle spreading the gospel. Although viewing himself as unworthy to be an apostle since he had persecuted the church of God (15.9), he says, "By the grace of God I am what I am and his grace toward me did not prove vain" (v.10). Paul recognizes that he has been a recipient of God's grace, not just in his salvation, but in his empowerment for ministry. God *graced* him for the ministry and the grace he received was well appropriated by Paul. And yet for Paul it was difficult to distinguish his own labors for the gospel from the grace of God working through him: "I labored . . . yet not I, but the grace of God with me" (v. 10). The grace of God would have likewise been at work in the Macedonians. As recipients of God's grace, they lived in the grace of God. Their efforts were empowered by God's grace. The result was action on their behalf which was humanly unexpected

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[37] Harris, 564. Amstutz, *ΑΠΛΟΤΗΣ*, 104, similarly refers to these dual "paradoxes".

because of their own circumstances, but which, because of the grace of God given to them, was entirely understandable.

Paul had not asked the Macedonians to participate in the collection but when they found out about the project they begged him for the privilege of contributing. As a reply to their pleading, Paul gave them the opportunity to respond according to the grace of God at work in them. Thus the impact of the grace of God on the Macedonians is seen in two ways, first as it has impacted their internal disposition resulting in joy amidst affliction, and second in the resultant ability to make a contribution toward the collection, despite their situation of poverty.[38]

5.4. Paul Urges the Corinthians' Participation in the Collection (8.6-15)

Having begun his discussion regarding the collection with the evidence of the Macedonians' enthusiastic participation, in 8.6-15 Paul directly addresses the Corinthians, urging their participation as well.

5.4.1. 2 Cor. 8.6 and αὕτη ἡ χάρις

Within 2 Corinthians 8-9, the phrase ἡ χάρις αὕτη appears three times in chapter 8, in verses 6, 7 and 19.[39] In the following discussion I examine the phrase in 8.6 with a view toward understanding its significance in all three occurrences in 2 Corinthians 8.

5.4.1.1. Issues concerning 2 Cor. 8.6

As a result of the Macedonians' enthusiastic participation and of Titus's recent successful visit to Corinth, Paul concludes that now is the appropriate time for the Corinthians to follow through on their previous commitment to contribute. Therefore, he decides to send Titus back to them: εἰς τὸ παρακαλέσαι ἡμᾶς Τίτον, ἵνα καθὼς προενήρξατο οὕτως καὶ ἐπιτελέσῃ εἰς ὑμᾶς καὶ τὴν χάριν ταύτην ("As a result [of the outworking of divine grace among the Macedonians], we have encouraged Titus, that just as he previously began, so he would also bring to completion among you this

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[38] See George Panikulam, *Koinonia in the New Testament: A Dynamic Expression of Christian Life*, AnBib 85 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1979), 46.

[39] Elsewhere in the NT the phrase appears in Rom. 5.2 in reference to "grace" given to all believers, and in Eph. 3.8 in reference to the special grace given to Paul for his apostolic ministry to the Gentiles.

grace as well".).[40] The construction εἰς with the articular infinitive is often used to express result, and so here: as a result of the *gracious* work of the Macedonians toward the collection project, Paul has been prompted to send Titus back to Corinth in order to motivate a similar *gracious* work among them with regard to their contribution. The verb προενάρχομαι in 8.6 indicates a "previous beginning" for Titus among the Corinthians with regard to the collection. The question arises as to when Titus previously began this work for the collection in Corinth. On the evidence of 2 Cor. 7.14, it has been argued that Titus's first visit to Corinth was that described in 2 Corinthians 7, during which he delivered Paul's sorrowful letter. Since Paul writes in 7.14 of his boasting to Titus regarding the Corinthians, which proved to be justified, it is supposed that Titus had not previously been to Corinth; otherwise he would have known what the Corinthians were like, and Paul's "boasting" about them would have been unnecessary.[41] It is not unreasonable to suppose, however, that Paul could have had reasons for boasting to Titus about the Corinthians even if Titus had already become acquainted with them. Perhaps Titus had held a different opinion regarding how they would react to Paul's sorrowful letter, and so Paul had "boasted" in his confidence to Titus that they would respond favorably.

A greater difficulty in suggesting that Titus had not previously been to Corinth involves the use of the rare verb προενάρχομαι in 8.6, which again occurs in verse 10. In 8.6 we see that Titus had "previously begun" (προενήρξατο) work for the collection among the Corinthians, and now is being sent back to "complete" (ἐπιτελέω) it, while in 8.10 Paul reminds the Corinthians that they themselves had begun (προενήρξασθε) the collection endeavor a year prior (ἀπὸ πέρυσι), but now must complete (ἐπιτελέω) it. Paul in 8.6 refers to Titus's expedient role (cf. 8.23 where he is described as Paul's partner and συνεργός in the collection among the Corinthians), while in 8.10-11 he emphasizes the Corinthians' own actions. As in both 8.6 and 8.10-11, we find the verb

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[40] The double occurrence of καί in 8.6 has puzzled commentators. The logical explanation (as per Harris, 572; and Thrall, 528) seems to be that the second occurrence in the phrase καὶ τὴν χάριν ταύτην ("this grace as well") indicates that Paul wants Titus to complete "this grace" (with regard to the collection), just has he had completed some other work among the Corinthians. This other work could be Titus's help in restoring relations between Paul and the Corinthians (as reflected in 2 Cor. 7), and/or his delivery of Paul's "sorrowful letter" (see 2 Cor. 2.4; 7.8-12).

[41] C. K. Barrett, "Titus", in *Essays on Paul* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982), 125-26; Barrett, 221; Furnish, 397-414.

ἐνάρχομαι elsewhere in Paul coupled with ἐπιτελέω (Gal. 3.3; Phil. 1.6).[42] The second use of προενάρχομαι, in 8.10, has a clear time reference: the Corinthians' initial involvement in the collection had begun "a year ago". It cannot be insignificant that Paul repeats the verb προενάρχομαι,[43] which is found nowhere else occurring in the Greek literature.[44] It seems likely, then, that the time reference "a year ago" connected with the verb in 8.10 also applies to its occurrence in 8.6: Titus was somehow involved in the introduction of the collection project to the Corinthians a year prior. Therefore, Titus's visit to Corinth referred to in 2 Corinthians 7 was not his first, and since Paul has previously given the Corinthians instructions regarding the collection in 1 Cor. 16.1-4, it appears that Titus's initial involvement with the Corinthians, that is, with the collection project among them, occurred prior to the writing of 1 Corinthians.[45]

Another difficulty in 2 Cor. 8.6 concerns the phrase εἰς ὑμᾶς. In what sense did Paul desire Titus to complete "this grace" *εἰς* the Corinthians? Occurring with transitive verbs (προενάρχομαι and ἐπιτελέω), the expected translation of εἰς ὑμᾶς would reflect "motion into a thing or into its immediate vicinity or relation to something", with a corresponding translation "into/toward/to you".[46] The problem is that the lexical sense of these two verbs in the context of the passage does not easily lend to such a translation. One solution is to agree with Windisch who says that Paul has simply used εἰς ὑμᾶς for ἐν ὑμῖν, which is more naturally translated "in/among you".[47] This interpretation is reflected in many modern English versions.[48] I would like to suggest that Paul may have simply left out the verb διακονέω, a verb often associated with the collection, which he may have felt would be understood from the context. The ἵνα clause would then read as follows: ἵνα καθὼς προενήρξατο [διακονῆσαι] εἰς ὑμᾶς οὕτως καὶ ἐπιτελέσῃ καὶ τὴν χάριν ταύτην. In this case I have supplied the infinitive διακονῆσαι. The idea would be that Titus had indeed ministered previously to

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[42] Besides these four occurrences of ἄρχομαι compounds used in conjunction with ἐπιτελέω, the verb only occurs in two other places in Paul: Rom. 15.12 (ἄρχω in an OT citation) and 2 Cor. 3.1.

[43] Thrall, 528.

[44] BDAG, s.v. προενάρχομαι.

[45] See Plummer, 237; Thrall, 498-99, 528; Betz, 54-55.

[46] BDAG, s.v. εἰς.

[47] Windisch, 248. Note also Phil. 1.6 where a similar construction occurs with ἐνάρχομαι and ἐπιτελέω, only here with the expected ἐν ὑμῖν: ὁ ἐναρξάμενος ἐν ὑμῖν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἐπιτελέσει.

[48] NRSV has "among you", while NASB and KJV have "in you". NIV has "on your part".

the Corinthians, perhaps referring to the collection or perhaps with regard to his work in reconciling them with Paul in 2 Corinthians 7. In this case the full force of the second καί can be appreciated and the verse may be translated: "As a result we have encouraged Titus, that, just as he previously began to minister to/among you, so he would also bring to completion among you this grace as well."

5.4.1.2. χάρις in 2 Corinthians 8-9 in light of usage in 1 Corinthians

In his various discussions of the collection project Paul uses a number of designations for the collection,[49] only actually referring to it as a "collection" (λογεία) in 1 Corinthians 16.[50] In this latter passage, he uses λογεία (16.1) and the plural λογεῖαι (16.2) as a descriptive term since the Corinthians' gifts were to be collected on a weekly basis.[51] Once completed, however, this collection was to be delivered to Jerusalem as the Corinthians' gift (16.3), which Paul expresses with χάρις: "your gift" (ἡ χάρις ὑμῶν). From the studies of Graeco-Roman benefaction surveyed in Chapter 2, we have seen that χάρις as gift would not have been an unfamiliar usage to the Corinthians. In Chapter 4, I considered various uses of χάρις outside of 2 Corinthians 8-9, particularly several that occur in 1 Corinthians. When Paul offers his instructions regarding the collection in 1 Cor. 16.1-4, as his letter is drawing to a close, Paul's readers would already have encountered χάρις used in a diversity of ways: in his initial greeting (1 Cor. 1.3), in reference to the grace they had received from God in terms of spiritual gifts (1.4, 7), the grace Paul himself had received in his apostolic calling (3.10), as empowerment for Paul's ministry (15.10), and in expressions of thanksgiving to God (10.30; 15.57). Yet another usage of χάρις in this letter – a usage familiar to them from the Graeco-Roman world of benefaction – would not have surprised the readers. Paul certainly could have chosen a different, more explicit word for gift in 1 Cor. 16.3, such as δόσις (Phil. 4.15), δόμα (4.17), δῶρον (Eph. 4.8), or even δώρημα (Rom. 5.16); yet

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[49] λογεία (1 Cor. 16.1, 2); χάρις (1 Cor. 16.3; 2 Cor. 8.6, 7, 19); διακονία (2 Cor. 8.4; 9.1, 12, 13; Rom. 15.31); ἁδρότης (2 Cor. 8.20); εὐλογία (2 Cor. 9.5 (2x)); λειτουργία (2 Cor. 9.12); κοινωνία (Rom. 15.26). For more complete listings of words and phrases used in connection with the collection, see Nils Alstrup Dahl, *Studies in Paul: Theology for the Early Christian Mission* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977), 37-38; and Harris, 554-55.

[50] λογεία refers to "*a collection* of money"; BDAG s.v. λογεία.

[51] These are the only NT occurrences of λογεία.

he chose χάρις, suggesting the generous nature of their gift.[52] I have already pointed out that this usage of χάρις in 1 Cor. 16.3 is not in reference to the overall collection project, but simply to the Corinthians' own contribution.

Unlike the situation in 2 Corinthians 8-9, it would seem that in 1 Corinthians 16 the Corinthians are still eager to make their contribution. Paul does not hesitate in issuing them an imperative regarding the collection ("As I have instructed the Galatians, you do likewise!"; 16.1), perhaps because they themselves had asked for further clarification regarding the logistics of gathering together their gift.[53] χάρις is used here in 1 Cor. 16.3 in an unqualified sense; the collection is not emphasized as an outworking of the grace of God, although Paul can hardly be thought to have used χάρις without having in mind at least some underlying theological nuance. In fact, from chapter 15 he already has grace on his mind, as we have seen previously. In 15.10 he attributes the effectiveness of his own efforts to the grace of God. At the end of this same chapter, in verse 57, Paul uses χάρις to express his thanks to God: τῷ δὲ θεῷ χάρις τῷ διδόντι ἡμῖν τὸ νῖκος διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν᾽ Ιησοῦ Χριστοῦ. According to Anthony Thiselton, Paul's exuberant return of χάρις to God here is for the God-given victory over death that comes to believers as a gift of grace through Christ's own victorious resurrection.[54] Paul then concludes in 15.58 with an exhortation that also resounds in overtones of grace, urging the Corinthians to "abound in the work of the Lord" (περισσεύοντες ἐν τῷ ἔργῳ τοῦ κυρίου). Although χάρις does not appear here, we have seen that περισσεύω is commonly used in conjunction with χάρις, and by "the work of the Lord", Paul may well have in mind here grace-empowered deeds of

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[52] Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 1325. The use of χάρις here to reflect the generous nature of their gift is also suggested in Barrett's translation, C. K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, BNTC 7 (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1968), 387.

[53] The premise behind this statement is that περὶ δέ introduces a topic about which the Corinthians had inquired of Paul in a letter to which 1 Corinthians is his reply. Margaret Mitchell has challenged this "consensus view" regarding περὶ δέ, concluding that it is only *possible* that it signals a topic about which the Corinthians had inquired (see Margaret M. Mitchell, "Concerning PERI DE in 1 Corinthians", *NovT* 31, no. 3 (1989): 229-56). Thus, I acknowledge the possibility that the Corinthians had not specifically inquired about the collection. Regardless, Paul's mention of it here makes it clear that it was a topic about which both he and the Corinthians had at least some common familiarity, and that, for some reason, he found necessary to clarify its administration in Corinth.

[54] See Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 1304.

the believer as in 2 Cor. 9.8 (δυνατεῖ δὲ ὁ θεὸς πᾶσαν χάριν περισσεῦσαι εἰς ὑμᾶς, ἵνα . . . περισσεύητε εἰς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθόν).

When Paul proceeds with chapter 16, χάρις is no doubt still in his thoughts. I would suggest that regardless of how the Corinthians might have read his use of the term χάρις in verse 3, Paul had in mind their collection gift as a work of grace in connection with his exhortation of 15.58, a "work of the Lord which was not in vain".[55] Therefore, while the Corinthians are apparently still quite eager to participate in the collection in 1 Corinthians 16, Paul uses χάρις only in passing as a reference to their gift. It is likely that Paul understood his use of the term here as reflecting the Corinthians' participation in the collection as a work of grace, an "abounding in the work of the Lord". He does not seem to have gone to any great effort, however, to ensure that the Corinthians' understood their involvement in the same way. As long as they were eager to participate, there was no reason to draw attention to the connection between their participation and the role of grace. Since it would have been perfectly natural for them to understand χάρις as a simple reference to their gift for Jerusalem, they may or may not have read more into the use of the term here. In 2 Corinthians 8-9, however, where any enthusiasm the Corinthians may have had previously for the collection seems to have waned, Paul makes χάρις the *leitmotif* for his entire discussion. He uses the term in a variety of ways to suggest that every aspect of the collection is affected by grace. To the degree that the Corinthians' interest in sharing what they have with others diminishes, Paul draws their attention to the grace of God, which has freely been given to them.

5.4.1.3. What is "this χάρις"?

So why *does* Paul choose to refer to the collection project in 2 Cor. 8.6 (and 8.7, 19) with the phrase ἡ χάρις αὕτη?[56] At this point in his discussion, where the connection between χάρις and the collection is still being established by Paul, the antecedent to "this" in "this grace" is unclear. There are three likely options for the meaning of ἡ χάρις αὕτη in 8.6-7: (1) In the first place, the phrase can refer back to

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[55] See Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 1319.

[56] Some, such as Lambrecht, 137, limit the meaning of χάρις here entirely to the collection. Fee, on the other hand, rightly points out that "The meaning here [specifically in 8.7] obviously moves beyond a mere equation with λογεία (= gift)"; Gordon D. Fee, "Χάρις in 2 Corinthians 1.15: Apostolic Parousia and Paul-Corinth Chronology", *NTS* 24 (1978): 536.

the grace-source mentioned in 8.1, "the grace of God", which was given in the Macedonian churches. Having thus made reference back to "this grace" of 8.1, Paul perhaps at the same time has in mind "the grace of God which was given to you", of which he wrote previously to the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 1.4. At that time, he rejoiced with the Corinthians over "the grace of God given you in Christ Jesus", which was particularly manifested in terms of the χαρίσματα mentioned in 1.7 and chapters 12 and 14.[57] In now referring to "*this* grace", it could be that he is saying, "the Macedonians have been given the grace of God, just as you have, but we now see abundant evidence of it in their enthusiastic participation in the collection. What, then, has become of *this grace* that was given to you?" (2) The phrase ἡ χάρις αὕτη could also be intended to refer, not specifically to the grace of God given in the Macedonian churches, but to the outworking of that grace in the lives of the Macedonian believers (8.2-5). Although this "outworking" is not described with the term χάρις, it is clearly the evidence of the grace given them, the results of which are described using terminology frequently associated with χάρις. The outworking of that grace was that it produced in the Macedonians – who had been experiencing afflictions and great poverty – abundant joy that overflowed in a wealth of generosity. "This grace" was evidenced in them through their spirit of giving, first of themselves to the Lord and to Paul (8.5), and ultimately through their sincere generosity to the suffering saints in Jerusalem. The *divine grace* they received had resulted in "this grace" – acts of *human grace* toward others. (3) Finally, the phrase ἡ χάρις αὕτη could be simply a "euphemism" for the collection project,[58] utilizing benefaction terminology. We have seen that contemporary secular use of χάρις would have allowed for this usage with the corresponding

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[57] Although Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 91, says that the "grace which was given" the Corinthians in Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 1.4) refers to the "*event* of the gift of grace", i.e. their salvation, for three reasons it is more likely that Paul has in mind here "grace given" as χαρίσματα: (1) the immediate reference to πᾶς λόγος καὶ πᾶσα γνῶσις in 1.5 appears to be to spiritual gifts; (2) Paul states in 1.7 that they are not lacking any χάρισμα; and (3) the issue of spiritual gifts was a major topic addressed by Paul in the letter (chs. 12-14). See Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 37. Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 36, also distinguishes this "grace given" from redemptive grace, although he speaks of the former "grace" more generally: "The antecedent and universal grace of God encounters particular Christians as a divine gift, constituting their Christian life, and enabling them to perform services they are called to render in the church and for the world".

[58] Sampley, 121.

translation: "this gracious work" or "this generous undertaking".[59] If, however, Paul's use of this terminology were only intended as a means of referring to the collection, we would then be led to conclude that the entire discussion had, as its main objective, the external result of the Corinthians' contribution. Certainly Paul is interested in them fulfilling their promise, but we have seen (and will continue to see) that he has just as great a concern for the motivations lying behind it.[60]

Keeping in mind that Paul's underlying theme in these chapters is grace, and in light of the concentration of χάρις usage in this discussion, I again suggest that every occurrence of χάρις that might convey a secular use of the word, in Paul's mind also conveys at least a theological undertone. Therefore, when Paul speaks of "this gracious deed" in verses 6, 7, 19, he does have in mind a "generous undertaking"; however, his concern is to attribute this undertaking to the outworking of the grace of God. With this in mind, when Paul uses the phrase ἡ χάρις αὕτη in 2 Cor. 8.6-7, he does not distinguish the three senses mentioned above. ἡ χάρις αὕτη indeed refers to the grace of God given to the Macedonians (and to the Corinthians); it likewise refers to the gracious outworking that God's grace produces, resulting in acts of human grace toward others. And to make it even more relevant to his readers, Paul expresses it in terms familiar to them through the prevalence of benefaction in their Graeco-Roman world. "In a society where benefaction was a powerful, all-pervasive cultural assumption, the vocabulary of benefaction would, of itself, have inclined the hearer to attend favourably to the argument."[61] Paul desires that the same evidence of the "grace given among the Macedonians" also be demonstrated through the Corinthians, just as they abound in everything (ὥσπερ ἐν παντὶ περισσεύετε . . . ἵνα καὶ ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ χάριτι περισσεύητε; 8.7). Paul says he is sending Titus to Corinth to help the Corinthians fully realize the grace of God worked out through them in this ministry – "this grace". When Paul encourages them to "abound also in this χάρις" (v. 7), he is encouraging them to act in faith, thereby allowing the grace of God (which has already been evident in them) to manifest itself in the same way as it has among the Macedonians, so that "this grace" may be manifest also among them.

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[59] English translations vary: "this generous undertaking" (NRSV); "this gracious work" (NASB); "act of grace" (8.6), "grace of giving" (8.7), "offering" (8.19; NIV).

[60] See again Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 80-81.

[61] Kieran J. O'Mahony, *Pauline Persuasion: A Sounding in 2 Corinthians 8-9*, JSNTSup 199 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 148.

Building on the above discussion, I suggest that when Paul refers directly to the collection as χάρις, he has in mind: 1) that the collection is a financial gift for the saints in Jerusalem, expressed using Graeco-Roman benefaction terminology; 2) that the ability to make such a contribution is itself a gift from God – out of one's abundance one is enabled to give to others in need (cf. 8.14); 3) that the attitudes of joy, cheerfulness (8.2; 9.7) and generosity are also outworkings of God's grace; and 4) that the actual gift conveyed is a form of grace passed on to the recipients, an expression of divine grace flowing through human channels. Divine grace abounds from above to believers and believing communities so that human grace may further abound to others. This summary does not apply to every use of χάρις in 2 Corinthians 8-9, but it does encompass those occasions where Paul seems to use χάρις as a designation for the collection, particularly in 8.6, 7, 19.[62]

It is notable that in the three passages where Paul explicitly mentions the Jerusalem collection (1 Cor. 16.1-4; 2 Cor. 8-9; Rom. 15.25-28), only in 2 Corinthians 8-9 does he focus on it as a work of grace. We saw above that in 1 Cor. 16.1-4 Paul refers to the Corinthians' eventual gift as a χάρις, and that from his perspective he probably had in mind this χάρις as an outworking of God's grace, although he does not make this point a central part of his discussion there. In Romans 15.25-28 Paul portrays the Gentile churches' participation in the collection as repayment of an obligation (15.26), with no reference whatsoever to grace. In 2 Corinthians 8-9, however, every aspect of the collection is related to χάρις.

5.4.2. Paul Redirects the Discussion toward the Corinthians (8.7-8)

5.4.2.1. The Corinthians told to abound in "this χάρις"

Paul's discussion reaches its first climax in 2 Cor. 8.7. Having initially described the working of the grace of God in and through the Macedonians in verses 1-5, Paul included the Corinthians in the discussion in verse 6; he would be sending Titus back to Corinth to bring to completion a similar outworking of God's grace among them. Now in verse 7 he both acknowledges the grace of God already at work in the Corinthians, and indicates that there is still an element lacking. As a result, he offers what Margaret Thrall labels a "virtual command" for the Corinthians to follow through on their

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[62] See §6.1.1 below for further comments on ἡ χάρις αὕτη in 8.19.

contribution: "that you may also abound in this grace".[63] I have noted the suggestive parallel between 8.1 (the grace of God given to the Macedonians) and 1 Cor. 1.4 (the grace of God given to the Corinthians in Christ).[64] In 2 Cor. 8.7 Paul again refers to the overflowing nature of grace using περισσεύω, his comment that the Corinthians "abound in everything" (ἐν παντὶ περισσεύετε) also echoing 1 Cor. 1.5, where he says that they have been "enriched in everything" (ἐν παντὶ ἐπλουτίσθητε) in Christ.

In 2 Cor. 8.7 Paul lists five things in which he says the Corinthians already abound. While the first three refer specifically to spiritual gifts, the final two relate directly to the collection and are picked up again in the following verse. The first three, πίστις, λόγος and γνῶσις, as spiritual gifts, all appear in 1 Cor. 12.8-9. Two of these also appear in 1 Cor. 1.5 where Paul writes that the Corinthians had been enriched in πᾶς λόγος καὶ πᾶσα γνῶσις.[65] Paul's point from these passages seems clear: both the Macedonians and the Corinthians have been recipients of God's grace, in the first place in their salvation, but especially through empowerment for ministry.[66] πᾶσα σπουδή, the fourth item in the list, probably refers to the eagerness with which the Corinthians had responded to Titus when he delivered Paul's sorrowful letter (7.11-12).[67] That they abounded in such eagerness was good, but it seems likely that Paul is also comparing their eagerness with that of the Macedonians described in 8.2-5 and reinforced in 8.8. The final item in Paul's list refers to the Corinthians' love. The phrase ἡ ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐν ὑμῖν ἀγάπη[68] ("the love we inspired in you")[69] is awkward, but probably

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[63] The ἵνα-clause (ἵνα καὶ ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ χάριτι περισσεύητε) is not an imperative, but may convey the force of a command, despite Paul's denial in v. 8 that he is issuing a command; see Thrall, 529, n. 150.

[64] See §5.4.1.3.

[65] Cf. also 1 Cor. 1.7, ". . . you are not lacking in any spiritual gift . . ."

[66] Of course, "Special gifts of grace are viewed as incidental to, or presupposing, a state of grace, i.e. the state of one living under the influence of, and governed by, the redemption and reconciliation of man effected by Jesus Christ"; Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer, *A Critical And Exegetical Commentary on The First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1911), 5.

[67] Thrall, 529.

[68] There are two significant variants which have resulted in divided opinion among scholars and modern versions. The reading ἡμῶν ἐν ὑμῖν is testified by early witnesses ($\mathfrak{P}^{46}$ B it^{r} cop^{sa} geo Origen^{it} Ephraem Ambrosiaster Augustine) and has both proto-Alexandrian ($\mathfrak{P}^{46}$ B 1739) and later Alexandrian (0243 104 1175 1881) support. This is the more difficult reading and is adopted by the ESV, NAB, NASB and NRSV. The other reading, ὑμῶν ἐν ἡμῖν, has wide geographic support (ℵ C D F G K P Ψ 81 614 $it^{d, g, 61}$ vg syr^{h} goth eth) and it could be argued that it fits the context better, "your love for us", since Paul is talking about manifestations of grace. The latter variant is reflected

so because Paul wants to distinguish this aspect of their love (in which the Corinthians already abound) from the love he mentions in the next verse, which, when demonstrated through their participation in the collection, will serve as proof of the grace of God at work in them.

Paul affirms the Corinthians in these five things, but indicates that there is still more in which they can abound, effectively saying, "Just as you abound in all these things, see to it that you likewise abound in *this* χάρις". We have seen that it is common for Paul to use "abounding" terminology – specifically περισσεύω – together with the term χάρις. We have also observed the suggestive parallel between 8.7 ("you abound in everything") and 1 Cor. 1.4-5 ("the grace of God given to you in Christ Jesus . . . in everything you have been enriched in him"). It therefore follows that with Paul's first use of περισσεύω in 2 Cor. 8.7 ("just as in everything περισσεύετε . . .") he has in mind that they already "abound" in God's grace to the degree that it has been demonstrated in their faith, love, knowledge, and so on. Through his virtual command for them to "abound also in this grace" (ἵνα καὶ ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ χάριτι περισσεύητε), he therefore means for them likewise to abound in God's grace by allowing its outworking to be demonstrated through their generous participation in the collection. The grace of God depends on the Giver, and not the recipient, for its supply. Since grace is God's gift, Paul cannot actually command the Corinthians to be supplied with grace. If, however, it has already been given, Paul can command them to allow it to be effective in them, in order that it not be that it has been given to them in vain (cf. 1 Cor. 15.10, 58). As Rudolf Bultmann says, "grace itself must be affirmed by the will".[70] When they do affirm the grace already given to them and act upon it, the evidence will be their generous participation in the collection. By telling them that they already "abound in everything", he is reminding them that they are already recipients of God's grace. For them not to participate in the collection suggests that they are somehow hindering the outworking of the grace of God in them; it does not suggest that they are not recipients of that grace. Paul's use of the phrase αὕτη ἡ χάρις in verse 7 maintains the same three-fold significance it had in verse 6, referring to the grace with which the

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in the ASV, HCSB, KJV, NIV. I prefer the first, more difficult reading which has older Alexandrian support. This reading is also adopted by Harris, 573; Martin, 260 and Thrall, 529-30.

[69] NASB.

[70] Bultmann (1985), 254.

Corinthians have already been enriched (cf. 1 Cor. 1.5 in comparison with the Macedonians in 2 Cor. 8.1), the anticipated outworking of that grace in their participation in the collection, and their actual generous gift toward the collection.

5.4.2.2. The proof of their love

Paul next states in verse 8 that his intent is not to issue the Corinthians a command, but rather, διὰ τῆς ἑτέρων σπουδῆς καὶ τὸ τῆς ὑμετέρας ἀγάπης γνήσιον δοκιμάζων ("through the eagerness of others, I am also testing the sincerity of your [the Corinthians'] love"). It is notable that of the five things Paul lists in verse 7 in which the Corinthians "abound", the last two both recur in verse 8. Paul refers to the "σπουδή of others", which appears to refer to the enthusiasm of the Macedonians described in verses 1-5. Although the word σπουδή is not used explicitly of the Macedonians in 8.1-5, their "eagerness" or zeal is clearly demonstrated through their "abundance of joy" and the "riches of their generosity" (8.2), their own initiative in giving beyond their means (αὐθαίρετοι; 8.3), and their pleading to be allowed to participate in the collection project (8.4). Paul also mentions the Corinthians' ἀγαπή here in verse 8, ἀγαπή also being the last item in the list of verse 7. Their participation in the collection as the proof of the genuineness of their love will be the evidence of God's grace effectively at work in them.

Thus in verse 8, Paul offers the Macedonians' zealous participation in the collection as a standard against which the Corinthians can measure their own actions, thereby giving them the opportunity to prove the sincerity of their own love, which will be evident through their contribution. He further confirms this purpose in verse 24 where he encourages the Corinthians, through their collection offering, to demonstrate the proof of their love and to validate Paul's reason for boasting about them.

5.4.3. The Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ (8.9)

In 2 Corinthians 8.9 Paul continues his persuasive discourse by appealing to the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Macedonians have provided Paul with a wonderful example of sacrificial giving, and their enthusiasm offers a standard against which to measure the Corinthians' sincerity (8.8). But the example of the Macedonians fades in comparison to the ultimate demonstration of love, that of the grace of the Lord Jesus

Christ, which Paul mentions in verse 9.[71] Having made it clear in verse 7 that the Corinthians should "abound in *this grace*", Paul then claims in verse 8 that he does not intend to issue them a command (when in reality, that is precisely what he is doing). By telling them of the σπουδή produced by the grace of God in the Macedonians Paul desires to motivate the Corinthians to verify that same work of grace in themselves, thus proving the sincerity of their love. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is presented in 8.9 in terms of the poverty and wealth motif initially introduced in 8.1-5 regarding the Macedonians, in keeping with the economic theme of the extended discussion. The issues raised by this verse are numerous. What is meant by Christ's "wealth" and "poverty", and specifically what did it mean for him to become "poor"? What are the "riches" provided to the Corinthians as a result of Christ becoming "poor"? What is the difference, if any, between the grace of God and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ? What role does this verse play in Paul's discussion of grace and the Corinthians' contribution for the saints – is Paul merely illustrating grace by way of an example of voluntary self-impoverishment that is to be emulated?

The issues connected with this verse which are relevant to my discussion warrant an extended discussion. In order to answer the questions posed above, I will examine 2 Cor. 8.9 in light of several other passages. First I will compare it with the situation of the Macedonians in 8.1-2. After examining how Paul talks about poverty and wealth in his letters, I will next compare 8.9 with Phil. 2.6-11 and 2 Cor. 5.21. Prior to concluding this section, I will discuss some other matters related to the poverty of Christ.

5.4.3.1. 2 Cor. 8.9 compared with 8.1-2

I begin this discussion of 2 Cor. 8.9 with a comparison of the striking syntactical as well as conceptual parallels between Paul's words in 8.1-2 and 8.9. Paul begins each with the same verb: in 8.1, he says he wants to make known (γνωρίζομεν) to the Corinthians ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ given in the Macedonian churches, where in 8.9 he says, γινώσκετε γὰρ τὴν χάριν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. He apparently needed to inform the Corinthians of the working of God's grace among the Macedonians, but they were already well aware of the significance of the grace of Christ, and only needed reminding.

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[71] See Alexander Ross, "The Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ", *EvQ* 13 (1941): 219.

The substance or outworking of grace in each case is elaborated with ὅτι clauses. Two ὅτι clauses elaborate on the grace of God of 8.1, one in 8.2 and the other in 8.3-4:

8.1 Γνωρίζομεν δὲ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν δεδομένην ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Μακεδονίας

8.2 ὅτι ἐν πολλῇ δοκιμῇ θλίψεως ἡ περισσεία τῆς χαρᾶς αὐτῶν καὶ ἡ κατὰ βάθους πτωχεία αὐτῶν ἐπερίσσευσεν εἰς τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς ἁπλότητος αὐτῶν·

8.3-4 ὅτι κατὰ δύναμιν, μαρτυρῶ, καὶ παρὰ δύναμιν, αὐθαίρετοι μετὰ πολλῆς παρακλήσεως δεόμενοι ἡμῶν τὴν χάριν καὶ τὴν κοινωνίαν τῆς διακονίας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους . . .

With regard to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ in 8.9, the ὅτι clause occurs in the same verse:

8.9 γινώσκετε γὰρ τὴν χάριν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν᾽ Ιησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὅτι δι᾽ ὑμᾶς ἐπτώχευσεν πλούσιος ὢν . . .

Here I only illustrate the syntactical similarities between these two passages. Their content is discussed elsewhere in the respective sections (see §5.3 and §5.4.3.4).

In both 8.1-2 and 8.9 it is clear who receives the benefits of grace: the grace of God given to the Macedonians first benefits them as they experience abundant joy[72] and a generous heart (ἡ περισσεία τῆς χαρᾶς and τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς ἁπλότητος αὐτῶν) despite their affliction and poverty. This grace then fans out to the saints in Jerusalem, as the material benefits of the Macedonians' collection gift. The grace of Christ directly benefits the Corinthians by making them "rich" (δι᾽ ὑμᾶς . . . ἵνα ὑμεῖς . . . πλουτήσητε; 8.9).

Both the Macedonians and Christ "gave themselves". As the Macedonians received and experienced God's grace, they "gave themselves" (ἑαυτοὺς ἔδωκαν), entrusting themselves in the first place to God and to Paul (8.5). Christ too offered himself by becoming poor (ἐπτώχευσεν), although he was rich (πλούσιος), so that others might become rich (πλουτέω) through his poverty (8.9).[73] Christ "giving himself" also included his going to the cross.[74]

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[72] Notably, "joy" (χάρα), the immediate outcome of grace for the Macedonians, is etymologically related to "grace" (χάρις).

[73] It was according to God's will that both Christ and the Macedonians "gave themselves". As Christ "gave himself for our sins . . . *according to the will of our God and Father* (κατὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν; Gal. 2.14)", so too the

Paradoxically, for the Macedonians, grace (χάρις) abounded (περισσεύω) from poverty (πτωχεία) to "wealth" (πλοῦτος), while for Christ, grace (χάρις) meant setting aside his "wealth" (πλούσιος) and becoming "poor" (ἐπτώχευσεν). In the case of Christ, however, his "poverty" enabled others to become "rich" (πλουτέω). Ultimately, as a result of grace, "poverty" is overcome by "wealth" in each case. Despite the Macedonians' material poverty, they are able to experience a "wealth of sincere generosity" (τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς ἁπλότητος) as a result of the grace they receive.[75] Paul later promises this same πλοῦτος τῆς ἁπλότητος to the Corinthians in 9.11. Because of their generosity, the Macedonians provide aid for the saints in Jerusalem. Christ voluntarily became "poor" so that the Corinthians might become "rich".[76] We see, then, that in connection with "grace", the themes of poverty and wealth (i.e. lack and abundance) are central to this passage. The "lack" of the saints in Jerusalem is to be met by the "abundance" of the Gentile believing communities, whether in material or spiritual terms. Paul has already demonstrated how "grace" produced a certain "wealth" amidst the Macedonians' "poverty", and he likewise desires to see the evidence of such "wealth" from the Corinthians.

In these two passages, as throughout the two chapters, Paul interchangeably refers to the literal and the figurative. Or, in David Ford's words, "Paul interweaves inextricably the 'literal' and the 'divine' economies".[77] Ford presents the "divine economy" as one in which there is "more than enough of the central resource", in contrast to other economies where scarcity is a controlling factor.[78] The abundant resource in the divine economy is grace, of which there is never a shortage, but only an

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Macedonians "gave themselves to the Lord and to us *by the will of God* (διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ; 2 Cor. 8.5)".

[74] This is expressed in several Pauline texts where Christ "gave himself" (ἔδωκεν/παρέδωκεν ἑαυτόν): "He gave himself for our sins" (Gal. 1.4); "he gave himself for me" (2.20); "he gave himself for us, an offering and sacrifice" (Eph. 5.2); "he loved the church and gave himself for her" (Eph. 5.25). Cf. also 1 Tim. 2.6; Titus 2.14.

[75] I have already demonstrated (see §5.3.3) that ἁπλότης refers to the sincerity with which the Macedonians gave, the generosity of their hearts, despite their situation of poverty, and therefore, I translate the term as "sincere generosity".

[76] Cf. also 1 Cor. 1.5, where Paul writes, ἐν παντὶ ἐπλουτίσθητε ἐν αὐτῷ, ἐν παντὶ λόγῳ καὶ πάσῃ γνώσει. Similarly, in 2 Cor. 8.7 he says, ἐν παντὶ περισσεύετε, πίστει καὶ λόγῳ καὶ γνώσει . . . .

[77] David F. Ford, "The Economy of God: Exploring a Metaphor", Chapter 6 in *Meaning and Truth in 2 Corinthians*, BFT, 166-85 (London: SPCK, 1987), 176.

[78] Ford, "Economy of God", 172.

overflow. Although Ford's application of this economic metaphor is somewhat anachronistic, it does help stimulate our thinking to fully appreciate Paul's perception of grace. Indeed, limited resources have a limiting effect on people's thinking. As the example of the Macedonians illustrates, however, the grace of God does not in the first place remove the limits on the available resources, but it removes the limits in people's thinking. As grace turns suffering to joy and the heart is filled with generosity, people imagine giving freely, and reach into their pockets as the Spirit leads them, trusting God rather than calculating according to their own impending needs. Christ too demonstrated his grace by giving for the sake of others, rather than limiting himself because of what it might mean for him. In the economics of God's grace, neither poverty nor suffering are limiting factors, but rather from such seeming limitations, after God's grace has prevailed, comes the ἁπλότης that overflows in thanksgiving and glory to God (cf. 2 Cor. 9.11-13).

In summary, both 2 Cor. 8.1-2 and 8.9 emphasize "generous" giving as the outcome of grace. Just as the grace of God was demonstrated in the Macedonians' generous giving (8.2) and their self-giving (8.5), so too the grace of Christ was displayed in his generous self-giving.

5.4.3.2. Poverty and wealth in Paul

I now want to consider Paul's use of poverty and wealth terminology throughout his writings in order to determine whether he is consistent in 2 Cor. 8.9 with his usage elsewhere.

Paul mentions poverty and the poor a number of times in his letters using πτωχ– terminology, and reference is almost exclusively to literal poverty. He also refers to the situation of those in poverty as one of "lack" or "need" using ὑστερ– terms. Excluding the use of πτωχεύω and πτωχεία in 2 Cor. 8.9, Paul mentions the poor and poverty in the following instances. In Galatians 2, after having reached an agreement with the leaders of the Jerusalem church regarding his mission to the Gentiles, the leaders encourage Paul to "remember the poor" (πτωχός; Gal. 2.10).[79] In

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[79] In §1.3.1 I mentioned Holl's proposal that "the poor" was a self-designation for the Jerusalem believers, who held to their high status as the believers of the mother church. As I stated, arguments against Holl's proposal are convincing, but if his theory were true, it would suggest that the references to "the poor" in Gal. 2.10 and Rom. 15.26 were not necessarily to be taken literally.

Romans 15.26 he describes the recipients of the collection as "the poor (πτωχός) among the saints in Jerusalem" and elsewhere describes them as lacking or having "need" (ὑστέρημα; 2 Cor. 8.14; 9.12). In 2 Cor. 8.2 he refers to the "deep poverty" (πτωχεία) of the Macedonians. Similarly, Paul describes himself and his co-workers as "poor" (πτωχός) and "having nothing" (μηδὲν ἔχοντες; 2 Cor. 6.10), and elsewhere refers to times when he was "in need" (ὑστερέω; 2 Cor. 11.9). Paul's only other use of πτωχ– words is in Gal. 4.9 where he mentions τὰ ἀσθενῆ καὶ πτωχὰ στοιχεῖα ("the weak and worthless elemental things"),[80] apparently his only use of a πτωχ– term in a figurative sense. On one occasion he uses the term πένης ("poor") in an Old Testament citation (2 Cor. 9.9), the only New Testament occurrence of this word.[81] Each of these references, with the exception of Gal. 4.9, seems to refer to literal poverty or material lack. Does Paul then have in mind material poverty when he says that Christ, although he was rich, became poor?

In contrast to his literal use of poverty terms, Paul uses terms for wealth and riches (πλουτ– terms) figuratively or spiritually. πλουτ– terminology is frequently used to describe God's attributes: the riches (πλοῦτος) "of his kindness" (Rom. 2.4); "of his glory" (Rom. 9.23; Eph. 3.16), of his "wisdom and knowledge" (Rom. 11.33), and of "his grace" (Eph. 1.7; 2.7). With regard to Christ, Eph. 3.8 refers to "the incomprehensible riches of Christ". God himself "is rich" (πλουτέω) toward all who call upon him (Rom. 10.12), and he supplies the needs of believers according to his "riches" (πλοῦτος) in glory in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4.19). Similarly, in terms of human wealth, Paul speaks only of spiritual "riches" and nowhere of material wealth. He tells the Corinthians that they "have been enriched in everything in Christ" (πλουτίζω; 1 Cor. 1.5), and again (with "grave irony")[82] that they have already become "rich" (πλουτέω; 1 Cor. 4.8), and they "will be enriched (πλουτίζω) in everything for all ἁπλότης" (2 Cor. 9.11), each case clearly referring to figurative "riches".

In 2 Cor. 8.2 Paul again combines material poverty with figurative wealth. The Macedonians are said to have been experiencing "deep poverty" (ἡ κατὰ βάθους πτωχεία αὐτῶν). The outworking of the grace of God among them was not, however, in the first place materialistic, but appeared as "the wealth of their sincere generosity"

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[80] NASB.
[81] The term πένης occurs 78 times in the LXX.
[82] Plummer, 83.

(τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς ἁπλότητος αὐτῶν). Thus, in this phrase "the wealth of their sincere generosity", πλοῦτος ("wealth"), consistent with Paul's usage of the term elsewhere, is not to be taken literally as financial wealth. The grace of God at work in the Macedonians had not transported them from the depths of poverty to a position of financial security. Rather, grace was demonstrated in them and through them by the *sincere* generosity of their hearts, not the liberal generosity of their pocketbooks. For them, their gift was indeed on a par with the widow's mite;[83] their generosity was great, but in absolute terms, the amount they gave may not have been substantial. They were not saying, "In our hearts we would love to give toward the collection, but our pocketbooks simply will not allow us to do so". Their generosity was demonstrated by the fact that they did give – beyond their means, and they would experience even greater poverty because of the sacrifice they made in contributing toward the collection. The point is that πλοῦτος here is again to be taken figuratively. τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς ἁπλότητος αὐτῶν was the sincerity of their hearts demonstrated in giving beyond their means. Thus Paul again mixes the literal with the figurative. In 2 Cor. 8.2,[84] he refers to a "wealth" which far exceeds material poverty.[85]

We have seen, then, that when Paul discusses poverty, he normally refers to literal poverty but that when he discusses wealth or riches, he uses the terms figuratively, referring to spiritual wealth or spiritual riches. We have also seen that it is common for Paul to mix these literal and figurative usages. I have yet to answer the questions posed at the beginning of this section, whether Paul has in mind in 2 Cor. 8.9 that Christ in becoming poor was materially impoverished, and whether Paul's usage of poverty and wealth terms here is consistent with his usage elsewhere. Before addressing these issues, I want first to consider 2 Cor. 8.9 in light of Phil. 2.6-11 and 2 Cor. 5.21.

5.4.3.3. 2 Cor. 8.9 compared with Phil. 2.6-11 and 2 Cor. 5.21

There are some clear parallels between 2 Cor. 8.9 and two other passages, Phil. 2.6-11 and 2 Cor. 5.21. I want to consider to these parallels in order to understand what it means that "he became poor".

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[83] Cf. Mark12.42-43; Luke 21.2-3.

[84] Cf. also 2 Cor. 6.10, discussed below in §5.4.3.3.

[85] In my discussion of reciprocity in Chapter 7, we shall also see that material "blessings" can be an appropriate return for spiritual "blessings", as in Rom. 15.27.

As most commentators agree, Philippians 2.6-11 refers to Christ's incarnation.[86] There are significant parallels between this passage and 2 Cor. 8.9,[87] as well as some notable differences. The two passages correspond as follows. The statement that Christ was "rich" (πλούσιος ὤν) in 2 Cor. 8.9 aligns with Phil. 2.6, where Paul says he "existed in the form of God" (ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων), referring to Christ's pre-incarnate state. Where in 2 Corinthians he says he became poor (ἐπτώχευσεν), in Phil. 2.7 Paul writes that he "emptied himself, taking on the form of a servant" (ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν μορφὴν δούλου λαβών). The Philippians passage continues, however, saying that Christ, having been found in appearance as a man, ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ (2.8). Thus the Philippians passage references not only the incarnation, but also includes reference to Christ's death on the cross. From this comparison of the two passages, while 2 Cor. 8.9 does not include direct reference to the crucifixion, as does Philippians 2, it does not exclude that possibility either.

Besides the similarities between 2 Cor. 8.9 and Phil. 2.6-11, there are also some notable differences, the first being the obvious fact that in Philippians 2 the incarnation is not described with wealth/poverty terminology. Second, in Philippians 2 there is no reference to χάρις: neither Christ's incarnation nor his going to the cross are described in terms of grace.[88] And thirdly, where in 2 Cor. 8.9 Christ is portrayed as becoming poor for the sake of others, specifically here, the Corinthians, in Philippians 2 there is no mention of beneficiaries. Christ emptied himself and died on the cross – without reference to others – the result being that God exalted him so that all in heaven and on earth would bow before him.

In turning to 2 Cor. 5.21, we find perhaps more elements in common with 8.9. In both 2 Cor. 8.9 and 5.21 there are stated beneficiaries: δι᾽ ὑμᾶς ("for your sake"; 8.9) corresponds to ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ("for us"; 5.21). Christ "became poor" (ἐπτώχευσεν; 8.9) corresponds to him "being made sin" (ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν; 5.21). His "wealth" (πλούσιος ὤν; 8.9) corresponds to "not knowing sin" (ὁ μὴ γνοὺς ἁμαρτίαν; 5.21), but this wealth would be in his preexistent state, while his "not knowing sin"

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[86] Dunn is an exception. See discussion in note 107 below.

[87] The parallels are so strong that Lambrecht, 137, writes, "In reading [2 Cor. 8.9] one spontaneously thinks of the more elaborated Christological text in Phil. 2.6-11".

[88] The verb χαρίζομαι does, however, occur in Phil. 2.9, "God . . . gave (ἐχαρίσατο) him the name that is above every name".

presumably refers to his humanity. The benefit for others in one case comes by way of "his poverty" (τῇ ἐκείνου πτωχείᾳ; 8.9) while in the other case it is found simply "in him" (ἐν αὐτῷ). "Becoming rich" (πλουτήσητε; 8.9) corresponds to "becoming the righteousness of God" (γενώμεθα δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ; 5.21). In one case, he "became sin" so that we might "become righteousness", while in the other, he "became poor" so that we might "become rich".

One important aspect that separates 2 Cor. 5.21 from both 8.9 and Phil. 2.6-11 is that in 2 Cor. 5.21 Christ is not the subject. In 8.9 "*he* became poor", and similarly in Phil. 2.7, "*he* emptied himself". In 2 Cor. 5.21, however, God is the agent, who "made him sin, who knew no sin". A notable similarity between 8.9 and 5.21, in distinction from Philippians 2, is that both are connected with "grace". In 2 Cor. 6.1, which immediately follows 5.21, Paul writes, παρακαλοῦμεν μὴ εἰς κενὸν τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ δέξασθαι ὑμᾶς. Reference is to the previous verses, to reconciliation (5.18-19), but particularly to the righteousness of God (v. 21).[89] The phrase "becoming the righteousness (δικαιόσυνη) of God" is difficult, but is probably a reference to the sinner's justification (δικαίωσις) in Christ.[90] Just as we saw in Chapter 4 that the "abundance of grace" in Rom. 5.17 is further qualified as the "gift of righteousness", so in 2 Cor. 6.1, the grace of God refers to sinners becoming the righteousness of God in Christ (5.21). It is difficult here to take ἁμαρτία (in ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν) and δικαιοσύνη (in γενώμεθα δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ) in their normal senses; just as it is difficult both theologically and practically to understand how Christ might *become* sin, so too it is difficult to imagine how we might *become* the righteousness of God. Most scholars agree on the interpretation that Christ did not literally become sin, but that either he became as a sin-offering,[91] or that God "made him sin" in the sense that Christ suffered *as though* he were a sinner, that is, "he came to stand in that relation with God which normally is the result of sin, estranged from God and the object of his wrath".[92] It is generally held that when Paul says "so that we might become the righteousness of God

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[89] Furnish, 341.

[90] According to Hooker, it is through interchange in Christ – not simply an exchange – that believers become the righteousness of God. "The interchange of experience is not a straightforward exchange, for we become the righteousness of God *in him*. If Christ has been made sin, he has also been made our righteousness"; Morna D. Hooker, *From Adam to Christ: Essays on Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 17 (emphasis in original). See further discussion of Hooker below.

[91] Martin, 157.

[92] Barnett, 180; Thrall, 442.

in him", he is referring to the result of justification for the believer as a result of Christ's "becoming sin on our behalf".[93]

We see, then, that 2 Cor. 8.9 corresponds in different ways to Phil. 2.6-11 and to 2 Cor. 5.21. The passage in Philippians 2 in the first place draws attention to the incarnation: Christ's voluntary condescension and obedience resulting in his exaltation. The parallels with the Philippians passage also help elucidate the voluntary nature of Christ's incarnational act, corresponding to his *self*-impoverishment in 2 Cor. 8.9. Therefore, we might say that grace in this passage is viewed from Christ's perspective; it is *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*. In 2 Cor. 5.21 Paul refers in the first place to Christ's death and resurrection – however we interpret the phrase "God made him sin" – he died on the cross that we might become righteous. The parallels between 2 Cor. 8.9 and 5.21 help us identify that aspect of Christ's impoverishment that focuses on his sacrificial death, viewing grace from God's perspective – as a manifestation of *the grace of God*. We saw this described in Romans 5 as the "free gift of grace", the "gift of righteousness" (Rom. 5.15, 17). In 2 Cor. 5.21-6.1, Paul likewise refers to "the grace of God" (6.1) in connection with God's gift – God's initiative in offering Christ on the cross (ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν; 5.21).

With regard to 2 Cor. 8.9, the first part of the verse suggests reference to the incarnation:[94] . . . ἐπτώχευσεν πλούσιος ὤν, following the pattern of Philippians 2. There is nothing explicit here in the first part of the verse which necessitates reference to the crucifixion; however, the purpose clause with which the verse concludes, ἵνα ὑμεῖς τῇ ἐκείνου πτωχείᾳ πλουτήσητε, cannot be realized simply by Christ taking on human form. It was his death that ensured the change for mankind. This latter part of the verse thus suggests the death of Christ on the cross and corresponds to 2 Cor. 5.21. Morna Hooker addresses these complications by discussing "interchange" with Christ for those who are *in Christ*. Using Irenaeus's familiar phrase, "Christ became what we are, in order that we might become what he is", she argues that Christ, in "emptying himself" and becoming "poor", became human and in this state of "poverty" fully identified with mankind. In his resurrection and ascension his "riches" were restored. Since believers are united with him in his death, those who are *in Christ*, experience this interchange with him: Christ, in taking on the form of humanity and experiencing its

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[93] Thrall, 442; Barrett, 180.
[94] As Hooker, *Adam to Christ*, 18-19, argues.

ultimate end, death, set aside the glorious riches of his heavenly existence. At the level of his human existence, believers are joined with him and when he returns to his heavenly existence and has his glorious riches restored, those *in him* share in the riches. Through the act of his poverty, they join with him and are made "rich" together with him as his glorious riches are restored. One point that Hooker repeatedly makes in her argument is that in passages such as 2 Cor. 5.21; 8.9 and Phil. 2.6-11 we must caution against "[driving] a wedge between the incarnation and the crucifixion in Paul's thought".[95] Paul cannot talk about what Christ has done for man without having in mind his incarnation *and* his death on the cross.

5.4.3.4. The poverty of Christ in 2 Cor. 8.9

The grace of God spans both the spiritual and material realms in the abundance/wealth it provides in order to meet various situations of poverty/lack. In 2 Cor. 8.2 the Macedonians were experiencing material poverty, yet the grace of God at work in them demonstrated the spiritual riches they possessed: an abundance of joy and a wealth of generosity resulted in them contributing financially toward the collection. In 2 Cor. 8.9 Christ "becoming poor" is hardly just a reference to self-impoverishment that resulted in material poverty. Just as in Gal. 4.9 Paul contrasts the spiritual riches of "being known by God" with the relative "impoverishment" of living according to the elemental forces (πτωχὰ στοιχεῖα),[96] so too the contrast in 2 Cor. 8.9 between Christ's heavenly riches and the "poverty" he took on for the sake of others is not intended as a material impoverishment.[97] In the same way, the resulting "enrichment" of believers hardly suggests that Christ died so that Christians might become materially wealthy. Foreshadowing his statement in 2 Cor. 8.9 that Christ became poor so that others might become rich, Paul says of himself in 6.10, in commending his own

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[95] Hooker, *Adam to Christ*, 15.

[96] James D. G. Dunn, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, BNTC (London: A & C Black, 1993), 226, comments that "Paul calls the elemental forces 'poor' partly in contrast to the richness of divine reality . . . . But probably also because life under such a power, life under the law, was an impoverishment in comparison with the riches of grace which Paul had experienced through Christ".

[97] Witherington, however, believes that Paul had in mind at least a partial reference to Jesus taking on "the specific socioeconomic state of poverty"; Witherington, 420. G. W. Buchanan goes as far as to suggest a literal interpretation of Jesus' self-impoverishment in 2 Cor. 8.9 where he finds evidence to support that Jesus may have been a successful businessman who gave away his wealth. See George Wesley Buchanan, "Jesus and the Upper Class", *NovT* 7 (1964-65): 195-209.

ministry, that although he and his co-workers were "poor", yet they made many "rich" (ὡς πτωχοὶ πολλοὺς δὲ πλουτίζοντες). Clearly, the poverty here is material while the riches must be understood as having spiritual significance through Paul's ministry of the gospel.[98] In the same verse he also combines the literal with the figurative when he says that he and his co-workers "had nothing", referring to material poverty, "and yet possessed all things", in reference to their spiritual riches, (ὡς μηδὲν ἔχοντες καὶ πάντα κατέχοντες).[99] Paul is living out the same paradigm set down by Christ, in recognizing the greater wealth that supersedes his material poverty. In Christ he is indeed wealthy. Although he may be poor in one dimension of his life, this in no way diminishes the great spiritual wealth he possesses. As he shares this wealth in the form of preaching the gospel, he makes others rich also.

A proper analysis of Paul's use of the verb ἐπτώχευσεν in 2 Cor. 8.9 is essential to understanding to what degree Christ's "poverty" relates to his incarnation in this verse. The classification of the aorist tense of πτωχεύω lies at the heart of the interpretation. Scholars are quick to say both that this is an *ingressive* aorist, and that it refers to Christ's incarnation in paralleling Phil. 2.6-11, as discussed above.[100] Certainly the verb fits the classic ingressive aorist usage for a stative verb: "he became poor". In fact, it is this verse that is frequently offered as the example of an ingressive aorist in Greek grammars.[101] Is his "becoming poor", however, limited to his incarnation? Identifying the verb as an ingressive aorist would suggest so, the implication being that

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[98] James D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (London: SCM, 1980), 121, points out that it was not uncommon to contrast spiritual wealth with material poverty (cf. Tob. 4.21; 2 Cor. 6.10; Jas. 2.5; Rev. 2.9).

[99] See §7.3.3.2 below, where I also address the interchange of material and non-material provisions regarding the collection as mentioned in Rom. 15.27: "For if the Gentiles have shared [with the Jerusalem saints] in spiritual things, they are likewise obliged to minister to them in material things".

[100] Furnish, 404-05; Martin, 263-64;

[101] See Ernest DeWitt Burton, *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek*, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1898), §37, "inceptive"; A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1863-1934), 834; C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 11; H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: Macmillan, 1955), §180(2); Nigel Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, ed. J. H. Moulton Vol. III: Syntax (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1963), 71; Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 559; Buist M. Fanning, *Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 262.

Christ entered into the state of being poor, which is usually identified with his incarnation. The problem is that the purpose clause in the verse, ἵνα ὑμεῖς τῇ ἐκείνου πτωχείᾳ πλουτήσητε, says that the Corinthians were made rich – assumed here to refer to spiritual riches, i.e. their salvation – and that this was accomplished through Christ's poverty (τῇ ἐκείνου πτωχείᾳ). Paul emphasizes elsewhere, however, that salvation comes through the death and resurrection of Christ,[102] which suggests that this second reference to his poverty in 8.9 cannot be limited to his incarnation, but must also include his death and resurrection. Some scholars hold to the ingressive aorist interpretation of ἐπτώχευσεν and then simply include the ἵνα clause as an outcome of his becoming poor. Thrall suggests that this verb, functioning ingressively, "include[s] the whole of Jesus' earthly life *and his death by crucifixion*".[103] Similarly, Wolff, who likewise accepts the aorist as ingressive, writes, "The poverty of Christ begins with the incarnation and culminates in the crucifixion, thus making believers rich."[104] The difficulty here is that Christ entering into the state of being human would not necessarily include the kind of death he suffered. A better solution is that proposed by Harris, who suggests that ἐπτώχευσεν be taken as a constative aorist, "comprehending Christ's incarnation, life, and death-resurrection in a single glance as 'becoming poor', as self-impoverishment, with πτωχείᾳ referring to that same sequence of events as 'poverty'".[105] In this case the tense classification of the verb better supports the interpretation, particularly that Christ's poverty included both his incarnation and his death and resurrection. In the words of Fred Craddock, "The poverty of Christ consists, therefore, in the identification of Christ with the human situation, an identification without reservation. . . . By his death, Christ's becoming poor was made complete; he has tasted fully the lot of dispossessed humanity living in fear of the created forces in God's universe".[106]

What, then, does it mean that Christ became poor? I have stated above that the traditional understanding of him "becoming poor" refers to his incarnation; he gave up

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[102] Cf. Rom. 5.10; 1 Cor. 15.3.
[103] Thrall, 534 (emphasis mine); Cf. Martin, 265.
[104] Wolff, 171-72.
[105] Harris, 580.
[106] Fred B. Craddock, "The Poverty of Christ: An Investigation of II Corinthians 8:9", *Int* 22, no. 1 (Jan 1968): 166-67.

the riches of heaven to take on the relative poverty of humanity.[107] If his becoming poor refers to the incarnation, then his being rich refers to his pre-existent state, that is, "the riches of his glory". His wealth thus consists in *spiritual* riches. In becoming poor, he became a man, which might include the double sense of taking on a lifestyle of economic poverty. Since, however, Paul's writings do not include reference to Jesus' historical life, if he did desire to make such a point here to emphasize, for example, Christ's socioeconomic status, we would expect him to do so more deliberately.[108]

Dunn is correct in noting that when Paul refers to "grace" in connection with Christ, it is normally in reference to his death and resurrection,[109] although this does not preclude reference to the incarnation in 2 Cor. 8.9. Paul says to the Corinthians, "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . ." What did they know, except what Paul had taught them, namely, that Jesus Christ, God's Son, came to earth, "that [he] died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15.3-4)? His act of grace consisted in all that he gave up for the sake of man (specifically, in 2 Cor. 8.9, for the sake of the Corinthians: δι᾽ ὑμᾶς). What did he give up? He voluntarily took humanity upon himself, giving up his heavenly life in the incarnation, an act that limited his divine faculties. If that were not enough, he also voluntarily condescended to being treated like a criminal, and ultimately gave up even his human life through the unjust punishment of death on a cross. Since Paul is discussing this within a context of grace, it would seem that emphasis on Christ's death and resurrection for the sake of the Corinthians ("that you might become rich") is just as much in view as his incarnation. Thus it does not seem necessary to limit his "becoming poor" to one or the other – as referring only to his

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[107] Dunn questions whether the Corinthians would have had at this early stage an understanding of Christology that included the incarnation and Christ's preexistent state (See Dunn, *Christology*, 121). He therefore concludes in James D. G. Dunn, *Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 292, "The most obvious way to take 2 Cor. 8.9 is as a vivid allusion to the tremendous personal cost of Jesus' ministry and particularly the willing sacrifice of his death. It was as a result of this self-impoverishment that the first Christians had experienced the richness of God's grace. That Paul intended an allusion to the preexistent Christ's self-abasement in incarnation must be judged unlikely". Dunn's argument is hardly acceptable since Christ's sacrifice, if viewed simply as a personal inconvenience, as great as it might have been, would hardly have been sufficient to secure heavenly riches for believers. See Martin, 263, and Thrall, 534, who likewise argue against Dunn's position.

[108] See again, however, Buchanan, "Jesus and the Upper Class", 202-07, who suggests that Christ came from the upper classes.

[109] Dunn, *Christology*, 121; see Rom. 5.15, 21; Gal. 2.20-21; Eph. 1.6-7.

earthly life culminating in his death, as per Dunn, or only to his incarnation.[110] For all of the reasons mentioned above, the imagery of Christ becoming poor in 2 Cor. 8.9 is best taken to include both his incarnation, and his death and resurrection, as in Phil. 2.6-11.[111]

The aim of the economic imagery in verse 9 is not simply to provide an example of self-impoverishment for the Corinthians to emulate.[112] Besides the example of self-sacrifice for the sake of others, which Christ clearly illustrates, a main concern of Paul is the attitude with which the Corinthians will give their gift. We have seen that Paul emphasizes the proper motivation behind the Macedonians' contribution, and besides offering Christ's attitude of self-sacrifice as an example, we will see that Paul continues to touch on the significance of the attitude of the giver throughout 2 Corinthians 8-9 (cf. 8.8; 9.2, 7).

5.4.3.5. Summary: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ

Second Corinthians 8.9 thus serves several purposes in Paul's discussion in these two chapters. First, it offers the basis for the grace of God, which is here the grace of Christ. Christ's incarnation, death and resurrection together are an act of grace – *the* act of grace. The grace of Christ is the *grace infusion* that makes living the Christian life possible by providing the gift of righteousness and the ongoing grace of God at work in believers. Secondly, in the context of 2 Corinthians 8-9, this verse demonstrates the fact that God's grace impacts both the spiritual and the material realms. In the present discussion based on the economic motif begun in 8.2, Paul wishes to stress that the

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[110] For Cranfield it is important that Paul is here referring to the incarnation, because through his emphasis on "the downward movement, the condescension" . . . he wants to bring out "the self-sacrificing generosity of Christ as the stupendous example for the Christians of Corinth to be thankful for and in their own small way to try to follow"; C. E. B. Cranfield, "The Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 Corinthians 8:1-9", *CV* 32, no. 3 (1989): 107. Again, the problem is that it is not simply Christ's incarnation that provides for believers' spiritual riches.

[111] Furnish, 417; Thrall, 534.

[112] Betz, 61, however, does seem to interpret the description of Christ here in the first place as the example to be followed, while others, such as Furnish, 418, take the opposite view, saying that Paul is *not* presenting Christ as an example for the Corinthians to emulate. C. T. Rhyne argues that this verse is "more explanatory than exemplary . . . . The apostle introduces the incarnation of Christ in order to affirm that [the Corinthians] have been enriched by his grace and thus can freely respond in love to the needs of others. . . . The incarnation *as grace* is the very foundation of Paul's appeal"; C. Thomas Rhyne, "II Corinthians 8:8-15", *Int* 41, no. 4 (Oct 1987): 410, (emphasis in original).

Corinthians' spiritual riches in Christ far surpass any material wealth they possess. They are rich with Christ's unlimited riches; therefore, they can contribute generously toward the collection. Paul himself, although poor, through his wealth in Christ, made others rich. The Macedonians, also experiencing poverty, gave toward others, and in so doing passed on grace that would further enrich the recipients. Grace affected them spiritually, producing joy and a generous heart, resulting in them giving freely to others. The Corinthians, then, whether materially poor or rich, must realize that they too can give freely toward the collection. They do have the necessary resources, consisting of their spiritual riches and whatever material possessions they have.[113] From this combination, they will always have an overflow from which they can share.

Thirdly, the paradigm established by Jesus in giving himself so that others might become rich is the example for all believers to follow. In 8.8 Paul wrote to the Corinthians that he was giving them an opportunity to prove the sincerity of their love. Proceeding in verse 9 he illustrates what that proof looks like; "For you know the χάρις of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . ," in other words, "For you know the proof of Christ's love . . . ." Having told the Corinthians that they have an opportunity to demonstrate the grace of God given to them, that is, to prove the genuineness of their love by contributing to the needs of the saints, Paul illustrates how Jesus demonstrated his love, by "becoming poor", so that the Corinthians might "become rich". Paul offered the supreme example to be followed, which demonstrated ultimate love and the ultimate proof of the working of the grace of God. God demonstrated his love for man by giving up his only Son that man's sins might be forgiven. In an entirely self-sacrificial act, Jesus put others before himself, for their benefit, first in becoming a man, and then in giving up his own life. This was the proof of his love and of the grace of God at work. This is the ideal towards which the Corinthians may strive. God's grace is demonstrated through giving, by putting the needs of others before one's own, and as we shall see, by trusting God for the resources to do so. Paul makes it clear in 8.13 that such giving must not necessarily result in their own suffering. The simple paradigm is this: Jesus gave for the sake of others. Believers united with him have abundant resources from which to give, and as he gave for the sake of others, so believers in him are to follow his example of giving. Paul does not want the Corinthians to take a vow of poverty and give away everything they own. Neither is it necessary for them to give so as to bring hardship

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[113] We will see below, that it is the "surplus" (περίσσευμα) provided by God that they are able to share.

upon themselves. Whatever their economic situation, Paul simply wants to stimulate in them generous giving. "The Macedonians gave when they were desperately poor; Christ gave when he was incalculably rich. In their present economic circumstances the Corinthians fitted somewhere between these two extremes."[114]

Throughout this discussion Paul no doubt has in the back of his mind that which he had previously written to the Corinthians: Εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τῇ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ τῇ δοθείσῃ ὑμῖν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ὅτι ἐν παντὶ ἐπλουτίσθητε ἐν αὐτῷ . . . ὥστε ὑμᾶς μὴ ὑστερεῖσθαι ἐν μηδενὶ χαρίσματι (1 Cor. 1.4-5, 7). Paul had already stressed to them that as a result of God's grace they had abundant spiritual riches and that they were not lacking any spiritual endowment. Now, however, Paul must help them to see that these spiritual riches are not only for receiving, they are to be passed on as well and that by passing them on, they themselves become conduits for God's grace.

My discussion of Paul's use of χάρις in 2 Corinthians 8-9 continues in Chapter 6.

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[114] Harris, 581.

CHAPTER 6

PAUL'S USE OF ΧΑΡΙΣ IN 2 CORINTHIANS 8-9: PART 2

This chapter continues with the exegesis of 2 Corinthians 8-9 which began in Chapter 5. I have chosen to address 2 Cor. 8.10-15 separately in Chapter 7, however, since χάρις does not appear in the section and because it focuses on an aspect of gift exchange that is best addressed as a separate topic. Similarly, the section 9.11-15 will be analyzed separately in Chapter 8 which addresses the topic of thanksgiving.

6.1. Recommendations for Paul's Co-Workers (8.16-9.5)

6.1.1. Eagerness *in the Administration of the Collection (8.16-24).*

6.1.1.1. The eagerness of Titus and his co-workers

In 8.16 Paul expresses thanks to God using the common Pauline formula: Χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ. I will discuss the use of χάρις to express gratitude, especially in this formula, in Chapter 8 (see §8.2.1 below). Suffice it to say at this point that Paul has appropriately chosen to express thanksgiving to God in 8.16 with this χάρις formula. Paul's thanks (χάρις) are directed toward God, the giver of χάρις, who in this case has given it to Titus in the form of σπουδή ("eagerness")[1] toward the Corinthians. The focus of the thanks is the giver (ὁ δούς) and only secondarily on that which he has given: Χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ τῷ δόντι τὴν αὐτὴν σπουδὴν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ Τίτου (8.16). Paul previously used σπουδή in 8.7, 8, and I have shown above that while σπουδή in verse 7 is that of the Corinthians, in verse 8 it refers to the eagerness of the Macedonians described in 8.1-5. What does Paul mean here by "the same eagerness" (ἡ αὐτὴ σπουδή)? He clearly does not have in mind that eagerness expressed by the

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[1] BDAG, s.v. σπουδή, offers the meanings *eagerness, earnestness, diligence, willingness, zeal.*

Corinthians in 8.7, since he refers to it here as eagerness "on the Corinthians' behalf" (ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν). Some scholars differentiate the eagerness mentioned here, directed toward the Corinthians, from that of the Macedonians, which was for the collection, saying that the comparison in 8.16 must therefore be with Paul's own eagerness toward the Corinthians.[2] Thus, God put the same zeal toward the Corinthians in the heart of Titus that he had put in Paul's heart. For this reason Titus was the appropriate person to lead the delegation to Corinth to complete the collection. This conclusion is mere speculation, however, and finds no clear support in the text. Certainly, Paul did have great concern for the Corinthians (which could appropriately be described as "eagerness"), but this is not emphasized in this passage, let alone expressed as σπουδή.

There are two parties in particular whose "eagerness" captures the attention of the reader in this passage. First, as we have seen, Paul describes the great enthusiasm of the Macedonians toward the collection project (8.1-5), and then makes that same zeal a measuring rod for the Corinthians (σπουδή; 8.8). Although Paul specifically mentions σπουδή in connection with the Corinthians in 8.7 (in reference to 7.11-12; see above), whatever eagerness they have already demonstrated has yet to be applied to their participation in the collection. Paul is now giving them the opportunity to express it in this arena by describing the already evident eagerness of the Macedonians.[3]

The other party to whom σπουδή is attributed is Titus. His zeal for the Corinthians is no doubt rooted in his successful visit to Corinth described in chapter 7, which resulted for him in great joy and a refreshed spirit (7.13), as well as great affection for the Corinthians (7.15). The grace of God given in the churches of Macedonia had produced in them a great zeal to help meet the needs of the saints in Jerusalem. In a similar way, God's grace had produced an eagerness in Titus's heart toward the Corinthians. That which is the "same" regarding this eagerness in 8.16 is its quality, not that it has the same object. Throughout this passage Paul stresses that the grace of God does a work in people's hearts; it worked in the Macedonians' hearts and it has worked in Titus's heart as well. Therefore, the σπουδή in 8.16 most likely

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[2] See, for example, Thrall, 544-45; Harris, 598.

[3] Betz, 58-59, argues that the Corinthians' σουπδή in 8.7 was yet to be proven, and would only be made evident if they gave generously toward the collection. He is correct in saying that the Corinthians' eagerness toward the collection was yet to be proven, but the σπουδή of 8.7 is something with which they already "abound". See §5.4.2.1.

compares the eagerness of Titus with that of the Macedonians.[4] Paul returns χάρις (thanks) to God for the χάρις (evidenced by σπουδή) he has put in the heart of Titus.

In 8.17 there is further evidence of grace received by Titus. Not only did he accept Paul's appeal to return to Corinth, but σπουδαιότερος δὲ ὑπάρχων, he was ready to go to Corinth "on his own initiative" (αὐθαίρετος). It has been suggested that σπουδαιότερος here be translated "extremely zealous".[5] Barrett gives it the sense, "more zealous than I had allowed myself to hope".[6] In any case, because of Titus's zeal, he was ready to return to Corinth on his own initiative (αὐθαίρετος). Presumably this means, that although Paul requested that Titus go, Titus himself did not have to be persuaded to do so. It is notable that the Macedonians' participation in the collection project was likewise αὐθαίρετοι. It seems, then, that both the Macedonians and Titus experienced the fruit of the grace of God in them as demonstrated through their σπουδή and through acting αὐθαίρετοι.

Paul sends two co-workers to Corinth along with Titus to complete the collection there. The second of these, referred to only as "our brother" (8.22), is also described according to his "eagerness". Having been tested often and in many ways by Paul, he was proven to be σπουδαῖος, and at the present is even more eager (πολὺ σπουδαιότερος) because of his great confidence in the Corinthians. Thus, both Titus and this brother have as qualifications for this mission to complete the collection in Corinth σπουδή, a quality already associated with the working of the grace of God in 2 Cor. 8.7, 8.

6.1.1.2. "This χάρις" and the collection project

The other "brother", sent along with Titus, has a positive reputation in "the churches" for his effort in the gospel (8.18). "And not only this", writes Paul, "but he has been appointed by the churches as our traveling companion (συνέκδημος) σὺν τῇ χάριτι ταύτῃ which is being administered by us . . ." (8.19). This is the third and final occurrence of the phrase ἡ χάρις αὕτη in these two chapters. In the first two occurrences in 8.6, 7, I suggested that Paul had in mind a multifaceted reference of

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[4] Lietzmann, 73, n. 8, and Hafemann, 360, agree. Furnish, 421, and Barnett, 418, n. 12, while allowing for this view, prefer to take "the same eagerness" as that of Paul.

[5] With this translation BDF §244(2) classifies the term as an "elative comparative".

[6] Barrett, 227-28. This would be similar to how Paul says the Macedonians had responded (8.5), even beyond what he had expected.

χάρις that included both inner workings of grace in the Corinthians and the outworking of grace in their eventual collection gift (see §5.4.1 above). Here in 8.19 Paul no doubt also intends χάρις to convey these multiple senses, but more than in the other instances, Paul seems to use the phrase here as a designation for the overall collection project. Perhaps he desires to stress here the project itself as an outworking of God's grace in the Gentile believing communities. That it is a direct reference to the collection is clear from the parallelism with the following verses. In 8.19 Paul refers to the collection as ἡ χάρις αὕτη ἡ διακονουμένη ὑφ' ἡμῶν ("this χάρις that is being administered by us"). In the following verse he likewise refers to it as ἡ ἁδρότης αὕτη ἡ διακονουμένη ὑφ' ἡμῶν ("this generous gift that is being administered by us"; 8.20). It seems that for Paul, where the phrase ἡ χάρις αὕτη was originally used in association with a single community (i.e. the Corinthians), it may have come to be used in this discussion as a technical term for the overall project or for the actual funds being gathered. And as Paul and his co-workers administrate the collection, he makes clear in 8.19 that the overarching purpose of the project is that it bring glory to God (cf. 9.13).

6.1.2. Paul's Tactic of Shame (9.1-4)

Having completed his recommendation of the members of the team he is sending ahead to Corinth (8.16-24),[7] Paul begins 2 Corinthians 9 by offering his strongest challenge yet for the Corinthians to complete their offering. He then uses numerous scriptural references, through allusions and direct quotations, to conclude his theological argument regarding the collection.

Paul's approach in the opening verses of this chapter is to encourage the Corinthians to follow through on their previous commitment to the collection so as not to bring shame either upon him or upon them. He says he has boasted to the Macedonians about the Corinthians' willingness to contribute a year prior, the result being that the Macedonians have been all the more motivated to make their own contribution (9.2). Similarly, Paul boasted to the Corinthians at the beginning of chapter 8 of the Macedonians' enthusiastic participation. We have seen that the Macedonians became involved in the project at their own initiative and not at Paul's prompting, which is not inconsistent with Paul's words in 9.2 that it was the Corinthians' zeal that

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[7] See Betz, 70-82, for a discussion of 8.16-24 with a particular emphasis on the section as a recommendation of Titus and the two brothers for the work of completing the collection in Corinth.

challenged (ἐρεθίζω) the Macedonians to participate.[8] It is certainly possible that Paul told the Macedonians of the "zeal" of the Corinthians *after* the Macedonians expressed their initial desire to be involved (cf. 8.4). In any case, he attempts to motivate them by letting them know that they have a reputation to maintain and that only by following through with their collection gift will they save face for themselves, and, perhaps more importantly, for Paul. There is a good chance that some Macedonians will accompany Paul when he comes to Corinth, and so to avoid this shame, they need to be prepared (9.4).

In connection with this, Paul refers to the team he is sending ahead and the fact that he is sending them to motivate the Corinthians to conclude their final efforts toward the collection (9.3-5). With what appears to be a deliberate concentration of προ– compound verbs, Paul reiterates that he is simply urging the Corinthians to follow through on the promise they previously made: "So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers, that they would go on ahead (προέρχομαι) to you and arrange in advance (προκαταρτίζω) your previously promised (προεπαγγέλλομαι; perfect tense) gift" (9.5). In verse 7 Paul urges the Corinthians to do as each has previously determined (προαιρέω; perfect tense) in his heart.

6.1.3. Gifts of Blessing – εὐλογία in 9.5

In 9.5 Paul refers to the Corinthians' contribution toward the collection as their "previously promised εὐλογία". Paul rarely speaks explicitly of the individual gifts which constitute the collection,[9] he instead uses more indirect language to refer to the overall project.[10] We have seen that Paul does refer to the Corinthians' gift in 1 Cor. 16.3, writing that, upon arriving in Corinth, he will send on to Jerusalem with letters of recommendation those whom the Corinthians designate to deliver their χάρις or "gift".

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[8] In saying that "Achaia had been prepared since a year ago" in 9.2, Paul uses the name of the province as a general reference to the Corinthians, probably following the use of the geographically general designation, "the Macedonians"; Furnish, 431.

[9] On several occasions he refers specifically to the contribution of a church or community: ἡ χάρις ὑμῶν (1 Cor. 16.3); ἡ εὐλογία ὑμῶν (2 Cor. 9.5); and perhaps, ἡ κοινωνία (9.13; Rom. 15.26).

[10] On numerous occasions Paul refers to the overall collection project: ἡ λογεία ἡ εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους (1 Cor. 16.1); ἡ διακονία ἡ εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους (2 Cor. 8.4; 9.1); part of the sense of ἡ χάρις αὕτη (8.6, 7, 19); ἡ ἁδρότης αὕτη (8.20); τὸ μέρος τοῦτο (9.3); ἡ λειτουργία αὕτη (9.12); ἡ διακονία αὕτη (9.13).

In the same passage, Paul twice refers to the collection project with λογεία (16.1, 2),[11] perhaps in order to emphasize the actual process of collecting individuals' gifts. Georgi has concluded that the use of εὐλογία in 2 Cor. 9.5 "resembles the combination of λογεία and χάρις used in 1 Corinthians 16:1 and 3 for designating the collection".[12] This seems a bit contrived but it may be, as Georgi also suggests, that Paul has in mind a play on words here between εὐλογία and λογεία,[13] which is possible considering the frequent phonetic interchange between –εία and –ία nouns in Hellenistic Greek.[14] Paul clearly prefers to use richer vocabulary; in connection with the collection he nowhere makes use of any of the more common Greek terms for gift and giving, such as, δόσις, δόμα, δώρημα, δωρεά,[15] δῶρον or even χρῆμα.[16] Instead, he refers to the contributions using χάρις (1 Cor. 16.3; but never χάρισμα), εὐλογία (2 Cor. 9.5), and perhaps κοινωνία (2 Cor. 9.13; Rom. 15.26). Of these latter terms, only χάρις in 1 Cor. 16.3 and εὐλογία in 2 Cor. 9.5 clearly refer to the Corinthians' gift. Regarding εὐλογία, several examples from the Septuagint support its use as "gift" in terms of "something bestowed on one person by another, especially in token of their relationship".[17] Georgi writes that such gifts underline the pronouncement of blessing, in which cases "εὐλογία stands for the confirmation or the establishment of a communal relationship, not just for a prayerful wish or thanks".[18] It may be, then, that when Paul refers to the Corinthians' gift as a εὐλογία, he has in mind it not only conveying a blessing to the recipients, but at the same time symbolizing fellowship between the Gentile and Jerusalem communities.[19]

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[11] As mentioned in §5.4.1.2, these two occurrences are the only NT uses of λογεία.

[12] Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 93-94.

[13] I.e. εὐ–λογεία, "good collection". Cf. also Harris, 628, n. 56.

[14] BDF §23. See Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 93, referring to Windisch, 276; also Furnish, 428.

[15] God's *gift* of grace, however, is described as an ἀνεκδιήγητος δωρεά, "unspeakable gift", in 9.15.

[16] Paul, however, nowhere uses the word χρῆμα, "wealth, money".

[17] Furnish, 428. See Gen. 33.11; Josh. 15.19; Judg. 1.15; 1 Sam. 25.27; 2 Kgs. 5.15.

[18] Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 93.

[19] Panikulam, *Koinonia*, 44, views Paul's use of εὐλογία here as suggestive of blessings that, as a result of the collection, would flow both from the Corinthians and the Jerusalem believes to God.

6.1.4. Gifts Potentially Affected by Greed – πλεονεξία in 9.5

In 2 Cor. 9.5-6 εὐλογία appears in contrasting pairs. In 9.5 it is paired against πλεονεξία[20] and in 9.6 in an adverbial phrase against φειδομένως.[21] In 9.5 Paul states that he is sending brothers ahead of him to Corinth to ensure that the Corinthians' "gift" (εὐλογία ὑμῶν) is ready when he arrives. With an infinitive phrase, he states that the purpose of sending them is to ensure that the gift is prepared ὡς εὐλογία καὶ μὴ ὡς πλεονεξία ("as a blessing and not affected by covetousness"). The repetition of εὐλογία in verse 5 suggests that the Corinthians' gift reflects the multiple aspects of εὐλογία. The first instance seems to stress the gift aspect while the second focuses on the gift as a blessing. The two terms εὐλογία and πλεονεξία contrast each other in the way they potentially relate to benefits. The former ("blessing") is the result of an action that conveys a benefit to someone else,[22] while the latter ("covetousness") expresses an attitude of self-centeredness, potentially restricting any benefit toward another.

Scholars have been puzzled regarding the use of πλεονεξία here. Thrall points out differing views regarding whose "covetousness" Paul has in mind, whether the Corinthians' or, "hypothetically", his own.[23] The latter view is expressed by Furnish: "If Paul himself must beg for the money to be given, it might appear to be an extortion – money obtained from reluctant donors by inappropriate means, and perhaps even under false pretenses".[24] That is, if the Corinthians did not willingly prepare their gift in advance of Paul's visit, upon his arrival he would have to compel them to complete it, which could appear to the Macedonians accompanying him as extortion. It has been suggested that the use of the cognate πλεονεκτέω in 2 Cor. 12.17-8 lends support to this view that it is Paul's greedy extraction of money that is in mind here. Certainly Paul would rather see the money given ὡς εὐλογία, but why would he even hint at the suggestion that he might be forced to extract it in a suggestively greedy manner? The greatest problem with this view, however, is the fact that it does not maintain the same subject for both ὡς εὐλογία and ὡς πλεονεξία, and thus the parallelism which continues into the next verse.

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[20] "The state of desiring to have more than one's due, *greediness, insatiableness, avarice, covetousness*"; BDAG, s.v. πλεονεξία.

[21] "In a scanty or meager manner, *sparingly*"; BDAG, s.v. φειδομένως.

[22] Meanings for εὐλογία include *an act or benefit of blessing, bestowed by God or Christ or brought by other humans*; BDAG, s.v. εὐλογία.

[23] Thrall, 571-72.

[24] Furnish, 439. See also Bruce, 226.

Thrall's own view is that the Corinthians are to be taken as the subject of both phrases, but that the use of πλεονεξία is meant to be an allusion to 8.15 where Paul quotes from the manna incident in Exodus 16 using πλεονάζω. According to Thrall, the Israelites who "had too much", at the end of each day had their amounts adjusted by "the divine miracle of equalization", having greedily gathered more than had been prescribed. Since "the literal meaning of πλεονεξία is 'a desire to have more'", she argues that the Corinthians likewise were not to "have too much" in comparison with the Jerusalem Christians. Thus, "the Corinthian contribution to the collection is not to be an expression of any such "desire to have more" than their fellow Christians of the mother church".[25]

I am not convinced by this interpretation and will argue in Chapter 7 that the Israelites in Exodus 16 were not necessarily being greedy in their collection of the manna. Whether ὡς εὐλογία or ὡς πλεονεξία, Paul anticipates the Corinthians presenting a gift. At issue are their attitude and the quantity of the gift. Paul's overall discussion falls under the theme of grace and so to conceive of the Corinthians' gift as a εὐλογία – a blessing – would be to see it as conveying grace, the benefit being not only the financial aid received but the grace passed on to the recipients by way of the gift. On the other hand, for the gift to be "affected by covetousness" (ὡς πλεονεξία) would hinder grace. Paul has already indicated that the Corinthians' participation in the collection will be a demonstration of their Christian love (8.8, 24), an outworking of the grace of God. Their love will be evident as they follow through on their original commitment to make a generous contribution. Their generous gift will be a channel through which God's grace will pass on to the saints in Jerusalem. Contributing anything less than the original promised amount will reflect a change of heart and an attitude of greed. The limitation they put on their gift will in effect limit the flow of grace within the Christian body. The use of πλεονεξία in verse 5 may well convey the same sense as it did for the Greeks when it stood in opposition to ἰσότης ("equality") among men. In this usage πλεονεξία meant "always wanting more than one's position and attainments warrant".[26] Paul envisioned the Corinthians' gift as conveying a blessing and contributing toward the ἰσότης he describes in 2 Cor. 8.13-14 (see §7.3

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[25] Thrall, 573.
[26] Gustov Stählin, "ἴσος, ἰσότης, ἰσότημος", *TDNT* 3:346.

below). Hence he wants them to give generously, so as not to reflect any selfishness or self-centeredness through the manner of their giving.

Although I discuss 2 Cor. 9.6 in the next section, I will address the occurrence of εὐλογία in that verse here. In 9.6 Paul uses the word εὐλογία again, this time in a different pairing:

> ὁ σπείρων φειδομένως φειδομένως καὶ θερίσει,
> καὶ ὁ σπείρων ἐπ᾽ εὐλογίαις ἐπ᾽ εὐλογίαις καὶ θερίσει.

Here ἐπ᾽ εὐλογίαις is an adverbial phrase paralleling φειδομένως. Paul has told the Corinthians that he expects their collection effort to be complete by the time he arrives, and here he further reminds them by way of this proverb that their "reaping" will be proportionate to their "sowing". With the recurrence of εὐλογία here, used only in these two verses in connection with the collection, it is clear that he intends there to be a connection between verses 5 and 6. In verse 5 εὐλογία is antithetically paired with πλεονεξία while in verse 6 it is paired against φειδομένως. By analogy, then, there is a correspondence between what it means to give ὡς πλεονεξίαν and to sow/reap φειδομένως.[27] In several places in 2 Corinthians 8-9 Paul suggests that the Corinthians' participation in the collection is an expression of the κοινωνία in Christ existing between them and the believers in Jerusalem. He says that there is to be some form of mutual giving and receiving (8.14), and the demonstration of their Christian love (8.8, 24) will result in recognition of the gift and prayer for the Corinthians in return (9.14). And now with the sowing and reaping metaphor, Paul underlines that any benefit will be in proportion to what they give. Their particular gift toward the collection will be a "blessing" if given appropriately (i.e. not reduced by covetousness), and anyone who gives accordingly (ἐπ᾽ εὐλογίαις – so as to convey blessings to the recipients), will also reap abundant blessings in return. There seems to be a progressive shift in the sense of εὐλογία in verses 5-6. Initially in verse 5 it occurs as a simple reference to the Corinthians' contribution with emphasis on the gift aspect. The second time it appears in verse 5 the idea of blessing seems to be in the forefront, while at the same time still clearly referring to the gift. In verse 5, εὐλογία appears in the singular. Finally, the two occurrences in verse 6 convey a general principle of reaping "blessings" by sowing "blessings" without direct reference to the Corinthians' gift, and thus the plural is used.

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[27] This correspondence clearly provides evidence for the view that Paul is not to be understood as the subject of ὡς πλεονεξίαν in v. 5.

The contrast in verse 6 between φειδομένως and ἐπ᾽ εὐλογίαις indeed suggests that the latter is to convey an abundance of blessings.

Thus in using εὐλογία in 2 Cor. 9.5, Paul refers to the Corinthians' gift, but also to the blessing the gift will convey. Perhaps they initially perceived that their abundant gift would indeed convey a blessing and so Paul now reminds them of this. Apparently, however, the Corinthians had re-thought their intentions and reduced the amount they originally had in mind. For this reason he encourages them to remain true to their original commitment. Paul is sending ahead the "brothers" to prepare the Corinthians' "gift" (εὐλογία) – which was intended to be a blessing for the recipients, so that it may indeed be a "blessing" (εὐλογία) and not be affected in any way by greed.

6.2. Final Theological Perspectives (9.6-15)

6.2.1. Sowing and Reaping in 2 Cor. 9.6 – Echoes of Proverbs?

The agricultural motif is introduced in 2 Cor. 9.6 with imagery of sowing and reaping, which would have been familiar in both Jewish and Graeco-Roman culture. The metaphor of seed and the sower appears in verses 6 and 10 (and is suggested in v. 9) to illustrate Paul's idea of giving and the abundant byproducts which result. Although this passage (9.6-10) contains numerous scriptural allusions, only verse 9 contains a direct quotation. The remaining allusions are subtly interwoven into the text of Paul's argument.

Verse six contains the accepted maxim, which I introduced above, approximating the modern adage, "you reap what you sow".[28] Paul includes this as an accepted adage but does not present it as scripture.[29] The sowing/reaping imagery is common in Jewish and Greek literature,[30] and although it is also a common metaphor in the scriptures, the precise terminology of 2 Cor. 9.6 is nowhere found in the Septuagint.[31] It appears that Paul may intentionally be drawing on imagery from

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[28] See Cicero, *De oratore*, trans. E. W. Sutton and H. Rackham, LCL (London: Wm. Heinemann, 1942), 2.65, "You shall reap your sowing" (translation E. W. Sutton).

[29] That is, there is no introductory formula as in 8.15, and 9.9 where "καθὼς γέγραπται" introduces each OT quotation.

[30] Thrall, 574-75, cites examples from Jewish Apocalyptic as well as from Aristotle, Cicero, Philo, and Plato.

[31] Besides the passages discussed below, the imagery occurs in Ps. 125.5; Job 4.8. Paul also uses it in Gal. 6.7-8. Harris, 634, suggests that "the φειδομένως – ἐπ᾽ εὐλογίαις antithesis is probably a Pauline creation".

Proverbs 11 and 22 and perhaps Proverbs 28. There is a high concentration of key terms from 2 Corinthians 8-9 that occur in these three chapters of Proverbs. The former two are the only passages that explicitly contain the sowing/reaping metaphor, but all three contain not only common vocabulary, but also concepts common with those of 2 Corinthians 8-9.[32] Thus, it seems that Paul has as a backdrop for his discussion the wisdom offered in the book of Proverbs.

6.2.2. Non-Compelled, Cheerful Giving – 9.7

In verse 7 Paul writes that each of the Corinthians is to do just as he has προήρηται, "previously decided",[33] in his heart. We see again Paul's use of a προ– compound verb, linking this verse back to verse 5, and further emphasizing that Paul is not trying to persuade them to do something new, but simply to follow through on a previous commitment. The Corinthians had previously committed themselves to a generous gift for the saints in Jerusalem. He does not want to pressure them into giving "grudgingly or under compulsion" (ἐκ λύπης ἢ ἐξ ἀνάγκης).

6.2.2.1. Joyful giving in the Old Testament

The phrase μὴ ἐκ λύπης in 2 Cor. 9.7 is suggestive of Deut. 15.10 where the Israelites are told to care for their own poor:

> If there is a poor man with you, one of your brothers, in any of your towns in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart, nor close your hand from your poor brother; but you shall freely open your hand to him, and shall generously lend him sufficient for his need in whatever he lacks. . . . You shall generously give to him, and your heart shall not be grieved (οὐ λυπηθήσῃ)[34] when you give to him, because for this thing the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in all your undertakings (Deut. 15.7-8, 10; NASB).

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[32] Sowing imagery is found in Prov. 11.21, 24; 22.8. εὐλογία and its cognates occur throughout Proverbs, but particularly in 11.25 where εὐλογέω occurs together with ἁπλοῦς (cf. ἁπλότης in 2 Cor. 8.2; 9.11, 13), and in 11.26 where "the one who hoards" is contrasted with "the one who gives": εὐλογία δὲ εἰς κεφαλὴν τοῦ μεταδιδόντος ("but blessing be on the head of the one who gives"). χάρις words also occur throughout Proverbs (22 times), normally with the sense "favor" in contexts where righteousness and ungodliness are contrasted. Themes which recur both in Proverbs (particularly in Prov. 11, 22, 28) and in 2 Cor. 8-9 include "righteousness" and "poverty and wealth".

[33] "To reach a decision beforehand"; BDAG, s.v. προαιρέω.

[34] NRSV: "be ungrudging".

Besides the lexical connection with λύπη/λυπέω in Deut. 15.10 and 2 Cor. 9.7 there is also correspondence between the contexts of these two passages. Prior to being led into the promised land, the Israelites were being instructed to care for the poor and needy (ὁ πένης καὶ ὁ ἐπιδεομένος; Deut. 15.11) among their brethren. They were told that if they were obedient, God would truly bless them (εὐλογῶν εὐλογήσει σε) – sufficiently that they would be able to bless many nations from their own abundance (15.4-6). As a result of this blessing, there would be no poor among them (15.4), but if in the cities that God was giving them they did encounter any poor and needy among their brethren, they were to give generously according to the person's need (15.8, 10). The second half of verse 10 is somewhat vague when it says, "on account of this thing, the LORD your God will bless you".[35] Would God bless them *in order that* they could give to the poor, or *as a result of* their giving? That is, was God's blessing here conditional, or an act of grace?[36] Verse 4 had already suggested that the poor would be provided for through the abundance of the Israelites' blessing from God. In Deuteronomy 28, however, blessings are very much conditioned upon obedience. Perhaps both ideas are valid. On the one hand God would bless them abundantly and sustain them and as a result there would be no poor among them. If they encountered any needy person, however, there would always be sufficient supply from which to provide for his or her needs. This suggests community sharing of supplies, or at least a system in which individuals would be expected voluntarily to share from their own abundance. Thus, from God's abundant blessing, they could care for the needy among them. But then, as they did share their resources, God would further bless them: εὐλογήσει σε κύριος ὁ θεός σου ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔργοις καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν οὗ ἂν ἐπιβάλῃς τὴν χεῖρά σου (15.10). In this way obedience both follows blessing and results in further blessing. Paul also conveys this idea in 2 Corinthians 9; since believers have received grace from God (8.1, 7), they are to share from their abundance with others who are in need (8.13-14). As they share generously, God further blesses them with more grace (9.8).

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[35] Greek: ὅτι διὰ τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτο; Heb. כִּי בִּגְלַל הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה; Both διά with the accusative and בִּגְלַל can be translated "on account of", which could be interpreted either as following from what immediately precedes, or as the basis for the preceding phrase.

[36] Harris, 636, n. 26, understands generous giving in Deut. 15.10 as the condition for the Lord's blessing: "Give generously. . .for because of this the LORD your God will bless you . . . ." But then he later speaks of the "twofold biblical principle": "'Bless others, because you have been blessed by God' (cf. Deut. 15.14); 'bless others, in order to be blessed by God'"; Harris, 637, n. 30.

First Chronicles 29 also provides some interesting parallels with 2 Corinthians 9. As the end of the life of King David approaches, he has set the course for the building of the temple and charges his son Solomon with its completion. David declares how much of his own wealth he has contributed toward the precious materials needed for the temple's construction. He challenges the Israelites also to give from their own possessions, and all of the leaders of Israel respond by giving abundantly and "willingly" (προθυμέομαι):[37] "And the people rejoiced because of their willingness (ὑπὲρ τοῦ προθυμηθῆναι), for they offered willingly to the Lord with a full heart; and king David rejoiced greatly" (v. 9). As a result, David blesses (εὐλογέω) the Lord and instructs all the people to bless him as well (29.10, 20). In his blessing, David declares that all πλοῦτος comes from God, and that all things belong to him. He further declares to God, "all things are yours, and of your own we have given to you" (σὰ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἐκ τῶν σῶν δεδώκαμέν σοι; 29.14). As a result, speaking on behalf of the people, David says to the Lord, "We give thanks to you" (v. 13).[38] Some of the terminology of v. 17 is particularly interesting, as it also occurs in 2 Corinthians 8-9:

> καὶ ἔγνων κύριε ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ ἐτάζων καρδίας καὶ δικαιοσύνην ἀγαπᾷς ἐν ἁπλότητι καρδίας προεθυμήθην πάντα ταῦτα καὶ νῦν τὸν λαόν σου τὸν εὑρεθέντα ὧδε εἶδον ἐν εὐφροσύνῃ προθυμηθέντα σοι (1 Chr. 29.17).

In view of the joyful and willing attitude toward giving in 1 Chronicles 29 we are not surprised to find here such a concentration of terms that also occur in 2 Corinthians 8-9. David claims to have contributed "with a sincere heart" (ἐν ἁπλότητι[39] καρδίας) and "willingly" (προεθυμήθην) and says that the Israelites also, with joy, gave "willingly" (προθυμηθέντα).[40] David also declares that God loves righteousness (δικαιοσύνην ἀγαπᾷς – both of which are significant terms in 2 Cor. 9.7, 9) and thereby characterizes his own heart attitude in giving willingly, along with the attitude of the people, as an act of righteousness which is pleasing to God. Indeed, *God loves a cheerful giver!*

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[37] The cognate προθυμία occurs four times in 2 Cor. 8-9: 8.11, 12, 19; 9.2. προθυμ- words appear in only five additional texts in the NT. Of the twenty-four occurrences of προθυμ- words in the LXX, seven occur in 1 Chronicles 29: 29.5, 6, 9(2x), 14, 17(2x).

[38] Here the common verb for giving thanks in the LXX, ἐξομολογέω, is used.

[39] Cf. 2 Cor. 8.2; 9.11, 13. We have seen that ἁπλοτ- words occur only six times in the LXX (once here in 1 Chr. 29) and eight times in the NT (three times in 2 Cor. 8-9).

[40] See comment in note 37 above.

Thus, concern for the attitude of the giver is expressed both in Deuteronomy 15 and 1 Chronicles 29. In Deuteronomy 15, the Israelites are warned not to give to the needy from grief (or grudgingly), but to trust in the blessing of the Lord. The Israelites were likewise to give in faith, believing that God's blessing would sustain them. Whether it pertained to their present possessions or their future provision, they were not to be concerned because "the Lord would surely bless them in the Land which he was giving them" (15.4), and he would bless them "in all their undertakings" (15.10). So there was no reason for them to grieve as they gave, for God would further bless them. God promised to bless *them* and through the blessing they received, *others* would be blessed as the Israelites gave to help the poor among them and as they lent to other nations (v. 6).[41] They were only to be obedient and trust God. The conditional aspect of the blessing meant that if they were not obedient, the blessings would stop, but since they themselves would become a channel for the blessing, this would have far reaching implications. For their own sake as well as for the sake of other nations, they were to be obedient and to share the blessing – and to do so ungrudgingly.

In 1 Chronicles 29 David expresses fear for the hearts and attitudes of the people. Having just declared his own sincere heart and willingness to contribute, he prays to God, "Preserve this desire forever in the thoughts of the hearts of your people, and direct their hearts to you" (1 Chr. 29.18). David feared that the hearts of the people might become corrupt, and the sincerity from which they gave willingly might be lost, and so he prays to God to preserve that attitude in them. David had been blessed with an abundance, and he acknowledged God as the source of this blessing (vv. 12, 14). David and the people rejoiced in their own attitude of willingness to give from a "whole heart" (v. 9), and so gave thanks to God (v. 13), and blessed him and worshipped him (v. 20). In this case the blessings which originated with God returned also to him, both in the form of the offerings for the temple and in the thanksgiving and worship directed toward him. Certainly if the attitude which had produced the willingness to give and the resultant gifts was lost, so too would be the accompanying thanksgiving and praise to God.

6.2.2.2. Willing giving in 2 Cor. 9.7

Having diverged slightly, I now return to the discussion of 2 Cor. 9.7 and the phrase μὴ ἐκ λύπης ἢ ἐξ ἀνάγκης. The "grief" associated with their giving may reflect

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[41] Cf. 2 Cor. 1.3-7.

a grudging spirit and perhaps relate to the attitude of πλεονεξία expressed in verse 5 above.[42] Thus, if Paul succeeded in persuading them to give, they were not to give grudgingly (9.5). They were also not to feel coerced into giving ἐξ ἀνάγκης, "out of necessity" (9.7). It may be that these two phrases are simply intended to emphasize one and the same point: "giving under compulsion is regretful giving".[43] If we accept ἐκ λύπης as an echo of Deut. 15.10 as argued above, then Paul may have in mind that "regretful giving" can hinder the blessing, that is, it can hinder the spread of God's grace through the gift. As David was concerned that the Israelites' attitude of willingness in contributing toward the building of the temple from a sincere heart could be lost, so too Paul is concerned that the Corinthians' original attitude of sincere generosity toward the collection, which had been prompted by the grace of God, may have diminished. He is cautious not to coerce the Corinthians to give simply to fulfill their promise, which would mean compelling them to do so and result in regretful giving. This too would hinder the cycle of grace, of God's blessing, which was to pass on through the Corinthians to the saints in Jerusalem.

Continuing in verse 7, Paul adds a quotation from Prov. 22.8, an addition that appears in the Septuagint: "God loves a cheerful giver". He quotes the phrase with slight variation:

Prov. 22.8a [LXX]	ἄνδρα ἱλαρὸν καὶ δότην εὐλογεῖ ὁ θεός
2 Cor. 9.7	ἱλαρὸν γὰρ δότην ἀγαπᾷ ὁ θεός

The omission of ἀνήρ by Paul is not significant, but the change of verb from εὐλογέω to ἀγαπάω is notable since Paul has already made repeated use of the noun εὐλογία (9.5, 6). I have discussed the fact that in verse 6 he refers twice to the Corinthians' collection as a εὐλογία and in verse 7 he speaks of sowing abundantly as ἐπ' εὐλογίαις. It would have been quite easy for Paul to develop further the theme of "blessing" here, if he had desired to do so. He could have stressed that blessing from God follows from enthusiastic giving. But apparently that is not his point for he has chosen to replace the verb εὐλογέω with ἀγαπάω. The question remains as to what

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[42] Martin, 289.

[43] Thrall, 576. See also Plummer, 259. Harris, 635, however, points out the following difference between ἐκ λύπης and ἐξ ἀνάγκης: the former refers to "inward sorrow at losing what is given", while the latter, "outward compulsion that forces one to give". The difference is therefore between "giving that is reluctant and giving that is pressured".

significance there is in the use of ἀγαπάω. The change could be due to Paul quoting from memory[44] or from him using a Greek text different from the Septuagint, either of which is reasonably possible. The idea of cheerful giving is also found in Sir. 35.8(11)[45] and *Lev. Rab.* 34.9(131b).[46] By saying that God loves a cheerful giver, could Paul be suggesting that God's love toward man is conditioned upon such cheerful giving? Some say, "It is doubtful whether *loves* here means any more than 'approves' or 'values'",[47] and others, "whilst [Paul] certainly regards the love of God as prior in a fundamental sense to human attitudes and activities, this need not exclude the possibility that it could be seen also as a response on particular occasions to such activities or attitudes".[48] Could it be said that God rewards such cheerful giving? We have seen from Deuteronomy 15 that God blesses the obedient who give to the poor. In 2 Cor. 9.6, Paul states that abundant sowing results in abundant reaping, and the terminology suggests that blessings are also in mind here. Sir. 25.9-10(12-13) says that God will repay sevenfold those who give generously to him. If Paul intended a *reward* of blessing for those who give generously he could have easily expressed it by quoting Prov. 22.8[a] directly with εὐλογέω instead of ἀγαπάω. Certainly God's love leading to salvation is not contingent upon one's attitude toward his philanthropic practices. In this passage where Paul discusses the grace of God at work in these believing communities, it is God's grace that instills the attitude of generous giving. This grace is channeled through the giver, and produces blessings both for the giver and the receiver. A wrong attitude in giving may hinder the blessing – the grace – from passing to the receiver and for this reason, God is delighted when giving is conducted with a cheerful, generous attitude. It is evidence to God that his grace is both being experienced in the giver, and being expressed toward or passed on to the recipient through the act of "cheerful" giving. Consequently, cheerful giving is both a demonstration of the presence of the grace of God and a means for conveying it to others. Thus, God delights in the cheerful giver who serves as a channel for his grace.

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[44] Plummer, 259.

[45] "With every gift show a cheerful face" (NRSV), Sir. 35.11 (ἐν πάσῃ δόσει ἱλάρωσον τὸ πρόσωπόν, 35.8[LXX]).

[46] "When a man gives alms he should do it with a joyful heart", cited from Barrett, 236.

[47] Furnish, 441.

[48] Thrall, 577.

If Paul is indeed quoting from Prov. 22.8(LXX), it may seem peculiar that he would knowingly change the verb from the original. As he wrote to the Corinthians with the hopes that their initial zeal for the collection would be rekindled, Paul's mind no doubt was full of thoughts of gifts and generous giving, particularly those examples we have already seen from the scriptures. Many ideas and theological concepts came together in what he wanted to express to the Corinthians. Their gift would be a channel of God's grace and so would result in blessings both for the giver and the recipient. It was an act of obedience and a natural expression of Christian charity. It was also an act of righteousness, a demonstration of the presence of the love of God at work in the Corinthian community. Those who had become the δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (2 Cor. 5.21) were to live out that righteousness. This act of sincere, generous, cheerful giving was thus a righteous act. In David's words in his prayer of blessing in 1 Chr. 29.17 he says, "I know, Lord, that you love righteousness (δικαιοσύνην ἀγαπᾷς)". We have already seen that 1 Chronicles 29 may well have also been in Paul's mind as he wrote to the Corinthians and so when he says "God loves a cheerful giver", he may have been combining the thoughts of Prov. 22.8[a] and these words from 1 Chr. 29.17 to express that God *loves* a cheerful giver – he delights in him – because a cheerful giver is a channel for God's grace, that grace which will ultimately return to him (God) in the form of thanksgiving and praise.

6.2.3. The Grace of God and Human Effort – 9.8-10

I will consider the text of each of these three verses independently before drawing general conclusions below.

6.2.3.1. God supplies sufficient grace – 9.8

Paul next reminds the Corinthians in 9.8 of the availability and sufficiency of God's grace: δυνατεῖ δὲ ὁ θεὸς πᾶσαν χάριν περισσεῦσαι εἰς ὑμᾶς, ἵνα ἐν παντὶ πάντοτε πᾶσαν αὐτάρκειαν ἔχοντες περισσεύητε εἰς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθόν. This verse is saturated with "πᾶς-words": "all grace" (πᾶσα χάρις), "in everything" (ἐν παντί), "always" (πάντοτε), "having all self-sufficiency" (πᾶσα αὐτάρκεια), "every good work" (πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθόν), which superlatively emphasize the all-encompassing nature of the grace of God. The verse likewise speaks of abundance; God's grace is able to abound (περισσεύω) to the Corinthians so that they might themselves abound (again, περισσεύω) in every good work. The first verb, δυνατέω, (God "is able") occurs only three times in the New Testament, all in Paul's letters, and in each case with God as the

subject.[49] The use of this verb here implies a certain element of conditionality. God is able to act, but it is possible that he might not.[50] Although δυνατέω might be used as a synonym for δύναμαι, "to be effective, to be able",[51] Paul clearly uses the two differently. As noted above, he uses δυνατέω only with God as the subject, while he never has God as the subject of δύναμαι. In Chapter 4, I discussed the use of χάρις to convey "power"; here, the use of δυνατέω clearly suggests God as the powerful source of grace.[52] Some commentators even translate the phrase, "God has the power . . . ."[53]

The inner working of the grace of God makes it difficult to determine who the actual agent is performing "good deeds" described by Paul, particularly in 2 Cor. 8.1-5 and 9.7-8. In 8.1-5, God's grace is at work in the Macedonians, yet it is the Macedonians themselves who begged for the privilege to make a contribution. In this present verse (9.8), the grace that God gives enables the recipients to abound in good works, but where is the line drawn between God's empowering grace and the actions of those performing the "good works"? Perhaps Paul is deliberately evasive, since for him there is no line of demarcation between where God's grace works in the believer and the initiative of the believer himself. For Paul, the grace of God and the efforts of man are not mutually exclusive. For this reason he says in Phil. 2.12-13, ". . . work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for God is the one who works in you, both desiring and working for his good pleasure". Similarly, as we have seen in his own life, Paul had difficulty distinguishing his own efforts from the working of God within him: "I labored . . . yet not I, but the grace of God with me" (1 Cor. 15.10). So it should not be surprising to find Paul similarly ambiguous in these passages in 2 Corinthians 8-9.

If the outworking of God's grace is so intertwined with the deeds of man, is it even possible to suggest that there might be some condition to be met in order for God's grace to abound in 9.8? Thrall argues that when Paul says, "God is able to abound unto you πᾶσα χάρις ('all grace')", he means grace "in a comprehensive sense" (i.e. it includes not just the resources to give, but also the "cheerful attitude" of the giver). "God is able most abundantly to bestow both the spiritual quality of cheerful generosity

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[49] δυνατέω also occurs in Rom. 14.4 and 2 Cor. 13.3.

[50] See below for more on the conditional aspect implied here.

[51] BDAG, s.v. δύναμαι.

[52] A textual variant has δυνατὸς δὲ ὁ θεός, which implies more that he will act than that his action is conditional, but the textual evidence is weightier in favor of the reading δυνατεῖ δὲ ὁ θεός.

[53] Furnish, 441; Harris, 637.

and the practical resources for its implementation, so that the individual Corinthian may truly fulfill the role of the ἱλαρὸς δότης"[54] (cf. 9.7). Certainly, God through his grace is able to impart to believers a generous attitude toward giving. This is evident in the case of the Macedonians (8.1-5). The situation with the Corinthians, however, is somewhat different. Paul seems to be addressing a reluctance on their part to give, or at least to give the same amount they had initially promised. Surely God can bestow the attitude of "cheerful generosity", but will he do so when there is already a reluctance on the part of the potential giver? The Macedonians gave generously despite their poverty and affliction; they did not give generously despite their reluctance to give (as far as we know). God *is* powerful and he *is* able to abound "all grace", but is it not more likely that he will do so when the heart is first willing? Perhaps this is the condition that must be met; the believer's heart must be willing to allow God's grace to work in him. In this sense, Harris seems to be correct in saying that if the "principles of giving" of 9.6b-7 are met, the giver will receive the blessings of 9.8.[55] In other words, God is able and will abound *more* grace as one gives generously, unreservedly and with a cheerful attitude, thereby demonstrating the grace already received from God. As believers allow God's grace to work in them, he continues abundantly to impart it.

We have seen that there are a number of terms which are common between Rom. 5.15, 17 and 2 Cor. 8-9. In Rom. 5.17 it is those who "receive" the abundance of grace (ἡ περισσεία τῆς χάριτος) who actually experience the gift (ἡ δωρεά). The gift of Christ's death on the cross is given (i.e. available) to all mankind, but only those who accept it actually receive ἡ δωρεὰ τῆς δικαιοσύνης. Salvation is not universal; God has given the gift of his Son, but only those who *receive* the gift experience the abundance of grace. We saw above that Thrall seems to suggest that the Corinthians *will* receive God's abundant grace so as to become "cheerful givers". I would suggest that while God *is able* to work in this way, Paul's underlying message is that the Corinthians must first be willing for this to happen.

Looking ahead, we may find a key in 2 Cor. 9.13 to the conditional nature of God's grace.[56] Paul says that once the Corinthians have offered their collection gift,

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[54] Thrall, 578.

[55] Harris says that χάρις is used in 9.8 with the connotation of εὐλογία "so that πᾶσαν χάριν means 'every kind of blessing' or 'every benefit'"; Harris, 637. Furnish likewise translates πᾶσαν χάριν here "every benefit"; Furnish, 441.

[56] This will be explored in detail in §8.2.2 below.

God will be glorified in their *obedience* to their gospel confession. Perhaps it is obedience that opens the door for God's grace. Paul says of the Macedonians that they "first gave themselves to the Lord" (8.5). Was this a condition that enabled the grace of God to work effectively in them? Perhaps by giving themselves to God (and to Paul; 8.5), they were submitting to his authority (and to Paul's, or perhaps, to God's authority through Paul) and thus pledging their obedience to him. Just as the gift of righteousness, provided through God's grace, was conditioned on the acceptance of Christ's death on the cross, so too it would seem that the effective empowerment of God's grace is conditioned on the believer "giving himself to the Lord".[57] This is what Paul was trying to persuade the Corinthians to do. His tactic was not to persuade them to give to the collection per se, but to persuade them to give themselves entirely to the Lord – in obedience and with a willing spirit – so that the grace of God might abound in them.

In the first of many uses of πᾶς ("all") in this verse, Paul says that God is able to abound πᾶσα χάρις ("all grace"). The repetition of πᾶς and πᾶς-words along with the two uses of περισσεύω (besides providing a nice alliteration in the Greek) emphasizes abundance in connection with χάρις. Paul uses overstatement to stress that God is not limited in the grace he can provide, and since he has an unlimited supply to offer, he is able to grant a sufficient amount, whatever the need may be. The verb περισσεύω is used both transitively and intransitively in the New Testament and in the first occurrence in 9.8, the direct object πᾶσαν χάριν makes clear that this usage is transitive: δυνατεῖ δὲ ὁ θεὸς πᾶσαν χάριν περισσεῦσαι εἰς ὑμᾶς ("God is able to abound all grace unto you"). The situation regarding the second occurrence, however, is less obvious. Initially it seems to be intransitive, "that you may abound in every good work". If this sense is accepted, I would suggest the addition of the implied phrase ἐν πάσῃ χάριτι: "that you may abound [in all grace] for every good work". Once God's grace has abounded to these believers, it follows that they abound in that grace, which provides the necessary resources for them to perform "every good work". On the other hand, it is also possible to interpret περισσεύητε transitively, with the addition of a direct object, πᾶσαν χάριν: "that you may abound [all grace] unto/in every good

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[57] The believer's willingness or cooperation with God is also evidenced in Paul's words to the Corinthians in 2 Cor. 5.19-20. Although "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" (v. 19), Paul commanded the Corinthians to "be reconciled to God" (v. 20). The Corinthians Paul was addressing could not of their own ability reconcile themselves to God, yet they could accept God's grace through the death of Christ, thus allowing his reconciliation to be effective for them.

work". Having received "all grace" from God, believers themselves become channels of that grace in every good work they perform. In the case of the collection, having received sufficient grace to make a generous contribution, when the donors give, they not only enable the recipients to receive a material gift, but they also enable them to be recipients of God's grace through the gift. Against this view it could be argued that, although the terms χάρις and περισσεύω/περισσεία often go hand in hand in Paul, a human agent is nowhere else expressed as the subject of περισσεύω when it is used transitively. These options are illustrated in Figure 6.1. In any case, Paul has not specified whether he had in mind a transitive or intransitive interpretation, and it may very well be that he intentionally left it ambiguous to allow for both. In either case, grace abounds from God, to believers, enabling them to perform "good deeds" and in so doing pass on grace to others.[58]

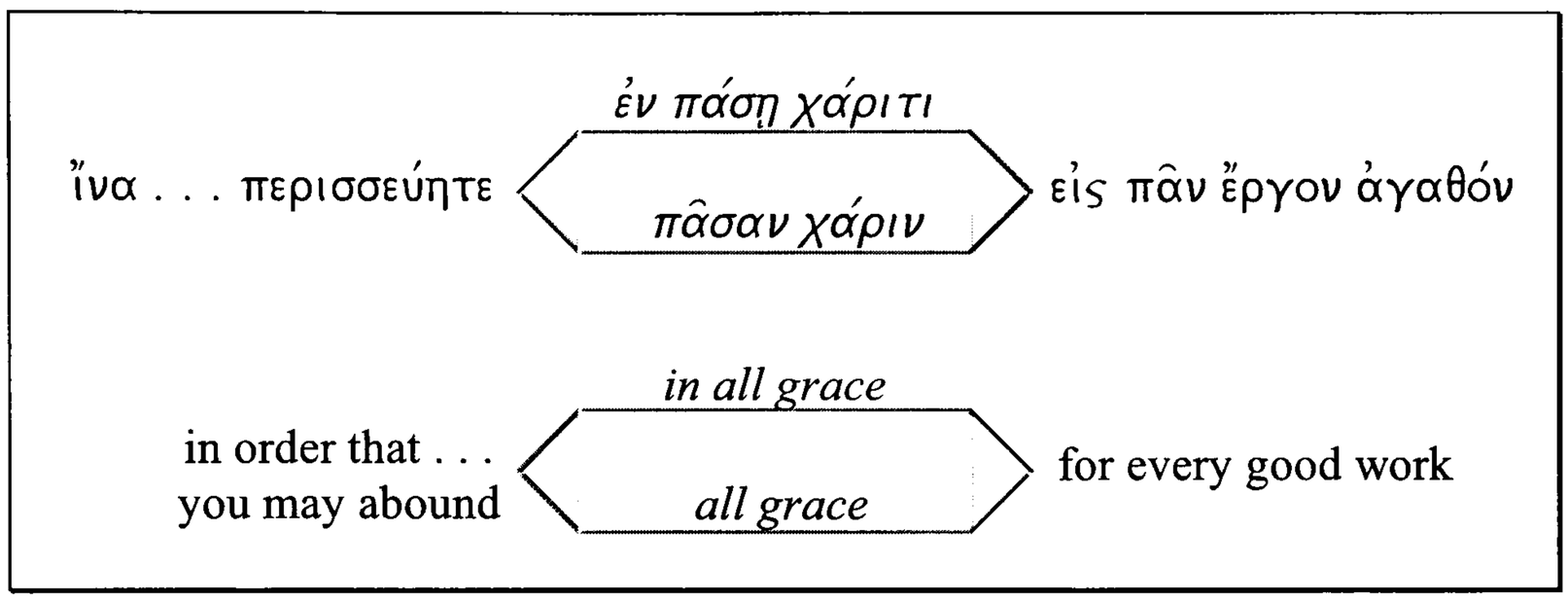

Figure 6.1. Transitive/Intransitive Variations of περισσεύω in 2 Cor. 9.8

In conjunction with the above discussion regarding χάρις and περισσεύω, I want to return briefly to reconsider 2 Cor. 8.7, where Paul writes, Ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ἐν παντὶ περισσεύετε . . . ἵνα καὶ ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ χάριτι περισσεύητε.[59] Paul recognizes that through the grace of God the Corinthians had abounded, as he puts it, "in all things" (cf. 1 Cor. 1.4-7), especially in the spiritual gifts he lists: faith, speech and knowledge. They "abounded" in these things because they had allowed God's grace to work accordingly in them; they had chosen to receive the grace necessary for the empowerment of their spiritual gifts. Now Paul wants them also to "abound in this grace", that is, he wants them to be willing to allow the grace of God to work effectively

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[58] It seems to me that Harris, 637, in stressing the "blessing" aspect of χάρις in 2 Cor. 8.9 (see note 55 above), places too much emphasis on χάρις blessing the recipient and not enough on χάρις supplying the recipient with that which is needed to pass on grace to others. Although the text does say that αὐτάρκεια will result, the ultimate goal is to abound εἰς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθόν.

[59] See also the previous discussion of 8.7 in §5.4.2.1.

in them in the area of giving. The limitation is not God's grace ("he *is able* to abound all grace unto you"), but lies with the Corinthians. By their lack of obedience, they limit the working of God's grace in them. God is able; they must be willing.

One result of God's grace abounding to the Corinthians is that they will have πᾶσα αὐτάρκεια ("all self-sufficiency"). The word αὐτάρκεια was used in Stoic philosophy of someone becoming self-sufficient to the point that he had need of no one else.[60] In the New Testament, the word occurs only twice, in the present verse, and in 1 Tim 6.6, although the cognate αὐτάρκης occurs in Phil. 4.11. Gerhard Kittel points out the difference between New Testament and Stoic usage of the term: in Stoic usage one's self-sufficiency enables him to isolate himself from society, since he has need of no one else, while in Paul, particularly here in 2 Cor. 9.8, αὐτάρκεια enables the believer not only to care for his or her own needs, but also to have sufficient resources to help meet the needs of others.[61] Paul demonstrates the principle in Phil. 4.11-13. In verse 11 he says that he has learned to be "content" (αὐτάρκης) in all things. Whether he is hungry or full, whether he has an abundance or is suffering need, he has learned to be "self-sufficient": πάντα ἰσχύω ἐν τῷ ἐνδυναμοῦντί με (4.13).[62] Paul is content/self-sufficient because he is strengthened by God, that is, God's grace is sufficient for him (cf. 2 Cor. 12.9). And so, in 2 Cor. 9.8 Paul writes that when God's grace abounds unto the Corinthians, they too will be self-sufficient – but only to the degree that God abounds his grace unto them. In reality, through God's grace, what they will experience is "God-sufficiency", that this sufficiency may abound to others who are also in need.

6.2.3.2. Giving to the poor – 9.9

Moving on to verse 9, we encounter the only explicit Old Testament reference in chapter 9, which comes from Ps. 111.9 (LXX):[63]

> καθὼς γέγραπται·
> ἐσκόρπισεν, ἔδωκεν τοῖς πένησιν,
> ἡ δικαιοσύνη αὐτοῦ μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα (2 Cor. 9.9).

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[60] Gerhard Kittel, "αὐτάρκεια", *TDNT* 1:466.

[61] See Kittel, *TDNT* 1:467.

[62] There does not seem to be any reason to accept the variant reading (τῷ ἐνδυναμοῦντί με Χριστῷ) which specifies Christ as the one who strengths Paul. If this had been the original reading, certainly it would not have been later omitted.

[63] Ps. 111 in the LXX corresponds to Ps. 112 in the English (and Hebrew) versions. In my discussion, when referencing passages which differ in this manner, I will refer to the LXX reference and add the corresponding English reference in brackets: Ps. 111(112).

The only difference between Paul's citation in 2 Cor. 9.9 and Ps. 111(112).9 is Paul's truncated form of "forever"; where the psalm has εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος Paul has simply written εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

Paul introduces this quote using the familiar introductory formula, καθὼς γέγραπται, also used in 8.15. This emphasizes the fact that he is using scripture to support his argument, as opposed to simply making an allusion. But what does he intend with this reference? Some find the inclusion of the psalm puzzling, as Furnish expresses, "It is not altogether clear how Paul himself has understood the text or what he intends by quoting it here".[64] Key questions regarding the passage are clearly delineated by Thrall[65]: (1) Who is the subject of ἐσκόρπισεν ("he scattered") and ἔδωκεν ("he gave")? (2) What is the meaning of δικαιοσύνη? and (3) What is meant by saying that this δικαιοσύνη "abides forever"?

Indeed, the answers to these questions are not immediately obvious. From a casual reading of 2 Cor. 9.8-10, one might conclude that the subject of the verbs in verse 9 ("he scattered", "he gave") is God; God is the subject of the main clause in verse 8 where he abounds "all grace", and he is the implied subject in verse 10 as the one who "supplies seed to the sower and bread for food".[66] However, if Paul expected that his readers were familiar with Ps. 111(112), then he might have anticipated they would realize that it is not God but "the pious man"[67] who "scatters seed" and "gives to the poor" in the psalm. In this case Paul might have expected them to read 2 Cor. 8.9 in the same way, thus making application to themselves: the pious man [*viz.* the Corinthians] scatters and gives to the poor [i.e. they contribute toward the collection] and it is his righteousness that abides forever [however "his righteousness" might be interpreted; see below].

It is worth noting that there are close parallels between Psalm 111(112) and the previous psalm, where God *is* the subject.[68] The phrase ἡ δικαιοσύνη αὐτοῦ μένει εἰς

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[64] Furnish, 448.

[65] Thrall, 580.

[66] The subject shifts to second person plural in the subordinate clause of v. 8 but if I were basing my argument primarily on the flow of the grammar, it would seem more natural for the third person singular of v. 9 to agree with God as subject in vv. 8 and 10.

[67] Literally, ἀνὴρ ὁ φοβούμενος τὸν κύριον (Ps. 111.1(112.1)).

[68] Allen in his commentary distinguishes these psalms by entitling them "God at Work" (Ps. 110(111)) and "Godliness at Work" (Ps. 111(112)). See Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, WBC 21 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), 88, 93.

τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος appears in both psalms in verse 3, and also in verse 9 of Psalm 111(112), the passage quoted by Paul. In Psalm 110(111), it is God's righteousness that "abides forever" (v. 3), while in Psalm 111(112) it is the righteousness of the pious man that abides forever (vv. 3, 9).[69] Many attempts have been made to resolve the issue of both God and man possessing a "righteousness that abides forever" in these two psalms. Mitchell Dahood avoids the problem by translating צדקה not as "righteousness" but as "generosity" in all three occurrences.[70] Thus, whether referring to God or to the righteous man, it is no problem to say, "His generosity abides forever". Where Leslie Allen translates in 110(111).3 "his loyalty continues for ever",[71] in 111(112).3, 9 he has "his righteousness continues for ever".[72] C. A. Briggs says the term as applied to man is used "in the sense of prosperity" (in both Psalm 111(112) occurrences).[73] Of Paul's use in 2 Cor. 9.9, Briggs says it "prepares the way for the later usage, where 'righteousness' is a syn. of almsgiving".[74]

Explanations are just as varied from New Testament commentators with regard to the subject of the verbs in 2 Cor. 9.9.[75] On the one hand, as mentioned above, the context could suggest that God is the subject of verse 9. On the other hand, perhaps the Corinthians are in view, representing "the pious man" of the original psalm. Paul's message is to the Corinthians as (potential) contributors toward the needs of the poor in Jerusalem. Verse 9 speaks of giving to the poor, which is suggestively a "righteous deed". Paul emphasizes that God is the one who makes abundant giving possible through abundant grace. We read in verse 8, "[God] is able to make all grace abound . . . εἰς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθόν", and in verse 10, "[God] will supply and multiply seed for your sowing". In this way, verse 9 offers the example of the ἔργον ἀγαθόν – giving to the poor – while verses 8 and 10 assure the Corinthians that God will provide the

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[69] One might consider whether Paul simply confused the two psalms, but this is rather unlikely.

[70] Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms III: 101-150* (New York: Doubleday, 1970), 126.

[71] Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, 88. He then comments, "Heb. צדקה, righteousness here has the connotation of faithfulness to the covenant relationship whereby he comes to Israel's help"; Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, 89.

[72] Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, 94, where he says that צדקה for the "righteous" man "refers to behavior consistent with the covenant".

[73] Charles Augustus Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms, Vol. II* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1907), 385-86.

[74] Briggs, *Psalms 101-150*, 387.

[75] See Furnish, 448-49, and Thrall, 580-82, for the best discussions of the various views.

necessary resources. Following this reasoning the "pious man" of Psalm 111(112) would be the understood subject with a view to the Corinthians as (potential) contributors toward the collection. Thrall has a point when she says that this view "both fits the context and is a more natural use of the verse from the psalm, where the subject is the pious man".[76]

It is somewhat more difficult to reach a conclusion regarding the phrase "his righteousness abides forever". Since verse 10 makes specific mention of "your [the Corinthians'] righteousness", it would seem that Paul is making a connection between the righteousness of this verse and that mentioned in verse 9:[77] as the righteousness of the "pious man" who gives to the poor abides forever (whatever "forever" means here), so too God will increase the harvest of the righteousness of the Corinthians as they give. This would answer the question of *whose* righteousness and would suggest that by "righteousness" Paul means the ἔργα ἀγαθά of the Corinthians in contributing toward the collection. Just as "bountiful" sowing results in "bountiful" reaping (v. 6), God will ensure the "bountiful" harvest of the Corinthians' ἔργα ἀγαθά (v. 10).[78] Before reaching a conclusion on this question, I will first discuss verse 10.

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[76] Thrall, 582.

[77] Thrall, 583.

[78] There is one other possibility regarding the phrase "His righteousness abides forever", which has seemingly not been considered. Is it not possible that in the two psalms the phrase is used as a refrain, similar to the repeated refrain "And his lovingkindness endures forever" in Ps. 136? (See also Ps. 100.5; 106.1; 107.1; 118.1, 2, 3, 4, 29.) In Ps. 111.3 the psalmist writes, "Splendid and majestic is his [God's] work, his [God's] righteousness endures forever". Then in 112.3, "Wealth and riches are in his [the pious man's] house, his righteousness endures forever". Could the phrase "his righteousness abides forever" reflect back, to 111.3 as a refrain of praise to God, the one who has made the pious man's wealth and riches possible? In the same way 112.9, which says, "He has given freely to the poor, His righteousness abides forever", could then be understood, "since the pious man has been able to give freely to the poor, let there be praise to the God who has made it possible, whose righteousness abides forever". (In this case the following line in the psalm, "His horn will be exalted in honor" would be taken as the first line in the next strophe.) If Paul then had this same understanding of Pss. 111-112, he could have intended that the phrase likewise be read as a refrain in 2 Cor. 9.9 such that "His righteousness abides forever" would be a refrain of praise for the God who enables the pious man to give freely to the poor and, by analogy, by the provision of his grace enables the Corinthians to give abundantly to the saints in Jerusalem.

6.2.3.3. The ultimate source / The rich harvest – 9.10

With an allusion to Isa. 55.10 in the phrase ὁ δὲ ἐπιχορηγῶν σπόρον τῷ σπείροντι καὶ ἄρτον εἰς βρῶσιν, Paul continues the agricultural motif in 2 Cor. 9.10. In the Isaiah passage it is the rain and snow that serve as the subject, coming down from heaven and providing σπέρμα τῷ σπείροντι καὶ ἄρτος εἰς βρῶσιν.[79] There is a chain of activity involved here: the rain does not produce the seed; rather it waters the earth, which in turn produces the crops, from which are harvested "seed for sowing" and for making "bread for food". The writer portrays this as a divinely intentional process, and following the analogy, God sends forth his word to accomplish precisely what he desires (55.11). In 2 Cor. 9.10 God is the implied subject – the one who "supplies seed to the sower and bread for food",[80] who will also "supply and multiply your seed for sowing". This too involves a chain of activity. God's initiative lies behind the chain of events leading from rainfall to harvest, so too his grace will be at work, not only instilling in them the desire to give, but also providing the resources for the Corinthians to give, and then multiplying their harvest. As surely as God sends forth his word to accomplish what he desires, as surely as he provides the means for the production of food, he will provide seed for the Corinthians to sow – the necessary resources for them to give abundantly. In fact, he will not only provide the resources necessary for them to give, he will also αὐξήσει τὰ γενήματα τῆς δικαιοσύνης ὑμῶν. This last phrase appears to be an allusion to Hos. 10.12, which reads, ἐκζητήσατε τὸν κύριον ἕως τοῦ ἐλθεῖν γενήματα δικαιοσύνης ὑμῖν ("Seek the Lord until the harvest of his righteousness comes upon you"). Paul's use of γένημα ("harvest") in the plural is explained by the fact that it is also in the plural in the Hosea passage. The agricultural motif is common to both of these passages. In Hosea 10, Israel is described as a "lush vine" (10.1), which has become self-serving, and so is told to change its ways:[81] "Sow to yourselves for righteousness (εἰς δικαιοσύνην), gather for the fruit of life; enlighten yourselves with the light of knowledge; seek the Lord until the harvest of his righteousness (γενήματα δικαιοσύνης) comes upon you" (10.12).

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[79] Paul uses this phrase verbatim, except that he substitutes σπόρος for σπέρμα in the Isaiah passage.

[80] Of course God is ultimately the source in Isa. 55.10 as well.

[81] Might this even be a subtle allusion to the Corinthians? They already "abounded in everything" (8.7), i.e. they had already experienced God's grace through the manifestation of their spiritual gifts, but they had become self-centered and were only allowing his grace to be manifest for their own good, and not the good of others.

This is an appropriate allusion for Paul; in Hosea's day, the Israelites were to repent in anticipation of the day that God's righteousness as a harvest would come upon them. Paul addresses the Corinthians, who have already received the gift of God's righteousness, and now may expect to see a fruitful harvest through them.[82]

6.2.3.4. Summary: The grace of God and human effort – 9.8-10

I want to suggest that when Paul quotes Ps. 111(112).9 in 2 Cor. 9.9, he would be hard pressed to have his argument depend on his Gentile readers knowing that the subject in the psalm is not God, but the pious man. Since the natural flow of the verses before and after suggest God as the subject in verse 9, it seems that in the first place, Paul would anticipate his readers reading the passage in this way. This does not exclude the other reading, to which I will return, for it would be just as wrong to assume that none of Paul's readers would make the connection in the quotation with the pious man, and at least wonder which Paul had in mind. It is possible that Paul has allowed for both readings in 8.9. Consequently, I propose the following interpretation:

In verse 8, Paul emphasizes the overabundance of God's grace which he imparts to believers. The result is that they have "all self-sufficiency" and in turn, they "abound" and are enabled to perform good Christian deeds. Grace is the enabling power, although as I have indicated, effort on behalf of the Corinthians is assumed as well. I have noted the overlap in terminology used in this passage and that of Romans 5, particularly verses 15-17, highlighted by the key words χάρις, περισσεύω/περισσεία and various δικ– terms. We have seen that in Romans 5, through the grace of God, the gift of righteousness is offered to those who will accept the grace of Christ, his death on the cross. This is God's grace active in leading people to salvation. In 2 Corinthians 8-9 we also see the grace of God as active; however, here it is addressed to believers, which means they have already experienced God's grace and have received his gift of righteousness. With the exception of 2 Cor. 8.9, the uses of χάρις in 2 Corinthians 8-9 do not appear to relate to salvation, they do not stress the gift of righteousness. This further confirms that when Paul writes in 9.8 of God abounding all grace to [the

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[82] Those supposing eschatological purposes for the collection suggest that the "harvest of righteousness" would be the conversion of unbelieving Jews as a result of the collection (see Nickle, *Collection*, 137, and Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 99-101). I am more inclined to agree with Furnish, 450, that "it is unlikely that Paul would allude so obliquely to so important a point when it is not made elsewhere in the same context".

Corinthians], he is not speaking soteriologically, but of that aspect of grace that provides empowerment for good deeds. We see clearly emphasized in this verse that Paul uses the same term, χάρις, to refer both to the grace of God in the gift of righteousness and to his grace which provides empowerment for believers.

It seems, then, that after having emphasized the abundance of God's grace that empowers believers in 9.8, he uses the following two verses to further illustrate the far-reaching scope of grace. Since the quote from Psalms in verse 9 is not to be taken literally, I would suggest that Paul is using it with God as the subject, to refer to God's grace by which he offers salvation: "He scattered, he gave to the poor, his righteousness abides forever". "Scattering" here would relate to the χάρισμα of Rom. 5.15. It is the free gift, "the grace of God and the gift in the grace of the one man Jesus Christ", which is offered to all men. This is similarly implied in 2 Cor. 8.9 in terms of "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" who, ἐπτώχευσεν πλούσιος ὤν, ἵνα ὑμεῖς τῇ ἐκείνου πτωχείᾳ πλουτήσητε. I have previously elaborated on Christ's "poverty", that it includes his death on the cross; Christ died for the Corinthians so that they might become "rich". In other words, they were *spiritually* poor, and through the grace of Christ (Rom. 5.15; 2 Cor. 8.9), God "scattered, he gave to the poor" so that they might become "rich". As the sower widely disperses his seed and yet not every kernel takes root, so too God offers salvation to every person. However, only those who acknowledge their need and accept God's grace will actually receive the gift – the gift of righteousness. And so it says, "he gave to the poor"; those who acknowledged their need accepted the gift of the "seed". They are the spiritually poor who acknowledge their need before God when he offers them the free gift through his grace, and they accept his grace, they receive the gift of righteousness. And so the phrase, "his righteousness abides forever", signifies the enduring aspect of God's offer of grace. The righteousness he offers is not achieved by self-effort, it is not man-made. It is God's righteousness, available through God's grace. It abides forever.

With this understanding, Paul uses this psalm to allude to the initial outpouring of God's grace upon those who become believers. In the following verse, 9.10, Paul uses further scriptural allusions to focus on God's grace imparted to the believer. The one who supplies "seed" and "bread" is he who gives the gift of righteousness, who by his grace grants salvation to those who will accept it. But he also supplies and multiplies believers' "seed" – through his grace – and increases the harvest of their righteousness. In other words, having given the believer the gift of righteousness, God will increase the

fruit of that righteousness as he continues to abound his grace to the believer, which enables the believer to abound unto good works.

If, on the other hand, the readers of Paul's letter read verse 9 with the understanding of the "pious man" as the one who scatters the seed and gives to the poor, they may immediately make application to themselves, and understand that the grace abundantly provided in verse 8 is intended to enable them to perform such good deeds as "scattering seed" and "giving to the poor". Certainly this would have direct application to the collection for the poor in Jerusalem. In this case, the interpretation of verse 10 hardly changes; God, who gives grace, is again seen as the one who will multiply their seed so as to supply the resources necessary for the Corinthians to give generously toward the collection.

Since ambiguity abounds throughout this passage it may be unnecessary to determine one correct view with regard to 2 Cor. 9.9. Paul may well have left it intentionally ambiguous, allowing the readers to understand it according to either of the readings I have proposed, or possibly, both.

6.3. Conclusion: Paul's Use of χάρις in 2 Corinthians 8-9

Having not only considered a good portion of 2 Corinthians 8-9 but numerous other passages as well in this and the previous chapters, we have seen the diversity of ways in which Paul uses χάρις throughout his letters, particularly in 2 Corinthians 8-9. The grace of God given to believers (8.1) is based in the initial outpouring of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ (8.9). God's grace imparted to believers affects their motivations and attitudes (8.2-5, 16-22) and empowers them for action through both spiritual and material provision (8.6-7; 9.8). Having used χάρις to refer to the grace of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, he can then use it as "this χάρις" (8.6, 7, 19) in reference to the empowerment and outworking of God's grace in the Corinthians and others as demonstrated in the collection. The χάρις ("privilege") for which the Macedonians begged Paul to contribute toward the collection (8.4) is at the same time a demonstration of God's grace at work in them and a play on words reminding us that χάρις can be extended on the human level as well. Paul also uses χάρις personally to express thanks to God for the outworking of his grace, particularly in the eagerness God has given to Titus for the Corinthians (8.16).

My discussion of the diversity of Paul's use of χάρις will continue in Chapter 8. But first, in Chapter 7, I will focus on the outworking of God's grace in 2 Cor. 8.10-15,

a passage where Paul discusses the impact of grace without actually using the term χάρις.

CHAPTER 7

WILLINGNESS, EQUALITY AND RECIPROCITY (2 CORINTHIANS 8.10-15)

7.1. Introduction

I have previously examined most of 2 Corinthians 8-9 with the exception of 2 Cor. 8.10-15 and 9.11-15, which will be addressed in this chapter and the next. I have left 2 Cor. 8.10-15 to be considered in this chapter in order to give attention to the three main topics addressed in these six verses, "willingness" (προθυμία), "equality" (ἰσότης), and "reciprocity". The first two are explicitly mentioned in the passage, while the third is described as an outcome of the Corinthians' participation in the collection. I will consider the significance of the first two terms both individually and as they relate to grace and reciprocity in the overall passage.

I have identified the present section of text as beginning in 2 Cor. 8.6.[1] There Paul turns from his discussion of how the grace of God had been worked out through the Macedonians in their collection contribution to address the Corinthians directly and the need for them to follow through on their previously promised gift. Paul portrays the Corinthians' involvement in the collection as it had been for the Macedonians, an outworking of the grace of God, when he refers to it both in verse 6 and in verse 7 as ἡ χάρις αὕτη (see §§5.4.1-5.4.2). In 8.9 Paul offers the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ as the theological basis for the collection as an outworking of grace (§5.4.3). In this present section (8.10-15), however, there is no mention of grace and no appeal to the Corinthians' status before God as recipients of grace. Instead, what we find here is Paul offering his opinion (γνώμη) on the matter (8.10).

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[1] See my division of the text in §5.1.

7.2. The Acceptability of Voluntary Giving (8.10-12)

7.2.1. Paul Offers His Opinion

Paul's point in the three verses 8.10-12 is that in order for the Corinthians' gift to be acceptable (εὐπρόσδεκτος) it must be given willingly.[2] In verse 10 he points out that a year earlier the Corinthians had begun their participation in the collection, οὐ μόνον τὸ ποιῆσαι ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ θέλειν ("not only the doing, but even the desiring"). Although in a different context the word order of this phrase might seem unusual,[3] Paul's emphasis in the following verses on the Corinthians' willingness makes sense of the inverted word order here.[4] Paul wishes to place particular emphasis on the Corinthians' desire (τὸ θέλειν) to participate, a desire that corresponds to their initial involvement in the project, which may have led them to inquire further of Paul regarding the logistics of their participation.[5] I argued in §5.4.1.1 that it is likely that Titus initially informed the Corinthians of the collection project and thus initiated the work there. The implication is that the Corinthians' initial desire produced in them a willingness (ἡ προθυμία τοῦ θέλειν) to participate.

Paul points out that it was in the previous year that the Corinthians had expressed their initial interest in the project, but that it is now time for them to complete it. Their desire to contribute is commendable, but they must now act; they must complete that which they began to do (τὸ ποιῆσαι) the previous year. By doing so voluntarily they will demonstrate the authenticity of their willingness, the sincerity of their love (τὸ τῆς [ἐκείνων] ἀγάπης γνήσιον; 8.8). The expression of sincere ἀγάπη, however, must come from their own desire (τὸ θέλειν), their own willingness (προθυμία). Or, in the words of C. T. Rhyne, "Love cannot be commanded. It can be demonstrated. It can be suggested. But in the end, love always has a 'voluntary'

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[2] Literally, there must be willingness, προθυμία, 8.11, 12.

[3] We might expect something such as: "You not only had the desire to participate, but you even acted upon it".

[4] Commentators have been puzzled by Paul's word order here. Barrett says it "seems to be an inversion" since "surely common sense demands, 'Not only to will but also to do'", Barrett, 225. Bultmann (1976), 256, may have overstated the fact that Lietzmann, 135, says Paul has made a "blunder" here (*Versehen*; Bultmann's term, not Lietzmann's). Indeed, the best explanation that Lietzmann can offer for this "strange" phrase is that Paul expressed himself awkwardly, or even misspoke.

[5] Cf. 1 Cor. 16.1-4.

character".[6] It is ironic that while Paul emphasizes that they must act willingly, he issues them a command: νυνὶ δὲ καὶ τὸ ποιῆσαι ἐπιτελέσατε (8.11). This charge for the Corinthians to complete their collection effort is the sole imperative issued by Paul in the entire discussion of chapters 8 and 9.[7] Elsewhere he is cautious *not* to demand their involvement (cf. 8.8). How then can he do so here? It is not that he desires them to give toward the collection simply in fulfillment of this command. What he does desire is that they give voluntarily.

There is an interesting contrast here between the willingness with which Paul desires the Corinthians to give and the spontaneity with which the Macedonians had already given. According to Paul's account in 8.1-5, the Macedonians not only gave voluntarily (i.e. willingly; they were not pressured into giving), but in fact they gave spontaneously, that is, they gave at their own initiative, not in response to a command or request from Paul.[8] They pleaded with Paul for the opportunity to participate (8.4), and when they did give they did so in a self-sacrificing manner (8.3). They offered themselves, Paul writes, first to God and to Paul (πρῶτον τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ ἡμῖν; 8.5). Paul did not need to persuade the Macedonians to give. In fact, having previously accepted personal financial aid from them (2 Cor. 11.9; Phil. 4.14-15) and knowing the financial hardship they faced, he may have deliberately avoided suggesting they contribute.[9] Yet, he writes, they begged for the privilege of partnering with him in the ministry to the saints in Jerusalem (8.4). Therefore, the Macedonians gave spontaneously, and they gave sacrificially. In the case of the Corinthians, since Paul must encourage them to give, it is clear that their gift will not be spontaneous; however, it is still possible for them to give voluntarily.[10] And unlike the Macedonians who gave

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[6] Rhyne, "II Corinthians 8:8-15", 409.

[7] I discussed in §5.4.1.1 the pairing of προενάρχομαι with ἐπιτελέω. With the imperative ἐπιτελέσατε, Paul here commands the Corinthians to complete that which they had previously begun. In finding these two chapters replete with bureaucratic language, Betz, 54, argues that the use of ἐπιτελέω here is in reference to the completion of an administrative task. Ascough, on the other hand, argues that the use of ἐπιτελέω in the inscriptions in contexts of religious obligation would have allowed Paul to offer the added incentive of appealing to the Corinthians to complete a religious duty; see Richard S. Ascough, "The Completion of a Religious Duty: The Background of 2 Cor 8.1-15", *NTS* 42 (1996): 584-99.

[8] See Calvin, 108.

[9] See Best, 77-78.

[10] This is against Thrall, 536, who understands the Corinthians' initial interest in the collection in fact to have been spontaneous; they had somehow found out about the

sacrificially, it is enough for the Corinthians to give from their surplus (τὸ ἐκείνων περίσσευμα; 8.14), according to what they have (ἐκ τοῦ ἔχειν; 8.11), even though the Macedonians gave παρὰ δύναμιν – beyond their means. If the Corinthians give from their surplus, and do so willingly, their gift will be εὐπρόσδεκτος.

In chapter 9 Paul again reminds the Corinthians of their previous willingness (προθυμία) and zeal (ζῆλος), of which he had boasted to the Macedonians (9.2). And again he encourages them to give voluntarily, in accordance with their previous desire, ἕκαστος καθὼς προῄρηται τῇ καρδίᾳ (9.7), so that their gift will be given neither reluctantly (ἐκ λύπης) nor forcibly (ἐξ ἀνάγκης). With such voluntary giving God is pleased (ἱλαρὸν γὰρ δότην ἀγαπᾷ ὁ θεός).[11]

Paul's opinion (γνώμη; 8.10), then, is that even though they have delayed, if they complete their involvement in the collection project and offer their gift based on what they have now, and do so willingly, their involvement in the project will be acceptable.

7.2.2. Giving within One's Means

I will return to the issue of "acceptability" below, but first I wish to address the topic of giving within one's means. As stated above, while the Macedonians apparently gave beyond their means (παρὰ δύναμιν), Paul is not demanding this of the Corinthians. Perhaps the Corinthians had delayed their gift until they felt that they could make a substantial enough offering, or perhaps they feared that any gift would be to their own financial detriment (cf. 8.13 below). In any event, Paul stresses that their gift ought to be completed now, and it ought to be completed in accordance with their current means (ἐκ τοῦ ἔχειν, 8.11; καθὸ ἐὰν ἔχῃ, 8.12). Paul likens the completion of their gift (τὸ ἐπιτελέσαι) to the willingness rooted in their desire (ἡ προθυμία τοῦ

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project and then written to Paul inquiring how they might participate. Paul then replied with 1 Cor. 16.1-4. Thrall reaches this conclusion from the emphasis on the Corinthians' prior desire to participate (8.10-11), that the Corinthians a year prior not only undertook the doing of the project, but indeed even the desiring to participate. I have shown above, however, that it is more likely that Titus had initially instigated the collection among the Corinthians. In any case, Thrall seems to confuse "desire" with "spontaneity".

[11] See my discussion of this passage in §6.2.2.

θέλειν).[12] Danker helpfully points out that the term προθυμία, often used synonymously with σπουδή,[13] is common in the benefaction terminology of the honorary inscriptions, and thus is an appropriate term for Paul in this passage.[14] The προθυμία of the Corinthians (8.11, 12; 9.2) is comparable to the σπουδή of the Macedonians (8.8).

Paul expresses a progressive uniting of desire and action in 8.11-12, the key to which is the Corinthians' present resources from which they are able to give. In verse 10, τὸ ποιῆσαι and τὸ θέλειν are clearly two distinct things. Through the completing of τὸ ποιῆσαι, however, Paul wishes to see the Corinthians' willingness and action united, "in order that the completion of your gift may be as the willingness of your desire" (v. 11), that is, according to what they have (ἐκ τοῦ ἔχειν).[15] When their willingness to give is demonstrated by their giving according to their means, then their gift will be acceptable (8.12). The NIV captures this sense in its translation of verse 12: "Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means."

It seems the Corinthians perceived that giving beyond their means would produce hardship (θλῖψις; 8.13) they were not willing to endure. Paul recognizes the limits of their willingness and so requires no more from them other than to give *according* to their means, from the surplus that God has provided them. To ask more than this would be to compel the Corinthians to give beyond their original desire, and thus they might give unwillingly, that is, ἐκ λύπης ἢ ἐξ ἀνάγκης (reluctantly or from compulsion; 9.7). Such a gift would not be acceptable according to Paul's criterion of

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[12] The phrase, ἡ προθυμία τοῦ θέλειν, although an unusual construction, is not unprecedented. Danker points out that Plato uses this phrase in *Leg* 3.697d (although Plato uses the Attic form of the verb: προθυμία τοῦ ἐθέλειν). Danker's argument that Paul's use of this phrase "is *firmly embedded* in Greek usage", however, based on this single citation from Plato, is clearly an overstatement; Danker, 127 (emphasis mine).

[13] Cf. uses of σπουδή and cognates in 8.7, 8, 16, 17, 22 and of προθυμία in 8.11, 12, 19; 9.2.

[14] Danker, 127; see also Danker, *Benefactor*, 320-21.

[15] Most English versions read the parallel phrases in 8.11 as follows: the phrase τὸ ἐπιτελέσαι ἐκ τοῦ ἔχειν ("the completion of it according to what you have") is seen as parallel to ἡ προθυμία τοῦ θέλειν ("the willingness of your desire"). The parallel structure, however, seems to follow the τὸ ποιῆσαι – τὸ θέλειν contrast in v. 10, such that v. 10 ought to be read with an implied τοῦ ποιῆσαι after τὸ ἐπιτελέσαι. The ἐκ τοῦ ἔχειν in v. 11 can then refer to the entire correlative phrase: "In order that just as the willingness of your desire, so the completion of your action may be according to your means."

acceptability in 8.13, that their gift be given willingly *and* from what they have. In any event, the Corinthians' gift would not be spontaneous since their contribution would result from Paul's urging. Their giving could still be voluntary, however, and it would be acceptable if given according to their means, from their surplus.

The Macedonians, on the other hand, were quite willing to give beyond their means, following the example of Christ. Even though the Corinthians' giving did not result in impoverishment, as with Christ and the Macedonians, their gift could still be acceptable. Apparently Paul adapts his criteria to the conditions of the giver. Paul did not push the Corinthians to give beyond their means or beyond their hearts' desire. They had previously determined how much each would give (ἕκαστος καθὼς προῄρηται τῇ καρδίᾳ; 9.7), and Paul does not try to persuade them to give more than they had originally desired, even if others were giving sacrificially. Thus, Paul makes it clear that even a gift that is not sacrificial, if given willingly, may be acceptable.

It may be that the Corinthians were delaying their gift until they had more from which to give,[16] whether because they felt at the present time they could not offer a substantial enough gift to make a difference, or whether they felt that they did not have a surplus from which to draw. Thus Paul says that *now* is the time for them to gather what they have and offer it. Paul stresses that whatever they have at the present time will be acceptable, if it is given willingly. It is not a matter of how much they wished they *could* give – Paul says he is not interested in their willingness to give more than is possible at the present (οὐ καθὸ οὐκ [οὔπω?] ἔχει) – but simply how much they *can* give (καθὸ ἐὰν ἔχῃ).[17]

In this section, then, Paul is trying to draw the Corinthians' attention away from the simple action of giving, and to focus on what lies behind that action. What is it that motivates them to give? What is it that enables them to give? He has already shown that in the case of the Macedonians, the grace of God was the enabling factor. Paul is not as concerned with the action of giving as he is with the attitude of giving. At the end of the day he does desire that a gift be given, but he wants it to be given *willingly, graciously*. This is clear in this present passage, as it is also in 9.7: "Each one should give just as he

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[16] As Furnish, 419, concurs.

[17] I raise the possibility of whether οὐκ in 8.12 might have the sense of οὔπω such that the idea of the verse might be: "For if the willingness is present according to whatever one may have, this is acceptable, not according to what he does not *yet* have".

has determined in his heart, not out of grief or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver".

7.2.3. The Acceptable Gift

What does it mean for the Corinthians' collection offering (τὸ ποιῆσαι) to be εὐπρόσδεκτος? To whom will it be acceptable? To whom *should* their gift be acceptable? Elsewhere, Paul uses εὐπρόσδεκτος to say that he hopes that the saints in Jerusalem will find *his* ministry to them in delivering the collection acceptable (Rom. 15.31). Is it such acceptability of the Corinthians' gift in the eyes of the recipients that Paul has in mind in 8.12? Perhaps, but how would the believers in Jerusalem know with what attitude their benefactors had given their gift? Paul could have in mind that the Corinthians' gift, if given with the proper attitude, will be acceptable socially within the practices of Graeco-Roman benefaction. Or perhaps Paul simply has in mind that their gift will be acceptable before God.

The form εὐπρόσδεκτος occurs five times in the New Testament, as does the simplified form, δεκτός. It is only the simple form, however, that occurs in the Septuagint (28 times), and it is found almost exclusively in the Pentateuch and Proverbs, primarily in reference to things acceptable to God, although only occasionally in reference to sacrifices. Of the ten occurrences of these two terms in the New Testament, excluding for now 2 Cor. 8.12, only in Luke 4.24 and Rom. 15.31 does it refer to acceptability before man rather than before God. Paul uses the adjective εὐπρόσδεκτος four times, in Rom. 15.16, 31; 2 Cor. 6.2; 8.12, and δεκτός twice, in 2 Cor. 6.2; Phil. 4.18. I mentioned above the use of εὐπρόσδεκτος in Rom. 15.31. In Rom. 15.16 Paul says that he hopes that his "offering of the Gentiles will be acceptable [presumably to God]". His use of δεκτός in 2 Cor. 6.2 is in a quotation of Isa. 49.8, where the Septuagint also has δεκτός, the "acceptable time" (καιρὸς δεκτός). In the same verse, Paul restates the phrase as καιρὸς εὐπρόσδεκτος. Paul's other use of δεκτός is discussed below.

Second Corinthians 8-9 pertains to giving, and as we have seen, follows conventions of giving and receiving in the Graeco-Roman world of benefaction.[18] The passage also contains words often found in honorary inscriptions, such as προθυμία.[19]

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[18] See the studies surveyed in Chapter 2.
[19] See discussion regarding Danker's *Benefactor* in §2.2.2.

It seems reasonable to conclude that Paul has in mind at least to imply that the Corinthians' voluntary gift will be socially acceptable according to the practices of Graeco-Roman benefaction.

On the other hand, Paul may envision the Corinthians' collection gift in terms of a sacrifice expressing gratitude to God. The δεκτός words can refer to spiritual sacrifices, and Paul describes the gift he received from the Philippians through Epaphroditus as "a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice (θυσία δεκτή), well-pleasing to God" (Phil. 4.18). Likewise in Rom. 15.16, he refers to the offering of his ministry among the Gentiles, which he hopes will be εὐπρόσδεκτος to God.[20] In this sense, the Corinthians' collection gift, given to the Jerusalem saints from the surplus they have received from God (cf. 8.14), if given willingly, may also be viewed as an offering to God, acceptable in his sight. Christ gave himself so that others might be enriched (8.9). His self-giving serves as "a model for the self-giving of Christian people, and . . . this self-giving includes the giving of material things like money".[21] The Macedonians' sacrificial offering would have been acceptable as they followed this model; for, in connection with their collection offering, they "first gave themselves to the Lord" (8.5). For the Corinthians, the gift is acceptable "according to whatever one has", as each recognizes that the surplus from which he gives has been provided by God. God has already blessed him with a surplus, and it is from this surplus that he can in turn bless others. It would be presumptuous to wait for further blessings from which to give ("that which one does not [yet] have"); now is the time, says Paul, to offer an acceptable gift, acceptable in the eyes of God. Paul's desire is to see the grace of God unleashed in the Corinthians through the evidence of their contributing to the needs of the saints in Jerusalem with eager desire, willingly, voluntarily. If they give from what they have at present – recognizing that the resources from which they are able to give they have received from God – if they give willingly, this then will be acceptable.

7.3. Equality *in 2 Cor. 8.13-14*

Having made clear the primary importance of the attitude that lies behind the action of giving, Paul goes on in anticipation of the Corinthians' objection, or perhaps

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[20] Cf. also 1 Pet. 2.5: πνευματικὰς θυσίας εὐπροσδέκτους τῷ θεῷ.
[21] Horrell, "Paul's Collection", 77.

in order to alleviate an already present fear,[22] that if they make a contribution, they will themselves face financial hardship. Paul's answer to this is ἰσότης, "equality". Of what sort of "equality" does Paul speak here?[23] The term appears only three times in the New Testament, here in 2 Cor. 8.13, 14 and in Col. 4.1, and likewise only three times in the Septuagint,[24] which makes determining its meaning here from biblical usage difficult. The term ἴσος, however, which is often used synonymously with ἰσότης, occurs more frequently and will also enter into my discussion.[25] Thus I will consider other sources of influence below, perhaps the most significant of which is Philo's use of the term in *Quis rerum divinarum heres*.

7.3.1. Equality in the Ancient World

References to equality run rampant throughout the ancient Greek writings. The common terms used are ἴσος ("equal") together with its neuter form to mean "equality", and ἰσότης, ("equality"), the same terms we find used in the New Testament. Generally, references to equality may be grouped into four categories: quantitative,[26] social, judicial and proportional equality.

Besides the obvious quantitative forms of equality in size and number, among the Greeks there were various forms of social equality (equality among men, by which, in a legal sense, citizens were considered ἴσοι) – "equal" in status, being granted equal rights. This usage of equality for legal status among citizens as a basic principle of democracy seems to have been maintained throughout the entire period of the ancient Greek writings.[27] Equality can also be described using the phrase ἴσος καὶ ὅμοιος both in the realm of politics[28] and in friendship.[29] Where this phrase was used by Plato in a

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[22] Barnett, 414, n. 62, sees Paul addressing the Corinthians' fear here that, as a result of their gift, they would suffer hardship. See also Harris, 588, esp. n. 3.

[23] The conclusion by Vassiliadis that Paul has in mind by equality an "equal distribution and permanent sharing of material means in the Christian community and the society at large" seems unlikely, as I will show; see Petros Vassiliadis, "The Collection Revisited", *DBM* 11 (1992): 42-48.

[24] Job 36.29; Sol. 17.41; Zech. 4.7.

[25] ἴσος occurs 8 times in the NT, but only once in Paul (Phil. 2.6). It is found some 40 times in the LXX.

[26] Qualitative equality was often conveyed using ὅποιος and its cognates. Cf. Stählin, *TDNT* 3:343.

[27] Cf. Petros Vassiliadis, "Equality and Justice in Classical Antiquity and in Paul: The Social Implications of the Pauline Collection", *SVTQ* 36, no. 1-2 (1992): 53-54.

[28] Demosthenes, *Or.* 21.112; Xenophon, *Hell.* 7.1.1.

[29] ἡ δ' ἰσότης καὶ ὁμοιότης φιλότης, Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.* 8.10.

geometric sense to refer to equality of size and of form,[30] the locution came to be used as a superlative expression to denote not equality in essence, but equality of status and significance.[31]

Deriving from the legal sense of equality is the principle of judicial righteousness or fairness. Aristotle writes that what is lawful and "equal" is just (ὁ δίκαιος ἔσται ὅ τε νόμιμος καὶ ὁ ἴσος),[32] and he relates justice (δικαιόσυνη) to a "state which produces 'equality' or distributive of what is 'equal'" (ἕξις ἰσότητος ποιητικὴ ἢ διανεμητικὴ τοῦ ἴσου).[33]

In the Greek literature, therefore, ἴσος/ἰσότης can refer to quantitative equality, equality of status, or judicial equality in the sense of righteousness. Beyond these ideas, the terms can also refer to "proportional equality", which I will discuss below.

Before considering proportional equality, however, I want to consider a common expression used to convey the idea of equality, the phrase ἐξ ἴσου, which occurs frequently in the ancient Greek writings. Usage of this phrase is important to my study since ἴσος and ἰσότης are often synonymous. Therefore, the following examples of ἐξ ἴσου usage may be suggestive for interpreting Paul's use of ἐξ ἰσότητος in 2 Cor. 8.13. The simple expression ἐξ ἴσου is an idiomatic way of referring to equality, and its variable usage can be seen through these examples: νόμοι ἐξ ἴσου, "equality under the law" (Demosthenes, *Philip.* 4.4); πολεμεῖν ἐξ ἴσου, "to fight on equal terms" (4.23); τοῖς ἑτέροις ἐξ ἴσου ποιῆσαι, "to put someone on an equality with others" (4.51); οὐκ ἐξ ἴσου ἐσμέν ("we do not share equal conditions"), says Soteridas as he walks carrying his shield to Xenophon who is riding horseback (Xenophon, *Anab.* 3.4.47); ἐξ ἴσου τῷ θεῖν ὁρμηθείς, "to have a fair [equal] start in running a race" (*Cyr.* 4.3.16); for Plato (*Parm.* 150d) ἐξ ἴσου εἶναι means to be, in a sense, equal, and that which is in a sense equal (ἐξ ἴσου) must therefore *be* equal (ἴσον εἶναι); Aristotle speaks of both the poor and the rich governing ἐξ ἴσου, "equally" (Aristotle, *Pol.* 6.1.10); the sun and the moon can appear to be at equal distances from the earth: ἐξ ἴσου φαίνονται (*Probl.* 15.8); one body in motion is not able to move at the same rate as another, ἐξ ἴσου ἀδύνατος (16.3). The phrase ἐξ ἴσου is also used in the Septuagint referring to the equal alignment

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[30] Plato, *Tim.* 55A.
[31] Stählin, *TDNT* 3:346; Ceslas Spicq, "ἴσος, ἰσότης, ἰσότημος", *TLNT* 2:224.
[32] Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.* 5.1.
[33] Aristotle, *Top.* 6.5.

of posts in the assembly of the tabernacle where ἐξ ἴσου is equated with ἴσοι (Ex. 16.24). Thus, ἐξ ἴσου as an idiom for "equal", "equality" finds many varied uses, including equality in status, equal conditions, equality in performance of an action, and equal distance. It can convey the notion of fairness and, while at first Plato seems to distinguish that which is ἐξ ἴσου from simple ἴσος, in his argument the two are essentially equivalent.

I now want to turn to Philo's discussion of "equality" in *Quis rerum divinarum heres*, giving particular attention to his discussion of "proportional equality".

7.3.2. Equality in Philo's Quis Rerum Divinarum Heres

Philo's *Quis rerum divinarum heres* (*Who is the Divine Heir?*) is a commentary on Gen. 15.2-18. In this passage, Abraham, after having believed God for his promise of an heir, is instructed to offer a sacrifice from a heifer, a goat, a ram, a turtledove and a pigeon. The text says he divided the animals "in the middle" (διεῖλεν αὐτὰ μέσα), but not the birds. This "division in the middle" leads into the present discussion of equal divisions and equality (*Her.* §§141-206). In Philo's interpretation, against most scholars, it is not Abraham, but God who divides the animals, since "No man can divide anything exactly into equal parts" (§142); "God alone is able to divide things in the middle" (§143).[34]

7.3.2.1. Various forms of equality

Philo uses τὸ ἴσον and ἡ ἰσότης interchangeably for "equality" in his discussion. Because of the exactness of equality for Philo, he writes that if there were only one form of it, man would not be able to produce equality (§144). However there are actually several forms, which he discusses and illustrates. There is numeric equality (τὸ ἴσον ἐν ἀριθμοῖς; ἰσότης κατ᾽ ἀριθμόν), by which things can be numerically equal, i.e. two items of the same object are "numerically equal" to two items of another. There is equality in magnitude (τὸ ἴσον ἐν μεγέθεσιν) by which, for example, two different objects may be equal in length or breadth.[35] There is also equality in capacity

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[34] Translations are from Colson and Whitaker (LCL), Philo *Quis Rerum Divinarum Heres*, unless otherwise stated.

[35] Cf. Rev. 21.16: τὸ μῆκος καὶ τὸ πλάτος καὶ τὸ ὕψος αὐτῆς ἴσα ἐστίν.

or force (τὸ ἴσον δυνάμει).[36] Finally, there is a form of equality that Philo calls proportional equality (τὸ ἴσον ἀναλογίᾳ), by which entities, for all intents and purposes being unequal, are viewed (νομίζω) as equal.

Although Philo describes these various forms of equality as ways in which man is capable of producing equality, he also demonstrates that God used each of these forms in creation. For example, numerical equality is demonstrated in the four basic elements, which consist in "numerically equal" categories: The "heavy elements" (earth and water) are numerically equal to the "light elements" (air and fire), "two to two", since each consists in two elements. Even within these categories there is "one to one" equality; one heavy element which is dry, earth, corresponds to one which is wet, water. Likewise, of the light elements, one which is cold, air, is numerically equal to one which is hot, fire.[37]

Philo does find some imperfections in this system, since there are some things which are not equal: "And nearly (σχεδόν) all things are equal as respects proportion, even all the little and all the great things in the whole world" (§152).[38] Nonetheless, Philo does go on to argue that God has created everything "in equality", for no matter what he made, whether great or small, "he applied to all the same creative skill in equal measure" (τῆς αὐτῆς μετέδωκε πᾶσι τέχνης ἐξ ἴσου, §159).[39] When creation was complete, "by the rules of proportionality (τοῖς τῆς ἀναλογίας κανόσιν), everything was regarded equal and similar (ἴσα καὶ ὅμοια) to everything else, according to the principle of [God's] skill and knowledge" (§160).

At one point Philo personifies ἰσότης, as "the one who gives birth to peace" (§162),[40] "the one who rears justice" (§163),[41] and even as God himself: "For equality gave day and night, light and darkness, their place among the things which are. Equality too divided the human being into man and woman" (§164).

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[36] See discussion by Colson and Whitaker (LCL), Philo *Her.*, 569-70, regarding whether Philo intends "equality δυνάμει" as a separate category.

[37] Cf. *Her.* 146.

[38] Translation from Philo, *The Works of Philo Judaeus*, trans. C. D. Yonge II (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854).

[39] My translation.

[40] Cf. Philo, *Spec. Leg.* 4.231: ἰσότης μήτηρ δικαιοσύνης.

[41] This idea of equality giving birth to justice is at odds with the statement of Aristotle which we saw above (§7.2.3), that conditions of justice produce equality, that justice distributes equality (Aristotle, *Top.* 6.5).

Using the various forms of equality he mentions, Philo proceeds to describe many other aspects of creation and incidents from the Pentateuch in terms of their equality, including the ten commandments, sacrifices, the composition of holy incense, and manna in the wilderness (which will be considered separately below). It seems that for Philo, everything has been created in equality and maintains some form of equality. It is as if all of creation hangs in balance, the balance maintained by the equality of everything that has been created.

*7.3.2.2. Proportional equality in Philo (*Her. *145)*

In the following key passage (§145), Philo introduces proportional equality and illustrates it with an example of proportionality in giving:

> ἀναγκαία δὲ ἐστιν ἰσότητος ἰδέα καὶ ἡ διὰ ἀναλογίας, καθ' ἣν καὶ τὰ ὀλίγα τοῖς πολλοῖς καὶ τὰ βραχέα τοῖς μείζοσιν ἴσα νενόμισται· ᾗ καὶ πόλεις ἐπὶ καιρῶν εἰώθασι χρῆσθαι κελεύουσαι τὸ ἴσον ἕκαστον τῶν πολιτῶν ἀπὸ τῆς οὐσίας εἰσφέρειν, οὐ δήπου ἐν ἀριθμῷ, ἀλλ' ἀναλογίᾳ τοῦ περὶ τὸν κλῆρον τιμήματος, ὥστ' ὁ δραχμὰς ἑκατὸν εἰσενεγκὼν τῷ τὸ τάλαντον εἰσενεγκόντι δόξαι ἂν ἐπιδεδωκέναι τὸ ἴσον.
>
> "Now there is an essential kind of equality, and it is that of proportionality (διὰ ἀναλογίας), according to which the few are considered (νομίζω) equal to the many, and lesser things to greater things. City-states also use this principle when, while maintaining certain customs, they order each citizen to contribute from his possessions "equally" (τὸ ἴσον), not, of course, numerically (οὐκ ἐν ἀριθμῷ), but in proportion (ἀναλογίᾳ) to the estimated value of what he possesses. In this way, one who contributes 100 drachmas may appear to contribute equally (τὸ ἴσον) to another who gives a talent".[42]

Throughout *Quis rerum divinarum heres* Philo uses a number of circumlocutions to specify equality as proportional: διὰ ἀναλογίας (§145), τὸ ἴσον ἀναλογίᾳ (§152), ἰσότης ἀναλογίας (§153), ἰσότης ἀναλογούσα (§177), and ἰσότης κατ' ἀναλογίαν (§192). Twice he refers to the rule(s) of proportion, ὁ κανών τῆς ἀναλογίας (§§154, 160), by which equality has been established, although he offers no explanation of this "rule". It is the proportional form that dominates Philo's examples of equality.

The unique aspect of proportional equality is, as was stated above, that for all intents and purposes the two objects being considered are *not* equal but according to the "rule of proportionality" they are *regarded as equal*. Unfortunately, Philo does not offer criteria for evaluating proportional equality, we are only left with the examples he

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[42] My translation.

offers. In the example of proportional contributions seen in §145 above we can see that two individuals' contributions, although unequal in absolute value, are regarded as equal. The requirement for this offering is that each contributes in proportion to what he owns, although no fixed percentage is mentioned by Philo. When each offers his contribution, although the amounts vary, from the perspective of the *polis*, each has equally fulfilled the requirement.

Several of Philo's examples of proportional equality are worth noting. One clear example is that of animals, "For upon consideration, the smallest animals are found to be proportionately equal (ἀναλογίᾳ ἴσα) to the largest, as the swallow to the eagle, the mullet to the whale, and the ant to the elephant" (§154). Although the swallow and the eagle are birds of different size, the respective members of each one's body are proportionately equal in comparison to the other members. The eagle's head is larger than the sparrow's, but so are its wings. Philo states that all of creation is likewise proportionately equal. Despite the fact that God, in making everything, fashioned things from different materials, his skill in doing so was exercised through one equal and uniform power (κατὰ μίαν ἴσην καὶ ὁμαλὴν δύναμιν). The result was that, by the rules of proportionality, everything was regarded equal and similar (ἴσα καὶ ὅμοια; §160), in other words, all that God has made is [proportionally] equal in value. In §189 the "half-shekel tax" (Ex. 30.12-16) is offered as an example of proportional equality. Each registered person was to pay the same amount, "The one who is rich shall not add, and the one who is poor shall not diminish, from the half shekel" (§189; cf. Ex. 30.15). For the sake of this tax, all were regarded as equal, whether rich or poor; each would pay the same amount. The Passover lamb, prescribed in Ex. 12.4, Philo also identifies as an example of proportional equality (κατ᾽ ἀναλογίαν ἰσότητος; §192). If a household does not have enough people for an entire lamb, they are to join with their closest neighbor, "that each may reckon what is sufficient for him" (Ex. 12.4). Although the prescription is one lamb per household, if the need of the household is less, the households are to be "equalized" according to the sufficiency of a lamb.

In Philo, then, "equality" can be evaluated in several ways, most flexibly in terms of proportional equality. A significant example I have yet to consider is Philo's discussion of the manna incident in Ex. 16.18, which he offers as another example of proportional equality. This is the same text that Paul quotes in 2 Cor. 8.15, and for this reason I discuss it below in detail (cf. §7.4.2). I have identified the various forms of equality discussed by Philo along with several of his examples of proportional equality.

I will not, however, focus on Philo's understanding of the passages he discusses, which invariably involves allegorical interpretation.

7.3.2.3. Summary of Philo and equality

Having considered Philo's discussion of proportional equality, the question ought to be raised whether Philo is here *defining* proportional equality, or if he is just giving words to something already being practiced. Had it previously been recognized and referred to as proportional equality? In Philo's discussion in *Quis rerum divinarum heres,* he emphasizes that he has in mind *proportional* equality by the consistent association of ἴσος with ἀναλογία, as we saw above in the various expressions he uses. It seems that a thorough study of usage of ἴσος/ἰσότης with ἀναλογία has yet to be undertaken, but I note the following related uses in Aristotle, which indicate that the concept is not Philo's invention: "Reciprocal equality is the preservative of states" (τὸ ἴσον τὸ ἀντιπεπονθὸς σῴζει τὰς πόλεις; *Pol.* 2.1.4); "In the interchange of services Justice in the form of Reciprocity is the bond that maintains the association: reciprocity, that is, on the basis of proportion, not on the basis of equality (τὸ ἀντιπεπονθός, κατ' ἀναλογίαν καὶ μὴ κατ' ἰσότητα). The very existence of the state depends on proportionate reciprocity (τῷ ἀντιποιεῖν γὰρ ἀνάλογον συμμένει ἡ πόλις; *Eth. Nic.* 5.5.6)".

7.3.3. Equality in 2 Cor. 8.13-14

Returning now to 2 Corinthians 8, we come to 8.13-14, where Paul explicitly mentions "equality" (ἰσότης), once in each verse. I suggested the possibility that in this passage Paul may be anticipating the Corinthians' fear that their participation in the collection may lead to their own financial suffering. He has just explained in verse 12 that they are not expected to give beyond what they are capable of giving. He further explains (γάρ) that the collection is not meant to provide relief for others at the expense of their own suffering: οὐ γὰρ ἵνα ἄλλοις ἄνεσις, ὑμῖν θλῖψις. I assume that Paul has in mind ἄνεσις for the saints in Jerusalem as their need is met, and that the resultant θλῖψις would pertain to the Corinthians.[43] Paul says that the result is not to be ἄνεσις/θλῖψις, but ἐξ ἰσότητος.

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[43] This, despite the suggestion by A. P. Stanley that the Corinthians might understand that their gift will provide "relief" (ἄνεσις) for the Macedonians' "overstrain" (θλῖψις), i.e. the burden of their poverty. Following this interpretation, the abundance / lack

The argument of these two verses is as follows: Rather than the Corinthians' gift providing relief for Jerusalem which would result in financial hardship for the Corinthians, Paul says that there is to be equality (ἐξ ἰσότητος). He explains this equality in verse 14 as a form of reciprocity. At the present time, the Corinthians' abundance will meet the needs in Jerusalem so that at some future time, when the Corinthians find themselves in need, the Jerusalem community may be able to help from whatever abundance they may have. This, Paul writes, so that there may be equality (ὅπως γένηται ἰσότης).

7.3.3.1. Not inequality, but equality

There are several contrasting pairs that occur in these two verses. Besides the pairing ἄλλοις ἄνεσις / ὑμῖν θλῖψις, we also find τὸ ὑμῶν περίσσευμα / τὸ ἐκείνων ὑστέρημα (and its inverse) in verse 14, and ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ / [implied: *some undetermined time, perhaps in the future*]. One more contrast appears here, although not through corresponding pairs. In verse 13 Paul contrasts what the collection should not signify, οὐ . . . ἵνα ἄλλοις ἄνεσις, ὑμῖν θλῖψις, with what it should signify, ἐξ ἰσότητος. Despite the examples of self-sacrifice by both Christ (8.9) and the Macedonians (8.3), Paul did not intend the project to result in suffering for those who contributed.[44] Rather, he desired that it would result in equality.

At this point I need to address the phrase ἐξ ἰσότητος. We have seen above (5.3.1) a variety of examples of the similar phrase ἐξ ἴσου, and with ἴσος and ἰσότης often used synonymously, we can assume synonymous usage of the terms with ἐκ as well. We have seen that the idiom ἐξ ἴσου can be used substantivally, adverbially or even as an adjective with the senses "equality", "equally", or "equal". The clear

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discussion in v. 14 would likewise relate to the Macedonians and the Corinthians. The resultant equality would be demonstrated between the Macedonians' and the Corinthians' giving; Stanley, 472. Perhaps the largest problem with this view is that Paul's entire discussion is focused on the motivation of the giver and not the size of the gift. Nowhere is it implied that the Macedonians' gift was unsatisfactory due to its size. In fact, the size of their gift is nowhere mentioned, only that they gave παρὰ δύναμιν, "beyond their means".

[44] This is not to say that their gift *must not* result in financial hardship, as has been illustrated by the example of the Macedonians. Any hardship that did result, however, would be the choice of the giver and not an imposition by Paul. The only reason that any of the contributing communities should suffer hardship as a result of contributing would be if giving such a gift was motivated by the joy it produced in them to do so. It was the περρισεία of the Macedonians' joy that led them to give παρὰ δύναμιν.

antithesis in verse 13 is between what is not to be and what is to be (οὐ γάρ . . . ἀλλά); rather than Jerusalem ἄνεσις in exchange for Corinthian θλῖψις, there is to be ἰσότης. I want to point out that Paul does *not* make the statement that there is *not* to be ἄνεσις for those in need, only that there is not to be ἄνεσις for the recipients which results in θλῖψις for the givers. In fact there *is* to be ἄνεσις for the recipients of the collection (cf. 9.12), at the present time for the saints in Jerusalem, and when circumstances are reversed, ἄνεσις for the Corinthians themselves (8.14). So in fact, rather than ἄλλοις ἄνεσις, [ἀλλὰ] ὑμῖν θλῖψις, there will be ἄλλοις ἄνεσις, καὶ ὑμῖν ἄνεσις, "in order that there may be equality" (ὅπως γένηται ἰσότης; 8.14). In other words, Paul begins verse 13 with an inequality, and concludes it with equality.[45]

Some have made a connection between the ἐκ in ἐξ ἰσότητος of verse 13 and that of ἐκ τοῦ ἔχειν in verse 11. In this case, ἐξ ἰσότητος would mean the Corinthians are to be governed by the "principle of equality" just as ἐκ τοῦ ἔχειν means they are governed by the "principle of giving" according to what they have.[46]

Georgi's attempt to locate Paul's use of the phrase ἐξ ἰσότητος in Hellenistic-Jewish Gnostic wisdom seems unfounded as does his argument leading to the conclusion that ἐξ ἰσότητος approaches the sense ἐκ χάριτος, and is essentially equivalent to ἐκ θεοῦ.[47] He relies on a few verses in Philo's *Quis rerum divinarum heres* where ἰσότης is personified (§§161-66) to conclude that ἰσότης constitutes a divine force, but this goes beyond what Philo is portraying. I have already shown that the phrase ἐξ ἰσότητος is a common idiom for "equality" or "equally", and so there is no need for Georgi to search for special significance in the phrase. Thus I agree with Furnish who writes of Georgi's conclusions, "This proposal, however, moves quite beyond the plain sense of what is said in vv. 13-14".[48]

7.3.3.2. One's surplus for another's need

Before discussing what Paul may have meant by "equality" in these two verses I first want to include verse 14 in the discussion. In verse 13, Paul introduces equality as the relevant guiding principle for the collection. In verse 14 he explains what he has in mind, and in verse 15 illustrates through an Old Testament citation. It becomes clear

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[45] As Betz, 67, points out.
[46] See Barnett, 414, n. 62; Hughes, 306, n. 31.
[47] See discussions in Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 84-91, 138-40.
[48] Furnish, 407.

that for Paul, "equality" involves some form of reciprocity. Although the recipients of the collection have not been explicitly mentioned since 8.4, and even then only as "the saints", I assume that the ἀλλοί of 8.13 refers to those who "in this present time" have a ὑστέρημα (v. 14). Paul has told the Corinthians that now is the time to make their contribution, that they should not wait until they have more to give (8.12). He stresses that it is ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ that the saints in Jerusalem have need. Some commentators have pointed out that the phrase ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ is used with eschatological significance in Rom. 3.26 and 11.5,[49] and likewise suggest that the same applies to its usage here in 2 Cor. 8.14.[50] If this were the case, then it would clearly move the situation of meeting needs beyond the immediate situation of the collection.[51] Since the expression ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ is not used exclusively in eschatological contexts,[52] it seems more likely that Paul simply has in mind a contrast between this present time of need for the saints in Jerusalem and some future time when they may have opportunity to reciprocate. Danker finds particular significance in this term for both Paul and Philo in *Quis rerum divinarum heres*:

> The term *kairos* . . . ordinarily in official documents refers to periods of crisis, such as food shortages or military threats. . . . As used by Paul in 2 Cor. 8:14, the term *kairos* makes a strong claim on the Corinthians' sympathies – the need of the poor in Jerusalem has reached crisis proportions. To suggest, as some commentators have done, that Paul is thinking along 'eschatological' lines is to dilute the apostle's eloquent intercession.[53]

Paul, in verse 14, tells how the Jerusalem saints' needs will be met; it is from the Corinthians' surplus. The Corinthians' περίσσευμα will help relieve Jerusalem's ὑστέρημα. He does not say that the Corinthians' surplus will meet or fulfill their need,[54] but that it will contribute toward their need, εἰς τὸ ἐκείνων ὑστέρημα. Georgi rightly

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[49] Cf. also Rom. 8.18.

[50] Barnett, 415; Hafemann, 340; Martin, 267.

[51] And so Barnett, 415, himself concludes: "The eschatological setting lifts the importance of the collection from the particular to the general, providing the basis for a theology of practical relief among 'the Israel of God' (Gal 6:16) that will apply until the Parousia".

[52] See, for example, its use in the LXX: Gen. 29.34; 30.20; Ex. 9.14.

[53] Danker, 128-29.

[54] As was the case when the Macedonians sent aid to Paul: "They fully supplied my need (τὸ γὰρ ὑστέρημά μου προσανεπλήρωσαν)"; 2 Cor. 11.9. Likewise, Paul anticipates the combined effect of the collection meeting the needs of the saints in Jerusalem: "For the ministry of this service . . . is supplying the needs of the saints (ἐστὶν προσαναπληροῦσα τὰ ὑστερήματα τῶν ἁγίων)"; 2 Cor. 9.12.

points out that Paul's point in these verses is that the collection is not a gift precisely calculated according to the need of the recipients.[55] It is to be given from the Corinthians' surplus, that surplus which has been provided through the grace of God, which is in accordance with "what they have (ἐκ τοῦ ἔχειν)". Reciprocity will be demonstrated when, at some indefinite time, the church in Jerusalem will be able to contribute from some surplus of their own toward a need of the Corinthians. Does Paul have in mind that the roles will be reversed at some time in the future, the church in Jerusalem having a material abundance from which they will address some material need among the Corinthians? While some scholars take this to be the case,[56] most shy away from such an interpretation, assuming that such a reversal of fortune would have been highly unlikely, and therefore any future return from Jerusalem must be spiritual.[57] Furnish deals with this problem by saying that Paul is doing nothing more than formally stating "the principle of equality" with no reference either to a specific material or spiritual return. What was important was that the Corinthians have a clear understanding of their present responsibility.[58] Thrall is more ambivalent; at first she seems to lean toward some future spiritual return from Jerusalem, but in the end says, "it might be useful to reconsider the possibility that Paul does, after all, have in mind material benefits in both cases".[59]

The abundance that grace supplies is not limited to the material realm. Within the context of 2 Corinthians 8-9, where grace is the underlying theme, it is helpful to keep in mind how grace, particularly through Paul's use of the economic metaphor, penetrates both the material and spiritual realms.[60] The Macedonians had contributed materially as a result of the grace they received. The Corinthians themselves had abounded (περισσεύω) in spiritual things (8.7), and Paul hopes they too will abound in "this χάρις", contributing from their περίσσευμα toward the needs in Jerusalem. In Rom. 15.27 Paul will look back upon the Corinthians' collection gift as a material return for spiritual benefits received.[61] And so with Paul's propensity toward ambiguity ever present, I do not want to be too quick to jump to conclusions regarding what he has

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[55] Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 88.
[56] Barclay, 1366; Barrett, 226; Hughes, 306; Lietzmann, 135; Plummer, 245.
[57] Betz, 68; Danker, 129; Hafemann, 340; Héring, 61.
[58] Furnish, 420.
[59] Thrall, 542.
[60] Cf. §5.4.3.4.
[61] This will be discussed in more detail below.

in mind here in 8.14. It seems perhaps best to view the Corinthians' gift for Jerusalem at this stage, not from the perspective of Graeco-Roman benefit-exchange, but from the perspective of "Christian benefit-exchange". For Paul, κοινωνία is foundational within the body of Christ. An essential element of this κοινωνία is χάρις, grace received from God and grace passed on to others. As we have seen, grace is conveyed through benefits; it is from the abundance of benefits received, that believers give to others. In 1 Cor. 16.17, Paul writes to the Corinthians, "I rejoice in the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have supplied what was lacking on your part (τὸ ὑμέτερον ὑστέρημα οὗτοι ἀνεπλήρωσαν), for they have refreshed my spirit and yours . . ." (16.17-18). What was lacking on the side of the Corinthians was not material, for it was "filled up" simply by the presence of these three men. It was fellowship with the Corinthians that Paul was missing and these representatives of the community were able to supply it; the ὑστέρημα was filled through the brothers' presence.[62]

Paul clearly suggests reciprocation by the saints in Jerusalem for the Corinthians' gift. Although the natural sense of 8.14 might at first suggest that a future turn of circumstances could expect a material return from Jerusalem, the wider scope of Paul's discussion in light of χάρις and κοινωνία in the body of Christ, suggests that Paul might not have a specific form of return in mind. The point is that within the body, as believers share from their abundance to meet others' needs, there will be "equality". Abundance and need, as with riches and poverty, are not limited to material things. Perhaps, then, what Paul envisions is that which is suggested by Thrall, a view which in the end, she apparently abandons: "It could be, of course, that the spiritual blessing he has in mind relates to the prayer of thanksgiving which he believes the Jerusalem Christians will offer for the collection (see 9.12-15), which he sees as beneficial for the donors. If the 'surplus' of the Jerusalem Christians relates to spiritual benefits, this is the most probable interpretation."[63]

7.3.3.3. Reciprocity, 2 Cor. 8.14 and Rom. 15.27

There is a startling contrast between the way the Gentiles' role in the collection is characterized in 2 Cor. 8.14 and in Rom. 15.27, although in each passage, involvement in the collection is portrayed in terms of reciprocity. In 2 Cor. 8.14 Paul

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[62] Fee, *First Corinthians*, 832; Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 1340.
[63] Thrall, 542.

refers to the reciprocity as "equality". From their financial surplus, the Corinthians are to contribute toward the needs of the saints in Jerusalem with the understanding that there will be reciprocity, Jerusalem will also have opportunity to contribute from some surplus they receive toward a need of the Corinthians. The ἵνα καί links the reciprocal action of the saints in Jerusalem to the initiative of the Corinthians, while the time reference of the aorist subjunctive γένηται is ambiguous; the "return" will be at an undetermined time. The Corinthians' surplus, like the need of the believers in Jerusalem is understood to be material. What Paul has in mind in the reverse case by Jerusalem's surplus and the Corinthians' need remains unclear. Regardless of the details, the reciprocity that Paul has in mind here relates to equality. The "benefit-exchange" is initiated by the Corinthians, and will be responded to by the believers in Jerusalem with a return benefit. The benefit in each case is referred to as a περίσσευμα, an abundance or surplus. Each community shares from its surplus to help alleviate some need of the other, ὅπως γένηται ἰσότης; the purpose of this "surplus-exchange" is "that there might be equality" (v. 14). We also want to keep in mind that Paul embeds the collection discussion in this passage in the context of grace. Involvement in the collection is an undertaking of χάρις (8.6-7), the Corinthians have been enriched by the χάρις of Christ (8.9), and the abundance (περίσσευμα) from which they are able to contribute is itself a provision of God's grace (9.8).

When Paul discusses the collection in Romans 15 he also presents it in terms of a reciprocal exchange; however, he depicts it quite differently than in 2 Cor. 8.14. The book of Romans was written after 2 Corinthians, presumably from Corinth, as Paul was preparing to leave for Jerusalem to deliver the collection offering, as is evident from Rom. 15.25-27. Paul states that he had received collection gifts from both Macedonia and Achaia (v. 26). In verse 27 he says not only that they had been pleased to contribute, but that in fact they had been obliged to do so. Having cloaked his discussion of the collection in 2 Cor. 8-9 in a context of grace, and having urged the Corinthians to participate voluntarily, it is surprising to find Paul here speak of the collection "gift" as an obligation: εὐδόκησαν γὰρ καὶ ὀφειλέται εἰσὶν αὐτῶν· εἰ γὰρ τοῖς πνευματικοῖς αὐτῶν ἐκοινώνησαν τὰ ἔθνη, ὀφείλουσιν καὶ ἐν τοῖς σαρκικοῖς λειτουργῆσαι αὐτοῖς ("For they were pleased [to contribute], and they are their debtors; for if the Gentiles shared in their spiritual things, they are obliged also to minister to them in material things"; Rom. 15.27). In Rom. 15.27 it is not the Corinthians, however, who have initiated the benefit-exchange, but Jerusalem, to which

the Corinthians are obligated to reciprocate. And where the "benefits" exchanged in 2 Cor. 8-9 appear to be material on both sides, in Romans, the Gentiles offer a material return for spiritual benefits received from Jerusalem. The benefits conveyed from Jerusalem to the Gentiles are understood as the riches of salvation history culminating in Christ's death on the cross, of which Gentile believers have been partakers.[64] The return, then for these spiritual benefits is material, financial aid to help relieve the poverty among the believers in Jerusalem.

How could Paul portray the collection in such seemingly conflicting terms? We must keep in mind that Paul's purpose in each of these passages was entirely different. In 2 Corinthians 8-9 he was attempting to persuade the Corinthians to follow through on their previously promised collection gift and he portrays the collection as part of an exchange of reciprocity. However, Paul does not speak of reciprocity in terms of the Graeco-Roman conventions of benefit-exchange, which entailed an unspoken obligation for the beneficiary to offer a return benefit. Paul, rather, speaks in terms of "surplus-exchange". The benefits granted are gifts, offered from the giver's surplus (περίσσευμα; 2 Cor. 8.14), to help alleviate the recipient's need (ὑστέρημα). In contributing toward the needs of others, each community contributes to the common good. All such contributions are "proportionally equal", that is, each contribution is based on whatever surplus the giver has. As the surplus-exchange proceeds, it contributes to overall equality within the body of Christ, not a strict equality of resources or possessions, but a general redistribution of surplus to meet needs. Paul's use of ἰσότης would have been particularly appropriate, not only to convey the idea of proportional equality, but also since it could refer to the sense of equal status among citizens. Christians of different communities, some with greater resources, some with greater needs, were *equal*; all had the opportunity to share from whatever abundance they had, and all would have opportunity to receive gifts toward their own needs from the surplus of others.

On the other hand, when Paul mentioned the collection in his letter to the Roman believers, his purpose was not to persuade them to make a contribution. He was simply telling them of his itinerary, so they might know when to expect to see him. Perhaps he viewed it as an opportunity to plant the seed of an eventual contribution from Rome, but at the present he already had a collection offering that he was on his way to Jerusalem to

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[64] Moo, *Romans*, 905.

deliver. It is particularly significant that Paul's comment that the Gentiles were indebted to Jerusalem for spiritual benefits was made *after* the collection gifts had been collected, and was perhaps made in hindsight. The comment was not made as a means of persuasion, but was simply a characterization of the project, here clothed in the Graeco-Roman benefaction garb of obligatory return for benefits granted. Removed from the conversation between the parties involved, Paul could now speak of it in this way. When Paul was seeking a voluntary gift from the Corinthians, however, it would have been quite unhelpful for him to use obligation terminology, either to refer to their gift or to Jerusalem's response.

Thus, there is no conflict between Paul's portrayal of the collection or the reciprocity involved with the project in 2 Corinthians 8-9 and Rom. 15.25-27. The comments simply reflect different discussions, with different purposes. It seems likely that Paul's idea of the collection as a material return for spiritual benefits came to him sometime after 2 Corinthians 8-9 was written. One thing is clear, and that is that the perspective of Rom. 15.27 was not the underlying motivation for the collection project. Paul did not initiate the project as a way to reciprocate the spiritual benefits the Gentiles had received. Seen in this light, the request that Paul "remember the poor" in Gal. 2.10 cannot be viewed as part of a reciprocal agreement in which the collection would be the return benefit for spiritual benefits granted by the Jerusalem pillars in approving Paul's gospel to the Gentiles.[65]

7.3.4. Reciprocity and Mutualism

7.3.4.1. The establishment of equality

Let me at this point attempt to draw some conclusions regarding Paul's use of ἰσότης in these two verses. Based on the various uses of the phrase ἐξ ἴσου in the Greek literature and the fact that ἴσος and ἰσότης are often used synonymously, I conclude that the phrase ἐξ ἰσότητος in 8.13 is no more than a general reference to equality, in contradistinction to the *inequality* of ἄλλοις ἄνεσις, ὑμῖν θλῖψις. Regardless of whether the ἵνα in verse 13 serves as a form of imperative as in 8.7,[66] an implied γένηται could be understood as the verb. In this case, the ἐξ ἰσότητος would be essentially synonymous with the concluding phrase in verse 14, ὅπως γένηται

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[65] Against Joubert's conclusion. See Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 99.
[66] As Windisch, 258, suggests.

ἰσότης. Although Paul's use of ἐξ ἰσότητος expresses the idea more abstractly, the notion is clear: rather than the Corinthians experiencing suffering, Paul envisions some form of equality, which he describes in verse 14. The fact that he does initially express this equality more abstractly enables him to avoid specifying or even implying how equality will be achieved. Is it to be man-initiated, and thereby established by the Corinthians, or will it be God imposed? Spicq sees the initial use of ἰσότης as the "motivation" for the collection,[67] a motivation which should alleviate any fears which the Corinthians may have now or in the future regarding suffering as a result of their contribution. Stählin refers to the second use of ἰσότης (v. 14) as "the divine goal", with the implication that equality is two-sided; ἰσότης among believers and believing communities is the divine objective, while from the human perspective, it is "a regulative principle of mutual assistance"[68] which serves the divine goal. When stated in this way, however, there is no connection between the two; God makes his objective known, but it is left to the communities to socially implement it. In other words, only as believers and believing communities work to maintain this equality, will God's objective be realized. Although ἐξ ἰσότητος in verse 13 is abstract, the realization of equality as portrayed in verse 14 does appear to be contingent upon the successful joint participation in reciprocity by the Corinthians and the Jerusalem saints. *If* the Corinthians contribute to the needs in Jerusalem from their surplus, and *if* the Jerusalem church at some point, contributes toward a need of the Corinthians, *then* equality will be realized. It seems, then, that equality depends on man and not on God. Is this, actually the case? I will return to this question below.

7.3.4.2. Identifying Paul's usage of ἰσότης

Can Paul's usage of ἰσότης in 8.13-14 be identified with any of the uses from the Hellenistic literature that we have seen? In Philo, except for proportional equality, his other uses (equality in number, in magnitude, in capacity/force) fall into the category of quantitative equality. Besides these I also identified elsewhere usage of social equality (related to status) and judicial equality (fairness).

It would be difficult to identify ἰσότης in 2 Cor. 8.13-14 as numeric or quantitative equality. Such an interpretation would limit benefits to material gifts, numerically equal in value. This would invariably mean that Paul had in mind financial

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[67] Spicq, *TLNT* 2:230.
[68] Stählin, *TDNT* 3:348.

equality between all the Christian communities, which is clearly not the case; the Macedonians seemingly had needs, but as far as we know Paul does not seek relief for them from other communities.[69]

Regarding social equality in terms of equality of status, it might be tempting to envision here the equality of all believers before God. Stählin suggests that such equality is involved, which he calls the "inner equality in spiritual possessions and eternal salvation, which God in His sovereign grace establishes between Christians without regard for origin or prior history, for achievement or merit".[70] Although believers do in a sense share an equal status before God,[71] the context of our passage does not lend itself to such an interpretation. If, on the other hand, such usage was common in the world of Greek democracy, as suggested above, then it is entirely possible that Paul used ἰσότης in a way to allow for this sense, "appealing to it as something which would be familiar and congenial to his readers".[72]

Among the options for ἰσότης from the Hellenistic literature, having ruled out the above usages as primary for Paul, we are left with Philo's proportional equality. In terms of the reciprocity that Paul suggests in 8.14, it is the περίσσευμα of each community that is exchanged, each party contributing toward the ὑστέρημα of the other. If the saints in Jerusalem did reciprocate with a material gift, their gift certainly would not be equal in value to the Corinthians', since its value would be based not on the Corinthians' need, nor on the Corinthians' original gift (i.e. the Corinthians' περίσσευμα), but on the περίσσευμα of the saints in Jerusalem (ἐκ τοῦ ἔχειν). Paul says, however, that such a reciprocal exchange *will* result in equality. When Philo speaks of proportional equality in *Quis rerum divinarum heres,* he always qualifies τὸ ἴσον or ἡ ἰσότης with ἀναλογία.[73] The only use of ἀναλογία in the New Testament, however, is by Paul in Rom. 12.6, in reference to spiritual gifts; the gift of prophecy is to be used according to the proportion of the faith of the one possessing the gift.[74] If

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[69] Thrall, 540.

[70] Stählin, *TDNT* 3:348.

[71] As mentioned in Gal. 3.28; Rom. 10.12; Col. 3.11.

[72] Thrall, 540.

[73] See §7.3.2.2 above.

[74] κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως. The implication in Rom. 12 is that all gifts are to be exercised in proportion to the faith of the one possessing the gift. In this sense, then, it could be said that all spiritual gifts are "proportionally equal", according to the faith of the possessor of each gift.

Paul has in mind proportional equality in 2 Cor. 8.13-14, he does not express it by pairing ἀναλογία with ἰσότης. The context, however, does suggest proportional equality, since the gifts exchanged which lead to equality are not of equal value. The two parties' gifts could be proportionally equal either in value or in kind. If instead of a material gift, Jerusalem reciprocates with some form of spiritual benefit, if the gift is given from their "spiritual περίσσευμα", then it will be [proportionally] equal to the Corinthians' material gift. Thus equality exists when both parties contribute to the needs of the other from their own surplus.[75]

For Paul, equality entails more than the equal status of Greek democracy. Philo referred to a "rule of proportionality", by which things that are different may be regarded as equal. Paul too has a rule of proportionality, resulting in equality. Paul's rule of proportionality is to give according to what one has (ἐκ τοῦ ἔχειν), according to one's abundance (περίσσευμα), and to give willingly (προθυμία). Such giving is εὐπρόσδεκτος, "acceptable", and when the recipient contributes willingly from his surplus to the needs of the one from whom he has received, then there is ἰσότης, "equality". When Philo speaks of proportional equality, he says that things that are inherently different are *regarded as* equal. Paul, as we have seen, also has in mind proportional equality; however, he does not say the gifts are *regarded as* equal, he simply says there will be equality. The fundamental distinctive of Pauline equality is that it is maintained through reciprocity, through mutualism.[76] The needs of others are met from one's surplus so that one's needs might likewise be met by the surplus of others. In other words, Pauline equality involves Christian κοινωνία and is maintained through mutual interdependence.

The difference between equality in Philo and in Paul is that for Philo, proportional equality is a way of describing a static situation. The sparrow is proportionally equal to the eagle, and in the situation where two citizens contribute to

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[75] Similarly, the gifts of the Macedonians and the Corinthians might be regarded as "equal", even if the amounts differ, provided that each community has given ἐκ τοῦ ἔχειν, that is, from their περίσσευμα. Although their gifts might be regarded as equal in this sense, this does not establish equality between them since they are not contributing to each other's needs.

[76] Justin Meggitt distinguishes mutualism from reciprocity, for reciprocity involves vertical exchanges: "If mutualism has to be understood in the language of 'reciprocity' then it can be said to be, in a rough sense, a form of horizontal reciprocity"; Justin J. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival*, SNTW (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 158.

the *polis* according to the valuation of each one's property, the one who gives 100 drachma is proportionally equal to the one who gives a talent. As Paul relates equality to the collection, although the different gifts are proportionally equal when they are given willingly and from surplus, Paul's point is that through the exchange of such proportionally equal gifts, equality is established, and in the bigger picture, perpetuated. The point is not that each community should end up with equal possessions, but that a continual redistribution of surplus will maintain the equality of the wider Christian community.

7.3.4.3. The divine element in Pauline equality

Where, then, is God in this picture of Christian equality? I pointed out at the beginning of this chapter that there is no mention of χάρις in 8.10-15. It is, however, through his grace that God is involved in the equality mentioned in 8.13-14. "Abundance" in Paul is characteristically associated with grace.[77] God, through his grace, is the one who produces the abundance or surplus from which believers contribute to the needs of others. It is likewise by his grace that believers possess the willingness (προθυμία) to give. God knows where needs exist within the Christian community and he intends that those needs be met from the surplus that others have received. For *this* reason it will be acceptable to him when the Corinthians abound in "this χάρις" (cf. 8.7), acting upon their God-given willingness to give by contributing from their surplus to the needs of the saints in Jerusalem. For the mutualism to be complete, however, the Jerusalem saints must likewise "abound in grace" by recognizing a God-given surplus of their own which can meet some need of the Corinthians, and by willingly contributing toward that need. Thus the equality of which Paul speaks is conditional; it depends both on the dispensing of God's grace, and on the willingness of believers to respond to that grace. As is often the case in Paul, what he presents here is the ideal, not an ideal that cannot be achieved, but an ideal which God desires to see worked out through κοινωνία in Christ, in this specific instance in regards to the needs of the saints in Jerusalem, but also within the wider body of Christ.

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[77] As we have seen through Paul's use of περισσεία words in conjunction with χάρις in Rom. 5.15, 17; 2 Cor. 4.15; 8.2, 7; 9.8.

7.4. Equality, Reciprocity and 2 Cor. 8.15

Having concluded his argument in verse 14, Paul illustrates equality by quoting Ex. 16.18, from the incident of God providing manna for the Israelites in the wilderness.

7.4.1. Exodus 16.18, Paul and Philo

The manna incident from which Paul quotes is described in Ex. 16.8-21. The instructions for collecting manna were apparently given to the heads of the Israelite families, who were told to gather each day one *omer* of manna per person, according to the number in each family's tent. The text says both that they should "gather as much as each should eat" and that they should gather an *omer* for each person in the tent (16.16); presumably an *omer* was to be "as much each should eat".[78] The flow of the text implies that they measured the manna with an *omer* after gathering it.[79] They were also instructed not to save any for the following day, and those who disobeyed this instruction found the manna bred worms and became foul.

Exodus 16.18 is quoted by both Philo and Paul. As can be seen below, both quote precisely the same portion of the verse (which is isolated on the middle line of Ex. 16.18 below), omitting both the preceding statement, "And they measured with an *omer*", and what follows, "they gathered the amount that each man should eat". Philo's citation corresponds exactly with the passage in Exodus, where Paul makes minor changes.[80]

Ex. 16.18	καὶ μετρήσαντες τῷ γομορ οὐκ ἐπλεόνασεν ὁ τὸ πολύ καὶ ὁ τὸ ἔλαττον οὐκ ἠλαττόνησεν ἕκαστος εἰς τοὺς καθήκοντας παρ᾽ ἑαυτῷ συνέλεξαν
Her. 191	οὐκ ἐπλεόνασεν ὁ τὸ πολύ καὶ ὁ τὸ ἔλαττον οὐκ ἠλαττόνησεν
2 Cor. 8.15	ὁ τὸ πολὺ οὐκ ἐπλεόνασεν, καὶ ὁ τὸ ὀλίγον οὐκ ἠλαττόνησεν

There are several interesting parallels between the use of this Exodus passage by Paul and Philo. Both quote precisely the same portion of Ex. 16.18 and both use it to

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[78] As Brevard S Childs, *Exodus: A Commentary* (London: SCM, 1974), 289, argues.

[79] A. H. McNeile, *The Book of Exodus: with commentary and notes*, ed. W. Lock (London: Methuen & Co, 1908), 98, avoids the possibility of any miraculous equalization of the amounts by arguing that the Israelites measured as they collected, so as to avoid collecting an improper amount.

[80] Paul replaces τὸ ἔλαττον with τὸ ὀλίγον and changes the word order slightly, moving the phrase ὁ τὸ πολυ to the beginning of the citation. The LXX of Ex. 16.18 (along with Philo's citation) maintains the word order of the original Hebrew: וְלֹא הֶעְדִּיף הַמַּרְבֶּה וְהַמַּמְעִיט לֹא הֶחְסִיר.

illustrate equality. Not only does each use the manna incident to illustrate equality, but they also both use ἰσότης exactly twice, each in the discussion leading up to their use of Ex. 16.18, and both in constructions following the same pattern: ἐξ [equality] . . . that there might be [equality]:

> Philo: ἐξ ἴσου . . . πεφροντικώς διαφερόντως ἰσότητος
> Paul: ἐξ ἰσότητος . . . ὅπως γένηται ἰσότης

These commonalties lend support to Windisch's suggestion that it is likely that Paul and Philo were familiar with a common tradition regarding this Exodus passage.[81] Since such a tradition is not known, we cannot know precisely how this text would have been read. As it stands the text needs to be supplemented to make sense, and so we must consider what might be added. Considering the text alone, away from its surroundings in Exodus 16, one might be inclined to insert a participle form of ἔχω, as below, resulting in a translation potentially appropriate to a discussion of equality.

> οὐκ ἐπλεόνασεν ὁ τὸ πολύ [ἔχων] καὶ ὁ τὸ ἔλαττον [ἔχων] οὐκ ἠλαττόνησεν[82]
>
> He did not have more who [had] much and he who [had] little did not have less.

On the other hand, examining the verse in its context in Exodus 16 with particular attention to the verse immediately preceding it, we find in Ex. 16.17 the same phrase ὁ τὸ πολὺ καὶ ὁ τὸ ἔλαττον, but preceded by καὶ συνέλεξαν: καὶ συνέλεξαν ὁ τὸ πολὺ καὶ ὁ τὸ ἔλαττον ("and they gathered, some much and some little"). The repetition of the exact phrase ὁ τὸ πολὺ καὶ ὁ τὸ ἔλαττον in verse 18 makes it unnecessary to repeat the verb, for the ellipsis is obvious. Thus, to give the proper sense to a citation of Ex. 16.18 away from its context, the aorist participle of συλλέγω may be added:

> οὐκ ἐπλεόνασεν ὁ τὸ πολύ [σύλλεξας] καὶ ὁ τὸ ἔλαττον [σύλλεξας] οὐκ ἠλαττόνησεν
>
> He did not have more who [gathered] much and he who [gathered] little did not have less.

Since neither Philo nor Paul clarifies this potential ambiguity when quoting the verse, we must speculate whether, a) the common tradition with which they were both familiar would have clarified the issue, b) their readers would have been familiar

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[81] Windisch, 259.

[82] As noted above, the Greek word order, symmetrical around καί, follows the Hebrew order.

enough with the original context of Exodus 16 to know that it should be read with συλλέγω, or c) the passage should be read independent of its original context, thus reading it with a verb that would seem natural, such as ἔχω. I will give more attention to this question below as I discuss the passage in Philo and Paul.

7.4.2. Equality in Philo's Her. *191*

Philo offers the manna incident of Ex. 16.18 as an example of proportional equality in *Her.* 191.[83] Philo's interpretation is characteristically allegorical: the manna is wisdom – heavenly food for the soul, which is distributed by the divine *logos*. As in Ex. 16.18, each is to gather εἰς τοὺς καθήκοντας,[84] which, according to Philo, does not mean that each one gathers for the others in his tent (as Ex. 16.16 specifies), but rather he gathers for his own "reasonings and manners" (λογισμοὶ καὶ τρόποι), that is, he gathers wisdom to feed his own soul. Although Philo does not mention that measurement was made with an *omer*, he does interpret the measuring after having quoted the Exodus passage: οὐκ ἐπλεόνασεν ὁ τὸ πολύ, καὶ ὁ τὸ ἔλαττον οὐκ ἠλαττόνησεν, ἡνίκα τῷ τῆς ἀναλογίας ἐχρήσαντο θαυμαστῷ καὶ περιμαχήτῳ μέτρῳ ("since they used the wonderful and precious measure of proportion"). The "measure of proportion" corresponds to the *omer* of the Exodus account. This marvelous measure provided the correct amount of wisdom for each, the "allotted amount" (ἀποκληρόω προνοητικῶς); none lacked wisdom, nor did any have more

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[83] Here is the complete text of *Her.* 191: ἔτι τοίνυν τὴν οὐράνιον τροφὴν – σοφία δέ ἐστιν – τῆς ψυχῆς, ἣν καλεῖ μάννα, διανέμει πᾶσι τοῖς χρησομένοις θεῖος λόγος ἐξ ἴσου, πεφροντικώς διαφερόντως ἰσότητος. μαρτυρεῖ δὲ Μωυσῆς λέγων· "οὐκ ἐπλεόνασεν ὁ τὸ πολύ, καὶ ὁ τὸ ἔλαττον οὐκ ἠλαττόνησεν", ἡνίκα τῷ τῆς ἀναλογίας ἐχρήσαντο θαυμαστῷ καὶ περιμαχήτῳ μέτρῳ· δι' οὗ συνέβη μαθεῖν, ὅτι ἕκαστος "εἰς τοὺς καθήκοντας" παρ' ἑαυτῷ συνέλεξεν οὐκ ἀνθρώπους μᾶλλον ἢ λογισμοὺς καὶ τρόπους· ὃ γὰρ ἐπέβαλεν ἑκάστῳ τοῦτ' ἀπεκληρώθη προνοητικῶς, ὡς μήθ' ὑστερῆσαι μήτ' αὖ περιττεῦσαι.

"Now, therefore, the divine word distributes equally to those who have need [*or* to those who will make use] of the heavenly food of the soul – which is wisdom – which he calls *manna*, being especially careful to maintain the principle of equality. And Moses bears witness, saying, 'He who [gathered] much did not have more, and he who [gathered] less did not have less,' since they used the wonderful and precious measure of proportion. Through this it has come to be learned that [when Moses said that] each one gathered 'for his own' that were with him; [he meant] not for men, but rather for reasonings and manners. For whatever one received, this was deliberately allotted to him, so that there would neither be a lack, nor would there be an overabundance" (my translation).

[84] Lit., "as is appropriate"; BDAG, s.v. καθήκω.

than he needed, the divine *logos* distributed equally (ἐξ ἴσου) so as to maintain equality (ἰσότης).

Philo thus uses Ex. 16.18 to illustrate proportional equality: "The one who had much [wisdom] did not have more, and the one who had little [wisdom] did not have less." Each ended up with the share of wisdom that was appropriate for him. All did not receive the same amount; but each received an "equal" amount. Again we see that for Philo, equality is a static, descriptive state. Although different individuals received different amounts of wisdom, the amounts were not equalized; they were measured with a mysterious proportion-measure, which demonstrated the amounts to be (proportionally) equal.

7.4.3. Paul's Use of Ex. 16.18 in 2 Cor. 8.15

Paul's citation of Ex. 16.18 concludes his discussion on equality in 2 Corinthians 8. He introduces the quote with the common introductory formula, καθὼς γέγραπται,[85] "As it is written". Introducing it in this way makes it clear that Paul wants the verse identified as scripture. Perhaps he uses the formula here to set the citation apart from his discussion, to make it clear that this is an illustration and not a continuation of his argument. I have shown that it is likely that Paul was drawing on traditional material regarding equality, because of the several parallels with Philo's discussion. Although Philo's interpretation of the passage is allegorical, this does not mean that the tradition he was drawing from necessarily interpreted the text allegorically. It is possible that Paul has made use of this same tradition, but adapted it to his own understanding of Christian equality.

In the present discussion on equality, Paul has just concluded his elaborate explanation of how the Corinthians' gift to Jerusalem may be acceptable; it is acceptable if it is given willingly, from their surplus, thus contributing to the ethos of equality. Paul chooses to illustrate this ethos of equality with this excerpt from Ex. 16.18. I have discussed the need for the addition of participles in the reading of this verse and suggested two possibilities. How the verse is read in this present context will depend on how it is determined that Paul is using the Old Testament citation. There seem to be two options regarding how Paul might have used this verse. In one case the

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[85] Although there are other scriptural allusions in 2 Cor. 8-9, the formula καθὼς γέγραπται occurs again only in 9.9.

verse is detached from its original context and thus applied more freely, while in the other case, it carries with it the significance of the manna incident in Exodus 16.

I first want to consider the latter option. Certainly the manna incident was a well-known example of God's provision for Israel in the wilderness and his desire to test their obedience. The fact that it may have been part of a tradition associated with equality with which both Paul and Philo were familiar further illustrates the prominence of the account. Of course, for the citation to carry with it the greater significance of the broader context of the manna incident, Paul's readers would need to be familiar with the story in Exodus 16.[86] This being the case the readers could be expected to supply the aorist participle of συλλέγω when reading the verse: "The one who gathered (ὁ σύλλεξας) much did not have more, and the one who gathered (ὁ σύλλεξας) little did not have less." How then, might Paul intend the citation to illustrate the point of equality he had been discussing? Some differences between the situations of Exodus 16 and 2 Corinthians 8 stand out. Although in each case the end result may be viewed as equality, the process of arriving at the state of equality is quite different. In 2 Corinthians, the Corinthians and the believers in Jerusalem each share from their own surplus to meet the needs of the other. In the manna incident, however, the traditional interpretation is that a miraculous equalization of the manna occurred. The Israelites collected more or less than had been prescribed, either knowingly or unknowingly, but when they measured it with an *omer*, the amounts had been equalized so that each had the right amount.[87] Some commentators have referred to this miraculous equalization as *forced equality*.[88] In a variation of this interpretation, the miracle occurred in the falling of the manna such that precisely an *omer* fell to each individual, which was verified

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[86] Meyer, 359, is of the opinion that "Paul presupposes that his readers are aware of the reference and of the connection of the passage."

[87] Childs, *Exodus*, 289; Rabbi Samuel ben Meir (Rashban) as translated in Martin I. Lockshin, ed., *Rashban's Commentary on Exodus: An Annotated Translation* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 175; William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 1-18: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 2 (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 596; John I. Durham, *Exodus*, WBC 3 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 225.

[88] Plummer, 245. The terminology of "forced equality," however, views the situation negatively, assuming that the Israelites needed regulation to guard against greed and a desire to hoard. Perhaps it might be better viewed positively as "gracious equality," which, rather than limiting those who might try to collect more than their share, instead graciously provided for those who, for whatever reason, did not gather enough to meet their needs.

after the gathering, when the amounts were measured.[89] While the end result is equality in both 2 Corinthians 8 and in Exodus 16, the process of obtaining equality is not. In the equalization of the manna, divine intervention achieves the desired result. In the collection, however, while God supplies the surplus which becomes the source of meeting others' needs, he relies on the willing participation of believers to share their wealth with others who are in need.

Some have tried to find more points of similarity between the manna incident and the collection. It has been suggested that while the Israelites indeed collected variable amounts of manna, some more and some less than had been prescribed, rather than a miraculous equalization occurring, the Israelites who had collected "more" simply shared with those who had collected "less".[90] The miracle that occurred each day was that corporately, they always collected the right amount, which became evident as they shared with each other. Clearly, such an explanation would provide a very apt illustration for the collection for the saints in Jerusalem; the Israelites who had a surplus of manna shared with those who had need. If there were some indication of this sharing in the Exodus text, this indeed would make an appropriate illustration for Paul. The Exodus account, however, refers to no such sharing to achieve equalization.

In another attempt to find reason behind Paul's use of Ex. 16.18, Richard Hays says that "Paul taps Exodus 16 and then walks away, leaving the reader to draw out the sap".[91] Hays thus suggests that Paul's purpose in referring to the manna incident is to emphasize for the Corinthians God's intention for his people to trust him for daily provision. Just as the Israelites were not to stockpile manna, but were to rely on God's provision for each day's needs, so too the Corinthians ought not to hoard their surplus, but instead willingly share their excess with the community in Jerusalem, relying on God to provide for their own future needs. Beyond this, Hays says that Paul implies a series of silent echoes, which the reader can draw out through the reference to the Exodus text. In essence, it seems that Hays' explanation for Paul's obscure use of this text is to allow the reference to Exodus 16 to provide any parallel imaginable between the Corinthians and the Israelites in the wilderness. Such an interpretation not only

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[89] See Louis Ginzberg, "Bible Times and Characters from the Exodus to the Death of Moses", in *The Legend of the Jews* III (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1911), 46.

[90] Spicq, *TLNT* 2:230-31.

[91] Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 90.

presumes the readers are very familiar with the Exodus passage, which is not entirely impossible, but it also leaves the door open too wide to conclude that Paul had anything specific in mind in using Ex. 16.18 to illustrate equality for the Corinthians.

I will now consider the other option, that Paul intended to disassociate Ex. 16.18 from its context and simply use it for a verbal illustration of equality. It is not inconceivable that the verse as quoted by Paul and Philo had become a common anecdotal phrase or simply had become so common through its use in the equality tradition, that it was easily detached from Exodus 16. Thus, including it without commentary and without supplementary participles could have suited Paul's purpose. In this case it would seem that Paul is interested not only in using the verse to illustrate equality, but also to illustrate the reciprocity of mutualism that has been his application of equality. If Paul does intend the citation to be read detached from its original context, then he would expect the reader to supply the needed participles that seemed most natural. In this case it might be read: "As it is written: The one who [had] much did not end up with more, and the one who [had] little was not left with less", illustrating the equality of the Corinthian situation. "The one who had much" would refer to the Corinthians and their περίσσευμα and "the one who had less", the community in Jerusalem with their ὑστέρημα. Through the redistribution of surplus, the result would be equality. Without reference to "gathering", the citation thus applies more readily to the discussion of equality in 2 Cor. 8.13-14.

It is difficult to choose between these two options. On the one hand, it is hard to envision Paul citing a verse from the manna episode without drawing out theological significance from the incident, such as God's miraculous provision, both of the manna itself and in the resultant equality of the amounts collected. With divine grace fundamental to the discussion in 2 Corinthians 8-9, one might also expect Paul to make a connection between God's provision of manna to sustain the Israelites and his provision of grace to sustain Christians. The associations of Christ as the bread from heaven in John 6 with Christ and the grace of God in 2 Cor. 8.9 could also provide rich echoes in Paul's discussion. Yet Paul seems to have used Ex. 16.18, a verse potentially rich in theological implications, in a relatively insignificant way. Contextually, in 2 Corinthians 8, it seems easiest to apply the Ex. 16.18 citation by distancing it from its original context and simply accepting it as a verbal illustration of equality, although this would seem like a disappointing application of scripture for Paul. Perhaps, however, Paul leaves the door open for two levels of understanding. For the Gentile reader who

might not be familiar with the Exodus context, the conclusion of Plummer might be appropriate, "The quotation hardly illustrates more than the idea of equality of some sort",[92] or that of Thrall, who concludes, "The point of the quotation is simply to validate the principle of equality".[93] On the other hand, for those familiar with the manna incident in its Exodus context, the citation allows for a deeper connection between the equality of gift-exchange in 2 Corinthians 8-9 and the divine-human framework of equality in the Exodus passage.[94]

7.5. Conclusion: Willingness, Equality, Reciprocity and Grace

In 2 Cor. 8.10-15 Paul tells the Corinthians that now is the time to complete their involvement in the collection project. Having previously encouraged them to "abound in this χάρις" (8.7), he now tells them how to do so. They should allow the grace of God to abound in them, its evidence demonstrated through their willingness to contribute to the needs of the saints in Jerusalem followed up by their action of contributing from the material surplus with which God supplies them. They can rest assured that their contribution is not to produce hardship for them, but, through the principle of equality, will inspire the Jerusalem believers likewise to meet some need of the Corinthians from their own surplus. Unlike Philo, who describes equality as a static, descriptive state, Paul portrays it as a dynamic process of equalization where two or more parties contribute from their surplus to meet others' needs. The equality is not a quantifiable equivalence of surplus or a material equivalence of meeting needs. Rather, it is the process of equalization within the body of Christ where those who have a surplus share with others who have needs.

Thus Paul demonstrates through this practical matter of the collection, that Christian fellowship, κοινωνία, between fellow members of the body of Christ whether located near or far, is characterized by what might be labeled "Christian equality".

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[92] Plummer, 345.

[93] Thrall, 543.

[94] There is an interesting parallel in Prov. 11.24: "There are some who scatter their own, and make it more: and there are some also who gather, yet have less." (εἰσὶν οἳ τὰ ἴδια σπείροντες πλείονα ποιοῦσιν εἰσὶν καὶ οἳ συνάγοντες ἐλαττονοῦνται). The final word, ἐλαττονέω ("to have less, have too little"; BDAG, s.v. ἐλαττονέω), occurs both in Ex. 16.18 and Paul's citation in 2 Cor. 8.15. Interestingly, this passage in Proverbs contrasts those who scatter generously from their own possessions with those who gather unto themselves. The former ironically end up with more, while the latter are left with less. In the manna incident, however, all gather but he who gathers more, in the end does not have more, and he who gathers less οὐκ ἠλαττόνησεν.

Needs within the Christian family are to be met by others in the family to whom God provides a surplus. This form of reciprocity, or mutualism, establishes a mutual interdependence, which acknowledges the presence of the grace of God and for which God receives an abundance of thanks.

CHAPTER 8

GRACE & THANKSGIVING IN 2 CORINTHIANS 8-9

8.1. Introduction

An essential aspect of gift giving in the ancient world was the proper return of gratitude for gifts received. It is therefore not surprising to find references to thanksgiving included by Paul in contexts pertaining to giving and receiving, as is the case in the concluding section of his discussion of the collection in 2 Corinthians 8-9. What form do expressions of thanksgiving take in 2 Corinthians 8-9? How is gratitude expressed and to whom? Are expressions of gratitude in this passage consistent with the way they are expressed elsewhere in Paul's letters and beyond Paul in the structures of first-century society? What role does gratitude play in the collection, and more widely in the conveyance of grace? These are the questions I want to address in this chapter as I analyze expressions of thanksgiving in 2 Corinthians 8-9, focusing primarily on 2 Cor. 9.11-15.

The first major section in this chapter (§8.2) contains the exegesis of passages in 2 Corinthians 8-9 where thanksgiving is mentioned. These include two actual expressions of thanksgiving where Paul uses χάρις to express thanks to God (8.16 and 9.15), and two references to the thanksgiving (εὐχαριστία) that Paul anticipates resulting from a successful completion to the collection project. In the second major section (§8.3), I discuss thanksgiving in Paul according to three categories of worship. In §8.4, I discuss thanksgiving in Paul in connection with the paradigm of giving introduced in Chapter 3. In §8.5, I offer my conclusions.

8.2. Explicit Expressions of Thanksgiving in 2 Corinthians 8-9

8.2.1. The Formula χάρις τῷ θεῷ

Paul uses the formula χάρις τῷ θεῷ in 2 Cor. 8.16 and 9.15 to express thanks to God. This formula is found throughout Paul's letters, sometimes beginning a new section, while at other times at the conclusion of a section. In 8.16 there is an example of the former; having concluded in 8.15 his exhortation to the Corinthians to make their contribution, Paul begins a section where he commends those he is sending to Corinth to collect their offering. Beginning with Titus, Paul writes, "Thanks be to God (χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ) who put the same earnestness on your behalf in the heart of Titus".[1] The other occurrence of this phrase in 9.15 concludes a section. In fact, it concludes the entire discussion, forming an *inclusio* with 8.1. In 9.15 Paul writes, "Thanks be to God (χάρις τῷ θεῷ) for his indescribable gift".

The use of χάρις to express gratitude was common in the Graeco-Roman world, especially in Greek literature as an appropriate response to the deities for benefits conferred.[2] It has been suggested that, besides the Greek influence, the formula χάρις τῷ θεῷ also reflects influence from Jewish tradition in formulas offering blessings to God.[3] Paul uses the formula six times in his letters to express thanks to God for various divine workings.[4] Although the phrase is rather common in Paul, and despite Barrett's comment that "it is so idiomatic with Paul as to have no special significance

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[1] See discussion of this passage in §6.1.1.1 above.

[2] Cf. BDAG, s.v. χάρις, 5 for examples from Xenophon and Epictetus. From a third century BC papyrus, perhaps the oldest extant occurrence of the formula χάρις τοῖς θεοῖς (ἔστω) is noted by Peter T. O'Brien, *Introductory Thanksgivings in the Letters of Paul*, NovTSup 49 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977), 7, and Schubert, *Form and Function*, 159. See also Wetter, *Charis*, 206-207.

[3] See Reinhard Deichgräber, *Gotteshymnus und Christushymnus in der frühen Christenheit: Untersuchungen zu Form, Sprache und Stil der frühchristlichen Hymnen*, ed. K. G. Kuhn, SUNT 5 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), 43, and James M. Robinson, "Die Hodajot-Formel in Gebet und Hymnus des Frühchristentums", in *Apophoreta: Festschrift für Ernst Haenchen zu seinem 70. Geburtstag*, eds. W. Eltster and F. H. Kettler, BZNW 30 (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1964), 230.

[4] The usual word order is χάρις τῷ θεῷ and appears in Rom. 6.17; 7.25; 2 Cor. 8.16; 9.15, while the inverted form (τῷ θεῷ χάρις) appears in 1 Cor. 15.57; 2 Cor. 2.14. The formula appears nowhere else in the NT, although χάριν ἔχω appears twice: in 1 Tim. 1.12, thanks is expressed to Christ Jesus, and in 2 Tim. 1.3, to God, akin to Paul's opening thanksgivings which normally use εὐχαριστέω.

here",[5] I would again suggest that it is better to assume that due to the special emphasis on grace in these two chapters, *no* use of χάρις in 2 Corinthians 8-9 can go unnoticed or be said to have no significance.[6]

Any expression of thanksgiving inherently involves several elements:[7] the one expressing thanks, the one to whom thanks is offered, and that for which thanks is offered.[8] In 2 Cor. 8.16 Paul is the one expressing thanks, which he directs to God. That for which he is thankful is the σπουδή ("eagerness") which God has placed in the heart of Titus. In using the formula with χάρις as opposed to the verb εὐχαριστέω, Paul opens the door for others to join him in this expression of thanksgiving. Although it is more impersonal to say "thanks be to God" than "I thank God", the formula as an expression of worship promotes a wider recognition of that which is worthy of thanks, and thereby encourages others to be thankful as well. The formula serves as an invitation to join in Paul's expression of thanks. Such an expression differs from the introductory thanksgiving formulas in Paul's letters which use εὐχαριστέω; when Paul uses the χάρις formula, he often includes himself as a recipient of blessings for which he is offering thanks.[9]

Paul's expression of thanks in this verse underlines the working of the grace of God which is present throughout the entire discussion. The zeal in Titus's heart toward the Corinthians[10] for which Paul offers his thanks is not only the result of the grace of

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[5] Barrett, 227.

[6] With regard to Paul's use of χάρις here to express thanks, Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 92, comments, "Obviously, Paul weighs his words carefully when choosing the term χάρις".

[7] See Mullins, "Formulas": 382, for the typical structure of ancient Greek epistolary thanksgivings.

[8] My consideration of thanksgiving is to be differentiated from the discussions of epistolary forms of thanksgiving in Paul (see comments throughout this chapter relevant to the discussion). Rather than formulaic epistolary thanksgivings, I am concerned with thanksgiving as it relates to the giving and receiving of gifts, specifically in connection with χάρις.

[9] See Joseph Wobbe, *Der Charis-Gedanke bei Paulus: Ein Betrag zur neutestamentlichen Theologie*, ed. M. Meinertz, NTAbh 13, no. 3 (Münster: Aschendorffschen, 1932), 82, says that for expressing thanksgiving, the sense of χάρις and εὐχαριστία is not exactly the same. χάρις refers more to a single act of thanks, while εὐχαριστία expresses the broader sense of gratitude. I would instead distinguish χάρις used to express thanks, as I have above, as an expression of worship that invites others to join in expressing thanksgiving to God.

[10] Scholars debate with whom Titus's zeal is being compared. See my discussion in §6.1.1.1 .

God, it is also the *same* zeal which God had given to the Macedonians with regard to their involvement in the collection.[11] Although Paul here expresses thanks for that which Titus has received, the implication is that thanksgiving should be offered to God for the fact that this *same* grace is available to *all* believers. In the first place, Paul has in mind the grace of God at work in the Corinthians, but in the second place, he would thank God for the grace that is available to be effective in *all* believers. The grace of God not only enables the material giving for the collection, it also empowers the attitudes of the givers. Thus Thrall rightly comments: "every aspect of the collection is seen by Paul to be due to divine grace, including the zeal of Titus on the Corinthians' behalf".[12] Although χάρις τῷ θεῷ is a common formula, it has particular significance for Paul who recognizes God's χάρις as the enabling element for Christians and the Christian life.[13] χάρις is a common bond which unites all Christians with one another because of their union with God in Christ. For this reason, that which in secular usage expresses simple appreciation or gratitude, for Paul articulates the dependence of believers upon God for his grace. Much more than a formula, then, χάρις τῷ θεῷ expresses thanksgiving (χάρις) to God for his manifest grace (χάρις) given to all believers.[14] In 2 Cor. 8.16 there is a specific example of this grace in the zeal that God has put in the heart of Titus toward the Corinthians.

The other occurrence of the formula, in 9.15, serves as an appropriate conclusion to Paul's entire discussion of the collection in 2 Corinthians 8-9: Χάρις τῷ

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[11] Hafemann, 360, draws out this point well: "As with the Macedonians (cf. 8.1), *God* is the one who put the desire to help the Corinthians in Titus's heart. Titus is commended not because of his own innate qualities, but because of the way in which God has worked in his life."

[12] Thrall, 544.

[13] The cleverness of Paul's formulation of these two chapters is evident in the way that he can take such a formula which has secular usage and use it to further emphasize the underlying theme of the argument (χάρις). Betz has discussed the administrative aspects of these two chapters, particularly in connection with this section of recommendation for those who will shortly go to Corinth. With regard to the recommendation of Titus in 8.16-17, Betz, 70, points out that there is no reference to the fact that Titus has previously been mentioned in 8.6. Betz's explanation for this is that it demonstrates that 8.16-17 follows the requirements of a formal recommendation.

[14] Peter T. O'Brien, "Thanksgiving within the Structure of Pauline Theology", in *Pauline Studies: Essays Presented to Professor F. F. Bruce on His 70th Birthday*, eds. D. A. Hagner and M. J. Harris (Exeter: Paternoster, 1980), 62, points out that where Paul offers many grounds for giving thanks, "the great emphasis falls upon the mighty work of God in Christ bringing salvation through the gospel. . . . The majority of the Pauline references are in the context of God's grace given in Christ".

θεῷ ἐπὶ τῇ ἀνεκδιηγήτῳ αὐτοῦ δωρεᾷ. Here we find the only occurrence of the gift term δωρεά in 2 Corinthians 8-9, which Paul has saved to use at the climactic end of the discussion to stress χάρις as a divine gift. The term is used exclusively in the New Testament to refer to divine gifts and in Paul is always used to convey the gift nature of the grace of God (see §4.2 above). The gift is ἀνεκδιήγητος ("indescribable") because its significance and far-reaching implications are beyond comprehension or adequate expression with words.[15] The ambiguity of the expression "his gift" in 9.15 further underlies its indescribable nature: The gift is the grace of God, but it is God's grace through the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ who gave himself for us.[16] The two are intertwined and indistinguishable.[17]

In summary, Paul's adaptation of the Hellenistic formula χάρις τῷ θεῷ serves as an expression of thanksgiving to God for the abundant benefits of his χάρις. It is especially appropriate in the context of 2 Corinthians 8-9 where Paul's emphasis in relation to the collection project is upon grace and where the term χάρις appears in abundance. The expression χάρις τῷ θεῷ in 9.15 also functions with 8.1 as an *inclusio* framing the entire χάρις discussion of the collection.

8.2.2. "Grace" Returned to God – 9.11-15

8.2.2.1. The supply of abundant grace

Before turning to 9.11-15 it will be helpful to recap the preceding verses. In 9.8-10,[18] Paul emphasizes the abundance of God's grace given to believers, specifically the Corinthians, who have hesitated in completing their contribution toward the collection. Paul points them to the source of all giving: God, who has given them abundant grace in their salvation, is the same God who continues to give his grace so that believers (*viz.* the Corinthians) can in turn give to others. Paul has clearly stated God's provision (9.8, 11), which is based in his initial outpouring of grace in Christ (8.9). Paul has illustrated it through scriptural quotation (8.15; 9.9) and used metaphor by way of other scriptural allusions (9.6-10) to make it clear that the grace of God *will* provide the Corinthians

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[15] Cf. Rom. 11.33; Eph. 3.18-19.

[16] Harris, 660, offers four views on the identification of δωρεά here, himself concluding "δωρεά in this verse refers to Christ and the salvation he brings", which suggests the same interpretation I have offered above.

[17] See 2 Cor. 8.9; Gal. 1.4; 2.20; Eph. 5.2, 25; 1 Tim. 2.6; Titus 2.14.

[18] See the previous discussion of this passage in §6.2.3.

with ample resources from which to give. The obvious reference is to material resources, and we have seen that Paul has in mind the Corinthians giving from their περίσσευμα, the abundance or excess with which God's χάρις supplies them (cf. 8.14). Paul expresses himself with a degree of ambiguity when he refers to God's supply of πᾶσα χάρις for every good work (9.8) and the "seed" which God supplies and multiplies from which he brings about a great harvest (9.10). The gift of χάρις consists in two elements, the goodwill of the giver and the actual gift it produces (see §§3.2.4, 3.3.1.3). The action that Paul desires of the Corinthians is itself an act of χάρις (cf. 8.6-7); for them to give properly toward the collection, they must give an actual gift, but they must act from sincere goodwill ("God loves a cheerful giver"; 9.7). Paul's concern is for them to realize that their act of χάρις is itself empowered by God's χάρις, initially given in Christ, but continually supplied to believers. Therefore, the abundant χάρις of 9.8 which God supplies is itself the seed of verse 10: the seed is χάρις – God's enabling both spiritually *and* materially. The Corinthians' goodwill is rooted in the grace of Christ. As they share from their material abundance, not only does their physical gift have a multiplying effect which "increases the harvest of their righteousness" (9.10), but their gracious act likewise multiplies the spread of χάρις in motivating goodwill in those to whom they give and in the resulting thanksgiving which is offered to God, which I will now address.

8.2.2.2. Enriched by grace – 2 Cor. 9.11

At verse 11 Paul's discussion takes a turn. Until now, he has been speaking of what God's grace can and will accomplish in and through the Corinthians. His aim has been to see the Corinthians make a generous contribution toward the needs of the saints in Jerusalem, but his underlying objective has been to see God's grace unleashed in the Corinthians, so that they would voluntarily contribute as cheerful givers. Paul's confidence in the grace of God is such that, having exhausted his own persuasive techniques,[19] he now envisions the Corinthians' contribution as complete. From this point until the end of the discussion in verse 15, he no longer speaks of what God *is able* to do or of how God's grace *will* abound, but he talks of the results of the Corinthians' generous contribution, as if the gift has already been conveyed to the saints in Jerusalem. In these final verses he speaks only in the present tense, perhaps as he

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[19] Although using various persuasive techniques, Paul would no doubt say that God is with him in his argument: "Not I, but the grace of God with me" (cf. 1 Cor. 15.10).

dreams of how the reality of it will be played out, and he talks about what God will receive back in return for the grace that he has bestowed.

The participle phrase of 9.11 provides (in the present tense) a summary of the general point Paul has been making in the previous few verses, applied here directly to the Corinthians:[20] ἐν παντὶ πλουτιζόμενοι εἰς πᾶσαν ἁπλότητα.[21] Paul's use of the impersonal passive of πλουτίζω implies God as the agent;[22] the Corinthians' "enrichment" (πλουτιζόμενοι; 9.11) is the result of God "abounding all grace" (πᾶσαν χάριν περισσεῦσαι; 9.8) to them. Through the abundance of God's grace (v. 9), which for the Corinthians is the supply and multiplication of his "seed" (v. 10), he has enriched them in everything. This enrichment refers to "both their economic and their spiritual wealth",[23] which impacts their attitude toward giving (i.e. their "goodwill") and the material means from which they are able to give. Paul thus "emphasizes the close relationship between spiritual wealth and the sharing of material possessions with others".[24]

Paul's words here suggestively refer us again to 1 Cor. 1.4-7, the introductory thanksgiving passage of 1 Corinthians.[25] This passage offers rich parallels to the

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[20]As Furnish, 450 suggests.

[21] Some take the present participle πλουτιζόμενοι as standing for a finite verb (Barrett, 239; Furnish, 443), but the meaning is not greatly affected either way.

[22] As here in 9.11, so also in 1 Cor. 1.5 (ἐν παντὶ ἐπλουτίσθητε). It could be argued that Paul sees himself as the one making them rich – the intermediate agent – as in 2 Cor. 6.10 where Paul is the subject of πλουτίζω (active voice), "making many [spiritually] rich". Thus when Paul tells the Corinthians that they have been enriched (1 Cor. 1.5; 2 Cor. 9.11; πλουτίζω, passive voice), he could have in mind himself as the one who enriched them *through* his ministry of the gospel, recognizing that the spiritual riches they receive are ultimately from God (cf. use of πλουτέω in Rom. 10.12; 2 Cor. 8.9). The "divine passive" is more likely here, however.

[23] Thrall, 585.

[24] Stephan Joubert, "Religious Reciprocity in 2 Corinthians 9:6-15: Generosity and Gratitude as Legitimate Responses to the χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ", *Neot* 33, no. 1 (1999): 85.

[25] Although it is generally accepted that the "introductory thanksgivings" in Paul follow epistolary form, this does not mean that the content of the Pauline thanksgivings is hollow. O'Brien says that although Paul made use of the Greek epistolary form of introductory thanksgiving, the epistolary form did not control Paul's content in his thanksgivings; see Peter T. O'Brien, "Thanksgiving and the Gospel in Paul", *NTS* 21 (1975): 146. Paul used and modified his thanksgivings according to his purpose. In fact, with regard to the grace of God in introductory thanksgivings, O'Brien, *Introductory Thanksgivings*, 111, points out that "In no other introductory thanksgiving is the grace of God found to be the basis or ground for the giving of thanks". Thus, the significance

discussion of grace and thanksgiving and although I have referred to this passage several times already, I will now discuss it in more detail.

In 1 Cor. 1.4, Paul offers personal thanksgiving to God (εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου),[26] the basis of his thanks being ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ ἡ δοθεῖσα ὑμῖν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησου (v. 4). This χάρις is clearly related to χαρίσματα ("spiritual gifts"; v. 7), and two such manifestations are mentioned (λόγος, γνῶσις; v. 5). The result for the Corinthians of receiving this grace, Paul tells them, is: ἐν παντὶ ἐπλουτίσθητε. This is the same terminology encountered in 2 Cor. 9.11, where Paul again tells the Corinthians that in everything they have been made rich (ἐν παντὶ πλουτιζόμενοι). Their "wealth" in 1 Cor. 1.5 was evidenced in their spiritual gifts.[27] Throughout his letters, the apostle Paul uses a number of terms to express abundance, including πλουτίζω and its cognates (as in 1 Cor. 1.5 and 2 Cor. 9.11), and περισσεύω and its cognates, as we have seen. In 2 Cor. 8.7, Paul reminds the Corinthians of their "riches", using περισσεύω rather than πλουτίζω: ἐν παντὶ περισσεύετε, πίστει καὶ λόγῳ καὶ γνώσει καὶ πάσῃ σπουδῇ καὶ τῇ ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐν ὑμῖν ἀγάπῃ. In 8.7, however, he widens the impact of God's grace beyond the specific χαρίσματα mentioned in 1 Cor. 1.5, by including other qualities as well.

There are, then, different contexts in which Paul reminds the Corinthians of the "riches" they have in Christ through the grace of God given to them. Such grace worked through them in χαρίσματα for the building up of the Christian community. It likewise was to work through them in generating generous hearts and open pocketbooks. In any

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of the mention of grace in 1 Cor. 1.4 is not in any way diminished by the fact that it occurs in an introductory thanksgiving.

Interestingly, conclusions regarding the influences behind Paul's "thanksgiving periods" are varied: Schubert, *Form and Function*, 183, finds Paul's thanksgivings serving an epistolary function found in Hellenistic letters. O'Brien, "Thanksgiving and the Gospel", 147-48, finds additional influences in the OT, early Christian worship, and early apostolic preaching. Peter Arzt, "The 'Epistolary Introductory Thanksgiving' in the Papyri and in Paul", *NovT* 36, no. 1 (1994): 44, argues that no such Graeco-Roman epistolary formula existed during the first century which would have influenced the letters of the New Testament. (See Jeffrey T. Reed, "Are Paul's Thanksgivings 'Epistolary'?" *JSNT* 61 (1996): 87-99, for a rebuttal to Arzt.) See also Wetter, *Charis*, 202-206.

[26] Paul's expression of thanks in 1 Cor. 1.4, εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ for χάρις received, is echoed four times in 2 Cor. 8-9, in 8.16; 9.11, 12, 15.

[27] According to O'Brien, *Introductory Thanksgivings*, 116, "the presence of such wealth was a sign that grace had been given".

case, from Paul's perspective they were indeed rich, for God's grace had abounded to them, and would continue to do so.

Returning to 2 Cor. 9.11, Paul writes that the Corinthians' enrichment is εἰς πᾶσαν ἁπλότητα ("for all generosity"). The quality ἁπλότης was discussed previously in connection with the Macedonians in 2 Cor. 8.2.[28] I argued there that an appropriate translation is "sincere generosity", focusing on the integrity of the heart rather than the quantity of the gift. In that passage, Paul described the outworking of the grace given in the Macedonian churches, that "in the midst of great affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty ἐπερίσσευσεν εἰς τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς ἁπλότητος αὐτῶν". The grace of God had enabled them to give generously amidst difficult circumstances, which resulted even in them giving beyond their means. Amstutz stresses that the same sense is maintained here in 9.11, that ἁπλότης is the attitude behind the contribution, characterizing the giving as spontaneous and uncalculated.[29] Paul anticipates the same result for the Corinthians that, when they fully recognize the degree to which they have been enriched by God's grace, they too will experience it εἰς πᾶσαν ἁπλότητα (9.11).

Paul's infrequent use of ἁπλότης in economic contexts is what makes it difficult to determine precisely what he intended by the term in 2 Corinthians 8-9.[30] It is clearly a result of grace, occurring both as an outcome of the grace given to the Macedonians (8.2), and as a similar desired outcome for the Corinthians (9.11, 13). If the return of χάρις to God as εὐχαριστία is the eventual upward result of χάρις, could it be that the horizontal result of χάρις is ἁπλότης? Where some have tried to identify it as liberality – generosity through a material gift[31] – perhaps what Paul really has in mind is ἁπλότης as "human grace", the spiritual result of God's grace upon the believer producing a generous attitude, as that of the cheerful giver. As the grace of God expresses a certain dynamic of God's empowerment, which abounds to believers for the

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[28] See §5.3.3.

[29] See Amstutz, *ΑΠΛΟΤΗΣ*, 108.

[30] As we have seen above in §5.3.3, the term ἁπλότης occurs six times in the NT, all in the Pauline literature (Rom 12.8; 2 Cor. 1.12; 8.2; 9.11, 13; 11.3; Eph. 6.5; Col. 3.22). Only the occurrences in Rom. 12.8 and 2 Cor. 8.2; 9.11, 13 are suggestive of financial generosity, but since three of these four occurrences are found in 2 Cor. 8-9, it is difficult to determine meaning based on these usages alone.

[31] Barrett, 220, says "the word tends . . . in the direction of 'liberality'. See also Calvin, 107, 124.

completion of good deeds, perhaps the result of that grace at work in the human heart is ἁπλότης, a gracious human dynamic, which is expressed through the same good deeds.

8.2.2.3. The aim of thanksgiving – 2 Cor. 9.11-12

Having stated in verse 11 that the Corinthians' enrichment is "for all ἁπλότης", Paul next states that this ἁπλότης produces εὐχαριστία τῷ θεῷ.[32] Paul reiterates the significance of this thanksgiving in verse 12, where he explains that while the obvious result of a successful collection is that the needs of the saints in Jerusalem will be met, the significant theological outcome is that the collection will result in an abundance of εὐχαριστίαι τῷ θεῷ. The source of these thanksgivings is not entirely clear from the passage. It seems that God receiving thanks is more important than who will express it. The most obvious ones to express thanks would be the actual recipients of the collection offering, the saints in Jerusalem. It might be supposed that if they were grateful, they would express their gratitude to the ones from whom they received their gift. Yet the theological significance of this entire endeavor is that it is a work of χάρις, the grace of God. And as God is recognized as the source of abundance (both material and spiritual) from which the collection offering is made, he correctly is the one to whom the gratitude is directed. O'Brien has shown that thanksgiving in Paul "approximates to what we normally understand by 'praise'",[33] and thus is to be distinguished from modern notions of thanksgiving which normally denote expressions of gratitude for personal benefits received. Thanksgiving in Paul is expressed to God for the evidence of his grace at work in believers. It is in this way that thanksgiving is closely related to praise, and is likewise often associated with God's glory.[34]

The phrase διὰ πολλῶν εὐχαριστιῶν in 9.12 could mean "through many thanksgivings" or "through the thanksgivings of the many [people].[35] The plural

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[32] I note the similarity with other such expressions of thanks to God:
(1) εὐχαριστέω τῷ θεῷ: in Pauline opening thanksgivings (Rom. 1.8; 1 Cor. 1.4; Phil. 1.3; Col. 1.3, 1 Thess. 1.2; 2 Thess. 1.3; Phlm. 4); elsewhere (1 Cor. 14.18; 1 Thess. 2.13).
(2) χάρις τῷ θεῷ (Rom. 6.17; 7.25; 1 Cor. 15.57; 2 Cor. 2.14; 8.16; 9.15; 2 Tim. 1.3).

[33] O'Brien, "Thanksgiving in Pauline Theology", 62.

[34] This will be addressed in more detail below.

[35] While Plummer, 266 takes the latter view, both Windisch, 282, and Martin, 294, merely acknowledge it. Martin offers the unlikely interpretation that "the many" refers

εὐχαριστίαι in verse 12 seems to emphasize abundance, which might suggest a variety of sources, i.e. thanksgiving offered by more than just the saints in Jerusalem.[36] In favor of this interpretation would be the fact that in verse 13 God is glorified for the Corinthians' ἁπλότης . . . εἰς αὐτοὺς καὶ εἰς πάντας, which also suggests that thanksgiving is offered by more communities than Jerusalem alone. The idea is quite close to that of 2 Cor. 4.15 where Paul writes, τὰ γὰρ πάντα δι' ὑμᾶς, ἵνα ἡ χάρις πλεονάσασα διὰ τῶν πλειόνων τὴν εὐχαριστίαν περισσεύσῃ εἰς τὴν δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ. This verse presents many challenges, particularly since both verbs may be either transitive or intransitive. Most commentators agree on the syntax of the verse, however, taking πλεονάζω intransitively and περισσεύω transitively.[37] The verse may then be translated, "For all things are for your sakes, in order that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God." We see that εὐχαριστία is the direct object of περισσεύω and that it is grace that is spreading διὰ τῶν πλειόνων, resulting in glory to God (cf. 9.13): grace (χάρις) given to men results in thanksgiving (εὐχαριστία) returning to God. In 9.11, Paul writes that this thanksgiving is brought about (κατεργάζεται) through him and his co-workers (δι' ἡμῶν). Paul may have in mind here that he and his co-workers are the ones offering the thanksgiving, but it is more likely that he has in mind again that he and his co-workers are intermediate agents of this thanksgiving, whether through their role of delivering the collection to Jerusalem,[38] or, perhaps more likely (and similarly to Paul's role in "enriching" others through the gospel as in 2 Cor. 6.10), through the fact that he had been the initiator of the collection among the Corinthians.[39]

Where in 4.15, grace spreads through more and more people (διὰ τῶν πλειόνων), in 9.12 it seems best to take διὰ πολλῶν εὐχαριστιῶν as emphasizing the amount of thanksgiving rather than the multitude through whom thanks are being offered. If it were referring to the latter, although not necessary, we might expect

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to a remnant of Corinthians who remained loyal to Paul's cause during his conflict with the Corinthian community, "and who now welcome the action of the entire church as expressed in the raising of the offering". It would be this small group of Corinthians, then, who glorify God in 2 Cor. 9.13.

[36] See Richard R. Melick, "The Collection for the Saints: 2 Corinthians 8-9", *CTR* 4, no. 1 (Fall 1989): 112, n. 49.

[37] Barrett, 144-45; Furnish, 260-61; Martin, 90-91; Thrall, 346-47; Harris, 355-56.

[38] Furnish, 443; Hughes, 336.

[39] As Barnett, 443, expresses: "Here Paul is the go-between . . . . Paul initiated this ministry and is now engaged in reinvigorating it . . . ."

clarification with the use of an article before πολλῶν.[40] Having said that, even an emphasis on the amount of εὐχαριστίαι suggests – or at least allows – that the thanks being offered come from a variety of sources. This is not to say that the thanksgiving will not come primarily from Jerusalem, but the abundance of thanksgivings which result from the Corinthians' participation in the collection will be contributed to by anyone who becomes aware of what God's grace has accomplished through the Corinthians.[41] Paul's idea is that the Corinthians' ἁπλότης produces abundant thanksgiving to God, not only from the saints in Jerusalem, but in fact a multitude of thanksgivings, including those from himself and from other believing Gentile communities.

Beginning in 9.12, as the focus shifts away from the Corinthians, the Jerusalem saints as the recipients of the collection gift come more into view. Here the two-fold results of the collection are clearly stated; "the service of this ministry is not only supplying the needs of the saints, but it is also abounding to God through many thanksgivings". Just as the grace of God was able to abound to the Corinthians both materially and spiritually, so too, through their giving, his grace continues to bring about both material (the actual gift) and spiritual (thanksgiving expressed to God) results. The collection project has not been specifically mentioned since 9.1 where it was referred to as ἡ διακονία ἡ εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους. It is mentioned again in verse 12 as ἡ διακονία τῆς λειτουργίας ταύτης and in verse 13 simply as ἡ διακονία αὕτη. In this section where διακονία results in God receiving thanksgiving and glory, Paul may have used the term λειτουργία to further stir up thoughts of priestly service,[42] or he may have simply used it in its Hellenistic sense of public service.[43] Paul uses the cognate verb in Rom. 15.27 to say that the Gentiles were obliged "to minister" (λειτουργέω) material things to the Jerusalem saints in return for spiritual benefits received.

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[40] This is similar to 2 Cor. 1.11 where Paul qualifies πολλῶν such that in the phrase ἐκ πολλῶν προσώπων clearly refers to people.

[41] Although Harris widens the group of those offering thanksgiving beyond the Jerusalem church to include "other believers who learned of the collection, such as 'the churches of Christ in Judea' (Gal. 1.22)", he does not go as far as to include Paul or other Gentile communities; Harris, 653.

[42] Furnish, 443; Thrall, 587.

[43] Barrett, 239-40.

The needs of the saints (τὰ ὑστερήματα τῶν ἁγίων; 9.12) picks up the use of ὑστέρημα in 8.14. While Paul says that this ministry is supplying the needs of the saints (perhaps suggesting that only enough to meet their needs would be provided and no more), it is *abounding* (περισσεύω) through the thanksgivings that will be offered to God. The implication is that the result of abundant thanksgiving to God is more important than the actual physical need that is met.[44]

8.2.2.4. Thanksgiving glorifies God – 2 Cor. 9.13

In verse 13, Paul tells the Corinthians that "through the proof of this ministry you are glorifying (δοξάζοντες) God . . ." (9.13). Although many scholars understand "the saints" to be the subject of the participle δοξάζοντες,[45] it seems contextually logical and "grammatically more defensible"[46] for Paul to have in mind the Corinthians as the ones glorifying God.[47] As I have argued, the emphasis in these two verses is on the thanksgiving offered to God, and there is no clear indication that Paul has in mind thanksgivings limited to a specific group. Paul very well may have in mind gratitude expressed by various groups in connection with the collection, by Paul himself,[48] perhaps by the other contributing communities, by the Corinthians, and certainly by the saints in Jerusalem. As the grace of God abounds in making the collection offering possible, each of these groups would have its own reasons to be thankful to God for his work of grace in them or for the provision it made possible through others.

As I have said, there are contextual and grammatical reasons to understand the Corinthians as the subject of the participle δοξάζοντες in verse 13.[49] Contextually,

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[44] The use of both ὑστέρημα and περισσεύω is reminiscent of 8.14 where the Corinthians are to contribute their περίσσευμα toward the Jerusalem saints' ὑστέρημα. Does this imply that the Corinthians' περρίσευμα, rooted in the χάρις they have received, is more than simply their material abundance, but expresses an abundance of goodwill as well?

[45] Only Thrall and Harris offer arguments in support of the participle referring to the Jerusalem saints (discussion of Thrall's view follows in the main text). Others only state that it is so (Plummer, 266; Barrett, 240), or simply reflect it in their translation (Furnish, 440).

[46] Lambrecht, 151.

[47] In support of this view, see Barnett, 445, esp. n. 49; Sampley, 131; Malherbe, "Corinthian Contribution", 227; NASB; NRSV.

[48] Cf. 9.15.

[49] Thrall argues that since the emphasis has shifted from the Corinthians to the Jerusalem saints in verse 12, and since it is "clearly" the saints who give thanks in that verse, they are naturally also the ones who glorify God in verse 13; Thrall, 588. Against

Paul states in verse 11 that ἁπλότης is the result of the Corinthians' "being made rich", their ἁπλότης producing thanksgiving to God. Thus, the ministry of the collection for the saints not only produces the material result of meeting needs, but more importantly it produces an overflow of thanksgiving to God (verse 12). In verse 13, as a further motivation to the Corinthians, it seems that Paul tells them that through the evidence of their participation in this project they will glorify God, the ἐπί clause (discussed below) indicating the specific things that will bring him glory.

Grammatically, the closest antecedent verb in agreement with δοξάζοντες is the participle in verse 11, πλουτιζόμενοι, which, although occurring two verses prior, has as its subject the Corinthians. Verse 14 is also governed by a participle, ἐπιποθούντων, which appears to be a genitive absolute, whose subject is most reasonably understood as the Jerusalem saints. The genitive absolute of verse 14 indicates a disconnection from the previous verse, suggesting that the subject δοξάζοντες in verse 13 is different from that of verse 14, which again points to the Corinthians as the likely subject of δοξάζοντες in verse 13.

Those scholars who understand the subject of the participle δοξάζοντες as the saints in Jerusalem explain the phrase διὰ τῆς δοκιμῆς. . . as a less common usage of διά with the genitive to denote cause instead of the more common use for agency or instrumentality.[50] In my interpretation the normal sense of instrumentality expresses well the manner in which the Corinthians glorify God, "through the evidence" (διὰ τῆς δοκιμῆς τῆς διακονίας ταύτης δοξάζοντες τὸν θεόν). In 8.8 Paul stated that what was to be proven (δοκιμάζων, with Paul as subject), was the sincerity of the Corinthians' love (cf. 8.24). As Paul envisions the Corinthians having offered their generous gift and the saints in Jerusalem having received it, this evidence of the Corinthians' genuine love will bring glory to God. The specific ways that the "evidence" will glorify God is spelled out in the rest of the verse.

In 9.13 there are two things for which God will receive glory, the first of which is ἡ ὑποταγὴ τῆς ὁμολογίας ὑμῶν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ. The noun ὁμολογία can refer to the act of professing or confessing, or it can refer to an actual

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this view, as I argue above, the evidence provides stronger support for the Corinthians as the subject of δοξάζοντες.

[50] See Harris, 651; Thrall, 589, n. 179.

statement of confession or acknowledgement.[51] There is an interesting parallel to this verse with the use of ὁμολογέω in Rom. 10.9 where Paul writes, ὅτι ἐὰν ὁμολογήσῃς ἐν τῷ στόματί σου κύριον Ἰησοῦν καὶ πιστεύσῃς ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου ὅτι ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ἤγειρεν ἐκ νεκρῶν, σωθήσῃ. The double aspect of confessing with the mouth and believing in the heart explains Paul's quotation of Deut. 30.14 in Rom. 10.8, "the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart". Paul here is illustrating the simplicity of the availability of God's righteousness in the gospel. The Jews, in seeking to establish their own righteousness, did not subject themselves (ὑποτάσσω; cf. ὑποταγή in 2 Cor. 9.13) to the righteousness of God (10.3) and were thus disobedient. The declaration κύριος Ἰησοῦς was probably already an accepted confessional formula, perhaps used in baptism,[52] although the crucial element here is clearly belief in the heart.[53] The ὁμολογία is the verbal proclamation that describes the believer's inner change, the total realignment of one's life with the gospel. The verbal confession is not to be separated from the heart-belief, the two together reflect the transformation that has taken place, as 10.10 indicates.[54] The implication of this passage is that submission in one's heart (ὑποτάσσω) to the gospel is expressed through verbal confession. Paul's heart's desire for the Jews was that they would turn from a law-based gospel and embrace the grace-based gospel of Christ. The confession thus represents the inner change brought about by the grace of God. In Rom. 6.17 Paul appropriately expresses thanks (χάρις) to God for the Roman believers, for their heart-centered obedience (χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ ὅτι ἦτε δοῦλοι τῆς ἁμαρτίας ὑπηκούσατε δὲ ἐκ καρδίας . . .). They are no longer under sin, but are under grace (ὑπὸ χάριν; 6.13). Thus, confession of the gospel means submission to the power of grace in the heart of the believer.

In 2 Cor. 9.13, the Corinthians' confession of the gospel of Christ (εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ) is probably, on the one hand, simply a reference to their Christian faith, perhaps referring back to their confessional proclamation at their baptism. In the context of 2 Cor. 9.11-15, however, as Paul looks forward to the results of a successful collection, their confession represents the transformation that has taken place in them as a result of the grace of God. Through God's grace they had been

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[51] BDAG, s.v. ὁμολογία. Elsewhere in the NT the noun occurs only in 1 Tim. 6.12, 13; Heb. 3.1; 4.14; 10.23.

[52] Cranfield, *Romans*, 527.

[53] Moo, *Romans*, 657.

[54] "For with the heart one believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth one confesses, resulting in salvation."

enriched in all things in Christ (1 Cor. 1.4-5), and the evidence of the collection will be that they have indeed abounded in "this χάρις" (cf. 2 Cor. 8.7). One of the affects brought about by the transforming power of grace is the Corinthians' obedience (ὑποταγή, taking τῆς ὁμολογίας as a subjective genitive).[55] It has been suggested that ἡ ὑποταγὴ τῆς ὁμολογίας ὑμῶν in 9.13 means simply general obedience to God, or obedience to the gospel "that demands that believers should help to relieve need both inside and outside the family of believers".[56] It seems more likely that Paul has in mind the Corinthians' obedience to the grace of God as demonstrated in their eventual generous participation in the collection.

The second thing in 9.13 for which God will receive glory is ἁπλότης τῆς κοινωνίας εἰς αὐτοὺς καὶ εἰς πάντας. Having already discussed ἁπλότης in detail, the meaning of this phrase will depend on the understanding of κοινωνία. Of the variety of meanings the term can have,[57] those that suggest some *specific* κοινωνία can be ruled out because of the καὶ εἰς πάντας. This phrase, "and to all", indicates that Paul has in mind some κοινωνία first toward the saints (εἰς αὐτοῦς), and then toward everyone else. Thus, a *specific* "contribution", for example, to the saints, would not then be shared with others. With this in mind, the meaning here would be somewhat different from the only other occurrence of the word in 2 Corinthians 8-9, in 8.4. There the Macedonians' request is specifically to participate in the ministry of the collection for the saints. Whatever the ἁπλότης τῆς κοινωνίας is in 9.13, it relates in the first place to the saints in Jerusalem, and then εἰς πάντας. Thrall takes ἁπλότης here to mean "sincerity" or "genuineness" so that κοινωνία has the sense "state or feeling of fellowship".[58] With this sense of "sincerity of fellowship", it is easy to allow that to extend from the community in Jerusalem (εἰς αὐτούς) to the entire body of Christ (εἰς πάντας).[59] This interpretation would require a different sense for ἁπλότης, however,

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[55] Scholars are divided regarding the classifications of this genitive: subjective (my view above; Hafemann, 370; Barnett, 445, n. 51), objective (Hughes, 339, n. 75) or epexegetic (Furnish, 445; Thrall, 589). The emphasis on the results of grace in 2 Corinthians 8-9 favor the view that the Corinthians' obedience is the outworking of grace, i.e. of their confession to the gospel – their faith.

[56] Harris, 654.

[57] BDAG offers four meanings: 1. association, communion, fellowship, close relationship; 2. generosity, fellow-feeling, altruism; 3. sign of fellowship, proof of brotherly unity, even gift, contribution; 4. participation, sharing τινός in something.

[58] Thus combing BDAG meanings 1 and 2 for κοινωνία. See Thrall, 591.

[59] Thrall, 591.

than that which I have proposed. John McDermott argues for the sense "community", which from the context, he says, cannot be static, but must be "a dynamic community engaged in mutual assistance".[60] I have suggested above that ἁπλότης may be Paul's idea of human grace which is expressed in sincere generosity. In this case, the κοινωνία may indicate the action toward others (εἰς) that results from ἁπλότης, the "sincere generosity expressed in their sharing",[61] which the Corinthians direct specifically toward the saints in Jerusalem, but are also willing to share with any Christians who are in need.

In connection with 2 Cor. 9.13 there are two other verses in 2 Corinthians where Paul's focus is thanksgiving and God's glory. We saw above in 4.15 where Paul mentions that as grace spreads to more and more people it produces an abundance of thanksgiving to the glory of God. Another significant verse is 2 Cor. 1.11. After telling of the great affliction from which he had been delivered in Asia and of his assurance in God's ongoing deliverance (1.8-10), Paul writes in 1.11, συνυπουργούντων καὶ ὑμῶν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν τῇ δεήσει, ἵνα ἐκ πολλῶν προσώπων τὸ εἰς ἡμᾶς χάρισμα διὰ πολλῶν εὐχαριστηθῇ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν. For his future deliverance, Paul turns to the Corinthians for prayer, "you also joining in prayer on our behalf . . . ." The remainder of the verse indicates the reason Paul wants them to pray; it is not in the first place for his deliverance, but that God would receive thanksgiving for answered prayer. Although the syntax of this verse makes for challenging exegesis, the idea of the ἵνα clause is clearly stated by O'Brien: "The basis of thanksgiving by the Corinthians for Paul . . . is God's gracious gift (χάρισμα) to him".[62] This "gracious gift" is Paul's answer to prayer, his deliverance from future peril (cf. 1.10).[63] Here thanksgiving is expressed "by many persons" (ἐκ πολλῶν προσώπων), while in 9.12 it was "many thanksgivings" (διὰ πολλῶν εὐχαριστιῶν) that were in abundance. I will discuss below that such expressions of thanksgiving are inherently intended to bring glory to God.

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[60] John M. McDermott, "Biblical Doctrine of Koinonia", *BZ* 19, no. 1 (1975): 223.

[61] Furnish, 445. Harris, 665, also translates κοινωνία "sharing", the difference being the inclusiveness he gives to εἰς πάντας.

[62] O'Brien, *Introductory Thanksgivings*, 252-53. For further discussion of the challenges faced by the syntax of this verse, see Furnish, 115-25; Thrall, 122-27.

[63] Harris, 163; Thrall, 123-24. Thrall suggests a parallel between the use of χάρισμα here in reference to Paul's "deliverance" from peril, and its use in Rom. 5.15 to refer to God's free gift in salvation, "where χάρισμα is almost a summary term for God's gracious intervention through Christ"; Thrall, 123.

Verses 11-13 thus show the results of the Corinthians "abounding in χάρις" as Paul envisions them. Enriched in grace for all generosity (v. 11), the Corinthians' contribution toward the collection will not only supply aid to the saints, but it will also produce an overflow of thanksgiving to God. They will glorify God by reacting to his work of grace in them. The proof of this work of grace – the genuineness of their love – will be demonstrated in their submission to the power of grace in the gospel and their sincere generosity in sharing with the poor among the saints in Jerusalem and any other believers who may be in need. In the words of John Barclay, "it is as they give with generous hearts that believers indicate their submission to the power of grace which grasps and reorients their lives".[64] Paul began chapter 8 with the testimony of the grace of God at work in the Macedonians, resulting in their generous collection gift. Now he envisions the results of the same grace ("this χάρις") at work in the Corinthians.

8.2.2.5. Climactic offering of thanks – 2 Cor. 9.14-15

In verse 14 Paul clearly shows his desire to have a favorable response from Jerusalem: καὶ αὐτῶν δεήσει ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐπιποθούντων ὑμᾶς διὰ τὴν ὑπερβάλλουσαν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐφ' ὑμῖν. I have already discussed the genitive absolute in this verse and that this construction indicates the shift of subject to the saints in Jerusalem. The verb ἐπιποθέω occurs nine times in the New Testament, mostly in Paul. The meaning in BDAG is "to long for, to desire", and it is often used to express one person's desire *to see* another, either explicitly (ἐπιποθῶ ἰδεῖν; Rom. 1.11; 1 Thess. 3.6; 2 Tim. 1.4) or implicitly (Phil. 1.8; 2.26). In saying that the saints in Jerusalem will "long for" the Corinthians, it may be to see them in order to have some form of personal fellowship with their benefactors, but their motive is theological – it is διὰ τὴν ὑπερβάλλουσαν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ that has clearly been at work in the Corinthians. In Paul's mind, when the saints in Jerusalem receive the collection gift from the Gentiles, they will not simply recognize it as a work of God's grace. They will recognize God's grace as even exceeding that which Paul normally expresses as an "abundance". Here it is the ὑπερβάλλουσα grace of God, the grace which does not merely abound or overflow, but *surpasses* any conceivable imagination in what it has accomplished in and through the Gentiles.[65] This is the surpassing grace of God as realized through the evidence given in verse 13. It now becomes clear just how the

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[64] Barclay, 1367.

[65] And thus God's gift is ἀνεκδιήγητος; cf. 9.15 below.

Corinthians glorify God in verse 13: He is glorified as the saints in Jerusalem recognize that it is God's grace alone that has brought about the results of the Corinthians' obedience and generosity. And in recognizing this work of grace in the Gentiles, the saints long to have fellowship with them. In 8.14 Paul has indicated that the saints' response to the Corinthians' gift, their περίσσευμα, will be for them to offer a gift from their own περίσσευμα when the Corinthians have need. The saints' longing for the Corinthians here in 9.14 may simply be their sincere desire to be able to reciprocate in some way that will be beneficial to the Corinthians.

With a swelling wave of increasing thanksgiving and praise to God in these final verses, in a climactic moment, Paul himself finally cries out with thanks to God: Χάρις τῷ θεῷ ἐπὶ τῇ ἀνεκδιηγήτῳ αὐτοῦ δωρεᾷ (v. 15). There could be no more appropriate conclusion to Paul's discussion of grace and the collection for the saints in Jerusalem. At the heart of the entire discussion has been the χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ, "the grace of God". Paul began chapter 8 with "the grace of God given in the churches of Macedonia". He wove χάρις into his argument in a variety of usages, demonstrating how God's grace can work and promising that it would be effective in the Corinthians. For Paul, grace is a gift, the gift that provides salvation, and the gift that empowers believers to live the Christian life. At the end of this section, the ordinary formula χάρις τῷ θεῷ with which he concludes, makes anything but an ordinary statement. From the beginning of Paul's discussion he has been emphasizing that χάρις comes *from* God. Now, in the ultimate return of gratitude, he offers χάρις back to God, to the source from which it came.

8.2.3. Summary: Thanksgiving in 2 Corinthians 8-9

We have seen four references to thanksgiving in 2 Corinthians 8-9. Twice Paul uses the formula χάρις τῷ θεῷ, in 8.16 and 9.15, and twice the word εὐχαριστία, in 9.11, 12. Χάρις τῷ θεῷ has been described as "the spontaneous outburst of thanksgiving by the apostle for some great blessing which he or the readers have received from God",[66] and is a formula that Paul uses a number of times in his letters. Although equivalent to εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ, the formula serves to invite others to join in the expression of thanks, rather than limiting it to the speaker. Paul often uses this

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[66] O'Brien, "Thanksgiving in Pauline Theology", 60-61.

formula to mark off sections of text, and we find it used here once to begin a new section (8.16), and once to conclude the entire discussion (9.15).

With the occurrences of εὐχαριστία Paul does not express his own gratitude, but indicates that it will be the response of others, the saints who benefit from the collection offering and possibly others who become aware of this "work of grace". The expression of thanksgiving is offered, however, not to those who have contributed toward the collection, but to God as the one whose grace facilitates the entire endeavor. The thanksgiving here, rather than personal gratitude for gifts received, approximates praise for the recognition of what God has accomplished through his grace in the lives of the Corinthians and other Gentile communities, specifically those who have contributed toward the collection project. By allowing God's grace to work in and through them, the Corinthians have brought glory to God through the abundance of thanksgiving he receives. The return of thanks to God completes a "circle of grace" which began with the χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ, was passed on to those in need as the Corinthians ministered ἡ ταύτη χάρις, and then was returned to God as εὐχαριστία.[67]

8.3. Characterizing Thanksgiving as Expressed in Paul

In scholarly discussions of thanksgiving in Paul, different contexts within the Pauline letters have been identified in which thanksgiving occurs,[68] but the greatest emphasis in research has centered on the introductory thanksgivings occurring in the opening paragraphs of most of the Pauline letters.[69] The discussion below will attempt

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[67] G. Boobyer speaks of the "light" of God's initiating action in prayer and thanksgiving, which follows a similar pattern to the circle of grace; "Praise and thanksgiving come down from God as light, or are caused by a divine agency often itself thought of in terms of light (such as λόγος, χάρις, νοῦς, γνῶσις, πνεῦμα, or 'Light-power'), and are then sent up again by the worshipper to increase the light or glory of God, or to 'glorify' God in the concrete sense of the term"; George H. Boobyer, *"Thanksgiving" and the "Glory of God" in Paul* (Borna-Leipzig: Robert Noske University, 1929), 70.

[68] O'Brien, "Thanksgiving in Pauline Theology", 55-61, identifies six "groupings", according to which he classifies the use of thanksgiving terms in the Pauline literature: (1) Introductory Paragraphs: Thanksgivings for Congregations and Individuals in the Gentile Mission; (2) Colloquial Uses; (3) Thanksgivings Said over Food; (4) Exhortations to Thanksgiving; (5) Instances in Didactic Contexts; and (6) Short Expressions of Thanksgiving.

[69] I mentioned above that the epistolary function of these thanksgivings has been debated, but most scholars agree that they do serve such a role, although Paul adapts the style to his own purposes. See O'Brien, *Introductory Thanksgivings*, Schubert, *Form*

to draw out the worship aspects of thanksgiving as I consider Paul's mention of thanksgiving in connection with praise, gratitude, blessing, and the glory of God.

8.3.1. Thanksgiving as Worship

There are several characteristic aspects of the way thanksgiving is mentioned in Paul's letters.[70] Instead of gratitude being expressed to the one from whom something has been received, Paul never offers his thanks to people, but only to God for that which he has done in the lives of others.[71] Paul's expressions of gratitude relate to the work of God in believers' lives, which may rightly be described as the result of God's grace: particularly "[i]n the introductory thanksgivings Paul used εὐχαριστέω with reference to graces wrought in the lives of *others* by God. The notion of gratitude is not lost, but on the other hand the element of praise is present".[72]

8.3.1.1. Thanksgiving, praise and gratitude

In the Septuagint, the εὐχαριστία word group is noticeably absent from the canonical books.[73] This is not to say that the idea of thanksgiving is absent from the Old Testament. Pao points out that praise and thanksgiving are closely related both in the Old Testament and in Paul. Where the Old Testament lacks an emphasis on thanksgiving using εὐχαριστέω, which is common in Paul, the apostle avoids using the verb αἰνέω[74] ("to praise"), which is commonly used to translate Hebrew verbs of praise in the Septuagint.[75] Pao concludes that the concepts of thanksgiving and praise merge

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and Function, Arzt, "Epistolary Introductory Thanksgiving" and Reed, "Paul's Thanksgivings", for discussion of the issue.

[70] One debated passage is Phil. 4.10-20. Views vary on whether Paul is expressing thanks to the Philippians here or not. See Peterman, *Paul's Gift*, 11-15, for a list of views. If he is thanking them for their gift, he does so in a veiled manner without use of εὐχαριστέω, εὐχαριστία or χάρις.

[71] In Rom. 16.4, however, in reference to Prisca and Aquila, Paul says: οἷς οὐκ ἐγὼ μόνος εὐχαριστῶ ἀλλὰ καὶ πᾶσαι αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τῶν ἐθνῶν. Most modern translations render this as Paul expressing thanks *to* Prisca and Aquila, in which case the dative οἷς is taken to mean "to whom". Paul may, however, have had in mind expressing thanks to God *for* Prisca and Aquila: "for whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles". See Moo, *Romans*, 920.

[72] O'Brien, "Thanksgiving in Pauline Theology", 60 (emphasis in original).

[73] The sole exception is the use of εὐχάριστος in Prov. 11.16. In the apocryphal books, there are eleven occurrences of words from the group.

[74] The verb αἰνέω occurs once in Paul in Rom. 15.11 in a quotation of Ps. 116.1 (LXX). ἐπαινέω words, however, occur frequently both in the LXX and in Paul.

[75] Pao, *Thanksgiving*, 25.

together in Paul's use of εὐχαριστέω words.[76] This is supported by the fact that Philo contemporaneously uses εὐχαριστέω words in place of αἰνέω words which occur in the Septuagint.[77]

In Hellenistic usage prior to the first century, εὐχαριστέω words were used with meanings similar in sense to that of χάρις as "gratitude", with εὐχαριστέω meaning "to show someone favor",[78] and εὐχαριστία was close in meaning to χάρις as "favor received, thankfulness, gratitude".[79] By the first century, according to Robert Ledogar, εὐχαριστέω "had come to signify 'to thank', 'give thanks', 'return thanks', etc. more often than 'to be thankful'".[80] In other words, εὐχαριστέω denoted thanksgiving expressed through some action rather than a simple inner sentiment of gratitude. Thus, "the grateful attitude regularly found outward expression in thanksgiving",[81] as O'Brien stresses, adding that it is the public aspect of thanksgiving that is emphasized in the Pauline letters. In this sense, continues Ledogar, the verb is used as a verb of praise. While it is used similarly to other praise words (ἐπαίνω, τιμάω, ὕμνος, εὐλογέω), it is distinguished from them, for although the other praise words "may often be used to express gratitude, . . . they do not necessarily *imply* gratitude of themselves as does εὐχαριστεῖν".[82]

8.3.1.2. Thanksgiving and blessing

There also appears to be some synonymity between εὐλογέω and εὐχαριστέω words in the New Testament, as the work of James Robinson has shown.[83] In the Gospels there is interchangeability of the two verbs both in the accounts of the Lord's Supper and between the feeding accounts of the five thousand and the four thousand.[84]

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[76] Likewise, O'Brien, "Thanksgiving in Pauline Theology", 62, states, "Pauline thanksgiving approximates to what we normally understand by 'praise'".

[77] F. J. A. Hort and J. O. F. Murray, "εὐχαριστία–εὐχαριστεῖν", *JTS* 3 (1902): 594. Pao, *Thanksgiving*, 25, similarly says, "In Philo, as in Paul, thanksgiving approximates acts of praising God."

[78] Hans Conzelmann, "εὐχαριστέω, εὐχαριστία, εὐχάριστος", *TDNT* 9:407.

[79] See Robert J. Ledogar, *Acknowledgment: Praise-Verbs in the Early Greek Anaphora* (Rome: Herder, 1968), 91.

[80] Ledogar, *Acknowledgment*, 92.

[81] O'Brien, "Thanksgiving in Pauline Theology", 62.

[82] Ledogar, *Acknowledgment*, 98 (emphasis in original).

[83] Robinson, "Die Hodajot-formel", 194-235.

[84] In the accounts of the Lord's Supper in both Matt. 26.26-27 and Mark 14.22-23, εὐλογέω and εὐχαριστέω are used for the bread and the cup, respectively, while

Paul seems to equate "blessing in the spirit" (εὐλογέω πνεύματι) with "giving thanks" (εὐχαριστέω) in 1 Cor. 14.16-17,[85] and in what Pao identifies as a "formal parallel" in the introductory paragraphs of Paul's letters,[86] the normal "thanksgiving" – εὐχαριστέω formula – is substituted with a "benediction" or *berakah* – εὐλογητός formula – in 2 Cor. 1.3- 11.[87] Here the εὐχαριστέω τῷ θεῷ is replaced with εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεός. Besides the obvious semantic differences, O'Brien finds a distinction between Paul's usage of the εὐχαριστέω and the εὐλογητός formulas, in that where Paul uses εὐχαριστέω, the thanksgiving he offers is for the work of God in the lives of others – the recipients of the letter – while εὐλογητός seems to be used for blessings in which Paul himself has participated. "For Paul it seemed more fitting to use the term with a Greek background (εὐχαριστέω) when referring to graces, etc., given to others, particularly Gentiles; while the formula with a Jewish background (εὐλογητός κτλ.) was more apt when he himself came within the circle of blessing".[88] This distinction of the εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεός passages allows for an interesting parallel with the thanksgiving formula, χάρις τῷ θεῷ, which I likewise suggested that Paul uses when he wishes to allow the inclusion of others in the offering of thanks.

This overlap in usage between εὐλογέω and εὐχαριστέω terms in a context of worship suggests a corresponding overlap between the respective nouns, εὐλογία and εὐχαριστία or χάρις. This understanding might suggest that Paul's use of εὐλογία for

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εὐχαριστέω is used for both the bread and the cup in Luke 22.17-19 and (implied) in Paul's account in 1 Cor. 11.24-25 (but see 10.16, where Paul uses εὐλογέω). Similarly, where εὐλογέω appears in the Synoptic accounts of the feeding of the five thousand (Matt. 14.19; Mark 6.41; Luke 9.16), the accounts of the feeding of the four thousand in Matt. 15.36 and Mark 8.6 use εὐχαριστέω.

[85] "The two verbs, εὐλογέω and εὐχαριστέω, are nearly interchangeable here", says Fee, *First Corinthians*, 672, n. 35. Similarly, Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 1114, comments, "Blessing God is virtually synonymous with offering a thanksgiving in this context".

[86] Pao, *Thanksgiving*, 31.

[87] Cf. Eph. 1.3-14, which is also a *berakah*. Distinguishing this opening from that of 2 Corinthians, however, is the fact that the Ephesians *berakah* is followed in 1.14-13 by a *typical* Pauline introductory thanksgiving. It has also been observed, however, that the opening paragraphs of 2 Cor. 1 contain an inverted epistolary thanksgiving where, besides having the εὐχαριστέω at the end rather than at the beginning of the clause, in 1.11, instead of Paul offering thanksgiving for his readers with an active form of εὐχαριστέω, his readers instead offer thanksgiving for him, with the passive εὐχαριστηθῇ; see Schubert, *Form and Function*, 50; O'Brien, *Introductory Thanksgivings*, 250-51.

[88] O'Brien, *Introductory Thanksgivings*, 239.

the Corinthians' collection gift in 2 Cor. 9.5 (and the repeated use of the plural εὐλογίαι in 9.6) may further imply that their contribution is an act of worship.

8.3.1.3. Thanksgiving and the glory of God

Thanksgiving is also connected with the glory of God on several occasions in Paul. In Rom. 1.21, glorifying God and giving thanks are viewed as appropriate parallel responses to the knowledge of God (θεὸν ἐδόξασαν ἢ ηὐχαρίστησαν). We have seen above that in 2 Cor. 4.15, as a result of Paul's suffering for the gospel, God's grace spreads, producing an abundance of thanksgiving which brings glory to God (εἰς τὴν δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ).[89] I have also looked at 2 Cor. 1.11 where Paul writes that through the answered prayers of many, there will be thanksgiving offered on his behalf. Although there is no specific mention in this passage of glory, the resultant thanksgivings – whether the actual act of prayer, or in response to answered prayer – will glorify God, as Furnish concludes from this (and other) verses: "thanksgiving had a special place in the liturgy of the Pauline churches and . . . it was directly related to the notion of increasing the glory of God".[90] Also notable in 1.11 is the potential play on words between the offering of thanks (εὐχαριστέω) and that for which thanks is offered (χάρισμα). However χάρισμα is rendered here,[91] it is certainly meant to convey the gift or manifestation of God's χάρις ("grace") in the deliverance of Paul from peril, for which εὐχαριστία will be offered to God by those who observe Paul's deliverance as a result of their prayers. The other occurrence of thanksgiving and glory together in Paul occurs in 2 Cor. 9.11-13, which I analyzed above.[92] The simultaneous results of God's grace with regard to the collection, particularly of the Corinthians' participation, were that God would receive an abundance of thanksgiving (vv. 11-12) and that he would be glorified for the demonstration of his grace at work in the Corinthians (v. 13).

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[89] See above (§8.2.2.3), where, in the clause ἵνα ἡ χάρις . . . τὴν εὐχαριστίαν περισσεύσῃ εἰς τὴν δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ (2 Cor. 4.15), I have interpreted χάρις as the subject of the verb περισσεύω (taken transitively), whose direct object is εὐχαριστία: "Grace produces an abundance of thanksgiving to the glory of God".

[90] Furnish, 125.

[91] χάρισμα in this verse is translated in a multitude of ways: "the gift of grace" (Barrett, 67), "God's gracious gift" (O'Brien, *Introductory Thanksgivings*, 253), "gracious benefit" (Furnish, 115), "favor" (Martin, 16; NASB), "blessing" (Barnett, 90; NRSV), "gracious favor" (NIV), "gift" (KJV; HCSB).

[92] See §8.2.2 above.

Thus thanksgiving has as its purpose to glorify God. Expressions of thanks acknowledge him for who he is and what he has done through his grace and it is such acknowledgement that brings him glory.

8.3.2. Summary of Thanksgiving as Worship

We have seen that thanksgiving in Paul relates closely to worship and may at times be equated with worship. The fact that Paul directs all thanksgiving to God and not to men shows that for him, thanksgiving *is* an expression of worship. The use of εὐχαριστέω carries with it the notions of praise from the Old Testament, and the Jewish notion of blessing (εὐλογητός) is also closely related to thanksgiving. Thanksgiving may be described as gratitude expressed in public worship through some sort of action. For Paul the purpose of thanksgiving is always to bring glory to God.

8.4. Thanksgiving and a Paradigm of Giving

In Chapter 3, I noted several differences between the exchange of "benefits" in Seneca and in Paul. Equating benefits with χάρις in Paul, I identified corresponding elements to Seneca's "Goodwill" and "Gift or Service" (cf. Figure 3.2, in §3.2.4), whether the χάρις is bestowed by God or by man (§3.3.1.3). With regard to the "Return", however, Pauline giving diverges from the model of Seneca. Referring first to the "Return" of the "Gift or service", I have stated that for Paul, because of the community (κοινωνία) within the body of Christ, the actual return might not be directed to the one from whom the initial gift was received. But since all are part of the same body of Christ, when anyone within the body benefits, the entire body benefits. This societal element is missing in Seneca.

Now I shall consider the "Return" of "Gratitude". In Seneca's model, successful benefit exchange is dependent upon the return of gratitude, both from the standpoint of the one offering the benefit who must convey it in such a way as to inspire gratitude in the recipient, and from that of the recipient, who must accept the benefit with the response of gratitude that is anticipated by the bestower. As we have seen above, Paul is at variance with Seneca's model in that Paul normally expresses thanksgiving to God, rather than to the one from whom the benefit is received. Similarly, however, to Seneca's model, the resulting expression of gratitude – for Paul, offered to God – is all important, for it is at once both an act of praise that acknowledges God for who he is, the bestower of grace in the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is an act that brings glory to God

for that which his grace has accomplished in and for men. Thanksgiving is, thus, a public act of worship that recognizes God in such a way that others are motivated likewise to worship him.

Not only is thanksgiving a response to God's grace, but it also serves as a return for benefits received from him. We have seen it as the completion of the "circle of grace" illustrated in 2 Corinthians 8-9: it begins with the χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ given in the churches in Macedonia (8.1), continues as "this χάρις" at work in and through the Corinthians (8.6-7) and consequently passed on in their collection gift, and then returns to God as thanksgiving for what his grace has accomplished in producing the collection gift for the saints in Jerusalem (9.11-12). Similarly, in 2 Cor. 1.11, thanks are to be offered (ἵνα . . . εὐχαριστηθῇ) for the χάρισμα received by Paul in response to prayer. The result of God's grace given to men (2 Cor. 9.11) is an overflow of thanksgiving to him (9.11-12) for the things his grace accomplishes in them (9.13), and for this he receives glory. For Paul, the fact that the offering of thanksgiving is a return to God for that which has been received from him is evident from 1 Thess. 3.9: τίνα γὰρ εὐχαριστίαν δυνάμεθα τῷ θεῷ ἀνταποδοῦναι περὶ ὑμῶν ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ χαρᾷ ᾗ χαίρομεν δι' ὑμᾶς ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν.

8.5. Conclusion: Thanksgiving, Grace and the Collection

We have seen that for Paul, thanksgiving is an act of worship, in which thanks are offered to God for the work of the grace of God in one's life or in the lives of others. Thanksgiving expresses praise and brings glory to God. Thanksgiving is explicitly mentioned four times in 2 Corinthians 8-9. Twice, in seeming outbursts of joyous expression, Paul himself offers thanks to God for the gift of grace using the formula χάρις τῷ θεῷ, by which he invites others to join with him in this expression. Twice he refers to the εὐχαριστία τῷ θεῷ which will result from a successful completion of the collection project. Although Paul does not specifically state who will offer this thanksgiving, certainly he has primarily in mind the recipients of "this χάρις", the saints in Jerusalem. As Paul envisions the project completed and the collection delivered to Jerusalem, he envisions an overflow of thanksgiving flowing from the lips of the saints. These expressions of thanks would no doubt be included in their prayers together with their "longing" for the bestowers of the gifts they had received (9.14).

Paul offers his thanksgivings to God and not to men. He offers thanks for the work of God in men, whether simply for the grace of God which has been given them

(1 Cor. 1.4), for specific "graces" (faith, hope, love) evidenced in them (in his introductory thanksgivings), whether for deliverance from peril (2 Cor. 1.11), or whether for joyful participation in the collection (2 Cor. 9.11-12). All of these things he would see as works of grace. In thanking God for all that believers receive, including things received from others, believers acknowledge their common place before him. God is equally above all men. Since he is the same provider of grace to each one, each ought to be equally thankful *to him*. In this way the Jerusalem saints, when they offer thanksgiving to God for that which they have received from Gentile believers, are acknowledging their common status before God with the Gentile believers. Moreover, in "longing for the Corinthians, because of the surpassing grace in them" (9.14), the Jerusalem believers likewise acknowledge that these Gentiles may abound in grace to a greater degree than they themselves have. Thus, when Paul exclaims χάρις τῷ θεῷ in 9.15, he is not only expressing thanks to God for his wonderful χάρις – for the gift of grace in the Lord Jesus Christ – he is also praising God for the impact of this grace. Through the Gentiles and their ἁπλότης toward Jerusalem, the saints recognize their place in Christ on a level plane before God with the Gentiles and yearn for more of God's grace that has brought this about.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION: PAUL, GRACE AND SURPLUS EXCHANGE

My stated aim at the beginning of this thesis was to examine Paul's diverse use of χάρις terminology in 2 Corinthians 8-9 in light of usage in conventions of Graeco-Roman benefit exchange. My purpose has been to determine the relevance and theological significance of this terminology for giving and receiving, specifically as it relates to the collection. I began in Chapter 2 with a survey of literature that helps us place Paul's expressions of giving and receiving in the context of the surrounding Graeco-Roman world. In Chapter 3, I examined Graeco-Roman benefit exchange from Seneca's perspective and proposed a paradigm for understanding Paul's portrayal of gift giving. With an understanding of gift exchange in the Graeco-Roman world as a background, I proceeded to focus on Paul's use of χάρις, first outside of 2 Corinthians 8-9, and then as used in his discussion of the collection within these two chapters.

Before summarizing my conclusions regarding χάρις and gift giving with regard to the collection in 2 Corinthians 8-9, I will summarize the atmosphere of benefit exchange in the Graeco-Roman world during the time of the apostle Paul.

9.1. Graeco-Roman Benefit Exchange

By the first century AD benefit exchange had become an essential element of Graeco-Roman culture. As the "the chief bond of human society",[1] it would have likely impacted life in the communities where Paul planted churches in his mission to the Gentiles. Many of the terms used to describe benefaction in the Graeco-Roman literary sources we also find used by Paul in his letters, particularly in contexts involving giving and receiving. Because of the versatility of the term χάρις, it could be used to refer to the goodwill of the one bestowing a benefit, the gift or service provided, as well as the

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[1] Seneca *Ben.* 1.4.2.

recipient's return expression of gratitude. Inherent to the conventions of benefit exchange was the understood notion of reciprocity, that the bestowal of a gift carried with it the obligation to offer a return. While at times benefits were bestowed to establish friendships, at other times their bestowal resulted in an agonistic pursuit to outdo the generosity of one's benefactor, in order to enhance one's own status.

The Stoic philosopher Seneca, writing during the first century AD, recognized that the custom of benefit exchange was no longer contributing to the welfare of society but was only serving the interests of benefactors. He therefore wrote his treatise *De Beneficiis* which critiqued the contemporary practice and offered an ideal model of benefaction. Seneca wrote that benefactors should follow the Aristotelian practice of pursuing virtue as they bestowed their benefits. In so doing, they would offer their gifts with no expectation of return and they would give in such a way as to arouse a response of gratitude in their beneficiary. Since the response of gratitude was itself virtuous for a recipient, the benefactor would not only be performing a virtue himself, but he would also be inspiring virtue in another. The benefit conveyed consisted in two elements, the goodwill of the bestower and the actual gift or service provided, but it was the intention with which the benefit was given that was of primary importance. While the giver was to give with no expectation of a return, other than the expression of gratitude which he felt himself responsible to inspire, the recipient having received the gift with gratitude was to feel deeply indebted until the time when he could offer an appropriate return. Although the initial benefit, if received with gratitude, established a friendship between the two, the return offered to the original benefactor would likewise have to be received as if it were a new benefit. In this way, the two entered into a long relationship of conveying benefits and expressing gratitude to one another.

Thus was the environment of benefit exchange in the Graeco-Roman world of the first century AD, both the reality of the practice and the ideal model proposed by Seneca.

9.2. Paul's use of the term χάρις

Most of Paul's uses of χάρις outside of 2 Corinthians 8-9 can be generalized in two categories. In one category, the emphasis is on grace *imparted*, the grace of God viewed from the perspective of the Giver. It is the gift which provides salvation to all who receive it. I have shown that Paul's description of the "benefit" of salvation aligns with Seneca's portrayal of a benefit as consisting in two elements, the goodwill of the

bestower and the actual gift bestowed. In Romans 5.15, 17 this *free gift* (χάρισμα) is described as consisting of "the χάρις of God and the gift (δωρεά) which is the grace of the one man Jesus Christ" (5.15), which is also described as the gift of righteousness (ἡ δωρεά τῆς δικαιοσύνης; 5.17). God's grace is his goodwill, but it is always goodwill expressed in the action of giving.

The second category of usage for Paul is that of χάρις as *empowerment*. Here χάρις is also described as something given, but in this case it is viewed from the perspective of the recipient. χάρις *received* as empowerment is the grace given to Paul in his apostolic authority (Gal. 2.9; 1 Cor. 3.10; Rom. 12.3; 15.15), grace given for daily Christian living (1 Cor. 15.10; 12.9) and grace given to believers as χαρίσματα (1 Cor. 1.4-7; 12.4-31).

Other uses of χάρις in Paul's writings include its occurrence in his opening and closing benedictions, reference to the Corinthians' "gift" for the collection (1 Cor. 16.3), and expressions of thanksgiving to God.

9.3. Paul's Paradigm for Giving and Receiving

Seneca's ideal model of benefit exchange describes the benefit bestowed and the return offered by the recipient as each consisting in two elements. One element reflects the attitude of the giver – the giver's goodwill – and the other is the actual gift or service bestowed. The giver conveys both goodwill and his gift to the recipient, who responds with a return consisting of his gratitude and a return gift. This reciprocity is perpetuated as the original benefactor is obliged to respond to his beneficiary's return gift with a return of his own, which then becomes yet another benefit bestowed. And so the process continues and the two parties remain indebted to one another through the obligations of reciprocity. (See Figure 3.2, §3.2.4 for Seneca's model of benefit exchange.)

As I have clearly shown in Chapter 3, all of the elements of the Seneca model are present in the Pauline paradigm of giving; however, the dynamics are different. In 2 Corinthians 8-9 Paul desires the Corinthians to make a contribution toward the collection thus bestowing a benefit to the saints in Jerusalem. The Corinthians' "benefit" consists in two aspects, their goodwill and their gift (see Figure 9.1 below). Their goodwill is the generosity with which they have been enriched to give (9.11) and their gift is their contribution toward the collection. The Jerusalem saints as the recipients receive the Corinthians' gift with gratitude. Their gratitude, however, is not

directed back to the Corinthians but to God in recognition of him as the ultimate provider of their gift. At some time, when the Corinthians have a need, the saints in Jerusalem will offer a "return" gift to help meet their need (or, from their surplus, they may contribute toward the needs of others).

On the surface this description resembles Seneca's model, with the one exception that the recipients' gratitude is directed to God and not to their immediate benefactors. Just as Seneca's term *benefit* can refer to multiple elements of the gift

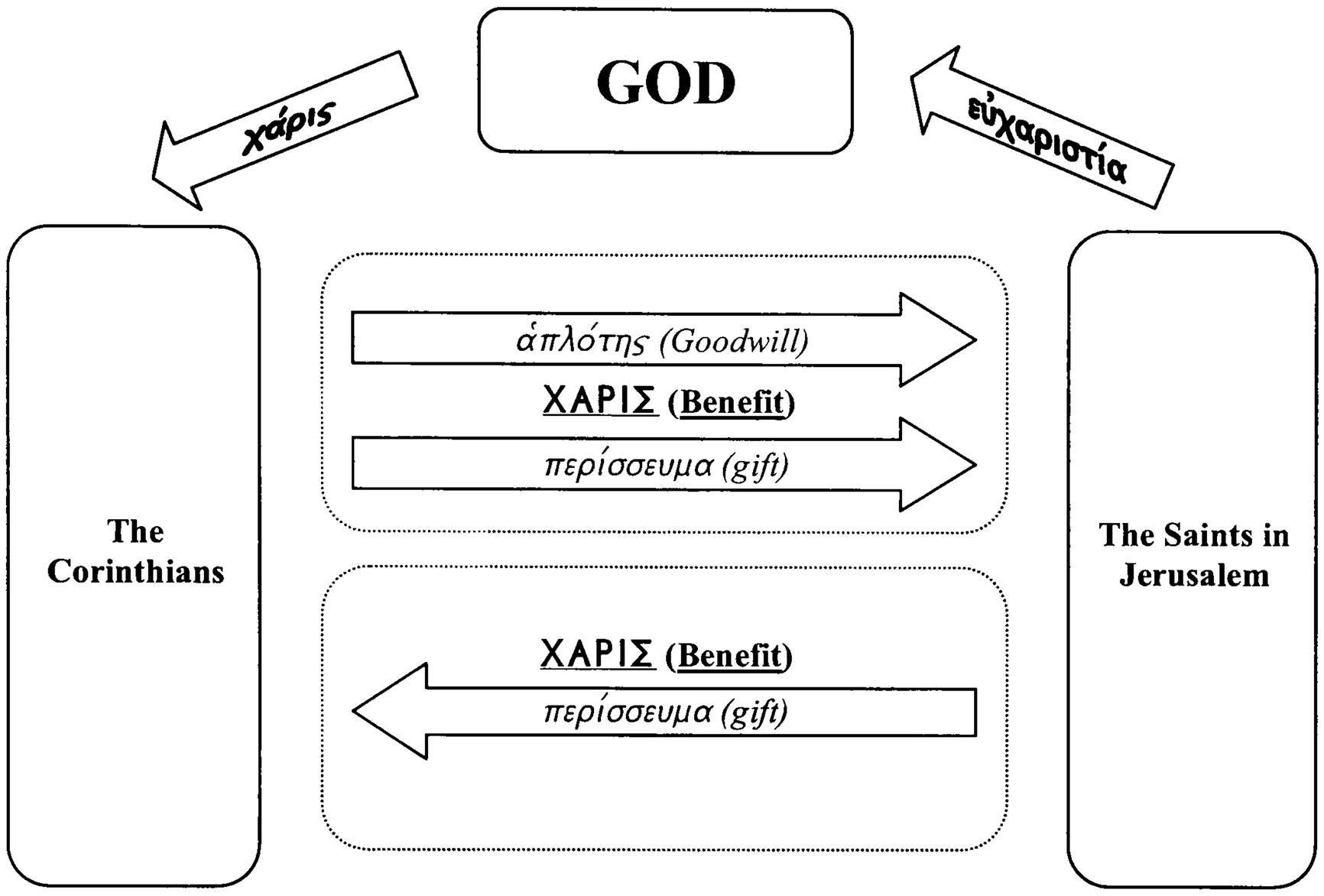

Figure 9.1 "χάρις-Exchange" in the Collection

giving process, so too the term χάρις can appropriately be used of the giver's attitude, his gift and the return of gratitude. In the same way that Paul can speak of God's grace in salvation as consisting of God's goodwill and the gift of his Son dying on the cross, so too the Corinthians' "benefit" can be considered a χάρις consisting of their goodwill (ἁπλότης) and the collection gift contributed from their surplus (περίσσευμα). Similarly, the eventual return by the saints in Jerusalem consists in the χάρις of their return gift and the εὐχαριστία they offer to God.

Seneca affirms that the intention of the giver is all-important, that he should demonstrate virtue in giving his gift in a selfless manner and in inspiring a virtuous response of gratitude in the recipient. Such striving after virtue has as its sole basis the example of the gods, who selflessly give benefits to man. As I have shown, for Paul, the intention of the giver is likewise important; however, the basis for such giving is not

only the supreme example of Christ's sacrifice, but it is also the fact that God empowers believers through his grace to give generously (see the χάρις arrow in *Fig. 9.1*). Christian gift giving is initiated by God in the gift of his Son, both providing an example to be followed and in providing the empowerment that makes generous giving possible. For Seneca, givers were to strive for virtue. Christians, however, have already received the gift of righteousness; they strive to glorify the God who has enabled them to *be* righteous. It is such gift giving that inspires a "virtuous" response in the recipient: thanksgiving offered to God which brings him glory.

The intriguing aspect of Paul's discussion of the collection in 2 Corinthians 8-9 is clearly his use of χάρις. The term is appropriate for Paul to use as he discusses giving as it relates to the collection precisely because of its versatility in Graeco-Roman benefaction where it could be used for the giver's goodwill, the actual gift bestowed and the recipient's gratitude. Just as these elements were integral to Seneca's model of benefit exchange, so too we find Paul subtly hinting at these nuances when he uses the term in discussing the collection. A single occurrence of χάρις can imply reference to the grace of God while at the same time referring to the outworking of that grace as the attitude of the giver and even the gift itself.

It is actually the inherent ambiguity of χάρις that makes the term effective in Paul's discussion. Each time he uses χάρις, Paul can draw off of the word's many meanings – whether consciously or subconsciously; it can potentially convey notions of God's grace leading to salvation, of favor, thanksgiving, a gift or one's goodwill. The central role of grace in Paul's theology inclines us to suspect that any use of the term in his letters may be theologically weighted, and for this reason we have considered whether Paul may have theological nuances in mind even for seemingly secular uses of the term. Paul obviously does not limit his use of χάρις to the senses it conveys in Graeco-Roman benefaction. By using the term in a context of giving, however, a context within which his readers were accustomed to hearing the term used, he allows them to associate his use of χάρις with the practices of giving and receiving. I have shown that the theological framework of Paul's discussion, established by both initiating and concluding the discussion with mention of χάρις in connection with God and by supporting his argument with reference to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, indicates that his concentrated and yet diverse use of χάρις in 2 Corinthians 8-9 is with a specific purpose in mind. That which in the Graeco-Roman world of benefaction implies obligation with regard to the giving and returning of gifts, for Christians reflects

the privilege of being recipients of God's grace and participating in the further dispersal of that grace.

9.4. The Significance of χάρις

The significance of χάρις in Paul's discussion in 2 Corinthians 8-9 is of course much broader than its application as a benefaction term. The significant difference between gift giving in Paul and in the Graeco-Roman world at large is that for Paul, divine grace is at the heart of the entire exchange. The motivation for all Christian giving lies in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself by becoming poor that others might become rich (8.9). This is the *grace infusion* that provides the impetus for all Christian giving. The ongoing bestowal of God's grace then enables believers to give. Through the provision of his grace, God supplies the "goodwill" and the "gift"; his grace imparts the spirit of generosity (ἁπλότης), and he supplies givers with the surplus (περίσσευμα) from which they can give. The giver's motive is not self-serving; he does not give in order to get something in return, and he does not give so as to increase his own status. He gives that there may be *equality*. Believers share with one another because God has blessed them with more than they need and they therefore have the ability to help meet others' needs. The recipients likewise share from some abundance they have to meet the needs of others – perhaps they will offer a "return" to those from whom they have received, or perhaps their gift will meet someone else's need. Since all are in the body of Christ, all benefit whenever anyone's need is met. And each time someone shares from their abundance with someone else in need, they are passing on χάρις, both an actual gift and God's grace as conveyed through their generosity. Thus where benefit exchange in the Graeco-Roman world entailed reciprocity and put the recipients under obligation, "surplus exchange" among believers results in "equality" (ἰσότης) from voluntary, even spontaneous giving. A continual redistribution of surplus will maintain the equality of the wider Christian community, not only in the exchange of gifts, but through fellowship – the sharing with one another from the abundance of God's grace received. And as both givers and receivers recognize God's grace at work in this way, they glorify him with abundant thanksgiving.

One of the reasons for giving gifts in antiquity was to establish relationships with others. Within the body of Christ, κοινωνία already exists between those who are in Christ, even between believers who have never met, such as the Corinthians and the

believers in Jerusalem.[2] Therefore they do not give in order to establish relationships, they give in recognition of the κοινωνία that already exists between them. In the body of Christ, "obligation" and "reciprocity" occur within a context of κοινωνία which is enveloped by χάρις. In this regard, when a person receives something, whether grace directly from God or grace in the form of a gift from someone else, he may feel obligated to offer a return. Recognizing that all gifts ultimately come from God, however, he offers the return of gratitude to God for gifts received from others. The way in which one offers a return gift to God is by "reciprocating" to someone in need within the body of Christ. Christ in his body of believers benefits when believers offer a return for that which they have ultimately received from God.

Benefit exchange in the Graeco-Roman world established perpetual relationships of giving and receiving, a process which could only end through a termination of the relationship. Gift exchange within the body of Christ is also a dynamic process. The equality that Paul says results from Christian "surplus exchange" (2 Cor. 9.13-14) does not exist solely on the basis of a relationship between two believers or two communities. With God's involvement in the process through his grace, it would ultimately require the participation of the entire body of Christ – individuals with individuals and Christian communities with Christian communities – those with surplus sharing with those in need, to establish this equality. The model of gift exchange for the collection given above in Figure 9.1 is an incomplete model because it describes a static situation. Although there is a χάρις arrow pointing from God to the Corinthians, there should also be one pointing from God to the saints in Jerusalem, for they too are recipients of God's grace. Their response of gratitude to God for the gift received from the Corinthians is itself a response of grace, an action prompted by the grace of God given to them. If the Corinthians receive a gift from the saints to help meet some need of their own, they likewise will want to respond to God with gratitude. All aspects of giving and receiving among Christians take place under the influence of God's grace. In Figure 9.1 there should perhaps be a large circle drawn around the entire figure with the word χάρις written in it to indicate that the entire process is driven by grace.

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[2] Or between Paul and the Roman Christians he addresses in his letter to them.

9.5. Grace and Abundance

In Paul's writings, grace is often associated with abundance – a characteristic of grace is that it overflows. In Rom. 5.15 God's grace "abounded to the many" and in 2 Cor. 9.8 Paul writes that God is able to abound all grace to the Corinthians. In 8.2 Paul writes that amidst afflictions, the Macedonians had an abundance of joy, and their deep poverty abounded in the wealth of their sincere generosity. God is the one who supplies the abundance, whether the material περίσσευμα or the attitude of ἁπλότης. Both of these are necessary ingredients for those contributing to the collection and both are supplied by God's grace.

When Paul addresses the Corinthians he explains that for them it is not necessary that their gift be sacrificial or that they give to the degree that they bring hardship upon themselves. Despite the example of the Macedonians and the self-sacrifice of Christ, it was sufficient for them to give simply from what they had. The reason for this is that what they have has been provided by God. It is from their περίσσευμα that they are to contribute toward the collection (8.14). As God's grace abounds in them, they will realize that this abundance or surplus has been provided by him for such a cause as this. And having contributed from their surplus to the needs of the saints in Jerusalem, they will likewise receive back toward some need of their own – whether material or spiritual – from Jerusalem's surplus or from some other community of believers. In this way, there is "equality" in the body of Christ.

9.6. Grace, the Corinthians and the Collection

God is able to cause his grace to overflow to the Corinthians so that they will not only have the right attitude, but they will also have sufficient resources from which to contribute to the collection. How this can happen Paul makes clear in 9.11-13 as he envisions the results of the completion of a successful collection project. God is able, but as I have demonstrated, there is a condition – the key lies in the Corinthians' attitude toward God. In telling the Corinthians of the Macedonians' enthusiasm and subsequent contribution gift, he says that they first "gave themselves to the Lord and to us" (8.5). The reason that God's grace was effective in the Macedonians was that they had fully committed themselves to God (and to Paul's apostolic authority given him by God). They had no self-interests in mind, only that God's will be done. As committed believers they were obedient to God and his leading. That which Paul desires of the Corinthians is that they too would be obedient to the working of God in their lives. This

is expressed in 9.13 as "the obedience of [their] confession to the gospel of Christ". Their confession of the gospel of Christ meant full submission to the power of the grace of God in their lives. As they submitted to the working of his grace, the door would be open for his grace to abound to them. For this reason the "obedience" of their confession (9.13) means not that their confession is a demonstration of their obedience, but that by their confession – their submission to the power of the grace of God – God, through his grace would enable them to be obedient to him. God is able to abound all grace unto them, and he will do so as they fully submit to the power of his grace, committing themselves first to him. God is able, but there is a condition, that condition being their obedience, which itself is a working of God's grace within them as they submit fully to him.

The result of the Corinthians' submission to the power of the grace of God is ἁπλότης – the ἁπλότης of their κοινωνία demonstrated in their collection gift (9.13). This evidence of the grace of God in them is the heart-felt generosity with which they give, not only to the saints in Jerusalem, but their willingness also to contribute to believers in other communities who may likewise have need. Paul's pastoral concern for his churches is not that they give toward the offering, but that they remain in full submission to the gospel of Christ. He is not concerned to persuade the Corinthians to give financially, but to give themselves to the Lord with a willing spirit so that his grace may abound in them, the outcome and evidence of which will be their generosity.

The fellowship involved in the grace of giving is not limited to the horizontal fellowship among believers, as my model of the "circle of χάρις" in 2 Corinthians 8-9 clearly demonstrates. God gives his χάρις to believers (8.1) enabling them to give χάρις generously to others (8.19), who in turn respond by returning χάρις to God as εὐχαριστία (9.11-12). "We encounter here", comments Barclay, "one of the deepest strands in Paul's theology, characteristically expressed while discussing mundane, practical, behavior. The *charis* which flows from God and ultimately back to God thus brings glory to God".[3] Another distinction between Paul's paradigm of giving and that of Seneca is that, for Paul, a third party is always involved. As the one who supplies the grace that enables both the sincere generosity and the abundance from which believers are able to give to others, God is involved in every aspect of giving. It is only right, then, that he receive the gratitude, which brings him glory as the one ultimately

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[3] Barclay, 1367.

responsible for every gift. Figure 9.2 uses a triangle to illustrate the "circle of grace" involved in Christian giving. God's grace (χάρις) supplies believers with the generous attitude (ἁπλότης) and the surplus from which to give (περισσεύμα), which when passed on in the form of a gift inspires the recipient to express gratitude (εὐχαριστία) to God. The recipients likewise, as they are supplied by God's χάρις, generously offer gifts from their surplus to those from whom they received or to others in need within the body of Christ.

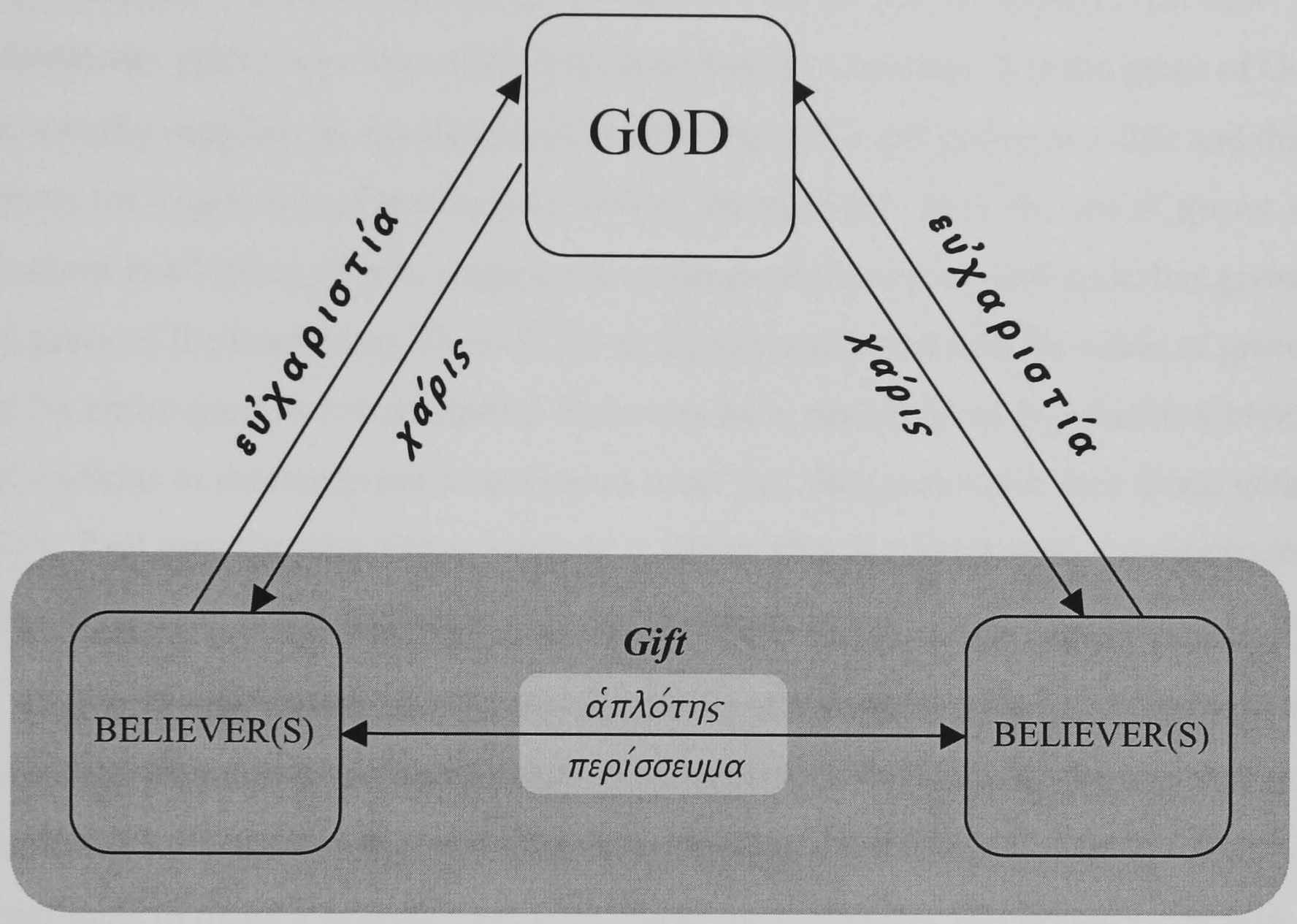

Figure 9.2. Gift Exchange Among Christians

9.7. Summary: Paul, Grace and Surplus Exchange

I have clearly established that Christian giving is a theological endeavor. When one believer or believing community gives to another, they become vessels in the dispersal of God's grace. When two Christians exchange gifts, there is always someone behind the human givers, for it is only because of God's grace that they are enabled to give. God's grace makes the heart generous, thereby empowering them to give, and he supplies the surplus they are able to share. The dynamic of the circle of grace ensures that God will receive glory through the process of gift giving. As people who have been supplied with his grace give to others, the recipients likewise receive from God's grace and are therefore moved to offer thanksgiving to God for his gift, thus bringing him glory.

I have established several reasons why the term χάρις was appropriate for Paul to use in his discussion of the collection. Since it was a key term in Graeco-Roman benefaction, using it allowed him to formulate his discussion of the collection in a framework with which his readers could identify. The versatility of the word as used in secular gift giving readily transferred to its use in divine contexts. The resultant ambiguity enriched Paul's discussion by suggesting references in both spheres. The fact that χάρις could be goodwill, gift or gratitude would have been clear to Paul's readers. As he defined the context, however, the impact of divine χάρις would reveal how different *this* χάρις was from that of ordinary benefit exchange. It is the grace of God that actually supplies the goodwill and surplus that make gift giving possible and that inspires the expression of gratitude to God by the recipient. Thus, the use of χάρις was expedient in allowing Paul to suggest the theological foundation that underlies giving. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ (8.9), as the grace infusion into the circle of grace, sets the entire progression in motion. Believers have already been enriched in Christ, and continue to receive grace from God in order that they may share their grace with others. Paul uses the term χάρις because it allows him to express both the provision for and participation in the collection as rooted in divine grace.

I have also shown how the understanding of Paul's use of χάρις sheds new light on the interpretation of 2 Corinthians 8-9, particularly in two aspects. First, it becomes clear that Paul's primary concern in the two chapters is not in persuading the Corinthians to make a generous contribution to the collection. His primary aim is to persuade the Corinthians in the first place to give themselves entirely to the Lord (as the Macedonians had done; 8.5) thereby submitting to the power of his grace. Paul longs to see his converts entirely committed to God. He knows that through such submission, God's grace will bring about obedience that *will* result in a generous contribution. The second aspect of 2 Corinthians 8-9 that I have brought to light is that the collection itself – and, in fact, all Christian giving – is entirely an outworking of the grace of God. The practical needs of the saints in Jerusalem would be met through an outworking of his grace through the contributions of various Gentile believing communities. The purpose of the collection – and particularly in this context, the Corinthians' participation in it – was to bring glory to God (9.13). The collection was to be an expression of the grace that the participants – both givers and recipients – had received from God, which overflowed in them to others and back to God in the form of thanksgiving. Thus for Paul, the theological motive for the collection was grace, submission to the power of

God's grace so that it could work effectively in the participants, and thus bring glory to him.

In comparing Graeco-Roman benefit exchange to surplus exchange in Paul, I have identified significant differences that scholarship until now has largely overlooked. Benefit exchange intrinsically involves the obligations of reciprocity. Upon receiving a benefit, the recipient was bound to offer a return, initially the return of gratitude, followed by an appropriate gift or service. The return would then be received by the initial benefactor as a new benefit which put him under obligation to reciprocate. The dynamics of χάρις exchange portrayed by Paul are quite different. Rather than falling under obligation to return gifts, Christians who have been supplied by God's grace exchange with one another the surplus which God provides. As he supplies, so they are able to give – not to repay a debt, but to help supply a need. Such surplus exchange allows for a redistribution of surplus within the body of Christ to meet needs. As individual believers abound in surplus from which to share, they also abound in generosity which produces in them great joy (8.2). As a result, the only obligation they feel is the obligation not to hold on to the surplus which God has provided but to pass it on to someone in need. Grace thus transforms the obligations and reciprocity of Graeco-Roman benefit exchange into the generosity and equality of Christian surplus exchange. The power of the grace of God enables those who submit to it to abound in generosity which produces thanksgiving and glory to God.

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