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**“The Truth of the Gospel”:
An Exegetical and Theological Study
of the Antitheses in Galatians 5.2-6**

by

Hung-Sik Choi

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**Thesis Submitted for PhD
Department of Theology, University of Durham**

January, 2002



- 3 MAY 2002

“The Truth of the Gospel”: An Exegetical and Theological Study of the Antitheses in Galatians 5.2-6

by

Hung-Sik Choi

Thesis submitted in the Department of Theology in fulfilment of the requirement of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of Durham

January, 2002

Abstract

The present work is an exegetical and theological study of the antitheses in Galatians 5.2-6. Chapter 1 justifies the present work by pointing out the fact that both the six “antitheses” in 5.2-6 and the passage itself have not been given sufficient recognition in the history of interpretation of Galatians.

First, Paul contrasts circumcision and Christ in terms of “benefit” in 5.2-3; the salvific benefit of Christ is contrasted with the uselessness of circumcision (ch. 2). The salvific benefit of Christ is Paul’s ultimate theological basis for his opposition to the agitators’ theological rationale for circumcision, in particular the salvific efficacy and benefit of circumcision. Second, the law is contrasted to Christ in terms of the sphere of justification (5.4b vs. 5.4a), not as two antithetical means of justification (ch. 3). With God’s eschatological transfer from the law to Christ as the sphere of justification Paul redefines the boundary of God’s people and replaces it from the law to Christ. Third, Paul contrasts the law with grace as two mutually exclusive foundations of justification (5.4b vs. 5.4c - ch. 4). Paul rejects the law as the soteriological basis of justification because God’s saving grace brought the salvific effects (e.g. righteousness, the Abrahamic blessing, sonship, election) to the Gentiles without Torah-observance. Fourth, Paul sets the law in antithesis with the Spirit as two antithetical bases of justification (5.4b vs. 5.5 - ch. 5). For Paul the Spirit is the means of righteousness, the medium of the blessing of Abraham, and the agent and basis of sonship. Fifth, the law and Christ’s faithfulness is contrasted as two antithetical means of justification (5.4b vs. 5.5 - ch. 6). The πίστις references in 5.5 and 5.6 refer to the faithfulness of Christ, not to the Christian’s act of faith in Christ. Paul’s antithesis between ἔργα νόμου and πίστις Χριστοῦ should be understood as shorthand for the incompatibility between ethnocentric covenantalism and the gospel of Christ’s faithfulness in terms of two mutually exclusive soteriological belief-systems. Sixth, Paul sets περιτομή/ἀκροβυστία in antithesis with πίστις δι’ ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη (i.e. Christ’s faithfulness working through his love) as two antithetical bases of justification (5.6 - ch. 7). The antithesis between “circumcision vs. uncircumcision” and Christ’s faithfulness working through his love should be interpreted as a microcosm of the two incompatible belief-systems between the agitators’ ethnocentric covenantalism and Paul’s gospel of the cross.

Chapter 8 consists of the summary and implications for Pauline interpretation. The antitheses function as a summary of Paul’s argument to the Galatians, the answer to the pivotal issues at stake in Galatians, the solution of the crisis in Galatia, the rationale for Paul’s opposition to the agitators’ gospel, and interpretive clues for understanding Paul’s theology in Galatians. In conclusion, Gal 5.2-6, where the six antitheses appear, is the truth-claim of Paul’s gospel, the summary and climax of Paul’s argument to the Galatians, and a hermeneutical key to Paul’s letter to the Galatians.

DECLARATION

I confirm that no part of the material contained in this thesis has previously been submitted by me for a degree in the University of Durham or in any other university.

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ABBREVIATIONS

In general, the conventions followed for the abbreviations of the titles of journals and reference works are those of the *Journal of Biblical Literature* 107 (1988) 579-596. In the notes the name of an author and the first title or a short title are given; full titles are available in the bibliography at the end.

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	The Anchor Bible Dictionary
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentary
<i>AusBR</i>	<i>Australian Biblical Review</i>
AV	Authorized Version
BAGD	W. Bauer, W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich and F. W. Danker, <i>Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1979)
<i>BAR</i>	<i>Biblical Archaeologist Reader</i>
BDF	F. Blass, A. Debrunner, and R. W. Funk, <i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament</i> (University of Chicago/University of Cambridge, 1961)
BCE	Before the Christian Era
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
<i>BJRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester</i>
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentary
BU	Biblische Untersuchungen
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CE	Christian Era
<i>CTJ</i>	<i>Calvin Theological Journal</i>
CUP	Cambridge University Press
DJD	Discoveries in the Judean Desert
<i>DPL</i>	<i>Dictionary of Paul and his Letters</i>
<i>EDNT</i>	<i>Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
ET	English Translation
<i>EvQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
<i>EvT</i>	<i>Evangelische Theologie</i>
<i>ExpT</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
FS	Festschrift
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GNC	Good News Commentary
HDR	Harvard Dissertation in Religion
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HTS</i>	<i>Hervormde Theologiese Studies</i>
ICC	The International Critical Commentary

<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
IVP	InterVarsity Press
JB	Jerusalem Bible
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JES</i>	<i>Journal of Ecumenical Studies</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
JKP	John Knox Press
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JPS	Jewish Publication Society
<i>JSP</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
KJV	King James Version
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Massoretic Text
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NBC	New Bible Commentary
LEC	Library of Early Christianity
<i>Neot</i>	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
NCBC	The New Century Bible Commentary
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIDNTT	New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NIV	New International Version
NIVAC	The New International Version Application Commentary
<i>NKZ</i>	<i>Neue kirchliche Zeitschrift</i>
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum Supplement Series
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue Biblique</i>
REB	Revised English Bible
<i>RevExp</i>	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
RV	Revised Version
<i>RSR</i>	<i>Recherches de science religieuse</i>
SANT	Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
SAP	Sheffield Academic Press
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
<i>SEA</i>	<i>Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok</i>
SJSJ	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series

TDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament
THKNT	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
TNTC	The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
TPI	Trinity Press International
<i>TRE</i>	<i>Theologische Realenzyklopädie</i>
<i>TZ</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
UBS	Union Bible Society
<i>USQR</i>	<i>Union Seminary Quarterly Review</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZTK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

VERSIFIED GREEK TEXT OF GAL 5.2-6

Throughout this study Gal 5.2-6 will be cited as follows:

(5.2a) Ἴδε ἐγὼ Παῦλος λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ἐὰν περιτέμνησθε,

(5.2b) Χριστὸς ὑμᾶς οὐδὲν ὠφελήσει.

(5.3) μαρτύρομαι δὲ πάλιν παντὶ ἀνθρώπῳ περιτεμνομένῳ ὅτι ὀφειλέτης ἐστὶν ὅλον τὸν νόμον ποιῆσαι.

(5.4a) κατηργήθητε ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ,

(5.4b) οἵτινες ἐν νόμῳ δικαιούσθε,

(5.4c) τῆς χάριτος ἐξεπέσατε.

(5.5) ἡμεῖς γὰρ πνεύματι ἐκ πίστεως ἐλπίδα δικαιοσύνης ἀπεκδεχόμεθα.

(5.6) ἐν γὰρ Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ οὔτε περιτομή τι ἰσχύει οὔτε ἀκροβυστία ἀλλὰ πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη.

Acknowledgements

My interest in Greek exegesis and Pauline theology goes back to my days as a postgraduate at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Illinois, USA. I am profoundly indebted to Dr. Murray J. Harris, a fine Christian gentleman and scholar, who taught me Greek exegesis and Pauline theology with meticulous scholarship, passion, and warmth, whose wise guidance and favourable recommendation made it possible for me to study at the University of Durham.

For the production of this thesis I am indebted to the help of many. My special thanks are due to many people without whose counsel and support the present thesis could not have been completed. My first and special thanks go to my *Doctorvater*, Professor James D. G. Dunn to whom I owe a huge debt of gratitude for his kind and gracious supervision, careful and acute criticism, warm encouragement, insightful comments, and especially his patience with my unrefined materials, without which the present thesis could not have been completed.

I also express my sincere thanks to Dr. Loren Stuckenbruck and Professor Robert Hayward who read part of my draft and offered helpful suggestions. I am also grateful to Andrew Carver, Ian Yorkston, Archie Wright, Brad Embry, and Terence Mournet for helping me to improve my English.

The present thesis could not have seen the light of day without the spiritual and financial assistance of many individuals and churches. My special thanks are due to Rev. Tae-Sik Lee who has encouraged and supported me with substantial financial support and wise counsel. I also express my warmest thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Joo-Eun Son who has provided me considerable financial support and Mdm. Yong-Soon Son for her prayer and encouragement. I also would like to record my deep thanks to many Jae-Gun churches in Korea: Balgun Church, Bupyung Church, Daebang Church, Dongsan Church, Duksan Church, Judamnun Church, Kwangju Church, Masan Church, Sungun Church, Youngdungpo Church.

Many friends will be cherished and memorable during my study at Durham: All the members of Durham Chodae Church, Rev. Jong-Eun Chung, Dr. Jin-Ho Ahn, Rev. Kyung-Jin Min, Rev. Hak-Jin Kim, Rev. Sang-Il Lee, Rev. Finny Philip, Rev. Hiroshi Ishiwata.

My special and deepest thanks and affection go to my parents Mr. and Mrs. Hong-Sub Choi for their sacrificial love and unfailing support without which my research at Durham would not have been possible and the present thesis could not have been produced. I dedicate this thesis to my parents who have educated me with love, sacrifice, passion, warmth, and Christian belief.

Finally, I offer my sincerest and warmest thanks to my loving wife Kyung-Boo for her love, care, sacrifice, and patience in spite of her PhD study in the University of Durham, and to our two lovely children John and David for their "encouragement" and "sacrifice" for "busy Daddy."

SOLI DEO GLORIA

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Paul's letter to the Galatians is one of the most important documents in the New Testament.¹ The letter has been very influential in the history of Christian thought.² The letter has played an important role in understanding pivotal themes of Pauline theology, such as Paul's attitude to the law and first century Palestinian Judaism, the truth of the gospel, justification, the Spirit, salvation-history, and Paul's ethics. Another important role of the letter is that it testifies to the character of early Christianity.³ Moreover, the letter describes the inter-Christian debates on several crucial issues such as the inclusion of Gentiles into the people of God, social relationship between Jewish Christians with Gentile, and circumcision.⁴ Since the Reformation, the letter has been a favourite epistle in pursuit of the theology of Paul and the historical situation of early Christianity. The letter was foundational to Luther's interpretation of Paul's view of the law and justification.⁵ It was an important

¹ H. D. Betz calls it "one of the most important religious documents of mankind" ("Spirit, Freedom, and Law," *SEA* 39 (1974), 145).

² Cf. J. D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul's Letter to the Galatians* [hereafter, *TPLG*] (Cambridge: CUP, 1993), 133-145; R. N. Longenecker, *Galatians* (Dallas: Word, 1990), xlii-lvii.

³ J. D. G. Dunn points out the importance of Paul's letter to the Galatians in understanding the theological foundation of Pauline Christianity and the nature of early Christianity. The letter, "helped to shape the character and self-perception of early Christianity, both in terms of its fundamental principles and in relation to the Jewish matrix from which Christianity emerged" (*The Epistle to the Galatians* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1993), 2).

⁴ J. M. G. Barclay notes the significance of the disputes between Paul and Peter in Antioch, and Paul and Paul's opponents in Galatia. These disputes, according to him, involved the interpretation of Scripture, the significance of the law, the relationship of the churches to Judaism, and many related moral and theological issues (*Obeying the Truth* (Fortress: Minneapolis, 1991), 1).

⁵ M. Luther, *Lectures on Galatians 1535*, vols. 26 and 27 *Luther's Works*, edited by J. Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1963, 1964).



epistle in F. C. Baur's investigations into Paul's opponents in Galatia and the historical context of early Christianity.⁶

In the last decades a considerable number of significant commentaries, monographs, and articles have focused on the letter. Many Galatians studies have focused on the identity of Paul's opponents in Galatia. Interpreters have proposed various hypotheses about the identity of Paul's opponents in Galatia, i.e. "the agitators."⁷ On his interpretation of 6.13, J. Munck suggested that οἱ περιτεμνόμενοι refers not to the Judaizers from outside but to the Gentile Christians in the church of Galatia.⁸ This hypothesis is based on his assumption that the Gentile Christians in Galatia thought from their interpretation of the Old Testament that God required of them circumcision and the observance of the commandments of the law.⁹ On his interpretation of 5.3 and 6.13, W. Schmithals insisted that the agitators were Gnostics.¹⁰ R. Jewett argued that Paul was fighting two sets of agitators at Galatia.¹¹ According to Jewett, on the one hand, Paul was arguing against legalistic nomism imported from Jewish Christians under the persecution of Zealots. On the other hand, Paul was fighting libertinism which existed in the church of Galatia from the beginning because of their Hellenistic background. N. Walter argues that the agitators were some of the non-Christian Jews who persecuted the church and intended to abolish the circumcision-free Christian mission.¹² Most commentators, however, believe that the agitators were Jewish Christians.¹³

⁶ F. C. Baur, *Paul, the Apostle of Jesus Christ* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1876), 105-145.

⁷ Paul's opponents in Galatia are traditionally called judaizers, but Barclay (*Obeying*, 36, n. 1) and Dunn (*TPLG*, 10) appropriately criticize this label. The term "the agitators" is Paul's own language about his opponents in Galatia, found in 1.7 and 5.10 (cf. 5.12).

⁸ J. Munck, "The Judaizing Gentile Christians," in *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind* (London: SPCK, 1959), 87-134.

⁹ Munck, "The Judaizing Gentile Christians," 132.

¹⁰ W. Schmithals, "The Heretics in Galatia," in *Paul and the Gnostics* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1972), 13-64.

¹¹ R. Jewett, "The Agitators and the Galatian Congregation," *NTS* 17 (1971), 198-212.

¹² N. Walter, "Paulus und die Gegner des Christusevangeliums in Galatien," in *L'Apôtre Paul*, edited by A. Vanhoye (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1986), 351-356.

¹³ E.g. Barclay, *Obeying*, 86-87; J. Bligh, *Galatians* (London: St. Paul, 1969), 35; F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 25-27; Dunn, *Galatians*, 11; I.-G. Hong, *The Law in Galatians* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 120; G. Howard, *Paul* (Cambridge:

We have also seen some investigations into the letter to the Galatians by means of the rhetorical approach.¹⁴ Pioneering rhetorical criticism to the letter, H. D. Betz claims that Galatians is an “apologetic letter.”¹⁵ Although Betz’s analysis has been welcomed by some scholars,¹⁶ a considerable number of scholars have criticised his analysis. Some scholars claim that the letter is a letter belonging to the deliberative genre.¹⁷ J. D. Hester considers that it is an “epideictic letter.”¹⁸ R. Longenecker argues that Paul’s letter to the Galatians is a “rebuke-request” letter.¹⁹ However, R. D. Anderson argues that the letter cannot be classified into any one of the three most popular rhetorical genres (apologetic, deliberative, epideictic).²⁰ Recently P. Kern also challenges the widely accepted view that the letter to the Galatians should be understood in light of Graeco-Roman rhetorical handbooks.²¹ He claims that the letter

CUP, 1979), 1-19; W. G. Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1975), 298-301; Longenecker, *Galatians*, xcv; G. Luedemann, *Opposition to Paul in Jewish Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 99-103; J. L. Martyn, *Galatians* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 120-126; F. J. Matera, *Galatians* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 10; H. Ridderbos, *The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953), 16-18; E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* [hereafter *PLJP*] (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 18. Interestingly, J. B. Tyson (“Paul’s Opponents in Galatia,” *NovT* 10 (1968), 241-254) argues that Paul’s opponents in Galatia are Jewish Christians native to Galatia. F. R. Crownfield (“The Singular Problem of the Dual Galatians,” *JBL* 64 (1945), 491-500) claims that Paul’s opponents in Galatia are Jewish Christian syncretists.

¹⁴ For recent scholarship, see R. D. Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul* (Kampen: Pharos, 1996), 111-167; P. Kern, *Rhetoric and Galatians* (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), 43-56.

¹⁵ H. D. Betz, “The Literary Composition and Function of Paul’s Letter to the Galatians,” *NTS* 21 (1975), 354; idem, *Galatians* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 14-25.

¹⁶ In particular, B. H. Brinsmead, *Galatians* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1982).

¹⁷ D. E. Aune, *The New Testament in Its Environment* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987), 203; J. Fairweather, “The Epistle to the Galatians and Classical Rhetoric: Parts 1 & 2,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 45 (1994), 1-38; idem, “The Epistle to the Galatians and Classical Rhetoric: Part 3,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 45 (1994), 213-243; R. G. Hall, “The Rhetorical Outline for Galatians,” *JBL* 106 (1987), 277-287; G. A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 144-152; J. Smit, “The Letter of Paul to the Galatians,” *NTS* 35 (1989), 1-26; Ben Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998).

¹⁸ J. D. Hester, “Placing the Blame,” in *Persuasive Artistry*, edited by D. F. Watson (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 281-307; idem, “The Use and Influence of Rhetoric in Galatians 2:1-14,” *TZ* 42 (1986), 386-408.

¹⁹ Longenecker, *Galatians*. It was followed by G. W. Hansen, *Abraham in Galatians* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989).

²⁰ Anderson, *Rhetorical*, 167.

²¹ Kern, *Rhetoric and Galatians*.

cannot be analyzed according to Greco-Roman rhetoric not only because Galatians does not conform to Graeco-Roman rhetorical handbooks or to extant speeches but also because these handbooks cannot assist the search for a distinctly Pauline rhetoric.²² J. L. Martyn contends that the letter is a highly situational sermon.²³ Concerning the current rhetorical approach to the letter, J. D. G. Dunn argues that Galatians does not accord closely with any ideal rhetorical type and indicates both a danger that analysis of the letter will be too much determined by fitting it on to a grid drawn from elsewhere rather than by the natural flow of the argument and a danger that too much emphasis on rhetorical considerations may blur the extent to which the letter is driven by theological logic and passion.²⁴

Scholarly attention has also concentrated on a sociological approach to Paul's letters.²⁵ Some scholars have focused on Paul's authority in relationship with the churches in Galatia.²⁶ Most interpreters have agreed that one of the critical issues in Galatia is the social issue of how Gentiles enter the people of God.²⁷ Thus, commentators have argued that Paul's Gospel of justification by faith is to be understood in light of this social issue.²⁸ Many scholars shed some new light on the

²² Kern, *Rhetoric and Galatians*, 259.

²³ Martyn, *Galatians*, 23.

²⁴ Dunn, *Galatians*, 20.

²⁵ E.g. B. Holmberg, *Paul and Power* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980); idem, *Sociology and the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990); A. J. Malherbe, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity* (2nd ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983); W. A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983); J. J. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998); J. E. Stambaugh and D. L. Balch, *The New Testament in its Social Environment* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986); G. Theissen *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982). For a succinct survey of the field, see S. C. Barton, "The Communal Dimension of Earliest Christianity," *JTS* 43 (1992), 399-427.

²⁶ H. Schütz, *Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority* (Cambridge: CUP, 1975), 114-158; N. Taylor, *Paul, Antioch and Jerusalem* (Sheffield: SAP, 1992), 75-139.

²⁷ See, in particular, Sanders (*PLJP*, 20) who argues, "The debate in Galatians is a debate about 'entry' in the sense of what is essential in order to be considered a member at all" and Matera, *Galatians*, 29-30.

²⁸ Notably, according to K. Stendahl, the doctrine of justification by faith "was hammered out by Paul for the very specific and limited purpose of defending the rights of Gentile converts to be full and genuine heirs of the promises of God to Israel" (*Paul among Jews and Gentiles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), 2). This point has been observed by several other scholars. M. Barth, "Jews and Gentiles," *JES* 5 (1968), 259; J. D. G. Dunn, "The New Perspective on Paul," in *Jesus, Paul and the Law* [hereafter *JPL*] (Louisville: JKP, 1990), 202; Howard, *Paul*, 46; Sanders, *PLJP*,

issue of Paul's attitude to the law and Judaism and the disputes between Paul and the agitators in Galatia by means of such a sociological approach. In particular, Dunn has highlighted "the social function of the law" which he believes to be important for understanding the mind-set with which Paul is engaging in Galatians.²⁹ He argues, "Unless this social, we may even say national and racial, dimension of the issues confronting Paul is clearly grasped, it will be well nigh impossible to achieve an exegesis of Paul's treatment of the law which pays proper respect to historical context."³⁰ Dunn is distinctive in understanding the social function of the law that "serves both to identify Israel as the people of the covenant and to mark them off as distinct from the (other) nations."³¹ In light of the social perspective on the law, Dunn understands the works of the law "as not only maintaining Israel's covenant status, but as also protecting Israel's privileged status and restricted prerogative."³² Analysing the social context of the letter to the Galatians with the help of sociological theories, F. Watson argues somewhat differently that the goal of Paul's arguments in the letter was that "the church should separate from the Jewish community."³³ On the basis of his sociological approach to the letter, he also claims, "The essential issue in Galatians is thus whether the church should be a reform-movement within Judaism or a sect outside it."³⁴ Recently P. Esler has provided a social-scientific reading of Paul's letter to the Galatians by employing Mediterranean social-identity theory.³⁵ In particular,

18, 159; N. T. Wright, "Justification," in *The Great Acquittal*, edited by G. Reid (London: Collins, 1980), 22.

²⁹ J. D. G. Dunn, "The Incident at Antioch (Gal 2.11-18)," in *JPL*, 129-182; idem, "The New Perspective on Paul," 183-214; idem, "The Relationship between Paul and Jerusalem according to Galatians 1 and 2," in *JPL*, 108-128; idem, "Works of the Law and the Curse of the Law," in *JPL* 215-241.

³⁰ Dunn, *JPL*, 219.

³¹ Dunn, *JPL*, 223.

³² J. D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* [hereafter *TPA*] (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 355.

³³ F. Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles* [hereafter *PJG*] (Cambridge: CUP, 1986), 64.

³⁴ Watson, *PJG*, 49. He also argues, "Paul's sole aim in discussing Judaism and the law is to maintain and defend the separation of his Gentiles Christian churches from the Jewish community" (p. 22).

³⁵ P. Esler, *Galatians* (London: Routledge, 1998). See also P. Esler, "Family Imagery and Christian Identity in Gal 5:13 to 6:10," in *Constructing Early Christian Families as Social Reality and Metaphor*, edited by H. Moxnes (London: Routledge, 1997), 121-149; idem, "Group Boundaries and Intergroup Conflict in Galatians," in *Ethnicity and the Bible*, edited by M. G. Brett

Esler draws attention to the connection between Paul's theology in Galatians and the social dimensions of the Galatian context.

Above all, many significant studies of the letter have concentrated on the theological issues in Galatians, such as "Paul and the Mosaic law,"³⁶ the theology of Galatians,³⁷ and the meaning and significance of ἔργα νόμου³⁸ and πίστις Χριστοῦ.³⁹

(Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), 215-240; idem, "Making and Breaking an Agreement Mediterranean Style," *BibInt* 3 (1995), 285-314.

³⁶ Notably Dunn, *JPL*, 89-264; Hong, *Law*; Howard, *Paul*, 66-82; H. Hübner, *Law in Paul's Thought* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1984); H. Räisänen, *Jesus, Paul and Torah* (Sheffield: SAP, 1992); idem, *Paul and the Law* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986); Sanders, *PLJP*. For a comprehensive bibliography of works published during 1980-1994, see *Paul and the Mosaic Law*, edited by J. D. G. Dunn (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1996), 335-341. For a concise survey of the subject, see V. Koperski, *What Are They Saying About Paul and the Law* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2001).

³⁷ J. D. G. Dunn, "The Theology of Galatians" in *Pauline Theology* vol. 1, edited by J. M. Bassler (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 125-146; idem, *TPLG*; B. R. Gaventa, "The Singularity of the Gospel," in *Pauline Theology* vol. 1, 147-159; J. L. Martyn, "Events in Galatia," in *Pauline Theology* vol. 1, 160-179; N. T. Wright, "Gospel and Theology in Galatians," in *Gospel in Paul*, edited by A. L. Jervis and P. Richardson (Sheffield: SAP, 1994), 222-239.

³⁸ M. Bachmann, "Rechtfertigung und Gesetzeswerke bei Paulus," *TZ* 49 (1993), 1-33; idem, "4QMMT und Galaterbrief, *ma'ase hatorah* und *ERGA NOMOU*," *ZNW* 89 (1998), 91-113; C. E. B. Cranfield, "'The Works of the Law' in the Epistle to the Romans," *JSNT* 43 (1991), 89-101; Dunn, *JPL*, 215-241; idem, "Yet Once More – 'The Works of the Law'," *JSNT* 46 (1992), 99-117; D. P. Fuller, "Paul and 'the Works of the Law'," *WTJ* 38 (1975), 28-42; L. Gaston, "Works of the Law as a Subjective Genitive," in *Paul and the Torah* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987), 100-106; R. H. Gundry, "Grace, Works, and Staying Saved in Paul," *Bib* 66 (1985), 1-38; D. Moo, "Law, Works of the Law, and Legalism in Paul," *WTJ* 45 (1983), 73-100; T. R. Schreiner, "'Works of the Law' in Paul," *NovT* 33 (1991), 217-244; H. Hübner, "Was heißt bei Paulus 'Werke des Gesetzes'?" in *Glaube und Eschatologie*, edited by E. Grasser et al, 123-133 (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1985); H. B. P. Mijoga, "The Pauline Notion of 'Deeds of the Law'," (Ph. D. Dissertation, The Catholic University of America, 1995); J. B. Tyson, "'Works of Law' in Galatians," *JBL* 92 (1973), 423-431.

³⁹ D. A. Campbell, *The Rhetoric of Righteousness in Romans 3.21-26* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 58-69; idem, "Romans 1.17," *JBL* 113 (1994), 265-285; idem, "False Presuppositions in the ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ Debate," *JBL* 116 (1997), 713-719; B. Corsani, "ΕΚ ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ in the Letters of Paul," in *The New Testament Age*, edited by W. C. Weinrich, vol. 1 (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984), 87-93; W. Dalton, *Galatians Without Tears* (Collegiville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992) 41-46; B. J. Dodd, "Romans 1:17," *JBL* 114 (1994), 470-473; J. D. G. Dunn, "Once More, ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ," in *Pauline Theology* vol. 4, edited by E. E. Johnson and D. M. Hay (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 61-81; J. Dunnill, "Saved by Whose Faith?" *Colloquium* 30 (1998) 3-25; L. T. Johnson, "Romans 3:21-26 and the Faith of Jesus," *CBQ* 44 (1982), 77-90; R. A. Harrisville III, "ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΗΡΙΣΤΟΥ," *NovT* 36 (1994), 233-241; D. M. Hay, "Pistis as 'Ground for Faith' in Hellenized Judaism and Paul," *JBL* 108 (1989), 461-476; R. B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983); idem, "Jesus' Faith and Ours," in *Conflict and Context*, edited by M. L. Branson & R. R. Patilla (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 257-268; idem, "ΠΙΣΤΙΣ and Pauline Christology," in *Pauline Theology* vol. 4, 35-60; M. D. Hooker, "ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ," *NTS* 35 (1989), 321-342; G. Howard, "Faith of Christ," *ABD* 2.758-760; A. J. Hultgren, "The *Pistis Christou* Formulations in Paul," *NovT* 22 (1980), 248-263; L. E.

Most important of all has been the extensive reassessment of Paul's view of the law and of his attitude to first century Judaism. Before the ground-breaking book of E. P. Sanders (i.e. *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*) appeared,⁴⁰ it was widely accepted that first-century Judaism was a legalistic religion in which one earned righteousness before God through meritorious observance of the law.⁴¹ Luther himself understood first-century Judaism to be legalistic in light of his struggle with a tormented conscience and a works-righteousness orientation of sixteenth-century Roman Catholicism. Recent studies argue, however, that the imposition of the interpretive grid of the Reformers, especially by Luther, does not do justice to the issue of Paul and the law. The long-maintained view that first-century Palestinian Judaism taught that one could earn righteousness through meritorious works of the law has come under severe criticism notably by K. Stendahl,⁴² E. P. Sanders,⁴³ J. D. G. Dunn,⁴⁴ H. Räisänen,⁴⁵ and F. Watson.⁴⁶ The challenge of recent studies has resulted in a "paradigm shift"⁴⁷ in understanding the nature of first-century Palestinian Judaism.

Keck, "'Jesus' in Romans," *JBL* 108 (1989), 443-460; V. Koperski, "The Meaning of *Pistis Christou* in Philippians 3.9," *Louvain Studies* 18 (1993), 198-216; B. W. Longenecker, "Defining the Faithful Character of the Covenant Community," in *Paul and the Mosaic Law*, 75-98; idem, "*Pistis* in Romans 3.25," *NTS* 39 (1993), 478-480; idem, *The Triumph of Abraham's God* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998), 95-115; R. Longenecker, *Galatians*, 87-88, 93-94; Matera, *Galatians*, 100-102; Martyn, *Galatians*, 263-275; S. K. Stowers, "ΕΚ ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ and ΔΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ in Romans 3:30," *JBL* 108 (1989), 665-674; I. G. Wallis, *The Faith of Jesus Christ in Early Christian Traditions* (Cambridge: CUP, 1995); S. K. Williams, "Again *Pistis Christou*," *CBQ* 49 (1987), 431-447; idem, "The Hearing of Faith," *NTS* 35 (1989), 82-93.

⁴⁰ E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* [hereafter *PPJ*] (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977). According to Sanders, the first century Palestinian Judaism could be characterized as "covenantal nomism": "Briefly put, covenantal nomism is the view that one's place in God's plan is established on the basis of covenant and that the covenant requires as the proper response of man his obedience to its commandments, while providing means of atonement for transgression" (p. 75). For a full summary, see pp. 180-182 and 422.

⁴¹ However, there have been several scholars who did not follow the line of Luther. E.g. M. Barth, "The Kerygma of Galatians," *Int* 21 (1967), 131-146; C. G. Montefiore, *Judaism and St. Paul* (London: Max Goschen, 1914); Stendahl, *Paul*.

⁴² "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West," *HTR* 56 (1963), 199-215.

⁴³ *PPJ*; *PLJP*.

⁴⁴ *JPL*.

⁴⁵ *Paul*.

⁴⁶ *PJG*.

⁴⁷ The term is used by R. Jewett in "The Law and the Coexistence of Jews and Gentiles in Romans," *Int* 39 (1985), 341.

Moreover, recent studies of Paul's view of the law brought about a "new perspective"⁴⁸ on the nature and role of the law in first-century Palestinian Judaism.⁴⁹

Recently J. L. Martyn produced a provocative and paradigm-shattering commentary on Galatians. Since it is impossible in this short review to do justice to the rich texture of Martyn's superb commentary,⁵⁰ it is sufficient to point out some major themes pertinent to the present study. Martyn effectively raises the consciousness of Pauline scholarship to the presence of apocalyptic theology in Galatians. He interprets Paul's letter to the Galatians as Paul's proclamation of the apocalyptic gospel of God's invasion into the world through Christ (cf. Comment #4). Concerning Paul's apocalyptic theology in Galatians Martyn concludes,

"God would not have to carry out an invasion in order merely to forgive erring human beings. The root trouble lies deeper than human guilt, and it is more sinister. The whole of humanity – indeed, the whole of creation (3:22) – is, in fact, trapped, enslaved under the power of the present evil age. That is the background of God's invasive action in his sending of Christ, in his declaration of war, and in his striking the decisive and liberating blow against the power of the present evil age."⁵¹

He also understands the apocalyptic motif of God's sending forth his Son to liberate those who were enslaved under the power of the law as the theological centre of Galatians.⁵² The apocalyptic motif of God's invasive action to liberate humanity from the power of the present evil age is carried throughout the commentary.

In his recent studies on Galatians, furthermore, Martyn convincingly demonstrates that Galatians presents the reader with "apocalyptic antinomies" (e.g. antinomies between "the world" and "new creation," between "the Spirit" and "the Flesh") which owe their birth to God's new creation.⁵³ He argues that the framework

⁴⁸ See Dunn, "Perspective," 183-214.

⁴⁹ For recent critical evaluations of Sanders' portrayal of Palestinian Judaism (i.e. "covenantal nomism") and the "new perspective," see A. A. Das, *Paul, the Law, and the Covenant* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 2001); S. J. Gathercole, "After the New Perspective," (Ph. D. Thesis, University of Durham, 2001); *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, edited by D. A. Carson, et al (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2001). For further, see Gathercole, "After the New Perspective," 25-30.

⁵⁰ For a fine review, see G. N. Stanton, "Review of *Galatians* (J. L. Martyn)," *JTS* 51 (2000), 264-270.

⁵¹ Martyn, *Galatians*, 105.

⁵² Martyn, *Galatians*, 388.

⁵³ Martyn, "Apocalyptic Antinomies," in *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997), 111-123.

of the world-view of Paul in Galatians is represented in the “antinomy”⁵⁴ between “the power of the cosmos” and “the power of God.”⁵⁵ The power of God manifested through his sending of Christ and the Spirit destroys the power of the cosmos (e.g. the present evil age, sin, and elements of the world) and sets one free from it. According to Martyn, the antinomy between the cosmos and God is clearly present both in 3.19-4.7 where God’s victory over the anti-God powers is described (Comment #41, 42) and in 6.15 where “the disappearance of the old antinomies” by the new creation is expressed (Comment #51).

In his provocative study on Galatians, *The Triumph of Abraham’s God*, B. W. Longenecker highlights the eschatological or apocalyptic dimension of Paul’s thought in Galatians. He contends as follows:

“Paul’s conviction concerning the obliteration of one ‘world’ and its replacement by another lies at the heart of his programme in Galatians, and is arguably fundamental to the whole of Pauline theology. Eschatological eruption is not for Paul about the introduction of a new religious configuration on to the scene of world history. Instead, it is about God’s triumph over competing suprahuman forces, about God’s invasion into the order of this world in order to set things aright in a new sphere of existence where God’s reputation as the cosmic sovereign is vindicated.”⁵⁶

This theme is developed in chapter 3 and is linked to all other features of this book. In Chapters 4 and 7 Longenecker deals with Paul’s understanding of the triumph of God in relation to Christian moral identity. In Chapters 5 and 6 he investigates “the way in which Paul imagines God’s triumph in Christ to relate to God’s dealing in history - with Israel (chapter 5) and in relation to the law (chapter 6).”

From this very brief survey of recent studies on Galatians, one can observe that rhetorical and sociological approaches have shed some fresh light on the interpretation of the letter. Above all, we may notice that the theological reading of the letter plays a pivotal role in interpreting Galatians not only because the issue at stake in Galatia seems primarily theological but also because Paul’s argument in Galatians

⁵⁴ For Martyn’s idiosyncratic definition of the term, see Martyn, *Galatians*, 570, n. 79 and 587. Martyn (*Galatians*, 23) notes the distinction between antithesis and antinomy in an idiosyncratic way. I prefer to use the term “antithesis” in the present study.

⁵⁵ Martyn, “Events in Galatia,” 179.

⁵⁶ Longenecker, *Triumph*, 3.

is theological in nature.⁵⁷ We may also note that, among recent Galatian studies, the most crucial debate has concentrated on the theological issues of the letter.

The present study is motivated by the potential of Gal 5.2-6 to contribute to recent scholarship of Galatians. There are two important reasons why 5.2-6 needs a detailed investigation for the purpose of contributing to recent studies of Galatians. The first reason is that a striking feature, that is, six “antitheses” emerge prominently in 5.2-6. These antitheses have not been given sufficient recognition in the history of interpretation of Galatians and should therefore be given more attention than they have received. The second reason is that insufficient recognition has been given to the passage itself. In 5.2-6 there are some other important issues and problems treated insufficiently and inadequately in the history of interpretation of Galatians. Therefore, Galatians 5.2-6 needs a fresh study. To the elaboration of these two reasons we now turn.

1. 1. Antitheses in Galatians 5.2-6

A unique feature of Gal 5.2-6 is the appearance of a number of antithetical oppositions. It is striking that Paul has in mind six antitheses in 5.2-6. It might at once be said that these antitheses are not very clear, except the antithesis in 5.6. And it is true that Paul does not use his typical “antithesis formula” οὐκ (οὐδέ, οὔτε) A ἀλλὰ B (Gal 1.1, 12; 4.7, 31; 5.6; 6.12, 15) in the passage, except in 5.6. Nevertheless, the other five antitheses become more apparent when we analyse Paul’s argument carefully.⁵⁸

First, it is clear that Paul opposes circumcision through the contrast between circumcision and Christ (5.2-3). Paul tells the Galatians, “Ἴδε ἐγὼ Παῦλος λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ἐὰν περιτέμνησθε, Χριστὸς ὑμᾶς οὐδὲν ὠφελήσει (5.2). He further says, μαρτύρομαι δὲ πάλιν παντὶ ἀνθρώπῳ περιτεμνομένῳ ὅτι ὀφειλέτης ἐστὶν ὅλον τὸν

⁵⁷ Most commentators have agreed that the subject of the letter is theological in nature. Notably, Dunn, *JPL*, 242; Esler, *Galatians*, 176. According to Martyn (*Galatians*) and Longenecker (*Triumph*), apocalyptic theology is the *Leitmotif* of Galatians.

⁵⁸ While N. Schneider (*Die rhetorische Eigenart der paulinischen Antithese* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1970) comprehensively investigates the rhetorical characteristics of the Pauline antithesis, it is astonishing that he does not notice the other five antitheses in 5.2-5.

νόμον ποιῆσαι (5.3). Here Paul means that circumcision forfeits the benefits of Christ (5.2) and makes those who want to undergo circumcision debtors obliged to do the entire law (5.3). But Christ is of sufficient benefit to the uncircumcised believers. Thus, Paul contrasts circumcision and Christ in terms of “benefit” in 5.2-3;⁵⁹ the benefit of Christ is contrasted with the uselessness of circumcision through the intentional word-play between ὠφελῆσει and ὀφειλέτης.⁶⁰

Second, it is equally obvious in 5.4a and 5.4b that Paul persuades Galatians who want to be justified ἐν νόμῳ not to rely upon the law for their justification by contrasting the law with Christ in terms of “sphere of influence.”⁶¹ Paul says, κατηργήθητε ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ, οἵτινες ἐν νόμῳ δικαιοῦσθε. Here Paul implies that justification ἐν νόμῳ means to be alienated from Christ (ἐν νόμῳ vs. ἐν Χριστῷ; ἐν νόμῳ = ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ). How can Paul contrast ἐν νόμῳ with ἐν Χριστῷ? What does it mean to be ἐν Χριστῷ against ἐν νόμῳ? What does Paul intend to convey by the antithesis?

Third, Paul sets the law (5.4b) in antithesis with grace (5.4c). Here Paul says, οἵτινες ἐν νόμῳ δικαιοῦσθε, τῆς χάριτος ἐξέπεσατε. Τῆς χάριτος ἐξέπεσατε denotes that the Galatians’ attempt to depend upon the law is resulting in their separation from grace. Thus Paul contrasts the law with grace as two mutually exclusive foundations of justification.⁶² How does Paul contrast the law with grace as two antithetical bases of justification?

⁵⁹ While J. M. Gundry-Volf (*Paul and Perseverance* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1990), 208) does not develop the antithesis, she correctly notes it: “The benefit which the Galatians might think to derive from circumcision is here played off against the benefits which Christ bestows.”

⁶⁰ Paul contrasts circumcision with Christ by creating a phonetic parallel between ὠφελῆσει and ὀφειλέτης. Probably phonetic parallelism is one of his literary styles (e.g. Rom 5.15-19). Several scholars have observed the word play. E.g. Dunn, *Galatians*, 265; Howard, *Paul*, 16; Lührmann, *Galatians*, 81; Matera, *Galatians*, 182; Witherington, *Grace*, 368.

⁶¹ K. Snodgrass, “Spheres of Influence,” *JSNT* 32 (1988), 93-113.

⁶² This is properly pointed out by Betz, *Galatians*, 261; E. D. Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1921), 275, 277; Dunn, *Galatians*, 269; R. Y. K. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 223-224; J. Moffatt, *Grace in the New Testament* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1932), 182; F. Mußner, *Der Galaterbrief* (Freiburg: Herder, 1974), 349; A. Oepke, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Galater* (3d ed. revised by J. Rohde; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1973), 119; Gundry-Volf, *Paul and Perseverance*, 213; Räisänen, *Paul*, 162; S. Westerholm, *Israel’s Law and the Church’s Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 113.

Fourth and fifth, two other antitheses can be drawn by inference: the antithesis between the law and the Spirit (5.4-5); the antithesis between the law and πίστις (5.4-5). Paul says, ἡμεῖς γὰρ πνεύματι ἐκ πίστεως ἐλπίδα δικαιοσύνης ἀπεκδεχόμεθα. It is generally agreed that 5.5 is in contrast to 5.4.⁶³ The γὰρ (5.5) introducing an argument *e contrario*⁶⁴ explains why those who want to be justified ἐν νόμῳ are separated from Christ and have fallen from grace. It is because by the Spirit and πίστις “we,” in contrast to those who want to be justified ἐν νόμῳ, are waiting for the hope of righteousness. Here, it seems that Paul deliberately contrasts οὔτινες with ἡμεῖς switching the third person plural pronoun to the first person.⁶⁵ Moreover, he contrasts “the law” with “the Spirit” and πίστις as the basis of justification because according to Paul’s gospel the Spirit and πίστις, not the law, is the sufficient basis of justification.⁶⁶ In other words, 5.5 is antithetical to 5.4 because 5.5 explains why the law is not the valid basis of justification by indicating the two antithetical bases of justification, i.e. the Spirit and πίστις.⁶⁷ In short, in 5.4-5 Paul sets the law in antithesis both with the Spirit and with πίστις as incompatible grounds of justification.

Sixth, as indicated earlier, the antithesis between “circumcision vs. uncircumcision” and πίστις is clear in 5.6. Paul says, ἐν γὰρ Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ οὔτε περιτομή τι ἰσχύει οὔτε ἀκροβυστία ἀλλὰ πίστις δι’ ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη. Here Paul implies that πίστις has completely nullified the old epoch’s distinction between

⁶³ This has been supported by a good number of scholars. E.g. D. C. Arichiea and E. A. Nida, *A Translators Handbook on Paul’s Letter to the Galatians* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1976), 123; BAGD, p. 152, Bruce, *Galatians*, 231; Burton, *Galatians*, 278; Dunn, *Galatians*, 269; Fung, *Galatians*, 224; Hong, *Law*, 57; T. Martin, “Apostasy to Paganism,” *JBL* 114 (1995), 457; Martyn, *Galatians*, 472; A. L. Mulka, “Fides Quae Per Caritatem Operatur,” *CBQ* 28 (1966), 185 [174-188]; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 349-350; Ridderbos, *Galatia*, 189. Cf. NIV.

⁶⁴ See Burton, *Galatians*, 278; Fung, *Galatians*, 224.

⁶⁵ Cf. Burton, *Galatians*, 277; Martyn, *Galatians*, 472; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 349.

⁶⁶ C. Kruse, *Paul, the Law, Justification* (Leicester: Apollos, 1996), 102; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 349-350.

⁶⁷ Burton (*Galatians*, 278) argues, “The whole sentence introduced by γὰρ is an argument *e contrario*, confirming the assertion of v.4 by pointing out that we, i.e., we who hold the gospel of grace, look for the realisation of our hope of righteousness, not in law, ἐν νόμῳ, but on the one side by the Spirit of God and on the other through faith.” Cf. Fung, *Galatians*, 227; J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians* (3rd ed.; London: Macmillan, 1869), 204; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 350.

circumcision and uncircumcision. Paul contrasts “circumcision/uncircumcision” with πίστις as the two contrasting foundations of righteousness.⁶⁸

To sum up, although five of the antitheses are not clearly set out as antitheses, we can speak quite appropriately of the six antitheses clearly present in 5.2-6. Although the six antitheses overlap in one way or another, each antithesis has distinctive significance and function.⁶⁹ The six antitheses are as follows:

1. The antithesis between circumcision and Christ (5.2-3)
2. The antithesis between the law and Christ (5.4b vs. 5.4a)
3. The antithesis between the law and grace (5.4b vs. 5.4c)
4. The antithesis between the law and the Spirit (5.4-5)
5. The antithesis between the law and πίστις (5.4-5)
6. The antithesis between “circumcision/uncircumcision” and πίστις (5.6)

Paul thus makes a sharp distinction between two sets of concepts. On the one side stand the law and circumcision; on the other side Christ, grace, the Spirit, and πίστις. It seems that Paul intentionally formulates the six antitheses both to summarise his previous argument and to express his theological conviction about circumcision, justification, the law, Christ, grace, the Spirit, and the mission to the Gentiles. It appears that the antitheses were devised by Paul not only to fight against “another gospel” (1.6) showing that circumcision and the law are no longer in effect for justification but also to persuade the Galatians not to follow the agitators’ gospel. The antitheses play a very important role in understanding the issues at stake in Galatia (e.g. circumcision, justification). It is also possible that Paul expresses the antitheses in order to resolve the pivotal issue at stake in Galatia: what are the legitimate conditions on which Gentiles enter the people of God? According to Paul’s gospel, neither circumcision nor the law but Christ (Christ’s salvific benefits, Christ as the sphere of justification, Christ’s faithfulness), God’s grace, the Spirit are the valid

⁶⁸ Notably J. D. G. Dunn, “Neither Circumcision nor Uncircumcision, but . . .” (Gal. 5.2-12; 6.12-16; cf. 1 Cor. 7.17-20,” [hereafter “Circumcision”] in *La Foi Agissant par L’amour*, 79-110; Martyn, *Galatians*, 472-473.

⁶⁹ We will deal with the distinctive feature and function of each antithesis in the next following chapters. Dunn (“Circumcision”) says, “In 5.2-6 *circumcision* is set in antithesis with *Christ*” (p. 79) in light of his understanding that the summary antithesis between circumcision and Christ is repeated in 5.3-4 (p. 85) and Christ is the key term elaborated by the complementary terms “grace”, “Spirit” and “faith” (p. 95). While it is true that these terms are co-related each other, each has distinctive feature and function, as we shall see later.

soteriological bases of justification. The major function of the antitheses seems to be to resolve the crisis in Galatia, i.e. the apostasy of the Galatians and the agitators' "another gospel" (1.6-9).

Even such a brief introduction is sufficient to indicate that these antitheses are very significant for interpreting Paul's theology and his view of salvation and the law in Galatians. The antitheses are very significant in understanding Paul's view of the law and the theology of Galatians not only because the antitheses seem to crystallise the issues of the law and circumcision, but also because Paul's argument to the Galatians and the theology of Galatians could be represented and summarised in these antitheses. It might be thus said that the six antitheses would be "interpretive clues" for understanding Paul's view of the law in Galatians and for the substance of the theology of Galatians, the solution of the crisis in Galatia, and the answer to the issues at stake in Galatians. Therefore, we will need to enquire more closely, particularly within the body of the letter, as to what fuller theology lies behind these six antitheses. It is necessary for us, then, to clarify as much as possible the following questions in order to address the issue of the antitheses in 5.2-6: 1) the force of each antithesis; 2) the function of the antitheses in regard to the crisis in Galatia and the issues at stake in Galatia as illuminated by the rest of the letter to the Galatians; 3) the significance of the antitheses for Paul's view of circumcision and the law, the theology of Galatians, his mission to the Gentiles, his rejection of "the other gospel," and his critique of first century Palestinian Judaism. Given 5.2-6 is summing up the rest of Paul's argument in Galatians (§1.2.), therefore, the antitheses can be illuminated by the rest of the argument.

In spite of the significance and prominence of these antitheses in 5.2-6, as already noted, very few have paid attention to them. Of course, many interpreters have dealt with the antitheses in the Pauline letters (in particular in Galatians), such as the antithesis between the law and Christ,⁷⁰ between the works of the law and πίστεως,⁷¹

⁷⁰ E.g. J. C. Beker, *Paul the Apostle* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 47-56; T. L. Donaldson, "Zealot and Convert," *CBQ* 51 (1989), 655-682; Gaventa, "Singularity," 147-159.

⁷¹ Most commentaries and Räisänen, *Paul*, 162-198; G. N. Stanton, "The Law of Moses and the Law of Christ," in *Paul and the Mosaic Law*, 101-116. For a survey of the history of

between “the flesh” and the Spirit,⁷² between, “the letter” and the Spirit,⁷³ and between cosmos and new creation.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, almost no commentator has addressed efficiently the antitheses in 5.2-6 as a whole in relation to the crisis in Galatia and the issues at stake in the letter.⁷⁵ Nor has anyone explained satisfactorily the implications of the antitheses for the interpretation of Galatians. While Dunn rightly notes in 5.2-6 the antithesis between circumcision and Christ in terms of “identity marker,”⁷⁶ he does not explain satisfactorily both the other antitheses and the significance of the salvific benefit of Christ for Paul’s opposition to circumcision. Fung observes the antithesis between circumcision and Christ stating that 5.3 “expresses an irreconcilable antithesis between circumcision and (faith) in Christ as two entirely different modes of receiving ‘profit’ (AV, RV) or ‘benefit’ (NASB) which are mutually exclusive and cannot be superimposed on each other.”⁷⁷ While Fung notes the antithesis in terms of two mutually exclusive modes of receiving benefit, however, he fails to notice that the antithesis is to be understood as two incompatible soteriological bases of receiving benefit, not as anthropological method. In other words, Paul does not contrast the Galatians’ circumcision with their faith in Christ. As we shall see later (§2.2.), rather, he sets circumcision in antithesis with Christ as two antithetical soteriological bases of salvation. Although Watson also observes the antithesis, he misses the point that the benefit of Christ (Christ) is the

interpretation, see A. B. Caneday, “The Curse of the Law and the Cross,” (Ph. D. Dissertation, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1992), 12-52.

⁷² Barclay, *Obeying*, 178-215; W. B. Russell III, *The Flesh/Spirit Conflict in Galatians* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1997).

⁷³ E.g. A. J. Dewey, *Spirit and Letter in Paul* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1996); S. Grindheim, “The Law Kills But the Gospel Gives Life,” *JSNT* 84 (2001), 97-115; S. J. Hafemann, *Paul, Moses and the History of Israel* (Hendrickson: Peabody, 1996); E. Käsemann, “The Spirit and the Letter,” in *Perspectives on Paul* (London: SCM, 1969), 138-166; O. F. M. Schneider, “The Meaning of St. Paul’s Antithesis ‘the Letter and the Spirit,’” *CBQ* 15 (1953), 163-207; S. Westerholm, “Letter and Spirit,” *NTS* 30 (1984), 229-248; idem, *Israel’s Law*, 209-216.

⁷⁴ Martyn, “Apocalyptic Antinomies,” 111-123.

⁷⁵ Dunn (“Circumcision,” 80) is exceptional when he expounds the antithesis between circumcision and Christ and in relation to the situation in the Galatian churches.

⁷⁶ Dunn, *Galatians*, 265; idem, “Circumcision,” 92-97.

⁷⁷ Fung, *Galatians*, 222.

ultimate theological reason of the incompatibility between Christ and circumcision.⁷⁸ It is thus fair to say that virtually all commentators have failed to explicate both that Paul contrasts circumcision and Christ in terms of “benefit” and that the salvific benefit of Christ is the most important theological ground of Paul’s rejection of circumcision.⁷⁹

Several commentators have observed the antitheses between “the law” and “Christ” and between “the law” and “grace” in 5.4,⁸⁰ and the antithesis between “circumcision/uncircumcision” and πίστις in 5.6.⁸¹ Surprisingly, few commentators have noted the contrast between “the law” and “the Spirit and πίστις” (5.4-5) in terms of soteriological basis of justification.⁸² Nevertheless it seems that most interpreters have failed to expound the antitheses efficiently and satisfactorily in light of “God’s eschatological saving act”⁸³ through Christ and the Spirit. At the same time, they have not paid sufficient attention to the antithesis between “the law” and “Christ” as mutually exclusive sphere of justification⁸⁴ and the antithesis between “the law” and “grace” as two conflicting bases of justification. J. L. Martyn has rightly drawn attention to the antinomies between “the world” and “new creation” between “the Spirit” and “the Flesh” and the two antithetical spheres of existence columnized under the categories of the present and heavenly Jerusalems both in his provocative article,

⁷⁸ On the contrary Watson argues, “Christ is incompatible with circumcision not because ‘Christ’ involves a theological principle . . . Paul here grounds his insistence on the incompatibility of allegiance to Christ with membership of the Jewish community not on rational theological argument but on his apostolic authority” (*PJG*, 69). As we shall see (§2.2.2.), this argument cannot be sustained because he fails to appreciate the theological significance of the benefits of Christ for Paul’s rejection of circumcision.

⁷⁹ As we shall see later (§2.2.2.), in Galatians Paul explains why it is unnecessary and useless for the Galatians to accept circumcision on the basis of the salvific benefits of Christ.

⁸⁰ See n. 62.

⁸¹ Dunn, *Galatians*, 271; idem, “Circumcision,” 101-104; Fung, *Galatians*, 228; Martyn, *Galatians*, 472-473.

⁸² Burton, *Galatians*, 278; Fung, *Galatians*, 227; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 349. Unfortunately, however, they did not elucidate the antithesis.

⁸³ God’s eschatological saving acts in Galatians are as follows: God’s calling (1.6; 5.8; cf. 5.13); God’s revealing πίστις (3.23); God’s sending his Son and the Spirit of his Son into the present evil age (4.4-6); God’s knowing (4.9); God’s new creation (6.15).

⁸⁴ While D. Guthrie, *Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 129 and H. Schlier (*Der Brief an die Galater* (5th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971), 232-233) note the contrast between ἐν νόμῳ and ἐν Χριστῷ, they did not elaborate the antithesis.

“Apocalyptic Antinomies” and his recent commentary of Galatians. But Martyn has not satisfactorily tackled the antitheses in 5.2-6. He has failed to note that the six antitheses summarise Paul’s exposition about “new pairs of opposites” (e.g. circumcision vs. Christ; the law vs. Christ, the law vs. grace; the law vs. the Spirit; the law vs. πίστις; “circumcision/uncircumcision” vs. πίστις) which owe their birth to God’s eschatological saving act through Christ and the Spirit (4.4-7) and the advent and revelation of πίστις (3.23-25). Therefore, it is fair to say that almost all interpreters have not provided a satisfactory explanation regarding the force and function of the six antitheses in relation to the crisis and the issues in Galatia, their significance for Paul’s view of circumcision, the law, and first century Palestinian Judaism, and their implications for the interpretation of Galatians and Pauline interpretation. This justifies a close inspection of the six antitheses in 5.2-6.

1. 2. Insufficient Recognition Given to Galatians 5.2-6

In addition to the antitheses, in Gal 5.2-6 one can find several significant data that motivate an investigation into the text. In 5.2-6 Paul focuses on the pivotal issues at stake in Galatia.⁸⁵ The passage tackles the issue of circumcision first (5.2-3), which is the real bone of contention in Galatians. It is also to be noted that in 5.4-6 Paul solemnly answers the central issue at stake in Galatia: what is the soteriological ground of the justification of Gentile believers? In the passage, moreover, there is significant vocabulary that encapsulates various central and pivotal terms appearing in the rest of the letter:

- a. Circumcision (2.3, 7, 8, 9, 12; 6.12, 13, 15 - **5.2-3**)
- b. Being justified (2.16, 17, 21, 3.11, 24 - **5.4**)
- c. Righteousness (2.21; 3.6, 21 - **5.5**)
- d. Law (2. 16, 19, 21; 3.2, 5, 10, 11, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19, 21, 23, 24; 4.4, 5, 21; 5.14, 18, 23; 6.2, 13 - **5.3, 4**)
- e. Christ (1.1, 3, 6, 7, 10, 12, 22; 2.4, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21; 3.1, 13, 14, 16, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29; 4.14, 19; 5.1, 24; 6.2, 12, 14, 18 - **5.2, 4, 6**)
- f. Grace (1.3, 6, 15; 2.9, 21; 6.18 - **5.4**)

⁸⁵ See H. Boers, *The Justification of the Gentiles* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 74-75.

- g. Faith (1.23; 2.16, 20; 3.2, 5, 7, 8, 11, 12, 14, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26; 5.22; 6.10 - 5.5, 6)
- h. The Spirit (3.2, 3, 5, 14; 4.6, 29; 5.16, 17, 18, 22, 25; 6.1, 8, 18 - 5.5)
- i. Love (2.20; 5.13, 14, 22 - 5.6)

Furthermore, one can note the uniqueness of the passage in various ways. Dunn states that 5.1-12 is “a passage almost unique within Paul’s letters in its passionate forcefulness, in its polarization of choice, and in its dismissal of those opposing him.”⁸⁶ As Smit rightly notes, Gal 5.2-6 is a summing-up passage “in which Paul undisguisedly and very emphatically clarifies what is at stake. To this end he briefly enumerates the most important conclusions of his entire argument.”⁸⁷ As Betz perceptively observes, Gal 5.5-6 “consists of a series of dogmatic formulaic expressions, which function as abbreviations of dogmatic statements.”⁸⁸ It should be noted that Gal 5.5-6 is a doctrinal statement that sums up Paul’s theological conviction and arguments in the letter.⁸⁹ In this passage Paul uses the Pauline emphatic ἐγώ (5.2) and several formulas of solemn affirmation (“Ἴδε ἐγὼ Παῦλος λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι in 5.2 and μαρτύρομαι δὲ πάλιν in 5.3). Most importantly, Gal 5.2-6 seems to contain the truth of Paul’s gospel because “the truth” in 5.7 might refer to what Paul has said in 5.2-6. In spite of the significance of 5.2-6 for the interpretation of Galatians, it has been neglected in the studies of Galatians. While a few scholars such as Betz, Longenecker, and Smit have rightly offered hints at the summational force and broader hermeneutical significance of Gal 5.2-6 (or 5.5-6), no one has explored it in depth. They have failed to explain that the six antitheses play a role as the summary and conclusions of Paul’s argument in Galatians and hermeneutical key for the interpretation of Galatians.

⁸⁶ Dunn, *Galatians*, 260.

⁸⁷ Smit, “The Letter of Paul to the Galatians,” 19.

⁸⁸ Betz, *Galatians*, 262.

⁸⁹ Longenecker (*Galatians*, 228) argues, “Paul sets out in vv. 5-6 a series of brief positive statements that are, in fact, largely a résumé or précis of what he said before in the *propositio* (2.15-21) and *probatio* (3.1-4.11).” H. Hübner, (*Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments: Band 2* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 101-102) notes that Gal 5.5-6 is “eine ganze Dogmatik in nuce.” Burton (*Galatians*, 279) also speaks of 5.6: “For the disclosure of the apostle’s fundamental idea of the nature of religion, there is no more important sentence in the whole epistle, if, indeed, in any of Paul’s epistles. Each term and construction of the sentence is significant.”

In light of a bibliographical survey of Galatian studies, moreover, it can be fairly stated that scholarly works of Galatians have paid little attention to Gal 5.2-6 as a whole.⁹⁰ In proportion to the abundant studies of the rest of the letter, only a few studies have dealt specifically with 5.2-6. In the last decades, many Galatian studies have concentrated on passages or verses within 1.1-5.1 and 5.7-6.18. Many studies have dealt with Paul's autobiography in chs. 1-2.⁹¹ Attention has focused on the significance of the Jerusalem conference,⁹² the Antioch incident,⁹³ and the theological content of 2.15-21.⁹⁴ In addition to these, there are many other studies dealing with historical, rhetorical, and theological issues related to chs. 1-2.⁹⁵ Moreover, many

⁹⁰ F. J. Matera observes that in recent years many Galatian studies have dealt with chs. 1-4, whereas few have been concerned with the material in chs. 5-6 ("The Culmination of Paul's Argument to the Galatians," *JSNT* 32 (1988), 79).

⁹¹ F. F. Bruce, "Further Thoughts on Paul's Autobiography," in *Jesus und Paulus*, edited by E. E. Ellis and E. Grässer (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), 21-29; S.-B. Choi, "Die Wahrheit des Evangeliums: eine Traditionsgeschichte Untersuchung von Gal 1 und 2," (D. Th. Thesis, Eberhard-Karls-University Tübingen, 2001); B. R. Gaventa, "Galatians 1 and 2," *NovT* 28 (1986), 309-326; P. E. Koptak, "Rhetorical identification in Paul's Autobiographical Narrative," *JSNT* 40 (1990), 97-113; G. Lyons, *Pauline Autobiography* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1985), 123-176; K.-Y. Na, "The Meaning of Christ in Paul: A Reading of Galatians 1:11-2:21 in the Light of Wilhelm Dilthey's *Lebensphilosophie*," (Ph. D Dissertation, Emory University, 2001); J. T. Sanders, "Paul's 'Autobiographical' Statements in Galatians 1-2," *JBL* 85 (1966), 335-343; J. S. Vos, "Paul's Argumentation in Galatians 1-2," *HTR* 87 (1994), 1-16.

⁹² F. F. Bruce, "The Conference in Jerusalem," in *God Who is Rich in Mercy*, edited by P. T. O'Brien and D. G. Peterson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986), 195-212.

⁹³ S. Agourides, "Peter and Paul in Antioch (Galatians 2,11-21)," in *The Truth of the Gospel*, 59-76; P. C. Böttger, "Paulus und Petrus in Antiochen," *NTS* 37 (1991), 77-100; S. A. Cummins, *Paul and the Crucified Christ in Antioch* (Cambridge: CUP, 2001); Dunn, "The Incident at Antioch (Gal 2.11-18)," 3-57; B. Holmberg, "Jewish versus Christian Identity in the Early Church?" *RevBib* 105 (1998), 397-425; T. Holtz, "Der antiochenische Zwischenfall (Galater 2.11-14)," *NTS* 32 (1986), 344-361; P. Richardson, "Pauline Inconsistency," *NTS* 26 (1979-80), 347-362; E. P. Sanders, "Jewish Association with Gentiles and Galatians 2.11-14," in *The Conversation Continues*, edited by R. T. Fortna & B. R. Gaventa (Nashville: Abingdon, 1990), 170-188; A. Wechsler, *Geschichtsbild und Apostelstreit* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1991), 296-398.

⁹⁴ H. Boers, "We Who Are by Inheritance Jews; Not From the Gentiles, Sinners," *JBL* 111 (1992), 273-281; W. G. Kümmel, "'Individualgeschichte' und 'Weltgeschichte' in Gal. 2:15-21," in *Christ and the Spirit in the New Testament*, edited by B. Lindars and S. S. Smalley, 157-173 (Cambridge: CUP, 1973); J. Lambrecht, "The Line of Thought in Gal. 2.14-21," *NTS* 24 (1977), 484-495; idem, "Paul's Reasoning in Galatians 2:11-21," in *Paul and the Mosaic Law*, 53-74; idem, "Transgressor by Nullifying God's Grace," *Bib* 72 (1991), 217-236; H. Räisänen, "Galatians 2.16 and Paul's Break with Judaism," *NTS* 31 (1985), 543-553.

⁹⁵ E. Baasland, "Persecution," *Studia Theologica* 38 (1984), 135-150; R. E. Ciampa, *The Presence and Function of Scripture in Galatians 1 and 2* (Tübingen: Mohr-Sibbeck, 1998); B. J. Dodd, "Christ's Slave, People Pleasers and Galatians 1.10," *NTS* 42 (1996), 90-104; P. Fredriksen, "Judaism, the Circumcision of Gentiles, and Apocalyptic Hope," *JTS* 42 (1991), 533-564; E.

studies have attempted to tackle several important issues in 3.1-5.1: the elements of the world,⁹⁶ the Spirit,⁹⁷ and the Hagar-Sarah allegory.⁹⁸ Furthermore, there are many other studies dealing with part of the section 3.1-5.1.⁹⁹ Moreover, quite a good

Grässer, "Das eine Evangelium. Hermeneutische Erwägungen zu Gal 1,6-10," *ZTK* 66 (1969), 306-344; R. G. Hamerton-Kelly, "Sacred Violence and 'Works of the Law'," *CBQ* 52 (1990), 55-75; K. Kertelege, "The Assertion of Revealed Truth as Compelling Argument in Galatians 1:10-2:21," *Neot* 26 (1992), 339-350; G. D. Kilpatrick, "Peter, Jerusalem and Galatians 1:13-2:14," *NovT* 25 (1983), 318-326; J. Knox, "On the Meaning of Galatians 1:15," *JBL* 106 (1987), 301-304; B. Lategan, "Is Paul Defending His Apostleship in Galatians?" *NTS* 34 (1988), 411-430; B. H. McLean, "Galatians 2.7-9 and the Recognition of Paul's Apostolic Status at the Jerusalem Conference," *NTS* 37 (1991), 67-76; D. J. Versepunt, "Paul's Gentile Mission and the Jewish Christian Community," *NTS* 39 (1993), 36-58; M. Winger, "Tradition, Revelation and Gospel," *JSNT* 53 (1994), 65-86.

⁹⁶ C. E. Arnold, "Returning to the Domain of Powers," *NovT* 38 (1996), 55-76; A. J. Bandstra, *The Law and the Elements of the World* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1964); Longenecker, *Triumph*, 47-58; D. R. Bundrick, "Ta Stoicheia tou Kosmou (Gal 4:3)," *JETS* 34 (1991), 353-364; E. Schweizer, "Slaves of the Elements and Worshipers of Angels," *JBL* 107 (1988), 455-468.

⁹⁷ H. D. Betz, "In Defense of the Spirit," in *Aspects of Religious Propaganda in Judaism and Early Christianity*, edited by E. S. Fiorenza (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1976), 99-114; idem, "Spirit, Freedom, and Law," 145-160; C. H. Cosgrove, *The Cross and the Spirit* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1988); R. Lemmer, "Mnemonic Reference to the Spirit as a Persuasive Tool," *Neot* 26 (1992), 359-388; D. J. Lull, *The Spirit in Galatia* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1980); H. T. Neumann, "Paul's Appeal to the Experience of the Spirit in Galatians 3.1-5," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 9 (1996), 53-69.

⁹⁸ C. K. Barrett, "The Allegory of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar in the Argument of Galatians," in *Rechtfertigung*, edited by J. Friedrich et al (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1976), 1-16; C. H. Cosgrove, "The Law Has Given Sarah No Children (Gal. 4:21-30)," *NovT* 29 (1987), 219-235; S. M. Elliott, "Choose Your Mother, Choose Your Master," *JBL* 118 (1999), 661-683; G. Galitis, "Gesetz und Freiheit: Die Allegorie von Hagar und Sara in Gal 4,21-5,1," in *La Foi Agissant par L'amour*, 41-69; K. H. Jobes, "Jerusalem, Our Mother," *WTJ* 55 (1993), 299-320; R. N. Longenecker, "Graphic Illustrations of a Believer's New Life in Christ," *RevExp* 91 (1994), 183-199; F. S. Malan, "The Strategy of Two Opposing Covenants," *Neot* 26 (1992), 425-440; J. L. Martyn, "The Covenants of Hagar and Sarah," in *Faith and History*, edited by J. T. Carroll et al (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 160-192 – revised in *Issues*, 191-208; A. C. Perriman, "The Rhetorical Strategy of Galatians 4:21-5:1," *Evangelical Quarterly* 65 (1993), 27-42; M. G. Steinhauser, "Gal 4,25a," *Bib* 70 (1989) 234-240.

⁹⁹ L. L. Belleville, "'Under the Law'," *JSNT* 26 (1986), 53-78; N. Bonneau, "The Logic of Paul's Argument on the Curse of the Law in Galatians 3:10-14," *NovT* 39 (1997), 60-80; D. Boyarin, "Galatians and Gender Trouble," *Center for Hermeneutical Studies Protocol Series* 1 (1995), 1-38; idem, "Was Paul an 'Anti-Semite'?" *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 47 (1993), 47-80; J. P. Braswell, "'The Blessing of Abraham' versus 'The Curse of the Law,'" *WTJ* 53 (1991), 73-91; D. Brondos, "The Cross and the Curse," *JSNT* 81 (2001), 3-32; T. Callan, "Pauline Midrash," *JBL* 99 (1980), 549-567; N. Calvert, "Abraham and Idolatry," in *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel*, edited by C. A. Evans and J. M. Sanders (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 222-237; A. H. Carver, "Means or Meaning," (Ph. D. Thesis, University of Durham, 2000); C. H. Cosgrove, "Arguing Like a Mere Human Being," *NTS* 34 (1988), 536-549; B. S. Davis, "The Meaning of ΠΡΟΕΓΡΑΦΗ in the Context of Galatians 3.1," *NTS* 45 (1999), 194-212; A. von Dobbeler, "Metaphernkonflikt und Missionsstrategie," *TZ* 54 (1998), 14-35; T. L. Donaldson, "The 'Curse of the Law' and the Inclusion of the Gentiles," *NTS* 32 (1986), 94-112; F. G. Downing "A Cynic

number of studies have treated the issues in 5.7-6.18: 5.7,¹⁰⁰ 5.11,¹⁰¹ Paul's ethics in Galatians,¹⁰² freedom,¹⁰³ "flesh and the Spirit,"¹⁰⁴ "the law of Christ,"¹⁰⁵ the postscript,¹⁰⁶ and other studies.¹⁰⁷

Preparation for Paul's Gospel for Jew and Greek, Slave and Free, Male and Female," *NTS* 42 (1996), 454-462; S. Eastman, "The Evil Eye and the Curse of the Law," *JSNT* 83 (2001), 69-87; S. Fowl, "Who Can Read Abraham's Story?" *JSNT* 55 (1994), 77-95; E. S. Fiorenza, "Neither Male nor Female," in *In Memory of Her* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 205-241; A. J. Goddard, and S. A. Cummins, "Ill or Ill Treated?" *JSNT* 52 (1993), 93-126; B. R. Gaventa, "The Maternity of Paul," in *The Conversation Continues*, 189-201; T. D. Gordon, "A Note on Παιδαγωγός in Galatians 3.23-25," *NTS* 35 (1989), 150-154; R. G. Hamerton-Kelly, "Sacred Violence and the Curse of the Law (Galatians 3.13)," *NTS* 36 (1990), 98-118; L. Hartman, "Galatians 3:15-4:11 as Part of a Theological Argument on a Practical Issue," in *The Truth of the Gospel*, 127-158; B. Kahl, "No longer Male," *JSNT* 79 (2000), 37-49; J. Lambrecht, "Curse and Blessing," *Collationes* 21 (1991), 133-157; idem, "Like a Mother in the Pain of Childbirth Again," in *La Foi Agissant par L'amour*, 13-31; B. W. Longenecker, "'Until Christ is Formed in You'," *CBQ* 61 (1999), 92-108; D. J. Lull, "'The Law Was Our Pedagogue,'" *JBL* 105 (1986), 481-498; T. Martin, "Pagan and Judeo-Christian Time-Keeping Schemes in Gal. 4.10 and Col. 2.16," *NTS* 42 (1996), 105-119; idem, "Whose Flesh? What Temptation? (Galatians 4.13-14)," *JSNT* 74 (1999), 65-91; D. R. Moore-Crispin, "Galatians 4:1-9," *Evangelical Quarterly* 60 (1989), 203-223; J. M. Scott, "'For as Many are of Works of the law are under a Curse' (Galatians 3.10)," in *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel*, edited by C. A. Evans and J. A. Sanders (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 187-221; C. C. Smith, "Ἐκκληῖσαι in Galatians 4:17," *CBQ* 58 (1996), 480-499; D. Stanley, "'Under a Curse,'" *NTS* 36 (1990), 481-511; T. Thatcher, "The Plot of Gal 3:1-18," *JETS* 40 (1997), 401-410; A. H. Wakefield, "Where To Live: The Hermeneutical Significance of Paul's Citations from Scripture in Galatians 3:1-14," (Ph. D. Dissertation, Duke University, 2000); D. B. Wallace, "Galatians 3:19-20," *WTJ* 52 (1990), 225-245; N. H. Young, "Who's Cursed - And Why? (Galatians 3:10-14)," *JBL* 117 (1998), 79-92.

¹⁰⁰ C. E. DeVries, "Paul's 'Cutting' Remarks about a Race," in *Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation*, edited by G. F. Hawthorne (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 115-120.

¹⁰¹ T. Baarda, "τί ἔτι διώκομαι in Gal 5:11," *NovT* 34 (1992), 250-256; P. Borgen, "Paul Preaches Circumcision and Pleases Men," in *Paul and Paulinism*, edited by M. D. Hooker and S. G. Wilson (London: SPCK, 1982), 37-46; T. L. Donaldson, *Paul and the Gentile* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 275-284; J. Lambrecht, "Is Gal 5:11b a Parenthesis?" *NovT* 38 (1996), 237-241.

¹⁰² Barclay, *Obeying*; G. W. Hansen, "Paul's Conversion and His Ethic of Freedom in Galatians," in *The Road from Damascus*, edited by Richard N. Longenecker (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 213-237; R. B. Hays, "Christology and Ethics in Galatians," *CBQ* 49 (1987), 268-290; I. Hong, "The Law and Christian Ethics in Galatians 5-6," *Neot* 26 (1992), 113-130; W. Schrage, "Probleme paulinischer Ethik anhand von Gal 5,25-6,10," in *La Foi Agissant par L'amour*, 155-194.

¹⁰³ F. F. Bruce, "'Called to Freedom'," in *The New Testament Age*, edited by W. C. Weinrich, vol 1. (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984), 61-71; J. Buckel, "Paul's Defense of Christian Liberty in Galatians," *Louvain Studies* 17 (1992), 254-268; B. D. Chilton, "Galatians 6:15," *ExpT* 89 (1977-78), 311-313; G. F. Wessels, "The Call to Responsible Freedom in Paul's Persuasive Strategy," *Neot* 26 (1992), 475-484.

¹⁰⁴ Barclay, *Obeying*, 202-215; W. Barclay, *Flesh and Spirit* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962); E. A. C. Pretorius, "The Opposition ΠΙΝΕΥΜΑ and ΣΑΡΞ as Persuasive Summons (Galatians 5:13-6:10)," *Neot* 26 (1992), 441-460.

¹⁰⁵ J. D. G. Dunn, "'The Law of Faith,' 'the Law of the Spirit' and 'the Law of Christ,'" in *Theology & Ethics in Paul and His Interpreters*, edited by E. H. Lovering, Jr. & J. L. Sumney

In contrast to plentiful studies focusing on chs. 1.1-5.1 and 5.7-6.18, there are only a few studies dealing with 5.2-6.¹⁰⁸ Those works, however, have not sufficiently and satisfactorily tackled questions and problems posed by the section, in particular the six antitheses. Although there are a good number of articles and books dealing with specific parts of the section such as 5.3,¹⁰⁹ 5.6,¹¹⁰ these studies have not covered the section completely. Moreover, while scholars have attempted to elaborate several specific issues in 5.2-6, such as the tension between 5.3 and 5.14¹¹¹ and the antithesis between circumcision and Christ,¹¹² there are some other important issues and problems treated insufficiently and inadequately in the section, such as circumcision, the benefits of Christ, the force of Paul's argument in 5.3, the meaning of πίστις in 5.5-6, the theme of Gal 5.2-6, and the rhetorical function of 5.2-6 within Galatians. Although commentaries on Galatians of course have dealt with the passage, they also have not properly or satisfactorily addressed some of the significant problems posed

(Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 62-82; Stanton, "The Law of Moses and the Law of Christ," 99-116; J. G. Strelean, "Burden-Bearing and the Law of Christ," *JBL* 94 (1975), 266-276; M. Winger, "The Law of Christ," *NTS* 46 (2000), 537-546; E. M. Young, "'Fulfill the Law of Christ,'" *Studia Biblica et Theologica* 7 (1977), 31-42.

¹⁰⁶ J. A. D. Weima, "Gal. 6:11-18," *CTJ* (1993), 90-107; idem, *Neglected Endings* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1996), 157-174.

¹⁰⁷ G. K. Beale, "Peace and Mercy Upon the Israel of God," *Bib* 80 (1999), 204-223; D. B. Garlington, "Burden Bearing and the Recovery of Offending Christians (Galatians 6:1-5)," *Trinity Journal* 12 (1991), 151-183; K. Kertelege, "Gesetz und Freiheit im Galaterbrief," *NTS* 30 (1984), 382-394; J. Lambrecht, "Abraham and His Offspring," *Bib* 80 (1999), 525-536; idem, "Paul's Coherent Admonition in Galatians 6,1-6," *Bib* 78 (1997), 33-56; P. S. Minea, "The Crucified World," in *Theologia Crucis-Signum Crucis*, edited by C. Andersen and G. Klein (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1979), 395-407; W. Russell, "The Apostle Paul's Redemptive-Historical Argumentation in Galatians 5:13-26," *WTJ* 57 (1995), 333-357.

¹⁰⁸ C. A. Amadi-Azuogu, *Paul and the Law in the Arguments of Galatians* (Weinheim: Beltz, 1996), 295-316; M. Bachmann, *Sünder oder Übertreter* (WUNT 59; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1992), 111-117; Cosgrove, *Cross*, 149-154; G. D. Fee, "Freedom and the Life of Obedience (Galatians 5:1-6:18)," *RevExp* 91 (1994), 201-217; S. J. Kraftchick, "Ethos and Pathos," (Ph. D. Dissertation, Emory University, 1985), 232-247; Matera, "Culmination," 79-91; O. Merk, "Der Beginn der Paränese im Galaterbrief," *ZNW* 60 (1969), 83-104.

¹⁰⁹ Barclay, *Obeying*, 64; M. Cranford, "The Possibility of Perfect Obedience," *NovT* 36 (1994), 254-255; Martyn, *Issues*, 236; Sanders, *PLJP*, 27-29; T. Schreiner, "Paul and Perfect Obedience to the Law," *WTJ* 47 (1985), 264-268.

¹¹⁰ Mulka, "Fides Quae Per Caritatem Operatur," 174-188.

¹¹¹ Barclay, *Obeying*, 136-141; Dunn, *Galatians*, 265-267; Hübner, *Law*, 36-41; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 242-243; Martyn, *Galatians*, 502-514; S. Westerholm, "On Fulfilling the Whole Law (Gal. 5:14)," *SEA* 51-52 (1986-87), 229-237.

¹¹² Dunn, "Circumcision," 79-110.

by 5.2-6 as a whole. As far as I know, there is not a scholarly article tackling satisfactorily the antitheses in 5.2-6.¹¹³ Although A. Saldanha's doctoral thesis is a detailed study of the section, it deals primarily with the concept of freedom.¹¹⁴ Unfortunately, this study does not cover sufficiently several important issues pertinent to 5.2-6, such as the six antitheses, circumcision, the benefit of Christ, and the meaning of πίστις references in 5.5-6. In short, Galatians 5.2-6 is a passage most insufficiently treated in the history of the interpretation of Galatians. Since insufficient recognition has been given to Gal 5.2-6, there is need for a detailed investigation of Gal 5.2-6, which justifies the present study.

1. 3. Conclusion

The passage Gal 5.2-6, which seems to be neglected in the studies of Galatians, can shed fresh light on the interpretation of Galatians and thus contribute to scholarship of Galatians. In particular, this study attempts to contribute to better understanding of some important issues in Galatians, particularly the six antitheses, the agitators' theological rationale for circumcision, the reason for the Galatians' acceptance of circumcision, the salvific benefits of Christ, Paul's view of the law and circumcision in Galatians, justification ἐν νόμῳ and ἐν Χριστῷ, πίστις Χριστοῦ, and the interpretation of Paul's antithesis between justification by ἔργα νόμου and justification by πίστις Χριστοῦ. Moreover, I will attempt to suggest the potential implications of Gal 5.2-6 for Pauline interpretation as well as the interpretation of Galatians. In particular, I would like to suggest some implications for the interpretation of issues such as the truth of Paul's gospel in Galatians, Paul's theological view on salvation history in Galatians, Paul's critique of the law in Galatians, the rhetorical function of Gal 5.2-12 within Galatians, the theme of 5.2-6, Paul's critique of first century Palestinian Judaism, Paul's mission to the Gentiles, and the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ.

¹¹³ Although Dunn does not tackle all the issues raised above in his article ("Circumcision"), his article is an excellent study focusing on the antithesis between circumcision and Christ in 5.2-6.

¹¹⁴ A. Saldanha, "The Concept of Freedom in Galatians," (Ph. D. Thesis, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 1994).

CHAPTER 2

THE ANTITHESIS BETWEEN CIRCUMCISION AND CHRIST

Circumcision is one of the crucial issues at stake in Galatians (cf. 2.3-5, 12; 5.2, 3, 6, 11; 6.12, 13, 15). When Paul preached “the gospel of Christ” (1.7) to the Galatians, they welcomed Paul and the gospel (4.13-15). But after he left them, the agitators (5.12) came along and preached “another gospel” (1.6). In particular, the agitators were trying to compel Paul’s Galatian converts to get circumcised (6.12).¹ Since the Galatians were convinced by the agitators’ persuasiveness (5.7), they intended to accept circumcision (5.2-3). Paul considered it a crisis not only because it is apostasy (1.6) but also because his ministry for them might be wasted (4.11; cf. 2.2). He was perplexed about the Galatians (4.20). Undoubtedly, the issue of circumcision was so sensitive for Paul because “the truth of the gospel” (2.5, 14; cf. 4.16; 5.7) and his ministry were put in danger because of the agitators’ success in persuading the Galatians to undergo circumcision (5.2-3).

It is striking that Paul attempts to solve the issue of circumcision by setting circumcision and Christ in sharp antithesis – “Ἴδε ἐγὼ Παῦλος λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ἐὰν περιτέμνησθε, Χριστὸς ὑμᾶς οὐδὲν ὠφελήσει. μαρτύρομαι δὲ πάλιν παντὶ ἀνθρώπῳ περιτεμνομένῳ ὅτι ὀφειλέτης ἐστὶν ὅλον τὸν νόμον ποιῆσαι (“Listen! I, Paul, am

¹ Although many aspects of the agitators’ gospel are unclear, there is little doubt that circumcision was an important component of the agitators’ gospel. There are two indications. It can be safely inferred from 5.2-3 that the Galatians intended to be circumcised because they were persuaded by the agitators’ demand of circumcision. In 6.12-13 it is apparent that the agitators in Galatia were teaching that the Galatians must get circumcised. They were trying to compel the Galatians to be circumcised (6.12). And also they wanted the Galatians to be circumcised so that they could boast about the circumcision of the Galatians (6.13). So rightly Barclay, *Obedying*, 45-60; idem, “Mirror-Reading a Polemical Letter,” *JSNT* 31 (1987), 88; F. F. Bruce, “Galatian Problems,” *BJRL* 53 (1970-71), 263-266; Dunn, “Circumcision,” 79; Hong, *Law*, 114-116; Martyn, *Galatians*, 290-294, 560-561; J. L. Sumney, ‘*Servants of Satan*’, ‘*False Brothers*’ and *Other Opponents of Paul* (Sheffield: SAP, 1999), 134-159.

telling you that if you are circumcised [because of the agitators' teaching of circumcision], Christ will not benefit you. Once again I testify to every man who is circumcised that he is obliged to obey the entire law" - 5.2-3).² Circumcision is set in antithesis with Christ: for the Galatians to be circumcised would mean that they forfeit the salvific benefits Christ brought them. It does not seem that the rite of circumcision is contrasted to Christ (a person). Rather, the two terms (circumcision and Christ) represent larger complexes of belief and praxis and the larger complexes are summarised in the antithesis; the two terms encapsulate the agitators' gospel of circumcision and Paul's gospel of Christ.³ It is important for us, then, to clarify as much as possible the force and function of the antithesis. Moreover, the antithesis is important for understanding why Paul opposed the circumcision of the Galatians.

A review of the history of interpretation of Gal 5.2-3 reveals that most commentators (especially German) have not addressed the force and function of the antithesis between circumcision and Christ in 5.2-3. While Dunn, Fung, and Watson note the antithesis,⁴ they do not explain satisfactorily the meaning, function, and significance of the antithesis. As we shall see later (§2.2.2.), in particular, Pauline scholars have failed to expound the salvific benefit of Christ (Χριστός ὑμᾶς οὐδὲν ὠφελήσει) as Paul's ultimate theological basis for his opposition to circumcision.

In order to clarify the issue of circumcision in Galatia and the significance of the antithesis, first of all, it is necessary to investigate the agitators' theological rationale for their demand for the circumcision of the Galatians.⁵ This is essential because the agitators' theological rationale is important for understanding why circumcision was such a sensitive issue for Paul, why Paul strongly opposed the

² Biblical translations are those of the author unless otherwise indicated.

³ Dunn, "Circumcision," 80.

⁴ See §1.1.

⁵ It is to be borne in mind that the antithesis between circumcision and Christ was set forth not directly against the view of Second Temple Judaism concerning circumcision, but against the agitators' rationale for circumcision. It is widely recognised that Paul's arguments concerning the law (e.g. the works of the law and circumcision) were formulated in dialogue and dispute not with non-Christian Jews, but with fellow Christian Jews. This is a methodological agreement among the participants in the Third Durham-Tübingen Research Symposium on Earliest Christianity and Judaism held in Durham on September, 1994. See J. D. G. Dunn, "In Search of Common Ground," in *Paul and the Mosaic Law*, 310. It is also recognised by other scholars. E.g. Fuller, "Paul and 'the

agitators' argument for circumcision, and why the Galatians were accepting circumcision. Second, we must clarify why Paul opposes the circumcision of the Galatians. Paul attempts to persuade the Galatians to reject circumcision both by warning of two fatal consequences of accepting circumcision (the forfeiture of Christ's benefit - 5.2 and to become ὀφειλέτης ὅλον τὸν νόμον ποιῆσαι - 5.3) and by reminding them of the salvific benefits Christ gave them.⁶ We will examine each aspect in turn.

2. 1. The Agitators' Theological Rationale for Circumcision

The aim of this section is to clarify the agitators' theological rationale for circumcision. The agitators were not arguing in a vacuum. As we attempt to understand the agitators' rationale adequately, therefore, we need to see the Scripture's view of circumcision to which they must have appealed.⁷ In addition, we should investigate their immediate predecessors' and their contemporaries' view of circumcision that might have influenced the agitators' view. When investigating the agitators' rationale, we are not so much concerned with their political or social reason (6.12) because it is not directly related to the present study.⁸ Rather our primary focus is on their theological rationale not only because Paul's letter is concerned with it but also because it caused the problem of circumcision in Galatia.

A good number of proposals concerning the agitators' rationale for circumcision have been suggested.⁹ But none of the proposals is entirely satisfactory. Although most commentators, notably Dunn¹⁰ and Barclay,¹¹ rightly point out that

Works of the Law',” 28-42; Hong, *Law*, 192; Martyn, *Galatians*, 470-471; Matera, *Galatians*, 32; Sanders, *PLJP*, 19, 46.

⁶ That Christ bestows benefits is a logical inference drawn from the fact that Christ will be of no benefit.

⁷ Barrett (“The Allegory,” 15) argues, “The adversaries did not act out of mere personal spite or jealousy; they held a serious theological position which they supported by detailed biblical arguments.” See also Longenecker, *Triumph*, 129-130.

⁸ For the agitators' political rationale, see Jewett, “Agitators,” 198-212. Jewett argues that the agitators preached circumcision because of the persecution of Zealots who were hostile to any Christian Jews who had fellowship with uncircumcised Gentiles.

⁹ For helpful survey of scholars' proposals concerning the agitators' strategy for circumcision, see Barclay, *Obeying*, 47-52; Hansen, *Abraham*, 170-171.

¹⁰ Dunn, “Circumcision,” 82-92; idem, *TPLG*, 29-31.

¹¹ Barclay, *Obeying*, 47-60.

the agitators demanded circumcision of the Galatians because it is an “identity marker” of God’s people and a condition of full membership into the covenant community, they have not provided a satisfactory explanation concerning the salvific efficacy and benefit of circumcision as the agitators’ most important theological rationale for circumcision (§2.1.3.).¹² It is thus necessary to investigate the agitators’ theological rationale.

2. 1. 1. Circumcision as the Sign of the Eternal Covenant Defining the Identity of God’s People

The first reason for the agitators’ demand for the circumcision of the Galatians no doubt was the belief that circumcision is the covenant sign between God and God’s people, which defines the identity of the covenant people of God. Probably they found support in Gen 17.10-14 for this rationale:¹³ “Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you . . . So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant” (NRSV). In particular, they must have appealed to Gen 17.11. It is clear in the passage that circumcision is “the sign of the covenant” (אוֹת בְּרִית)¹⁴ between God and Abraham and his descendants. Circumcision was both a token that testifies a special covenant relationship between God and Israel and a symbol that

¹² According to Barclay’s and Hansen’s survey of scholars’ proposals, we cannot find any proposal which paid due attention to the salvific efficacy and benefits of circumcision as explaining the agitators’ strategy.

¹³ Dunn regards Gen 17 as “the constitutional document of circumcision” (“What was the Issue between Paul and ‘Those of the Circumcision?’” in *Paulus und das antike Judentum*, edited by M. Hengel and U. Heckel (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1991), 303). Barclay (*Obeying*, 54 and p. 54, n. 53) writes, “The explicit connection in the Genesis text between circumcision, Abraham and covenant ensured the frequent association of these themes in Jewish theology as can be seen in a wide range of Jewish literature, both from Palestine and from the Diaspora.” See also S. McKnight, *A Light among the Gentiles* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 79. For further bibliography, see p. 79, n. 8. For the close relationship between circumcision and the Abrahamic covenant, see Hansen, *Abraham*, 171-174.

¹⁴ For a detailed study of circumcision as the sign of the covenant, see M. V. Fox, “Sign of the Covenant,” *RB* 81 (1974), 557-596.

reminds the Jews of their consecration and commitment to God.¹⁵ Furthermore, the agitators might have had a view similar to that of the author of *Jubilees*. The significance of Abraham's circumcision (Gen 17) as the sign of covenant is elaborated in *Jub.* 15.25-34. According to *Jub.* 15, circumcision is the covenant sign showing that the circumcised belong to the Lord (*Jub.* 15.26). The author of the book urges Jews of his day to maintain circumcision so that they might not be uprooted from the land (15.28). So, the author finds the reason for circumcision in Gen 17 and urges the Jews of his day to keep the covenant forever because it is the mark of the covenant between the Lord and the sons of Israel.¹⁶

Furthermore, it is to be noted that circumcision is the everlasting covenant (בְּרִית עוֹלָם - 17.13; cf. 17.7, 19)¹⁷ between God and Abraham. The offspring of Abraham throughout their generations (17.9; cf. 17.12) should keep the covenant not only because it is God's commandment (בְּרִיתִי אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁמְרוּ - 17.10) but also because not to keep it would result in being cut off from God's people (17.14). The significance of Abraham's circumcision (Gen 17) as the eternal covenant was again elaborated in *Jub.* 15.25-34. According to the passage, the covenant of circumcision is for all the generations because it is an eternal ordinance (*Jub.* 15.11, 14, 25, 28, 29). The author of *Jubilees* says, "This law is for all the eternal generations and there is no circumcising of days and there is no passing a single day beyond the eight days because it is an eternal ordinance ordained and written in the heavenly tablets" (*Jub.* 15.25). Predicting that the sons of Israel will deny circumcision, moreover, the author warns that there is no forgiveness for those who deny circumcision (*Jub.* 15.33-34).

The significance of circumcision as the eternal covenant commanded by God culminates in the Maccabean revolt. The revolt was caused by the attempt of Israel's Syrian overlords to destroy Israel's national and religious uniqueness by prohibiting

¹⁵ Cf. N. M. Sarna, *Genesis* (New York: JPS, 1989), 125, 385-387; G. J. Wenham, *Genesis* (Dallas, Texas: Word, 1994), 23-24.

¹⁶ Dunn ("Circumcision," 83) states, "The elaboration of the importance of circumcision in *Jub.* 15.25-34 is only a more extreme expression of the attitude already implicit in Gen. 17."

¹⁷ Fox ("Sign of the Covenant," 588) correctly notes, "The circumcision is a permanent, eternal sign, irradicable and irreversible both in the life of the individual and in the course of generations."

the practice of circumcision (1 Macc. 1.15, 48, 60-61; 2 Macc. 6.10; 4 Macc. 4.25). Antiochus stipulated that the Jews were “to leave their sons uncircumcised” (1 Macc. 1.48), and “they put to death the women who had their children circumcised, and their families and those who circumcised them; and they hung the infants from their mothers’ necks” (1 Macc. 1.60-61). In spite of the persecution the Maccabeans circumcised by force the uncircumcised children within the borders of their land (1 Macc. 2.46). In brief, circumcision as the everlasting covenant commanded by God is the reason why Jews during the Maccabean period continued to practise circumcision in spite of persecution.

The agitators presumably derived their rationale for their demand of the circumcision of the Galatians from Gen 17.9-14, possibly also *Jub.* 15.25-34 and the Maccabean tradition. On the basis of the texts and in line with the Maccabean tradition, the agitators could argue that if the Galatians want to become the covenant people of God, they should get circumcised because circumcision is the sign of the covenant between God and God’s people that must be kept forever by the people of God.¹⁸ Moreover, like the author of *Jubilees*, the agitators might have said that circumcision is the sign of the covenant testifying that the circumcised belong to God, and thus become the members of the people of God.

Furthermore, it seems that the agitators demanded the Galatians to get circumcised because circumcision was an identity marker of God’s people. Although there are various significant aspects of Jewish circumcision (cf. Philo, *Spec. Leg.* 1.1-11),¹⁹ its more fundamental role was an identity marker of the Jews within Judaism. The role of circumcision as an identity marker of the covenant people was vividly expressed when the Jews encountered “uncircumcised” nations, especially the Philistines (Judg 14.3; 15.18; 1 Sam 14.6; 17.26, 36; 31.4; 2 Sam 1.20; 1 Chr 10.4). The Philistines were simply called “the uncircumcised” (הַעֲרֵלִים – Judg 14.3;

¹⁸ Barclay (*Obeying*, 53) likewise maintains, “Armed with such unambiguous texts the agitators could readily demonstrate that, to share in the Abrahamic covenant and the Abrahamic blessing (Gen 12.3; 18.18, etc.), the Galatians needed to be circumcised; indeed, such was the command of God in their Scripture.” See also Sanders, *PLJP*, 18.

¹⁹ R. G. Hall (“Circumcision,” *ABD* 1.1026) notes various connotations of circumcision: marriage and fertility, covenant making, deliverance from evil, suitability for participation within

15.18; 1 Sam 14.6; 31.4; 1 Chr 10.4; lit. the “foreskin”) distinguished from the circumcised Jews. It is striking that the Egyptians were designated as הַעֲרָלִים (Ezek 32.21; cf. 32.19), despite the fact that they practised circumcision (Jer 9.25-26). Moreover, foreigners were simply characterised as עֲרָלִים (Ezek 28.10; 31.18; 32.24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 32; 44.7, 9). We can infer from these texts that Jews regarded circumcision as the marker of the covenant people and the uncircumcised as aliens from the covenant community. In other words, for Jews circumcision was a distinctive marker of the children of Israel which distinguished them from other peoples designated as “the uncircumcised.”

This significance of circumcision as an identity marker of Jews continued through the Second Temple period. As noted earlier, in the Maccabean period circumcision became a still more distinctive marker of Jews.²⁰ Furthermore, we can substantiate the point by comparing Jewish circumcision with the circumcision practice of other nations, such as Egypt and Arabia. While Egyptians, Arabs and other surrounding nations (e.g. Colchians, Ethiopians) also practised circumcision (Jer 9.25-26; Herodotus, *Hist.* 2.36-47, 104; Philo, *Spec. Leg.* 1.2; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.214; idem, *Ag. Ap.* 2.141),²¹ circumcision gave the Jews a sense of national identity. It is important to observe in *Jub.* 15.30 that “the Lord did not draw Ishmael and his sons and his brothers and Esau near to himself” despite the fact that they were the circumcised sons of Abraham. Moreover, it is noteworthy that the author of *Jubilees* viewed the real people of God as not the sons of Abraham but the sons of Israel because God chose Israel that they might be a people for himself (15.28-29). The sons of Ishmael and Esau were not called the people of God although they were circumcised and were the physical offspring of Abraham. Rather they were called Arab and Ishmaelites (20.13). While Roman authors knew the practice of circumcision in other countries, moreover, they thought circumcision as a unique

God’s activity, national identity. For a fine discussion of Philo’s understanding of circumcision, see B. R. Braxton, *The Tyranny of Resolution* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 150-160.

²⁰ Dunn, “Circumcision,” 84; Meyer, περιτέμνω, *TDNT*, 6. 77-79.

²¹ Cf. L. H. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in Ancient World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 154-155; Sarna, *Genesis*, 385-386; J. M. Sasson, “Circumcision in the Ancient Near East,” *JBL* 85 (1966), 473-476.

characteristic of Jewish males. That circumcision is considered as the most characteristic feature of the Jews is found in Petronius' remark ("And please circumcise us too, so that we may look like Jews" - Petronius, *Satyricon*, 102.14). Another indication is attested in Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.5.2 ("They adopted circumcision to distinguish themselves from other people by this difference"). In short, circumcision was the unique identity marker of the Jews (the true people of God), which distinguished them from other nations (Josephus, *Ant.* 1.192).²²

The point also can be vindicated by Paul's use of περιτομή. It is important for our argument to note that περιτομή denotes the community of the circumcised, i.e. the Jews. Paul identifies the Jews as a people simply as περιτομή (Rom 3.30; 4.9, 12; 15.8; Gal 2.7, 8, 9; Col 3.11). Περιτομή is used as a distinctive feature standing (by metonymy) for the Jews that distinguishes from ἀκροβυστία (Rom 2.26-27; 4.9; Gal 2.7; Col 3.11; cf. Eph 2.11).²³ It is probable that Paul takes over the Old Testament use of הַעֲרֵלִים (Judg 14.3; 15.18; 1 Sam 14.6; 31.4; 1 Chr 10.4; Ezek 28.10; 31.18; 32.24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 32; 44.7, 9) and designates the Gentiles simply as ἀκροβυστία; from Paul's perspective, the Jews could be categorised simply as περιτομή and the other people as ἀκροβυστία. Moreover, Paul's use of the phrases οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς (Gal 2.12; Rom 4.12; cf. Acts 10.45; 11.2; Tit 1.10) and οἱ ὄντες ἐκ περιτομῆς (Col 4.11) makes the point all the more forceful. While scholars have disputed whether οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς refer to either Jewish Christians²⁴ or non-Christian

²² Fredriksen ("Judaism," 536) notes, "Circumcision is likewise singled out in Hellenistic Jewish, pagan, and Christian literature as the premier mark of the Jew, and specifically of the convert to Judaism." See also Barclay, *Obedying*, 56; idem, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora from Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE-117 CE)* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1996), 411-412; Braxton, *Tyranny*, 133-141; E. J. Christiansen, *The Covenant in Judaism and Paul* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), 97-101; Dunn, *JPL*, 192; Feldman, *Jew*, 158; McKnight, *Light*, 79 and other scholars he cites in n. 8; E. P. Sanders, *Judaism* (London: SCM, 1992), 213-214; L. H. Schiffman, "The Rabbinic Understanding of Covenant," *RevExp* 84 (1987), 297; N. T.-L. Yee, "'You Who Were Called the Uncircumcision by the Circumcision'," (Ph. D. Thesis, University of Durham, 1999), 99-102.

²³ Dunn, "Circumcision," 82-83.

²⁴ H. Lietzmann, *An die Galater* (4th ed. Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1971), 14-15; V. M. Smiles, *The Gospel and the Law in Galatia* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1998), 89-92.

Jews,²⁵ there is little doubt that οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς is used to express those whose identity was derived from their circumcision.²⁶

To sum up, in light of the observations above, we can conclude that the agitators demanded the circumcision of the Galatians because circumcision is the sign of the eternal covenant which defines the identity of God's people. So the agitators could argue that no Gentile believers become part of the covenant people of God without first being circumcised.

2. 1. 2. Circumcision as an Entrance Requirement into the Covenant Community

A second likely reason for the agitators' demand for circumcision of the Galatians is that for the Gentiles circumcision is a prerequisite for becoming the people of God. The idea had been present before the third century BCE. We find several indications supporting this.²⁷

First of all, an indication of the entrance of בְּיָנֻקָּר (Gen 17.12) into the household of Abraham by means of circumcision is already found in Gen 17.12-13.²⁸ "Throughout your generations every male among you shall be circumcised when he is eight days old, including the slave born in your house and the one bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring. Both the slave born in your house and the one bought with your money must be circumcised" (NRSV). It is important to note that the alien slaves who were not Abraham's physical offspring also should be circumcised in order to be included into the household of Abraham.

²⁵ Bruce, *Galatians*, 131.

²⁶ Dunn, "Circumcision," 82. Dunn writes elsewhere ("What was the Issue," 312), "οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς, like its synonym, οἱ ἐκ τοῦ νόμου, defines a social identity marked out and bounded by law and circumcision in particular. These are phrases denoting ethnic identity; the group's self identity arises out of (ἐκ) their practice of the law and fact of circumcision (covenantal nomism)." See also E. E. Ellis, "The Circumcision Party and the Early Christian Mission," in *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 116-117.

²⁷ It should be noted that we shall focus on the issue of the inclusion of "uncircumcised man" in the covenant community. For the issue of the relationship between circumcision and women and the inclusion of women proselytes, see J. M. Lieu, "Circumcision, Women and Salvation," *NTS* 40 (1994), 358-370.

²⁸ Sarna (*Genesis*, 236) rightly states, "Genesis 17.9-14 makes circumcision the indispensable precondition for admittance into the community of Israel."

According to God's command, Abraham circumcised the slaves born in Abraham's house and bought with money from any foreigner who was not of his offspring so that they might not be cut off from God's people: "all the men of his house, slaves born in the house and those bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him" (Gen 17.27 - NRSV). So it is clear in Gen 17 that circumcision was also required of those not descended from Abraham.

Gen 34.14-24 is another passage that seems to refer to circumcision as a condition of entry into the covenant community for other than Abraham's direct descendants. According to the story in the passage, Shechem cannot marry Dinah because the sons of Jacob refused to give their sister to one who is uncircumcised. They said to Shechem and Hamor, "We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one who is uncircumcised, for that would be a disgrace to us" (34.14 - NRSV). So they suggested one condition. "Only on this condition will we consent to you: that you will become as we are and every male among you be circumcised, . . . and we will live among you and become one people" (34.15-16 - NRSV). Hamor and Hamor's son Shechem were pleased with their suggestion and spoke to the men of their city that "Only on this condition will they agree to live among us, to become one people: that every male among us be circumcised as they are circumcised" (34.22 - NRSV). So every male who went out of the city gate heeded Hamor and his son Shechem was circumcised (34.24). In this story, although the immediate issue was intermarriage, it is striking that circumcision determines whether the Shechemites can become one people (הָיִינוּ לְעַם אֶחָד - 34.16, 22) with the descendants of Abraham. Here again circumcision is required for the Shechemites as a condition for their becoming part of the covenant people.

The same lesson is pressed home in Exod 12.48. In Exod 12.48 circumcision is again the condition on which an uncircumcised resident alien (גֵּר) can celebrate the Passover to the Lord: "If an alien who resides with you wants to celebrate the Passover to the Lord, all his males shall be circumcised; then he may draw near to celebrate it; he shall be regarded as a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person shall eat of it" (NRSV). Note that the one who is circumcised can be regarded as a native of the land (וְהָיָה כְּאֶזְרָח הָאֶרֶץ). In other words, for the

aliens circumcision is the means by which they may be regarded as the members of the covenant community (i.e. Jewish festival community). This indicates that circumcision was already a prerequisite for the Gentiles to be considered as the members of Israel.

This point can be validated by examining the Septuagint's interpretation of a formal conversion of many of the Babylonians to Judaism in Esther 8.17. The LXX interpreted circumcision as a prerequisite for the Gentiles to become members of God's people. The translators of the Septuagint did not follow the Hebrew text. They translated מִתְּיָדָם as περιετέμοντο καὶ ἰουδαίζον. The difference between the Hebrew Text and LXX is important for understanding the significance of circumcision for the translator of the Septuagint. The addition of the word περιετέμοντο clearly indicates that the translator regarded circumcision as a prerequisite for conversion to Judaism. The same point is found in Jdt 14.10 – “When Achior saw all that the God of Israel had done, he believed firmly in God. So he was circumcised, and joined the house of Israel” (περιετέμετο τὴν σάρκα τῆς ἀκροβυστίας αὐτοῦ καὶ προσετέθη εἰς τὸν οἶκον Ἰσραηλ); and in Josephus *Ant.* 13.319 – Aristobulus compelled the Ituraeans to be circumcised and joined them to the Jews “by the bond of circumcision.” Moreover, the much-quoted story of Izates, king of Adiabene, clearly illustrates the point that circumcision was a requirement. Influenced by a Jewish merchant, Ananias, Izates wanted to adopt the Jewish way of life, including circumcision, in order to become an authentic Jew (*Ant.* 20.38). Ananias persuaded Izates that he could worship God without being circumcised. But Eleazar, a Jew from Galilee who was extremely strict in observance of the ancestral laws, urged him to get himself circumcised (*Ant.* 20.43). He compelled Izates to get circumcised because it is commanded in the law (*Ant.* 20.44-45). Moreover, the Gentile nations captured by the Jews were required to circumcise themselves to remain in their country. For example, *Ant.* 13.257-258 – Having captured the Idumaeans, Hyrcanus “permitted them to live in their country so long as they had themselves circumcised.” The literature above clearly indicate that for Gentiles (proselytes) circumcision was the indispensable precondition for admittance into the community of Israel because only circumcision could guarantee membership

of the covenant community.²⁹ There is little doubt, therefore, that circumcision was normally required for the Gentiles as a prerequisite for becoming members of the covenant people within the later Second Temple period.³⁰

It is entirely likely, therefore, that the importance of circumcision as a prerequisite for becoming a Jew and as the mark of the convert to Judaism was the theological rationale of the agitators. They would have insisted that the Galatians must enter Israel through circumcision in order to become the people of God,³¹ for their salvation is within Israel exclusively.³² Since the concept of Abraham as the

²⁹ Fredriksen ("Judaism," 546) concludes, "All the material we have reviewed – biblical and extra-biblical Jewish writings, Josephus, the rabbis, and outsiders whether pagan or Christian – emphasise circumcision as the *sine qua non* of becoming Jew."

³⁰ It is disputable whether baptism and sacrifice were normally understood as requirements for conversion to Judaism, for the two requirements are not attested in first-century stories of conversions such as *Joseph and Aseneth* and the story of Izates of Adiabene (Cf. J. J. Collins, "A Symbol of Otherness," in *To See Ourselves as Others See Us*, edited by J. Neusner and E. S. Frerichs, 163-186 (Chico: Scholars Press, 1985), 171; McKnight, *Light*, 82-87). But there can be little doubt that circumcision was a normal requirement. However, P. Borgen argues, "bodily circumcision was not the requirements for entering the Jewish community, but was one of the commandments which they had to obey after having received the status of Jews" (*Paul Preaches Circumcision and Pleases Men* (Trondheim: Tapir, 1983), 67). This is followed by T. Laato, *Paul and Judaism* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 173-174. N. J. McEleney also suggests that it is not always necessary for proselytes to be circumcised ("Conversion, Circumcision, and the Law," *NTS* 20 (1973-74), 319-341). However, both have not been widely accepted by scholars. For the criticism, see J. Nolland, "Uncircumcised Proselytes?" *JSJ* 12 (1981), 173-194. Nolland concludes, "We must conclude therefore that none of the texts brought forward stand scrutiny as firm evidence for a first-century Jewish openness to the possibility of accepting as a Jewish brother a convert to Judaism who felt unable to undergo circumcision" (p. 194). See also M. Hengel and A. M. Schwemer, *Paul Between Damascus and Antioch* (Louisville: Westminster/JKP, 1997), 72. But McEleney agrees that circumcision was normally the approved way of a man's becoming a Jew in first-century Israel (p. 332). I think Barclay's argument is balanced and convincing. He argues, "Although it is possible that in exceptional cases Gentiles could be regarded by Jews as proselytes without circumcision, it appears to have been generally recognized that circumcision was a necessary and decisive requirement for adopting Jewish identity" (*Obedying*, 56-57). S. J. D. Cohen also concludes, "as far as is known no (non-Christian) Jewish community in antiquity accepted male proselytes who were not circumcised" ("Crossing the Boundary and Becoming a Jew," *HTR* 82 (1989), 27). See also Donaldson, *Paul*, 58-60; Feldman, *Jew*, 299; McKnight, *Light*, 79-82; Mijoga, "The Pauline Notion of 'Deeds of the Law'," 157-162; E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C. – A.D. 135)*, vol III, part 1, revised and edited by G. Vermes, F. Millar, and M. Goodman (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1986), 173; E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews Under Roman Rule* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976), 205, 383; P. J. Tompson, *Paul and the Jewish Law* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 88-89.

³¹ Jewett ("Agitators," 207) argues likewise, "circumcision was presented as a prerequisite for entering fully into Abraham's promise, into the chosen people whom God would spare in the parousia." See also T. L. Donaldson, "'The Gospel That I Proclaim among the Gentiles' (Gal 2.2)," in *Gospel in Paul*, 180.

³² In the Jewish tradition, the description of "being cut off from Israel" as being removed from within the boundary of salvation indicates that salvation is within Israel (Gen 17.14; Exod

prototypical proselyte was present in Judaism (*Jub.* 11.15-17; *Apoc. Abr.* 1-8; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.154ff.; Philo, *Virt.* 212ff.; *Gen. Rab.* 46.2),³³ they may well have argued that the Galatians should be circumcised in order to be proselytes as Abraham was. At any rate they no doubt argued that the only way for the Galatians who were not Abraham's physical offspring ("aliens") to become the members of Abraham's family who can inherit the Abrahamic blessings was by accepting circumcision, an entrance requirement into the people of God.

2. 1. 3. Salvific Efficacy of Circumcision

A third likely reason for the agitators' imposition of circumcision on the Galatians is the salvific efficacy of circumcision. For them circumcision most likely had power to achieve salvation and righteousness before God. We will attempt to validate the claim by reflecting on the significance of circumcision as a redemptive and apotropaic rite within Judaism. Furthermore, the claim can be substantiated by several Jewish writings in which salvific efficacy is ascribed to circumcision. And also the salvific efficacy of circumcision is reflected in Romans and Acts. Most importantly the thought is clearly implied in Galatians.

2. 1. 3. 1. The Salvific Efficacy of Circumcision within Judaism

First of all, the salvific efficacy of circumcision is indicated by the Jewish understanding of circumcision as a redemptive rite within Judaism. Circumcision as a redemptive and apotropaic rite is hinted in the story of Zipporah's circumcision of Moses' son (*Exod* 4.24-26).³⁴ There are several issues in the passage, such as the meaning of the phrase *חתך דקלים*, the identity of the potential victim, and the differences between the Hebrew text and LXX.³⁵ For the purpose of the present inquiry, we will focus on the significance of Zipporah's circumcision of her son. Zipporah cut off her son's foreskin (*וַתִּקַּח אֶת־עֲרֵלֹת בְּנֵהָ*) because the Lord sought to

12.15, 19; 30.33, 38; 31.14; *Lev* 7.20, 21, 25, 27; 17, 4, 9, 10; 18.29; 19.8; 20.3, 5, 6, 17-18; 23.29; *Num* 9.13; 15.30; 19.13, 20; *Ezek* 14.8).

³³ Barclay (*Obeying*, 54) argues, "But of particular relevance to the Galatian situation was his [Abraham] position as the first proselyte."

³⁴ See Braxton, *Tyranny*, 131-132.

³⁵ See B. S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974) 95-96; J. I. Durham, *Exodus* (Waco, Texas: Word, 1987), 56-59.

kill him (Moses or her son). After she performed her son's circumcision, he (the Lord) left him alone. It is clear that she performed circumcision to save Moses or her son from death. It is important to note that the blood shed at the rite of circumcision redeemed him from mortal danger. So we can infer from the story of Zipporah's circumcision of her son that the blood shed at the rite of circumcision had a vicarious redemptive effect.³⁶ Moreover, it is likely that the blood of circumcision had the same significance as that of the Passover lamb which was of effect for the redemption of Israel (Exod 12.13, 22-23).³⁷ As we shall see below, on the basis of the text, such a redemptive significance for circumcision was developed and became prevalent within Second Temple Judaism.

The interpretation of Zipporah's circumcision of her son in the Septuagint (Exod 4.24-26) makes it probable that circumcision was regarded as a redemptive rite in the later Second Temple period. The translator(s) of the Septuagint did not follow the Hebrew text. Probably the translator(s) had Moses in mind as the potential victim and clearly regarded the angel of the Lord (ἄγγελος κυρίου) not the Lord (יהוה), as the attacker, refusing to follow the clear indication of the Hebrew text regarding the identity of the attacker. According to LXX, Zipporah circumcised the foreskin of her son and said to the angel that ἔσθη τὸ αἷμα τῆς περιτομῆς τοῦ παιδίου μου (4.25). Then the angel departed from Moses because (διότι) she so spoke. The translators' departure from the Hebrew text, translating לְפָנָי אֶמְתַּיְתֵּן ("you are a bridegroom of blood to me") into ἔσθη τὸ αἷμα τῆς περιτομῆς τοῦ παιδίου μου ("the blood of my son's circumcision is staunched"),³⁸ indicates that the redemptive blood of circumcision was significant for the translator(s). It is also to be noted that the translator(s) put the causal conjunctive διότι between the words of Zipporah and the departure of the angel. This indicates that Zipporah's circumcision of her son caused the departure of the angel from her husband and thus saved him

³⁶ H. P. Smith also notes the redemptive efficacy of the blood of circumcision ("Ethnological Parallels to Exodus IV. 24-26," *JBL* 25 (1906), 15).

³⁷ There are similarities between the two. 1) Redemption from death through blood; 2) touching with blood (Both used the same verb נָסַח – Ex 4.25 and 12.22). Cf. Sarna, *Genesis*, 125.

³⁸ G. Vermes writes, "Although the sense of ἔσθη is not at first sight obvious, a similar use of ἔσθημι in Luke viii. 44 shows that it should be translated 'staunched'" ("Circumcision and Exodus IV 24-25," in *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism* (2nd ed.; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973), 180).

from death.³⁹ Thus we can conclude that the Septuagint interpreted Zipporah's circumcision of her son as a redemptive rite for the guilt of Moses.

The belief in the redemptive efficacy of circumcision was also developed in later Judaism. The Targums interpreted Zipporah's circumcision of her son as a redemptive rite.⁴⁰ Thus, in *Tg. Onq.* Exod 4.25-26, Zipporah circumcised her son and said "May my husband be given to us by the blood of this circumcision" and "But for the blood of this circumcision, my husband had merited death." Here it is not difficult to think that the blood of circumcision had vicarious redemptive efficacy. The point is explicit in *Frg. Tg.* Exod 4.25 ("Now may the blood of this circumcision atone for the guilt of my husband") and 4.26 ("How beloved is the blood of this circumcision which has saved my husband from the hand of the Angel of Death"). The same thought is indicated in *Tg. Ps.-J.* Exod 4.25 – "May now the blood of this circumcision atone for my husband" and 4.26b – "How beloved is the blood of this circumcision which has saved my husband from the hand of the Destroying Angel." Here again it is clear that the sacrificial blood of circumcision was understood to have salvific force. The same point can be found in *Tg. Neof.* Exod 4.25-26 which is almost identical with the *Frg. Tg.* Exod 4.25-26 and *Tg. Ps.-J.* Exod 4.25-26. Thus we can safely infer that the targumic exegesis of Exod 4.24-26 reveals that the salvific efficacy was ascribed to circumcision as a redemptive rite for sin.⁴¹ If the targumic tradition originated in the third century BCE,⁴² it is likely that the tradition was widespread in the later Second Temple period.

The salvific power and merit of Zipporah's circumcision of her son is also found in *Exod. Rab.* 5.8:⁴³

³⁹ Vermes ("Circumcision," 181) notes, "Moses was delivered from death by the expiatory virtue of the blood of the circumcision." Hall ("Circumcision," 1028) writes, "The blood of circumcision atones for the guilt of Moses, thus warding off the angel of destruction who seeks to kill him."

⁴⁰ The following pages dealing with the Targumim interpretation of Ex 4.24-26 are indebted to the provocative study of Vermes ("Circumcision"). I use his translation of the texts.

⁴¹ McEleney, "Conversion, Circumcision and the Law," 334-345. T. R. Schreiner, "Circumcision," (Ph. D. Dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1983), 104-105; Vermes, "Circumcision," 183.

⁴² Vermes ("Circumcision," 184) argues, "The date of its origin may, therefore, safely be placed approximately in the third century BC."

⁴³ The similar thought is reflected in *Mek.* 2.169-170.

“And Zipporah took a flint. . . How did she know that Moses was in trouble because of circumcision? Because the Angel came and swallowed Moses from his head to the place of circumcision. When she saw that the Angel had swallowed him to that place, she understood that he was in trouble because of the commandment of circumcision. She knew how great was **the power of circumcision** because he could not swallow him further.

So immediately, she cut off. . . She said: You will give my husband back to me by the merit of this blood. Behold, I have fulfilled the commandment. Immediately, the Angel departed from him. Then she said: Bridegroom of blood because of the circumcision. She said: How great is **the merit of circumcision!** For my husband deserved to be punished with death because he neglected to observe the commandment of circumcision. **Without it he would not have been saved.**

There are several other indications that seem to refer to the salvific efficacy of circumcision. The significance is hinted in *Jub.* 15.28-32: God sanctified Israel by means of circumcision so that they might be with him and with his holy angels (15.27, 31). These texts imply that circumcision is a mark that testifies Israelites as the sanctified people of God who can draw near to the presence of God. Moreover, in the passage circumcision signifies God’s rule and protection of the Jews from evil spirits (15.32). In short, as Hall rightly notes, circumcision is of salvific effect in the sense that “Circumcision removes Israelites from the dominion of evil, places them under God’s reign, and sanctifies them to experience God’s presence with the holy angels who were created circumcised.”⁴⁴

Another indication that refers to the salvific efficacy of circumcision is to be found in the traditional Jewish *mohel*’s blessing recited at the time of circumcision. The blessing is as follows:

“Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who sanctified the beloved in the womb, and set a statute in his flesh, and stamped his descendants with the sign of the holy covenant, Therefore, as a reward for this, O Living God, our Portion and our Rock, command [for the living God . . . commanded] that **the beloved of our flesh shall be delivered from the pit, for the sake of His covenant which He set in our flesh.** Blessed art Thou, Lord, who makes a covenant.”⁴⁵

According to Flusser and Safrai, the blessing “expresses the idea that circumcision saves the circumcised infant from destruction . . . that circumcision saves one from mortal danger.”⁴⁶ It is striking that circumcision is closely bound up with God’s

⁴⁴ Hall, “Circumcision,” 1028.

⁴⁵ *Tosefta Ber.* 6, 13; *Pal. Tal.* 9.4; *Bab. Tal. Šabb.* 137 b. These are cited from L. Hoffman, *Covenant of Blood* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1996), 112. Cf. D. Flusser and S. Safrai, “Who Sanctified the Beloved in the Womb?” *Immanuel* 11 (1980), 50.

⁴⁶ Flusser and Safrai, “Sanctified,” 52, [46-55].

sanctification, seal, and salvation. The blessing therefore suggests that the salvific efficacy of circumcision was prevalent in the later Second Temple period because the blessing was probably customary in the period.⁴⁷

The apotropaic nature of circumcision can also be found in *Damascus Document* (CD 16.4-6: “And on the day when a man accepts on himself to return to the Torah of Moses, the angel Mastema leaves him if he fulfills his word; for this reason Abraham was circumcised on the day of his knowledge”). It seems that the author relates entrance into the Qumran community with Abraham’s circumcision, which frees the circumcised person from the dominion of Prince Mastema.⁴⁸ For the author circumcision has a salvific power requiring Prince Mastema to leave the circumcised man.

Furthermore, the relationship between perfection and circumcision is found in *Tg. Ps.-J.* The author translated Gen 17.1 as follows. “Worship before me and be perfect in the flesh.” It seems clear that *Tg. Ps.-J.* connects circumcision of the flesh with perfection. The same interpretation is also found in *m. Ned.* 3.11 (cf. *Šabb.* 19.23; *Gen. Rab.* 11.4; 46.1, 4). Rabbi Judah says, “Great is circumcision for despite all the religious duties which Abraham our father fulfilled, he was not called ‘perfect’ until he was circumcised, as it is written, Walk before me and be thou perfect.”⁴⁹ Here again circumcision is closely related to perfection.⁵⁰ Probably Rabbi Judah understood Abraham’s circumcision as the climactic act of his devotion to God. If the targumic tradition originated in the first century BCE, it is fair to say that perfection was regarded as a benefit of circumcision in first century Judaism.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Flusser and Safrai (“Sanctified,” 51) argues that the blessing recited at the time of circumcision was popular in the Second Temple period not only because the poetic language of the blessing points to the fact but also because the expression “sealed” in the blessing is already found in the Aramaic “Testament of Levi” in the story of Schechem which dates from the second century BCE and occurs in Paul’s epistle to the Romans (Rom 4.11).

⁴⁸ Hall (“Circumcision,” 1028) likewise maintains, “Circumcision removes one from the wicked sphere and places one in the sphere of God; entering the community resembles Abraham’s circumcision in that it frees one from the Angel of Enmity (CD 16.4-6).” See also Flusser and Safrai, “Sanctified,” 49.

⁴⁹ The translation is from J. Neusner, *The Tosefta*, vols. 2-6 (New York: Ktav, 1977-1981).

⁵⁰ Cf. O. Betz, “Beschneidung,” *TRE* 5.718 [716-722]; Christiansen, *The Covenant*, 41-42, 282; Hansen, *Abraham*, 172, 195; Martyn, *Galatians*, 292-294.

⁵¹ Pace Barclay (*Obeying*, 49) who claims, “we never find this ‘perfection’ motif in the context of Hellenistic Jewish apologetic.”

To sum up, all the texts examined above strongly suggest that the redemptive and apotropaic significance of circumcision was one strong line of tradition within Judaism. The Septuagint and all the Targums understood Zipporah's circumcision of her son as a redemptive and apotropaic rite that saves one from death. We have also seen that several other Jewish sources imply the salvific efficacy of circumcision.⁵² It is thus fair to say that the idea of salvific (redemptive) efficacy of circumcision was prevalent in later Second Temple Judaism.⁵³ In which case, it is likely that Jews in Paul's days believed in the salvific efficacy of circumcision on the basis of the redemptive nature of circumcision.⁵⁴

2. 1. 3. 2. The Salvific Efficacy of Circumcision in Romans and Acts

Paul's letter to the Romans likewise hints at the salvific significance of circumcision. Paul's statement concerning the benefit of circumcision in Rom 2.25 (περιτομή μὲν γὰρ ὠφελεῖ ἂν νόμον πράσσης) and 3.1 (ἢ τίς ἡ ὠφέλεια τῆς περιτομῆς;) suggests that the Jews of Paul's day believed that circumcision removes Israelites from the eschatological wrath of God (1.18) and from God's judgement (2.3).⁵⁵ In 2.25-29, Paul contests the salvific value of circumcision that protects circumcised Jews from the wrath and judgement of God.⁵⁶ The Jewish interlocutor

⁵² We can also find the salvific significance of circumcision in later rabbinic teaching. Later Judaism claimed that "no person who is circumcised will go down to Gehenna" (e.g. *Gen. Rab.* 48.18; *Exod. Rab.* 5.19 (81c)). According to later rabbinic teaching, circumcision is a guarantee of a share in the world to come and of salvation from the fires of Ge-Hinnom (cf. H. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testamen aus Talmud und Midrash*, 6 vols. (Munich: Beck, 1926-1963), 1.119). Hoffman (*Covenant of Blood*, 96-110) observes the close relationship between the blood of circumcision and salvation in later Rabbinic Judaism, in particular in *Pirque Rabbi Eliezer*. He concludes, "The Rabbis replaced the fertility symbolism of the Bible with blood as a symbol of salvation" (*Covenant of Blood*, 109). Vermes ("Circumcision," 190-191) also notes that the interpretation of the redemptive virtue of the blood of circumcision is closely bound up with the redemptive blood of the Passover lamb in later Judaism (*Mek.* 1.33-34; *Exod. Rab.* 19.7). Thus it seems clear that later Judaism ascribed salvific efficacy to circumcision. For the salvific merit of circumcision in Rabbinic Judaism, see Hoffman, *Covenant of Blood*, 111-135.

⁵³ Cf. McEleney, "Conversion, Circumcision, and the Law," 334.

⁵⁴ Hall ("Circumcision," 1028) likewise maintains that many of the Jews would have believed that "Circumcision atones for guilt as a sacrifice, transfers one from the realm of the deceiving, destroying angels to the realm of blessing, and sanctifies one for participation in heavenly worship in God's presence."

⁵⁵ Most commentators of Paul's letter to the Romans have not paid sufficient attention to the theme of the benefit of circumcision.

⁵⁶ D. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 167.

would have argued that Jews have the salvific advantage of circumcision.⁵⁷ He could have argued that circumcision is of benefit for rescuing the Jews from the power of sin (3.9) and the judgement of God (2.1-11; 3.19) because it is a mark of God's covenant people. So it may be fairly claimed that many Jews probably believed that circumcision gives the circumcised salvific benefit. They may well have assumed, as the author of *Jubilees* did, that circumcision sanctifies the circumcised and enables them to draw near to the presence of God without any hindrance. Paul argues against the salvific effect of circumcision by means of the antithesis between circumcision of the flesh and that of heart and between circumcision ἐν πνεύματι and that (ἐν) γράμματι.⁵⁸ He seems to contend that physical circumcision is irrelevant to salvation from the wrath of God (1.18) and justification,⁵⁹ and has become valueless because the true circumcision is the circumcision of the heart in the Spirit (Rom 2.29).⁶⁰ In other words, circumcision does not guarantee protection from the wrath and judgement of God because Jews and Gentiles are equally "under the power of sin" (3.9) and subject to God's wrath (1.18).⁶¹ Moreover, Paul argues that circumcision is irrelevant for the blessing of the forgiveness of sin (4.1-12). On the contrary, the blessing is given to those who believe. We can infer from Paul's critique of the salvific benefit of circumcision that the Jews (as represented by the Jewish interlocutor) of Paul's day believed in the salvific efficacy of circumcision.

What then is the benefit of circumcision that Paul has in mind in Rom 3.1-2? Although he could list more,⁶² he actually lists only one item, that is the oracles of God.⁶³ What are the other benefits of circumcision that Paul had in mind? Since Paul links the benefit of circumcision with the advantage of the Jew (3.1), probably he had in mind the prerogatives of Jews as the benefits of circumcision. He seems to

⁵⁷ J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans* (Dallas, Texas: Word, 1998), 1.121.

⁵⁸ For a detailed exposition of the antitheses, see J. M. G. Barclay, "Paul and Philo on Circumcision," *NTS* 44 (1998), 551-555.

⁵⁹ E. Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 71-77.

⁶⁰ Barclay ("Paul and Philo on Circumcision," 546) argues that for Paul circumcision "is simply not worth counting as a circumcision; it has become an entirely superfluous phenomenon."

⁶¹ Dunn ("What was the Issue," 311) writes, "Before the power of sin and the judgement of God . . . circumcision provides no guarantee."

⁶² This is suggested by "much," "in every way," and "first of all" (3.1-2).

⁶³ The oracles of God probably refer to the promises uttered by God. For bibliography, see Moo, *Romans*, 182.

have returned to the subject in Rom 9.4-5 where he lists the seven prerogatives of Jews.⁶⁴ The seven prerogatives are adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, the promises, and the patriarchs. So it is likely that Paul had in mind the seven prerogatives of Jews as the benefits of circumcision.

Acts 15.1, 5 also hints at the salvific efficacy of circumcision within first century Judaism. Acts 15.1 tells us, *τινες κατελθόντες ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἐδίδασκον τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς ὅτι, Ἐὰν μὴ περιτμηθῆτε τῷ ἔθει τῷ Μωϋσέως, οὐ δύνασθε σωθῆναι*. Acts 15.5 clearly tells us that some believers who belonged to the group of the Pharisees insisted that it is necessary for the Gentile believers to undergo circumcision (*δεῖ περιτέμνειν αὐτοὺς*) in order to receive in full the salvific benefits provided by God for his people.⁶⁵ Why did they require circumcision of the Gentile believers as a basis or condition of salvation? Probably because they believed in the salvific efficacy of circumcision (i.e. salvation through circumcision) on the basis of the Judaic tradition of the salvific efficacy of circumcision. Some believers who belonged to the group of the Pharisees had a position similar to the authors of *Frg. Tg. Exod 4.26*, *Tg. Ps.-J. Exod 4.26*, and *Exod. Rab. 5.8* on the point that they regarded circumcision as the basis of salvation.

2. 1. 3. 3. The Salvific Efficacy of Circumcision in Galatians

It is very important to note that the salvific efficacy of circumcision is indicated in Galatians. First of all, it is striking that there is a similarity between *Tg. Ps.-J.* (cf. *m. Ned. 3.11*; *Šabb. 19.23*; *Gen. Rab. 11.4*; *46.1, 4*) and Gal 3.3. In Gal 3.3 Paul says, *ἐναρξάμενοι πνεύματι νῦν σαρκὶ ἐπιτελείσθε*; (“Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected (ἐπιτελείσθε) by means of flesh?”).⁶⁶ Probably

⁶⁴ Several commentators have observed it. E.g. C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1979), 1.326; Moo, *Romans*, 181.

⁶⁵ C. K. Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostle* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998), 2.699.

⁶⁶ The verb ἐπιτελείσθε can be taken as passive or middle. Most commentators have rendered it as middle. In the middle voice the sense is “are you now ending with the flesh” (NRSV; Burton, *Galatians*, 148; R. Mahoney, ἐπιτελέω, *EDNT* 2.42). In the passive voice the sense is “are you now being perfected by the flesh” (NEB; Betz, *Galatians*, 136; Martyn, *Galatians*, 284; Matera, *Galatians*, 112-113) or “will you be completed with the flesh” (Dunn, *Galatians*, 155, Witherington, *Grace*, 197). However, the passive is more probable because Paul is thinking of the flesh as the means of perfection as σαρκὶ (“instrumental dative”) indicates (Cf. BAGD, s.v. Martyn, *Galatians*,

the word σάρξ refers to the circumcised flesh signifying Jewish privileged ethnic identity as God's people (cf. Gal 6.12-13; Rom 2.28; Phil 3.3-5; Col 2.11, 13; Eph 2.11-12).⁶⁷ So, it is possible that the agitators had a position similar to the author of *Tg. Ps.-J.* and R. Judah.⁶⁸ It is also noteworthy that James might have thought of circumcision as the basis of Abraham's perfection (ἐκ τῶν ἔργων ἢ πίστις ἐτελειώθη – Jas 2.22), if "works" include circumcision. Provided that the agitators in Galatia were one with τινὰς ἀπὸ Ἰακώβου (Gal 2.12),⁶⁹ they may well have shared the view of James.⁷⁰ It is possible that Jewish-Christian circles inherited the Jewish tradition that connects Abraham's circumcision and perfection and taught the Galatians to achieve perfection through circumcision as Abraham (the paradigmatic proselyte) did. We may justly infer, therefore, that the agitators argued for the necessity of circumcision for perfection.⁷¹

Secondly, another indication that refers to the salvific efficacy of circumcision is to be found in Gal 5.6. Paul says, ἐν γὰρ Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ οὔτε περιτομή τι ἰσχύει οὔτε ἀκροβυστία ἀλλὰ πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη. He claims that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision but πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη is of effect or

284). Another issue is the meaning of the verb ἐπιτελείσθε. Does it mean "are you being ended or completed" or "are you being perfected"? The second translation is more probable because the Jewish tradition regarding perfection as a benefit of circumcision suggests that the Galatians desired to be perfected by circumcision. Cf. Martyn *Galatians*, 289-294.

⁶⁷ The point is clearly indicated both in Gen 17.13, Sir 44.20 ("the covenant in the flesh") and in the traditional Jewish *mohel's* blessing, in which circumcision is equivalent to "His covenant which He set in our flesh." Cf. Barclay, *Obeying*, 180, n. 4; Burton, *Galatians*, 148; Dunn, "Circumcision," 89-92; R. Jewett, *Paul's Anthropological Terms* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971), 99-100; Martyn, *Galatians*, 290-292, 294; Witherington, *Grace*, 214. Thus "flesh" does not mean "human effort" (*pace* NIV; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 103) or "human nature in its fallenness" (*pace* Fung, *Galatians*, 134).

⁶⁸ Cf. Brinsmead, *Galatians*, 79-81; Jewett, "Agitators," 207; Martyn, *Galatians*, 285; Oepke, *Galater*, 101.

⁶⁹ Although the both groups might not be identical, at least both are in common in maintaining circumcision; τινὰς ἀπὸ Ἰακώβου are possibly τοὺς ἐκ περιτομῆς (2.12).

⁷⁰ Cf. Betz, *Galatians*, 134; Martyn, *Galatians*, 293; Witherington, *Grace*, 214.

⁷¹ Martyn (*Galatians*, 294) writes, "We can be confident that they spoke about the need for perfection in the form of victory over the Impulsive Desire of the Flesh, and about circumcision of the *flesh* as the initial point in the line leading to that perfection." Jewett ("Agitators," 207) argues, "At first glance it may seem strange that a Hellenistic congregation would consider undergoing circumcision simply to enter the promised people of Israel. It may be, however, that the contact with their own Hellenistic aspirations was at the point of the promise of perfection which the Judaic tradition attached to circumcision." *Contra* Barclay, *Obeying*, 49-50; Donaldson, "'The Gospel That I Proclaim among the Gentiles' (Gal 2.2)," 179-180.

force (λοχύει).⁷² Paul argues that circumcision is not effective for justification.⁷³ Since here Paul argues against the agitators' argument for circumcision, one can infer that the agitators argued that circumcision is powerful or effective (περιτομή λοχύει) for justification. It is also quite important to note that there is a close relationship between Gal 5.6 and *Exod. Rab.* 5.8 in terms of the salvific power of circumcision. This strengthens the suggestion that the agitators believed in the salvific efficacy of circumcision effecting salvation and righteousness to the circumcised.⁷⁴

Thirdly, the salvific efficacy of circumcision is also hinted in 6.15 (cf. 1 Cor 7.19). Paul says, οὔτε γὰρ περιτομή τί ἐστίν οὔτε ἀκροβυστία ἀλλὰ καινή κτίσις. Paul argues against the agitators' boasting in the flesh, i. e. pride in Jewish ethnic identity and prerogative as God's people⁷⁵ by saying that circumcision is nothing (οὔτε περιτομή τί ἐστίν). We can infer from this that the agitators argued that circumcision is something (τί ἐστίν). What does Paul mean by τί ἐστίν? The expression occurs in several places in Paul's letters (1 Cor 3.7; 10.19; cf. 7.19). What Paul was trying to say in 1 Cor 3.7 is that the one who gives the growth of the Corinthian church is not Apollos and Paul but God Himself. In 1 Cor 10.19 Paul means that food sacrificed to idols and an idol itself are not effective. So the expression in 6.15 describes something effective. Moreover, the verb ἐστίν in 1 Cor 7.19 seems to mean "to be effective." We can justly infer, therefore, that Paul argues against the salvific efficacy of circumcision. Since Paul argues against the agitators' view on circumcision in 6.15, it follows that the agitators argued the salvific effectiveness of circumcision.

In light of the discussion above, it is reasonable to claim that the Jewish belief in the salvific efficacy of circumcision was the theological rationale of the

⁷² The verb λοχύω can refer to "have power" (Mark 5.4; Acts 19.20; John 21.6), "to be able" (Phil 4.13), and "to be of effect or force" (Gal 5.6; Heb 9.17; James 5.16). The best translation of the verb λοχύει in Gal 5.6 is "is of effect or force." Cf. Betz, *Galatians*, 263 n. 94; Dunn, *Galatians*, 270. Most commentators fail to see the "power" character of the verb.

⁷³ Cf. Fung, *Galatians*, 228.

⁷⁴ Christiansen, *The Covenant*, 283.

⁷⁵ Dunn, "Circumcision," 90-92.

agitators. Since, as most scholars agree,⁷⁶ the agitators were Jewish Christians, they presumably knew the tradition. If so, they probably argued that circumcision was necessary for salvation because it is a means of redemption. It is also likely that the agitators preached “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved” (Acts 15.1),⁷⁷ as “men came down from Judea” did, for the agitators are similar to them.⁷⁸ It is therefore hardly to be doubted that they required the Galatians of circumcision as a condition of salvation because they believed that one could not be saved except by means of circumcision.⁷⁹ The agitators might have taught that the Galatians could be protected from the eschatological wrath of God and delivered from the present evil age (cf. Gal 1.4) by means of circumcision which saves God’s people from destruction and mortal danger and marks God’s rule. Since the significance of circumcision as a redemptive rite was prevalent in the Second Temple period, the agitators probably believed that one could be redeemed by means of circumcision. They also might have taught that circumcision secures and guarantees salvation not only because it signifies God’s rule and protection and admits the circumcised to the presence of God but also because it is a guarantee of a share in the world to come. For them one achieves righteousness by virtue of circumcision. In short, they wanted the Galatians to get circumcised on the basis of the saving efficacy of circumcision and preached the Galatians that one could not be saved without circumcision.

2. 1. 4. Conclusion and Corollary

To recap what we have said so far, the agitators’ theological rationale for circumcision was probably in accordance with the Jewish Scripture and the circumcision tradition of Paul’s days. According to the agitators, circumcision is the

⁷⁶ Cf. ch. 1, n. 13.

⁷⁷ T. R. Schreiner, “Circumcision,” in *DPL*, 138.

⁷⁸ Probably the agitators in Galatia, “certain individuals came from Judea” (Acts 15.1; cf. 15.5), and “the false brothers” (Gal 2.4) were from the same group οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς (Gal 2.12; cf. Acts 11.2; Tit 1.10). Cf. Martyn, *Galatians*, 195.

⁷⁹ J. McHugh rightly observes, “There is no doubt that Paul’s opponents are Jewish Christians who preached both the necessity of circumcision and the need to observe the Law *as conditions of salvation*, and they were striving to convince the Gentiles of these doctrines” (“Galatians 2.11-14,” in *Paulus und das antike Judentum*, 324). See also Schreiner, “Circumcision,” 138.

sign of God's eternal covenant playing a role as the identity marker of the people of God (§2.1.1.) and an entrance requirement into the community of Israel (§2.1.2.). Most importantly, they believed that circumcision is effective and profitable for salvation (§2.1.3.). For them circumcision defines the members of the covenant community and ensures the benefit of salvation. This is why the agitators hold together circumcision and Christ and thus would have argued that Christ was not by itself sufficient for salvation but that circumcision was also necessary; salvation is based on both circumcision and Christ. Furthermore, this is why the agitators wanted to make a good showing in the circumcised flesh (6.12) and why they boast in the circumcised flesh of the Galatians (6.13). It is also probable that the agitators, like the Jewish interlocutor in Romans (Rom 2.25; 3.1; cf. 9.4-5), argued the salvific benefits of circumcision (περιτομή ὠφελεῖ). Although we cannot know for sure what kind of benefits the agitators taught the Galatians because Galatians itself does not tell us what they are precisely, we can infer it from the salvific benefits reflected in LXX, *Jubilees*, targums, Acts, Romans, and Galatians. The benefits could be redemption, sonship of Abraham, participation in Abraham's blessing and his inheritance, adoption, perfection, and righteousness. Since it is probable that the agitators taught these benefits to the Galatians, it is likely that Paul deals with most of these themes because the agitators introduced them to the Galatians.⁸⁰ In light of the observations above, we can justly conclude that the agitators tried to persuade the Galatians to get circumcised through pointing out the salvific benefits of circumcision and thus succeeded in persuading many of the Galatians to consider seriously accepting circumcision.

On the basis of the observations above, I would respond briefly to the major proposals concerning the reason why the Galatians were accepting circumcision. As

⁸⁰ Unless we have very good reasons to the contrary, it is reasonable to think that Paul brought out the themes (e.g. redemption, sonship, perfection, inheritance, righteousness) because they were raised by the opponents. Most scholars think that the agitators first introduced the issues of Gentiles sharing in Abraham's inheritance and becoming descendants of Abraham in the Galatian context (e.g. Barrett, "The Allegory," 118-131; Brinsmead, *Galatians*, 107-114; J. J. Gunther, *St. Paul's Opponents and Their Background* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973), 82; Martyn, "A Law-Observant Mission to the Gentiles," 18). Others take Paul's mention of perfection (3.3) as an indication of the agitators' theological rationale for circumcision (e.g. Brinsmead, *Galatians*, 79-81; Jewett, "Agitators," 206-207; Lull, *Spirit*, 31; Martyn, *Galatians*, 285; Oepke, *Galater*, 101).

a matter of fact, it was very difficult for the Gentiles to decide to get circumcised because circumcision was disdained in the Graeco-Roman world and regarded with horror, contempt, scorn, and ridicule.⁸¹ As R. G. Hall rightly observes, this was an important reason why some Jews in the Diaspora practised a surgical removal of circumcision, epispasm (1 Macc. 1.15).⁸² Moreover, their problematic behaviour was contrary to what they did when Paul first announced the gospel to them (4.15-16). So the Galatians would have been hesitant to get circumcised. Why then were they accepting circumcision despite the difficulties? There have been a number of attempts to answer the question.

On the basis of the assumption that the agitators were Gnostics,⁸³ Schmithals argues that the agitators took over the Jewish circumcision rite and reinterpreted it as a Gnostic rite. He claims that the Galatians intended to undergo circumcision because they were fascinated by the act of circumcision which portrays the liberation of the pneuma-self from the prison of this body.⁸⁴ He supports this argument both by referring to the use of circumcision by the Ebionites, Elchasaites and Cerinthians and by comparing the interpretation of circumcision in Col 2.11-13. Betz argues that in consideration of circumcision as an effort to reintroduce a “code of ethics” the Galatians were seeking circumcision in order to prevent falling into “problems with the flesh.”⁸⁵ On the basis of Gal 3.3, Jewett claims that the Galatians were accepting circumcision in order to attain perfection through circumcision.⁸⁶ He supports his argument by appealing to *Gen. Rab.* 46.4 and *Jub.* 15.25-33. Lull suggests three reasons why the Galatians considered taking up circumcision:⁸⁷ (1) because the Galatians were “religiously scrupulous”; (2) because they wanted to be “genuine

⁸¹ See Barclay, *Obedying*, 46, n. 25; Feldman, *Jew*, 153-158; Hall, “Circumcision,” 1027; Hansen, *Abraham*, 170, n. 21; L. L. Grabbe, “Orthodoxy in First Century Judaism,” *JSJ* 8 (1977), 150; Witherington, *Grace*, 455-456.

⁸² R. G. Hall, “Epispasm and the Dating of Ancient Jewish Writings,” *JSP* 2 (1988), 71-86. Hall offers five motives for epispasm (p. 78).

⁸³ Schmithals, “The Heretics in Galatia,” 13-64.

⁸⁴ Schmithals, “The Heretics in Galatia,” 38.

⁸⁵ Betz, “In Defence of the Spirit,” 99-114; idem, “Spirit, Freedom, and Law,” 145-160.

⁸⁶ Jewett (“Agitators,” 212) states, “It was their desire to gain the final level of perfection which led to circumcision when they heard from the agitators that such an act would ensure entrance into the mythical seed of Abraham.”

⁸⁷ Lull, *Spirit*, 30-39.

Jews”; (3) because of “transgression.” Barclay seems to suggest that the Galatians wanted to get circumcised not only because they were convinced by the agitators’ theological argument that circumcision is necessary for them in order to share in the Abrahamic blessing and to secure their identity as members of God’s people and recipients of God’s promise, but also because by accepting circumcision they wanted to “identify themselves with the local synagogues and thus hold at least a more understandable and recognizable place in society.”⁸⁸

While these theories might have elements of truth, but none of them is entirely satisfactory. These commentators have not paid sufficient attention to the soteriological function of circumcision (i.e. the means and basis of salvation) as the key reason why the Galatians were accepting circumcision.⁸⁹ As noted earlier, for the agitators, circumcision is the covenant sign that secures and guarantees the membership of God’s people; it is the condition of becoming the offspring of Abraham; it is a redemptive rite. Since the Galatians evidently thought themselves not as full and equal members of the covenant community but as mere Gentile “god-fearers” who need to be circumcised for full membership of the people of God and salvation,⁹⁰ probably they desired to depend on the salvific effectiveness of circumcision in order to enjoy various salvific benefits of circumcision. In short, despite the fact that circumcision was widely regarded as the object of horror, contempt, scorn, and ridicule, the Galatians were accepting circumcision because they were fascinated and convinced by the agitators’ teaching of the salvific efficacy of circumcision and believed that circumcision is necessary, effective, and beneficial for salvation.⁹¹

The soteriological function and salvific benefits of circumcision are also significant for understanding Paul’s reason for his opposition to the circumcision of the Galatians. It is to be said that the issue is not concerned with the figurative

⁸⁸ Barclay, *Obeying*, 52-60.

⁸⁹ While Jewett (“Agitators,” 212) observes perfection as a salvific effect of circumcision, he did not paid sufficient attention to other salvific effects of circumcision.

⁹⁰ Bruce, “Galatian Problems, 3,” 271.

⁹¹ Interestingly, Martyn (*Galatians*, 478) suggests that Galatians may have understood circumcision has a redemptive power like castration among the priests in the cult of cybele that is a

significance of circumcision.⁹² It is clear that all of Paul's references to the rite or act of circumcision in Galatians are literal (2.3; 5.2, 3, 11; 6.12, 13), not figurative (cf. Rom 2.25-29; Phil 3.3; Col 2.11).⁹³ This indicates that literal circumcision was the issue between Paul and the agitators. What was at stake was the idea that physical circumcision is necessary for the Gentiles for their salvation. In particular, what was sensitive for Paul was the agitators' claim that circumcision is effective for salvation. In short, the issue was whether circumcision is valid and effective for becoming God's people.

It is important to remember that Paul's objection to circumcision is not so much concerned with the significance of circumcision as the mark of the covenant people. It is clear that Paul did not deny the practice of circumcision itself (1 Cor 9.20) and according to Acts he had Timothy circumcised when Paul needed him for ministry among the Jews (Acts 16.3). As Dunn rightly notes, "It was presumably not so much that he [Paul] objected to circumcision as the mark of the covenant people: 'the circumcision' in [Gal] 2.7, 9 is a fairly neutral characterisation; and later on Paul was happy to affirm the 'sign or seal' [Rom 4.11] significance of Abraham's circumcision."⁹⁴ The point is reflected in 1 Cor 7.18 ("Was anyone at the time of his call already circumcised? Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision. Was anyone at the time of his call uncircumcised? Let him not seek circumcision" – NRSV). However, he vigorously opposed circumcision when it was regarded as an essential means to salvation. For to accept the soteriological validity and salvific effectiveness of circumcision meant for Paul a rejection of the ultimate efficacy and sufficiency of the saving work of Christ as well as the salvific benefits of Christ. Paul's opponents urged the Galatians to accept circumcision because they regarded circumcision as essential for their salvation.⁹⁵ In complete contrast Paul regarded the

sign of trust in the redemptive power of religion. But he does not pay sufficient attention to the Judaic tradition of the salvific efficacy of circumcision.

⁹² Circumcision of lips (Ex 6.12, 30); uncircumcised ears (Jer 6.10); uncircumcised in flesh and heart (Ezek 44.7, 9); uncircumcised heart (Lev 26.41); circumcision of heart (Deut 10.16; 30.6; Jer 4.4; 9.25-26; cf. Philo *Spec. Leg.* 1.8)

⁹³ Martyn, *Galatians*, 194.

⁹⁴ Dunn, "Circumcision," 84.

⁹⁵ Augustine, in his commentary on Galatians, thinks that circumcision is indifferent unless one relies on it for salvation. See M. F. Wiles, *The Divine Apostle* (Cambridge: CUP, 1967), 71.

Galatian's acceptance of circumcision as apostasy from God (1.6) and disobedience to the truth of the gospel (5.7); it meant to deny God's grace through Christ and the Spirit, which is wholly sufficient for their salvation. Therefore, Paul rejected circumcision not for social⁹⁶ or ecclesiological⁹⁷ reasons, but because of the salvific efficacy and benefits attributed to circumcision (§2.1.3.).

The soteriological function and salvific benefits of circumcision as an important reason for Paul's opposition to circumcision is significant for further inquiry into Paul's opposition to circumcision in other of his letters (particularly Romans and Philipians). There are several places (Rom 2.25-3.2, 4.1-12; Phil 3.1-9)⁹⁸ where Paul speaks of the salvific benefits of circumcision as he tackles the issue of circumcision. It seems that Paul argues against his opponents' view on the salvific benefit of circumcision. Furthermore, one of the critical issues in Paul's mission to the Gentiles was the salvific efficacy of circumcision, which is evident from Acts 15.1, 5. This indicates that the salvific efficacy and benefit of circumcision is both a crucial concern for Paul and the main target of his attack on circumcision. While most commentators have rightly pointed out that the focus of Paul's opposition to circumcision is on the Jewish notion of circumcision as an identity marker of God's people and an entrance requirement into the covenant community,⁹⁹ they have not paid sufficient attention to the salvific efficacy of circumcision.¹⁰⁰ Therefore, I would suggest that if we are fully to appreciate how it is that circumcision could become such a crucial concern for Paul and why he vehemently opposed to circumcision,

Most commentators also note the point. E.g. Betz, *Galatians* 259, Borse, *Galater*, 179; Bruce, *Galatians*, 229; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 346; Oepke, *Galater*, 156; Ridderbos, *Galatia*, 188; Schlier, *Galater*, 232; Z. A. Ziesler, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (London: Epworth, 1992), 74.

⁹⁶ Pace Feldman (*Jew*, 155) who thinks that Paul decided not to require circumcision of Christian proselytes because of the general hostility of the Graeco-Roman world to circumcision.

⁹⁷ It is too simplistic to suggest that Paul rejects or abandons circumcision to make it easier for Gentiles to join the church. Pace Watson, *PJG*, 28. Schreiner ("Works of Law' in Paul," 237-238) has rightly criticised Watson's argument that social factors alone were the decisive reasons for Paul's viewpoint on the law and the Jew-Gentile issue.

⁹⁸ In Phil 3.2-10 Paul implies the antithesis between the profit of the flesh (circumcision) and the profit of Christ. The surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus makes the profit of the flesh (i.e. circumcision) valueless and rubbish (3.8).

⁹⁹ Notably Dunn, "Circumcision," 85.

¹⁰⁰ While Christiansen (*The Covenant*, 283) notes, "Paul only rejects circumcision in its function of conveying perfection," she overlooks other salvific effects of circumcision.

then we need to consider the salvific efficacy and benefit of circumcision as the most important reason for Paul's opposition to circumcision.

2. 2. The Antithesis between Circumcision and Christ: Paul's Rationale for his Opposition to the Circumcision of the Galatians

We concluded above that the Galatians were accepting circumcision because they were probably fascinated by the agitators' theological rationale for circumcision, in particular the salvific efficacy and benefits of circumcision. Since their "persuasion" (5.8) was logical and attractive, the Galatians began entertaining doubts about Paul's gospel and many of them started departing from his gospel (1.6). Consequently, the burden of proof was on Paul to demonstrate that circumcision is unnecessary, ineffective, and valueless. Why did Paul find circumcision, which is the identity marker of the people of God and an entrance requirement into the community of Israel, so objectionable? Why was it objectionable to him that circumcision be regarded as effective for salvation? Paul argues for the valuelessness and ineffectiveness of circumcision on two grounds: two fatal consequences of circumcision and the salvific benefit of Christ.

As we attempt to explain Paul's rationale for his opposition to the circumcision of the Galatians, which is given in 5.2-3, it is noteworthy that until 5.2 Paul has not dealt with the issue of circumcision despite its being one of the crucial issues at stake in Galatia. While several references to circumcision appear before (2.3, 8, 9, 12), Paul does not endeavour to resolve the issue until 5.2ff. He does not tackle this crucial problem in the course of his main argument (3.1-5.1). It is the more interesting because he structured Galatians logically and carefully.¹⁰¹ Why does Paul design to tackle such a pivotal issue in 5.2-6 (traditionally understood as part of exhortation - 5.1-6.18), and not in the main part of Galatians (the so-called theological section of the letter)? Probably it is because he wanted to persuade the

¹⁰¹ Cf. Betz, "Literary Composition and Function of Paul's Letter to the Galatians," 353-379; Hong, *Law*, 18-73; G. M. M. Pelsler, et al, "Discourse Analysis of Galatians," Addendum to *Neot* 26:2 (1992), 1-41.

Galatians not to undergo circumcision after securing his apostolic authority and showing his paradigmatic examples (1.10-2.21) and laying the theological foundation for his opposition to circumcision (3.1-5.1). Conversely, since to a certain extent the two terms (circumcision and Christ) in the antithesis between circumcision and Christ summarise Paul's argument in 1.1-5.1, Paul's rationale for his opposition to the Galatians' circumcision in 5.2-3 should be understood in light of Paul's argument in 1.1-5.1.

2. 2. 1. Valuelessness of Circumcision: Two Disastrous Consequences of Circumcision

On the basis of both his apostolic authority which is independent from the Jerusalem Church and his paradigmatic example following the truth of the gospel, which is different from the agitators and Peter, Paul solemnly urges ("Ἴδε ἐγὼ Παῦλος λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι") the Galatians to reject circumcision by warning of two fatal consequences of circumcision: 1) the forfeiture of the salvific benefits of Christ (5.2);¹⁰² 2) circumcision makes every man who is circumcised ὀφειλέτης ὅλον τὸν νόμον ποιῆσαι (5.3). These two consequences of circumcision are Paul's clear reasons given for his opposition to the circumcision of the Galatians.¹⁰³ In order to understand the two reasons, it is necessary first to explain what it means to forfeit Christ's benefit. Second, we must clarify what Paul means by ὀφειλέτης ἐστὶν ὅλον τὸν νόμον ποιῆσαι (5.3b).

2. 2. 1. 1. The Forfeiture of Christ's Benefit

Paul's first reason for his opposition to the circumcision of the Galatians is that it causes Gentile believers who receive circumcision to forfeit the benefits of Christ (ἐὰν περιτέμνησθε, Χριστὸς ὑμᾶς οὐδὲν ὠφελήσει).¹⁰⁴ It is clear that the

¹⁰² As we shall see below (§2.2.2.), the salvific benefits of Christ refer to the soteriological effects of the saving work of Christ in Galatians (e.g. redemption, righteousness, adoption, etc.).

¹⁰³ K. Müller thinks that the consequences of circumcision are given in 5.2-4 (*Anstoss und Gericht* (Munich: Kösel, 1969), 111-112). It seems clear, however, that being cut off from Christ and falling away from grace (5.4) are the consequences of justification in the law, not of circumcision.

¹⁰⁴ Dunn ("Circumcision," 86) takes 5.3 as Paul's first stated reason for his opposition to circumcision. In my view, 5.2 is Paul's first reason and 5.3 second.

object of Paul's persuasion is the Galatians who were accepting circumcision. Although the conditional expression (ἐὰν περιτέμνησθε) suggests that the Galatians had not received circumcision yet,¹⁰⁵ the present indicative (περιτεμνομένω) in 5.3 indicates that Paul envisages a situation in which they were accepting circumcision.¹⁰⁶ The verb περιτέμνησθε can be rendered as passive¹⁰⁷ or middle.¹⁰⁸ It is more cogent to be taken as passive. Presumably Paul envisaged that the Galatians intended to be circumcised in response to the agitators' persuasion of circumcision. Thus one can paraphrase 5.2b as follows: "if you are circumcised because of the agitators' teaching of circumcision, Christ will not benefit you."

What does it mean that Χριστὸς ὑμᾶς οὐδὲν ὠφελήσει? In order to understand the phrase we need to clarify the meaning of the words Χριστὸς and ὠφελήσει. It seems that Χριστὸς denotes the work and person of Christ, and so means the Christ-event.¹⁰⁹ No doubt it refers specifically to the saving work of Christ, Christ's sacrificial death (1.4; 2.20, 21; 3.1, 13), Christ's coming (3.24; cf. 4.4), Christ's redemption (3.13), and Christ's liberation (5.1; cf. 1.4). The verb ὠφελέω means "gain," "achieve," "benefit," and "help." Predominantly the verb is used in the sense of "benefit" in the New Testament (Matt 16.26; Mark 8.36; Luke 9.25; John 6.63; Rom 2.25; 1 Cor 13.3; 14.6). It is important to note that ὠφελήσει is used of Christ's benefit with regard to salvation.¹¹⁰ Thus Χριστὸς ὑμᾶς οὐδὲν ὠφελήσει means that the Christ-event will be of no benefit to you regarding salvation.

¹⁰⁵ Burton, *Galatians*, 273; Dunn, *Galatians*, 264; Martyn, *Galatians*, 469; Matera, *Galatians*, 181.

¹⁰⁶ That the Galatians had already begun the practice of circumcision is suggested by the fact that they were turning (μετατίθεσθε - present) to a different gospel (1.6). In addition, that they were no longer running well (5.7) indicates that they had already followed the agitators' gospel and thus had started accepting circumcision.

¹⁰⁷ KJV; Dunn, *Galatians*, 264.

¹⁰⁸ NRSV; NIV; REB; JB; most commentators.

¹⁰⁹ I basically follow J. A. Fitzmyer's definition. "The term "Christ-event" is a short way of referring to the complex of decisive moments of the earthly and risen life of Jesus Christ" (*Paul and His Theology* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1989), 59).

¹¹⁰ See M. Rutenfranz, ὠφελέω, *EDNT* 3.511.

When will Christ not be of benefit? The future tense of ὠφελῶ can suggest two possibilities. One is that Paul had in mind the last judgement.¹¹¹ The other is that Paul thinks of the moment that the Galatians get circumcised. The former seems plausible because the future eschaton is in view in 5.5 (ἐλπίδα δικαιοσύνης ἀπεκδεχόμεθα). Nevertheless, the latter is more likely not only because there is no implication of the Parousia or eschatological judgement in this verse but also because the two aorist verbs κατηργήθητε and ἐξεπέσατε in 5.4 suggest that the forfeiture of Christ's benefit begins at the moment that the Galatians get circumcised.¹¹²

In light of the exegesis of 5.2 above, one can paraphrase 5.2 as follows: "if you are circumcised because of the agitators' persuasion to circumcision, in particular the salvific efficacy of circumcision, you would have no salvific benefit from Christ from the moment that you receive circumcision." Thus one can infer from 5.2 that accepting circumcision results in the forfeiture of the benefit of the Christ-event. In terms of rhetorical effect, Paul urged the Galatians to remember the importance of the salvific benefits of the Christ-event before they underwent circumcision (cf. 3.1). Two questions might be raised in relation to the forfeiture of the benefits of Christ. First, what is the implication of the forfeiture of the benefits of Christ for Paul? Second, why is circumcision the cause of forfeiting the benefits of Christ?

Galatians itself does not explain clearly what is the implication of forfeiting the benefits of Christ. But this may be deduced from Paul's description of the past state of the Galatians before they received the benefits of Christ. This can be supported by Paul's conscious descriptions of the past life of the Galatians before receiving the benefits of Christ. Paul contrasts the old life before believing in Christ with the new life after. As their state of the old life Paul speaks of their life under τὰ

¹¹¹ E.g. Betz, *Galatians*, 259, n. 56; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 346; Schlier, *Galater*, 231; Witherington, *Grace*, 367.

¹¹² So rightly Burton, *Galatians*, 273; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 226; Gundry-Volf, *Paul and Perseverance*, 209.

στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου (4.3).¹¹³ Probably he also had in mind that the Galatians were under the curse of the law (3.13),¹¹⁴ and thus outside the realm of God's blessing.¹¹⁵ Paul implies that the Galatians were slaves who cannot inherit the blessings of God (4.7). They did not know God and were enslaved to beings that by nature are not gods (4.8). Therefore, it is legitimate to say that Paul would have implied by the forfeiture of the benefits of Christ that the Galatians returned to the state in which they were χωρὶς Χριστοῦ, ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι τῆς πολιτείας τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ξένοι τῶν διαθηκῶν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας, ἐλπίδα μὴ ἔχοντες καὶ ἄθεοι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ (Eph 2.12).¹¹⁶ In short, the forfeiture of Christ's benefit has several implications. First, it means returning to the life under the law and under the curse of the law. Second, it means to be enslaved by τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου and false gods. Third, it means to become the children of the slave who will not share in the inheritance of Abraham (cf. 4.30). In a word, it means the loss of God's salvation given through Christ and the Spirit.

Why does circumcision forfeit the benefits of Christ? We can best answer this question by clarifying Paul's view of the implication of accepting circumcision. First, accepting circumcision means to deny the sufficiency of Christ for the salvation of Gentiles. If the earlier argument is correct, Paul understood the Galatians' acceptance of circumcision as the acceptance of the validity and saving efficacy of circumcision. He also might have thought that the Galatians wanted to get circumcised because they believed that circumcision is the identity marker of the covenant people and a guarantee of membership of God's people. Probably they believed in the agitators' teaching that the saving work of Christ is insufficient for their salvation and circumcision has to be added. But from Paul's point of view, to

¹¹³ It seems clear that the Galatians were under the power of τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου, for the first-person plural indicates that both Jews and Gentile Christians used to be enslaved under τὰ στοιχεῖα. It is not our aim to discuss the notoriously difficult issue of τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου. For bibliography, see ch. 1, n. 96.

¹¹⁴ The first-person plural in 3.13 indicates that Jew and Gentile believers were under the curse of the law. For details see §2.2.2.1.

¹¹⁵ Dunn, *Galatians*, 176.

¹¹⁶ The authorship of Ephesians is not an issue here. For as M. Zerwick argues, "Whoever may have done the actual writing of the epistle, Paul is the source of the material of the epistle; and

accept circumcision would mean that the saving work of Christ is not sufficient for the salvation of Gentiles. If the Galatians thought that circumcision is effective and profitable for their salvation, then Christ died needlessly (cf. 2.21). Hence to accept circumcision was to deny the saving efficacy of Christ's death for the universal salvation of Jew and Gentile (3.28). It nullifies the liberating work of Christ (5.1). In short, circumcision denies the saving significance of the Christ-event,¹¹⁷ it changes the basis of salvation from Christ to circumcision.¹¹⁸

Second, to accept circumcision means to deny the grace of God manifested in and through Christ and the Spirit.¹¹⁹ God granted the Galatians a new way to become the children of God not through circumcision but through Christ and the Spirit (4.1-7). God sent his Son in order to redeem Jews and Gentiles, so that they might receive adoption as children of God (4.4-5). God also sent the Spirit to make them the children of God (4.6-7). For Paul, the Galatians' acceptance of circumcision means to change the ground of salvation from God's grace to circumcision because they would then be depending not on God's grace through Christ and the Spirit but on circumcision for their salvation. Paul says to the Galatians who attempt to get circumcised that they were deserting God (1.6). He also admonishes them (3.1-5) because their acceptance of circumcision means a denial of the sufficiency of God's grace through the Spirit (3.3-5; 4.6). In short, circumcision nullifies the grace of God manifested through Christ and the Spirit.

To sum up: Paul seeks to persuade the Galatians not to undergo circumcision by warning of its disastrous consequence, i.e. the forfeiture of Christ's benefits. He wants them to recognise that circumcision leads to the loss of God's salvation given through Christ and the Spirit because to accept circumcision means to deny the

it can be read with the other Pauline writings as a part of a single body of Christian teaching" (*The Epistle to the Ephesians* (London: Burns & Oates, 1969), 8).

¹¹⁷ Cf. Amadi-Azuogu, *Paul*, 299-300; Betz, *Galatians*, 259; Esler, *Galatians*, 73; Saldanha, "The Concept of Freedom in Galatians," 170-172.

¹¹⁸ Dunn ("Circumcision," 88) writes, "to accept the necessity of circumcision shifted the grounds for their redemption to membership of a people and made their previous commitment to Christ (in baptism) a pointless rite (5.4)."

¹¹⁹ So I. H. Marshall, *Kept by the Power of God* (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, Inc., 1969), 110.

saving work of Christ and God's saving grace, by which he attempts to persuade them to reject circumcision.

2. 2. 1. 2. **Becoming** ὀφειλέτης ὅλον τὸν νόμον ποιῆσαι

The second reason for Paul's opposition to the circumcision of the Galatians is given in 5.3. Paul testifies to the Galatians, παντὶ ἀνθρώπῳ περιτεμνομένῳ ὅτι ὀφειλέτης ἐστὶν ὅλον τὸν νόμον ποιῆσαι. What is the force of this argument? There are various views on the issue. Some scholars suggest that Paul was simply exposing the deceitful tactics of the agitators in order that his readers might not be deceived by the agitators' teaching.¹²⁰ Some think that Paul warns the Galatians not to embark on the wrong way of salvation, i.e. "legalism," not only because the whole law cannot be kept because of human inability to obey the whole law but also because accepting circumcision results in the curse of the law (3.10).¹²¹ In recent years, several interpreters argue that since the Galatians recognised the implications of accepting circumcision somewhat naively, Paul was reminding them of the fact that they must face realistically the implication of accepting circumcision, that is, obedience to the whole law.¹²² Dunn argues in a distinctive way that Paul was reminding the Galatians of the fact that "what was being demanded of them was not simply a matter of a single act of circumcision, but a whole way of life, a complete assimilation and absorption of any distinctively Gentile identity into the status of proselyte."¹²³ Dunn interprets 5.3 in light of "the typical Jewish mind-set which understood 'doing the law' as the obligation of those within the covenant people, as that which marked out the covenant people, as the way to live within the covenant."¹²⁴ That there is no agreement on the force of Paul's argument in 5.3 justifies a closer investigation of it.

¹²⁰ For the various tactics suggested by commentators, see Dunn "Circumcision," 86.

¹²¹ Bruce, *Galatians*, 230-231; Burton, *Galatians*, 277; Hübner, *Law*, 18-19, 36-39; Fung, *Galatians*, 222-223; Schreiner, "Paul and Perfect Obedience to the Law," 266-268; idem, "'Works of the Law' in Paul," 217-244; F. Thielman, *Paul and the Law* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1994), 130.

¹²² Barclay, *Obeying*, 64; Betz, *Galatians*, 259-261; Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 300; Matera, *Galatians*, 189; Witherington, *Grace*, 368.

¹²³ Dunn, *Galatians*, 267.

¹²⁴ Dunn, *Galatians*, 266; idem, "Circumcision," 87.

In order to understand the force and implication of Paul's argument in 5.3, it is necessary to clarify the following issues and questions: 1) the grammatical function of *πάλιν* in 5.3a; 2) the object of Paul's polemic in 5.3; 3) To what does "the whole law" refer?; 4) What is the implication of "doing the whole law"?; 5) Where does Paul's emphasis fall in 5.3b?; 6) What is the significance of *ὀφειλέτης* in 5.3?

First, what is the grammatical function of *πάλιν* in 5.3a? Does it imply that Paul taught the Galatians about circumcision before?¹²⁵ Or does it refer back to Gal 3.10?¹²⁶ Or does it indicate that Paul repeats the statement of 5.2 for emphasis? The first view is unlikely because it is not clear that Paul was simply restating his previous teaching about circumcision. Moreover, although Paul might have spoken of circumcision in general, it seems unlikely that Paul would have given advice to the Galatians about circumcision in the way now elaborated in Galatians because it was not issue at stake in Galatia when he first met them.¹²⁷ Only after hearing the agitators' teaching on circumcision did they begin to contemplate becoming circumcised. The second view is also implausible because Paul did not deal with the issue of circumcision in the Galatian churches in the previous argument (1.1-5.1). Paul is dealing with the problem of circumcision for the first time in this passage. Although it appears that 3.10 is related to 5.3 in terms of "keeping all the things in the book of the law," 3.10 is not speaking of the problem of circumcision specifically. In our view, the third interpretation is preferable. Paul's usage of the adverb *πάλιν* in Gal 1.9 clearly suggests that Paul is repeating the previous argument (1.8) for emphasis. Moreover, Paul uses *πάλιν* when he repeats the previous statement (2 Cor 11.16; Phil 4.4) and when he quotes similar scriptural passages to

¹²⁵ Some scholars argue that the adverb *πάλιν* is to be understood as being logical rather than being temporal (e.g. Betz, *Galatians*, 259, n. 58). Some say that the adverb indicates that Paul had given the advice at the last meeting with the Galatians (e.g. Burton, *Galatians*, 275; Lietzmann, *Galater*, 37; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 347).

¹²⁶ Barclay, *Obeying*, 64; Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 203; Lührmann, *Galatians*, 81; Howard, *Paul*, 16; T. R. Schreiner, *Law and Its Fulfillment* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 63-64; Watson, *PJG*, 71.

¹²⁷ As noted earlier, the issue of circumcision in Galatia was raised by the agitators. See e.g. Bruce, *Galatians*, 229; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 226; Oepke, *Galater*, 156.

reinforce the previous quotation (Rom 15.10, 11, 12; 1 Cor 3.20). We may justly infer, therefore, that Paul uses *πάλλιν* to reinforce and explain the statement of 5.2.¹²⁸

Second, what is the object of Paul's polemic in 5.3? Is 5.3 a polemic against legalism that the observance of the whole law is necessary for salvation?¹²⁹ Or did Paul attack Second Temple Judaism? Or did Paul argue against simply the agitators' teachings of circumcision? First of all, it is implausible that Paul argues directly against legalistic first century Palestinian Judaism or "covenantal nomism." One can substantiate this by indicating the object of Paul's polemic in Galatians. As most scholars agree, Galatians is a polemic not against first century Palestinian Judaism but against the other gospel of the agitators.¹³⁰ According to Martyn, the rhetorical horizons of Galatians are not two religions but "two Gentile missions."¹³¹ Although Galatians can be situated within the context of the larger struggle among the Jews of the late Second Temple period,¹³² the main rhetorical context of Galatians is not directly related to it. Although Paul's argument concerning the law, promise, Abraham, and the Hagar-Sarah allegory has implications for Second Temple Judaism, they are not linked closely to it because his argument is directed not against Judaism but the other gospel.¹³³ The rhetorical context of Galatians is the inter-Jewish Christian debate between the agitators and Paul. In short, the object of Paul's polemic in Galatians is not Second Temple Judaism but the agitators' "other gospel."¹³⁴ Furthermore, the immediate literary context of 5.3 is closely bound up

¹²⁸ So rightly Bruce, *Galatians*, 229; Dunn, *Galatians*, 265; Fung, *Galatians*, 222; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 226; Martyn, *Galatians*, 469; Matera, *Galatians*, 181; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 347; Witherington, *Grace*, 368.

¹²⁹ Fuller ("Paul and 'the Works of the Law'," 28-42) argues that Paul was attacking the Judaizers' legalistic interpretation of the law. He further developed his view in *Gospel and Law. Contrast or Continuum?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980).

¹³⁰ See n. 5 in this chapter.

¹³¹ Martyn, *Galatians*, 431.

¹³² E.g. The proper zeal for God – D. B. Garlington, "Role Reversal and Paul's Use of Scripture in Galatians 3.10-13," *JSNT* 65 (1997), 91; the inter-Jewish debate on circumcision – R. G. Hall, "Arguing Like an Apocalypse," *NTS* 42 (1996), 440-441.

¹³³ So rightly Martyn, *Galatians*, 433; J. S. Siker, *Disinheriting the Jews* (Louisville: Westminster/JKP, 1991), 28-50.

¹³⁴ Braswell notes that the controversy in Galatians was over the agitators' particularism, not meritorious works ("The Blessing of Abraham' versus 'The Curse of the Law'," 86, n. 39). See also Matera, *Galatians*, 31-32.

with Paul's argument against the agitators' argument for circumcision.¹³⁵ It is fair to say, therefore, that Paul does not argue against law-observant Second Temple Judaism as such in 5.3.

Third, to what does "the whole law" refer? Most interpreters think that it refers to "all the things (commandments) written in the book of the law" (3.10; cf. Jas 2.10).¹³⁶ Hübner argues that it refers to "the individual pronouncements of the law."¹³⁷ Martyn claims that it refers to "the plural Law" which has "the cursing and enslaving voice of the Law."¹³⁸ The first view is preferable because circumcision is a marker to signify total devotion to the observance of the law.¹³⁹ For most Jews the proselyte's act of circumcision signified complete commitment to the observance of the law and the Jewish way of life (Esther 8.17 - LXX; Sir 44.20; Jdth 14.10; Josephus *Vit.* 113, 149; idem, *Ant.* 13.257; 20.39-46, 145-146).

Fourth, what is the implication of "doing the whole law"? Does it imply the obedience of the law in a perfect way?¹⁴⁰ Or does it imply observing everything written in the book of the law without any sense of "perfectionism"?¹⁴¹ The first view seems unlikely. The immediate literary context of 5.3 is not so much concerned with perfect obedience of the entire law as with the fact that circumcision entails keeping the whole law.¹⁴² In recent years, a good number of scholars have argued that Paul does not imply in 5.3 that it is impossible to keep the whole law.¹⁴³ Paul cannot mean that it is impossible to keep the entire law because he speaks in Phil 3.4-6 that he kept the law "without blemish."¹⁴⁴ Moreover, Paul could not be implying the perfect observance of the law for salvation not only because it is

¹³⁵ Martyn (*Galatians*, 470-471) writes, "The instruction in v 3 is thus a polemic tightly focused on the message the Teachers are preaching to Gentiles, not a polemic against Judaism."

¹³⁶ E.g. Burton, *Galatians*, 275; Dunn, *Galatians*, 266; Matera, *Galatians*, 189;

¹³⁷ Hübner, *Law*, 37.

¹³⁸ Martyn, *Galatians*, 471, 503-514. For Martyn "the plural Law" refers to "the Law made up of many commandments" and "the Sinaitic Law."

¹³⁹ P. Borgen, "Debates on Circumcision in Philo and Paul," in *Paul Preaches Circumcision and Pleases Men* (Trondheim: Tapir, 1983), 18. See also Dunn, "Circumcision," 86.

¹⁴⁰ Guthrie, *Galatians*, 129; Schreiner, *Law and Its Fulfillment*, 63-64.

¹⁴¹ Westerholm, "On Fulfilling the Whole Law (Gal. 5.14)," 229-237, [235].

¹⁴² Dunn, *Galatians*, 266; idem, "Circumcision," 87.

¹⁴³ Notably, Cranford, "The Possibility of Perfect Obedience," 242-258; Dunn, *Galatians*, 266-267; Martyn, *Galatians*, 310-311, 470; Sanders, *PLJP*, 27-29.

¹⁴⁴ Betz, *Galatians*, 145; Dunn, *Galatians*, 267; Martyn, *Galatians*, 310.

difficult to imagine that Jews regarded their Jewish way of life as a perfect life but also because the cultic system in the law provided atonement.¹⁴⁵ It is likely, therefore, that “doing the whole law” means to keep all the things written in the book of the law without the sense of perfectionism.

Fifth, where does Paul’s emphasis fall in 5.3b? Is it ὅλον τὸν νόμον or ὀφειλέτης? Most commentators think that emphasis falls on the word “the whole law.”¹⁴⁶ Some think that Paul puts the emphasis on the word ὀφειλέτης.¹⁴⁷ In our view, the latter is preferable. It is to be noted that, since πάλιν is referring back to 5.2, Paul contrasts the fact that Christ benefits with the fact that circumcision makes a debtor, through the intentional word-play between ὠφελήσει and ὀφειλέτης.¹⁴⁸ In other words, the word is chosen carefully to highlight the valuelessness of circumcision in contrast to the benefit of Christ. At the same time, Paul employed the word ὀφειλέτης because he polemicizes against the agitators’ theological rationale that circumcision does benefit (ὠφελεῖ - cf. Rom 2.25).¹⁴⁹ Moreover, that Paul puts the emphasis on the word ὀφειλέτης is indicated by its place at the beginning of ὅτι clause. It is therefore likely that Paul’s emphasis falls on the word ὀφειλέτης.¹⁵⁰

Sixth, what is the significance of ὀφειλέτης in 5.3? Literally ὀφειλέτης refers to the one who owes something to someone (“debtor” - Matt 18.24; Rom 15.27). Sometimes it means “offender” (Luke 13.4) and “sinner” (Matt 6.12). The term occurs four times in the Pauline corpus (Rom 1.14; 8.12; 15.27; Gal 5.3). It is clear that Paul uses the word in the sense of “debtor” in Rom 15.27.¹⁵¹ Figuratively ὀφειλέτης in Rom 1.14 is used in reference to the one who is under obligation to do

¹⁴⁵ Notably, Dunn, *Galatians*, 266-267; idem, “In Search of Common Ground,” 311-313; Howard, *Paul*, 53; Sanders, *PLJP*, 28. *Contra* Das, *Paul*, 163-167.

¹⁴⁶ Notably, Barclay, *Obeying*, 64; Hübner, *Law*, 37; Matera, *Galatians*, 181-182

¹⁴⁷ Howard, *Paul*, 16.

¹⁴⁸ Dunn, *Galatians*, 265; Howard, *Paul*, 16; S. K. Williams, *Galatians* (Abingdon: Nashville, 1997), 136; Witherington, *Grace*, 368.

¹⁴⁹ See M. Wolter, ὀφειλέτης κτλ, *EDNT* 2.550.

¹⁵⁰ Howard (*Paul*, 16) rightly observes, “The emphasis is on the word ‘debtor’ both in that it is the first word in its clause (ὀφειλέτης ἐστὶν ὅλον κτλ) and that it forms a word play with ‘profit’ (ὠφελήσει) of the previous verse.”

¹⁵¹ Paul teaches that the Gentile congregations in Macedonia and Achaia have shared in the spiritual blessings of the saints in Jerusalem and so are debtors to them who ought to share with them material things.

something. Paul calls himself ὀφειλέτης both to Greeks and to barbarians, obliged to preach the gospel to all Gentiles (cf. 1 Cor 9.16b). It is plausible, however, that Paul employed ὀφειλέτης (Gal 5.3) figuratively in view of the implication of “slave.”¹⁵² Paul’s other figurative usage of ὀφειλέτης in Rom 8.12 substantiates the point. In Rom 8.12 Paul employs the word ὀφειλέται to describe people who are subject to “flesh.” Since the word σὰρξ refers to the power-sphere of “the world” (cf. ἐν σαρκὶ - Rom 8.9),¹⁵³ ὀφειλέται connotes those who are enslaved under the power of σὰρξ. Paul seems to relate ὀφειλέται to the power of the flesh to “a spirit of slavery” (8.15). Since Paul understands the law as power,¹⁵⁴ in the same way, ὀφειλέτης ἐστὶν ὄλον τὸν νόμον ποιῆσαι seems to describe those who are subject to the power of the law. This point can be strengthened by the fact that Paul relates circumcision to the slavery of the law. In Gal 2.4 Paul links circumcision to slavery. Probably Paul thought that the “false brothers” who wanted Titus to get circumcised attempted to enslave (καταδουλώσουσιν) Paul and his co-workers to the Mosaic law of circumcision. Probably Paul regarded those who wanted to be circumcised as those who desire to be under the enslaving power of the law (4.21). Furthermore, in light of 5.1 where Paul speaks of freedom from a yoke of slavery of the law, it is intelligible that Paul relates accepting circumcision to submitting to a yoke of slavery of the law. It is likely, therefore, Paul means that those who get circumcised put themselves under a yoke of the slavery of the law (cf. 5.1).

In light of what we have discussed above, we may clarify the force of Paul’s argument in 5.3. It is implausible that Paul was simply exposing the deceitful tactics of the agitators in order that the Galatians might not be deceived by the agitators. As Dunn rightly points out, this view fails to account for the fact that “Only circumcision could ensure membership of ‘the circumcision,’ but precisely as the

¹⁵² Howard (*Paul*, 16) rightly argues, “For Paul, to be debtor is to be in bondage.” Bruce (*Galatians*, 231) also notes, “Being obliged to keep the law, in part or in whole, is for such people a return to bondage under the στοιχεῖα (4.9).”

¹⁵³ Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 492; Moo, *Romans*, 494.

¹⁵⁴ It is generally recognised that the preposition ὑπὸ νόμον (Gal 3.23; 4.4, 5, 21; 5.18; Rom 6.14-15; 1 Cor 9.20) denotes “under the power of the law.” See e.g. Dunn, *TPA*, 141-142; Hong, *Law*, 156-161; Martyn, *Galatians*, 370-371; Moo, *Romans*, 389. Paul’s perception of the law as

defining act of commitment to the whole, as the climax of a wholly judaized life.”¹⁵⁵ Moreover, this view fails to pay attention to the fact that the agitators required the Galatians to observe the law (2.16, 21; 3.11, 18, 21; 5.4).¹⁵⁶ Nor is it likely that Paul warns the Galatians not to embark on the wrong way of salvation, i.e. “legalism,” not only because the whole law cannot be kept because of human inability to obey the whole law but also because accepting circumcision results in the curse of the law.¹⁵⁷ Rather, the point of Paul’s argument is not the warning not to embark on the wrong way of salvation, (i.e. “legalism”) but the rejection of the agitators’ teaching concerning the salvific efficacy and benefit of circumcision.

It seems plausible that Paul was reminding the Galatians, ignorant of the significance of accepting circumcision, of the fact that they must face realistically the implication of accepting circumcision, that is, obedience to the whole law. For instance, Sanders writes, “Paul may very well simply have been reminding his converts that, if they accepted circumcision, the consequence would be that they would have to begin living their lives according to a new set of rules for daily living.”¹⁵⁸ Although Sanders is right that accepting circumcision means to live by the precepts of the law, he fails to explain the significance of the word ὀφειλέτης as observed earlier.

What is in view, rather, is that, reinforcing (“again” – 5.3) the point of 5.2 that every man who become circumcised by the agitators’ persuasion forfeits the benefits of Christ, circumcision results in another fatal consequence, that is, to become the slave of the law (i.e. enslaved proselytes).¹⁵⁹ He implies that accepting

power also is indicated by that the law brought condemnation of sin (Rom 4.15), rules (Rom 7.1), and has a cursing power (Gal 3.10, 13).

¹⁵⁵ Dunn, “Circumcision,” 87.

¹⁵⁶ While scholars have debated whether the agitators demanded obedience to the law as a whole or partially, there is little dispute that they claimed that the Galatians should observe the requirements of Torah for the full status as God’s people, for Paul’s argument against justification through the law (the works of the law) testifies to this point. See e.g. Barclay, *Obeying*, 60-72; Hong, *Law*, 107-109; Howard, *Paul*, 19; Longenecker, *Triumph*, 30-33.

¹⁵⁷ Pace Bruce, *Galatians*, 230-231; Burton, *Galatians*, 277; Hübner, *Law*, 18-19, 36-39; Fung, *Galatians*, 222-223; Räisänen, *Paul*, 94-95; Schreiner, “Paul and Perfect Obedience to the Law,” 266-268; Thielman, *Paul and the Law*, 130.

¹⁵⁸ Sanders, *PLJP*, 29.

¹⁵⁹ So rightly Howard, *Paul*, 19.

circumcision means to transfer from the state of solvency to a bankrupt state. Paul's argument on the valuelessness of circumcision reaches its climax in his fierce attack on the agitators, suggesting that circumcision is equal to "mutilation" (5.12). In light of the Jewish tradition that excludes those who have bodily defects from the assembly of the Lord (Lev 21.20; Deut 23.1) and the temple and city (11QTemple 45.12-14), he means that circumcision brings exclusion instead of inclusion.¹⁶⁰ The implication would be that if the Galatians accept circumcision, it would lead to this exclusion from the people of God, i.e. loss of salvation. The aim of Paul's violent attack is to oppose and nullify the agitators' theological rationale for circumcision, in particular the salvific efficacy and benefits of circumcision. In short, since the Galatians recognised the implication of accepting circumcision so naively, Paul was warning the Galatians of the fact that a single act of circumcision entails a complete transfer of the identity of the children of God who enjoy the benefits of Christ (e.g. adoption, freedom) into the status of the slaves of the law (i.e. enslaved proselytes) who must obey the whole law under the power of the law. This is rhetorical force of Paul's argument in 5.3.

2. 2. 2. The Benefit (Value) of Christ

In order to understand why Paul vehemently opposes circumcision, we must go to the other side of the antithesis, i.e. Christ. As noted earlier, Paul contrasts circumcision and Christ in terms of "benefit" in 5.2-3; the valuelessness of circumcision is contrasted with the benefit of Christ. In this section we will attempt to expound Paul's idea of Christ's benefit upon which Paul argues against circumcision. From a rhetorical perspective, Paul designed to solve the issue of the circumcision of the Galatians by reminding them of the benefits of Christ that he elaborated in the previous section (1.1-5.1).¹⁶¹ The theme of benefits of Christ seems to play the important role as Paul's persuasive strategy and theological rationale for

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Dunn, *Galatians*, 283; G. Ebeling, *The Truth of the Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 245; J. H. Neyrey, "Bewitched in Galatia," *CBQ* 50 (1988), 83.

¹⁶¹ The benefit of Christ is a summary of various soteriological effects of the Christ-event that Paul brought up in 1.1-5.1.

his opposition to the circumcision of the Galatians who were attempting to validate the salvific efficacy and benefits of circumcision.

In order to investigate the significance of Christ's benefit for Paul's opposition to the circumcision of the Galatians, first of all, we need know what the benefits of Christ are in Galatians. They refer no doubt to the soteriological effects of the Christ-event: justification comes to the Gentiles not through the law but in and through Christ (2.15-21); Christ redeemed believers from the curse of the law (3.13) and the power of the law (4.4-5); through Christ's death the blessing of Abraham comes to the Gentiles (3.14); there is no distinction between Jewish believers and Gentile but oneness in Christ (3.28; cf. 5.6; 6.15); the Galatians become Abraham's offspring and heirs (3.29) and the children of God in Christ Jesus (3.26); believers receive adoption as sons through Christ (4.5); Christ gives freedom from the slavery of the law (5.1, cf. 2.4).¹⁶² Christ gave himself for forgiveness of sins (1.4) and deliverance from the present evil age (1.4), through Christ's redemptive death believers receive the promise of the Spirit (3.14). Thus the salvific benefits of Christ in Galatians are righteousness, redemption, the blessing of Abraham, adoption and divine sonship, oneness between Jew and Gentile, Abraham's offspring and heirs, freedom, forgiveness of sins, deliverance from the present evil age, and the promise of the Spirit. In what follows we shall investigate the meaning of each benefit and the significance of each benefit for both Paul's opposition to the Galatians' circumcision and the inclusion of the Gentiles into the people of God.¹⁶³

2. 2. 2. 1. Redemption

Paul says, Χριστὸς ἡμᾶς ἐξηγόρασεν ἐκ τῆς κατάρας τοῦ νόμου γενόμενος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν κατάρα (3.13a). In 4.5 Paul also says, ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός, γενόμενον ὑπὸ νόμον ἵνα τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον ἐξαγοράσῃ.¹⁶⁴ For Paul redemption is an effect of the Christ-event, i.e. Christ's death

¹⁶² Unfortunately, Fitzmyer does not pay sufficient attention to the effects of the Christ-event in Galatians. He notes only two effects in Galatians: justification and freedom (*Paul*, 59-71).

¹⁶³ We shall deal with the benefit of righteousness in §3.2. and §6.3., forgiveness of sins and deliverance from the present evil age in §7.3.1., and the promise of the Spirit in §5.2.2.

¹⁶⁴ The subject of the verb ἐξαγοράζειν could be either God or Christ (his Son). The latter is preferable because Paul probably was referring to Christ's redemption that he said earlier (3.13).

on the cross and the coming of Christ (Rom 3.24; 1 Cor 1.30; cf. Col 1.14; Eph 1.7).¹⁶⁵ Paul employs the verb ἐξαγοράζειν to describe the universal redemptive act of Christ. The imagery is of the ransoming of a captive or prisoner of war from slavery. The background of Paul's language of redemption is probably the OT – God's redemption of Israel from slavery in Egypt (Deut 7.8; 9.26; 13.6; 15.5; Pss 74.2; 77.16) and the Babylonian captivity (Isa 41.14; 43.1, 14; 44.22-24; 52.3; 54.5).¹⁶⁶ If Scott's interpretation of ἐξαγοράζειν (4.5) against the background of the "Second Exodus" is right,¹⁶⁷ then it denotes redemption from the enslaving power of the law (ὑπὸ νόμον).

Paul thinks that Christ brought "us" redemption from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us on the cross.¹⁶⁸ What is the reference of the first-person plural in Gal 3.13? It has been disputed whether the pronoun "us" refers to Jewish Christians or Jewish and Gentile Christians.¹⁶⁹ Paul employs the first-person plural "we" to refer to at least three distinct groups in Galatians.¹⁷⁰ First, in reference to both himself and his co-workers (1.8, 9; 2.4, 5, 9, 10). Second, in reference to Jews (esp. Paul and Peter) over against Gentiles (2.15, 16, 17). Third, Paul normally uses the pronoun to refer to both Jewish and Gentile believers (esp. Paul and the Galatians – 1.3, 4; 3.13, 14, 23, 24, 25; 4.3, 5, 6, 31; 5.1, 5, 25, 26; 6.9, 14, 18). The first-person plural ἡμεῖς (3.13) probably refers to both Jews and Gentiles.¹⁷¹ The equation

¹⁶⁵ Unfortunately, Fitzmyer fails to pay attention to redemption from the curse of the law as an important aspect of Christ's redemption. (*Paul*, 66-67).

¹⁶⁶ But A. Deissmann (*Light From the Ancient Near East* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1965), 319-330) attempted to demonstrate that the ancient legal custom of "sacred manumission" as the model for the Pauline doctrine of redemption. According to the sacral manumission of a slave, the slave himself pays the ransom money. But for Paul the different fact is that Christ pays the price and Christ's death is the method of the redemption. Thus it is unlikely that Paul is dependent on Greek sacral manumission. Cf. R. Dabelstein, ἐξαγοράζω, *EDNT* 2.1; K. Kertelege, ἀπολύτρωσις, *EDNT* 1.138-139. For a brief survey of debate, see Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 232, n. 101.

¹⁶⁷ J. M. Scott, *Adoption as Sons of God* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1992), 172-174.

¹⁶⁸ We will not explore the connection between Christ having died the accursed death of the cross and "our" having been redeemed from the law's curse for it is beyond the scope of the present study. For the study see, Brondos, "The Cross and the Curse," 3-32.

¹⁶⁹ For bibliography, see Betz, *Galatians*, 148, n. 101. For a detailed discussion, see Martyn, *Galatians*, 334-346.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. S. Byrskog, "Co-senders, Co-authors and Paul's Use of the First Person Plural," *ZNW* 87 (1996), 238-240. For four different uses of "we" in the Pauline letters, see pp. 232-233.

¹⁷¹ Cf. Bruce, *Galatians*, 167; Dunn, *Galatians*, 176; Howard, *Paul*, 59; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 121; Martyn, *Galatians*, 317; Räisänen, *Paul*, 19-20. *Contra* Betz, *Galatians*, 148;

between ἡμᾶς (3.13) and “we” (λάβωμεν - 3.14) suggests that those under the curse of the law are identical with those who receive the promise of the Spirit. There is little doubt that “we” (λάβωμεν - 3.14) refers to both Jewish believers and Gentile.¹⁷² Given ἡμᾶς (3.13) is equivalent to “we” (λάβωμεν - 3.14), therefore, ἡμᾶς includes the Gentiles. Paul’s inclusion of the emphatic LXX insertions πᾶς and πᾶσιν in his quotation of Deut 27.26 (3.10) also implies that Paul has in mind Jews and Gentiles with ἡμᾶς.¹⁷³ It is thus fair to say that Gentiles are under the curse of the law. And also Christ redeemed τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον (4.5). It is notoriously difficult to discern what the reference of οἱ ὑπὸ νόμον is. Since we shall deal with its reference later (§4.2. n. 68), we may simply assume here that οἱ ὑπὸ νόμον refers to both Jew and Gentile.

Christ’s redemption of Gentiles from the curse of the law is significant for Paul’s opposition to circumcision. The agitators might have argued that it is necessary for the Gentile Galatians to be circumcised to secure deliverance from God’s curse, for, according to the agitators, circumcision has power to achieve redemption (from God’s curse) as a redemptive rite which is testified in the Jewish tradition of Zipporah’s circumcision of her son (§2.1.3.1.). In contrast Paul argues that Christ’s redemption from the curse of the law causes Gentile believers to participate in the blessing of Abraham. Christ’s redemption means that it is unnecessary for those who received the benefit of redemption to accept circumcision for redemption. Moreover, Christ’s redemption from the enslaving power of the law is another aspect of Paul’s rationale by which he argues that the recipients of redemption of Christ must not undergo circumcision. For Paul in contrast to the fact that circumcision leads the circumcised to a life under the slavery of the law that circumcision entails and thus makes them the slaves of the law, Christ’s redemption

Donaldson, “The ‘Curse of the Law’ and the Inclusion of the Gentiles,” 94-112; Kruse, *Paul*, 86-89; Longenecker, *Triumph*, 92; Matera, *Galatians*, 120; Witherington, *Grace*, 236-238; N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 143. They think “us” referring to Jews or Jewish Christians. For the different views, Betz, *Galatians*, 148, n. 101; Fung, *Galatians*, 148-149; Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 62.

¹⁷² This point can be confirmed by the fact that “we” (λάβωμεν - 3.14) includes Jewish and Gentile believers in light of the parallelism of the two ἵνα clauses in 3.14 – “we” (λάβωμεν - 3.14) includes Gentiles (εἰς τὰ ἔθνη - 3.14). It is also clear that in 3.14 Paul had in mind the Galatians’ reception of the Spirit (3.1-5). Pace Wright (*Climax*, 143) who take “we” to mean Jewish Christians.

¹⁷³ Cf. Bruce, *Galatians*, 167.

grants Gentile believers “adoption”¹⁷⁴ (4.5) and thus have them become the sons of God. Thus for Paul circumcision is useless and ineffective because Christ’s redemption is sufficient and nullified the salvific efficacy of circumcision effecting redemption to the circumcised. On the basis of this conviction Paul urges the Galatians attracted by the salvific benefits of circumcision to reject circumcision.

2. 2. 2. 2. The Blessing of Abraham

Paul says that Christ redeemed us (Gentile and Jewish believers) from the curse of the law ἵνα εἰς τὰ ἔθνη ἡ εὐλογία τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ γένηται ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (3.14). By means of Christ’s redemptive work (death on the cross) the blessing of Abraham comes to the Gentiles in Christ Jesus.¹⁷⁵ What is the reference of the blessing of Abraham? There is no agreement among scholars. Several commentators hold that it refers to the gift of the Spirit.¹⁷⁶ A number of commentators reckon that Paul employs the phrase to refer to the blessing of justification.¹⁷⁷ On the basis of Gen 22.17-18 and 28.4, Matera seems to think that it refers to the fact that Abraham becomes the father of innumerable descendants.¹⁷⁸ The disagreement among commentators requires us to clarify what is meant by the blessing of Abraham.

One can find “the blessing of Abraham” in Gen 22.17-18, Gen 26.3-4, and Gen 28.3-4. For example, Gen 22.17-18 says, “I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice” (NRSV). The blessing of Abraham has something do with the blessing of innumerable descendants, the blessing of the land, and the blessing of all the nations of the earth through the offspring of Abraham (cf. Gen 26.3-4; 28.3-

¹⁷⁴ For the theme of adoption, see §2.2.2.3.

¹⁷⁵ We shall deal with the relationship between “the blessing of Abraham” and “in Christ Jesus” later (§3.2.2.2.).

¹⁷⁶ Bruce, *Galatians*, 168; R. A. Cole, *Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 144; Dunn, *Galatians*, 180; W. Hansen, *Galatians* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1994), 96; Ridderbos, *Galatia*, 128.

¹⁷⁷ Burton, *Galatians*, 175; Fung, *Galatians*, 151; Hong, *Law*, 131; Williams, *Galatians*, 94; Witherington, *Grace*, 228.

¹⁷⁸ Matera, *Galatians*, 120.

4). But the blessing of Abraham (3.14) must be understood in light of Gal 3.8-9 because the passage (the immediate literary context of 3.14) deals with the theme.¹⁷⁹ Notably, Witherington thinks that the blessing of Abraham refers to “inclusion of the nations in the people of God by faith.”¹⁸⁰ If so, the blessing of Abraham in 3.14 is not so much related either to the fact that the descendants of Abraham shall possess land or that Abraham becomes the father of innumerable descendants.¹⁸¹ Rather it is closely bound up with the fact that “all the tribes of the earth”¹⁸² (Gen 12.3; 28.14) shall be blessed in you (Gen 12.3).¹⁸³ What then is the blessing that the Gentiles are receiving in Abraham? To put it another way, what is the blessing with which those of faith are blessed together with Abraham? Paul relates the blessing to justification of the Gentiles by faith. God’s justification of the Gentiles by faith fulfils the promise that all the Gentiles shall be blessed in Abraham (3.8). Moreover, the blessing that those of faith share with Abraham is intimately related to righteousness that Abraham received by faith (3.6, 9). For Paul, then, the blessing of Abraham refers to justification of the Gentiles¹⁸⁴ and it comes to the Gentiles in Christ and through the redemptive death of Christ.

What is the significance of the blessing of Abraham for Paul’s rejection of the Galatians’ circumcision?¹⁸⁵ In contrast to the agitators’ argument that Gentiles could gain access to the blessing of Abraham through circumcision, Paul argues that the Galatians could participate in the blessing of Abraham through Christ’s death that is its ultimate source. Thus the Gentiles do not need to adopt a Jewish identity and life-style and enter the covenant community through circumcision in order to be included into the community of God’s people.

¹⁷⁹ Burton, *Galatians*, 175; Dunn, *Galatians*, 178; Fung, *Galatians*, 151.

¹⁸⁰ Witherington, *Grace*, 240.

¹⁸¹ *Pace Matera*.

¹⁸² Compare “all the nations of the earth” (Gen 18.18; 22.18; 26.4).

¹⁸³ So Betz, *Galatians*, 152; Martyn, *Galatians*, 322.

¹⁸⁴ Williams (*Galatians*, 94) writes, “the ‘blessing of Abraham’ is the new status of being in God’s favor, justified (3.6-9).”

¹⁸⁵ For the significance of the blessing of Abraham in Christ for Paul’s rejection of justification in the law, see §3.2.2.2.

2. 2. 2. 3. Adoption and Divine sonship

It is to be noted that the divine adoption (υιοθεσία) is one of the purposes (or consequences) of God's sending of his Son (ἵνα τὴν υιοθεσίαν ἀπολάβωμεν - 4.5).¹⁸⁶ The term υιοθεσία is unique to the Pauline corpus (Rom 8.15, 23; 9.4; Gal 4.5; Eph 1.5).¹⁸⁷ Scholars have debated the meaning and background of the term. Most commentators think that the term is to be seen against a Greco-Roman background since it is not found in the LXX or other Jewish sources.¹⁸⁸ But some argue that it is to be understood according to an Old Testament/Jewish background.¹⁸⁹ While one cannot rule out that the term was drawn from Paul's experience of Roman law and custom, the conclusion of Scott is preferable: "Hence, while the context of υιοθεσία in Gal. 4.5 gives no reason to suspect a Greco-Roman background for the term, the whole line of argumentation in Gal. 3-4, together with Pauline parallels, leads unambiguously to an Old Testament/Jewish background of adoption for the term (cf. Rom 9.4), and particularly to the 2 Sam. 7.14 tradition (cf. 2 Cor. 6.18)."¹⁹⁰ He argues that 2 Sam 7.14 is essential to Paul's usage of υιοθεσία.¹⁹¹ In particular, he argues that υιοθεσία in Gal 4.5 "should be interpreted in light of the Jewish expectation of divine adoptive sonship in the messianic time based on 2 Sam 7.14."¹⁹² Moreover, scholars debate whether Paul's use of υιοθεσία refers to the act

¹⁸⁶ C. F. D. Moule observes, "the Semitic mind was notoriously unwilling to draw a sharp dividing-line between purpose and consequence" (*An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: CUP, 1953), 142). In my view, both are intended.

¹⁸⁷ The word does not occur in the LXX and in other NT writings.

¹⁸⁸ Dunn, *Galatians*, 217; J. D. Hester, *Paul's Concept of Inheritance* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1968), 57-59; F. Lyall, "Roman Law in the Writings of Paul – Adoption," *JBL* 88 (1969), 458-466; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 172; Moo, *Romans*, 501.

¹⁸⁹ B. Byrne, *Sons of God-Seed of Abraham* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1979), 79-80, 99-100; Scott, *Adoption*.

¹⁹⁰ Scott, *Adoption*, 268. For a thorough study of an Old Testament/Jewish background, see 61-117. For Byrne's criticism of Scott's view, see B. Byrne, "Review of *Adoption as Sons of God* (J. M. Scott)," *JTS* 44 (1992), 288-294.

¹⁹¹ Scott, *Adoption*, 121-266.

¹⁹² Scott, *Adoption*, 186.

of adoption or the status of “sonship.”¹⁹³ Here too Scott convincingly argues that υιοθεσία in Gal 4.5 refers primarily to God’s act of adoption as sons.¹⁹⁴

It is significant for our present study that all the Galatian believers were receiving the benefit of adoption as a result of Christ’s coming. It is noteworthy that the inclusive “we” (ἀπολάβωμεν) are the recipients of adoption. It is almost certain that “we” in 4.5 refers to both Jewish and Gentile believers (in particular Paul and the Galatians) since it is clear that the Galatians are regarded as heirs (3.29; 4.7) and sons of God (3.26, 4.6, 7).¹⁹⁵ So there can be little dispute that Paul thinks of the Gentile believers as the recipients of adoption as sons of God and as enjoying the privilege of divine adoptive sonship. This is striking because υιοθεσία has been regarded as a prerogative of Israel (Rom 9.4). And also the privilege of adoption was given particularly to the proselyte (e.g. Abraham - Philo *Sobr* 56; and Aseneth - *Joseph Aseneth* 12).¹⁹⁶ But Paul argues that Israel’s unique privilege was granted universally to non-proselyte Gentiles by means of Christ, without their becoming proselytes (Gal 4.5; cf. Rom 9.26; Eph 1.5).¹⁹⁷ In short, Paul argues in 4.5 that “we”

¹⁹³ Some argue that the term denotes the act of adoption (e.g. Scott, *Adoption*, 3-57) or the event of adoption as a son (Martyn, *Galatians*, 390). But Byrne prefers the status of sonship (*Sons*, 215).

¹⁹⁴ Scott, *Adoption*, 175-177.

¹⁹⁵ So rightly Dunn, *Galatians*, 217; Martyn, *Galatians*, 390; Matera, *Galatians*, 150; Pace B. Longenecker (*Triumph*, 92), R. Longenecker (*Galatians*, 164, 172), and Witherington (*Grace*, 288) who think “we” referring to Jews, specifically Christian Jews. Note that Paul does not contrast “we” (Jews) with “you” (the Gentile Galatians) in 4.4-7 because no contrast can be ascertained in the sudden shift from “we” (4.5b, 4.6b) to “you” (4.6a, 4.7a). Rather Paul grounds a statement about the sonship of the Galatians (4.6-7 - “you”) on a statement about the sonship of Christians including Jewish and Gentile believers (4.5 - “we”). So Bruce (*Galatians*, 196) states, “The oscillation between ‘we’ (ἡμεῖς . . . ἀπολάβωμεν v 5; cf. εἰς τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν, v 6), ‘you’ (Ὅτι δέ ἐστε υἱοί, v 6) and ‘thou’ (οὐκέτι εἶ δούλος, v 7), attests the inclusive emphasis of Paul’s wording and argument (as in 3:23-26).” Furthermore the view that regards “we” referring to Jews, specifically Christian Jews is hard to explain the inconsistency between “we” (4.5 - Jews) and ἡμῶν (4.6) referring to both Jewish and Gentile believers. It is very difficult to imagine that Paul spoke to two different groups in the same breath (cf. Byrskog, “Co-senders, Co-authors and Paul’s Use of the First Person Plural,” 239, n. 46). This view is also not in accord with Gal 3.26 (Πάντες γὰρ υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἐστε - referring to both Jewish and Gentile believers) and Rom 8.16 where Paul says that the Gentile Romans (ἐλάβετε - Rom 8.16) received the Spirit of adoption.

¹⁹⁶ For a thorough study of divine adoption of the proselyte in Philo *Sobr*. 56, see Scott, *Adoption*, 88-96.

¹⁹⁷ Byrne, *Sons*, 215-219; Scott, *Adoption*, 61-117. God’s adoption of Gentile believers through Jesus Christ is clear in Eph 1.5 (προορισίας ἡμᾶς εἰς υιοθεσίαν διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς αὐτόν, κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ).

Jewish and Gentiles believers receive the “adoption” as an effect of God’s sending his Son (Christ’s coming) and have the privilege of divine adoptive sonship.

Moreover, Paul says that the Galatians are the sons of God (Πάντες γὰρ υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἐστε διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ - 3.26). He proclaims that the Gentile Galatians are the sons of God (cf. Rom 8.14, 19; 9.26). This is striking because Israel is characterised as God’s “son” or “sons” in the Old Testament (Exod 4.22; Deut 14.1; Isa 43.6; Jer 3.19; 31.9; Hos 1.10; 11.1) and other Jewish literature (*Jub.* 1.24-25; *Pss. Sol.* 17.27; *Sir* 36.17; *4 Ezra* 6.58). From a Jewish perspective Gentiles are normally excluded from the status of sonship because Yahweh is the father of Israel only.¹⁹⁸ As noted earlier, the only way for Gentiles to gain access to the divine sonship is by becoming members of the family of God through circumcision. But Paul argues that in Christ Jesus (ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ) and through πίστις Gentile believers receive the status of the sons of God (3.26). The phrase ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ indicates that Christ is the realm where the divine sonship is available.¹⁹⁹ Paul argues that the Galatians can become the sons of God when they participate in the sphere of Christ by means of baptism into Christ and identification with Christ (3.27).²⁰⁰

What is the significance of υἱοθεσία and divine sonship for Paul’s opposition to circumcision? As noted earlier, the agitators probably argued that Gentile believers could receive divine adoption and divine adoptive sonship by means of circumcision because it is a prerogative of circumcised Israel (Rom 9.4). They might also have argued that the Jewish privilege of adoption and divine sonship could be available to the circumcised proselyte, for circumcision is an identity marker of and admittance requirement into the people of God. But Paul argued that adoption as sons has been given to all (Jews and Gentiles) believers in and through Christ. In other words, the two benefits are no longer exclusive prerogatives given to Jews and the circumcised proselyte because the Christ-event made adoption universally

¹⁹⁸ Yahweh is described as Israel’s father (cf. Deut 14.1; Isa 43.6; Hos 2.1 (LXX); Wis 5.5). For a thorough study, see Byrne, *Sons*, 9-70.

¹⁹⁹ For the discussion concerning the rendering of the phrase ἐν Χριστῷ as “in the sphere of Christ,” see §3.3.1.

²⁰⁰ Paul understands the Gentiles’ becoming children of God as the fulfilment of Hosea’s prophecy (Hos 1.10) in Romans 9.26.

available to believers (Jewish and Gentile). As Dunn perceptively notes, sonship in the sphere of Christ implies that “‘Christ Jesus’ has replaced ethnic Israel as the social context of this sonship.”²⁰¹ Thus the divine adoption of all believers as sons in and through Christ nullifies and denies the adoption through circumcision. Moreover, Paul says that the Galatians are sons of God because they have been baptised into Christ.²⁰² If Paul refers to the act of baptism, baptism is a ritual of the Gentile believers’ changed identity from “aliens” to the children of God.²⁰³ This indicates that the valid ritual for divine sonship is not circumcision but baptism into Christ. In short, God’s adoption of Gentile believers as sons in and through Christ (3.26; 4.4-5; cf. Eph 1.5), apart from the law and circumcision, nullifies the salvific efficacy of circumcision which effects sonship to Jews and proselytes. This is a key part of Paul’s rationale for his opposition to the circumcision of the Galatians.

2. 2. 2. 4. “Oneness” between Jewish Believers and Gentile

Paul says, οὐκ ἔνι Ἰουδαῖος οὐδὲ Ἕλληνας, . . . πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἰς ἓστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (3.28). In contrast to the agitators’ distinction between Jewish believers and Gentile (cf. 4.17; 5.6; 6.15),²⁰⁴ Paul claims that there is no distinction between the two groups (5.6; 6.15); both groups are one in Christ Jesus. As a result of God’s saving action in Christ,²⁰⁵ Jewish believers and Gentile believers became one family of God as children of God in Christ Jesus (3.26). Probably Paul had in

²⁰¹ Dunn, *Galatians*, 202.

²⁰² The preposition γὰρ (3.27) indicates that baptism into Christ is the ground of becoming sons of God.

²⁰³ For Paul’s understanding of baptism in Gal 3.27-29 as a ritual of changed identity, see Christiansen, *The Covenant*, 311-318.

²⁰⁴ This point is testified by the agitators’ requirement of the Galatians’ circumcision. If the agitators believed that Jewish believers and Gentile are one people of God, they would not have demanded the circumcision of the Galatians for the inclusion of the Galatians into the people of God.

²⁰⁵ Paul’s theological reason for the equality and unity between the two groups is based on God’s justification of Jews and Gentiles in Christ (§3.2) and God’s universal saving grace (§4.2). If this is true, D. Boyarin’s argument that Paul’s conviction of the equality and sameness was “motivated by a Hellenistic desire for the One, which among other things produced an ideal of a universal human essence, beyond difference and hierarchy” should be disputed (*A Radical Jew* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 7). For an excellent response to Boyarin, see J. M. G. Barclay, “‘Neither Jew nor Greek’,” in *Ethnicity and the Bible*, edited by M. G. Brett (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), 209-214.

mind one body of Christ (Rom 12.5; 1 Cor 12.13, 27).²⁰⁶ With the concept of “oneness in Christ” Paul redefines the social relationship between Jews and Gentiles. As Horrell rightly notes, “it is clear that identity is redefined and social relationships restructured by a new defining identity ἐν Χριστῷ. This shared identity – and this identity alone – defines the boundary between insider and outsider, and establishes the basis for intimacy and commensality.”²⁰⁷

What is the significance of “oneness in Christ” for Paul’s opposition to circumcision? Paul contrasts circumcision with Christ as two antithetical identity markers.²⁰⁸ Circumcision is the fundamental identity factor for Jewish identity (§2.1.1.). On the contrary, for Paul, Christ is axiomatic for Christian identity (cf. Col 3.10-11). According to Paul, the group-dividing function of circumcision has ceased because Christ abrogates the function of circumcision as an identity marker of God’s people by making Jewish believers and Gentile the same offspring of Abraham in and through Christ (3.28-29). Circumcision is no longer necessary because the function of circumcision as an initiation rite into the covenant community has been abrogated by oneness in Christ (cf. 5.6; 6.15). “Oneness in Christ” nullifies the function of circumcision in separating Jews from Gentiles so sharply. Christian unity in Christ means that Jewish identity as “circumcision” must cede to the common Christian identity as the church of God.²⁰⁹ In short, Paul sees Christ (ἐν Χριστῷ) as the defining centre of the believer’s identity, not circumcision or Torah.²¹⁰ Thus Gentile believers need not get circumcised in order to enter the covenant community because in the sphere of Christ they are neither aliens nor outsiders of the covenant community but are already the members of the eschatological people of God.

2. 2. 2. 5. Abraham’s Offspring and Heirs

Paul says in 3.29, εἰ δὲ ὑμεῖς Χριστοῦ, ἄρα τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ σπέρμα ἐστέ κατ’ ἐπαγγελίαν κληρονόμοι. Taking up the previous phrase ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (3.28),

²⁰⁶ Cf. Betz, *Galatians*, 200-201; Martyn, *Galatians*, 377.

²⁰⁷ D. G. Horrell, “No longer Jew or Greek’,” in *Christology, Controversy and Community*, edited by D. G. Horrell and C. M. Tuckett (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2000), 337.

²⁰⁸ Dunn, “Circumcision,” 92-95.

²⁰⁹ See Holmberg, “Jewish,” 414-416.

²¹⁰ See Donaldson, *Paul*, 298-299; Horrell, “No longer Jew or Greek’,” 321-344.

Paul argues that the Galatians are Abraham's offspring by means of belonging to Christ.²¹¹ The Galatians become part of Christ both by believing in Christ (2.16) and by clothing themselves with Christ through baptism into Christ (3.27).²¹² As a result of that, they can share in the status of Christ who is the singular seed of Abraham (3.16).²¹³ So they become the seeds of Abraham by participating in the unique seed of Abraham (Christ).²¹⁴ Moreover, Paul argues that the Gentile Galatians are heirs who can share in the inheritance of Abraham²¹⁵ because God's promise of blessing to all the Gentiles has been fulfilled (3.8).²¹⁶

The significance of being Abraham's offspring and heirs through participation in Christ for Paul's opposition to circumcision is that it makes it unnecessary and useless to receive circumcision in order to become Abraham's descendants and heirs. In contrast to the agitators' argument that the Galatians could come to share in the status of Abraham's offspring and heirs through circumcision (§2.1.2.), Paul claims that the Galatians have already become the offspring of Abraham and heirs through participation in Christ;²¹⁷ they received the benefit of becoming Abraham's offspring and heirs through belonging to Christ. For Paul, the status of the Gentile Galatian believers was changed from aliens from the covenant community to Abraham's descendants and heirs. Moreover, the benefit of becoming Abraham's offspring and heirs in and through Christ nullifies both the salvific efficacy of circumcision effecting the benefits of Abraham's offspring and heirs to Jews and proselytes and the significance of circumcision as an identity marker of the

²¹¹ Hester, *Inheritance*, 51-57.

²¹² Dunn (*Galatians*, 208) writes, "To believe 'into Christ Jesus' (ii.16), 'to be baptized into Christ' (iii.27), was to become so identified with Christ as to share in his status, not only before God ('sons of God' – iii.26), but also in relation to Abraham, as Abraham's seed and therefore participant in the promise given to Abraham and his seed (iii.16)." Cf. Matera, *Galatians*, 143.

²¹³ For Paul's interpretation of the singular seed of Abraham as Christ, see Dunn, *Galatians*, 183-185.

²¹⁴ As Beale rightly observes, "Paul understands that this Isaiah prophecy (Isa. 54 LXX) began fulfilment in Christ. Gentiles and Jews participate in the blessings promised to Israel in the eschaton by identifying with Jesus, the true Israel and true seed of Abraham" ("Peace and Mercy Upon the Israel of God," 218). See also C. K. Barrett, *Freedom and Obligation* (London: SPCK, 1985), 38.

²¹⁵ Hester, *Inheritance*, 63-67.

²¹⁶ For the argument that "promise" refers to God's promise to bless the nations, see §4.2.2.

²¹⁷ Longenecker, *Triumph*, 128-134.

offspring of Abraham. It is unnecessary, therefore, for those who already experience the benefits of Abraham's offspring and heirs to receive circumcision.

2. 2. 2. 6. Freedom

Paul says that we have freedom in Christ (τὴν ἐλευθερίαν ἡμῶν ἣν ἔχομεν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ - 2.4). And also he says, τῇ ἐλευθερίᾳ ἡμᾶς Χριστὸς ἠλευθέρωσεν (5.1). It is clear that Paul speaks of "freedom" as an effect of the Christ's liberating work. Since it exceeds the scope of the present study to deal with the idea of freedom in Galatians,²¹⁸ it is sufficient to focus on the significance of freedom for Paul's opposition to circumcision. The background of freedom is probably rooted in the Greco-Roman idea of freedom as the social status of Greek and Roman citizens.²¹⁹ In the Pauline corpus the freedom to which Paul refers is that from "sin" (Rom 6.7, 18, 22) and "the law" (Rom 7.3; 8.2; Gal 5.1). In particular Paul talks about the freedom from circumcision and the law in Galatians. Here again freedom is closely bound up with Christ. First, freedom is available in Christ. Paul and his co-workers have their own freedom in Christ (ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ - 2.4b). But "false brothers" tried to enslave them to rob them of their "freedom in Christ" by attempting to circumcise Titus. In other words, maintaining freedom in Christ is Paul's theological rationale for his opposition to the circumcision of Titus. The freedom to which Paul refers seems to be that from circumcision. This is also indicated by Paul's description of his gospel as τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς ἀκροβυστίας. This suggests that Paul's gospel is a circumcision-free gospel for the uncircumcised. Furthermore, Paul urges the Galatians who desire to be subject to the law (4.21) not to submit again to a yoke of slavery of the law, for Christ set them free from the slavery of the law (5.1; cf. Rom 7.3; 8.2).²²⁰ Freedom from the law implies freedom from the obligation of circumcision.

²¹⁸ For a detailed discussion, see Saldanha, "The Concept of Freedom in Galatians."

²¹⁹ Cf. *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, edited by N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard (2nd ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 851-852; Dunn, *Galatians*, 100.

²²⁰ Saldanha ("The Concept of Freedom in Galatians," 127-163) argues that freedom in 5.1 denotes not freedom from the law but the freedom of the sons of God. However, he fails to notice that freedom is Paul's answer to the problem of the Galatians' subjection to the law (4.21). Moreover, if 5.1 is the conclusion of the issue of the Galatians' desire to be under the law which is the subject of 4.21-31, probably freedom in 5.1 refers to the freedom from the law.

The benefit of freedom from the law (5.1) and circumcision (2.4) means that Gentile believers do not need to get circumcised. In other words, since Christ set them free from the commandment of circumcision, it is not obligatory for them to get circumcised in order to enter the covenant. Moreover, the benefit of freedom implies that the status of Gentile Christians has been changed from “children of the slave woman” to “the children of the free woman” (4.31), that is to say, they are the descendants of Abraham. In short, freedom in and through Christ makes circumcision unnecessary and abrogated.

2. 2. 2. 7. Conclusion and Corollary

The theme of Christ’s salvific benefits plays an important role as Paul’s persuasive strategy and theological rationale for his opposition to the circumcision of the Galatians. Paul wanted them to know that the benefits of Christ are sufficient for their salvation and make circumcision unnecessary. The benefit of Christ is Paul’s solution to the issue at stake in Galatia: what is the valid condition on which Gentiles enter the people of God, either circumcision (the law) or Christ?²²¹ If circumcision were necessary, effective, and beneficial for salvation, salvation would come by accepting Jewish customs and by living like Jews and thus the Christ-event would not have been necessary. But for Paul, circumcision is valueless and useless because it forfeits the salvific benefits of Christ and leads the circumcised Gentile believers to the slavery of the law under which they must obey the whole law. Since the salvific benefits of the Christ-event are necessary and sufficient for salvation,

²²¹ Sanders (*PLJP*, 18) rightly notes, “The subject of Galatians is not whether or not humans, abstractly conceived, can by good deeds earn enough merit to be declared righteous at the judgment; it is the condition on which Gentiles enter the people of God.” Matera (*Galatians*, 29) also states that the question of Galatians is “what are the entrance requirements for Gentile Christians who want to be recognized as full members of that portion of Israel which believes in Jesus the Messiah.” *Contra* Cosgrove who argues that the Galatians’ status as God’s people was not disputed by the agitators; they advocated the works of the law (e.g. circumcision) “for the increase of life in the Spirit” (*Cross*, 118); Smiles (*Gospel*, 24) who claims that the issue in Galatians does not merely have to do with the conditions on which Gentiles enter the people of God. For him, “The issue is: What is the nature of the relationship that has been established in Christ between God and all believers, and what place does the law have in that ongoing relationship?” But he pays little awareness to the fact that circumcision and the law were required by the agitators as entry requirements into the people of God and that Paul rejects it by indicating antithetical soteriological bases for the inclusion of the Gentiles, i.e. Christ, God’s grace, the Spirit, Christ’s faithfulness.

salvation through circumcision must be rejected. This means that non-proselyte Gentiles could be God's people without being Jews through circumcision. This conviction leads Paul to Christian universalism.

One corollary should be mentioned. The theme of Christ's salvific benefits is significant for understanding Paul's theology in Galatians. First, the theme is important for Paul's view of the inclusion of the Gentiles into the people of God.²²² The salvific benefits of Christ, not circumcision, define the Gentile believers' status as members of God's people. It is thus no longer a matter of being a member of the circumcised community; the central thing is belonging to Christ who is the singular seed of Abraham.²²³ Second, Paul's denial of circumcision on the basis of the salvific benefits of Christ implies the dissociation between the Jewish community and the Christian community; from a Jewish perspective denial of circumcision means exclusion from the Jewish community. The benefits of Christ encapsulate Paul's theological rationale for the separation of those who accept the salvific benefits of Christ (i.e. Jewish and Gentile believers) from the circumcised community who refuse to accept the benefits and maintain the efficacy of circumcision (i.e. synagogue).²²⁴ Third, the benefits of Christ imply Paul's conviction of both the removal of the boundary of the law within which those benefits were available and the annulment of circumcision as the badge of the Jewish privileged status and as the identity marker of God's people. For Christ liberated the benefits confined to Jews alone for all to enjoy.

²²² It is noteworthy that Christ's benefits in Galatians are closely bound up with the inclusion of the Gentiles. The soteriological effects of the Christ, such as reconciliation, expiation, sanctification, transformation, glorification, do not appear in the letter. Cf. Fitzmyer, *Paul*, 59-71.

²²³ Schreiner ("Circumcision," 171) writes, "For by belonging to Christ one becomes part of the seed of Abraham, a son of God, and an heir of the promise."

²²⁴ While Watson (*PJG*, 69) rightly notes that the antithesis between circumcision and Christ, "*asserts* the separation of church from synagogue," he shows little awareness to the fact that the antithesis is Paul's theological rationale for the separation by saying that the antithesis "does not explain *theologically* why such separation is necessary."

CHAPTER 3

THE ANTITHESIS BETWEEN THE LAW AND CHRIST

In Gal 5.4 Paul says, *κατηργήθητε ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ, οἵτινες ἐν νόμῳ δικαιοῦσθε* (“You who want to be justified in the sphere of the law have been separated from the sphere of Christ”). The issue in Gal 5.4 is obviously justification, which is one of the crucial issues at stake in Galatia (cf. 2.16-21; 3.6-29; 5.4-6). As we shall see below (§3.1.2.3.), the agitators demanded the Galatians to accept the law, in addition to their faith in Christ, in order to enter the boundary of the law where the Gentiles can be God’s people. Since the Galatians evidently thought themselves not as full and equal members of the covenant community but as mere Gentile “god-fearers” who need to enter the boundary of the law for full membership of the people of God and salvation, they desired to be justified ἐν νόμῳ (*οἵτινες ἐν νόμῳ δικαιοῦσθε* cf. 3.11).¹ For Paul it was a big problem, because they would be relying on the law for justification and thus denying the sufficiency of Christ.² He was much concerned that they were not obeying “the truth of the gospel” (5.7; cf. 2.5, 14). He sums up his concern that their problematic behaviour would lead to the fatal consequence of separation from Christ (5.4a) and falling away from grace (5.4c). So Paul attempted to meet head on the issue of justification ἐν νόμῳ.

As we shall see shortly, Paul attempts to persuade the Galatians not to rely upon the law for their justification by contrasting the law with Christ in terms of sphere of justification (*κατηργήθητε ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ, οἵτινες ἐν νόμῳ δικαιοῦσθε* - 5.4a and 5.4b). This expresses Paul’s idea that getting within the boundary of the law through Torah-observance (esp. circumcision) for the purpose of righteousness is to

¹ The present verb *δικαιοῦσθε* is conative. Cf. BDF, §319; Bruce, *Galatians*, 231; Burton, *Galatians*, 276; Dunn, *Galatians*, 267; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 228; Martyn, *Galatians*, 471.

² Martyn, *Galatians*, 471.

separate oneself completely from the realm of Christ (ἐν νόμῳ = ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ; ἐν νόμῳ vs. ἐν Χριστῷ).³ Paul thus contrasts justification within two spheres – the sphere of the law and the sphere of Christ. The distinctive feature of the antithesis is that the law and Christ are antithetical as two incompatible spheres of justification, not as two antithetical means of justification. This claim can be substantiated by an exegesis of 5.4a and 5.4b.

3. 1. Exegesis of 5.4a and 5.4b

In order to explain and understand the antithesis between the law and Christ as two antithetical spheres of justification, first it is necessary to tackle two exegetical questions: 1) The meaning of καταργήθητε ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ; 2) The meaning of δικαιούσθε ἐν νόμῳ.

3. 1. 1. The Meaning of καταργήθητε ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ

We will not attempt to investigate the verb καταργέω outside the Pauline corpus because it is beyond the scope of the present study.⁴ The verb καταργέω appears 25 times in the Pauline corpus. Paul employs the active forms of καταργέω figuratively in the sense of “to make (something) ineffective, inactive, powerless” or “to nullify (something)” (Rom 3.3, 31; 1 Cor 1.28; Gal 3.17; cf. Eph 2.15).⁵ The verb also means “to abolish, destroy” (1 Cor 6.13; cf. 2 Thes 2.8; 2 Tim 1.10) or “bring (something) to an end” (1 Cor 13.11; 15.24). Paul uses the verb καταργέω 15 times in the passive. The passive verb normally means “to be rendered ineffective, inoperative, powerless” (2 Cor 3.7, 11, 13, 14; Gal 5.11), “to be nullified” (Rom 4.14), “to be destroyed” (Rom 6.6; 1 Cor 15.26), or “to be abolished, brought to an end” (1 Cor 2.6; 13.8, 10).⁶

³ So rightly Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 349; Schlier, *Galater*, 232.

⁴ For the verb καταργέω outside the Pauline corpus, see Hafemann, *Paul*, 301-303. With regard to the meaning of the verb καταργέω outside the NT, Hafemann concludes, “The few ancient sources that we do have outside the Christian sphere, including LXX, thus all testify to the meanings ‘put to an end,’ ‘abolish,’ or ‘destroy’ as adequate equivalents for καταργέω” (p. 303).

⁵ Hafemann, *Paul*, 303.

⁶ H. Hübner, καταργέω, *EDNT* 2.267-268.

The passive form of the verb *καταργέω* is used with the preposition *ἀπό* in Rom 7.2, 6 and Gal 5.4 with the meaning “to be removed from the sphere of something operative or influential.”⁷ Clearly the law is understood as something powerful or influential in Rom 7.1-6.⁸ That the woman is discharged from the law (*κατήργηται ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου*) means that she is not within the jurisdiction of the law, and thus she is free to marry another man. In the same way, believers were liberated from the law (*κατηργήθημεν ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου* - 7.6). So, they are no longer within the dominion of the law. Believers were transferred from a sphere where the law is operating to another realm where the Spirit is (7.6). In short, *κατηργήθημεν ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου* means that “we were released from the power-sphere of the law.”

In the same way, the Galatians who desire to be justified in the sphere of the law were separated from the sphere of influence of Christ (*κατηργήθητε ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ*). It is apparent that Christ (Gal 5.4) is the one who is powerfully working for salvation.⁹ As it shall become clear later (§3.2.1.), Christ is understood as the *heilsgeschichtlich* social and salvific sphere within which believers exist and enjoy the salvific benefits of the Christ-event. Elsewhere the contrast between “in the law” (5.4; cf. 3.11; Phil 3:6) and “in Christ” (5.6; cf. 3.14; Phil 3.9) can likewise be understood in terms of sphere of influence (§3.1.2.). Thus *κατηργήθητε ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ* means “you were removed from the realm of Christ.”

What does it mean to be removed from the realm of Christ? It means that the Galatians who accept circumcision and desire to be justified in the law have nothing to do with Christ in relation to Christ’s salvific activity and the benefits of the Christ-event.¹⁰ They are no longer under the lordship of Christ and thus cannot enjoy the grace and salvific effects of Christ available within the realm of Christ.

⁷ G. Dellling rightly notes that *κατηργήθητε ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ* means “to take from the sphere of operation” of Christ (*ἀργός* κτλ., *TDNT* 1.454). See also Hafemann, *Paul*, 306.

⁸ This point is testified by *ὁ νόμος κυριεύει* (7.1), *δέδεται νόμῳ* (7.2), *ἐν ᾧ* (*sc.* the law) *κατειχόμεθα* (7.6a), and *ὥστε δουλεύειν ἡμᾶς ἐν καινότητι πνεύματος καὶ οὐ παλαιότητι γράμματος* (7.6b).

⁹ In Galatians Paul associates “power” with Christ (1.4; 3.13; 4.4-5; 5.1; cf. 1 Cor 1.18, 24).

¹⁰ Gundry-Volf (*Paul and Perseverance*, 211) suggests that *κατηργήθητε ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ* means “to be estranged from Christ, resulting in the complete dissociation of one’s activity in relation to Christ.”

3. 1. 2. The Meaning of δικαιούσθε ἐν νόμῳ

The expression δικαιωθῆναι ἐν νόμῳ occurs twice in Paul's letters (Gal 3.11; 5.4; cf. Acts 13.38). In Phil 3.6 Paul mentions "righteousness in the law" (δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐν νόμῳ). As we shall see, most commentators have not explained satisfactorily the meaning of the phrase ἐν νόμῳ. Nor have they done justice to the theological and social significance of justification ἐν νόμῳ.

3. 1. 2. 1. The Meaning of δικαιούσθε

Without attempting to investigate δικ-root words in Paul's letters,¹¹ we will discuss the meaning of the verb δικαιόω, focusing on Galatians. The verb occurs 25 times in Paul alone (excluding the Pastorals) out of 39 times appearing in the NT. In Galatians it occurs 8 times (2.16 [3 times], 17; 3.8, 11, 24; 5.4). Scholars have debated whether δικαιόω means "make righteous" (the classic Roman Catholic position)¹² or "declare as righteous" (the classic Protestant position).¹³ As we investigate the meaning of δικαιόω in Galatians, it must be understood in light of the rhetorical context of Galatians; the meaning of a word is determined by its literary context. Since the Reformation the issue of justification in Galatians has been read in the context of the individual's pursuit of salvation.¹⁴ According to the traditional understanding of justification, the essential issue in Galatians concerns individual salvation: one is justified by faith in Christ, not by meritorious good works.¹⁵ Recently this traditional understanding has been challenged.¹⁶ Notably, Stendahl argues, "Paul's thoughts about justification were triggered by the issues of divisions

¹¹ For the study of δικ-root words, see the extensive bibliography in Dunn, *Romans*, 1.36-37; K. Kertelege, δικαιοσύνη, *EDNT* 1.325-330; J. Reumann, *Righteousness in the New Testament*, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 127-135; J. A. Ziesler, *The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1972).

¹² E.g. Bruce, *Galatians*, 138; K. Kertelege, *Rechtfertigung bei Paulus* (Münster: Aschendorf, 1966), 115-120; Matera, *Galatians*, 93; Schlier, *Galater*, 89-91.

¹³ E.g. R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (New York: Schribner's, 1951), 1.271-278; Fung, *Galatians*, 125-126; idem, "The Forensic Character of Justification," *Themolix* 3 (1977-78), 16-21; Ridderbos, *Galatia*, 99.

¹⁴ Luther struggled with a tormented conscience how he could be right before God. Lutherans emphasised the forensic nature of justification by individual's faith in Christ.

¹⁵ Matera, *Galatians*, 28.

¹⁶ E.g. Barth, "Jews and Gentiles," 259; Dunn, *JPL*, 202; Esler, *Galatians*, 177; Howard, *Paul*, 46; Sanders, *PLJP*, 17-20; Wright, "Justification," 22.

and identities in a pluralistic and torn world, not primarily by inner tensions of individual souls and conscience.”¹⁷ Gal 2.16-21 is not so much concerned with how individuals can earn enough merit to be declared righteous as with what is the soteriological basis on which Gentiles enter the people of God (the law or God’s grace and Christ – 2.21). Thus it is fair to say that the primary thrust of Paul’s justification language in Galatians is not individual but social or ecclesial.¹⁸

Moreover, we need to understand the meaning of justification in light of the immediate literary context of 2.16 in which Paul first introduced justification into the argument. In the preceding context the explicit issues are circumcision (2.1-10) and dietary regulations and table-fellowship (2.11-14). In the Jerusalem consultation (2.1-10) and the Antioch incident (2.11-14), the issue was how Gentiles can be members of the covenant community. In other words, justification not ἐξ ἔργων νόμου but ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ is Paul’s answer to the question: What is the soteriological basis of the inclusion of the Gentiles into the people of God?¹⁹ The primary issue in 3.6-29 is how Gentiles can become Abraham’s offspring and children of God to receive the blessing of Abraham. We may justly infer, therefore, that the meaning of justification in Galatians should be understood in light of the issue: how the Gentile Christians could be regarded as members of the people of God, which was central to the dispute between Paul and Jewish Christians?

With that in mind, it is noteworthy that Paul equates “being justified” with becoming Abraham’s offspring (3.29), becoming the children of God (3.26; 4.6), becoming heir (3.29; 4.7), receiving adoption (4.5), and becoming the children of promise (4.28). The term “justification” is elaborated by those equivalent terms. As Sanders rightly argues, “the passive verb ‘be righteous’ is employed in his discussions of transferring from one status to another.”²⁰ It may well be, therefore,

¹⁷ Stendahl, *Paul*, 40.

¹⁸ Notably J. D. G. Dunn, “The Justice of God,” *JTS* 43 (1992), 1-22; F. J. Matera, “Galatians in Perspective,” *Int* 54 (2000), 231-245. See further ch. 1, n. 28.

¹⁹ So rightly Dunn, *TPA*, 340.

²⁰ Sanders, *PLJP*, 6. Elsewhere Sanders (*PPJ*, 544) argues, “Most succinctly, righteousness in Judaism is a term which implies the maintenance of status among the group of the elect; in Paul it is a transfer term. In Judaism, that is, commitment to the covenant put one ‘in’, while obedience (righteousness) subsequently keeps one in. In Paul’s usage, ‘be made righteous’ (‘be justified’) is a term indicating getting in, not staying in the body of the saved.”

that the verb δικαιούται means to be set in right relationship with God as God's people (i.e. to become members of the people of God).²¹

3. 1. 2. 2. The Meaning of the Phrase ἐν νόμῳ

The phrase ἐν νόμῳ and its cognates (ἐν τῷ νόμῳ and ἐν ᾧ) occur 12 times in the undisputed Pauline letters (Rom 2.12, 20, 23; 3.19; 7.6, 23 (twice); 1 Cor 9.9; 14.21; Gal 3.11; 5.4; Phil 3.6). The phrase also appears in the Gospels (Matt 12.5; 22.36; Luke 2.23, 24; 10.26; 24.44; John 1.45; 8.5, 17; 10.34; 15.25). All occurrences in the Gospels unanimously refer to "in the book of the Mosaic Law."²² On the one hand, Paul uses the phrase in the sense of "in the book of Torah" in several places (Rom 2.20; 1 Cor 9.9; 14.21). It is fairly clear that in 1 Cor 9.9 and 14.21 Paul used the phrase in reference to the book of Moses; the similar formula (ἐν τῷ νόμῳ γέγραπται) appears in 1 Cor 9.9 and 14.21. In Rom 2.20 he says that Jews have "the embodiment of knowledge and truth in the law." Probably the law refers to the book of Torah in which Jews think that knowledge and truth is to be found. The usage of the phrase as such in the Gospels and Paul's letters is probably derived from LXX.²³

On the other hand, Paul employs ἐν νόμῳ in the sense of "in the sphere of the law" (Rom 2.12, 23; 3.19; 7.6, 23; Gal 3.11; 5.4; Phil 3.6; cf. Acts 13.38). The precise meaning of the phrase must be judged by the immediate literary context where it occurs. Paul uses the phrase in reference to the sphere of Jews' existence and life (Rom 2.12, 23; 3.19). The sentence ὅσοι ἐν νόμῳ ἥμαρτον (2.12) can be understood as "all who have sinned in the sphere of the law." In light of a Jewish perspective, Paul divides humanity into two groups: ὅσοι ἐν νόμῳ ἥμαρτον and ὅσοι

²¹ Dunn (*Galatians*, 134-135) states that to be justified means "to be counted as one of God's own people who had proved faithful to the covenant." Esler (*Galatians*, 141-177) convincingly argues that Paul understood "righteousness as privileged identity" as God's covenant people. See also Bruce, *Galatians*, 138; R. B. Hays, "Justification," in *ABD* 3.1130-1132; Longenecker, *Triumph*, 104.

²² In most cases, the phrase is used in the form of γέγραπται ἐν νόμῳ. This indicates that the phrase refers to "in the book of Torah."

²³ The formula γέγραπται ἐν τῷ νόμῳ and its similar formulae occur in LXX (Josh 9.21; 1 Kgs 2.3; 1 Chr 16.40; 2 Chr 23.18; 31.3; 31.21; 35.26; Ezra 3.2; 7.6; Neh 8.14; 10.35, 37; *Pss. Sol.* 10.4; 14.2; Bar 2.2; Dan 9.11).

ἀνόμως ἡμαρτον (2.12).²⁴ Moreover, he describes the “Jew” as οἱ ἐν τῷ νόμῳ (Rom 3.19). Jews lived within the boundary defined and characterized by the law (cf. e.g. Neh 10.30; Jer 51.23; Pss 77.10; 118.1; Sir 23.23 - LXX; *Pss. Sol.* 14.2). They cannot imagine their life outside the law because the law defines their identity and existence. In a word, the law is the boundary of Jews’ identity and existence.

Furthermore, Paul depicts the past state of Paul and Romans (“we”) as those who were in the domain of the law. The law is likened to a “power-sphere” within which they were held captive (ἐν ᾧ κατειχόμεθα – Rom 7.6). Rom 7.23 supports this interpretation (αἰχμαλωτίζοντά με ἐν τῷ νόμῳ τῆς ἁμαρτίας). If νόμος refers to the Torah,²⁵ Paul understands that the law takes one captive within the “power-sphere” of the law of sin. In other words, he regarded the law as “domain” in which one is imprisoned.²⁶

Paul also employs ἐν νόμῳ as the sphere within which some hope to be justified (Gal 3.11; 5.4; Phil 3.6). Most commentators have rendered ἐν νόμῳ in Gal 3.11, 5.4, and Phil 3.6 as “by the law” taking the preposition ἐν as instrumental.²⁷ A few commentators have rendered it as “in the sphere of the law,” taking the preposition as locative.²⁸ The phrase in 3.11 is likely to be rendered in a spatial sense because the phrase ἐν νόμῳ (3.11) and ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (3.14) are contrasted as two mutually exclusive spheres of righteousness.²⁹ Having understood ἐν νόμῳ in Phil 3.6 in the sense of “rooted in the law,”³⁰ some interpreted “righteousness ἐν νόμῳ” as

²⁴ Dunn, *Romans*, 95; Moo, *Romans*, 1.145.

²⁵ Scholars have debated whether νόμος occurrences in 7.22-25 refer to the Mosaic law or “principle or authority.” For the debate, see Moo, *Romans*, 462-465. Paul’s ideas of both the slavery to the law (Rom 7.6b; cf. Gal 5.1) and the captivity within the domain of the law (Rom 7.6a) and under the power of the law (Rom 6.14, 15; 1 Cor 9.20; Gal 3.23; 4.5) suggests the former is preferable.

²⁶ Paul’s understanding of the law as “domain” is also indicated by Paul’s phrase ὑπὸ νόμον (Gal 3.23; 4.4, 5, 21; 5.18; Rom 6.14-15; 1 Cor 9.20) and its equivalents (Gal 3.10, 25). Cf. Ch. 2, n. 154.

²⁷ Most commentaries and Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 260; Hays, *Faith*, 206; H. Ridderbos, *Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 138, 170; Sanders, *PLJP*, 21, 23; Gundry-Volf, *Paul and Perseverance*, 210.

²⁸ Dunn (*Galatians*, 267) notes that the phrase could be translated “in/within the law.” See also Guthrie, *Galatians*, 129.

²⁹ We have already anticipated that the blessing of Abraham refers to justification of Gentiles (§2.2.2.2).

³⁰ Bruce, *Galatians*, 160; G. F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, (Waco, Texas: Word, 1983), 134; S. Kim, *The Origin of Paul’s Gospel* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1981), 41.

the righteous way of life prescribed by the law.³¹ But Paul uses the phrase ἐν νόμῳ in Phil 3.6 in a locative sense³² because he contrasts ἐν νόμῳ (3.6) with ἐν αὐτῷ (3.9)³³ as two incompatible spheres in which righteousness was thought to be available.

On the basis of the observations above, it is probable that ἐν νόμῳ occurring in Gal 5.4 probably means “in the sphere of the law.” As we have noted already, Paul contrasts the law and Christ as two antithetical spheres of influence (ἐν νόμῳ vs. ἐν Χριστῷ; ἐν νόμῳ = ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ). Moreover, he contrasts ἐν νόμῳ (5.4) with ἐν Χριστῷ (5.6) as two antithetical redemptive-historical spheres. These observations make the rendering of the preposition ἐν as instrumental improbable.³⁴

3. 1. 2. 3. Concluding Remarks

On the basis of the study above, it may be fairly claimed that δικαιωθῆναι ἐν νόμῳ means to be set in right relationship with God as God’s people within the sphere of the law. Righteousness in the sphere of the law does not mean ethical righteousness demanded by the law and required of human beings by God. Rather, it denotes becoming God’s people acceptable to God by being within the boundary of the law within which the covenant community lives.³⁵ It also implies that the privileged status of the covenant people (i.e. righteous status before God) is limited within the sphere of the law (within the boundary of the law). Furthermore, δικαιωθῆναι ἐν νόμῳ connotes “justification on the basis of the law” because the former includes the latter conceptually.³⁶

Of course, “justification within the sphere of the law” is an important part of the agitators’ gospel based on covenantal nomism, that is, salvation by membership

³¹ E.g. P. T. O’Brien, *Commentary on Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 379; M. Silva, *Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 177.

³² So rightly Longenecker, *Triumph*, 99.

³³ The pronoun refers back to Christ in 3.8.

³⁴ *Pace* scholars in n. 27.

³⁵ As Dunn (*Galatians*, 267) well puts, “to be justified in the law” denotes “an attempt to get within the area of safety marked out by the law, ‘in the sphere of the law’, ‘within the boundary of the law,’ that is, membership of the Jewish people.”

³⁶ While taking the phrase as “in the sphere of law,” Burton (*Galatians*, 276) understands it meaning “on the basis of the law.”

in the covenant through Torah-observance.³⁷ The theme is in harmony with the agitators' teaching of circumcision, i.e. the inclusion of Gentiles into God's people through circumcision. Without entering the boundary of the law, the Gentiles are cut off from the people of God and from salvation. For them righteousness is a consequence of membership of God's people staying within the boundary of the law. It connotes Jewish Christian ethnocentric exclusivism or separatism arguing that salvation is given to the covenant community exclusively.³⁸ In the context of Galatians, moreover, justification in the law represents "Jewish Christian covenantal nomism"³⁹ holding that acceptance by God is restricted to Jewish Christians who maintain the status of God's covenant people by staying in the sphere of the law through Torah-observance. At the same time, it represents the agitators' proselytism that requires Gentile believers to come within the boundary of the law through Torah-observance. The agitators maintained that since Gentiles who are outside the law are outside the sphere of salvation, Gentiles must enter the boundary of the law by observing the law; salvation is within the sphere of the law. The agitators' proselytism is based on Jewish ethnocentric proselytism.⁴⁰ In short, for the agitators the law is the domain of salvation and the means to get in the domain is to adopt the law and circumcision. It is this Jewish Christian ethnocentric covenantalism to which Paul objects. We shall now turn to Paul's rationale for his opposition to justification in the law.

³⁷ According to Sanders (*PPJ*, 147ff.), salvation by membership in the covenant is the soteriology of covenantal nomism. Jews must live within the boundary of the law because one can maintain the status of God's covenant people only by staying in the sphere of the law.

³⁸ Having not paid sufficient attention to this significance, however, Dunn ("Perspective," 183-214; "Works," 215-241) rightly points out that "Jewish Christian separatism" was the problem addressed by Paul in Galatians. See also Smiles, *Gospel*, 15-21, 65-67.

³⁹ Martyn ("Events in Galatia," 160) calls it "modified covenantal nomism." Barrett (*Freedom and Obligation*, 44) notes, "the theology of the Judaizers . . . to tally in some remarkably ways (though not in every way) with the covenantal nomism of E. P. Sanders."

⁴⁰ For Jewish nationalistic proselytism, see W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (4th ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 58-66; Donaldson, *Paul*, 54-60.

3. 2. Justification in Christ: Paul's Theological Rationale for His Opposition to Justification in the Law

In light of the study above it is clear that one of the pivotal issues in Galatians is how the Gentiles can be included the people of God, i.e. whether Torah-observance is a basic requirement for membership in the people of God. Paul urges the Galatians not to go within the boundary of the law through Torah-observance for their justification by warning them of the fact that it leads to the separation from the sphere of Christ. He does so in effect by setting “justification in Christ” (Gal 2.17; cf. Gal 3.14; Phil 3.9) against “justification in the law” (Gal 3.11; 5:4; cf. Phil 3.6). If Acts 13.38-39⁴¹ preserves Paul's teaching on justification,⁴² it confirms that Paul proclaimed justification in Christ as an antithesis to justification in the law. In what follows, then, we will attempt to argue that Paul holds that righteousness is not available in the law because the gift of righteousness is already universally available in the sphere of Christ, outside the sphere of the law. In order to explain “justification in Christ,” first it is necessary to clarify the meaning of the phrase ἐν Χριστῷ.

3. 2. 1. The Meaning of the Phrase ἐν Χριστῷ

From the outset it is to be said that we do not attempt to deal with all the occurrences of the phrase ἐν Χριστῷ in their immediate context. It is sufficient rather to deal with them succinctly in order to ascertain the meaning of the phrase. In particular, we will attempt to clarify the meaning of ἐν Χριστῷ which occurs in “justification” contexts (Gal 2.17; 3.14; Phil 3.9). Before getting into it, it is appropriate to survey the history of interpretation briefly.

The unique Pauline phrase ἐν Χριστῷ and its equivalents (“in him/whom” and “in the Lord”) are nearly absent from the other writings of the New Testament, except for the Petrine literature (1 Pet 3.16; 5.10, 14) and the pronominal references

⁴¹ ὅτι διὰ τούτου ὑμῖν ἄφεσις ἁμαρτιῶν καταγγέλλεται, [καὶ] ἀπὸ πάντων ὧν οὐκ ἠδυνήθητε ἐν νόμῳ Μωϋσέως δικαιοθῆναι ἐν τούτῳ πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων δικαιοῦται (Acts 13.38-39).

⁴² J. D. G. Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostle* (Peterborough: Epworth, 1996), 181; B. Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 414, n. 230. *Contra* Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostle*, 1.650.

to Christ in the Johannine materials.⁴³ The phrase ἐν Χριστῷ occurs 83 times in the Pauline corpus. If we exclude the Pastorals, it appears 74 times.⁴⁴ Any thoughtful reader of the Pauline letters will be struck by this unique and recurring phrase, and many scholars have investigated the meaning of Paul's formula "in Christ."⁴⁵ Some think that the formula is a very difficult one to pin down especially in an attempt to arrive at a definition of the phrase since Paul uses the phrase in more than one sense.⁴⁶ Under the assumption that Paul uses the formula in various contexts and with differing shades of meaning, commentators classify the phrase into several categories.⁴⁷

Without attempting to survey various views in detail,⁴⁸ it is sufficient for our purpose to survey four major approaches succinctly. (1) The "mystical approach"

⁴³ ἐν ἐμοὶ (John 6.56; 10.38; 14.10, 11, 20; 15.4, 5, 6, 7; 17.21, 23, 26; cf. 1 John 2.5, 6, 24, 28; 3.6, 24; 4.12, 13, 15, 16; 5.20); ἐν αὐτῷ (John 1.4; 3.15; 13.31, 32a; 19.6).

⁴⁴ For the statistics of the phrases' occurrence in the Pauline corpus, see Dunn, *TPA*, 396.

⁴⁵ E. Best, *One Body in Christ* (London: SPCK, 1955), 1-33; F. Büchsel, "In Christus' bei Paulus," *ZNW* 42 (1949), 141-158; A. Deissman, *Die neutestamentliche Formel "in Christo Jesu"* (Marburg: Elwert, 1882); idem, *St. Paul* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1926), 135-157; Dunn, *TPA*, 396-401; G. E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 480-483; I. H. Marshall, "The Theology of Philippians," in *The Theology of the Shorter Pauline Letters* (Cambridge: CUP, 1993), 138-144; C. F. D. Moule, *The Origin of Christology* (Cambridge: CUP, 1978), 60-63; idem, *The Phenomenon of the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1964), 20-42; F. Neugebauer, *In Christus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1961); idem, "Das Paulinische 'in Christo'," *NTS* 4 (1957-58), 124-138; G. Strecker, *Theology of the New Testament* (Louisville: Westminster/JKP, 2000), 117-123; A. J. M. Wedderburn, *Baptism and Resurrection* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1987), 351-356; idem, "Some Observations on Paul's use of the Phrases 'in Christ' and 'with Christ'," *JSNT* 25 (1985), 83-97; D. E. H. Whiteley, *The Theology of St Paul* (2nd ed.; Oxford: Blackwell, 1974), 45-46; Wright, *Climax*, 41-45.

⁴⁶ It is generally agreed that the phrase "in Christ" is used with flexibility by Paul. E.g. M. Barth, *Ephesians* (New York: Doubleday, 1974), 70; C. K. Barrett, "New Testament Eschatology," *SJT* 8 (1953), 148-149; Bultmann, *Theology*, 1.328-329; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 153.

⁴⁷ Dunn classifies the phrase into three major usages: 1) objective usage; 2) subjective usage; 3) the basis of Paul's own activity and exhortation (*TPA*, 397-398). M. J. Harris classifies Paul's employment of the term in the following way: 1) Incorporative union; 2) Sphere of reference; 3) Agency or instrumentality; 4) Cause; 5) Mode; 6) Location; 7) Authoritative basis ("In Christ," in *NIDNTT*, edited by C. Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 1192). Marshall classifies the phrase occurring in Philippians into five categories: 1) Ordinary usage; 2) Use with verbs of divine action; 3) Use with verbs of human action; 4) Adjectival use; 5) Uncertain uses (*The Theology of the Shorter Pauline Letters*, 139-143). According to Neugebauer ("Das Paulinische 'in Christo,'" 131), Paul uses the phrase in three contexts: 1) soteriological context, 2) ecclesiological context, 3) in relation to the apostle and apostolic service. See also M. A. Seifrid, "In Christ," in *DPL*, 436.

⁴⁸ Cf. Best, *One Body in Christ*, 8-19; Barth, *Ephesians*, 67-71; Ladd, *Theology*, 480-483; Moule, *Origin*, 60-63.

was initiated by A. Deissman⁴⁹ and followed by Bousset⁵⁰ and Schweitzer.⁵¹ (2) The “eschatological approach” interprets Christ’s death and resurrection as having brought in “the age to come;” therefore, “being in Christ” means to participate in the new aeon. Notably Ladd stated that, redemptively, believers “have entered into a new existence in Christ - the life of the new aeon.”⁵² (3) The “objective approach” contends that the phrase is not mystical, but refers to the “objective saving work” of Christ. Hans Conzelmann has pointed out that the phrase occurs in contexts where reconciliation is spoken about in “juridical, objective terms.” He views the phrase as describing Christ in believers in non-mystical terms. Christ is “there for” believers in the sense that he intercedes for them.⁵³ (4) The “corporate personality” approach

⁴⁹ A. Deissmann was a vigorous champion of Paul’s mysticism. In 1892 he published a study of the phrase “in Christ” (*Die neutestamentliche Formel “in Christo Jesu.”*). He considers that Paul uses this phrase to express the closest conceivable union between the Christian and Christ the triumphant spiritual Lord. He thinks that the phrase “in Christ” signifies that the spiritual Christ is the place where the Christian is. With regard to the intimate relationship between Paul and Christ, he says, “Just as the air of life, which we breathe, is ‘in’ us and fills us, and yet we at the same time live in this air and breathe it, so it is also with the Christ-intimacy of the Apostle Paul. Christ in him, he in Christ” (*St. Paul*, 140).

⁵⁰ W. Bousset, *Kyrios Christos* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1970), 153-210. On the basis of his assumption that Paul’s portrait of Jesus is not historical, Bousset says that Paul’s “in Christ” mysticism is derived from “cult mysticism” in which Paul lived (p. 156). Taking it a step further, Bousset believes Paul developed the phrase “in Christ” out of cultic mysticism. Bousset tries to show that the Pauline concept of union with Christ was derived from the celebration of the sacraments in which the change from the mysticism of community and sacrament into Paul’s personal mysticism took place (p. 157). He concludes with regard to the origin of the phrase “in Christ” by saying that the Pauline Christ mysticism which is summarised in the phrase “in Christ” grew out of the cults; the Lord who governs the entire personal life of the Christian has been developed out of the culturally present Kyrios (p. 160). The origin of Paul’s idea of “being in Christ,” Bousset believes, is derived from his personal mysticism out of cultic Christ-mysticism.

⁵¹ A. Schweitzer (*The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* (London: Black, 1931)) views the original conception of “in Christ” as constantly breaking through, namely, the sharing by the Elect in the same corporeity with Christ. He differentiates Paul’s mysticism from the Hellenistic mysticism which allowed daily life to go its own way apart from the mystical experience and without relation to it: “The fact that the believer’s whole being, down to his most ordinary everyday thoughts and actions, is thus brought within the sphere of the mystical experience has its effect of giving to this mysticism a breadth, a permanence, a practicability, and a strength almost unexampled elsewhere in mysticism” (p. 129). According to him, the union between the Elect and Christ has thus a meaning not only in relation to the Elect, but also in relation to Christ himself (pp. 115-116). In short, he made an effort to find the source of Paul’s thought in an early Jewish expectation of a real, physical union of the Elect with the Messiah (p. 127).

⁵² Ladd, *Theology*, 483.

⁵³ H. Conzelmann, *An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), 209-211.

interprets Christ as a corporate personality.⁵⁴ According to this view, Paul viewed Christ as “a representative personality” through which others obtained the consequences of his actions.

While the approaches above have elements of truth, they are not completely satisfactory. In particular they have not explained satisfactorily ἐν Χριστῷ occurring in the context of the issue of justification. Thus it is necessary to outline briefly Paul’s usage of ἐν Χριστῷ. The occurrences of the expressions may be summarised thus:⁵⁵

1. The phrase “in Christ” as the sphere where God’s saving activities have happened.⁵⁶
2. The phrase “in Christ” as the sphere where salvific benefits are found.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Corporate personality is the expression used by E. Best. Best concludes, “the formula ‘in Christ’ contains two fundamental ideas: believers are in Christ; salvation in Christ. In both the ἐν is taken at its full value. Sometimes one idea predominate and sometimes the other; they are held together by the conception of Christ as a corporate personality; who in his own person gained the salvation of believers, and of whose personality they are members (*One Body in Christ*, 29). Moule calls it “inclusive personality” (*Origin*, 95). Whiteley refers to the issue of corporate solidarity as a means of explaining Paul’s view of solidarity in Adam and in Christ (*The Theology of St Paul*, 45-46). Wedderburn recognises that the explanation which he gives has distinct similarities to the concept of corporate personality (*Baptism and Resurrection*, 351-356). In another article dealing with this issue (“Some Observations on Paul’s use of the Phrases ‘in Christ’ and ‘with Christ,’” 83-97), Wedderburn concludes his view on the background of Paul’s use of the phrases “in Christ” and “with Christ” thus: “Paul himself does offer some clues. These clues seem, in my view, to point to a background in which Abraham and Christ are viewed as representative figures through whom God acts toward the human race; he acts them “in” those figures and they are caught up “with” them in that divine initiative of grace.” In the other article (A. J. M. Wedderburn, “The Body of Christ in 1 Corinthians,” *SJT* 2 (1971), 74-96), he provides his clear-cut view with regard to the origin and implications. He says that “Paul’s use of the formula “in Christ” is, we infer, based upon the language used by the LXX to express OT ideas of representation and solidarity, ideas which could most aptly be called a spatial metaphor; for, figuratively speaking, Abraham is the source or the place of origin of the blessing of the nations, just as Christ, as his seed, is its true channel; as one finds water in a well, so one finds blessings in Christ.” His ideas are very similar in many respects to those in Moule (*The Phenomenon of the New Testament*, 20-42). But this concept of “corporate personality” has been questioned by J. R. Porter, “The Legal Aspects of the Concept of ‘Corporate Personality’ in the Old Testament,” *VT* 15 (1965), 361-380; S. E. Porter, “Two Myths,” *SJT* 43 (1990) 289-307; J. W. Rogerson, “The Hebrew Conception of Corporate Personality,” *JTS* 21 (1970), 1-16.

⁵⁵ I intentionally include Ephesians, Colossians, and 2 Thessalonians because, whoever may have written these epistles, Paul is the source of their use of the phrase. The investigation of these occurrences is not exhaustive.

⁵⁶ Justification in Christ (Gal 2.17; cf. 1 Cor 6.11); reconciliation in Christ (2 Cor 5.19; Eph 2.13); enrichment in Christ (1 Cor 1.5); resurrection in Christ (1 Cor 15.22; Eph 2.6); election in Christ (Eph 1.4); blessing in Christ (Eph 1.3b); calling in Christ (Phil 3.14); new creation in Christ (2 Cor 5.17); sanctification in Christ (1 Cor 1.2); forgiving in Christ (Eph 4.32). See also 2 Cor 3.14.

3. The phrase “in Christ” as the sphere where God’s glory (Phil 4.19), grace (1 Cor 1.4), love (Rom 8.39), and will (1 Thes 5.18) have been manifested.
4. The phrase “in Christ” as the *heilsgeschichtlich* social or existential sphere of believers.⁵⁸
5. The phrase “in Christ” as the ground of Paul’s apostolic attitude, action, and exhortation (Rom 9.1; 1 Cor 4.15, 17; 16.24; 2 Cor 2.17; 12.19; Phil 1.13; 4.13; Col 1.28; 2 Thes 3.12).

The formula is used in reference to God’s saving work and the salvific benefits of God and Christ.⁵⁹ Paul describes Christ as the locus of the Christian life, the “place” where not only believers’ benefits, but believers themselves, are found.⁶⁰ It is “in Christ” that believers received all benefits and privileges of being associated with Christ.⁶¹ There was also in Paul’s understanding an eschatological dimension to the “in Christ” formula. For Paul, “in Christ” believers participated in the new sphere of salvation i.e. Christ (Rom 5.12-21; 1 Cor 15.22; 2 Cor 5.17).⁶² For Paul, the phrase has ecclesiological implications.⁶³ The person who was “in Christ” entered into a relationship with fellow believers (1 Cor 12.12). All who were “in Christ” were thereby members of the body of Christ (Gal 3.28; cf. Eph 5.23, 30; Col 1.18).⁶⁴

⁵⁷ Access to God in Christ (Eph 3.12); all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in Christ (Col 2.3); becoming the covenant people in Christ (Eph 3.6); blessing of Abraham in Christ (Gal 3.14); children of God in Christ (Gal 3.26); eternal life in Christ (Rom 6.23); ethnic reconciliation between Jews and Gentiles in Christ (Eph 2.17); forgiveness of sin in Christ (Eph 1.7); freedom in Christ (Gal 2.4); oneness between Jew and Gentile in Christ (Gal 3.28; cf. 5.6); redemption in Christ (Rom 3.24; Eph 1.7; Col 1.14); righteousness in Christ (Phil 3.9); the law of the Spirit of life in Christ (Rom 8.2).

⁵⁸ Believers dead to sin and alive to God in Christ (Rom 6.11); no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Rom 8.1); believers as one body in Christ (Rom 12.5); believers who are in Christ (Rom 16.3, 7, 9, 10; 1 Cor 4.10; Phil 1.1; 4.21; Col 1.2; Phm 23); boast in Christ (Rom 15.17; 1 Cor 15.31; Phil 1.26; 3.3); churches in Christ (2 Cor 1.22; 1 Thes 1.1; 2.14; 2 Thes 1.1); death in Christ (1 Cor 15.18; 1 Thes 4.16); having the same mind in Christ (Phil 2.5); hope in Christ (1 Cor 15.19); receiving a spiritual circumcision in Christ (Col 2.11).

⁵⁹ Dunn, *TPA*, 399, n. 47.

⁶⁰ See Bornkamm, *Paul* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1971), 154-155; Longenecker, *Triumph*, 63-67; Moule, *Origin*, 55-56.

⁶¹ Fitzmyer, *Paul*, 59-71.

⁶² C. K. Barrett, *Romans* (London: Black, 1991), 127; A. Oepke, ἐν, *TDNT* 2.542; Ridderbos, *Paul*, 60-62; J. A. Ziesler, *Pauline Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 52-55.

⁶³ F. Hahn, Χριστός, *EDNT* 3.483; Ridderbos, *Paul*, 371-373; Ziesler, *Pauline Christianity*, 57-60.

⁶⁴ Moule, *Origin*, 81-82; Sanders, *PPJ*, 454-455.

In short, ἐν Χριστῷ means the sphere of Christ, referring to the boundary or realm of Christ within which the God's salvific act and benefits, Christian's identity, privileges, existence are confined. Thus the Christian's being in Christ means to live in the realm or sphere of Christ in which Christ reigns as the Lord and in which the salvific effects of God are available.

In light of the fact that the phrase is used as the redemptive-historical sphere in which God's salvific act has happened and God's salvific benefits are found,⁶⁵ it is probable that ἐν Χριστῷ occurring in "justification" context is used to denote "the sphere of Christ" within which God's justifying act takes place (Gal 2.17; cf. Acts 13.39) and the benefit of righteousness is available (Phil 3.9). Furthermore, the phrase in Gal 3.14 (and Phil 3.9) means "in the sphere of Christ" because the phrases ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (Gal 3.14; cf. Phil 3.9) and ἐν νόμῳ (Gal 3.11; Phil 3.6) are contrasted as two mutually exclusive spheres of righteousness. Thus, it may be fairly claimed that in the "justification" context, ἐν Χριστῷ probably does not refer to "in union with Christ" in a mystical or corporative sense.⁶⁶ Since these approaches have focused on believers' being in Christ ("subjective usage"), they have not paid an appropriate attention to the "eschatological usage" of the formula, referring to God's eschatological saving activities taking place in the sphere of Christ, God's salvific benefits given in the sphere of Christ, and the existence of believers in the sphere of Christ.

3. 2. 2. Justification in Christ

"Justification in Christ" is without doubt one of the most significant themes in Pauline theology. As observed above, although recent scholarship has paid much attention to the interpretation of the meaning of δικαιοσύνη and its cognates in Paul and the meaning of the phrase ἐν Χριστῷ respectively, scholarly attention has rarely been given to the relationship between "justification" and "in Christ."⁶⁷ The

⁶⁵ See S. E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 159; idem, "The Pauline Concept of Original Sin in Light of Rabbinic Background," *Tyndale Bulletin* 41 (1990), 13-18; Seifrid, "In Christ," 435-436.

⁶⁶ See Dunn, *TPA*, 393; W. Elliger, ἐν Χριστῷ, *EDNT* 1.448.

⁶⁷ While several scholars point out the relationship between righteousness and "in Christ," they have not developed it further. E.g. Hooker, "ἸΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ," 337; V. Koperski, *The*

theological and social significance of “justification in Christ” has not been dealt with satisfactorily among scholars.⁶⁸ In particular scholars have failed to address sufficiently and adequately the significance of justification in Christ for Paul’s rejection of justification in the law as well as Paul’s critique of the law. In what follows we will exegete Gal 2.17, 3.14, and Phil 3.9 where Paul brings out “justification in Christ” to argue against “justification in the law” (Gal 3.11; 5.4; Phil 3.6).⁶⁹

3. 2. 2. 1. Gal 2.17

In Gal 2.17 Paul says, εἰ δὲ ζητοῦντες δικαιωθῆναι ἐν Χριστῷ εὐρέθημεν καὶ αὐτοὶ ἁμαρτωλοί, ἄρα Χριστὸς ἁμαρτίας διάκονος; μὴ γένοιτο. The argument of 2.17 is very complicated and has been variously interpreted.⁷⁰ Since it is beyond the limit of the present study to deal with all the issues involved in 2.17,⁷¹ it is sufficient to focus on ζητοῦντες δικαιωθῆναι ἐν Χριστῷ. In order to come to a better understanding of Paul’s meaning of justification in Christ, it will be helpful to consider the immediate literary context.

The immediate literary context of 2.17 is concerned with the issue of table-fellowship between Jew and Gentile (2.11-14), that is, how Gentiles can be included into the people of God. The people from James claimed that Gentile believers could be part of God’s covenant people ἐξ ἔργων νόμου.⁷² For them if one depends only on Christ, abandoning the works of the law (e.g. food law, circumcision), one becomes

Knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord (Pharos: Kampen, 1996), 225-226; Matera, *Galatians*, 95; O’Brien, *Philippians*, 415-417; Reumann, *Righteousness*, 56, 114; Ziesler, *Meaning of Righteousness in Paul*, 164-171. Cosgrove (*Cross*, 172, 178, 184) does not pay sufficient attention to “being in Christ” as the basis of justification, while understanding it as the sole condition of life in the Spirit.

⁶⁸ Although E. P. Sanders (*Paul* (Past Masters; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 44-64) notes the importance of “righteousness by faith” and “being in Christ” in Galatians, he does not explore the significance of “righteousness in Christ.”

⁶⁹ While noting that “justification in Christ” is a ‘counterformula’ to the antithetical expression “justification ἐν νόμῳ” (3.11; 5.4), Fung (*Galatians*, 119) understands the antithesis in terms of two incompatible means of justification taking ἐν Χριστῷ and ἐν νόμῳ in an instrumental sense.

⁷⁰ For various interpretations, see E. Kok, “The Truth of the Gospel,” [hereafter “Truth”] (Ph. D. Thesis, University of Durham, 1993), 170-188; Burton, *Galatians*, 127-130.

⁷¹ For a detailed discussion of 2.17, see Cummins, *Crucified*, 206-212; Kok, “Truth,” 189-221.

⁷² For the meaning of the phrase, see §6.3.1.

a sinner breaking the law. Probably they accused Paul of sinning like Gentile sinners who do not obey the food laws.⁷³ Against justification by the works of the law, Paul argues that one is acceptable to God not ἐξ ἔργων νόμου but διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (2.16).⁷⁴ After 2.16, Paul says in 2.17, ζητοῦντες δικαιοθῆναι ἐν Χριστῷ. Here noteworthy is that justification ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ is equivalent to justification ἐν Χριστῷ. The relationship indicates that for Paul justification depends only on Christ. In 2.18-21 he continues to claim that justification rests not on the law but on Christ (esp. 2.21). In short, the immediate literary context of 2.17 shows that Paul brings up the theme of justification in Christ in order to argue that not the law but Christ is the only basis of justification.

With the context in mind, let us clarify what Paul means by ζητοῦντες δικαιοθῆναι ἐν Χριστῷ. In connection with justification ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ, Paul argues that we (Paul and the Jewish Christians)⁷⁵ seek to be justified ἐν Χριστῷ.⁷⁶ As we argued already, the meaning of ἐν Χριστῷ is “in the sphere of Christ,”⁷⁷ not

⁷³ The word “sinner” has a range of other meaning in the Jewish circle (cf. J. D. G. Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways between Christianity and Judaism and their Significance for the Character of Christianity* (London: SCM, 1991), 102-107). In Gal 2.15 the word is not used in an ethical sense (Pace Betz, *Galatians*, 115; Burton, *Galatians*, 119). Rather it is employed as a term for Gentiles who stand outside of the covenant (cf. *Jub.* 23.23-24; *Pss. Sol.* 2.1-2). See Dunn, *Galatians*, 133; idem, *The Partings*, 103; Kok, “Truth,” 108-111; Longenecker, *Triumph*, 107-111.

⁷⁴ For a detailed discussion of 2.16, see §6.3.1.

⁷⁵ The identity of the adverbial participle ζητοῦντες is determined by the main verb εὐρέθημεν. It is natural to link the subject of the verb to the emphatic Ἡμεῖς φύσει Ἰουδαῖοι (2.15), and thus the unexpressed subject “we” in the participle refers to Jewish Christians. So rightly Barclay, *Obedying*, 78; Burton, *Galatians*, 125; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 176.

⁷⁶ The verb ζητεῖν occurs some twenty times in the Pauline epistles. Paul uses the verb positively (as in Rom 2.7; 1 Cor 14.12; Col 3.1); negatively (Rom 11.3; 1 Cor 1.22; 2 Cor 13.3; Phil 2.21); in both ways (1 Cor 4.2; 10.24, 33; 2 Cor 12.14). In Gal 2.17 Paul employs the verb ζητεῖν positively. M. L. Soards, however, argues that seeking to be justified is sin because ζητεῖν as a human endeavor is contrary to divine activity (“Seeking (ZĒTEIN) and Sinning (HAMARTŌLOS & HAMARTIA) According to Galatians 2.17,” in *Apocalyptic and the New Testament*, edited by J. Marcus and M. L. Soards (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 237-254). But he fails to note that justification ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ is equivalent to justification ἐν Χριστῷ. Moreover, he misses the point that ἐν Χριστῷ is never used in any negative sense in Galatians (cf. 1.22; 2.4; 3.14, 26, 28, 5.6). On the contrary, the phrase is employed as the salvific sphere in which the salvific benefits of Christ (freedom – 2.4, the blessing of Abraham – 3.14; divine sonship – 3.26; oneness – 3.28) are available to Gentiles. As we observed already (§3.2.1.), moreover, the phrase is used positively in other Pauline letters. Cf. Kok, “Truth,” 196-199; Longenecker, *Triumph*, 107; Martyn, *Galatians*, 254.

⁷⁷ Most commentators take ἐν as locative, not instrumental. E.g. Burton, *Galatians*, 124; Dunn, *Galatians*, 141; Kok, “Truth,” 203; Martyn, *Galatians*, 253; Matera, *Galatians*, 95; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 176; Witherington, *Grace*, 185; Ziesler, *Galatians*, 27.

“by means of Christ.”⁷⁸ As Matera rightly notes, the phrase “indicates a transfer of the sinner from one sphere (the Law) to another (Christ).”⁷⁹ Here Paul is contrasting righteousness within two spheres - the sphere of Christ and the sphere of the law.⁸⁰ Against Jewish Christians’ argument that Gentiles must get within the boundary of the law (i.e. the covenant community) through the works of the law (esp. circumcision) in order to be acceptable to God,⁸¹ Paul argues that one is justified in the sphere of Christ. Paul insists on justification in Christ to protect the righteous status of believing Gentiles within the eschatological people of God. Justification in Christ has social implications as well as soteriological ones. Justification in Christ implies that Jewish and Gentile believers all together are the descendants of Abraham in the sphere of Christ, outside the law. Thus they do not need to observe the works of the law to enter the covenant community. Justification in Christ means that one can become the people of God not by participating in the sphere of the law (within the boundary of the law) through the works of the law but by participating in the sphere of Christ.⁸² Since those in Christ are justified in the sphere of Christ, one need not get within the boundary of the law through Torah-observance for justification. In short, justification in Christ is Paul’s theological rationale for his rejection of justification in and through the law.

3. 2. 2. 2. Gal 3.14

It is important to note the relationship between “the blessing of Abraham” and “in Christ” (ἵνα εἰς τὰ ἔθνη ἡ εὐλογία τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ γένηται ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ - 3.14). Given that “the blessing of Abraham” refers to justification of the Gentiles,⁸³

⁷⁸ Pace Betz, *Galatians*, 119, n. 60; Büchsel, “‘In Christus’ bei Paulus,” 144; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 89, 153; Oepke, *Galater*, 92, n. 228; Schlier, *Galater*, 95; Wedderburn, “The Body of Christ in 1 Corinthians,” 89. Interestingly Fung (*Galatians*, 119) suggests a combination of both the locative and instrumental sense.

⁷⁹ Matera, *Galatians*, 95; cf. 31-32.

⁸⁰ So rightly Cummins, *Crucified*, 208; Witherington, *Grace*, 185, n. 48. But they did not explicate it.

⁸¹ It is to be borne in mind that circumcision was regarded as an entrance requirement into the boundary of the law in which Jews live (§2.1.2.).

⁸² Hays (*Faith*, 250-251) rightly notes, “Christians are justified precisely because they participate in the crucified and justified Messiah, whose destiny embodies theirs. This compatibility of the two motifs appears most clearly in Gal 2.17, where Paul uses the expression δικαιωθῆναι ἐν Χριστῷ. Here justification and participation in Christ is merged.”

⁸³ See §2.2.2.2.

it is closely bound up with “in Christ.” With the blessing of Abraham in Christ Paul argues against the agitators’ teaching of justification in the law (3.11). Why did they argue that the Gentiles are not entitled to receive the blessing unless the Gentiles come within the boundary of the law where the community of the offspring of Abraham exists? We can understand the reason in light of the traditional Jewish ethnocentric covenantalism holding that the blessing of Abraham (i.e. the gift of righteousness) only comes to Gentiles through Israel. In traditional Jewish thinking, Gentiles were considered as “aliens” (ἄλλοτρίοι- Deut 29.21; 2 Chr 6.32, 33; 14.3; 1 Kgs 8.43; Ezra; 10.11; Isa 1.7; 62.8; Lam 5.2; Ezek 7.21; 11.9; 28.10; 30.12; 44.7; Esth 14.15; Hos 7.9; 8.7; Obad 1.11; 1 Macc. 1.38; 2.7; *Pss. Sol.* 17.15; Josephus, *Ant.* 3.214; cf. Eph 2.12; 4.18; Col 1.21) and “foreigners” (ἄλλογενές – Exod 12.43; Isa 56.3; 60.10; 61.15; Jer 28.51; Ezek 44.9; Joel 3.17; 1 Esdr 9.7, 12; Philo, *Qaest. Gen.* 3.61; Luke 17.18). They were also considered as sinners (1 Macc. 2.44, 48; Tob 13.6 [LXX 8]; *Jub.* 23.23-24; *Pss. Sol.* 1.1; 2.1-2; 17.22-25; Matt 5.47/Luke 6.33; Gal 2.15). The author of *Jubilees* regarded the uncircumcised as “the children of destruction” (*Jub.* 15.34). For the author those who are born outside the covenant are excluded from the covenant community (*Jub.* 15.26). The Qumran community restricts salvation to native-born Israelites (1QS 6.13-14). The Gentiles are “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of promise, having no hope and without God in the world” (NRSV), to use the language of Eph 2.12. On the basis of the Jewish ethnocentric covenantalism, therefore, the agitators maintained that the Gentiles could not gain access to the blessing of Abraham unless they joined the community of Israel within which the blessing is available.

Against the agitators’ teaching of justification in the sphere of the law (3.11), Paul argues that righteousness is available to Gentile believers in the sphere of Christ (3.14).⁸⁴ In other words, justification of the Gentiles in Christ Jesus is a clear statement of the reason why Paul held that no one is justified in the sphere of the law.⁸⁵ The blessing of Abraham in the sphere of Christ Jesus means that Gentiles

⁸⁴ Most commentators fail to note the antithesis between the law and Christ as two incompatible spheres of righteousness in 3.11-14.

⁸⁵ *Pace Sanders (PLJP, 26)* who argues that in 3.6-18 there is not an explicit statement of the reason for it.

receive the gift of righteousness without needing to go within the boundary of the law.⁸⁶ Put differently, Gentile believers can become the descendants of Abraham because in Christ the curse which prevented them being accepted into the covenant people and which rendered them ineligible for participation in the covenant promise to Abraham was removed by the death of Christ on the cross.⁸⁷ Hence the boundary within which the blessing is available has been transferred from “within the covenant community” to “within the sphere of Jesus Christ.” In short, Gentile believers can become God’s covenant people not by entering the boundary of the law but by participating in Christ. This is Paul’s theological rationale for why he rejects the works of the law (in particular circumcision) as entrance requirements into the covenant community and why Gentiles do not need to observe the works of the law to get within the boundary of the law.

3. 2. 2. 3. Phil 3.9

Phil 3.6-9 is one passage outside Galatians in which Paul makes clear the contrast between righteousness within the sphere of the law (3.6) and righteousness within the sphere of Christ (3.9). In 3.6-9 Paul states that his supreme goal is to know Christ fully. He regards everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus as Lord. For his sake, Paul has suffered the loss of his Jewish privileges such as circumcision, a member of the people of Israel, and righteousness (3.5-6) and regards them as rubbish, in order that he may gain Christ. In 3.9 Paul now states his supreme goal in terms of his being in Christ. The reason why Paul wants to gain Christ and to be found in Christ is because, through gaining Christ and being found in Christ, he comes to have not his own righteousness from the law but righteousness from God.

With this immediate context in mind, let us turn to 3.9 itself. Paul says, καὶ εὐρεθῶ ἐν αὐτῷ, μὴ ἔχων ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ νόμου ἀλλὰ τὴν διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ, τὴν ἐκ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει. We need to exegete the text in order to understand the significance of righteousness in Christ. What does it mean

⁸⁶ Dunn, “The Theology of Galatians,” 145.

⁸⁷ Dunn, *The Partings*, 123.

εὑρεθῶ ἐν αὐτῷ?⁸⁸ Some, notably R. Martin, identify εὑρεθῶ with “to be justified.”⁸⁹ The expression may have a special nuance, approaching the sense of “turn out, appear, be shown.”⁹⁰ Since when the verb is passive, it really means “to be” and “be evident,”⁹¹ it is likely that “to be found in Christ” simply means “to be in Christ.”⁹² Then, what is the meaning of “being in Christ”? Several scholars argue that it refers to “full participation in Christ.”⁹³ Some commentators take it as referring to “being united with Christ” in light of corporate personality.⁹⁴ Others interpret it in the sense of the final and eschatological dimension.⁹⁵ As argued earlier, the phrase probably should be interpreted “in the sphere of Christ,” which is contrasted “in the sphere of the law” (3.6), and thus “to be found in Christ” means “to exist in the realm of Christ” in which Paul wants to be found.

Although it can be construed as modal, the participle ἔχων probably should be taken as causal, signifying that Paul wants to be found in Christ because he has the righteousness that comes from God rather than his own. This seems to be more natural in terms of the context in which Paul regards everything as loss because he thinks that he can gain what he really wants, i.e. righteousness from God.

The long participial clause contrasts two kinds of righteousness. The first “righteousness” is ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ νόμου. The second is τὴν διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ, τὴν ἐκ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει. Our aim here does not permit us to discuss all the issues involved in this passage. So, we should be content with simply explaining the meaning of two kinds of righteousness.⁹⁶ “My own

⁸⁸ The pronoun αὐτῷ refers to Christ.

⁸⁹ R. P. Martin, *Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 149.

⁹⁰ BAGD s.v.; Silva, *Philippians*, 188.

⁹¹ S. Pederson, εὐρίσκω, *EDNT* 2.84.

⁹² On the passive of εὑρεθῶ as signifying “to be,” see Burton, *Galatians*, 125; O’Brien, *Philippians*, 393; R. C. Tannehill, *Dying and Rising with Christ* (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1967), 118.

⁹³ Tannehill, *Dying and Rising with Christ*, 118; O’Brien, *Philippians*, 392.

⁹⁴ Silva, *Philippians*, 188; Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 140; M. R. Vincent, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians and to Philemon* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1897), 102.

⁹⁵ F. F. Bruce, *Philippians* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 88; G. B. Caird, *Paul's Letters from Prison* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 137; P. Stuhlmacher, *Gerechtigkeit Gottes* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965), 99.

⁹⁶ For a detailed discussion about the two kinds of righteousness, see Koperski, *The Knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord*, 191-238.

righteousness that comes from the law” has been generally understood as “my individual righteousness, based on the merit achieved by the performance of good deeds, which leads to boasting.”⁹⁷ Against Sanders,⁹⁸ Gundry, after listing eight items in vv. 2-11 (e.g. “boasting,” “thinking to have confidence,” his “considering” past achievements as gain, etc.) that are clearly attitudinal, argues that “my own righteousness” refers to self-righteousness on the basis of the works of the law.⁹⁹ It is probable, however, that “confidence in the flesh” (cf. “boasting in the law” – Rom 2.23), which is equivalent to ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ νόμου, does not mean boasting in meritorious self-righteousness. As noted earlier, the word σάρξ refers to the circumcised flesh signifying Jewish privileged ethnic identity as God’s people (cf. Gen 17.10-14; Gal 6.12-13; Rom 2.28; Col 2.11, 13; Eph 2.11-12). So what is referred to is boasting in privileged status of Israel.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, Paul’s righteousness is not so much concerned with his attitudinal self-righteousness because “righteousness in the law” (3.6) which is a parallel of ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ νόμου means a privileged status of Israel restricted to those who live within the boundary of the law, as argued already. Thus, it cannot be characterised as self-righteousness through meritorious works of the law, but rather as Jewish ethnocentric righteousness which is available to those who are in the law and limited to law observant Jews like Paul.¹⁰¹

What is the reference of ἡ δικαιοσύνη ἐκ θεοῦ? Identifying ἡ δικαιοσύνη ἐκ θεοῦ with δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, Stuhlmacher takes it as “a saving demonstration of God’s

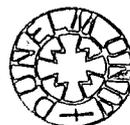
⁹⁷ F. W. Beare, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians* (2nd ed.; London: Black, 1969), 118; Bultmann, *Theology*, 1.285; O’Brien, *Philippians*, 395; Silva, *Philippians*, 186; Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 141. For a fuller list of scholars who hold this position, see Koperski, *Saying*, 9-16.

⁹⁸ Sanders, *PLJP*, 44-45.

⁹⁹ Gundry, “Grace,” 1-38, especially, 13.

¹⁰⁰ Dunn rightly argues that “flesh” denotes membership of Israel (*TPA*, 69). See also Sanders, *PLJP*, 33.

¹⁰¹ H. Räisänen (“Paul’s Conversion and the Development of His View of the Law,” *NTS* 33 (1987), 409-410) maintains that “What Paul renounces according to Philippians 3:7ff. is his whole covenant-status as a Jew, which includes reliance on the divine gifts bestowed uniquely on Israel as well as the confirmation of those gifts by his own obedience.” Sanders, *PLJP*, 38. Sanders argues that “my own righteousness” is the same as “their own righteousness” in Rom 10.3 (p. 44). See also Watson, *PJG*, 78.



righteousness going out from God.”¹⁰² The phrase ἡ δικαιοσύνη ἐκ θεοῦ, however, should not be interpreted as “the salvific activity of God” (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ - Rom. 1.17; 3.5, 21, 22)¹⁰³ because ἡ δικαιοσύνη ἐκ θεοῦ is not identical with δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ.¹⁰⁴ Rather the phrase ἡ δικαιοσύνη ἐκ θεοῦ refers to righteousness granted from God as a free gift.¹⁰⁵ This can be substantiated by its equivalence, i.e. τὴν διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ. Whatever the meaning of the phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ is,¹⁰⁶ undoubtedly τὴν διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ describes the gift of righteousness given to believers through Christ (cf. Gal 2.16). Moreover, the parallelism between ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ νόμου (“righteousness of my own derived from the law”) and τὴν ἐκ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην strengthens the suggestion that ἡ δικαιοσύνη ἐκ θεοῦ means a gift of righteousness granted from God.

In brief, certainly in Phil 3.9 Paul emphasises righteousness in Christ as his theological rationale for rejecting righteousness in the law (3.6). Paul considers all things (e.g. righteousness in the sphere of the law, confidence in the flesh) as loss that he may be found in the sphere of Christ and gain righteousness in Christ. He regards his righteousness within the law as rubbish because of the surpassing value of righteousness in Christ. Thus righteousness in Christ is the reason why Paul discards righteousness in the law and his own Jewish privileges. In light of his Christocentric perspective, Paul replaces the valid sphere of justification from the sphere of the law to the sphere of Christ. Thus we can conclude that in Phil 3.6-9 also Paul sets the law in antithesis with Christ as two antithetical spheres of justification in order to reject righteousness in the sphere of the law.

¹⁰² P. Stuhlmacher, *Biblische Theologie des Neue Testaments* (Band 1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 337.

¹⁰³ Pace Stuhlmacher. For the meaning of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as “God’s salvific activity,” see ch. 8, n. 15.

¹⁰⁴ Silva (*Philippians*, 186) lists four reasons: (1) the presence of ἐκ, (2) the contrast with a righteousness of my own derived from the law, (3) the conception that God’s righteousness is something we may have, (4) the clear concern of the passage with personal salvation.

¹⁰⁵ R. Bultmann, “δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ,” *JBL* 83 (1964), 13; O’Brien, *Philippians*, 397; Silva, *Philippians*, 187; Schreiner, *The Law and Its Fulfillment*, 110.

¹⁰⁶ This phrase is usually taken to refer to “faith in Christ” regarding Χριστοῦ as an objective genitive (e.g. G. D. Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 324-325; Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 141-142; Koperski, “The Meaning of *Pistis Christou* in Philippians 3.9,” 198-216; Silva, *Philippians*, 187). As we will see later (§6.1.), however, the case for understanding

3. 2. 2. 4. Concluding Remarks

On the basis of the study above we may conclude that there is a close relationship between justification (or righteousness) and “in Christ.” It may be fairly claimed that justification in the sphere of Christ is Paul’s theological rationale for his opposition to justification in the sphere of the law. It becomes clear that the way by which Gentiles enter the people of God is participation in the sphere of Christ in which justification takes place, the blessing of Abraham and the gift of righteousness, are given to the Gentiles. While these themes do not appear in the context where Paul argues directly against justification in the law, furthermore, freedom in Christ (2.4),¹⁰⁷ sonship in Christ (3.26),¹⁰⁸ and “oneness” in Christ (3.28)¹⁰⁹ indicate that the boundary of the law is no longer the legitimate sphere of salvation; rather, Christ is. It is thus unnecessary for those in Christ to enter the boundary of the law in which Israelites exist in order to become the offspring of Abraham; when one is in Christ, then he or she may receive the soteriological effects of the Christ-event such as freedom, righteousness, the blessing of Abraham, and sonship. The legitimate sphere of salvation is Christ, not the law.

3. 2. 3. Paul’s Theological Rationale for Justification in Christ

Why does Paul think that not the law but Christ is the valid sphere of justification? Here we will attempt to argue that it is rooted in Paul’s new theological conviction, that is, God’s eschatological transfer of the redemptive-historical salvific sphere from the law to Christ. There are several indications in Paul’s letters that show the “sphere-transfer.” Although the observation is hardly new, it is worth documenting the point because of its importance to our thesis.

First of all, the conviction is expressed in Paul’s autobiographical statements, in particular Gal 1-2 and Phil 3. It is true that Paul’s encounter with Jesus

πίστις Χριστοῦ as “the faithfulness of Christ” is more probable. Note the bibliographical details which support this view, in O’Brien, *Philippians*, 398-400; Longenecker, *Triumph*, 99.

¹⁰⁷ See §2.2.2.6.

¹⁰⁸ Divine sonship in the sphere of Christ means that the legitimate way of receiving divine sonship is not by entering the covenant community through circumcision but by participating in the sphere of Christ. The boundary in which sonship is available has been transferred from “within the community of Israel” to “in the sphere of Jesus Christ.” See §2.2.2.3.

¹⁰⁹ See §2.2.2.4.

Christ on the road to Damascus transformed not only his view of Jesus but also his view of the law.¹¹⁰ It resulted in a “paradigm shift”¹¹¹ from a world-view defined by the Torah and the “traditions of [his] fathers” (Gal 1.14) to that defined by the gospel of Christ.¹¹² The experience probably led Paul to the antithesis between the law and Christ in terms of redemptive-historical sphere.¹¹³ It is probable that before the experience Paul firmly believed that God’s saving grace is available only in the sphere of the law, as his Jewish contemporaries did. So he was “exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my ancestors” (Gal 1.14) and “blameless, so far as righteousness in the sphere of the law was concerned” (Phil 3.6). He had confidence in the flesh, that is, his Jewish heritage and privilege (Phil 3.3-5). On the basis of the conviction, moreover, he “was violently persecuting the church of God and was trying to destroy it” (Gal 1.13 - NRSV; cf. Phil 3.6) probably because the first Jewish Christians proclaimed salvation in and through Christ and were breaking the boundary of the covenant by including Gentiles into the covenant community without asking the requirements of proselytes. He was advanced in Judaism beyond many Jews of his own age (προέκοπτον ἐν τῷ Ἰουδαϊσμῷ - Gal 1.14a). The sphere of Paul’s life was Judaism (ἀναστροφὴν ἐν τῷ Ἰουδαϊσμῷ - Gal 1.13). But when God revealed his Son to Paul (Gal 1.12, 15-16; cf. 2 Cor 4.6), he was converted from a zealot to the law to “a slave of Christ” (Rom 1.1; Gal 1.10; Phil 1.1). He was changed from a persecutor of the church to an apostle to the Gentiles (Gal 1.13-16). He turned from his earlier life in Judaism (Gal 1.13) to life in Christ (Gal 2.20). Before the encounter with Christ he had lived for the law (Gal 1.14). But after the encounter he died to the law (Gal 2.19; cf. Rom 7.4). He no longer lives for it. Now it is Christ who lives in him (Gal 2.20). He had no confidence in belonging within the boundary of the covenant, through circumcision in flesh (Phil 3.3-4).¹¹⁴ Probably he boasted in the flesh before

¹¹⁰ Donaldson (*Paul*, 299) argues, “Paul’s conversion experience can be understood as a reconfiguration of his convictional world.” For the study, see *The Road from Damascus: Paul’s Impact of Conversion on His Life, Thought, and Ministry*, edited by Richard N. Longenecker, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997); Kim, *The Origin of Paul’s Gospel*.

¹¹¹ Cf. T. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (2nd ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

¹¹² Donaldson, *Paul*, 304.

¹¹³ Donaldson, *Paul*, 45.

¹¹⁴ Dunn, *TPA*, 69.

knowing Christ, as his Jewish contemporaries did (cf. Rom 2.23; Gal 6.13). But after knowing Christ, he boasts in the cross (Gal 6.14) and in the sphere of Christ (Phil 3.3). He considered his Jewish prerogatives as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing the Lord, Jesus Christ (Phil 3.7-8). He regarded “righteousness in the sphere of the law” (Phil 3.6) as loss and rubbish because he found “righteousness in Christ” (Phil 3.9). He abandoned his conviction about Jewish privileges in the sphere of the law, since in the sphere of Christ God’s grace is more freely and universally given to those who believe in the gospel. Paul’s death to the law and his abandoning his former life in Judaism, righteousness in the law, and confidence in belonging to the sphere of the law show that he believed that the law is no longer the legitimate sphere of God’s grace. In other words, Paul’s life in Christ, his desire to have righteousness in Christ, his boast in Christ indicate that he understood Christ as the new redemptive-historical sphere of God’s grace.

Secondly, Paul’s negation of the law as the sphere of God’s grace supports the suggestion that God transferred the sphere of his saving grace from the law to Christ. The negation is expressed in Rom 3.21: *Νυνὶ δὲ χωρὶς νόμου δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ πεφανέρωται. Νυνὶ δὲ* probably signals the transition from the old epoch of sin to the new epoch of salvation.¹¹⁵ The phrase *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* is likely to mean God’s covenantal faithfulness manifested in the saving activities of God.¹¹⁶ In the new epoch of salvation, God’s saving grace has been disclosed outside the law. What does Paul mean by the phrase, *χωρὶς νόμου*? Does it mean that God’s righteousness is now attained without any contribution from “works of the law”? This is unlikely not only because the righteousness of God seems not to refer to the status of righteousness given by God but also because Paul is talking not about how God’s

¹¹⁵ Cf. Rom 6.22; 7.6; 1 Cor 15.20; Eph 2.13; Col 1.22.

¹¹⁶ E.g. Campbell, *The Rhetoric*, 156; Dunn, *TPA*, 342; Käsemann, *Romans*, 24; idem, “The Righteousness of God in Paul,” in *New Testament Questions of Today* (London: SCM, 1969), 180; Kertelege, *Rechtfertigung bei Paulus*, 296; O. Michel, *Der Brief an die Römer* (12th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963), 54, 171; Moo, *Romans*, 219; M. L. Soards, “The Righteousness of God in the Writings of the Apostle Paul,” *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 15 (1985), 109; J. Piper, *The Justification of God* (2nd ed.; Baker: Grand Rapids, 1995), 150; idem, “The Demonstration of the Righteousness of God in Romans 3:25, 26,” *JSNT* 7 (1980), 2-32; P. Stuhlmacher, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans* (Louisville: JKP, 1994), 31f; idem, “Apostle Paul’s View of Righteousness,” in *Reconciliation, Law, Righteousness* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 78; S. K. Williams, “Righteousness of God in Romans,” *JBL* 99 (1980), 265.

righteousness is received but about how it is manifested.¹¹⁷ Rather, it is likely that the phrase denotes that God's righteousness has been manifested outside the law, i.e. outside the sphere of the law.¹¹⁸ As Dunn rightly notes, it implies that God's righteousness has been manifested "outside the national and religious parameters set by the law."¹¹⁹ In short, the law is no longer the redemptive-historical salvific sphere in which God's saving grace has been manifested.¹²⁰

On the contrary Paul argues that God's saving grace has been disclosed in the sphere of Christ. This can be confirmed by 1 Cor 1.4 where Paul says that the grace of God has been given in the sphere of Christ (τῇ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ τῇ δοθείσῃ ὑμῖν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ - 1 Cor 1.4). Moreover, this is reflected in disputed Pauline letters: Eph 1.6 (εἰς ἔπαινον δόξης τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ ἧς ἐχαρίτωσεν ἡμᾶς ἐν τῷ ἡγαπημένῳ); Eph 2.7 (ἵνα ἐνδείξῃται ἐν τοῖς αἰῶσιν τοῖς ἐπερχομένοις τὸ ὑπερβάλλον πλοῦτος τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ ἐν χρηστότητι ἐφ' ἡμᾶς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ); 2 Tim 1.9 (χάριν, τὴν δοθείσαν ἡμῖν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ πρὸ χρόνων αἰώνων); 2 Tim 2.1 (τῇ χάριτι τῇ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ). In short, God manifested his saving grace not in the sphere of the law but in the sphere of Christ. It is therefore fair to say that the shift of the sphere of God's saving grace from the law to Christ occurred in salvation history.¹²¹ In other words, Christ has replaced the place of Torah as the sphere of God's salvation.¹²²

¹¹⁷ Moo, *Romans*, 222-223.

¹¹⁸ In several occasions the preposition χωρὶς denotes "outside" something or someone. The clearest example is 2 Cor 12.3. Here Paul contrasts between "in the body" and "out of the body" by using the prepositions ἐν and χωρὶς. The preposition χωρὶς means "outside" with the same meaning of ἐκτός that is a parallel of χωρὶς. The Ephesian believers' past life is described in a way in which they were "outside of" the sphere of Christ (Eph 2.12). But now they are in the sphere of Christ (Eph 2.13). It is clear that χωρὶς Χριστοῦ is contrasted with ἐν Χριστῷ as νυνὶ δέ testifies. The phrase χωρὶς νόμου in Rom 7.8-9 also might mean that outside the sphere of the law, sin is dead and Paul was alive.

¹¹⁹ Dunn, *Romans*, 165.

¹²⁰ God has used means other than the law to manifest his righteousness. Paul implies by the phrase "apart from the law" that the law has no longer redemptive efficacy; therefore God bypassed the law altogether in the eschatological manifestation of His righteousness. Cf. Williams, "Righteousness of God in Romans," 271.

¹²¹ Sanders argues, "in Christ God has provided for the salvation of all who believe" (*PPJ*, 441).

¹²² Sanders argues that Christ has replaced the Torah at the centre of Paul's theology, and that the two dispensations are antithetical (*PLJP*, 151f). Other scholars also observe Paul's apocalyptic use of two spheres. Barclay, *Obedying*, 206, 213; Hall, "Arguing Like an Apocalypse,"

Thirdly, Paul's statement of God's saving activities and God's salvific effects in the sphere of Christ also supports the transfer of the sphere of God's saving grace from the sphere of the law to the sphere of Christ. Paul speaks of God's various saving activities carried out in the sphere of Christ.¹²³ Probably this is the reason why Paul does not regard the law as the locus where God's saving grace is available. At the same time, various salvific effects given by God in the sphere of Christ¹²⁴ support the point. There are other of God's favours manifested in the sphere of Christ.¹²⁵ Furthermore, God's saving activities through Christ also allude to the sphere-transfer of God's saving grace from the law to Christ.¹²⁶ In short, in all of these cases the thought of Christ as the sphere or realm of God's saving activities and salvific benefits implies the transfer of the sphere of God's grace from the law to Christ.¹²⁷

Fourthly, the point can be validated by Paul's understanding of the temporality of the law and the inauguration of the epoch of Christ. Paul thinks that the epoch of the law had now come to an end through the coming of Christ (Gal 3.24) who is the end of the law (Rom 10.4). Paul states, "when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son (Gal 4.4). The coming of Jesus Christ (3.24) and "faith" (3.23, 25) had ended the realm of the law."¹²⁸ So B. Longenecker writes, "Paul restricts the law's purpose to the 'Mosaic dispensation', the period that fell 430 years after Abraham (supposedly) and up to the coming of Christ."¹²⁹ The temporality of the law is expressed in Gal 3.15-19, 23-25, and 4.1-4.¹³⁰ These texts indicate that the

444-453; Lull, *Spirit*, 157, 170; Martyn, "Apocalyptic Antinomies," 111-123; Snodgrass, "Spheres of Influence," 93-113; Westerholm, "Letter and Spirit," 238.

¹²³ See §3.2.1. Cf. M. Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1990), 150.

¹²⁴ See §3.2.1.

¹²⁵ God's comfort in Christ (Phil 2.1); God's love in Christ (Rom 8.39); God's riches in Christ (Col 1.27; Phil 4.19).

¹²⁶ The saving actions of God through Christ: adoption (Eph 1.5); justification (Rom 5.9); reconciliation (Rom 5.11-12; 2 Cor 5.18; Col 1.20, 22; Eph 2.16); resurrection (1 Thes 4.13); salvation (Rom 5.9-10); victory over death (1 Cor 15.57).

¹²⁷ Büchsel states, "Die Sprachgebrauchsp parallelen zwischen $\epsilon\nu$ νόμῳ und $\epsilon\nu$ K usw. sind nicht zufällig" ("In Christus' bei Paulus," 158). Cf. Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 272; Ridderbos, *Galatia*, 190.

¹²⁸ Cf. Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery*, 135.

¹²⁹ Longenecker, *Triumph*, 117.

¹³⁰ Longenecker, *Triumph*, 118.

law has no further role in God's plan of salvation. It suggests that God disqualifies the sphere of the law as that of salvation. These texts also indicate the arrival of the new age, that is, the era of Christ in which God acts. In short, the contrast between the law and Christ in terms of epoch suggests that Paul understood it as an indicator of God's transfer of the sphere of grace from the law to Christ.

Fifthly, Paul's antithesis between the law and Christ as the divine means of justification supports the point argued above. No matter what is the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ, Paul sets the law and Christ as two incompatible means of justification (Rom 9.30-31; 10.5-6; Gal 2.16, 21; Phil 3.9). Paul argues that righteousness cannot come by the law (Gal 2.21) and the works of the law (Rom 3.20; Gal 2.16). The law was the means of atonement and forgiveness. But the law became invalid for justification not only because it was broken by the sin of Israel¹³¹ but also because God provided a new means of justification, that is, Jesus Christ. In other words, God changed the means of justification from the law to Christ (Rom 5.9, 17-18; 10.4; Gal 2.21).

3. 3. Summary and Implications

To recap what we said earlier, Paul attempted to persuade the Galatians not to go within the boundary of the law for their justification by contrasting the law with Christ in terms of two antithetical spheres of justification. Against the agitators' argument that unless they come within the boundary of the law, the Gentiles are cut off from the people of God and from salvation, Paul argues that those in the law are cut off from the sphere of Christ and salvation. Justification in the law leads to alienation from the realm of Christ and thus those who desire to be justified in the law will receive no salvific benefit of Christ. The rhetorical force of the antithesis is that Paul urges the Galatians to continue to stay within the sphere of Christ in which they can be justified, without being persuaded by the agitators' message of justification in the law. This antithesis is Paul's answer to one of the critical issues in Galatians: whether Gentiles must enter the boundary of Israelites (i.e. the Mosaic covenant) to become God's people. Paul answers that Jews and Gentiles alike must

¹³¹ Hong, *Law*, 193.

enter the boundary of Christ for salvation. Since Christ is the legitimate boundary of salvation, the boundary of the law must be rejected.

In general, it may be fairly claimed that the antithesis between the law and Christ as two antithetical spheres of justification has not been given sufficient attention in previous studies of Paul.¹³² In particular, the sociological significance of the antithesis has been neglected in the Pauline studies. The antithesis is significant for understanding Paul's view of the relationships between Jew and Gentile (and Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians), between the Jewish community and the Christian community, and between the agitators and Gentile Christians (the Galatians). First, what is the sociological significance of the antithesis for understanding Paul's view of the relationship between Jew and Gentile? Justification in the law presupposes the distinction between Jews and Gentiles in the sense that Gentiles can be justified only by entering into the circle of the Jewish people. For Jews of Paul's day the law (the observance of the law) functions as the mark of the covenant community.¹³³ They believed that one could maintain membership of the covenant community by living within ("staying in," in Sanders' phrase) the boundary of the law. On the contrary Paul believed that Christ defines the people of God.¹³⁴ Believers can be the children of God by being within the boundary of Christ (Gal 3.26); the boundary marker of the covenant community is not the law but Christ.¹³⁵ Justification in Christ implies the end of the social function of the law dividing Jews

¹³² Although Sanders (*PLJP*, 45-48) points out the antithesis between the law and Christ as incompatible means of justification, he overlooks the antithesis as contrasting sphere of justification. While Donaldson (*Paul*, 172) rightly notes, "Paul perceives Christ and Torah as rival boundary markers, rival ways of determining the people of God, rival entrance requirements for the community of salvation," he does not pay sufficient attention to the Christ-Torah antithesis as antithetical spheres of justification.

¹³³ As noted earlier (ch. 1), Dunn has made a significant contribution to our understanding of Paul's thought on the law by highlighting the identity marking function of the law (*Romans 1-8*, lxiii-lxxii). Dunn (*JPL*, 4) argues that the whole point of Paul's rejection of the law lies in the social function of the law, that is, "the law functioning to mark out Israel's distinctiveness as the people of God, both in terms of Jewish self-identity, and as forming a boundary between Jews (those 'inside the law') and Gentiles (those 'outside the law')." He also interprets "the works of the law" (Gal 2.16; Rom 3.20, 28) as a reference to "the social function of the law as marking out the people of the law in their distinctiveness" (*Romans*, 1.159).

¹³⁴ Esler (*Galatians*, 177) argues that Christ is the basis of the social-identity of Christians.

¹³⁵ Donaldson (*Paul*, 172) rightly argues, "Paul perceives Christ and Torah as rival boundary markers, rival ways of determining the people of God, rival entrance requirements for the community of salvation."

and Gentiles and excluding Gentiles from the privilege of righteousness.¹³⁶ It denies privileged Jewish “national righteousness”¹³⁷ from which Gentiles were excluded because the gift of righteousness is freely given to Gentiles without requiring the works of the law, in particular circumcision. It is Paul’s theological basis for unity between Jewish Christians and Gentiles in Christ (Gal 3.28) and for denying any distinction between circumcision and uncircumcision in Christ (Gal 5.6; cf. 6.15; Rom 3.22). Moreover, justification in Christ signifies the transfer of Gentile believers’ social status “from Gentile outsiders to covenant insiders.”¹³⁸ The point is clearly expressed in Eph 3.6: εἶναι τὰ ἔθνη συγκληρονόμα καὶ σύσσωμα καὶ συμμετόχα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου. In short, the antithesis is Paul’s theological basis for refusing to make a distinction between Jew and Gentile (and Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians) and for his rejection of the social function of the law dividing Jew and Gentile and excluding Gentiles from God’s people.

Second, the antithesis is important for understanding how Paul sees the relationship between the Jewish community and the Christian community. Our study of the antithesis might shed fresh light on Paul’s view of the relationship between Israel and the Church, that is one of the hot issues in recent Pauline scholarship.¹³⁹ The antithesis implies that those in Christ should not become those in the law. As noted earlier, for the Jews the law is the boundary of Jews’ privilege, identity, and existence, whereas for the Christians Christ is. Those ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ and those ἐν νόμῳ are contrasted as two mutually exclusive religious communities. What Paul connotes by the contrast is that the Christian community should be separated from the ethnocentric Jewish community,¹⁴⁰ from Paul’s redemptive-historical perspective

¹³⁶ Martyn (“Events in Galatia,” 167) similarly argues that incorporation into Christ “has as its necessary corollary the obliteration of the distinction between Jews and Gentiles (3.26-28).”

¹³⁷ The expression “national righteousness” had its origin with N. T. Wright, “The Messiah and the People of God,” (D. Ph. Thesis, University of Oxford, 1980).

¹³⁸ Neyrey, “Bewitched in Galatia,” 80.

¹³⁹ Cf. S. J. Hafemann, “Paul and the Exile of Israel in Galatians 3-4,” in *Exile*, edited by J. M. Scott (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997), 329-371.

¹⁴⁰ While Watson underplays the continuity between Abraham’s descendants and the church, it is convincing that one of the major purposes of Galatians was that ‘the church should separate from the Jewish community’ (*PJG*, 64).

(i.e. the antithesis between the law and Christ as two antithetical salvation-historical spheres) those in the law are to be separated from those in Christ.¹⁴¹ The former excludes the latter and *vice versa*. For Paul the new boundary of God's people is the sphere of Christ in which Jewish believers and Gentile become the newly-created people of God (cf. Eph 2.15). Paul believes that only those Jews and Gentiles in Christ already constitute the eschatological people of God and the Jews who rejected Christ is outside Christ (i.e. the new covenant).¹⁴² In short, for Paul the question is not whether one is in the law or outside the law, but of whether one is in Christ or not,¹⁴³ Christ is the new boundary marker of the people of God. This indicates the sociological discontinuity between those in Christ and those in the law.

Third, the antithesis suggests that those in Christ (Paul and the Galatians) should be disassociated from the agitators (Jewish Christians) who are in the sphere of the law and want the Galatians to enter within the boundary of the law.¹⁴⁴ This is indicated by the contrast between ἡμεῖς and οἵτινες ἐν νόμῳ δικαιοῦσθε (5.4b).¹⁴⁵ The perspective is implicitly present in Gal 4.23-30. The force of Paul's argument is that the agitators (those in the law) belonging to the line of Hagar are Ishmael, but the Galatians (those in Christ) belonging to the line of Sarah are Isaac.¹⁴⁶ The children of the promise born according to the Spirit (i.e. Christians) should dissociate

¹⁴¹ Although Watson rightly notes that several antitheses in Galatians legitimate the separation of church from the Jewish community, he shows little awareness that the antithesis between the law and Christ is one of Paul's theological rationales for the separation (*PJG*, 46-47, 63-69). Sanders (*PPJ*, 549) states, "One may hazard the guess that the experience of being 'in Christ' was not the same as the experience of being 'in Israel'." In light of the antithesis between being in Christ and being in the law (i.e. in Israel), this dissimilarity is not a hazardous guess.

¹⁴² Hafemann, "Paul and the Exile of Israel in Galatians 3-4," 371.

¹⁴³ Bonneau similarly argues, "In the new humanity instituted by the death and resurrection of Jesus, the question is not whether one is a Jew or a Gentile, but of whether one is 'in Christ' or not" ("Logic," 79). Horrell ("No longer Jew or Greek," 343) also concludes, "Hence what defines the 'ingroup' as opposed to 'outgroup' is quite simply being ἐν Χριστῷ. The distinction to be drawn in terms of moral obligation and social interaction is not between Jew and Gentile but between those who are in Christ and those who are not."

¹⁴⁴ The Hagar-Sarah allegory seems to strengthen this point because one rhetorical function of the allegory is to appeal the Galatians to expel the agitators from their churches (cf. 4.30). See Bligh, *Galatians*, 390; A. T. Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet* (Cambridge: CUP, 1981), 27-28; Hansen, *Abraham*, 145-146; Martyn, *Galatians*, 445-446. *Contra* Barrett, "The Allegory."

¹⁴⁵ As observed earlier (§2.2.2.1.), "we" refers to Paul and the Galatians who had faith in Christ and experienced the Spirit, i.e. the church. See Burton, *Galatians*, 277; Martyn, *Galatians*, 472.

¹⁴⁶ See R. B. Hays, "Crucified with Christ," in *Pauline Theology* vol. 1, 237; Martyn, *Galatians*, 450; Matera, *Galatians*, 175-178.

with the children born according to the flesh (Jews). This is implicitly expressed in Gal 4.30 ("Ἐκβαλε τὴν παιδίσκην καὶ τὸν υἱὸν αὐτῆς· οὐ γὰρ μὴ κληρονομήσει ὁ υἱὸς τῆς παιδίσκης μετὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς ἐλευθέρας). What Paul means by the text is that the Galatians should expel the Jewish agitators from their congregations.¹⁴⁷ For they are not God's heirs and thus cannot share in the inheritance with the children of the promise (i.e. the new covenant people of God).¹⁴⁸ As E. P. Sanders rightly notes, "Christological 'universalism' quickly becomes another kind of exclusiveness: those not in Christ, no matter how loyal to the covenants between God and Israel, are excluded from the people of God."¹⁴⁹ It may be fairly claimed, therefore, that there was another boundary line among Christians, i.e. between the Jewish Christian Judaizers community and the Pauline Gentile Christian community. Justification in Christ implies Christian particularism which maintains that one can be acceptable to God only in the sphere of Christ.

In light of the observations above, it may be fairly claimed that with God's eschatological transfer from the law to Christ as the sphere of justification Paul redefines the boundary of God's people and replaces it from the law to Christ. However, Dunn argues that "in Christ" means "Paul replaces one bounded system (Judaism bounded by the law) with another (Christ); not a completely different one (Christ is the seed of Abraham), but one enlarged by relativizing the significance attached to the old boundary markers like circumcision."¹⁵⁰ While Dunn rightly notes the replacement of a boundary system (from Judaism to Christ), he does not pay sufficient attention to the mutual exclusiveness between the two boundary systems, which is clearly demonstrated in 5.4: κατηγγήθητε ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ, οἵτινες ἐν νόμῳ δικαιοῦσθε ("in the law" = "outside Christ"). This shows that "being in the law" is in stark contrast to "being in Christ." While noting the antithesis between "within the law" and "within Christ,"¹⁵¹ Dunn does not allow for the antithesis between the law

¹⁴⁷ See Betz, *Galatians*, 251; Martyn, *Galatians*, 446; Matera, *Galatians*, 178.

¹⁴⁸ Hafemann, "Paul and the Exile of Israel in Galatians 3-4," 365-367.

¹⁴⁹ E. P. Sanders, "Paul," in *Early Christian Thought in Its Jewish Context*, edited by J. Barclay and J. Sweet, 112-129 (Cambridge: CUP, 1996), 116.

¹⁵⁰ Dunn, *Galatians*, 82.

¹⁵¹ Dunn, "The Theology of Galatians," 137.

and Christ as two incompatible spheres of justification, as we argued already.¹⁵² At the same time, although Dunn is right when he says, “he (*sc.* Paul) was attempting to redraw the boundaries with Gentile Christians inside”¹⁵³ he fails to notice that the boundary redrawn (i.e. the boundary of Christ) excludes the boundary of the law. Put differently, the redrawn boundary is not an enlarged one including the boundary of the law but a newly-created boundary excluding it because there is no overlap between the zone of the law and that of Christ.¹⁵⁴ Recently Donaldson argues, “In his [Paul’s] first-generation situation, expecting the return of Christ and the consummation of salvation to occur soon, he could insist, as his basic conviction impelled him to do, that membership in Israel was determined by Christ, not Torah, while at the same time continuing to take for granted – in accordance with another of his core convictions – the traditional, Torah-based distinctions between Jew and Gentile.”¹⁵⁵ He seems to suggest that Paul desired to reconfigure the boundary of salvation by making Christ its centre without replacing the law with Christ as the valid boundary of justification. If I understand him correctly, he overlooks that for Paul the new boundary of salvation is the sphere of Christ; thus the old boundary of Israel (i.e. the law) must be rejected. With the antithesis Paul excludes from God’s eschatological people Jews who are in the sphere of the law, not in the sphere of Christ. It may be fairly claimed, therefore, that Paul’s churches (“the church of God” – 1 Cor 10.32) who are in Christ (some of them Gentiles and some Israelites) were “a third race” distinguished from both Jews and Gentiles.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² Similarly Neyrey notes, “The correct side of the boundary line is constituted by being ‘in Christ,’ i.e., by having the faith of Jesus; here is found justification, which is ‘purity’ in God’s sight. The wrong side is that characterized by ‘the Law’ and works of the law” (“Bewitched in Galatia,” 81).

¹⁵³ Dunn, “The Theology of Galatians,” 138, n. 45.

¹⁵⁴ Gaventa (“Singularity,” 153) similarly argues, “One may be under the law or one may be in Christ, but it is impossible to be both.”

¹⁵⁵ T. L. Donaldson, “Israelite, Convert, Apostle to the Gentiles,” in *The Road from Damascus*, 83; *idem*, *Paul*, 305.

¹⁵⁶ While missing the antithesis between the law and Christ in terms of two antithetical spheres in which God’s people exist, Sanders (*PLJP*, 178-179) rightly notes, “Paul’s view of church, supported by his practice, against his own conscious intention, was substantially that it was a third entity, not just because it was composed of both Jew and Greek, but also because it was in important way neither Jewish nor Greek.” Esler (*Galatians*, 89) also suggests “Paul unambiguously asserts that the Christ-followers constituted a third group, set over against both the Judaic and the gentile worlds” although he does not notice the point above. See also Esler, “Family Imagery and Christian Identity in Gal 5:13 to 6:10,” 128-130. However, Donaldson argues that Paul did not intend to create

To sum up, what is the significance of the antithesis for understanding the focus of Paul's critique of covenantal nomism and the law? He argues against ethnocentric covenantal nomism that asserts salvation is available only within the boundary of the law (i.e. the covenant). In contrast to ethnocentric covenantal nomism that requires Gentiles to get within the sphere of the law in order to become members of the covenant community, the gospel of Christ calls them to participate in the sphere of Christ. For Paul covenantal nomism denies the new salvific boundary that God has drawn in Christ.¹⁵⁷ Paul's gospel of justification in Christ made him refute covenantal nomism because God's justification is dependent not on exclusivistic covenantal nomism but on the universalistic gospel of Christ through which God planned to justify Gentiles before giving the law (3.8) through the promise made to Abraham (3.16-18). Alternatively expressed, the theological ground of Paul's critique of the law is Christocentric exclusivistic soteriology; since salvation is only in Christ, salvation in the law is wrong. This is a central content of Paul's gospel.¹⁵⁸ In light of the observations above it may be fairly claimed that Paul's critique is focused on the sociological and soteriological function of the law. The issue in Paul's critique of the law has nothing to do with being justified through

a third race, rather the perspective was developed by later Christian generation. Donaldson (*Paul*, 306) says, "Paul's generation was replaced by another, and another, and yet another. By the time of Justin Martyr, Paul's both/and was clearly an either/or – either Christian or Jew; either Justin's 'true, spiritual Israel' or Trypho's ethnic, empirical Israel." However, the antithesis above indicates that by the time of Paul either "those in Christ" or "those in the law"; the two groups cannot be mingled together as one God's people. Interestingly, Horrell ("No longer Jew or Greek," 341) understands Christian identity as "a redefined Israel" who are in Christ. But Horrell does not explain whether or not Paul regarded "a redefined Israel" as a distinctive group different from ethnic Israel. S. Mason argues that Paul "no longer identifies himself with the Jewish people" ("Paul, Classical Anti-Jewish Polemic, and the Letter to the Romans," in *Self Definition and Self-Discovery in Early Christianity*, edited by D. J. Hawkin and T. Robinson, 181-223 (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990), 207). Boyarin (*A Radical Jew*, 155) also regards Paul as having "given up his specific Jewish identity in order to merge his essence into the essence of the gentile Christians and create the spiritual People of God." Similarly H. Conzelmann (*Gentiles – Jews – Christians* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 251-254) argues that Paul distinguished the true Israel (i.e. Church) from empirical Israel.

¹⁵⁷ Dunn ("The Theology of Galatians," 137) rightly notes, "The upshot is that Paul is able to pose a different alternative from that usually posed by Judaism. Judaism asserted: within the law = within the covenant. Paul in contrast asserted: within Christ = within the covenant; within the law = outside Christ (5.4)."

¹⁵⁸ Dunn (*Galatians*, 141) writes, "the phrase encapsulates the core of Paul's gospel: that believers are counted acceptable to God because they are 'in Christ'." Garlington also argues, "In a nutshell, the heart of Paul's soteriology is that one becomes and then remains a faithful member of the covenant people by virtue of being 'in Christ' versus being ἐν νόμῳ" ("Role Reversal," 106).

meritorious deeds of the law. Rather his focus is on the exclusivistic role of the law as the boundary of God's people and the sphere of God's justification.

CHAPTER 4

THE ANTITHESIS BETWEEN THE LAW AND GRACE

In Gal 5.4b and 5.4c Paul continues to tackle the issue of justification saying, οἵτινες ἐν νόμῳ δικαιοῦσθε, τῆς χάριτος ἐξέπεσατε (“You who want to be justified in the sphere of the law have fallen away from grace”). As noted in the previous chapter, the Galatians were willing to depend on the law for their justification because they were persuaded by the agitators’ teaching that Gentiles can be full and genuine members of the covenant community by getting within the sphere of the law through Torah-observance, in particular circumcision. There is little doubt that the agitators argued for justification on the basis of the law (2.16, 21; 3.11, 18, 21; 5.4). As indicated earlier (§1.1.), Paul attempts to solve the issue of justification by setting the law in antithesis with grace as two mutually exclusive soteriological sources or foundations for justification.¹ The two terms (the law and grace) seem to represent larger complexes of belief and praxis and the larger complexes are summarised in the antithesis.² While many scholars have rightly observed this antithesis,³ they have not satisfactorily expounded its force, function, and significance with special reference to the issues at stake in Galatia, in particular the Galatians’ desire to accept the law for justification.

There are several questions for us: What does Paul intend to achieve through the antithesis? Why does Paul hold that grace is sufficient for justification of the

¹ While the theme of grace seems to include the idea of Christ and the Spirit, as we shall see below, in this antithesis Paul focuses on the *theological* aspect, not the Christological or pneumatological one.

² Moffatt (*Grace*, 182) notes the significance of the antithesis by saying, “Law and Grace are viewed as incompatible systems of religion. To toy with the former is to invalidate the latter . . .” Cf. Burton, *Galatians*, 277; Dunn, “Circumcision,” 80.

³ For the interpreters see ch. 1, n. 62.

Gentiles in Galatians? What is the significance of the antithesis both for Paul's opposition to the law as the soteriological basis of justification and for his critique of covenantal nomism? In order to answer these questions, it is first necessary to exegete τῆς χάριτος ἐξεπέσατε (5.4c).

4. 1. Exegesis of 5.4c

4. 1. 1. The Meaning of ἐξεπέσατε

The verb ἐξεπέσατε is a second aorist from ἐκπίπτω. Without attempting to investigate the verb ἐκπίπτω used by classical writers from Homer down,⁴ it is sufficient to note that the verb generally means “to fall out of” in the classical Greek writings.⁵ In the LXX the verb appears 15 times. In most occurrences it is used literally. It describes the flower which falls from its stalk and withers away (Isa 28.1, 4; 40.7; Job 14.2; 15.30, 33), an axe which falls from the haft (Deut 19.5) and the woodchopper which falls from the hand (2 Kgs 6.5), the morning star which falls from heaven (Isa 14.12), a tree which falls from a stump (Isa 6.13), and the horns which fall (Dan 7.20). Figuratively the verb describes a command which goes forth (2 Macc. 6.8) and those people who set their hopes in dreams which have perished (Sir 34.7).

In the NT the verb ἐκπίπτω occurs 10 times.⁶ In Acts 27.17, 26, 29 it describes a ship failing to hold the course which leads to safety and falling away into disaster. In Acts 27.32 the verb ἐκπίπτω means “drift away.” In James 1.11 and 1 Pet 1.24, the verb means “fall off from.” On the basis of the LXX, the verb in James 1.11 and 1 Pet 1.24 describes a withered flower falling from its stem to the ground. In Acts 12.7 the verb describes the supernatural deliverance of Peter (“the chains fell from his wrists”). Paul uses the verb 2 times (Rom 9.6; Gal 5.4). In Rom 9.6 Paul says that the word of God (i.e. God's promises to Israel) had not “failed” (ἐκπέπτωκεν) because of the present rejection of the gospel by some Israelites. In Gal 5.4, however, the verb ἐκπίπτω describes the Galatians who have fallen away from

⁴ For the usage of the verb in classical Greek literature, see W. Michaelis, πίπτω κ.τ.λ., *TDNT* 6.167 [161-173].

⁵ See Burton, *Galatians*, 277; Michaelis, πίπτω κ.τ.λ., 167.

⁶ See M. E. Glasswell, ἐκπίπτω, *EDNT* 1.420.

grace. It is conceivable that Paul metaphorically relates the stem of a flower sustaining the flower to grace, and thus compares the Galatians' state of being fallen away from grace figuratively with a withered flower falling away from its stem to the ground. A close parallel in the NT is 2 Pet 3.17 (ἐκπέσητε τοῦ ἰδίου στηριγμοῦ), where the verb describes Peter's exhortation to his congregation not to fall from their earlier firm stance which establishes and maintains their faith. When the subject of the verb is a person, it describes one's falling away from or separation from something (e.g. grace, stability) that supports and sustains the person. Another parallel is ἐκπεσεῖν κυρίου in *T. Judah* 21.4. The priesthood of Levi falls away from the Lord through sin. To fall away from the Lord means that the priesthood of Levi has departed from the Lord who is the source of establishment and sustenance for the priesthood. It is probable, therefore, that the verb describes the Galatians' falling away from or separation from grace, on which their salvation is totally dependent.

Finally we should not fail to note the force of the aorist ἐξεπέσατε in relation to the present δικαιοῦσθε.⁷ For Paul, the Galatians' desire to be justified on the basis of the law, even though they had not as yet relied upon the law, has already resulted in falling away from grace.⁸ The aorist verb denotes a past event viewed as a simple fact. So for Paul the Galatians' attempt to rely upon the law for justification means that their separation from the relationship with grace had already happened as an immediate consequence.

4. 1. 2. The Meaning of χάρις

What did Paul have in mind by the χάρις from which the Galatians have fallen? Without attempting to investigate the full range of χάρις in Paul's letters,⁹ it is sufficient to focus on Galatians not only because χάρις with the article (ἡ)

⁷ Burton, *Galatians*, 277.

⁸ For the issue of the loss of one's salvation which can be derived from the force of the aorist verb, see Gundry-Volf, *Paul and Perseverance*, 214-215; McKnight, *Galatians*, 249-250; B. J. Oropeza, *Paul and Apostasy* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2000), 197.

⁹ For the word study of χάρις in Paul, see K. Berger, χάρις, *EDNT* 3.457-460; H. Conzelmann, χάρις κτλ, *TDNT* 9.373-376, 387-402. For recent study, see E. J. Eastmann, "The Significance of Grace in the Letters of Paul," (Ph. D. Dissertation, McMaster University, 1995). For the central role of χάρις in Paul's theology, see H. Conzelmann, χάρις κτλ, *TDNT* 9.393; Dunn, *TPA*, 319-320; Westerholm, *Israel's Law*, 165-169.

probably refers back to that grace of God, of Christ, or both, which Paul explained to the Galatians in the previous section,¹⁰ but also because ἡ χάρις seems to summarise Paul's previous argument about grace. In Galatians χάρις occurs seven times (1.3, 6, 15; 2.9, 21; 5.4; 6.18). It is proper to deal with each occurrence in order to clarify the meaning of ἡ χάρις in 5.4.

The word χάρις is employed in the opening salutation (1.3) and closing benediction (6.18) as in Paul's other letters.¹¹ When χάρις is used in relation to his greeting and benediction, it normally refers to the "favour" of God or Jesus Christ toward believers which sustains and empowers them. So χάρις (1.3; 6.18) refers to God's or Christ's continuous mercy, spiritual benefit, and enabling the edification of believers, not to God's past redemptive act in and through Christ.

What is the meaning of χάρις at 1.6? In order to clarify its meaning, it is necessary to define the meaning of the phrase ἐν χάριτι [Χριστοῦ]. First of all, we should decide what the original reading among the five variant readings is.¹² As Metzger indicates, "the absence of any genitive qualifying ἐν χάριτι has the appearance of being the original."¹³ The absence of Χριστοῦ from P^{46vid} and some Western witnesses is hard to explain and may well indicate that copyists added the other readings.¹⁴ In other words, transcriptional probability prefers the shorter reading.¹⁵ Thus it is fair to say that ἐν χάριτι is original reading.¹⁶ Secondly, it is necessary to clarify the meaning of the preposition ἐν. There are two possible renderings. 1) It may be taken in an instrumental sense (cf. 2 Thes 2.16) in light of

¹⁰ Burton, *Galatians*, 276.

¹¹ χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Rom 1.7; 1 Cor 1.3; 2 Cor 1.2; Gal 1.3; Phil 1.2; Phm 1.3; cf. Eph 1.2; Col 1.2; 1 Thes 1.2; 2 Thes 1.2; 1 Tim 1.2; 2 Tim 1.2; Tit 1.4); ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ μεθ' ὑμῶν (Rom 16.20; 1 Cor 16.23; 2 Cor 13.13; Gal 6.18; Phil 4.23; 1 Thes 5.28; Phm 1.25; cf. Eph 6.24; Col 4.18; 2 Thes 3.18; 1 Tim 6.21; 2 Tim 4.22; Tit 3.15).

¹² See B. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (2nd ed.; Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 1994), 520.

¹³ Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 520.

¹⁴ Dunn, *Galatians*, 38.

¹⁵ Martyn, *Galatians*, 109; Matera, *Galatians*, 45.

¹⁶ Metzger mentions that a majority of the committee that worked on the UBS³ was unwilling to adopt a reading that is supported by only part of the Western tradition, though Χριστοῦ was included with reservations due to its omission by P^{46vid} and other Western witnesses (*A Textual Commentary*, 520). Cf. Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 55.

Gal 1.15 where Paul says that God called him διὰ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ.¹⁷ 2) It could be rendered in a locative sense,¹⁸ which would mean that God called the Galatians to be in grace. The latter is preferable because when the expression καλέω ἐν occurs, ἐν is normally used in a locative sense. The preposition has as its object a state, such as peace (ἐν δὲ εἰρήνῃ κέκληκεν ὑμᾶς ὁ θεός - 1 Cor 7.15), holiness (ἐκάλεσεν ἡμᾶς ὁ θεός ἐπὶ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ ἀλλ' ἐν ἁγιασμῷ - 1 Thes 4.7), one body (ἐκλήθητε ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι - Col 3.15), and hope (ἐκλήθητε ἐν μιᾷ ἐλπίδι - Eph 4.4).¹⁹ It is thus fair to say that ἐν (1.6) should be understood in a locative sense,²⁰ and thus 1.6 probably means that God called the Galatians to be “in the realm or state of God’s grace” in which they exist. Here χάρις is depicted as the realm in which God’s grace rules and where Christians may find their existence and enjoy God’s rule.²¹ This suggestion can be strengthened by Paul’s understanding of grace as the realm of God’s saving benevolence. This is reflected in Rom 5.2 (δι’ οὗ καὶ τὴν προσαγωγὴν ἐσχήκαμεν [τῇ πίστει] εἰς τὴν χάριν ταύτην ἐν ᾗ ἐστήκαμεν).

In 1.15 χάρις is used as the basis of Paul’s own calling to apostleship among the Gentiles.²² In light of Isa 49.1 and Jer 1.5 Paul probably understood himself as the apostle to the Gentiles called and commissioned by God.²³ With a view to God’s grace as the grounds for calling, “grace” in 1.15 probably refers to God’s generous salvific act of God.

In 2.9 the “grace” given to Paul seems to refer to God’s entrusting τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς ἀκροβυστίας to Paul (2.7). When James, Cephas, and John recognised the “grace” given to Paul, they approved the gospel that Paul proclaimed

¹⁷ Bruce, *Galatians*, 79; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 15; Matera, *Galatians*, 45; NIV.

¹⁸ Burton, *Galatians*, 21; Fung, *Galatians*, 44; Martyn, *Galatians*, 109; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 55; Schlier, *Galater*, 37; Witherington, *Grace*, 79.

¹⁹ See Burton, *Galatians*, 21.

²⁰ So rightly Betz, *Galatians*, 48; Burton, *Galatians*, 21; Fung, *Galatians*, 44; Martyn, *Galatians*, 109.

²¹ The same usage appears in 2 Tim 2.1, Acts 13.43, 1 Pet 5.12, and 2 Pet 3.18. Cf. Eastmann, “The Significance of Grace in the Letters of Paul,” 113-114; Moffatt, *Grace*, 184; Schütz, *Paul*, 117.

²² Most commentators render the pronoun αὐτοῦ in the phrase διὰ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ referring to God, not Christ. E.g. Betz, Burton, Dunn, Martyn, Matera, Mußner, Schlier. *Contra* Longenecker.

²³ See Martyn, *Galatians*, 155-157; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 82. The concept of “grace” as the basis of God’s calling is reflected in 2 Tim 1.9.

among the Gentiles (2.9-10). What is the grace of God that “the pillars” (2.9) recognised in Paul? What is the grace of God that convinced them to approve the gospel? It seems that the grace recognised by the pillars refers to the grace of God manifested in Paul’s successful missionary work among Gentiles with the gospel.²⁴ It does not, however, necessarily exclude God’s commission of τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς ἀκροβυστίας to Paul,²⁵ Paul’s privilege of apostleship,²⁶ or Paul’s own apostolic office (Rom 1.5; 15.15-16).²⁷

What is the meaning of ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ in 2.21? Scholars are divided. Some claim that it refers to God’s special gift of Torah to Israel.²⁸ For instance, Longenecker argues that “Probably the Judaizers were picking up on one of Paul’s favorite terms, ‘grace’, and turning it against him, asserting that his doctrine of grace apart from the law is really a denial of God’s grace to the nation Israel.”²⁹ Some argue that it refers to Paul’s apostolic commission to the Gentiles.³⁰ For example, Dunn says, “here Paul obviously has in mind ‘the grace of God’ manifested in his calling and in his successful missionary work (1.15; 2.9).”³¹ However, the majority of scholars think that it refers to God’s salvific grace in Christ.³² Notably, Lambrecht suggests, “God’s grace is basically the gift of Christ, his person and all that he did, especially dying out of love.”³³ Although it is conceivable that Paul is answering the agitators’ criticism that he had destroyed God’s grace manifested in God’s giving of the law to Israel, the first view is unlikely because there is no clear indication that

²⁴ Burton, *Galatians*, 95; Dunn, *Galatians*, 147.

²⁵ Gaventa, “Galatians 1 and 2,” 316; T. D. Gordon, “The Problem at Galatia,” *Int* 41 (1987), 35 [32-43].

²⁶ Bruce, *Galatians*, 121; Fung, *Galatians*, 99; Schlier, *Galater*, 78.

²⁷ Betz, *Galatians*, 99; Matera, *Galatians*, 77; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 118.

²⁸ Betz, *Galatians*, 126; Bruce, *Galatians*, 146; Burton, *Galatians*, 140; Fung, *Galatians*, 125; Schlier, *Galater*, 104.

²⁹ Longenecker, *Galatians*, 94-95.

³⁰ Dunn, *Galatians*, 147; J. P. Sampley, *Pauline Partnership in Christ* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 40.

³¹ Dunn, *Galatians*, 147.

³² Betz, *Galatians*, 126; Bruce, *Galatians*, 146; Cole, *Galatians*, 126; C. B. Cousar, *Galatians* (Louisville: JKP, 1982), 52; Ebeling, *Truth*, 150; Guthrie, *Galatians*, 91; Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 120; Lührmann, *Galatians*, 48; Martyn, *Galatians*, 260; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 184; Witherington, *Grace*, 192.

³³ Lambrecht, “Transgressor by Nullifying God’s Grace,” 228.

Paul is reacting to such an accusation here.³⁴ Rather it is most likely that Paul states his present position, in contrast to his previous attempt to destroy God's grace given to the Gentiles (cf. 1.13, 23). Unlike Peter in Antioch and the agitators in Galatia who were nullifying the grace of God, Paul declares, "I do not nullify the grace of God" (2.21a). Although it is difficult to rule out the second view, in our opinion, the third view is preferable because the immediate context supports it: Paul's new life anchored in the Son of God who loved and gave himself for Paul (2.20); Christ's death which is considered by Paul as the central manifestation of God's grace (2.21). In a word, ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ refers to God's saving grace in Christ and through Christ's death, which justifies the Gentile believers.

What then is the reference of ἡ χάρις at 5.4c? It is uncertain whether it refers to the grace of God or the grace of Christ. It is probable that ἡ χάρις refers generally to God's salvific benevolence and act³⁵ in and through Christ and the Spirit in the light of the following observations. 1) With a view to "grace" as the foundation of the justification of the Gentiles at 5.4, χάρις denotes God's salvific act for the Gentiles which welcomes the Gentiles into the people of God (2.21). 2) If 5.4 summarises Paul's previous argument, χάρις with the article (ἡ) refers back to God's salvific benevolence and act for the salvation of the Gentiles which Paul explained in the previous section (1.1-5.1). 3) God's calling the Galatians to be in the state of God's salvific grace (1.6) suggests that the grace from which the Galatians have fallen is God's saving favour in which they were called to be. 4) The antithesis between the law and the grace of God as two contrasting grounds of justification (2.21) suggests that "grace" set in opposition to the law (5.4) in terms of the basis of justification refers to God's salvific act for justification. As it shall become clear below, God's grace in Galatians is described as a salvific power to redeem his people and to make the Gentiles God's children.³⁶

³⁴ Cf. Ebeling, *Truth*, 150; Guthrie, *Galatians*, 91; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 184, n. 80.

³⁵ Cf. Bruce, *Galatians*, 231; Dunn, *Galatians*, 268; Martyn, *Galatians*, 471; Matera, *Galatians*, 182.

³⁶ Dunn (*Galatians*, 31) notes "in Paul's usage it [grace] is not merely a disposition in God, but something dynamic, the generous output of his power to achieve what is best for his creation." Cf. For χάρις as power, see J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit* (London: SCM, 1975), 202-205; Martyn, *Issues*, 279-297; J. Nolland, "Grace as Power," *NovT* 38 (1986), 26-31.

4. 2. Sola Gratia: Paul's Theological Rationale for Opposition to Justification on the Basis of the Law

On the basis of the exegesis above it is clear that what Paul argues for based on the antithesis between the law and grace is that it is not the law but instead God's saving benevolence and act that is the sufficient soteriological basis or source for the justification of the Gentiles. In order to appreciate the force and significance of this antithesis we must clarify what Paul intended his readers to understand by his summary reference to *χάρις*.³⁷ How does Paul attempt to convince the Galatians of the sufficiency of God's grace for justification? In order to answer this question, first we need to know what God's saving benevolence and activities for justification of the Gentiles are. The prominent salvific favour and activities of God appearing in Galatians are as follows: God called the Galatians (1.6; 5.8; cf. 5.13). God promised to bless the nations (3.8, 15-18, 21, 23, 29; 4.28). God sent his Son in order to redeem those who were under the law (4.4). God sent the Spirit to make the Gentiles God's children (4.6; cf. 3.5). God knew the Galatians (4.9). In what follows we shall investigate the significance of each saving activity of God both for Paul's persuasion of the Galatians not to depend on the law for justification and for his opposition to the agitators' message of justification on the basis of the law.

4. 2. 1. God's Calling

When he rebukes the Galatians' apostasy,³⁸ Paul says, Θαυμάζω ὅτι οὕτως ταχέως μετατίθεσθε ἀπὸ τοῦ καλέσαντος ὑμᾶς ἐν χάριτι [Χριστοῦ] εἰς ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον (1.6). In 5.8 Paul seeks to persuade the Galatians to reject the agitators' gospel by saying that the agitators' persuasion does not come from the one who calls them (τοῦ καλοῦντος ὑμᾶς – 5.8). There is little doubt that “the one who calls” refers to God.³⁹ Why is God's act of calling the Galatians so important for Paul when he

³⁷ As we shall see below, the term “grace” sums up what Paul said earlier about the saving benevolence and activities of God.

³⁸ Oropeza (*Paul and Apostasy*, 225) understands the Galatians' apostasy as accepting the agitators' gospel which contradicts the essence of the Gospel.

³⁹ Having translated ἀπὸ τοῦ καλέσαντος ὑμᾶς ἐν χάριτι as “from Christ who called you in grace,” some older commentaries rendered Christ as the subject of calling. For a list of the older commentaries which agree or disagree this position, see Burton, *Galatians*, 19. But Paul's general use of the verb *καλέω* encourages us to take God as the subject of τοῦ καλέσαντος (Gal 1.15; Rom

tries to urge them to reject the agitators' message, in particular justification on the basis of the law?

In order to answer this question, first we need to clarify the soteriological significance of God's calling.⁴⁰ Paul's understanding of God's calling of his people probably derives from the OT, particularly from the striking language of Isaiah (Isa 41.8-9; 43.1; 45.3-4; 48.12, 15),⁴¹ where God's calling is described as the soteriological cause of Israel's election. Presumably, it is with this background that Paul speaks of God's calling as the cause of salvation. This point can be substantiated by Paul's statement of God's calling in Romans. Paul understands that God summons Gentiles as well as Jews into the right relationship with himself (Rom 9.24-26; cf. 1 Cor 1.24). He regards God's calling of the Gentile believers as God's making of them as God's elected people (cf. 1 Cor 1.26-29). Paul understands God's calling of the Gentiles as the fulfilment of Hosea's prophecy (Rom 9.25-26; cf. Hos 2.23; 1.10). In Rom 8.28-30 he also emphasises God's calling of all believers to salvation.⁴² Moreover, God's call is the means of election (Rom 9.12). Most importantly, the divine call is closely related to God's justification (Rom 8.30). Thus it may be reasonable to claim that for Paul God's calling is the cause of election and to be called by God means to be justified and to become the people of God.⁴³ In consideration of the close relationship between God's call and salvation (esp. election), it is clear, therefore, that God's calling of the Galatians denotes that God elected them to become members of the people of God and called them to salvation (cf. Rom 9.25-26; 1 Cor 1.9; 2.17). Once again the point is clearly expressed by

4.17; 8.30; 9.12, 24; 1 Cor 1.9; 7.15, 17; 1 Thes 2.12; 4.7; 5.24). So most commentators: e.g. Betz, Bruce, Burton, Dunn, Fung, Longenecker, Martyn, Matera, Mußner, Schlier. Particularly, Martyn (*Galatians*, 108) suggests that ὁ καλῶν virtually functions as a name for God (Gal 5.8; 1 Thes 2.12; 5.24; Rom 9.12).

⁴⁰ In the Pauline letters God's calling is described in three different connections: God's calling of all believers (Rom 1.7; 8.28-30; 9.24; 1 Cor 1.2, 26; 1 Thes 2.12; 5.24), God's calling of Paul as an apostle (Gal 1.15; Rom 1.1; 1 Cor 1.1; 15.9), and God's calling of Israel (Rom 11.28-29; cf. 9.11). Cf. C. G. Kruse, "Call, Calling," in *DPL*, 84-85.

⁴¹ Cf. *TDNT* 3.490; Dunn, *Galatians*, 40.

⁴² God's calling as the basis of salvation is indicated in 1 Thes 2.12; 2 Thes 2.14 (cf. Eph 1.18; 1 Tim 6.12).

⁴³ Martyn ("The Abrahamic Covenant, Christ, and the Church," in *Issues*, 171) correctly notes that Paul's use of the verb καλέω describes the genesis of the church by God's election. See also Martyn, *Galatians*, 109.

God's calling of the Galatians to freedom ('Υμεῖς γὰρ ἐπ' ἐλευθερίᾳ ἐκλήθητε – 5.13). This text means that the Galatians are not "the children of the slave" (i.e. Ishmael) but "the children of the free woman" (i.e. Isaac), as is explicitly expressed in 4.31 (ἀδελφοί, οὐκ ἐσμὲν παιδίσκης τέκνα ἀλλὰ τῆς ἐλευθέρας). In other words, as a consequence of God's calling, the Galatians are the descendants of Abraham (4.28) who are free from the slavery of the law (5.1).

On the basis of the observations above we can easily answer the question raised earlier. For Paul, just as Israel's own election was a consequence of God's calling so too is the election of the Galatians. God's gracious calling is available to Gentiles as well as Jews, not to Jews exclusively (cf. Rom 9.24-26; 1 Cor 1.24). Since God called them as God's people, in practice the Galatians do not have to undergo circumcision nor to observe the whole law in order to have membership within the people of God. This is one of Paul's theological rationales upon which he urges the Galatians to reject the agitators' message of justification on the basis of the law. Because the identity of God's people is determined by neither circumcision nor the law but God's salvific act of calling,⁴⁴ justification on the basis of the law must be rejected.

4. 2. 2. God's Promise

Another significant aspect of God's justifying grace in Galatians is God's promise,⁴⁵ from which Paul argues against the agitators' teaching of justification on the basis of the law. In Galatians there are several texts where Paul argues that God's promise is primary and sufficient for justification (3.15-26; 3.29; 4.28).

Before discussing the texts, however, we need to know what the reference of God's ἐπαγγελία is. In Galatians the word ἐπαγγελία is used 10 times (3.14, 16, 17, 18 (2 times), 21, 22, 29; 4.23, 28). There is no consensus concerning the content of the promise.⁴⁶ There are two major views. The one is that the promise refers to God's

⁴⁴ The point is well expressed in Rom 9.10-12, where Paul argues that God's election depends not on "the works" (of the law) but on God's call.

⁴⁵ The interlocking relationship between grace and promise is presented in Rom 4.16 (ἵνα κατὰ χάριν, εἰς τὸ εἶναι βεβαίαν τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν παντὶ τῷ σπέρματι).

⁴⁶ For the various views regarding the content of the promise, see S. K. Williams, "Promise in Galatians," *JBL* 107 (1988), 709, n. 2.

blessing of the nations (Gen 12.3; 18.18) cited in 3.8.⁴⁷ The other is that the Spirit itself is the promise.⁴⁸ As we shall see later (§5.2.1), it is true that Paul understands the eschatological coming of the Spirit as the fulfilment of God's promise (Isa 32.15; 44.3; 59.21; Ezek 11.19; 36.26-27; 37.14; 39.29; Joel 2.28-29) in light of Christian tradition (Luke 24.49; Acts 1.4; 2.17, 33). But it is more probable that the content of the promise is primarily God's blessing of the nations⁴⁹ for the following reasons. First, although Paul does not use the term ἐπαγγελία at 3.8, the two words (προϊδοῦσα and προεπηγγείσατο) seem to indicate that he considered "all the Gentiles shall be blessed in you" as the promise of God which would be fulfilled in the future. Second, the fact that God made the promise before the law came (3.17) indicates that the promise is God's blessing promised to Abraham. Third, that the Gentile Galatians are heirs according to the promise (3.29) and children of the promise like Isaac (4.28) reflects that they become the heirs of the Abrahamic blessing because the promise that ἐνευλογηθήσονται ἐν σοὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη was fulfilled. Fourth, Paul's use of the word ἐπαγγελίαι (the plural of ἐπαγγελία – 3.16) seems to suggest that ἐπαγγελία refers to God's promise given to Abraham.⁵⁰ Fifth, if Gal 3.10-4.7 is Paul's elaboration of the implications of the promise of 3.8,⁵¹ the promise points to

⁴⁷ Most commentators: Betz, Bruce, Burton, Dunn, Howard, Martyn, Mußner. In particular H.-J. Eckstein, *Verheißung und Gesetz* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1996), 95, 97.

⁴⁸ E.g. Williams ("Promise in Galatians," 709-720) suggests that promise "on the one hand . . . refers to the divine pledge to Abraham that he would have innumerable descendants. But since God keeps his word, fulfills his pledge, through the operation of his Spirit, the promise of many descendants is, at the same time, the promise of the Spirit – that is, the promise of the *means* by which sons of Abraham would be created out of people who had been enslaved" (p. 716). This is followed by Matera, *Galatians*, 143; Witherington, *Grace*, 244.

⁴⁹ It is commonly recognised that God's promise to Abraham contains three primary strands (i.e. land, descendants, and blessing for the nations). For a detailed discussion, see J. R. Wisdom, "Blessing for the Nations and the Curse of the Law," (Ph. D. Thesis, University of Durham, 1998), 27-49. In Galatians, however, the promise refers to God's blessing of the nations (Gen 12.3; 18.18) which Paul quotes in 3.8. The reference to the land play no part in Galatians (cf. Bruce, *Galatians*, 172). The promise of Abraham's innumerable descendants can be understood in association with Gentiles' justification as a result of the fulfilment of God's promise, "I have made you a father of many nations" (Gen 17.5), i.e. blessing of the nations. The relationship is expressed in Rom 4.16-25.

⁵⁰ The word ἐπαγγελίαι (the plural of ἐπαγγελία – 3.16, 21) probably refers to God's promise to bless the nations that God repeated several times in different occasions (Gen 12.3; 18.18; cf. Gen 22.18; 26.4; 28.14), not the three different blessings (i.e. land, descendants, and blessing for the nations). Cf. Martyn, *Galatians*, 339. *Contra* Betz, *Galatians*, 156, 157, 159; Schilier, *Galater*, 143.

⁵¹ The term ἐπαγγελία appears in the section intensively (3.14, 16, 17, 18 (2 times), 21, 22, 29; 4.23, 28). Cf. Howard, *Paul*, 55; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 125.

God's promise to bless the nations. Thus it is fair to say that the ἐπαγγελία refers to God's promise to bless the nations (Gen 12.3; 18.18; cf. Gen 22.18; 26.4; 28.14; Pss 72.17; Jer 4.2)⁵² which Paul quotes in 3.8. In light of the parallel between δικαιοῖ τὰ ἔθνη ὁ θεός and ἐνευλογηθήσονται ἐν σοὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, it is probable that ἐπαγγελία refers to God's promise of justification of Gentiles (3.8).⁵³ Let us then turn to the passages where Paul deals with the theme of God's promise of justification of Gentiles.

In 3.15-18 Paul elaborates the idea of God's promise to demonstrate that the justification of Gentiles is based not on the law but on God's promise. This is clearly summed up in 3.18 (εἰ γὰρ ἐκ νόμου ἢ κληρονομία, οὐκέτι ἐξ ἐπαγγελίας· τῷ δὲ Ἀβραὰμ δι' ἐπαγγελίας κεχάρισται ὁ θεός). It is widely recognised that with the antithesis between the law and God's promise,⁵⁴ Paul argues that not the law but God's promise is the sufficient means of the inheritance, i.e. Abraham's sonship.⁵⁵ In view of the criticism from the side of traditional Jewish covenantalism that Paul treated the law of the covenant too lightly, Paul argues that the law does not nullify a covenant previously ratified by God (i.e. God's promise to Abraham). In other words, God's promise of the justification of Gentiles cannot be nullified by the law because God's promise to Abraham precedes the law which came four hundred and thirty years later (3.17).⁵⁶ Paul makes the point that just as a human διαθήκη, once signed and witnessed, could not be set aside by another document claiming to represent the will of the testator and could not be added to by another authority

⁵² See particularly Bruce, *Galatians*, 172.

⁵³ Martyn, *Galatians*, 355.

⁵⁴ See Betz, *Galatians*, 158; Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 144; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 134; Martyn, *Galatians*, 337; Matera, *Galatians*, 127; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 242; Witherington, *Grace*, 245.

⁵⁵ While Paul is not explicit about what the content of κληρονομία is, in the light of the argument of the letter it must be becoming Abraham's heir. Although κληρονομία is primarily concerned with land (Gen 15.7-8; 28.4; Deut 1.39, 2.12), the crucial Genesis passage include the idea of being Abraham's heir (Gen 15.2-4; 21.10). Cf. Dunn, *Galatians*, 186. Note that the territorial and material features of the Abrahamic inheritance are not mentioned here by Paul. Interestingly some (Martyn, *Galatians*, 343, Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 242, Matera, *Galatians*, 127; Williams, *Galatians*, 97) suggest that it refers to the promised Spirit in 3.14. Ziesler (*Galatians*, 44) thinks that it refers both justification by faith and the gift of the Spirit. Betz (*Galatians*, 159) says, "Inheritance' includes all the benefits of God's work of salvation."

⁵⁶ See Dunn, *TPLG*, 87-88; R. B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 109.

(3.15),⁵⁷ so with the διαθήκη God made with Abraham (i.e. the Abrahamic covenant).⁵⁸ It is also to be noted that the inheritance of Abraham's sonship is a matter of divine initiative and grace.⁵⁹ Paul's insistence on the priority of God's graceful promise effectively relativizes the idea that Gentiles can become the descendants of Abraham only through the observance of the law, in particular circumcision. In short, the point of Paul's argument in 3.15-18 is that since God always intended, from the time of the promise to Abraham, that the Gentiles are to be blessed,⁶⁰ the inheritance of Abraham's sonship (i.e. justification) comes to the Gentiles not from the law but from the gracious promise of God which cannot be modified or nullified by the law given subsequently.

In 3.19-22, Paul continues to explain God's promise as the sufficient soteriological basis of justification. Without attempting to tackle the relationship between the law and the promise,⁶¹ it is sufficient to focus on God's promise of justification of the Gentiles ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, which was given to those who believe (3.22). Contrary to the agitators' ethnocentric covenantalism maintaining that righteousness comes through the law, Paul argues that the law has no function to "make alive" and thus righteousness cannot come through the law (3.21).⁶² Although the law regulates life within the covenant for the people of Israel (e.g. Lev 18.5; Deut 6.24; Prov 3.1-2; 6.23; Sir 17.11; Bar 3.9; 4.1; *Pss. Sol.* 24.2), the law does not make one alive because God⁶³ did not intend the law to play such a role.⁶⁴ From a Jewish perspective, rather, the role is ascribed to God (2 Kgs 5.7; Neh

⁵⁷ Nevertheless, according to Roman law, testators were allowed to cancel or modify their will at any point during their lifetime (Bruce, *Galatians*, 170). For a summary discussions concerning legal technicalities, see Bruce, *Galatians*, 170-171; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 128-130.

⁵⁸ Paul links closely the terms ἐπαγγελία and διαθήκη. Cf. McKnight, *Galatians*, 166.

⁵⁹ Dunn, *Galatians*, 187. Note the verb κεχάρισται – "God showed favour." For the close relationship between grace and God's saving act, see Betz, *Galatians*, 160, n. 62.

⁶⁰ Dunn ("Theology of Galatians," 125) rightly argues that the "initial expression of God's covenant purpose was in terms of promise and faith and always had the Gentiles in view from the first." See also Hays, "Crucified with Christ," 236; idem, *Echoes*, 106.

⁶¹ For the discussion, see Eckstein, *Verheißung und Gesetz*, 190-212; M. A. Kruger, "Law and Promise in Galatians," *Neot* 26 (1992), 311-327.

⁶² Righteousness is used as the equivalent of "life." Cf. Sanders, *PPJ*, 493-495.

⁶³ The subject of the passive verb ἐδόθη is God (divine passive).

⁶⁴ Sanders (*PLJP*, 27) argues, "God sent Christ; he did so in order to offer righteousness; this would have been pointless if righteousness were already available by the law (2:21); the law

9.6; Job 36.6; Pss 71.20; *Jos. and As.* 8.3, 9; 12.1; 20.7; *Ep. Arist.* 16; John 5.21; Rom 4.17; 1 Cor 15.22).⁶⁵ Paul also argues that the law is not the means of righteousness because the law cannot set everything (τὰ πάντα [3.22] - including all humanity [both Jews and Greeks]) free from the power of sin. In other words, Jews and Gentiles alike cannot be accepted by God on the basis of the law (2.16; cf. Rom 3.20) because the law cannot deal with the problem of sin which prevents anyone from approaching God (cf. Rom 3.23). This implies that the privileged status of righteousness is not automatically guaranteed for the people of Israel by means of the law because they are not exempt from the power of sin (cf. Rom 3.9; 11.32) to which the law provides no real answer. For Paul the solution to the problem of sin is God's promise. The promise as the embodiment of the divine power defeats the power of sin.⁶⁶ It is thus fair to say that 3.22b means that God's unconditional promise, which precedes the law and breaks the power of sin, is given to those who believe, Jews and Gentiles without distinction ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.⁶⁷ In short, Paul opposes justification through the law on the basis of God's promise to bless nations given to Gentiles ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

In 3.23-29 Paul develops his point that not the law but God's gracious promise fulfilled in Christ and through πίστις is the soteriological basis for the justification of Gentiles. First of all, in 3.23-25 Paul expounds his earlier point that God's promise (i.e. justification of Gentiles) fulfilled ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is given to Gentile believers. Before the coming and revelation of πίστις Paul and the Galatians ("we") were imprisoned and guarded under the power of the law.⁶⁸ Paul

was not given to bring righteousness (3.21)." Hong (*Law*, 132 [125-132]) likewise argues, "The law was never planned to be the condition for entering the people of God at all."

⁶⁵ In NT the role is also given to the Spirit (John 6.63; Rom 8.11; 1 Cor 15.45; 2 Cor 3.6; 1 Pet 3.18).

⁶⁶ Dunn, *Galatians*, 195.

⁶⁷ For the discussion of the meaning of πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, see §6.1.1.

⁶⁸ As noted earlier (§2.2.2.1.), although "we" in 2.15-17 refers to "Jews," (e.g. Paul and Peter) it is likely that "we" in 3.23-25 refers to both Jewish and Gentile believers (in particular Paul and the Galatians) on the basis of the following: 1) In 3.23-29 Paul is addressing not Jewish believers as in 2.15-17 but the Galatians. 2) The parallelism between 3.22 ("all things" [Jews and Gentiles] were imprisoned under the power of sin) and 3.23 ("we were imprisoned under the power of the law" hints that "we" includes both Jews and Gentiles. 3) Paul does not contrast "we" (Jews) with "you" (the Gentile Galatians) in 3.23-29 because no contrast can be ascertained in the sudden shift from "we" (4.5b, 4.6b) to "you" (4.6a, 4.7a). Rather Paul grounds a statement about "us" on a

implies that the coming of Christ and πίστις and the revelation of πίστις set them free from imprisonment of the law (cf. 5.1; Rom 7.6) and ended the interim role of the law as custodian. He also argues that πίστις came and was revealed so that Paul

statement about “you” (3.25-26; 4.6) or “you” on “us” (4.6b-7). See C. B. Cousar, *A Theology of the Cross* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 115-118; Howard, *Paul*, 59-62; Scott, *Adoption*, 155-157. Contra Donaldson, “‘The Curse of the Law’ and the Inclusion of the Gentiles: 3:13-14,” 94-112.

Furthermore, although οἱ ὑπὸ νόμον in 1 Cor 9.20-21 refers clearly to the Jews, it is possible that ὑπὸ νόμον ἐφρουρούμεθα συγκλειόμενοι (3.23) means that “we” (Jewish believers and Gentile) were under the power of the law. It is likely that οἱ ὑπὸ νόμον (4.5) refers to both Jews and Gentiles. There are a good number of reasons in favour of this possibility. 1) In 3.25, ὑπὸ παιδαγωγόν ἔσμεν means that “we” (including the Galatians) are not under a guardian (i.e. the law) because Paul’s substantiation in 3.26 applies to “you all” (the Galatians). The verb ἔσμεν is probably inclusive because Paul calls the Galatians ἀδελφοί in the same breath by using the same verb at 4.31. Moreover, the word οὐκέτι, which is used in a temporal sense as before and after the coming of faith (3.23, 25), indicates that the Galatians (“we”) were under the law. 2) οἱ ὑπὸ νόμον in Gal 4.5 seems to include Jewish and Gentile believers in light of the parallelism of the two ἵνα clauses in 4.5 – οἱ ὑπὸ νόμον in Gal 4.5a is equivalent to the first-person plural (“we” – the subject of the verb ἀπολάβωμεν) which refers to both Jewish and Gentile believers (cf. Bruce, *Galatians*, 197). 3) The parallel between 3.13 (“us” including Gentile believers) and 4.5 seems to indicate that Gentile believers were redeemed from the power of the law. Christ’s redeeming Jews and Gentiles from the curse of the law is to Christ’s redeeming those under the law (i.e. Jews and Gentiles). 4) Gal 5.1 (τῇ ἐλευθερίᾳ ἡμᾶς Χριστὸς ἠλευθέρωσεν· στήκετε οὖν καὶ μὴ πάλιν ζυγῶ δουλείας ἐνέχεσθε) assumes that Gentiles were under the enslaving power of the law. 5) The parallelism between 3.23 (ὑπὸ νόμον ἐφρουρούμεθα συγκλειόμενοι) and 4.3 (ὑπὸ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου ἡμεθα δεδουλωμένοι) suggests that the Gentile Galatians were under the power of the law; Paul probably regarded the law as one of τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου, which is indicated by the equation between the Galatians’ turning back again to τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου and their observing special days, months, seasons, and years (4.9-10). The adverb πάλιν also indicates that the Galatians were once enslaved to πτωχὰ στοιχεῖα. Moreover, the equation between ὑπὸ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου ἡμεθα δεδουλωμένοι (4.3) and πτωχὰ στοιχεῖα οἷς πάλιν ἄνωθεν δουλεύειν θέλετε (4.9) suggests that “we” (4.3) includes the Galatians who were once enslaved to τὰ στοιχεῖα (cf. Betz, *Galatians*, 204-205; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 268; Schlier, *Galater*, 193). The fact that the Galatians are no longer slaves (4.7a) because God redeemed them from the power of τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου and the law implies that they were ὑπὸ νόμον. 6) The equation of ἡμᾶς (3.13) with “we” (λάβωμεν - 3.14) suggests that those under the curse of the law are identical with those who receive the promise of the Spirit. There is little doubt that “we” (λάβωμεν - 3.14) refers to both Jewish believers and Gentile. 7) Rom 7.6a (νυνὶ δὲ κατηργήθημεν ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου) suggests that Gentiles were under the dominion of the law. The first-person plural of the verb κατηργήθημεν (aorist) indicates that Paul and Gentile Roman believers have been released from the domain of the law. The phrase νυνὶ δὲ tells that before the eschatological event of Christ they were held captive under the domain of the law. 8) Rom 7.6 b (ἐν ᾧ κατειχόμεθα) indicates that Paul and the Gentile Romans (“we”- the subject of the verb κατειχόμεθα) were held captive in the the domain of the law. 9) The universal reign of the law over both the Jew and the Gentile is stated in Rom 3.9-20, in which Paul thinks that the law condemns both Jews and Gentiles. The close relationship between “those who are under the law” and “every mouth,” “the whole world,” and “no human being” (Rom 3.19) seems to indicate that “those who are under the law” refers to all humanity. As Sanders notes (*PLJP*, 82), “He [Paul] offers no explanation of how what the law says to those who under it (the Jews) also applies to ‘the whole world.’” While most of the Gentile believers in Galatia have never lived “under the law” as Jews had (1 Cor 9.20), “being under the law” seems to be used by Paul as representative of the situation of all humanity (cf. Moo, *Romans*,

and the Galatians (“we”) might be justified by πίστις (3.23-25).⁶⁹ After making the point that God’s promise to justify the Gentiles through πίστις is the soteriological basis of justification, in 3.26-29 Paul argues that in Christ Jesus the Galatians are all children of God through πίστις.⁷⁰ He further argues that there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female because the Galatians are one in Christ Jesus (3.28).⁷¹ In other words, Jewish and Gentile believers are full and equal members of the covenant community as one people of God. Finally he concludes that if the Galatians belong to Christ, then they are Abraham’s offspring and heirs according to the promise (3.29).⁷² Since the benefit of becoming Abraham’s heirs was given to the Galatians by the promise, it did not come from the law. In short, the central point of Paul’s argument in 3.23-29 is that by means of God’s gracious ἐπαγγελία realised by the advent and revelation of πίστις, the Gentiles (e.g. the Galatians) have become heirs i.e. Abraham’s offspring (3.29), not through the law.⁷³ The point indicates that Paul realises that God’s promise to bless the Gentiles which was given to Abraham (Gen 12.3; 18.18) has been fulfilled by God’s justification of the Gentiles both in and through Christ and through the coming and revelation of πίστις.⁷⁴

The point that Gentile believers can become the descendants of Abraham not by the law but by God’s promise is reinforced in 4.28. To the Galatians who were eager to become Abraham’s descendants through Torah-observance (4.21), in particular circumcision, Paul says that they are children of the promise, in the pattern of Isaac (ὤμεις δέ, ἀδελφοί, κατὰ Ἰσαὰκ ἐπαγγελίας τέκνα ἐστέ - 4.28). Identifying the child of Hagar (i.e. Ishmael) with Gentiles (including the Galatians) and the child of Sarah (i.e. Isaac) with Jews, the agitators argued that the Galatians could become

388). In light of the observations above, it is likely that Jews and Gentiles alike were under the power of the law. Cf. Barclay, *Obeying*, 97, n. 51

⁶⁹ It is likely that “we” includes Gentile believers (cf. 5.5) because in 3.10-29 Paul elaborates God’s justification of Gentiles by faith (3.8).

⁷⁰ For divine sonship, see §2.2.2.3.

⁷¹ For oneness between Jew and Gentile, see §2.2.2.4.

⁷² For becoming heirs of Abraham, see §2.2.2.5.

⁷³ So rightly Hansen, *Abraham*, 136-139; Howard, *Paul*, 65.

⁷⁴ While T. Söding takes πίστις (as the soteriological basis of justification) as the Christian’s faith, he rightly notes that Paul discovers that what God has promised to Abraham has been fulfilled in God’s justification of Jews and Gentiles (“Verheißung und Erfüllung im Lichte paulinischer Theologie,” *NTS* 47 (2001), 150-161).

the descendants of Abraham through circumcision.⁷⁵ On the contrary Paul identifies the Galatians with Isaac who was the child of the free woman (Sarah) born through the promise (4.23). The Galatians are children of the promise (4.28; cf. Rom 9.8). Paul's statement here is so radical as to deny traditional Jewish covenantalism maintaining that the Jews alone belong to the column of the covenant of promise. Why does Paul attempt to make a totally different exegesis of Gen 16-21 from the agitators? Paul's complete "turn-around" exegesis is based on his conviction that God's promise of justification of Gentiles was fulfilled through Christ and the Spirit and thus the Galatians became the offspring of Abraham and heirs without their becoming proselytes. Since the Gentile Galatians are children of the promise like Isaac and thus belong to the covenant community, they do not need to enter Israel through circumcision and depend upon the law for justification. This is a central point of the allegory of Hagar and Sarah (4.21-31).

To sum up, with a view to the priority and sufficiency of God's promise, Paul argues that Gentile believers receive adoption as sons of God and become the offspring and heirs of Abraham and the children of God (4.5-7) and the promise (4.28) not in and through the law (3.11, 18, 21) but in and through Christ and the Spirit (3.14, 29; 4.4-6, 29). According to Paul, God's blessing promised to Abraham always had the justification of the Gentiles through Christ in view from the first. The gift of righteousness was to Gentiles as well as Jews. Since God's promise of justification of the Gentiles given to Abraham, which cannot be nullified by the law, was fulfilled at a preordained time by God's sending of his Son and the Spirit and the advent and revelation of πίστις, the Galatians have become the children of Abraham apart from Torah-observance and circumcision. Thus, for Paul, to maintain the law as the soteriological basis of justification means to deny the eschatological fulfilment of God's promise. In short, the fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant (i.e. God's promise of justification of Gentiles) through Christ and the Spirit is Paul's theological foundation upon which he seeks to persuade the Galatians not to rely on

⁷⁵ Barrett, "The Allegory of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar in the Argument of Galatians," 1-16.

the law for justification and rejects the agitators' message of justification on the basis of the law.⁷⁶

4. 2. 3. God's Sending of His Son and the Spirit

Without attempting to investigate 4.4-7 in detail,⁷⁷ it is sufficient to concentrate on the fact that God sent his Son and the Spirit so that believers receive redemption and adoption as sons through God (διὰ θεοῦ - 4.7).⁷⁸ Before the fullness of time (τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου)⁷⁹ had come, both Jewish and Gentile believers used to be under the power of τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου (4.3). The precise meaning of the phrase has been disputed among scholars.⁸⁰ Since it is impossible to discuss it here, it is sufficient to say that 4.3b (ὑπὸ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου ἡμεθα δεδουλωμένοι) means that Jew and Gentile Christians were enslaved under the influence or dominion of certain primal and cosmic forces.⁸¹ It is significant for our present study that as a result of God's sending of his Son, all the believers (Jewish and Gentile) receive the salvific benefits of redemption⁸² and adoption.⁸³ Notably God sent the Spirit of his Son into the Galatians' hearts (cf. 3.2-5), crying "Abba! Father!" (4.6). Since God has given the Spirit of his Son to them, they are the children of God.⁸⁴ In 4.7 Paul concludes that since God sent Christ and the Spirit of his Son, the Galatians are no longer slaves but sons and heirs through God. In short, the force of Paul's argument in 4.4-7 is that the salvific gifts of redemption, adoption as sons of God, and becoming God's children and heirs are given to Jewish and Gentile believers through God's saving act, that is, God's sending of his Son and the Spirit.

⁷⁶ So rightly Longenecker, *Triumph*, 178-179.

⁷⁷ For a detailed discussion, see Scott, *Adoption*, 121-186.

⁷⁸ Martyn (*Galatians*, 388) argues, "the sentence comprising 4:3-5 is nothing less than the theological center of the entire letter." Martyn interprets God's sending of his Son and the Spirit as God's apocalyptic invasion into cosmos.

⁷⁹ In light of the parallel between τῆς προθεσμίας τοῦ πατρός (4.2) and τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου, the phrase means the time foreordained by God. Cf. Scott, *Adoption*, 161-162.

⁸⁰ For bibliography, see ch. 1, n. 96.

⁸¹ Arnold, "Returning to the Domain of the Powers," 55-76; Dunn, *Galatians*, 213; Hong, *Law*, 162-166; Longenecker, *Triumph*, 46-58; Martyn, *Galatians*, 393-406.

⁸² For redemption, see §2.2.2.1.

⁸³ For adoption, see §2.2.2.3.

⁸⁴ For sonship by the Spirit, see §5.2.3.

4. 2. 4. God's Knowing

It is important to note that Paul attempts to persuade the Galatians not to turn back again to τὰ ἀσθενῆ καὶ πτωχὰ στοιχεῖα by reminding them of the fact that they were known by God (γνωσθέντες ὑπὸ θεοῦ - 4.9). Paul's swift correction (μᾶλλον δὲ) from the Galatians' act of knowing God (γινόντες θεόν) to God's act of knowing them (γνωσθέντες ὑπὸ θεοῦ) stresses the divine initiative in the relationship between God and the Galatians. Why is it so crucial for Paul that God knew the Galatians when he discourages them from turning back again to τὰ ἀσθενῆ καὶ πτωχὰ στοιχεῖα and from keeping the festival law? There is little doubt that the verb γινώσκω here is employed not in the sense of either "to perceive" or "to acquire knowledge about" but in the biblical sense of "to experience."⁸⁵ Paul emphasises God's act of knowing here on the basis of Hebrew thought in which the idea that God knows someone is normally confined to the intimate, personal relationship with God (e.g. Gen 18.19; Num 16.5; Pss 1.6; 37.18; 44.21; 94.11; 139; Jer 1.5; Amos 3.2). Most importantly, in Hebrew thought God's graceful act of knowing his people was the basis of the election of his people (e.g. Gen 18.19; Num 16.5; Jer 1.5; Amos 3.2).⁸⁶ In light of this background Paul probably intends the Galatians to recognise that they became God's people and thus had come to the right relationship with God not through the observance of the law but by God's graceful act of knowing them personally. The point can be reinforced by Paul's use of God's knowing in the sense of election (Rom 8.29; 11.2; cf. 1 Cor 8.3; 13.12; 2 Tim 2.19); for Paul to be known by God means to be elected and accepted by God.⁸⁷ Moreover, being known by God means having a loving relationship with God (1 Cor 8.3). Thus for Paul the Galatians' being known by God means both that they became the elected people of God and that they

⁸⁵ It is widely accepted that despite the fact that this meaning is strange against the background of broad Greek usage, it is natural in light of the use of γινώσκω in the LXX to translate the Hebrew יָדָע when it denotes intimate relationship. For a discussion of this OT relational sense of יָדָע, see R. Bultmann, *TDNT* 1.697-698; E. D. Schmitz, *NIDNTT* 2.395-396.

⁸⁶ Gen 18.19 – "for I have 'known' ('chosen' – NRSV, NIV) him [Abraham]"; Num 16.5 – "God will know who is his" [where 'know' is paralleled by 'choose']; Jer 1.5 "Before I formed you in the womb I 'knew' you" [where 'know' is paralleled by 'consecrate' and 'appoint']; Amos 3.2 – "You [Israel] only have I 'known' ['chosen' – NIV] of all the families of the earth."

⁸⁷ Cf. Bruce, *Galatians*, 202; R. Bultmann, *TDNT* 1.706; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 292; W. Schmithals, *EDNT* 1.250.

are in a justified relationship with God.⁸⁸ It is on the basis of this point that Paul urges the Galatians not to turn back again to τὰ στοιχεῖα and not to observe the calendrical law, which would mean to deny God's election. In short, for Paul God's gracious act of knowing Gentiles is part of Paul's theological rationale both for his persuasion of the Galatians not to observe the law and for his opposition to justification on the basis of the law.

4. 3. Concluding Remarks

What Paul intends the Galatians to realise by the antithesis between the law and grace is that they do not have to undergo circumcision nor to observe the law in order to become full members of the covenant community not only because they became God's elected people by God's act of calling and knowing but also because they are heirs and God's children by God's promise and his sending of Christ and the Spirit. In contrast to the agitators who argue that the identity of God's people is determined by the law and circumcision, Paul upholds that it depends upon God's saving activities, such as God's calling, God's promise, God's sending of Christ and the Spirit, and God's knowing. For Paul to argue for justification through the law means to nullify and deny God's graceful saving acts welcoming the Gentiles into God's people apart from the law (2.21). For the agitators God's grace is for the Jews and proselytes, but for Paul God's grace is for both Jews and Gentiles.⁸⁹ The antithesis (i.e. justification through the law vs. justification by God's grace) is both a substantial feature of Paul's theology in Galatians and an interpretive clue to understanding Paul's theology in Galatians.⁹⁰ Justification *sola gratia* is a central content of Paul's gospel (Gal 2.21; 5.4; Rom 3.24; 5.15-17).

⁸⁸ Compare Martyn (*Galatians*, 412) who states, "to be known by God is to know that there are no holy times."

⁸⁹ This is certainly Paul's point of view in Rom 3.29 (ἢ Ἰουδαίων ὁ θεὸς μόνον; οὐχὶ καὶ ἔθνῶν; ναὶ καὶ ἔθνῶν) and in Rom 4.9 (ὁ μακαρισμὸς οὖν οὕτως ἐπὶ τὴν περιτομὴν ἢ καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ἀκροβυστίαν).

⁹⁰ The antithesis seems to serve the same role in Paul's letter to the Romans. The antithesis is clearly expressed in Rom 3.20-24. In 3.20 Paul says, ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιοθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ. In contrast to 3.20, Paul says in 3.24, δικαιοῦμενοι δωρεὰν τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι. The point of the antithesis is that for Paul a right relationship with God is wholly of God's grace, and thus justification through the works of the law must be rejected. The point is restated in Rom 11.6: εἰ δὲ χάριτι, οὐκέτι ἐξ ἔργων, ἐπεὶ ἡ χάρις οὐκέτι γίνεται χάρις. The antithesis between the

What is the significance of the antithesis between the law and grace for Paul's denial of the law as the soteriological basis of justification? In light of the discussion above, it is reasonable to claim that Paul's critique of the law by means of the antithesis between the law and grace has nothing to do with legalism maintaining that one could earn righteousness through meritorious works of the law.⁹¹ Rather his focus is on the exclusivistic role of the law as the boundary of God's people excluding the Gentiles from the community of God's people. The law requires the one who wants to share God's covenant to obey the works of the law. Against this idea, Paul argues that God's saving grace is the primary and sufficient soteriological basis of justification. Thus to add the observance of the law and circumcision for the salvation of the Gentiles to God's grace means a perversion of the gospel of Christ (1.7) and a denial of God's grace (2.21), which results in ἀνάθεμα (1.8-9). In short, Paul rejects the law as the soteriological basis of justification not only because the exclusivistic law prevents the Gentiles from enjoying the salvific effects (e.g. righteousness, the Abrahamic blessing, sonship, election) of God's grace but also because God's eschatological salvific deeds (e.g. God's calling, God's sending of Christ and the Spirit, God's knowing) brought these salvific blessings to the Gentiles without Torah-observance.

The antithesis between the law and grace is also significant for understanding Paul's critique of covenantal nomism. According to traditional Judaism, the Jewish privileges (e.g. righteousness, the Abrahamic blessing, sonship, election) are restricted to Jews and proselytes and Gentiles are excluded from these prerogatives. On the contrary Paul argues that the blessings and God's grace are not exclusive to Jews and proselytes but inclusive of the Gentile believers because God's

human endeavour of Torah-observance and God's grace is embedded in Rom 9-11 (cf. Smiles, *Gospel*, 238, n. 42). Moreover, the antithesis between the law and grace as two antithetical salvific spheres or realms in Rom 6.14 (cf. 6.15) indicates that Paul understood the law and grace as two contrasting ways of salvation. Paul says, ἀμαρτία γὰρ ὑμῶν οὐ κυριεύσει· οὐ γὰρ ἐστε ὑπὸ νόμον ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ χάριν. Paul means that sin will no longer have lordship over believers because they are not under the law but under grace. In light of the observations above, it is fair to say that Paul's argument that the right relationship with God is no longer dependent upon the law but upon God's salvific grace is significant for the interpretation of Romans.

⁹¹ See Barclay, *Obeying*, 235. Pace Bruce, *Galatians*, 231; Bultmann, *Theology*, 1.264; Burton, *Galatians*, 277.

blessings and grace have been granted to Gentiles through God's saving activities through Christ and the Spirit. Paul rejected ethnocentric "covenantal nomism" because it denies God's grace welcoming Gentile believers as the offspring of Abraham, God's children, and equal and full membership of the people of God apart from the law (cf. Rom 3.21-26).⁹² Furthermore, Paul denied covenantal nomism because it does not recognise that God's promise to bless all nations (i.e. the Abrahamic covenant) was already fulfilled eschatologically when God sent Christ and the Spirit. On the basis of the Abrahamic covenant, Paul refutes that the covenant on Mt. Sinai can be effective for salvation.⁹³

⁹² Dunn rightly states, "And what he [Paul] denies is that God's justification depends on 'covenantal nomism', that God's grace extends only to those who wear the badge of the covenant" ("Perspective," 194). Compare Burton (*Galatians*, 277) who notes the significance of the antithesis for Paul's opposition to first century Judaism as follows: "Grace, by virtue of which God accepts as righteous those who have faith, itself excludes, and is excluded by, the principle of legalism, according to which the deeds of righteousness which one has performed are accredited to him as something which he has earned."

⁹³ Sanders (*PPJ*, 551) writes, "Paul in fact explicitly denies that the Jewish covenant can be effective for salvation." Cf. M. D. Hooker, "Paul and 'Covenantal Nomism'," in *Paul and Paulinism*, edited by M. D. Hooker and S. G. Wilson (London: SPCK, 1982), 49-50.

CHAPTER 5

THE ANTITHESIS BETWEEN THE LAW AND THE SPIRIT

In Gal 5.5 Paul continues to deal with the issue of justification. To the Galatians who were willing to be fully-approved members of the people of God through Torah-observance, in particular circumcision, Paul says, ἡμεῖς γὰρ πνεύματι ἐκ πίστεως ἐλπίδα δικαιοσύνης ἀπεκδεχόμεθα (“For we, through the Spirit, by πίστις, are eagerly waiting for the hoped-for righteousness”). The further antithesis between the law and the Spirit (§1.1.) is implied here.¹ Paul rejects the law as the basis or means of justification by contrasting the law with the Spirit (and πίστις)² as two antithetical soteriological bases of ἐλπίς δικαιοσύνης.³ Paul has this antithesis in mind in order to argue against the agitators’ teaching that Gentiles must accept the law as a condition of or as a basic requirement for justification.⁴ Surprisingly, most commentators have not elaborated the force, function, and significance of this antithesis in relation to the issues at stake in Galatia (§1.1.).

There are several questions for us here: What did Paul intend his readers to understand by the antithesis? Why does Paul hold that the Spirit is the primary and sufficient soteriological basis of ἐλπίς δικαιοσύνης? What is the significance of the

¹ While it seems that the antithesis between the law and the Spirit overlaps with the antithesis between the law and grace, the former differs from the latter in the sense that the theme of the Spirit focuses on the *pneumatological* subject which Paul deals with in Galatians, whereas the theme of grace focuses on the *theological*.

² We will deal with the antithesis between the law and πίστις in chapter 6.

³ So Mußner (*Galaterbrief*, 350) writes, “πνεύματι und ἐκ πίστεως sind Modalbestimmungen, die den neuen und ganz andern ‘Modus’ des Heilswegs und der Heilswartung im Vergleich mit dem Gesetzesweg, dem δικαιοῦσθαι ἐν νόμῳ, angeben.” See also Burton, *Galatians*, 278.

⁴ The agitators probably held together the law and the Spirit and thus argued that the Spirit was not by itself sufficient for salvation but that the law was also necessary; salvation is based on both the law and the Spirit. But for Paul the Spirit excludes the law as the soteriological basis of justification.

antithesis between the law and the Spirit for his critique of the law and covenantal nomism? In order to answer these questions, we need to exegete 5.5.

5. 1. Exegesis of 5.5

The pronoun ἡμεῖς is emphatic, as indicated by the fact that it is placed at the beginning of 5.5.⁵ “We” refers to Paul and the Galatians.⁶ Paul appeals to their shared experience of the Spirit⁷ as he attempts to persuade the Galatians not to depend on the law for their justification. The first word ἡμεῖς is significant in terms of rhetorical effect⁸ because ἡμεῖς is contrasted with οἵτινες ἐν νόμῳ δικαιοῦσθε (5.4b).⁹ Those who rely upon the Spirit and πίστις are distinguished from those who are trying to be justified on the basis of the law. As noted earlier (§1.1.), γάρ introducing an argument *e contrario*¹⁰ shows that 5.5 explains why the law is not the valid soteriological means or basis of God’s acceptance by indicating the two antithetical soteriological bases of justification, i.e. the Spirit and πίστις.

There is little doubt that πνεῦμα refers to the Holy Spirit because Paul uses anarthrous πνεῦμα in reference to the divine Spirit in Galatians (3.3; 5.16, 18, 25).¹¹ The dative πνεύματι is to be understood as instrumental (cf. Gal 5.16, 18, 25; Rom 8.13, 14)¹² or causal¹³ meaning “by the work and power of the Spirit.” The Spirit plays a role as the means or agency of the realisation of ἐλπίς δικαιοσύνης.¹⁴ The

⁵ So most commentators: e.g. Burton, *Galatians*, 277; Dunn, *Galatians*, 269; Martyn, *Galatians*, 472; Matera, *Galatians*, 182; Williams, *Galatians*, 137.

⁶ See Burton, *Galatians*, 277-278; Dunn, *Galatians*, 269; Martyn, *Galatians*, 472; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 349; Schlier, *Galater*, 233; Williams, *Galatians*, 137. Pace Longenecker (*Galatians*, 229) and Witherington (*Grace*, 367) who think that “we” refers to Paul and other Jewish Christians. See further §2.2.2.3. and §4.2.2. n. 68.

⁷ See further Dunn, *TPLG*, 59-63.

⁸ The rhetorical effect of the word is often lost in modern translations. Cf. Dunn, *Galatians*, 269.

⁹ Cf. Burton, *Galatians*, 277; Martyn, *Galatians*, 472; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 349.

¹⁰ See Burton, *Galatians*, 278; Dunn, *Galatians*, 269; Fung, *Galatians*, 224; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 349. Pace Longenecker (*Galatians*, 229) who takes γὰρ as similar to the conjunction ὅτι.

¹¹ So Burton, *Galatians*, 278; Dunn, *Galatians*, 269; Guthrie, *Galatians*, 129; Matera, *Galatians*, 182.

¹² Most commentators: e.g. Burton, *Galatians*, 278; Dunn, *Galatians*, 269; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 229; Matera, *Galatians*, 182; NRSV; NIV.

¹³ Martyn, *Galatians*, 472.

¹⁴ Compare Russell (*The Flesh/Spirit Conflict in Galatians*, 125-126) who understands the Spirit (5.4) as “the community identifier” by which one’s community life is characterised and

phrase ἐκ πίστεως also has an instrumental sense. Since Gal 5.5 contains dogmatic formulaic expressions (§1.2), phrases such as πνεύματι and ἐκ πίστεως are “formulaic summaries” that sum up the previous argument about the Spirit and πίστις. We must seek to unfold the meaning and function of the phrases by seeing how Paul uses them in his exposition.¹⁵

What is the grammatical relationship between πνεύματι and ἐκ πίστεως? It is possible grammatically to interpret πνεύματι ἐκ πίστεως as “by the Spirit, which is received by (human) faith” in the light of receiving the Spirit ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως (3.2, 5) and διὰ τῆς πίστεως (3.14).¹⁶ However, this is unlikely on several grounds. The fact that in three justification passages in the letter (2.16-21; 3.21-26; 5.4-6) δικ- words occur with ἐκ πίστεως all the time suggests that Paul regards the phrase ἐκ πίστεως as the basis of justification, not the means of receiving the Spirit. In view of the summarising character of 5.5-6, the phrase ἐκ πίστεως recapitulates the various phrases διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (2.16a), ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ (2.16b), ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (3.22), and διὰ τῆς πίστεως (3.26) which emerge in the context of justification and describe the instrument of justification. More to the point, as we shall see later (§6.1.1.), if Paul had in mind not human faith but Christ’s faithfulness with πίστις references at 5.5-6 to interpret πνεύματι ἐκ πίστεως as “by the Spirit, which is received by (human) faith” is improbable.¹⁷ It is highly likely, therefore, that πνεύματι ἐκ πίστεως means “through the Spirit, by faith,” as most exegetes recognise.¹⁸

determined. He fails to recognise that the emphasis of the immediate context (5.4-6) is not on what is the objective standard of the Christian’s life (i.e. “a life by the Spirit”) but on what is the soteriological basis of justification (i.e. the antithesis between the law and the Spirit (5.4 vs. 5.5) as two antithetical bases of justification).

¹⁵ The meaning of the phrase ἐκ πίστεως will be dealt with in §6.1.1.

¹⁶ E.g. Cosgrove, *Cross*, 152; Lull, *Spirit*, 126.

¹⁷ Although he considers this possibility, Burton (*Galatians*, 278) rightly rejects this interpretation by saying “the nature of the relation which this interpretation assumes between πνεύματι and ἐκ πίστεως is such as would probably call for πνεύματι τῷ ἐκ πίστεως” (cf. ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῇ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ - 2.20).

¹⁸ E.g. Betz, *Galatians*, 262; Burton, *Galatians*, 278; Dunn, *Galatians*, 269; Fung, *Galatians*, 224; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 229; Martyn, *Galatians*, 472; Matera, *Galatians*, 182; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 350; Williams, *Galatians*, 138; NRSV. *Pace* Cosgrove and Lull.

What is the meaning of the phrase ἐλπὶς δικαιοσύνης? Commentators have debated the meaning of the phrase.¹⁹ The dispute is concerned with the grammatical function of the genitive of the word δικαιοσύνη. Most commentators take it as objective (“the righteousness for which we hope”).²⁰ Some render it as subjective (“the hope which righteousness produces”²¹ or “the realization of the hoped for things pertaining to the state of righteousness conferred in justification”²²). Martyn views it as exegetical (“we eagerly wait for what we confidently hope for, rectification at God’s hands”).²³ In our opinion, the subjective genitive interpretation is unlikely because the immediate context (5.4-6) is closely related not to the ground of the hope which righteousness produces but to what is the legitimate soteriological basis of justification. Since 5.5 is clearly intended to support 5.4 (γάρ) where Paul deals with the issue of justification, it is likely that the emphasis falls not on “hope” but on “righteousness.” In light of Jewish tradition in which righteousness is the object of hope by the people of Israel (cf. e.g. Isa 43.9; 45.25),²⁴ Paul probably understood righteousness as the object of hope which will be completed on judgement day, even though he describes righteousness as a gift of salvation in the present (cf. Rom 3.24; 5.1, 9; 8.30; 1 Cor 6.11). This can be supported by the fact that Paul uses the “future tense” of justification in Galatians (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιοθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ - 2.16) and Romans (δικαιοθήσονται - 2.13; δικαιοθήσεται - 3.20; δικαιώσει - 3.30) in which Paul envisages the final justification which will be fulfilled by the favourable verdict of the final judgement (cf. δίκαιοι κατασταθήσονται οἱ πολλοί - Rom 5.19). In light of these observations,

¹⁹ For a succinct summary of the various views, see Fung, *Galatians*, 224-227.

²⁰ E.g. Burton, *Galatians*, 277, 279; Cousar, *Galatians*, 115; Dunn, *Galatians*, 270; Kertelege, δικαιοσύνη, 327; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 350. For others, see Fung, *Galatians*, 224, n. 23.

²¹ Matera, *Galatians*, 182.

²² Fung, *Galatians*, 226. Similarly G. D. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1995), 419.

²³ Martyn, *Galatians*, 472.

²⁴ According to Qumran tradition, justification is a matter of future event. See Kertelege (*“Rechtfertigung” bei Paulus*, 41) who states, “For the faithful in Qumran justification is always a matter of hope” Cf. Dunn, *Galatians*, 269; Martyn, *Galatians*, 478-479.

thus it is probable that ἐλπίδα δικαιοσύνης means “hoped-for righteousness”²⁵ or “the righteousness for which we hope” (NIV).

It is to be borne in mind that the Spirit is described not as the basis of the Christian’s moral life or attitude in waiting for the hoped-for righteousness (i.e. ethical life by the Spirit – 5.16, 18) but as the soteriological means or basis of the realisation of ἐλπίς δικαιοσύνης. Paul does not employ the prepositional phrase πνεύματι to modify the verb ἀπεκδεχόμεθα²⁶ because the two phrases (πνεύματι and ἐκ πίστεως) appear to be independent adverbial phrases modifying the whole statement (ἐλπίδα δικαιοσύνης ἀπεκδεχόμεθα),²⁷ as indicated by the fact that they are placed at the beginning part of 5.5. More to the point, since 5.5 supports 5.4 (γάρ) where Paul deals with the issue of justification, it is certain that Paul’s main emphasis in 5.5 lies in the valid soteriological basis of ἐλπίς δικαιοσύνης not the proper Christian attitude of waiting for ἐλπίς δικαιοσύνης. To put it differently, Paul’s focus in 5.5 is not how the Christian should live but how people are justified.²⁸ We should not fail to note that Paul has the antithesis between the law and the Spirit as two contrasting soteriological bases of righteousness,²⁹ not two different human life-styles.³⁰ It is thus fair to say that the phrase πνεύματι describes not the subjective or “internal” attitude (i.e. believers’ confidence provided by the Spirit) of waiting for ἐλπίς δικαιοσύνης³¹ or “the community identifier,”³² or “das Prinzip des übernatürlichen Lebens”³³ but the eschatological or “external” soteriological basis of

²⁵ So rightly Burton, *Galatians*, 279; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 350; Schlier, *Galater*, 233; Williams, *Galatians*, 137.

²⁶ *Contra* Martyn, *Galatians*, 472.

²⁷ Pace Fung (*Galatians*, 227) who says, “The two phrases are not, strictly speaking, predicated of ‘righteousness’: it is not explicitly stated here that it is ‘through the Spirit’ and ‘by faith’ that ‘we wait for the hope of righteousness’.”

²⁸ The two phrases (πνεύματι and ἐκ πίστεως) is not so much related to ἀπεκδεχόμεθα as to ἐλπίς δικαιοσύνης. Pace Fee, *Empowering*, 418-419.

²⁹ The phrase πνεύματι (and ἐκ πίστεως) stands in contrast to ἐν νόμῳ. So rightly Burton, *Galatians*, 278; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 350; Ridderbos, *Galatia*, 189.

³⁰ Pace Fee (*Empowering*, 419) who argues that Paul’s emphasis is on “life in the Spirit” vis-à-vis “life under Torah observance.”

³¹ Pace Martyn, *Galatians*, 472.

³² Pace Russell, *The Flesh/Spirit Conflict in Galatians*, 125-126.

³³ Pace Schlier, *Galater*, 234 and other commentators he quotes.

final justification.³⁴ Consequently, πνεύματι ἐλπίδα δικαιοσύνης ἀπεκδεχόμεθα describes not the Christian's ethical life in the Spirit but the Spirit as the cause and guarantee of the fulfilment of final righteousness (cf. Rom 8.23; 2 Cor 1.22; 5.5).³⁵ For the Spirit causes those who received the Spirit to cry out Abba! Father! to God (4.6) and will confirm and guarantee their sonship before God at the final judgement.³⁶ Thus Paul does not urge the Galatians to live an ethical life according to the Spirit because it forms the basis of future justification.³⁷

What is the meaning of δικαιοσύνη at 5.5? Since 5.5 supports 5.4 as γάρ indicates, it is reasonable to expect "righteousness" (5.5) to bear a similar sense to that which is involved in "being justified" in 5.4. As noted earlier, in Galatians being justified (i.e. righteousness) means to be accepted as God's covenant people who are set in right relationship with God.³⁸ So "righteousness" refers to the state of acceptability before God and the status of being accepted as the people of God.³⁹ The verb ἀπεκδεχέσθαι means "to await eagerly."⁴⁰ The verb is used in the sense of eschatological expectation (Rom 8.19, 23, 25; 1 Cor 1.7; Phil 3.20).⁴¹ The objects of ἀπεκδεχόμεαι in Paul's letters are eschatological entities.⁴²

³⁴ Burton (*Galatians*, 278) rightly notes, "πνεύματι denotes the objective power by which it [ἐλπίς δικαιοσύνης] is achieved." Mußner (*Galaterbrief*, 350) also states, "πνεύματι sieht auf die 'übernatürliche' Wirkursache des eschatologischen Heils." Pace Cousar, *Galatians*, 116; Martyn, *Galatians*, 467.

³⁵ Pace Cosgrove, *Cross*, 153; Fee, *Empowering*, 419.

³⁶ Lull (*Spirit*, 172) likewise maintains, "Paul, therefore, identifies the Spirit as the eschatological sign assuring them [the Galatians] of the protection of the grace and righteousness of God in the 'last age'."

³⁷ Pace Cosgrove (*Cross*, 153) who states, "Ethical life in the Spirit forms the basis for future righteousness."

³⁸ Since there is no religious implication in the classical usage of δικαιοσύνη, it is unlikely that Paul's usage of the word is based on the classical usage. Cf. Williams, "Righteousness of God in Romans," 260-263; Dunn, *Romans*, 40-42. Rather, probably Paul uses the word in light of Hebrew thought, that is, righteousness as a covenantal and relational concept. For the idea, see Schrenk, δικαιοσύνη, 2.195; D. Hill, *Greek Words with Hebrews Meanings* (Cambridge: CUP, 1967), 96. This point has been followed by many scholars (cf. Dunn, *TPA*, 341, n. 27).

³⁹ Dunn (*Galatians*, 269) rightly notes, "'righteousness' denotes the state of acceptability before God, the status of acceptance by God." See also Hays, "Crucified with Christ," 237; N. T. Wright, "Putting Paul Together Again," in *Pauline Theology* vol. 4, 201.

⁴⁰ M. E. Glasswell, ἀπεκδεχόμεαι, *EDNT* 1.407.

⁴¹ Glasswell, ἀπεκδεχόμεαι, 1.407; Matera, *Galatians*, 182.

⁴² The revealing of the children of God (Rom 8.19); adoption (Rom 8.23); "what we do not see" (Rom 8.25); the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor 1.7); righteousness (Gal 5.5); Jesus Christ (Phil 3.20).

It is striking that Paul brings out the future reality of righteousness because it appears that Paul shows little interest in the future manifestation of God's triumph in Galatians. The nature of righteousness is eschatological in the sense that the gift of righteousness will be granted in the favourable verdict of the final judgement.⁴³ Even though traditionally scholars have paid insufficient attention to the significance of future righteousness in 5.5 for the interpretation of Galatians, it has finally been given its rightful attention.⁴⁴ Y.-K. Kwon concludes, "Paul does not say that the Galatians are already justified since he cannot. For the Paul of Galatians justification is not a present reality yet; it still remains a hope for which the Galatians are to wait."⁴⁵ It is to be noted, however, that in Galatians Paul brings out both present (2.16, 17; 3.24; 5.4) and future (5.5) aspects of justification.⁴⁶ When one believes in Christ and belongs to Christ, one is justified (2.16; cf. 1.6; 3.26, 29; 4.7, 9)⁴⁷ and the final justification (5.5) is read back into one's present experience of righteousness.⁴⁸ Thus ἐλπίδα δικαιοσύνης ἀπεκδεχόμεθα describes the Christian's waiting for the fulfilment of the gift of righteousness which is given to believers through the Spirit and πίστις.⁴⁹ Thus it is fair to say that righteousness is accomplished in and through Christ (2.16-17) and the Spirit (4.6), but the perfect right relationship with God guaranteed by the Spirit and πίστις will be realised at the end of days.⁵⁰

Despite the fact that the temporal aspect of righteousness is expressed in 5.5, Paul's main emphasis in his discussion of justification lies in the "how" not the

⁴³ See Betz, *Galatians*, 262; Dunn, *Galatians*, 269-270; Kertelege, δικαιοσύνη, 327; Witherington, *Grace*, 370.

⁴⁴ For a fine study of futuristic aspect of justification in Galatians, see Y.-K. Kwon, "Eschatology in Galatians," (Ph. D. Thesis, King's College, London, 2001), 67-99.

⁴⁵ Kwon, "Eschatology in Galatians," 98.

⁴⁶ In Paul, δικαιοσύνη is spoken of in three temporal phases: past (Rom 5.9; 8.30; 1 Cor. 6.11); present (Rom 3.24; 5.1; Gal 2.16; 5.4; Phil 3.9); future (Rom 3.30; 5.19; Gal 5.5).

⁴⁷ Bruce (*Galatians*, 232) likewise maintains that for those who believe in Christ a favourable verdict in the last judgment "is assured in advance by the present experience of justification by faith . . . In their case the eschatological verdict of 'not guilty' is realized."

⁴⁸ For Paul's "two-stage soteriology" (justified already but not yet finally acquitted), see J. D. G. Dunn, "Jesus the Judge," in *The Convergence of Theology*, edited by D. Kendall and S. T. Davis (New York: Paulist Press, 2001), 40-43.

⁴⁹ M. Silva, "Eschatology in Galatians," in *Explorations in Exegetical Method*, 169-186 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 182 here.

⁵⁰ Dunn, *Galatians*, 269-270; Martyn, *Galatians*, 479; Ziesler, *Galatians*, 76.

“when,” as Ziesler rightly notes.⁵¹ In other words, Paul’s focus here is not on futuristic righteousness but on the valid means of final justification. The reason why Paul abruptly introduces the idea of future “hope”⁵² of righteousness is possibly because he intends to contrast the hopelessness of the attempt to be justified on the basis of the law, which is evidenced by the two disastrous consequences (i.e. separation from the sphere of Christ and falling away from grace), with “the hoped-for righteousness” through the Spirit and πίστις.⁵³ Hence, without attempting to investigate the significance of futuristic righteousness,⁵⁴ we will focus on the antithesis between the law and the Spirit as two contrasting soteriological bases of ἐλπίς δικαιοσύνης.

To sum up: ἡμεῖς γὰρ πνεύματι ἐκ πίστεως ἐλπίδα δικαιοσύνης ἀπεκδεχόμεθα means “for through the Spirit, by πίστις, we are eagerly waiting for the hoped-for righteousness.” The point of Paul’s argument at 5.5 is that the primary and sufficient soteriological basis of justification is not the law but the Spirit and πίστις.

5. 2. The Antithesis between the Law and the Spirit

It is true that life in the Spirit is the central focus of Paul’s argument about the Spirit in Galatians (5.16, 18, 22-26).⁵⁵ But there has been a tendency to neglect an equally important matter – the relationship between justification and the Spirit. Notably Cosgrove does not do justice to the fact that in Galatians Paul defends the position that the Gentiles do not have to become Jews in order to belong to God’s people on the basis of the Spirit.⁵⁶ Several commentators, however, rightly draw attention to the relationship.⁵⁷ Unfortunately, these scholars have not explained

⁵¹ Ziesler, *The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul*, 180.

⁵² The word ἐλπίς occurs only at 5.5 in Galatians.

⁵³ See Bruce, *Galatians*, 231.

⁵⁴ It is beyond the scope of the present study and has been treated in detail. For the study, see Kwon, “Eschatology in Galatians.”

⁵⁵ On this issue, see Barclay, *Obeying*, 106-215; G.-J. Choi, “Living by the Spirit,” (Ph. D. Dissertation, The Iliff School of Theology and the University of Denver, 1998), 224-281; Cosgrove, *Cross*; Dunn, *TPLG*, 104-114.

⁵⁶ Pace Cosgrove, *Cross*, 170.

⁵⁷ E.g. N. A. Dahl argues, “the Galatians’ reception of the Spirit, and their experience of its work among them, proves that God has justified them, given them a share in the blessing of Abraham and made them his sons and heirs. Justification and the gift of the Spirit are inseparable from one another. Paul makes no distinction between the forensic and pneumatic. The gift of the

sufficiently the antithesis between the law and the Spirit as two incompatible bases of justification (5.5; cf. 3.2-5; 3.14; 4.29) in relation to the issue of the Galatians' desire to accept the law for justification. Most commentators have also failed to recognise the fact that with the antithesis Paul summarises his previous argument about the Spirit as the sufficient soteriological basis of justification. Thus it is necessary to investigate the force of the antithesis by dealing with the relevant texts in Galatians (3.2-5; 3.14; 4.6; 4.29).

5. 2. 1. Gal 3.2-5

The connection between justification and receiving the Spirit is implicitly present in 3.2-5. It is not clear in 3.1-5 that Paul deals with the issue of justification because *δικ*-words do not occur in the passage. However, there are several indications that Paul has the issue of justification in mind in the passage. Since the issue in the Antioch incident (i.e., the condition on which Gentiles enter the people of God - 2.11-21) is the same as that in Galatia, it is reasonable to assume that Paul tackles the issue of justification in 3.1ff. Furthermore, if the crucified Christ (3.1) and God's gift of the Spirit (3.5) is Paul's elaboration on the grace of God as the basis of justification (2.21), then 3.1-5 is concerned with the issue of justification. Finally, since Paul refers to the issue of circumcision in 3.3,⁵⁸ then it is likely that he refers to the issue of justification through the works of the law, in particular circumcision. It is thus obvious that in 3.1-5 Paul tackles the crisis at stake in Galatia, that is, the Galatians' attempt to observe the law, in particular circumcision in order to be considered fully-approved members of the people of God.⁵⁹

Spirit is evidentiary proof of God's acceptance" ("Promise and Fulfillment," in *Studies in Paul* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977), 133 [121-136]). S. K. Williams notes, "the experience of the Spirit and the status of justification are, for the apostle, inconceivable apart from each other. Each implies the other. Those persons upon whom God bestows the Spirit are justified; the persons whom God reckons righteous have the Spirit poured out upon them" ("Justification and the Spirit in Galatians," *JSNT* 29 (1987), 97 [91-100]). Dunn also writes, "the experience of the Spirit and the status of justification were for Paul (but also more widely) two sides of the same coin" (*TPLG*, 61, n. 54). See also Lull, *Spirit*, 99-152.

⁵⁸ See §2.1.3.3.

⁵⁹ Cf. Dunn, *Galatians*, 150; Sanders, *PLJP*, 17-21. Pace Cosgrove (*Cross*, 49) who argues, "the central focus of the passage is not how a person becomes justified."

It is important to note that in tackling the issue of justification, Paul starts his main argument from the Galatians' reception of the Spirit (3.2-5).⁶⁰ In view of their foolishness (3.3; cf. 3.1), he asks the Galatians four rhetorical questions from which he makes his point. 1) ἐξ ἔργων νόμου τὸ πνεῦμα ἐλάβετε ἢ ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως; (3.2b); 2) ἐναρξάμενοι πνεύματι νῦν σαρκὶ ἐπιτελείσθε; (3.3); 3) τσαῦτα ἐπάθετε εἰκῆ; (3.4a); 4) ὁ οὖν ἐπιχορηγῶν ὑμῖν τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἐνεργῶν δυνάμεις ἐν ὑμῖν, ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἢ ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως; (3.5). The focal point of the questions is the Galatians' reception of the Spirit as a gift of God (3.2, 5; cf. 4.6).⁶¹

According to Paul, the fact that God had provided the Spirit to non-proselyte Gentiles is an important theological reason by which Paul urges the Galatians not to rely upon Torah-observance, in particular circumcision for justification. Paul's understanding of God's universal bestowal of the Spirit upon non-proselyte Gentiles is different from the Jewish eschatological hope of the Spirit. This distinctiveness (i.e. the sufficiency of the Spirit) can be clarified when it is seen in the light of the common Jewish expectation.

In several notable OT prophecies, it was expected that in the coming age God would pour out the Spirit upon only Israel for the purpose of making Israel obedient to God's law. In Isa 44.3 (cf. Isa 32.15; 59.21), the promise that "I will pour my spirit upon your descendants, and my blessing on your offspring" (NRSV) describes the Jewish eschatological hope that the Spirit will be diffused upon all Israelites in the messianic age. The same expectation was also a principal feature in Ezek 11.19, 36.26-27, 37.14, and 39.29. In particular, in Ezek 36.26-27 the Spirit was described as the divine energy which empowers Israel to obey God's law ("A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you, and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances" – NRSV). Joel 2.28-29 is in the same line with the Jewish expectation

⁶⁰ Cosgrove (*Cross*, 39-48) takes 3.1-5 as "the decisive clue to Paul's view of the 'problem at Galatia'." But he did not paid sufficient attention to the issue of the Spirit and justification. But rightly, Barclay, *Obedying*, 83-84; Dunn, *TPLG*, 59-63.

⁶¹ See further Lemmer, "Mnemonic Reference to the Spirit as a Persuasive Tool," 359-388.

that God would not pour out his Spirit upon all Israel until the dawn of the messianic age.⁶²

The Jewish belief that God will create the eschatological children of God obedient to God's law through the Spirit in a new age is found in *Jub.* 1.23-25:

“And I shall create for them a holy spirit, and I shall purify them so that they will not turn away from following me from that day and forever. And their souls will cleave to me and to all my commandments. And they will do my commandments. And I shall be a father to them, and they will be sons to me. And they will all be called ‘sons of the living God.’ And every angel and spirit will know and acknowledge that they are my sons and I am their father in uprightness and righteousness.”

The expectation that God will refine people with the Spirit is indicated in 1 QS 4.20-21:

“Then God will refine, with his truth, all man's deeds, and will purify for himself the structure of man, ripping out all spirit of injustice from the innermost part of his flesh, and cleansing him with the spirit of holiness from every wicked deed. He will sprinkle over him the spirit of truth like lustral water (in order to cleanse him) from all the abhorrences of deceit and (from) the defilement.”

The same eschatological fervour of the Qumran community is reflected in CD 2.12 and 1 QH 16.12.

It is important to note that in these Jewish writings the recipient of the Spirit in the age to come is only Israel.⁶³ This indicates Jewish ethnocentric or nationalistic expectation of the Spirit. Moreover, God's promise of the Spirit was intended to make Israel obedient to God's law. Since the reception of the Spirit (and the eschatological life in the Spirit) are closely bound up with Torah-observance (e.g. 1 QS 9.3),⁶⁴ the lawless Gentiles are naturally excluded from receiving the Spirit. In effect, the Spirit-less and the lawless Gentiles are excluded from the community of God's people. Finally it is also to be noted that God's giving of the Spirit is the basis

⁶² Cf. Barclay, *Obeying*, 84; Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, 203-204.

⁶³ The recipients of the future hope of the Spirit, i.e. “your descendants” (Isa 44.3; “you” (Ezek 36.26-27; 37.14; 59.21), “them” (Ezek 11.19; *Jub.* 1.23-25; *T. Levi* 18.11) refer to only the Jews. Even “all flesh” (Joel 2.28) also seems to refer to Israel including Jewish slaves. The recipients of the Spirit in the Dead Sea Scrolls refer to the Jewish members of the Qumran community (e.g. “him” - 1QS 4.21). This point is explicitly expressed in Ezek 39.29 (“I will never again hide my face from them, when I pour out my spirit upon *the house of Israel*, says the Lord GOD” - NRSV) and in Zech 12.10 (“And I will pour out a spirit of compassion and supplication on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem” – NRSV).

⁶⁴ For the discussion of texts, see Cosgrove, *Cross*, 99-101. As Barclay (*Obeying*, 84) rightly notes, “Given that Gentiles were ‘sinners’ and the Spirit was ‘holy’, it was taken for granted that the

of Israel's covenantal relationship with God in the age to come (cf. *Jub.* 1.23-25; *T. Judah* 24.2-3). In short, at the heart of the Jewish expectation of the Spirit is the belief that in the messianic age God will create his eschatological people of God obedient to God's law by pouring out the Spirit upon only Israel. This implies that since God's promise of the Spirit had not the Gentiles in view, the Gentiles are excluded from the promise. This Jewish nationalistic hope of the Spirit reflects ethnocentric covenantalism that the Spirit-less Gentiles have no way to become the members of God's eschatological people without becoming law-observant Jews through proselytization.

However, Paul believed that the eschatological hope of Israel was fulfilled in the Gentiles (3.14) through God's gracious salvific act of sending the Spirit to non-proselyte Gentiles (3.5; 4.6), apart from Torah-observance. Although there is relationship between Paul and the Jewish expectation in terms of "the communal aspect of the Spirit,"⁶⁵ we hardly find any reference in the texts above that indicates God's universal bestowal of the Spirit upon non-proselyte Gentiles. It is Paul's belief that the Spirit is given to the Gentiles that differentiates Paul from Israel's hope of a general outpouring in the last days. Attempting to understand Paul's distinctiveness from the Jewish expectation further, it is important to recognise that the first Christians claimed that the eschatological Spirit had been dispensed "on all flesh" (Acts 2.17; cf. Joel 2.28) including the Gentiles (Acts 10.44-48; 11.15-18; 15.8-9). In particular, the Christians in Jerusalem accepted Gentiles' reception of the Spirit as a sign or marker that testifies to the inclusion of Gentiles into the community of God's people (Acts 11.15-18), and thus they thought that there is no distinction between the Jewish Christians and the Gentile (Acts 15.8-9). It is striking that when the first Christian Jews debated the status of Gentile Christians in the church and their table fellowship with Gentile Christians, the Gentiles' experience of the Spirit was the evidential proof by which they confirmed full membership on the Gentile Christians

Spirit would not be given to non-Jews and, indeed, was only to be expected in the context of law observance."

⁶⁵ For the relationship, see Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, 202ff.

in the church.⁶⁶ The same point is implicitly expressed in Gal 2.7-9. When leaders in Jerusalem recognised God's grace manifested in Paul's successful missionary work among Gentiles, which includes the observable signs of the Spirit's presence among Paul's converts,⁶⁷ "the pillars" in Jerusalem agreed that Paul and Barnabas should go to the Gentiles. This agreement indicates that both "the pillars" in Jerusalem and Paul and Barnabas accepted that the Gentiles' reception of the Spirit is the sufficient condition of their inclusion into God's people without circumcision. Both in common with other early Christians and in line with the agreement in Jerusalem Paul believed that the Galatians who received the Spirit had already experienced the eschatological hope of Israel, i.e. the Spirit, and thus were included into the people of God.⁶⁸ For Paul, the reception of the Spirit is the mark and guarantee of acceptance before God (cf. Rom 8.16; 2 Cor 1.22),⁶⁹ and thus confirms full membership of the Gentile Galatians in the people of God.

In light of the observations above, it seems clear that Paul's difference from the traditional Jewish eschatological hope of the Spirit was that apart from Torah-observance God poured out the Spirit upon non-proselyte Gentile believers and thus accepted them as his people without further requirements (e.g. circumcision). For Paul it is a matter of sore perplexity that those who experienced the Spirit should revert to the observance of the law; Paul now considered it as a limited and unsatisfactory prelude to the fulfilment of the eschatological hope of Israel (3.15-4.7).⁷⁰ Since the Spirit continued to be the primary and sufficient basis of righteousness, to require the Gentiles of Torah-observance means to destroy that whole basis.

On the basis of the observations above, it is fair to say that the sufficiency of the Spirit (i.e. the antithesis between the law and the Spirit) is Paul's theological

⁶⁶ See Holmberg, "Jewish," 419-421.

⁶⁷ Dunn, *Galatians*, 105; Williams, "Justification," 98.

⁶⁸ See Barclay, *Obedying*, 83-85; Dunn, *TPA*, 416-419.

⁶⁹ 2 Cor 1.22: ὁ καὶ σφραγισάμενος ἡμᾶς καὶ δοὺς τὸν ἀρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν. G. Vos rightly argues, "possession of the Spirit seal the actuality of righteousness" ("The Eschatological Aspect of the Pauline Conception of the Spirit," in *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation*, edited by R. B. Gaffin (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1980), 110). Cf. Dunn, *TPLG*, 60.

⁷⁰ See Dunn, *Galatians*, 156.

rationale for his opposition to Torah-observance as the basis of justification. In particular, it is important to note that by appealing to their reception of the Spirit (ἐναρξάμενοι πνεύματι νῦν σαρκὶ ἐπιτελεῖσθε – 3.3), Paul seeks to persuade the Galatians not to rely upon circumcision for their justification. Here the antithesis between the law (represented by circumcision) and the Spirit is hinted at⁷¹: Paul places the term “flesh” (i.e. circumcised flesh) in opposition to the term “the Spirit” in terms of two antithetical bases of justification.⁷² As already argued (§2.2.3.), the agitators probably succeeded in persuading the Galatians on the basis of the salvific efficacy of circumcision for perfection (i.e. righteousness).⁷³ Against the agitators who were breaking the agreement in Jerusalem (2.7-9) Paul argues that since the Galatians are God’s people as a result of their reception of the Spirit, it is unnecessary for them to be inducted formally to the community of God’s people by means of Torah-observance and circumcision, i.e. proselytization.⁷⁴ Undoubtedly this is the point Paul wants to make from the four rhetorical questions, in particular ἐναρξάμενοι πνεύματι νῦν σαρκὶ ἐπιτελεῖσθε; (3.3), through which he tried to remind the Galatians of the significance of their undeniable reception of the Spirit, i.e. God’s acceptance without becoming proselytes.⁷⁵ This key point for Paul is summed up in Paul’s fourth antithesis – not the law, but the Spirit.

5. 2. 2. Gal 3.14

In 3.14 Paul picks up the theme of non-proselyte Gentiles’ reception of the Spirit (ἵνα τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος λάβωμεν) in order to argue against justification in and through the law (3.10-11). As most commentators have agreed,⁷⁶ the promise of the Spirit refers to the promised Spirit (cf. Eph. 1.13; Acts 2.33). As

⁷¹ Cf. Burton, *Galatians*, 148; Martyn, *Galatians*, 294.

⁷² Pace Fee (*Empowering*, 385) who understands the antithesis as the contrast between life according to the flesh and life according to the Spirit and Barclay (*Obeying*, 85-86) as “two alternative patterns of behaviour.”

⁷³ As Lull (*Spirit*, 42) argues, the agitators “had almost persuaded Paul’s converts that the Spirit was good for ‘beginners’, but to be perfect they had to perform the rites required by the Mosaic law. . . .” See also Jewett, “The Agitators,” 212; Martyn *Galatians*, 289-294.

⁷⁴ So rightly Dunn, *Galatians*, 153-154; Fee, *Empowering*, 395.

⁷⁵ Barclay (*Obeying*, 85) similarly argues, “by appealing to their experience of the Spirit, Paul clearly intends to assure the Galatians that, without becoming proselytes, they are nonetheless fully-approved members of the family of God.”

⁷⁶ E.g. Betz, Bruce, Burton, Dunn, Fung, Martyn, Mußner, Oepke, Schlier, Williams.

noted earlier, Paul was certainly thinking of the promise of the Spirit made to Israel through the prophets. It is very important to note that the recipients of the Spirit are not just Jews, but Jewish and Gentile believers (“we” - λάβωμεν).⁷⁷ This indicates that the Spirit was given freely to all the Jewish and Gentile believers.⁷⁸ It is also striking that Paul relates the blessing of Abraham coming to the Gentiles with the Galatians’ receiving of the Spirit by paralleling the two ἵνα clauses (ἵνα εἰς τὰ ἔθνη ἡ εὐλογία τοῦ Ἀβραάμ γένηται ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ἵνα τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος λάβωμεν διὰ τῆς πίστεως). The parallel indicates that Paul interpreted the Gentiles’ reception of the Spirit and the blessing of Abraham as the fulfilment of the promise that God promised to pour out upon Abraham’s descendants.⁷⁹ Since the blessing of Abraham refers to justification,⁸⁰ it is likely that Paul implies by parallel that the reception of the Spirit means receiving the gift of righteousness.⁸¹ For Paul the Gentiles’ reception of the Spirit is solid evidence both showing that the blessing of Abraham was given to the Gentiles and confirming that they are included into the people of God without further requirements such as Torah-observance and circumcision.⁸² In short, since the Spirit is the primary and sufficient soteriological basis of justification, therefore, justification in and through the law must be rejected.⁸³

5. 2. 3. Gal 4.6

The connection between “sonship” (i.e. justification) and the Spirit is explicitly expressed in 4.6.⁸⁴ Paul says, “Ὅτι δέ ἐστε υἱοί, ἔξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν κρᾶζον, Ἀββα ὁ πατήρ. Here it is to be noted that Paul appeals to the Abba! Father! cry of the Spirit in the heart of the

⁷⁷ Presumably Paul understood Jewish and Gentile believers’ reception the Spirit as the fulfilment of Joel 2.28-29.

⁷⁸ See Dunn, *Galatians*, 179; idem, *TPA*, 418-419; Martyn, *Galatians*, 323, 334-336.

⁷⁹ See particularly, Williams, “Justification,” 90-100; Dunn, *Galatians*, 180.

⁸⁰ See further §2.2.2.3.

⁸¹ So Dunn, *TPA*, 414; Eckstein, *Verheißung und Gesetz*, 168; Hong, *Law*, 131; Williams, “Justification,” 90-100.

⁸² Cf. Stanley, “‘Under a Curse’,” 508.

⁸³ Fee (*Empowering*, 371) writes, “The Spirit is an experienced reality providing evidence that righteousness is not by Torah (3.1-5, 14, 4.6).”

⁸⁴ As noted earlier, sonship is equivalent to justification in Galatians. For sonship, see §2.2.2.3.

Galatians as evidence for their sonship.⁸⁵ Presumably Paul understood God's sending of the Spirit into believers' hearts (4.6; cf. 2 Cor 1.22) as the fulfilment of Ezek 36.26-27. It is also important to note that unlike the author of *Jubilees* who believed that Jews who will receive the Spirit will be called "sons of the living God" (*Jub.* 1.23-25; cf. *T. Judah* 24.3),⁸⁶ Paul thinks that all believers (Jew and Gentile) who received the Spirit are sons of God. God's sending of the Spirit of his Son into the hearts of the Galatians is part of Paul's theological rationale against justification on the basis of the law. One grammatical issue in 4.6 is the grammatical function of ὅτι at the beginning of the text. Most exegetes take it as a causative conjunction ("because"). Some render it as explanatory or declarative ("to show or prove that").⁸⁷ Although the former view seems natural, the latter is preferable. Dunn reasons as follows:⁸⁸

Yet it is most unlikely that Paul wished to suggest that the Spirit was a gift consequent and subsequent upon their being made sons. Such an inference would have been quite counter to his basic argument: that the Galatians' receipt of the Spirit was the *beginning* of their experience as Christians (3.2-3) and amply demonstrated their full acceptance by God, that is, as sons of Abraham and sons of God (3.7, 26). It would also run counter to the parallel thought expressed in Rom 8, where it is clear that possession of the Spirit is coterminous with sonship (Rom 8.14).

Accepting Dunn's argumentation, it is more likely that Paul means that God sent the Spirit to accept the Galatians as the children of God than that God sent the Spirit because they are already children. Gal 4.7 appears to reinforce the point that God has sent the Spirit of his Son into believers' hearts to confirm their status as the children of God. In 4.7 Paul says, οὐκέτι εἶ δοῦλος ἀλλὰ υἱός· εἰ δὲ υἱός, καὶ κληρονόμος διὰ θεοῦ. Since the phrase διὰ θεοῦ implies "through God's sending of the Spirit of his Son," it is likely that the sonship of the Galatians is a consequence of

⁸⁵ Lull (*Spirit*, 68) rightly notes, "Paul seized upon the Spirit's Abba cry as the highest evidence that Gentile believers were 'sons' already without 'the works of the law'." See also Barclay, *Obeying*, 84-85.

⁸⁶ There is a similarity between the author of *Jubilees* and Paul on the point that both take the Spirit's presence as proof that its recipients are 'sons' of God, as Barclay argues (*Obeying*, 84). But the author of *Jubilees* did not believe that God's promise of the Spirit had the Gentiles in view, as Paul did.

⁸⁷ Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (London: SCM, 1970), 113-115; idem, *Galatians*, 219; Fee, *Empowering*, 406, n. 136 and scholars he quotes; Ziesler, *Galatians*, 58.

⁸⁸ Dunn, *Galatians*, 219.

God's sending of the Spirit into their hearts.⁸⁹ In the light of Rom 8.14-16 and the logic of Paul's argument, therefore, it is fair to say that Paul conceived of an adopted sonship as the consequence of God's sending of the Spirit.⁹⁰ In short, for Paul the Galatians' reception of the Spirit is the evidence of their sonship, and the sonship is one of the blessings of the Spirit.

Apparently Paul puts forward the theme of becoming sons of God by the Spirit to argue against the agitators' teaching that if the Galatians want to be the children of God, they must observe the works of the law, in particular circumcision (§2.2.2.3.). In contrast to the agitators' teaching, Paul claims that the Galatians do not need to accept the law and circumcision because they are sons of God already through the Spirit, without becoming proselytes through circumcision.⁹¹ It is important to note that God sent the Spirit into not just Jews' hearts, but the hearts of Jewish and Gentile believers also (εἰς τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν). This indicates that the sonship as a result of the reception of the Spirit is no longer the exclusive prerogative given to Jews because God's sending of the Spirit made adoption universally available to Jewish and Gentile believers alike. In short, by appealing to their reception of the Spirit Paul clearly intends to assure the Galatians that they are genuine and full members of the covenant community of God (i.e. children of God) without becoming proselytes.

5. 2. 4. Gal 4.29

Another indication of the Spirit as the soteriological basis of justification is found in 4.29 (ἀλλ' ὡσπερ τότε ὁ κατὰ σάρκα γεννηθεὶς ἐδίωκεν τὸν κατὰ πνεῦμα,

⁸⁹ Lull (*Spirit*, 106) rightly argues, "A causal ὅτι, therefore, is in conflict with 4.21-31, which attributes being 'sons' to the causal agency of the Spirit, and with the concept of the πνεῦμα υἰοθεσίας in Rom 8.15." See also Fee, *Empowering*, 406-408. It should be made clear that we do not suggest that sonship is a consequence of the Spirit in terms of a temporal sequence; the experience of the Spirit and receiving sonship are coincidental. Cf. Williams, "Justification," 100, n. 12.

⁹⁰ Dunn (*Galatians*, 221) rightly notes, "the experience of the Spirit is the experience of sonship and bears the mark of Christ's own sonship." See also Dunn, *TPA*, 435-437; Lull (*Spirit*, 105) also notes, "Paul conceives of the Spirit as the source and agent of the 'sonship' of the Christians in Galatia." See also Barclay, *Obeying*, 85; Fee, *Empowering*, 412; Lemmer, "Mnemonic Reference to the Spirit as a Persuasive Tool," 359.

⁹¹ Cf. J. Becker, *Paul* (Louisville: Westminster/JKP, 1993), 293; Lull, *Spirit*, 109.

οὕτως καὶ νῦν). Here Paul makes a typological identification; the child of Hagar (i.e. Ishmael) is the child “born according to the flesh”; the child of Sarah (Isaac) is the child “born according to the Spirit.” As Martyn perceptively notes, Paul relates the former not to the descendants of Ishmael but to the Jews including the Jewish Christians (the agitators).⁹² In the same way he corresponds the latter not to the descendants of Isaac but to those who have received the Spirit like the Galatians (οὕτως καὶ νῦν). Paul’s interpretation of Gen 16-21 is radically different from the agitators’ view.⁹³ The agitators identify the child of Hagar with Gentiles (including the Galatians) and the child of Sarah with Jews. For them the true descendants of Abraham are the Jews like themselves who are circumcised in flesh and observe the law. So they argue that the Galatians could become the descendants of Abraham through Torah-observance and circumcision. On the contrary Paul insists that the Galatian believers who experienced the Spirit are children born according to the Spirit. They are the children of the promise,⁹⁴ like Isaac (4.28). They are not children of the slave woman (Hagar), but children of the free woman (Sarah) who are entitled to share in the Abrahamic inheritance (4.30). Why does Paul attempt to make a totally different exegesis of Gen 16-21 from the agitators? Paul’s complete “turn-around” exegesis is based on his conviction that God has supplied the Galatians with the Spirit (3.5; 4.6) and thus God made the Galatians the offspring of Abraham through the power of the Spirit. It is quite important to note that Paul contrasts the flesh (i.e. the circumcised flesh - ethnic identity) and the Spirit as two antithetical means or causes (κατὰ)⁹⁵ for becoming the children of Abraham; Paul sets “the child who was born according to flesh” in antithesis with “the child who was born according to the Spirit” (4.29).⁹⁶ To put it differently, the Spirit, not circumcision, is effective for producing the children of the promise (i.e. the offspring of Abraham).⁹⁷

⁹² This is Martyn’s insight (“The Covenants of Hagar and Sarah,” in *Issues*, 191-208).

⁹³ For the difference between Paul and the agitators, see Martyn, “The Covenants of Hagar and Sarah,” 196-197, 204.

⁹⁴ For the promise see §4.2.2.

⁹⁵ Martyn (*Galatians*, 435) suggests, “Paul uses the preposition κατὰ to mean ‘as a result of the power of.’”

⁹⁶ See e.g. Betz, *Galatians*, 249; Bruce, *Galatians*, 223; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 216; Martyn, *Galatians*, 456; Witherington, *Grace*, 337.

⁹⁷ See Martyn, “The Covenants of Hagar and Sarah,” 198-200.

What Paul intends his readers to understand by the antithesis is that they can become the descendants of Abraham not by the salvific efficacy of circumcision but the salvific power of the Spirit creating the eschatological people of God. In short, the point of Paul's argument at 4.29 is that the Galatians who received the Spirit are the offspring of Abraham like Isaac and thus the members of the people of God without their becoming proselytes.⁹⁸ This is one of the theses of Paul's Hagar-Sarah allegory (4.21-31).

5. 2. 5. Other Pauline Letters

Although it goes beyond the scope of the present study to undertake a detailed investigation of the close connection between justification and the Spirit in other Pauline letters, some observations on Paul's treatment of the theme in other letters will prove to be of some value. In Rom 2.29 Paul argues that the true member of God's people is the one who is circumcised in the heart ἐν πνεύματι οὐ γράμματι.⁹⁹ In the same way Paul says at Phil 3.3a, ἡμεῖς γὰρ ἐσμεν ἡ περιτομή, οἱ πνεύματι θεοῦ λατρεύοντες. The point of the two texts is that the Spirit defines the true members of the people of God. The authentic people of God are determined not by the law or physical circumcision but by the Spirit through whom believers receive circumcision of heart and worship God. In other words, the identity marker of the genuine people of God is neither circumcision nor the Torah but the Spirit. The same point is clearly expressed at Rom 8.14-15 - ὅσοι γὰρ πνεύματι θεοῦ ἄγονται, οὗτοι υἱοὶ θεοῦ εἰσιν. οὐ γὰρ ἐλάβετε πνεῦμα δουλείας πάλιν εἰς φόβον ἀλλὰ ἐλάβετε πνεῦμα υἰοθεσίας ἐν ᾧ κράζομεν, Αββα ὁ πατήρ. Here Paul argues that those who are led by the Spirit are the children of God because they received "the Spirit of adoption." The reception of the Spirit is empirical evidence of the status of God's son. The Spirit as the guarantee of the status of the children of God (i.e. justification) is explicitly described in Rom 8.16: αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα συμμαρτυρεῖ τῷ πνεύματι ἡμῶν ὅτι ἐσμεν τέκνα θεοῦ. Here Paul argues that the Spirit testifies the status of the

⁹⁸ See Dunn, *Galatians*, 257.

⁹⁹ See Schneider, "The Meaning of St. Paul's Antithesis 'the Letter and the Spirit'," 197-201, 207.

children of God and thus that the membership in the community of God's people is determined and guaranteed by the Spirit.

In Rom 14.17, furthermore, Paul considers righteousness as an effect of the work of the Holy Spirit (δικαιοσύνη ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ). We can find the same point in 1 Cor 6.11, in which Paul notes that justification is the work of the Spirit by saying ἐδικαιώθητε. . . ἐν τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν. In light of the parallel between ἡ διακονία τοῦ πνεύματος and ἡ διακονία τῆς δικαιοσύνης (2 Cor 3.8-9), moreover, it is likely that justification is the work of the Spirit. Here it is quite important to note that the law and the Spirit are being set in opposition in very radical terms as between a ministry of death (the law) and a ministry of life (the Spirit), and between a ministry of condemnation and a ministry of justification.¹⁰⁰ The connection between the Spirit and God's election is also implicitly expressed in 1 Thes 1.4-5. Here Paul means that the blessing of election was given to the Gentile Thessalonians because the message of the gospel came to them ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ. Perhaps Paul understands that the Thessalonians' election is a consequence of the work of the Holy Spirit. The point is also reflected in 2 Thes 2.13 (εἴλατο ὑμᾶς ὁ θεὸς ἀπαρχὴν εἰς σωτηρίαν ἐν ἁγιασμῷ πνεύματος).

The relationship between the Spirit and the inclusion of the Gentiles is also found in 1 Cor 12.13 - γὰρ ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι ἡμεῖς πάντες εἰς ἓν σῶμα ἐβαπτίσθημεν, εἴτε Ἰουδαῖοι εἴτε Ἕλληνες εἴτε δούλοι εἴτε ἐλεύθεροι, καὶ πάντες ἐν πνεύμα ἐποτίσθημεν. It is to be noted that the one Spirit is the soteriological basis upon which Jewish believers and Gentile become one body in the church. This point is reflected in Eph 1.13-14 (ἐσφραγίσθητε τῷ πνεύματι τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τῷ ἁγίῳ, ὃ ἐστὶν ἀρραβὼν τῆς κληρονομίας ἡμῶν). Here the author of Ephesians tries to say that the Gentile Ephesians were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit who is the pledge guaranteeing their inheritance. For the author the Spirit is the seal and "down-payment" guaranteeing the status of Gentile believers as heirs (cf. 2 Cor 1.22). This is clearly expressed in Eph 2.18-19¹⁰¹: δι' αὐτοῦ ἔχομεν τὴν προσαγωγὴν

¹⁰⁰ See Dunn, "In Search of Common Ground," 320; Grindheim, "The Law Kills But the Gospel Gives Life," 97-115.

¹⁰¹ For a fine discussion of the text, see Yee, "'You Who Were Called the Uncircumcision by the Circumcision'," 224-241.

οἱ ἀμφότεροι ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι πρὸς τὸν πατέρα. ἄρα οὖν οὐκέτι ἐστὲ ξένοι καὶ πάροικοι ἀλλὰ ἐστὲ συμπολίται τῶν ἁγίων καὶ οἰκεῖοι τοῦ θεοῦ (cf. Eph 4.30). The “one Spirit” is the medium of access to the presence of God. The access of the Gentile believers to God means that they are no longer strangers and aliens excluded from the community of God’s people but fellow citizens with the “holy ones” and the members of the household of God. In other words, they are full members of the family of God. In short, the Spirit is the valid soteriological basis of the inclusion of the Gentiles into the people of God.

5. 3. Concluding Remarks

What Paul intended the Galatians to understand by the antithesis between the law and the Spirit is that they must not depend upon the law for justification because the Spirit is the means of righteousness, the medium of the blessing of Abraham, and the basis and cause of sonship. For Paul the Spirit, not the law determines the members of the covenant community. Paul replaces the identity marker of God’s people from the law (and circumcision) by the Spirit. The antithesis is also intended to defend the position that Gentile Christians who received the Spirit do not have to undergo circumcision and keep the law in order to become full members of the covenant community. The antithesis is both a summary of Paul’s previous argument about the Spirit as the sufficient soteriological basis of justification and a hermeneutical key for understanding Paul’s theology in Galatians.

What is the significance of the antithesis between the law and the Spirit for Paul’s critique of the law and covenantal nomism? This study confirms the earlier conclusion that it is unfair to say that Paul argues against the attitude of self-righteousness, that is, dependence on one’s meritorious works to earn the status of the children of God. Rather the target of Paul’s attack on the law is both the exclusivistic role of the law as the identity marker and boundary of God’s people excluding the Gentiles from the community of God’s people and its soteriological role as the basis of justification. Paul argues that the valid soteriological basis and guarantee of the status of descendant of Abraham and children of God is neither the law nor circumcision but the Spirit. One step further, the Spirit is the basis (cf. Rom

15.16; 1 Cor 5.5) and guarantee (cf. 2 Cor 1.22; 5.5) of the salvation of human beings.¹⁰² Paul redefines or replaces both the identity marker of God's eschatological people and ecclesiological boundary mark from the law to the Spirit. Paul criticised "covenantal nomism" not only because it denied the fact that God sent the Spirit of his Son into the hearts of Gentile believers (4.6; cf. 3.5; 1 Thes 4.9) but also because it did not recognise that God replaced the law with the Spirit both as a new soteriological basis of justification of the Gentiles and as a new identity marker of God's people.¹⁰³ Paul also denied the validity of "covenantal nomism" because it excluded the Gentiles accepted by God through the Spirit from the people of God and thus denied the work and power of the Spirit making the Gentiles as Gentiles the full members of the community of God's people and the children of God.

¹⁰² In Paul's letters the Spirit is the soteriological basis of the salvific benefits, such as righteousness (Gal 5.5; 1 Cor 6.11), sonship (Gal 4.6-7, 29; cf. Rom 8.14-17), eternal life (Gal 6.8; cf. Rom 8.11; 1 Cor 15.45; 2 Cor 3.6), and freedom (Gal 5.18; cf. Rom 8.2, 21-23; 2 Cor 3.17; Gal 4.28-31).

¹⁰³ See Sanders, *PPJ*, 550.

CHAPTER 6

THE ANTITHESIS BETWEEN THE LAW AND ΠΙΣΤΙΣ

In 5.5 Paul continues to meet head on the issue of justification in the Galatian churches. To the Galatians who were attempting to be the authentic descendants of Abraham by observing the law (the works of the law, in particular circumcision), Paul says, ἡμεῖς γὰρ ἐκ πίστεως ἐλπίδα δικαιοσύνης ἀπεκδεχόμεθα (“For by πίστις we are waiting for the hoped-for righteousness”). As noted earlier,¹ γὰρ introducing an argument *e contrario* shows that 5.5 explains why the law is not the valid soteriological means or basis of justification by indicating the antithetical soteriological means of justification, i.e. πίστις.² Paul has the antithesis between the law and πίστις in mind in order to argue against the agitators’ teaching that Gentiles must accept the law as a condition of justification.³ It is thus fair to say that implied is the further antithesis between the law and πίστις in terms of incompatible means of justification.⁴

The questions for us here are: What did Paul intend the Galatians to understand by his summary reference to πίστις? Why does Paul claim that πίστις is the sufficient soteriological basis or means of justification? What is the significance of this antithesis for understanding Paul’s view of the law and his attitude toward

¹ See §1.1. and §5.1.

² Cf. Burton, *Galatians*, 278; Fung, *Galatians*, 227; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 349; Ridderbos, *Galatia*, 189.

³ Probably the agitators hold together the law and πίστις and thus they argued that πίστις was not by itself sufficient for salvation but that the law was also necessary; salvation is based on both the law and πίστις. Cf. Howard, *Paul*, 52.

⁴ Provided that πίστις refers to the faithfulness of Christ, it seems that the antithesis between the law and πίστις overlaps with the antithesis between the law and Christ. But the former differs from the latter in the sense that the former focuses on two antithetical means of justification, whereas the latter on two incompatible spheres of justification.

first-century Palestinian Judaism? In order to answer these questions, first it is necessary to clarify the meaning of πίστις references in 5.5 and 5.6.

6. 1. The Meaning of the Πίστις References in 5.5 and 5.6

When investigating the meaning of ἐκ πίστεως (5.5) and πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη (5.6), we must interpret them both in relation to the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ⁵ and with a view to the current πίστις Χριστοῦ debate, not only because ἐκ πίστεως is an abbreviation of ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ⁶ but also because both ἐκ πίστεως and ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ occur in the rhetorical context of the justification issue.⁷ The discussion of how to interpret Paul's notoriously difficult expression πίστις Χριστοῦ has been one of the main debates in recent Pauline scholarship.⁸ The debate has revolved largely around the issue whether the phrase should be understood as the Christian's act of "faith in Christ" (objective genitive) or as "the faith(fulness) of Christ" (subjective genitive). While a good number of scholars had earlier tackled the issue,⁹ it has resurfaced as a thorny issue in recent Pauline scholarship within the

⁵ We will use πίστις Χριστοῦ in this chapter when referring as a whole to the following five variations (πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ – Rom 3.22; Gal 3.22; πίστις Ἰησοῦ – Rom 3.26; πίστις Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ – Gal 2.16; πίστις Χριστοῦ – Gal 2.16; Phil 3.9; πίστις τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ – Gal 2.20).

⁶ This is testified by Paul's abbreviation of ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Gal 3.22) to ἐκ πίστεως (Gal 3.24). Cf. Paul's abbreviation of διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Rom 3.22) to διὰ πίστεως (Rom 3.25, 31) and ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ (Rom 3.26) to ἐκ πίστεως (Rom 3.30). Paul usually abbreviates the long phrases such as στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου (Gal 4.3) to στοιχεῖα (Gal 4.9), and ἔργα νόμου (Rom 3.20) to ἔργα (Rom 3.27; 4.2, 6; 9.12, 32; 11.6).

⁷ There are three justification passages in the letter: 2.16-21; 3.21-26; 5.4-6. In these passages justification occurs with ἐκ πίστεως (Χριστοῦ) each time. So, it is very difficult to think that the meaning of ἐκ πίστεως in 5.5 is different from ἐκ πίστεως (Χριστοῦ) in 2.16-21 and 3.21-26.

⁸ This was an important topic of discussion in the Pauline Theology Group of the Society of Biblical Literature. The discussion culminated in the debate between Hays ("ΠΙΣΤΙΣ," 35-60) and Dunn ("ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ," 61-81) in Kansas City in November 1991.

⁹ E.g. J. Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 161-205; Barth, "The Kerygma of Galatians," 144-145; idem, "The Faith of the Messiah," *The Heythrop Journal* 10 (1969), 363-370; H.-W. Bartsch, "The Concept of Faith in Paul's Letter to the Romans," *Biblical Research* 13 (1968), 41-53; J. Haussleiter, "Der Glaube Jesus und der christliche Glaube," *NKZ* 2 (1891), 109-145, 205-230; G. Howard, "Notes and Observations on the 'Faith of Christ,'" *HTR* 60 (1967), 459-465; idem, "The Faith of Christ," *ExpT* 85 (1974), 212-215; Kertelege, *Rechtfertigung bei Paulus*, 162-166; G. Kittel, "Πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ bei Paulus," *TSK* 79 (1906), 419-436; R. N. Longenecker, *Paul, Apostle of Liberty* (New York: Harper & Low, 1964), 149-152; A. V. Longworth, "'Faith' in Galatians," *Studia Evangelica II* 87 (1964), 605-610; C. F. D. Moule, "The Biblical Conception of Faith," *ExpT* 68 (1957), 157, 222; D. W. B. Robinson, "'Faith of Jesus Christ,'" *Reformed Theological Review* 29 (1970), 71-81; G. Taylor, "The Function of

last twenty or so years.¹⁰ In recent years, a growing number of scholars have claimed that the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ is “the faith(fulness) of Christ.”¹¹ Many scholars, however, have maintained the traditional interpretation: πίστις Χριστοῦ refers to the Christian’s act of “faith in Christ.”¹² Alternatively, some scholars have argued that it refers to “Christ-faith”¹³ or “Christic-faith.”¹⁴ Recently A. Vanhoye suggests that the meaning of “credibility or trustworthiness” of Christ suits well some texts because the “trustworthiness” of Christ is what makes the Christian’s “faith” possible.¹⁵ In spite of so many contributions to the debate, the discussion has not come to an end and no scholarly consensus may yet be discerned.¹⁶

Although there is no consensus about the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ, it is generally agreed that its precise meaning cannot be decided on grammatical and syntactical grounds alone,¹⁷ and thus this issue must be settled by the exegetical study of the relevant texts.¹⁸ Recognising that arguments based on grammar and syntax are not decisive in determining the meaning, Hays states, “Our interpretative

ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ in Galatians,” *JBL* 85 (1966), 58-76; T. F. Torrance, “One Aspect of the Biblical Conception of Faith,” *ExpT* 68 (1957), 111-114.

¹⁰ For a bibliography, see ch. 1, n. 39 and Hays, “ΠΙΣΤΙΣ,” 35, n. 2. For good summaries of the debate, see Campbell, *The Rhetoric*, 58-60; Hays, *Faith*, 158-162.

¹¹ For a bibliography of the interpreters who understand the genitive in πίστις Χριστοῦ to be subjective, see Hays, “ΠΙΣΤΙΣ,” 36, n. 3.

¹² For a bibliography of the scholars who understand the genitive to be objective, see, Hays, “ΠΙΣΤΙΣ,” 36, n. 4.

¹³ Cosgrove, *Cross*, 56; Williams, “*Pistis*,” 437.

¹⁴ Garlington, “Role Reversal,” 89.

¹⁵ A. Vanhoye, “Πίστις Χριστοῦ: fede in Cristo o affidabilità di Cristo,” *Bib* 80 (1999), 1-21.

¹⁶ Cf. E. E. Johnson, “Preface,” in *Pauline Theology* vol. 4, xi; P. J. Achtemeier, “Apropos the Faith of/in Christ,” in *Pauline Theology* vol. 4, 92.

¹⁷ It is widely accepted that the genitive in πίστις Χριστοῦ can be construed grammatically as either subjective or objective. Hays (“ΠΙΣΤΙΣ,” 39) and Dunn (“ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ,” 64, 67) agree that the grammatical issue is inconclusive in determining the meaning. Hays also responded to the critique of Moisés Silva who favours the objective genitive as follows: “In the end, Dr. Silva and I agree that the expression πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is ambiguous, that its ambiguity must be resolved by appealing to broader contextual considerations, and that no irrefutable resolution of the ambiguity is possible on either side” (“Postscript,” in *Conflict and Context*, edited by M. L. Branson and C. R. Padilla (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 278). But Hays (“ΠΙΣΤΙΣ,” 39) says, “I stand by my earlier judgement that the balance of grammatical evidence strongly favors the subjective genitive interpretation and that the arguments for an objective interpretation are relatively weak.” Campbell (“Romans 1.17,” 267, n. 9) also says, “Hays, M. Hooker, and I concur that both grammatical cases are invalid.” See also Achtemeier, “Apropos the Faith of/in Christ,” 84, 92; Hooker, “ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ,” 321; Johnson, “Preface,” xi.

¹⁸ Cf. Hays, “ΠΙΣΤΙΣ,” 39; Hooker, “ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ,” 321; Wallis, *The Faith*, 71-72.

decision about the meaning of Paul's phrase, therefore, must be governed by larger judgements and logic of Paul's thought concerning faith, Christ, and salvation."¹⁹ Without attempting to rehearse the discussions with regard to grammatical and syntactical issues pertinent to the phrase,²⁰ then, we will focus on the interpretation of the πίστις references in Gal 5.5-6 through a contextual and exegetical study of 5.5-6.

Pauline scholars have overlooked or undervalued the importance of Gal 5.5-6 for the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate. With regard to the meaning of ἐκ πίστεως in 5.5, most commentators have understood πίστις as the Christian's act of faith.²¹ Surprisingly, most exegetes who argue for "the subjective genitive" interpretation do not explicitly interpret ἐκ πίστεως as "through the faith(fulness) of Christ."²² Matera is an exception because he claims that it should be understood in light of "through the faith(fulness) of Christ" (2.16).²³ So far as πίστις in 5.6 is concerned, virtually all interpreters of Paul have taken it to refer to the Christian's act of faith. Having understood it as an ethical principle of Christian behaviour, they have interpreted πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη as "the Christian's faith expressing itself through love." To our knowledge, no one has explicitly argued that it denotes "the

¹⁹ Hays, "ΠΙΣΤΙΣ," 39.

²⁰ For the discussions, see Campbell, *The Rhetoric*, 214-218; Dunn, "ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ," 63-67; Hultgren, "The *Pistis Christou* Formulations in Paul," 248-263; R. B. Matlock, "Detheologizing the ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ Debate," *NovT* 42 (2000), 1-23; O'Brien, *Philippians*, 398-400; Williams, "*Pistis*," 431-447; Wallis, *The Faith*, 69-71.

²¹ E.g. Betz, *Galatians*, 262; Bruce, *Galatians*, 231; Burton, *Galatians*, 278; Dunn, *Galatians*, 269; Fung, *Galatians*, 227; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 229; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 350; Oepke, *Galater*, 157; Schlier, *Galater*, 233; Williams, *Galatians*, 138; Witherington, *Grace*, 369.

²² E.g. Hays (*Faith*, 231-232) understands that the phrase describes the Christian's life in conformity to the pattern of faithfulness grounded and revealed in Jesus. Martyn (*Galatians*, 472) interprets that "faith" is the cause of "waiting for the hoped-for righteousness." He translates the phrase as "having the confidence that comes from faith." Williams (*Galatians*, 138) regards "faith" as the internal source of believers' existence: "Faith is that personal receptivity to God's grace that allows the Spirit to be at work in believers' lives." See also Longenecker, *Galatians*, 229; Witherington, *Grace*, 369.

²³ Matera (*Galatians*, 182; cf. 94, 100-102) opts for "the subjective genitive" interpretation of the phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ. But he does not demonstrate that ἐκ πίστεως (5.5) should be interpreted as "through the faith(fulness) of Christ."

faith(fulness) of Christ.”²⁴ The thesis put forward in what follows is that the πίστις references in 5.5 and 5.6 refer to “the faith(fulness) of Christ.”²⁵

6. 1. 1. The Meaning of ἐκ πίστεως in 5.5

The interpretation of the πίστις occurrences in Gal 3.23-25 (Πρὸ τοῦ δὲ ἐλθεῖν τὴν πίστιν ὑπὸ νόμον ἐφρουρούμεθα συγκλειόμενοι εἰς τὴν μέλλουσαν πίστιν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι, ὥστε ὁ νόμος παιδαγωγὸς ἡμῶν γέγονεν εἰς Χριστόν, ἵνα ἐκ πίστεως δικαιωθῶμεν· ἐλθούσης δὲ τῆς πίστεως οὐκέτι ὑπὸ παιδαγωγόν ἐσμεν) is crucial for clarifying the meaning of πίστις in 5.5. Gal 3.23-25 is also important for understanding the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Galatians because an irrefutable resolution of the grammatical and syntactical ambiguity of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Galatians is possible by contextual and exegetical scrutiny of 3.23-25. There are several reasons for this claim. First, the reference of the unqualified use of πίστις in 3.23-25 is apparently πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in 3.22.²⁶ Second, the same phrase ἐκ πίστεως occurs both in 3.24 and 5.5. Third, the same context of justification appears both in 3.23-25 and 5.5. Fourth, in consideration of the summarising character of 5.5-6 (§1.2.),²⁷ it is reasonable to think that ἐκ πίστεως as an abbreviation of ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ recapitulates the ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ of 2.16, 3.22 and ἐκ πίστεως of 3.8, 24.²⁸ Therefore, Gal 3.23-25 is probably one of the decisive texts for the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate, and may well hold the key to our interpretation of ἐκ πίστεως at 5.5. In what follows I will argue that πίστις references in 3.23-25 refer to “the faithfulness of Christ.”

²⁴ Hays (“Christology,” 289) interprets πίστις δι’ ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη in an anthropological sense (i.e. “to become slaves of one another through love”). Although Hays (“ΠΙΣΤΙΣ,” 59) argues later, “there are no cases in Galatians where the noun πίστις unambiguously denotes ‘human believing in Christ,’” he does not explicitly claim that the phrase here should be understood in a Christological sense (i.e. “the faith(fulness) of Christ”).

²⁵ The meaning of “the faith(fulness) of Christ” will be discussed in §6.2.

²⁶ Most commentators view that the definite articles with πίστις throughout 3.23-25 refer back to the πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in 3.22. E.g. Bruce, *Galatians*, 181; Burton, *Galatians*, 198; Dunn, *Galatians*, 197; Fung, *Galatians*, 168; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 145; Matera, *Galatians*, 136; Williams, *Galatians*, 101.

²⁷ Cf. Anderson, *Rhetorical*, 158; Betz, *Galatians*, 262; Fung, *Galatians*, 221; McKnight, *Galatians*, 251.

²⁸ Cf. n. 5 in this chapter.

Before turning to the exegesis of the text, it is appropriate to survey briefly the major proposed interpretations concerning the πίστις references in 3.23-25.²⁹ Some exegetes interpret ἡ πίστις in 3.23-25 in terms of the Christian's faith in Christ.³⁰ In recent years, several exegetes who favour the subjective genitive interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ claim that ἡ πίστις refers to "the faith(fulness) of Christ."³¹ Surprisingly commentators who argue for the subjective genitive interpretation seem to suggest that it denotes both "the faith of the Christian" and "the faith of Jesus Christ."³² Interestingly, a good number of commentators have interpreted πίστις as a quasi-personified entity. The exegetes have suggested that it refers to a "mythico-historical period of the faith,"³³ or to "the Christian revelation,"³⁴ or to "the manifestation of faith in personified form,"³⁵ or to "Christianity."³⁶ It has also been understood as a metonymy for "Christ,"³⁷ "principle of salvation,"³⁸ "the gospel,"³⁹ or "Jesus-Christ-faith" as a metonymy for Christ or

²⁹ For a succinct survey of German scholarship, see von Dobbeler, "Metaphernkonflikt und Missionsstrategie," 15-16.

³⁰ E.g. Burton, *Galatians*, 198; Dahl, *Studies in Paul*, 175; Dunn, *Galatians*, 197; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 254-255.

³¹ Caneday, "The Curse of the Law and the Cross," 196; Howard, *Paul*, 65; idem, "'Faith of Christ,'" 214; L. A. Jervis, *Galatians* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999), 101; Longenecker, *Triumph*, 103; Matera, *Galatians*, 136; Wallis, *The Faith*, 113.

³² Hays (*Faith*, 232) says, "the coming of πίστις is indeed the coming of a new possible mode of disposing one's self toward God, but this mode is possible precisely because it was first of all actualised in and by Jesus Christ." B. Longenecker (*Triumph*, 104) says, "Paul envisages Christ's πίστις leading to the enlivenment of πίστις in the lives of others." R. Longenecker (*Galatians*, 145) states, "Paul means not faith generically, but the particular faith referred to in v 22b that has to do with 'the faithfulness of Christ' and humanity's response of faith." But R. Longenecker is inconsistent because he considers the coming of "faith" in 3.25 as "the Christian gospel" (p. 149). Martyn (*Galatians*, 362-363) seems to think that πίστις refers both Christ's faith and the Christian's faith kindled by Christ's faith. Williams ("Pistis," 431-437) suggests that it refers to "Christ-faith" and includes both meanings by arguing that the sense of Gal 3.22-25 is that "Faith comes in that Christ . . . actualizes and exemplifies faith." He does not distinguish the faith of Christians from the faith of Christ (p. 436).

³³ Betz, *Galatians*, 175-176.

³⁴ J. Brown, *An Exposition of the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians* (Edinburgh: William Oliphant and Sons, 1853), 171.

³⁵ E. Käsemann, *Perspectives on Paul* (London: SCM, 1969), 83.

³⁶ Lietzmann, *An die Galater*, 23; W. Mundle, *Der Glaubensbegriff bei Paulus* (Leipzig: Heinsius, 1932), 93.

³⁷ M. C. de Boer, "Paul, Theologian of God's Apocalypse," *Int* 56 (2002), 27; Stendahl, *Paul*, 21.

³⁸ G. Bornkamm, "The Revelation of Christ to Paul on the Damascus Road and Paul's Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation," in *Reconciliation and Hope*, edited by R. Banks, 90-

the gospel.⁴⁰ In the light of the use of the term πίστις in the works of Philo and Josephus, Hay suggests that in Gal 3.23-25 “ἡ πίστις means ‘the objective ground of faith.’ Jesus is the decisive evidence or pledge given humankind by God which makes faith possible.”⁴¹ Recently, von Dobbeler claims,

“Der absolute Gebrauch von πίστις in Gal 3,23-25, d.h. der Verzicht auf die Benennung eines Glaubensinhalts hat dabei – wie wir sahen – die missions-strategisch sinnvolle, ja geschickte Übernahme und Modifizierung des Metaphernfelds der Familie zum Hintergrund, galt die jetzt an die Stelle der Sophia rückende Pistis doch allgemein als das den Sozialverband einer Grossfamilie / eines Hauses (οἶκος) konstituierende und stabilisierende Element, das im Sinne einer wechselseitigen Loyalität und Solidarität auch Aussenstehenden die Zugehörigkeit zu einer Grossfamilie / zu einem Haus ermöglichte und zugleich das Kennzeichen dieser Zugehörigkeit war.”⁴²

As we shall see below, the subjective genitive interpretation is to be preferred. Although other suggestions may reflect a facet of Paul’s meaning, none of them quite does justice to the fact that Paul speaks of πίστις as an “apocalyptic”⁴³ and eschatological event from his redemptive-historical perspective (see below). Moreover, other proposals, except both the objective genitive interpretation and the subjective genitive one, fail to observe that ἡ πίστις occurrences in 3.23-25 point back to πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in 3.22, as most exegetes recognise. Here ἡ πίστις which is an abbreviation of πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (3.22) cannot mean “that which is believed” (e.g., body of faith, Christian belief, the gospel, principle of salvation, Glaubensinhalts, etc.) or “objective ground for faith” because it probably refers either to the Christian’s act of faith in Jesus Christ or to the faith(fulness) of Jesus Christ.⁴⁴ Moreover, these interpretations are not in accordance with Paul’s statement

103 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 96; Fung, *Galatians*, 168; Oepke, *Galater*, 120; Schlier, *Galater*, 167.

³⁹ Bruce, *Galatians*, 181; BAGD, 664.

⁴⁰ E.g. Cosgrove suggests that πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in 3.22 refers to “Jesus-Christ-Faith” as a metonymy for Christ or the gospel (“Justification in Paul,” *JBL* 106 (1987), 662, n. 22). Witherington (*Grace*, 268) argues “‘the Faith here refers to Christ’ who is epitomized as Faith.

⁴¹ Hay, “*Pistis* as ‘Ground for Faith’ in Hellenized Judaism and Paul,” 471.

⁴² von Dobbeler, “Metaphernkonflikt und Missionsstrategie,” 34-35.

⁴³ I use the term “apocalyptic” in terms of God’s self-revelation or his self-revelatory act in and through Christ and the Spirit. Here I follow basically Käsemann’s and Martyn’s use of the term as Christian theological shorthand referring to God’s self-revelation or his self-revelatory act in Christ. Cf. de Boer, “Paul, Theologian of God’s Apocalypse,” 21-33.

⁴⁴ Pace Cosgrove (“Justification in Paul,” 661, n. 22) who argues that πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in 3.22 denotes neither the believer’s faith per se nor that of Jesus, and S. Ota (“Absolute Use of ΠΙΣΤΙΣ and ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ in Paul,” *Annual of the Japanese Biblical Institute* 23

of “justification ἐκ πίστεως” in 3.24.⁴⁵ These readings are possible only if Paul means that we are justified by “the gospel,” “the body of belief,” “Christianity,” etc. But we cannot find this sort of teaching regarding justification in Galatians. Since both πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in 3.22 as the reference of the unqualified use of πίστις in 3.23-25 and ἐκ πίστεως (3.24) as an abbreviation of ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ militate against such interpretations, those interpretations introduced above have failed to comprehend the meaning of πίστις in 3.23-25.

Our question is therefore: Does it refer either to the Christian’s act of faith in Christ or to the faith(fulness) of Jesus Christ, or both? As we try to press into its meaning, it is absolutely critical to assess the characteristics of πίστις described in 3.23-25. First, it is striking that πίστις is the subject of “coming” (3.23a, 25a).⁴⁶ Betz is right in saying that πίστις “describes the occurrence of a historical phenomenon, not the act of believing of an individual.”⁴⁷ It is to be noted that Paul marks the turning point in salvation-history with the use of the verb ἔρχομαι (cf. Gal 3.19, 23, 25, 4.4; Rom 7.9).⁴⁸ With this in view, it is fairly clear that what πίστις is describing is not “the Christian’s act of faith.” It would seem problematic if πίστις describes the Christian’s act of faith because the eschatological coming of πίστις is not primarily a human act of faith but the divine salvific act to bring to an end of the rule of the law.⁴⁹ The eschatological transition from the old epoch (before the coming of ἡ πίστις) to a new era (after the coming of ἡ πίστις) also suggests that the advent of ἡ πίστις should be understood as a redemptive-historical event rather than a subjective anthropological element (i.e. human faith in Christ). Πίστις is objectified as an eschatological power that intruded into the world to set free those who are under the

(1997), 71-72 [64-82]) who suggests that Paul’s absolute use of πίστις (1.23, 3.2, 5, 23, 25) “is understood to mean a new reality coming from God as a superindividual total phenomenon which involves all these elements: believing people who have faith in Christ/God, believed Christ/God who is the object of their faith, and the word of proclamation that creates their relationship.”

⁴⁵ It is unreasonable to think that πίστις (3.24) is used in a different sense from the same term occurring in the verses immediately before (3.23) and after (3.25) it.

⁴⁶ Πρὸ τοῦ δὲ ἔλθειν τὴν πίστιν (3.23a); ἐλθούσης δὲ τῆς πίστεως (3.25a).

⁴⁷ Betz, *Galatians*, 176, n. 120.

⁴⁸ T. Schramm, ἔρχομαι, *EDNT* 2.56.

⁴⁹ As Wallis (*The Faith*, 113) rightly argues, the coming of faith is not so much concerned with a human response as with a divine action corresponding to the sending of his Son (4.4).

enslaving power of the law (3.23-25).⁵⁰ It is hardly to be imagined that “human faith in Christ” came into the world and was revealed for the purpose of liberating those who are under the law. Furthermore, if one understands it as “human faith,” it is difficult to think that “human faith” had been absent before. Such would be inconsistent with the presence of Abraham’s faith (3.6) and faith of Israel. If understood as an apocalyptic event in a Christological sense (i.e. the advent of Christ’s faithfulness), however, it is hardly surprising that Christ’s faithfulness had been absent before the advent of Christ (3.19; 4.4) and the revelation of πίστις (3.23). It is also important to note that Paul equates the coming of πίστις (3.23, 25) with the coming of τὸ σπέρμα referring to Christ (3.19).⁵¹ Thus, it is probable that πίστις describes a characteristic of Jesus Christ. We can conclude, therefore, that Paul has in mind something other than the Christian’s faith, that is, the faithfulness of Christ understood as an eschatological event.

Second, it is very striking that πίστις is the object of God’s revelation (εἰς τὴν μέλλουσαν πίστιν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι - 3.23b). This makes the objective genitive interpretation highly unlikely. It is quite difficult to think that πίστις should be thought as the Christian’s faith because one hardly finds in Paul’s letters a human entity as an object of God’s eschatological revelation, not to mention “human faith in Christ.”⁵² Furthermore, both the coming of πίστις and the revelation of πίστις are closely bound up with the end of the law’s realm. Paul says ὑπὸ νόμον ἐφρουρούμεθα συγκλειόμενοι εἰς τὴν μέλλουσαν πίστιν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι (3.23) and ἐλθούσης δὲ τῆς πίστεως οὐκέτι ὑπὸ παιδαγωγόν ἐσμεν (3.25). In light of the fact that freedom from the power of the law is an effect of Christ’s work (5.1, 13; cf. 3.13, 4.5), πίστις should be interpreted in relation to Christ, not the Christian’s act of faith; it is very difficult to imagine that “human faith in Christ” was revealed eschatologically to set free those who are under the law. Rather the apocalyptic and cosmic character of

⁵⁰ Cf. Martyn, *Galatians*, 362; E. Schweizer, “Dying and Rising with Christ,” *NTS* 14 (1967-68), 12.

⁵¹ Matera, *Galatians*, 100; Hays, *Faith*, 231; Wallis, *The Faith*, 131.

⁵² The objects of the verb ἀποκαλύπτω in Paul’s letters are as follows: righteousness of God (Rom 1.17), the wrath of God (Rom 1.18); glory (Rom 8.18); God’s wisdom (1 Cor 2.10); the work of builders (1 Cor 3.13); revelation (1 Cor 14.30); the goal of God (Phil 3.15); the Son of God (Gal 1.16); faith (Gal 3.23). The one exception is 1 Cor 3.13 (the work of builders).

πίστις strongly favours understanding πίστις not anthropologically but Christologically because in Galatians Paul describes Christ as the one who freed believers from the present evil age (1.4) and the slavery of the law (5.1) and redeems them from the curse (3.13) and power (4.5) of the law. Moreover, this interpretation is in accordance with Paul's understanding of Jesus' death as an apocalyptic and cosmic event to change the status of human beings (cf. Rom 5.6, 8, 10; 2 Cor 5.17-19). Given that the advent and revelation of ἡ πίστις is an objectified eschatological and apocalyptic event, it is difficult to think that ἡ πίστις refers to the Christian's act of belief in Christ. Therefore, the foregoing observations lead us to conclude that the πίστις references in 3.23-25 describe an objective historical event (i.e. the advent and revelation of Christ's faithfulness), not the subjective Christian's act of believing.⁵³

In the light of contextual and theological grounds above, we may conclude with some confidence that the πίστις references in Gal 3.23-25 probably refer to the faith(fulness) of Christ rather than to human faith in Christ. The anthropological understanding fails to consider that the πίστις references in Gal 3.23-25 denote the eschatological advent and revelation of Christ's faithfulness to set free those who are under the law. The πίστις references in Gal 3.23-25 depict an apocalyptic-eschatological event for justification of humanity. Although it is true that both Christ's faithfulness as the basis of justification and the believer's trust as the existential appropriation of righteousness are clearly found in Galatians (2.16),⁵⁴ it is unlikely that the πίστις references in Gal 3.23-25 refer both to "the faith of Christian" and to "the faith of Jesus Christ" since the πίστις references describe a historical event, not the Christian's act of believing. If then it is correct that ἐκ πίστεως in 3.24 means "by the faith(fulness) (of Christ),"⁵⁵ then ἐκ πίστεως in 5.5 probably means "by the faith(fulness) (of Christ)" because the same phrase and the same context of justification appear both in 3.23-25 and 5.5.

⁵³ Bultmann says, "Though Gal 3.23-26 sketches the preparation and the 'coming of 'faith,' what is sketched is not the individual's development but the history of salvation" (*Theology*, 1.319). See also Betz, *Galatians*, 176, n. 120; Schlier, *Galater*, 167.

⁵⁴ E.g. Dodd, "Romans 1.17," 473; Hooker, "ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ," 321-342; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 87-88.

⁵⁵ Hays, *Faith*, 232; Matera, *Galatians*, 137; Wallis, *The Faith*, 113.

Several considerations drawn from the immediate literary context (5.2-6) also support the view that ἐκ πίστεως in 5.5 means “by the faith(fulness) (of Christ).” First, as noted earlier, Paul has the antithesis between the law and πίστις in mind as the two mutually exclusive objective means of justification, not subjective means of justification. In other words, the contrast is not between a person’s works of the law and a person’s faith in Christ but between the law and πίστις in terms of the soteriological means of justification. In 5.5 Paul does not argue against the Galatians’ attempt to deny the sufficiency of the Christian’s faith in Christ for justification. Rather, Paul refutes their attempt to deny the sufficiency of Christ’s faith(fulness) by believing in justification through the law (cf. 2.21). As noted earlier (§5.1.), the phrase ἐκ πίστεως describes not the subjective attitude (i.e. believers’ confidence) of waiting for ἐλπίς δικαιοσύνης⁵⁶ or the subjective means of appropriating justification⁵⁷ but the objective soteriological basis of ἐλπίς δικαιοσύνης. Second, the several antitheses in 5.2-6 (between circumcision and Christ [ch. 2], between the law and Christ [ch. 3], between the law and grace [ch. 4], between the law and the Spirit [ch. 5]) support the premise that Paul contrasts the law with πίστις as two conflicting soteriological means of justification. As already argued, these antitheses are to be understood in terms of the external (not internal or human) ground of justification. The antithesis between the law and πίστις is a subset of the larger antithesis between the law and Christ. Third, if it is correct that Paul usually mentions the mission of Jesus Christ and of the Spirit side by side (3.1-5; 4.4-6; 4.28-5.1), then it is likely that faith in 5.5 is to be understood in a Christological sense. In light of these observations, it is fair to deduce that πίστις in 5.5 refers neither to the believers’ confidence coming from the Christian’s faith nor to the internal condition of justification (i.e. the Christian’s faith), but to the external basis of justification (i.e. the faith(fulness) of Christ).

⁵⁶ Pace Martyn (*Galatians*, 467) who translates 5.5 as follows: “With us things are entirely different: having the Spirit in our hearts, and the having the confidence that comes from faith, we eagerly await the hope of rectification,” and Williams (*Galatians*, 138) who takes the Spirit and faith pointing to the “external” and “internal” sources of believers’ existence.

⁵⁷ Pace commentators in n. 20.

In conclusion: All the most decisive considerations lead us to conclude that ἐκ πίστεως in 5.5 probably means “by the faith(fulness) (of Christ)” and that πίστις functions as the eschatological or apocalyptic soteriological means of final justification. So the traditional anthropocentric reading of πίστις (5.5) is highly unlikely; it does not mean the Christian’s faith in Christ as the human condition of attaining the hoped-for righteousness. Nor does it describe the Christian’s life as a reenactment of the pattern of faithfulness grounded and revealed in Jesus.⁵⁸ Nor does it function as the psychological cause (i.e. the Christian’s confidence) that makes Paul and the Galatians wait with eager longing for “the hoped-for righteousness.”⁵⁹ Rather it refers to the faith(fulness) of Christ which is the apocalyptic soteriological basis of justification. One important corollary should be noted. If it is correct that ἐκ πίστεως in 3.24 and 5.5 means “through the faith(fulness) (of Christ),” then διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (2.16a), ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ (2.16b), ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (3.22), ἐκ πίστεως (3.8), and διὰ τῆς πίστεως (3.26) which emerge in the context of justification and describe the instrument of justification almost certainly conform to the meaning of ἐκ πίστεως in 3.24 and 5.5. But we will have to await till §6.3 for fuller confirmation of this corollary.

6. 1. 2. The Meaning of πίστις in 5.6

As noted earlier, the *opinio communis* on the meaning of πίστις at 5.6 is that it refers to the Christian’s act of faith. According to the prevailing scholarly opinion, πίστις δι’ ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη refers to the Christian’s faith capable of expressing itself in love toward neighbour as an ethical principle of Christian behaviour. In what follows, I will set forth a creative thesis that swims against the traditional current, that is, that πίστις δι’ ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη refers to Christ’s faithfulness working powerfully through his self-giving love to humanity on the cross. Indeed, there are significant observations to support the claim in light of immediate and broader contextual considerations.

⁵⁸ Pace Hays, *Faith*, 231-232. Hays’ interpretation of ἐκ πίστεως in 5.5 is inconsistent with his interpretation of ἐκ πίστεως in 2.16, 3.11, and 3.22.

⁵⁹ Pace Martyn, *Galatians*, 472.

First, the concept of πίστις as “power” can lead us to understand it in a different way from the consensus because in Galatians the concept of power is not so much concerned with the Christian’s faith as with Christ’s faithfulness. The two verbs ἰσχύω and ἐνεργέω, of which πίστις is the subject, suggest that Paul understands πίστις as a salvific power.⁶⁰ It is important to note that the verb ἐνεργέω itself usually has a supernatural connotation. K. W. Clark recognises this, but still understands πίστις (5.6) in terms of “human faith.”⁶¹ The fact that the verb itself is employed in Paul’s letters to refer to effective divine and supernatural action points to πίστις in 5.6 as a divine power working for justification.⁶² The definition of πίστις as “power” comes as a surprise.⁶³ It is indeed a surprise when πίστις is understood as “human faith (in Christ)” because Paul never associates the concept of “power” with the Christian’s faith in Galatians. But it is not surprising when πίστις is taken as “the faith(fulness) (of Christ).” As indicated already, Paul describes πίστις in terms of an apocalyptic and eschatological saving power that was revealed and intruded into the cosmos in order to set free those who are under the power of the law (3.23-25).⁶⁴ In 5.6 πίστις is also expressed as “power” nullifying the distinction between circumcision and uncircumcision (5.6).⁶⁵ It is quite important to recognise that in Galatians Paul associates “power” with Christ (1.4; 3.13; 4.4-5; 5.1; cf. 1 Cor 1.18, 24). Paul understands Jesus’ death on the cross as the power of salvation in Galatians (1.4; 3.13). In particular, that both the coming of πίστις (3.23, 25) and the coming of Christ (4.4-5) are closely bound up with the redemption from the power of the law

⁶⁰ See Betz, *Galatians*, 263; Dunn, *Galatians*, 271; Kraftchick, “Ethos and Pathos,” 239; Martyn, *Galatians*, 472; H. Paulsen, ἰσχύω, *EDNT* 2.208.

⁶¹ K. W. Clark, “The Meaning of ἘΝΕΡΓΕΩ and ΚΑΤΑΡΓΕΩ in the New Testament,” *JBL* 54 (1935), 93-101.

⁶² The saving work of Christ for justification (2.17, 21; 3.13, 14; 4.4, 5) helps us understand “faith” not anthropologically but Christologically.

⁶³ So rightly Betz, *Galatians*, 263; Dunn, *Galatians*, 271. But most commentators have not paid attention to the concept of “power” present in the verbs (e.g. Schlier, Mußner, Longenecker, Matera).

⁶⁴ Martyn, *Galatians*, 99. J. Haussleiter rightly points out the redeeming power of “faith” (*Der Glaube Jesu Christi und der christliche Glaube* (Erlangen: Leipzig, 1891), 177). This is cited from Kertelege, *Rechtfertigung bei Paulus*, 164, n. 18.

⁶⁵ Cf. Betz, *Galatians*, 263; Dunn, *Galatians*, 271; Martyn, *Galatians*, 472-473; Paulsen, ἰσχύω, 2.208. The significance of the antithesis between “circumcision/uncircumcision” and πίστις in terms of “power” will be discussed in §7.2.

leads us to interpret πίστις Christologically. It seems unlikely that human faith has soteriological power in Pauline theology.⁶⁶ Furthermore, if ὠφελήσει (the subject of the verb is Christ) at 5.2 parallels ἰσχύει (the subject of the verb is faith) at 5.6,⁶⁷ πίστις can be understood Christologically. It is likely, therefore, that Paul thinks of Christ's faith(fulness) as an eschatological and apocalyptic power defeating the power of the law (3.13; 5.1) and the power of the Jewish "circumcision vs. uncircumcision" value-system which dominates Jewish mind-set and community (5.6).⁶⁸ It appears that Paul describes Christ's faith(fulness) manifested on the cross as *heilsetzende Macht* to save humankind from the power of the law (3.25) and the present evil age (1.4).⁶⁹ Such an understanding is in accordance with Paul's understanding of the message of the cross (1 Cor 1.17-18) and Christ (1 Cor 1.24) as the power of God for salvation. These observations lead us to conclude, therefore, that πίστις denotes Christ's faithfulness as a salvific power, not "human faith expressing itself through love."

Second, Mulka's observation that in Paul's letters the subject of the verb ἐνεργέω is not usually closely bound up with a human element but with a spiritual and divine being further leads us to interpret πίστις (5.6) from a different perspective. For the subject of the verb ἐνεργέω Mulka rightly notes, "In sharp contrast to the active use, all nine verbal forms have an impersonal subject . . . the subjects for the most part are connected with power and force, frequently of a nature that directly or indirectly penetrates the realm of the supernatural or other-worldly existence, as, e.g., sinful passions, death, faith, power, the mystery of iniquity, prayer."⁷⁰ It is unlikely that πίστις (which is the subject of the verb ἐνεργέω) refers to the Christian's act of faith, because in Paul's letters most of the subjects of the verb are either spiritual powers (death, sinful passions, God's word) or divine beings

⁶⁶ See Ziesler, *Pauline Christianity*, 80f, 110f.

⁶⁷ Lull, *Spirit*, 126, n. 196.

⁶⁸ For the interpretation of "circumcision/uncircumcision" as a Jewish value-system, see §7.2.1.

⁶⁹ Martyn (*Galatians*, 101) notes that Jesus' death on the cross that shows Christ's faithfulness is the powerful act in God's apocalyptic war.

⁷⁰ Mulka, "Fides Quae Per Caritatem Operatur," 180.

(God, Christ, the Spirit).⁷¹ Thus it is likely that πίστις (which is the subject of the verb ἐνεργέω) refers to Christ's faithfulness, not human faith in Christ.⁷²

Third, Paul's three antitheses between circumcision and Christ (5.2-3 – ch. 2), between the law and Christ (5.4 – ch. 3), and between circumcision and the cross (5.11; 6.12-14 – §7.3.4.) suggest that πίστις (5.6) (which is the antithesis of "circumcision/uncircumcision")⁷³ also can be interpreted in a Christological sense.⁷⁴ In particular, the antithesis between "circumcision/uncircumcision" and πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη can be interpreted in light of the contrast between circumcision and the cross, and the incompatibility between circumcision and Christ.⁷⁵ As we saw earlier, the two antitheses are closely bound up with the soteriological belief-system of justification. The antithesis between "circumcision/uncircumcision" and πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη may well be equivalent to the contrast between circumcision and the cross. Moreover, the fact that in Galatians Paul usually puts Christ in antithesis with circumcision (5.2, 11; 6.12, 14) suggests that πίστις is to be understood not anthropologically (i.e. "human faith") but Christologically (i.e. "Christ's faithfulness"). It is thus reasonable to think that πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη functions as the complement to "Christ."

Fourth, what does Paul have in mind by "love" at 5.6? Does it refer to the love of God, the love of Christ, or the love of Christians? Interpreters have disputed the meaning of the word. Duncan takes "love" in 5.6 "primarily of God's love to

⁷¹ The subject of the verb ἐνεργέω in Pauline letters are as follows: sinful passions (Rom 7.5); the Spirit (1 Cor 12.11; cf. Eph 2.2); comfort (2 Cor 1.6); death (2 Cor 4.12); God (1 Cor 12.6; Gal 2.8; 3.5; Phil 2.13; cf. Eph 1.20; 3.20); God's word (1 Thes 2.13); Christ (Eph 1.11); Christ's energy (Col 1.29); mystery of lawlessness (2 Thes 2.7).

⁷² While Mulka ("Fides Quae Per Caritatem Operatur," 180) is right in pointing out that the subjects of the verb ἐνεργέω are connected with supernatural and divine power, it is odd that he seems to regard "human faith coming to expression through love" in 5.6 as a supernatural power.

⁷³ The antithesis between "circumcision/uncircumcision" and πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη will be dealt with in detail in the next chapter.

⁷⁴ The two antitheses between the law and Christ (2.21) and between the law and πίστις (2.16; 3.23-26) might also be indicative of the possibility that πίστις in contrast to "circumcision vs. uncircumcision" refers to "the faithfulness of Christ."

⁷⁵ While Dunn ("Circumcision," 100, 102) notes that 5.6 elaborates the Christ/circumcision, cross/circumcision antitheses and in 5.6 the Christ/circumcision antithesis is reaffirmed, he understands πίστις as the Christian's trust in Christ in terms of the sole "internal" ground of acceptance by God. In my view, it is not probable that "faith" is an "internal" ground of justification

man, rather than of the Christian's love for his neighbour."⁷⁶ But most commentators have agreed that it refers to the Christian's act of love.⁷⁷ No one has interpreted it as the love of Christ. Here I would like to suggest that ἀγάπη refers to Christ's love. There are two important considerations for the suggestion. (1) As we noted earlier, since 5.5-6 summarises and encapsulates themes in the previous section,⁷⁸ it seems strange that Paul abruptly introduces the idea of "Christian love" because the concept is absent earlier in Galatians. As Galatians was being read aloud,⁷⁹ what would the Galatians have had in mind when Gal 5.6 was read? Was it believers' love or Christ's love? So far as Gal 1.1-5.5 has been read, they probably would never have envisaged the idea of believers' love through which their faith is expressed. As Betz rightly observes, it is surprising that Paul here introduces the notion of "love" as a concept of ethics,⁸⁰ because "love" as a concept of ethics is not discussed earlier. The intimate relationship between "human faith" and "Christian love" is nowhere else expounded in Galatians.⁸¹ Rather he mentions the love of Christ in the previous section (2.20; cf. 1.4; 3.13). (2) The combination of the idea of πίστις and "love of Christ" occurring in 2.20 suggests that "love" in 5.6 refers to the love of Christ (cf. 1 Tim 1.14; 2 Tim 1.13). The phrase πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη probably summarises the subject of Christ's faithful death on the cross and sacrificial love for the salvation of humanity, which he elaborated previously in Galatians (cf. 1.4; 2.20-21; 3.1, 13).⁸² In short, "love" probably refers to the love of Christ, in which case

because 5.6 is a reaffirmation or elaboration of the Christ/circumcision antithesis in terms of an "external" ground of justification.

⁷⁶ G. S. Duncan, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (London: Hodder, 1934), 157.

⁷⁷ This is a consensus among modern commentators (e.g. Betz, Bruce, Dunn, Ebeling, Fung, Longenecker, Matera, McKnight, Mußner, Oepke, Schlier, Williams, Witherington).

⁷⁸ See Betz, *Galatians*, 261-262; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 221-222; Matera, *Galatians*, 185-186.

⁷⁹ For the argument that silent reading was rare in antiquity, see G. N. Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1992), 73-76.

⁸⁰ Betz (*Galatians*, 263) notes that Paul's introduction of the notion of "love" as a concept of ethics is new at this point.

⁸¹ Longenecker (*Galatians*, 229) notes that the idea is very rare concept in the undisputed Pauline corpus.

⁸² Although many exegetes have observed the relationship between 2.20 and 5.6, they failed to see that πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη refers to Christ's faithfulness working through the love of Christ who gave himself for humanity. E.g. Betz, *Galatians*, 263; Burton, *Galatians*, 280; Dunn, *Galatians*, 271; Matera, *Galatians*, 189; J. Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 204; Williams, *Galatians*, 139.

πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη should mean "Christ's faith(fulness) working through his sacrificial love."

Fifth, the fact that the argumentative situation of 5.6 is not so much concerned with how the individual can be justified as with what is the valid "external" soteriological basis of justification, might help us to understand πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη as Christ's faithfulness. As we shall argue later (§7.2.), the antithesis between "circumcision/uncircumcision" and πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη should be interpreted as two conflicting soteriological belief-systems (i.e. Jewish value-system of "circumcision/uncircumcision" vs. the gospel of the cross), not as two contrasting anthropological human acts (i.e. the act of circumcision vs. the act of faith coming to expression through love). The antithesis between "circumcision/uncircumcision" and πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη should be interpreted as a subset of the larger antithesis between the law and Christ. We should not fail to note that Paul contrasts between "circumcision/uncircumcision" and πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη not as different ways of life or human act but as conflicting redemptive-historical powers (τις ἰσχύει).⁸³ The power to wage war against the power of "circumcision vs. uncircumcision" which determines and dominates the Jewish mind-set and community should be "Christ's faithfulness working through his love," not the Christian's faith in Christ. It is conceivable that Christ's faithfulness as a salvific power battles over the power of "circumcision/uncircumcision" and is victorious over it (5.6). The phrase ἐν Χριστῷ also suggests that the antithesis should be understood from a redemptive-historical perspective, not from an anthropological one. As noted earlier, the phrase ἐν Χριστῷ (5.6) is contrasted to ἐν νόμῳ (5.4) as two incompatible redemptive-historical spheres in which believers are justified. For Paul ἐν Χριστῷ is the new redemptive-historical sphere in which the Jewish value-system of "circumcision-uncircumcision" no longer operates but Christ's faithfulness revealed and intruded into human history is (cf. 3.23-25).

Sixth, since πίστις in 5.5 refers to "the faith(fulness) of Christ" (§6.1.1.), πίστις in 5.6 should also be interpreted as "the faith(fulness) of Christ" because

⁸³ Both περιτομή and ἀκροβυστία are the subjects of the verb ἰσχύω.

πίστις in 5.6 refers back to πίστις in 5.5. Although Matera understands πίστις in 5.5 in light of “the faithfulness of Christ” (2.16), he does not consider that πίστις in 5.6 might mean the same because he fails to recognise that πίστις in 5.6 refers back to πίστις in 5.5 and that 5.6 supports the argument of 5.5.⁸⁴ It is impossible that πίστις in 5.5 and πίστις in 5.6 should have different meanings because the latter is the logical complement to the former, as the explanatory γάρ in 5.6 indicates.

On the basis of immediate and broader contextual considerations of 5.6, we should note the significance of Gal 5.6 for the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate. Gal 5.6 is completely neglected evidence for the interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ as “the faith(fulness) of Christ” in the history of the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate. Even those who argue for the subjective genitive interpretation have failed to interpret πίστις δι’ ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη from a Christological perspective. While many exegetes have observed the relationship between 2.20 and 5.6,⁸⁵ they failed to see that πίστις δι’ ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη refers to Christ’s faithfulness working through the love of Christ who gave himself for humanity. Rather, they have understood the phrase in terms of Christian ethical character that resembles the Christological model of faithfulness. However I have argued that both πίστις and ἀγάπη should be interpreted in a Christological sense, i.e. Christ’s faithfulness and Christ’s love. The phrase πίστις δι’ ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη sums up the subject of Christ’s faithful death on the cross and sacrificial love for the salvation of humanity, which he elaborated previously in Galatians (cf. 1.4; 2.20-21; 3.1, 13).

6. 1. 3. Conclusion

The contextual and exegetical study of 5.5-6 leads us to conclude that the πίστις references in 5.5 and 5.6 refer to the faith(fulness) of Christ, not to the Christian’s act of faith in Christ. In consideration of the character of πίστις as an

⁸⁴ Matera, *Galatians*, 183. Matera’s interpretation of πίστις in 5.6 is inconsistent with his interpretation of πίστις in 2.16, 3.22, and 5.5. He takes πίστις δι’ ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη as the Christian’s faith expressing itself in love.

⁸⁵ E.g. Betz, *Galatians*, 263; Burton, *Galatians*, 280; Dunn, *Galatians*, 271; Longenecker, “Defining,” 89; Matera, *Galatians*, 189; Mulka, “Fides Quae Per Caritatem Operatur,” 188; Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul*, 204; Williams, *Galatians*, 139.

objectified eschatological and apocalyptic event (3.23-25), it probably refers not to the Christian's act of belief in Christ but to Christ's faithfulness. Since ἐκ πίστεως in 3.24 refers to "the faithfulness of Christ," then, ἐκ πίστεως in 5.5 probably also means the faithfulness of Christ that is effective as a power for justification. Moreover, the concept of πίστις as "power" (5.6; cf. 3.24) leads us to the conclusion that it is not so much concerned with human faith as with Christ's faithfulness. As we observed above, the immediate literary context of 5.5-6 (i.e. antitheses) drives us to think that Paul does not have in mind the subjective human faith in Christ with πίστις. Paul's literary style (Paul's use of the verb ἐνεργέω and the summarising nature of 5.2-6) also encourages us to interpret πίστις not anthropologically but Christologically. Furthermore, the foregoing study of 5.6 leads us to the conclusion that the phrase πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη should be interpreted not as an ethical principle of Christian behaviour but as an external soteriological basis of justification. In other words, πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη is a topic in Paul's Christology, not in his anthropology. In short, πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη is a formulaic summary that encapsulates the subject of Christ's obedient and self-giving death on the cross, which works powerfully for the salvation of humanity through his sacrificial love.

6. 2. The Meaning of the Faith(fulness) of Christ

In the foregoing study we came to conclusion that πίστις references in Gal 5.5-6 refer to "the faith(fulness) of Christ." What then does "the faith(fulness) of Christ" mean? What does Paul have in mind by this phrase? The answer to the question is important for understanding "the faith(fulness) of Christ" as the basis or means of justification. The question is not easy to answer because Paul does not explain its meaning explicitly in Galatians. As we attempt to clarify the meaning of "the faith(fulness) of Christ," first we need to clarify the meaning of πίστις in relation to the subjective genitive Χριστοῦ. Without attempting to investigate the cultural and semantic background of πίστις⁸⁶ and the meanings of πίστις in early

⁸⁶ For the background, see Bultmann, πιστεύω κτλ, *TDNT* 6.175-202.

Christian times,⁸⁷ it is sufficient to focus on the theological meaning of πίστις in relation to the subjective genitive Χριστοῦ. Before we determine its meaning, it is to be remembered that πίστις had been understood as a relational concept (between human and divine) both within and outside Judaism prior to the Christian era.⁸⁸ As Wallis rightly observes, in early Christian times πίστις ranged semantically from “credulity over the existence of the divine to a fully-fledged personal relationship based upon God’s perceived initiatives.”⁸⁹ In terms of the semantic range of πίστις, it denotes assurance, confidence, reliance, trust, or belief when πίστις is employed in its active sense, and it means trustworthiness, reliability, fidelity, or faithfulness as it is used in its passive sense.⁹⁰ What we need to determine is whether πίστις in relation to Χριστοῦ bears the active sense or the passive. Does πίστις Χριστοῦ refer to Christ’s act of faith in someone (i.e. God), or to Christ’s faithfulness to someone (e.g. God, humankind)? From the outset it is to be said that the former is to be excluded not only because it is not a prominent theme in Paul but also because Paul never employs Christ as the subject of the verb πιστεύω. Thus we can say that semantically, πίστις Χριστοῦ refers to Christ’s faithfulness or fidelity in relation to God or human beings. It is the fuller implication of the phrase that we need to clarify here.

Most exegetes who argue for the subjective interpretation understand πίστις Χριστοῦ in light of Christ’s faithful death on the cross.⁹¹ Notably, Hays claims, “πίστις Χριστοῦ refers to Jesus’ obedience to death on the cross. In other words, the meaning of the phrase is focused on the kerygma’s narration of his self-giving death,

⁸⁷ For the meanings, see Wallis, *The Faith*, 9-23.

⁸⁸ Wallis, *The Faith*, 23.

⁸⁹ Wallis, *The Faith*, 23.

⁹⁰ Cf. BAGD; Louw-Nida. The word πίστις carries both active sense (faith) and passive (faithfulness) in Hellenistic Greek. Cf. Bultmann, πιστεύω κτλ, *TDNT* 6.175-202; Hays, “ΠΙΣΤΙΣ,” 58.

⁹¹ E.g. Campbell, “Romans 1.17,” 267; Hays, “ΠΙΣΤΙΣ,” 49; M. J. Gorman, *Cruciformity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 95-121; Hooker, “ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ,” 331; B. Longenecker, *Triumph*, 97-98; R. Longenecker, “The Obedience of Christ in the Theology of the Early Church,” in *Reconciliation and Hope*, 146-148; Martyn, *Galatians*, 271; Matera, *Galatians*, 94; Wallis, *The Faith*, 125-127; Witherington, *Grace*, 182. Interestingly, Williams (“*Pistis*,” 444) takes πίστις Χριστοῦ to refer to “Christ’s openness to God,” “the mode of personal existence which Christ pioneered.” And later on he defines it as “that relationship to God which Christ exemplified, that life stance which he actualized” (p. 446).

not on the whole ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. This narrower punctiliar sense – focused on the cross – is the only meaning supported by Paul’s usage.”⁹² Although Paul does not elaborate on the concept of Christ’s faithfulness, in Galatians he describes the faithfulness of Christ obliquely in relation to Christ’s sacrificial death on the cross (2.20; 5.6; cf. Rom 3.25).

The close relationship between Christ’s faithfulness and his self-giving death is found in Gal 2.20, where Paul says, ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῇ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀγαπήσαντός με καὶ παραδόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἑμοῦ. Paul understands that the faithfulness of the Son of God is a characteristic of Christ, which is manifested in his love and self-giving death (cf. Gal 1.4).⁹³ The relationship between the faithfulness of Christ and the death of Christ is also found in Gal 2.21, where it can be recognised by the parallel between justification through the faithfulness of Christ (2.16) and righteousness through the death of Christ (2.21). Since 2.21 summarises Paul’s previous argument (2.16-20), “righteousness through the law” is a summary of being justified by the works of the law, and righteousness through Christ’s death is equivalent to being justified by the faithfulness of Christ. The parallel between “justification by Christ’s faithfulness” and “justification by Christ’s death” is also present in Rom 5. Paul’s statement that believers are justified by faith (5.1) parallels both “we have been justified by his blood” (5.9) and “many will be made righteous by the obedience of Christ” (5.19). Justification by the faithfulness of Christ manifested through his sacrificial death on the cross is of a piece with justification by Christ’s death on the cross. In light of these observations, it is probable that Paul understands the faithfulness of Christ in terms of Christ’s death.

Gal 5.6 is another text testifying that Paul had in mind Christ’s sacrificial death when he speaks of the faithfulness of Christ. As argued already, πίστις δι’ ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη means Christ’s faithfulness working through his self-giving love on the cross. In other words, Christ’s death on the cross is the manifestation of his faithfulness. In short, πίστις δι’ ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη is a summary description of

⁹² Hays, “ΠΙΣΤΙΣ,” 59.

⁹³ Hays (“ΠΙΣΤΙΣ,” 55) rightly notes, “Jesus’ act of giving himself up to death is precisely the act of burden bearing to which Paul refers when he speaks of ‘the πίστις of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me’ (2.20).”

Christ's sacrificial self-giving love demonstrated by his atoning death on the cross. The same point is present in Rom 3.25 where Paul links Christ's faithfulness with the blood of Christ. Paul says, ὃν προέθετο ὁ θεὸς ἱλαστήριον διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι εἰς ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ. If πίστις refers to the faithfulness of Christ,⁹⁴ Paul may well think that Christ's faithfulness was manifested in his blood i.e. in his death on the cross. In other words, Christ's death on the cross is the manifestation of his faithfulness. This interpretation is in harmony also with the Pauline idea that Christ's faithfulness to God is demonstrated by his obedience unto death (Phil 2.5-11). Thus it is likely that πίστις Χριστοῦ is a summary description of Christ's sacrificial self-giving love demonstrated by his atoning death on the cross.⁹⁵

If πίστις Χριστοῦ refers to Christ's faithfulness demonstrated by his death on the cross, does it refer to his faithfulness in relation to God, or his faithfulness to human beings, or both? Most commentators who argue for the subjective genitive interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ rightly understand Christ's own faithfulness in light of Christ's death in obedience to the will of God.⁹⁶ It is true that crucifixion is the mark of Christ's obedient faithfulness to God (bearing the curse of the law - Gal 3.13; following the will of God - Gal 1.4b). This is clearly indicated by Rom 5.19 in which Paul says, διὰ τῆς ὑπακοῆς τοῦ ἑνὸς δίκαιοι κατασταθήσονται οἱ πολλοί. Evidently the one man refers to Jesus Christ and his obedience is to God. It is noteworthy that many will be made righteous by the obedience of Christ to the will of God which is manifested by his obedient death on the cross.

But those exegetes who interpret Christ's faithfulness in terms of his obedient faithfulness to God seem to fail to understand it as a loving act of faithfulness to human beings as well, which is demonstrated by Christ's self-giving death and love for humanity. The point is found in 2.20. With a view to the close link

⁹⁴ Campbell (*The Rhetoric*, 65, 117) and Longenecker ("ΠΙΣΤΙΣ in Romans 3.25," 479-480) rightly argue that πίστις in Romans 3.25 refers to Christ's faithfulness.

⁹⁵ Hays, "ΠΙΣΤΙΣ," 49.

⁹⁶ E.g. Campbell ("Romans 1.17," 280-281, n. 45) understands the faithfulness of Christ as "his obedience and perseverance to the will of God, culminating in Calvary." Hays ("ΠΙΣΤΙΣ," 37) understands it as "a loving act of faithfulness (πίστις) to God." See also Gorman, *Cruciformity*, 120; Johnson, "Romans 3.21-26 and the Faith of Jesus," 77-90.

between “the faithfulness of the Son of God” and his self-giving love to Paul, it is probable that Paul understood the former in terms of Christ’s sacrificial love to human beings. Gal 5.6 is another text supporting the point. The point is expressed by πίστις δι’ ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη, which Paul understood in terms of Christ’s commitment and self-giving love to humanity. It is fair to say, therefore, that for Paul πίστις Χριστοῦ refers to Christ’s faithfulness in relation to both to God and to human beings.

6. 3. The Antithesis between the Law and Christ’s Faithfulness

As noted earlier, it is the antithesis between the law and the faithfulness of Christ that Paul has in mind in 5.5. What did Paul intend his readers to understand by his summary reference to ἐκ πίστεως (5.5)?⁹⁷ How does Paul argue that not the law (and the works of the law) but the faithfulness of Christ is the sufficient soteriological basis of justification in his previous arguments? We will attempt to answer these questions through an exegesis of 2.16 and 3.21-26 where Paul formulates the antithesis explicitly.

6. 3. 1. Gal 2.16

Although scholarly opinion is divided on the issue of the relationship between 2.11-14 and 2.15-21,⁹⁸ it is widely accepted that 2.15-21 is Paul’s restatement of the position he argued for at Antioch in the confrontation with “certain people came from James” (2.12) and Peter.⁹⁹ While Paul’s argument in 2.15-21 is directly related to the Antioch incident, it is also connected to the crisis in

⁹⁷ As noted earlier, the phrase ἐκ πίστεως recapitulates the various phrases διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (2.16a), ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ (2.16b), ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (3.22), and διὰ τῆς πίστεως (3.26) which emerge in the context of justification and describe the instrument of justification. Paul restates the relationship between justification and faith in summary in 5.5. Cf. Betz, *Galatians*, 262; Dunn, “Circumcision,” 80.

⁹⁸ For the debate, see Kok, “Truth,” 52-63.

⁹⁹ Notably, Barclay, *Obeying*, 76-77; Bruce, *Galatians*, 136; Dunn, *Galatians*, 132; Eckstein, *Verheißung und Gesetz*, 3-4; Verseput, “Paul’s Gentile Mission and the Jewish Christian Community,” 51, n. 30. For a list of scholars, see Kok, “Truth,” 52, n. 3. *Contra* Betz, “The Literary Composition and Function of Paul’s Letter to the Galatians,” 367-368; Brinsmead, *Galatians*, 51-52; Ziesler, *Galatians*, 21.

Galatia.¹⁰⁰ Even though there is a difference between the Antioch incident and the crisis in Galatia in terms of specific issues at stake, the common issue is: what is the soteriological basis for the inclusion of the Gentiles into the people of God? Probably “certain people came from James” (2.12) required the Jewish Christians to observe the food laws and so, by implication, “compelled” the Antiochian Christians to adopt the Jewish way of life, specifically requiring them to observe the food laws (2.14).¹⁰¹ So too, as argued already, the agitators in Galatia urged the Galatian believers to accept circumcision (5.2; 6.12-13) and to keep calendric regulations (4.10). Thus it could be said that both the men from James in Antioch and the agitators in Galatia argued that Gentile Christians could only be full members of the people of God through “the works of the law” in particular, food laws and circumcision.

In Gal 2.16-21, then, Paul attempts to tackle the common issue both in Antioch and in Galatia whether or not Gentile believers must adopt the cultural practices of Jews such as circumcision and the food laws in order to be genuine members of the people of God. Against the Jewish Christian teaching that Gentile Christians can be part of God’s covenant people by the works of the law, Paul argues that εἰδότες [δὲ] ὅτι οὐ δικαιούται ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἐὰν μὴ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν, ἵνα δικαιωθῶμεν ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου, ὅτι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιωθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ (2.16). On the basis of a dogmatic proposition that is widely accepted,¹⁰² Paul claims that the valid means by which any human being (ἄνθρωπος) can have a right relationship with God is not ἔργα νόμου but (or but only) πίστις Χριστοῦ.¹⁰³ It

¹⁰⁰ For a list of scholars who think that Paul wrote 2.15-21 with the Galatian situation in mind, see Smiles, *Gospel*, 103, n. 1.

¹⁰¹ See Dunn, “The Incident at Antioch,” in *JPL*, 158.

¹⁰² Munck (*Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*, 126) comments on the usage of εἰδότες (and οἴδαμεν) in the NT: “The formula that Paul uses to introduce the view of Peter and the other Jewish Christians, εἰδότες (or οἴδαμεν), occurs frequently in his letters, usually introducing a dogmatic proposition as something commonly known.” Similarly, BAGD (p. 556) notes, “The formula οἴδαμεν ὅτι is frequently used to introduce a well-known fact that is generally accepted.” Longenecker (*Galatians*, 83) also observes, “The appearance of ὅτι, which is probably a ὅτι *recitativum*, signals that what follows could even be set in quotes as something widely affirmed.”

¹⁰³ On the dispute about whether to take ἐὰν μὴ in 2.16 in an exceptive or adversative sense, see Dunn “New Perspective on Paul,” 212, n. 9; Kok, “Truth,” 149-154; Martyn, *Galatians*, 264, n. 158; Räisänen, “Galatians 2.16,” 543-553; W. O. Walker, Jr. “Translation and Interpretation of ἐὰν

is important to note that in contrast to the traditional Jewish distinction between Jews (i.e. the people of God) and Gentile sinners before God, with the word ἄνθρωπος (πᾶσα σὰρξ - Rom 3.20) Paul implies that there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile before God in relation to justification. In other words, for Paul the identity of Jews is not advantageous before God and the works of the law are not the soteriological basis of justification as Jews maintained. Why does Paul hold that not ἔργα νόμου but πίστις Χριστοῦ is the legitimate soteriological basis of justification of humanity?

In order to answer this question, first we have to clarify the meaning of the phrases πίστις Χριστοῦ and ἔργα νόμου. Earlier in this chapter we suggested that the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ in 2.16 is the faithfulness of Christ demonstrated by Christ's obedient self-giving death on the cross.¹⁰⁴ The immediate context of 2.16 supports the suggestion. After 2.16, Paul says in 2.17, εἰ δὲ ζητοῦντες δικαιωθῆναι ἐν Χριστῷ. Here it is striking that justification ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ is equivalent to justification ἐν Χριστῷ.¹⁰⁵ In consideration of the fact that the same subject ("we") and the same verb δικαιώω are employed both in 2.16 and 2.17, it is difficult to think that in 2.16 and 2.17 two different bases of justification are depicted; in both 2.16 and 2.17 Paul argues that not the law (and the works of the law) but Christ is the soteriological basis of justification. Consequently, πίστις Χριστοῦ should be understood Christologically, not anthropologically. Gal 2.21 reinforces this interpretation because it expresses that justification comes not through the law but through the death of Christ (εἰ γὰρ διὰ νόμου δικαιοσύνη, ἄρα Χριστὸς δωρεὰν ἀπέθανεν). As commentators rightly observed,¹⁰⁶ the antithesis between Torah and Christ in 2.21b is reminiscent of the contrast between ἔργα νόμου and πίστις

μή in Galatians 2:16," *JBL* 116 (1997), 515-520. In either cases ἔργα νόμου and πίστις Χριστοῦ are contrasted as two incompatible bases of justification, which is clearly indicated in the latter half of 2.16 (ἵνα δικαιωθῶμεν ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου).

¹⁰⁴ However, the majority of commentators have taken πίστις Χριστοῦ constructions in 2.16 as objective genitive, referring to the Christian's act of faith in Christ. E.g. Betz, *Galatians*, 117-118; Bruce, *Galatians*, 139-140; Burton, *Galatians*, 121; Dunn, *Galatians*, 138-139; Fung, *Galatians*, 115; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 170; Schlier, *Galater*, 93.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Betz, *Galatians*, 119; Burton, *Galatians*, 124; Schlier, *Galater*, 93.

¹⁰⁶ E.g. Betz, *Galatians*, 126; Cosgrove, *Cross*, 143; Fung, *Galatians*, 125; Guthrie, *Galatians*, 91; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 95.

Χριστοῦ. Since Christ is described as the soteriological basis for the inclusion of believing Gentiles, it is likely that πίστις Χριστοῦ is not so much concerned with the internal ground of justification (i.e. human faith) as with the external soteriological ground (i.e. Christ's faithfulness). It is also noteworthy that Paul often associates Christ, instead of the faith of Gentile Christians, with the inclusion of believing Gentiles into the people of God (3.14, 28-29; 4.5).

Furthermore, if the letter as a whole is characterised by the antithesis between "human act" (the works of the law – 2.15-3.5) and "divine act" (God's saving act through Christ and the Spirit and Jesus' death on the cross – 3.23-4.7),¹⁰⁷ it is unlikely that Paul contrasts ἔργα νόμου (human act) with the Christian's act of faith (human act).¹⁰⁸ Rather it is more likely that Paul contrasts ἔργα νόμου (human act) and Christ's faithfulness (divine act). As Martyn correctly argues, "Paul sees an antinomy between Law observance and the faithful death of Christ: they are opposites in the sense that the former is a human deed, impotent to rectify, whereas the latter and the latter alone is God's active power to set things right."¹⁰⁹ On the basis of the foregoing observations, we can conclude that πίστις Χριστοῦ in 2.16 refers to the faithfulness of Christ.¹¹⁰ Let us then turn to the meaning of ἔργα νόμου.

As we saw earlier,¹¹¹ the phrase ἔργα νόμου has attracted the attention of many scholars. Commentators have proposed various explanations for the phrase. According to Mijoga, there are six proposals.¹¹²

(1) Ἔργα νόμου: Legalistic works-righteousness

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Martyn, *Galatians*, 286-289, 476; Matera, *Galatians*, 100.

¹⁰⁸ Martyn (*Galatians*, 271) convincingly argues "The antinomy of Gal 2.16, then – *erga nomou* versus *pistis Christou* – is like all of the antinomies of the new creation. It does not set over against one another two human alternatives, to observe the Law or to have faith in Christ. The opposites, as one sees from Gal 1.1 onward, are an act of God, Christ's faithful death, and an act of human being, observance of the Law."

¹⁰⁹ Martyn, "Events in Galatia," 165.

¹¹⁰ So rightly, Cummins, *Crucified*, 198-201; Hays, *Faith*, 175; Jervis, *Galatians*, 21-23, 69; Kok, "Truth," 126-133; Longenecker, "Defining," 79-83; Martyn, *Galatians*, 251, 263-275; Matera, *Galatians*, 100-102; Wallis, *The Faith*, 105-106; Williams, *Galatians*, 67-68; M. Winger, *By What Law? The Meaning of Νόμος in the Letters of Paul* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 139-141. For a recent defence of the subjective genitive interpretation against Dunn's objection to the view, see Witherington, *Grace*, 178-182.

¹¹¹ See ch. 1, n. 38.

¹¹² For a comprehensive historical survey of literature, Mijoga, "The Pauline Notion of 'Deeds of the Law'," 6-70.

- (2) "Ἔργα νόμου: Getting in and staying in the covenant
- (3) "Ἔργα νόμου: Boundary/identity markers (badges)
- (4) "Ἔργα νόμου: A subjective genitive
- (5) "Ἔργα νόμου: Social and Cultural Achievements
- (6) "Ἔργα νόμου: Regulations of the law

Since it is beyond the scope of the present study to survey these interpretive trends and Paul's usage of the phrase in the Pauline corpus,¹¹³ it is sufficient to ascertain the reason why Paul considers ἔργα νόμου an invalid means of justification by clarifying the meaning of ἔργα νόμου in Gal 2.16 in light of the contextual analysis of 2.16.

Traditionally it has been understood that Paul denies ἔργα νόμου as a legitimate basis of justification because salvation cannot be achieved by meritorious works-righteousness.¹¹⁴ The traditional view presupposes that first century Judaism was a legalistic religion which maintained that one could earn God's favour on the basis of meritorious works of the law. Some have understood that the attempt to keep the law as a means of justification is sinful.¹¹⁵ But, as noted earlier,¹¹⁶ the traditional view has come under severe criticism notably by K. Stendahl, E. P. Sanders, J. D. G. Dunn, H. Räisänen, and F. Watson. The challenge of recent studies has resulted in a "paradigm shift" in understanding Paul's view of first century Judaism. According to the "new perspective," since the whole of Israel's religion was based on God's election of Israel as the people of God, membership of the covenant community depends not on keeping the deeds prescribed by the law but on God's gracious

¹¹³ For the study, see Mijoga, "The Pauline Notion of 'Deeds of the Law'." In Paul's letters the phrase ἔργα νόμου occurs eight times (Gal 2.16 (three times); 3.2, 5, 10; Rom 3.20, 28).

¹¹⁴ With regard to the meaning of ἔργα νόμου, Luther ("Lectures on Galatians," 122) writes that "for Paul 'works of the Law' means the works of the entire Law." According to Luther, ἔργα νόμου refers to the works of the decalogue and the ceremonial laws. Luther thought that Paul rejected ἔργα νόμου as a means of justification because justification by ἔργα νόμου implies salvation by human act of the meritorious works of the law. Burton (*Galatians*, 120) argues, "By ἔργα νόμου Paul means deeds of obedience to formal statutes done in the legalistic spirit, with the expectation of thereby meriting and securing divine approval and award." See also Bruce, *Galatians*, 137; C. H. Cosgrove, "The Mosaic Law Preaches Faith," *WTJ* 41 (1978-79), 146-148 [146-164]; C. Crowther, "Works, Work and Good Works," *ExpT* 81 (1969-70), 166-171; Fuller, "Paul and 'the Works of the Law'," 33; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 86; Schreiner, "Works of the Law in Paul," 218-220.

¹¹⁵ Bultmann (*Theology*, 1.264) writes, "Because man's effort to achieve his salvation by keeping the Law only leads him into sin, indeed this effort itself in the end is already sin." Käsemann (*Romans*, 103) notes that works of the law are condemned as "higher form of godlessness than transgression of the law." For a bibliography, see Kok, "Truth," p. 118, n. 22.

¹¹⁶ See ch. 1.

election.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, the argument that Paul's problem with ἔργα νόμου is human weakness and inability to fulfil the law perfectly is doubtful.¹¹⁸ As noted earlier, for first century Judaism the perfect observance of the law was not impossible.¹¹⁹ Paul himself says in Phil 3.4-6 that he kept the law "without blemish."¹²⁰ Paul's criticism of his own righteousness coming from the law is not that he was guilty of "the attitudinal sin of self-righteousness,"¹²¹ but that he put confidence in the flesh, i.e. his privileges as a Jew which are rendered inoperative through the righteousness coming from God through the faithfulness of Christ (Phil 3.9).¹²² Moreover, the traditional view is unlikely in light of the immediate literary context of 2.16 in which Paul first introduced ἔργα νόμου into the argument. In the preceding context, the explicit issues are circumcision (2.1-10) and dietary regulations and table-fellowship (2.11-14). Gal 2.16-21 is not so much concerned with how individuals can earn enough merit to be declared righteous (meritorious deeds of the law or faith in Christ) as with what is the valid soteriological basis on which Gentiles enter the people of God (the law or God's grace and Christ – 2.21).¹²³ The issue of meritorious works-righteousness and the question of human inability to fulfil all the requirements of the law do not seem to be the issues at all in Galatians. What then was Paul denying?

While commentators' proposals in regard to the meaning and significance of the phrase ἔργα νόμου are various according to their emphasis or focus, most scholars agree that ἔργα νόμου refers to the deeds prescribed by the law.¹²⁴ As we

¹¹⁷ See Sanders, *PPJ*; Dunn, "Perspective."

¹¹⁸ Pace e.g. Cranfield, "The Works of the Law' in the Epistle to the Romans," 100-101; G. N. Davies, *Faith and Obedience in Romans* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 115-127; Gundry, "Grace," 12-23; Moo, "Law, Works of the Law, and Legalism in Paul," 90-99; Schreiner, "Works of the Law' in Paul," 217-244; F. Thielman, *From Plight to Solution* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989) 28-45, 59-72; Westerholm, *Israel's Law*, 109-130.

¹¹⁹ See e.g. Cranford, "The Possibility of Perfect Obedience," 242-258; E. P. Sanders, "On the Question of Fulfilling the Law in Paul and Rabbinic Judaism," in *Donum Gentilicium*, edited by E. Bammel, et al (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 103-126.

¹²⁰ Räisänen (*Paul*, 106) argues that Paul kept the law perfectly. See also Sanders, *PLJP*, 23, 77-78, 80.

¹²¹ See Sanders, *PLJP*, 44.

¹²² See §3.2.2.2.

¹²³ So rightly scholars in ch. 1, n. 28.

¹²⁴ Betz (*Galatians*, 116) argues that it means "doing and fulfilling the ordinances of the Torah." Bruce (*Galatians*, 137) takes it as "the actions prescribed by the Law" and Reumann (*Righteousness*, 55) "the requirements of the Law." Moo ("Law, Works of the Law, and Legalism in Paul," 92) remarks that it refers to "actions performed in obedience to the law, works which are

attempt to understand why Paul rejects ἔργα νόμου in 2.16, we need to know what are the specific references of ἔργα νόμου in view; for the references are closely bound up with the meaning and significance of the phrase and the reason why Paul denies them. We need to understand the meaning of the phrase in light of the specific issues at stake in Antioch and Galatia. On the basis of the contextual analysis of the Jerusalem incident (2.1-10) and the Antioch incident (2.11-14), Dunn rightly concludes, “We may justifiably deduce, therefore, that by ‘works of the law’ Paul intended his readers to think of *particular observances of the law like circumcision and the food laws*.”¹²⁵ On the basis of contextual analysis of Paul’s ἔργα νόμου in Galatians, Mijoga also concludes.

“In conclusion, circumcision, dietary regulations, and observance of the Jewish calendar are specifically mentioned in Galatians. These practices refer to “deeds of the law.” However, these are not the only things that constitute “deeds of the law.” But as used in Galatians, the phrase “deeds of the law” is a blanket expression covering circumcision, dietary laws, calendaric observance. These are examples with which Paul had to deal. The agitators have been emphasizing these characteristic Jewish practices. Hence Paul is bringing them up.”¹²⁶

When Galatians was being read aloud, the Galatians probably thought of circumcision and food laws as the references of ἔργα νόμου because these were mentioned in the immediately preceding context (2.1-14) and circumcision was advocated by the agitators (5.2; 6.12-13).¹²⁷ While ἔργα νόμου in Galatians is not a technical term referring only to circumcision and food laws,¹²⁸ as Dunn rightly

commanded by the law.” Mijoga (“The Pauline Notion of ‘Deeds of the Law’,” 213) also interprets it as “the deeds prescribed by the Mosaic Law.” NRSV translates it as “works or deeds prescribed by the law” (Rom 3.20, 28). Martyn (*Galatians*, 261) understands it as “observance of God’s Law.” Interestingly, Bachmann (“Rechtfertigung und Gesetzeswerke bei Paulus,” 14) argues that it refers to “die Regelungen des Gesetzes selber.” See also Cranfield, “‘The Works of the Law’ in the Epistle to the Romans,” 89-101; Das, *Paul*, 157-158; Räisänen, *Paul*, 177 and scholars he quotes in n. 77; Schreiner, “‘Works of the Law’ in Paul,” 225.

¹²⁵ Dunn, “Perspective,” 191; idem, *TPA*, 354-359. Those agreeing with Dunn include: Boyarin, *A Radical Jew*, 53-56, 275-276; Matera, *Galatians*, 93, 99; R. B. Hays, “Three Dramatic Roles,” in *Paul and the Mosaic Law*, 152-153; Räisänen, “Galatians 2.16,” 545; A. F. Segal, *Paul the Convert* (New Haven: Yale University press, 1990), 123-125; M. Silva, “The Law and Christianity,” *WTJ* 53 (1991), 339-353; N. T. Wright, “Romans and the Theology of Paul,” in *Pauline Theology* vol. 3, edited by D. M. Hay and E. E. Johnson, 30-67 (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 41.

¹²⁶ Mijoga, “The Pauline Notion of ‘Deeds of the Law’,” 182.

¹²⁷ Winger, *By What Law?* 138.

¹²⁸ Cf. Mijoga (“The Pauline Notion of ‘Deeds of the Law’,” 146) argues that ἔργα νόμου are not restricted to issues like circumcision, food laws, and sabbath observance as 4QMMT demonstrates. See also Stanton, “The Law of Moses and the Law of Christ,” 103-104; Witherington, *Grace*, 176. Note: Dunn (“Yet Once More – ‘The Works of the Law’,” 100-102) did not claim that

argues, “Whatever else he had in mind when he wrote of ‘works of the law’ in Gal 2:16, Paul certainly had in mind circumcision and food laws” (his italics).¹²⁹

Why then does Paul find fault with ἔργα νόμου such as circumcision and food laws? It has been often suggested that Paul’s objection to these Jewish cultural practices is closely bound up with Jewish national identity and hence exclude Gentiles (i.e. the social function of the law).¹³⁰ Notably, Dunn insists, “it still seems to me impossible to avoid the strong inference here that the works of the law in view were seen as important by the Jewish traditionalists for what I have called their ‘boundary defining function’.”¹³¹ The works of the law functioning as an identity-confirming and boundary-defining marker can be substantiated by the parallel between מעשי החורה in the Dead Sea Scrolls (e.g. 1QS 5.21, 23; 6.18; 4QFlor 1.1-7), in particular, in 4QMMT and ἔργα νόμου (2.16).¹³² Both 4QMMT and Galatians have similarities on the point that both are polemical letters¹³³ containing legal and

ἔργα νόμου denotes only circumcision, dietary restrictions and Sabbath keeping. Rather he (*JPL*, 4) remarks that ἔργα νόμου does not mean “only circumcision, food laws and sabbath, but the requirements of the law in general, or, more precisely, the requirements laid by the law on the Jewish people as their covenant obligation and as focused in these specific statutes.” Recently Dunn (*TPA*, 355) states, “we should define ‘works of the law’ as what the law required of Israel as God’s people.”

¹²⁹ J. D. G. Dunn, “Noch Einmal ‘Works of the Law’,” in *Fair Play*, edited by I. Dunderberg, et al (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2002), 276.

¹³⁰ See e.g. Barclay, *Obedying*, 82; Boers, “We Who Are by Inheritance Jews; Not From the Gentiles, Sinners,” 273-281, especially, 279; Dunn, “New Perspective” and “Works of the Law” in *JPL*; Hansen, *Abraham*, 102; B. W. Longenecker, *Eschatology and the Covenant* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 201-202, 205-206; 212-213; Matera, *Galatians*, 93, 99; Räisänen, *Paul*, 162-177; Sanders, *PLJP*, 17-64; Tyson, “‘Works of the Law’ in Galatians,” 430-431; Watson, *PJG*, 63-67, 129-130, 139-141. *Contra* e.g., Cranfield, “‘The Works of the Law’ in the Epistle to the Romans,” 89-101; Schreiner, “Works of the Law in Paul,” 217-244; idem, *The Law and Its Fulfillment*, 41-71.

¹³¹ Dunn (“Noch Einmal,” 279-284) defends his earlier argument effectively against the challenge of Bachmann (“4QMMT und Galaterbrief, *ma’ase hatorah* und *ERGA NOMOU*,” 91-113). See also Dunn, *JPL*, 223.

¹³² For the connection between the thought of 4QMMT and Paul’s argumentation in Galatians, see M. Abegg, “Paul, ‘Works of the Law’ and MMT,” *BAR* 20.6 (1994), 52-55; J. D. G. Dunn “4QMMT and Galatians,” *NTS* 43 (1997), 147-153; J. Kampen, “4QMMT,” in *Reading 4QMMT*, edited by J. Kampen and M. J. Bernstein (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 138-139; Mijoga, “The Pauline Notion of ‘Deeds of the Law’,” 126-132. On the basis of the connection, M. Barth’s (*Ephesians*, 1.246) observation “The nature of ‘works of law’ (which cannot be defined with the aid of LXX, Qumran, Apocalypticists, Tannaites) must be elucidated by the only group of documents in which they are mentioned” should be disputed.

¹³³ There is little doubt that Galatians is a polemical letter. According to E. Qimron and J. Strugnell, 4QMMT is also a polemical document: “The existence of a polemic in MMT is, in itself, of great historical significance” (*Miqsat Ma’ase Ha-Torah: Qumran Cave 4, V. DJD 10* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 115

hortatory sections.¹³⁴ It is important to note that in both documents “works of the law” are required in order to be counted righteous (4QMMT C 31; Gal 2.16).¹³⁵ In other words, doing “the deeds of the law” is associated with becoming full members both of the Qumran community (4QMMT) and of the community of God’s people (Galatians). Furthermore, just as the Qumran community separated themselves from the rest of the people who, in the writer’s view, were disobeying the Mosaic law (4QMMT C 7-8), so Peter and Barnabas separated themselves separate the Antiochians who did not observe the food law (2.12-13).¹³⁶ In both documents “works of the law” plays an identity-confirming and boundary-defining function that distinguishes each group from others of Israel or others of faith. Both groups of separatists were regarding “works of the law” as a requirement for being reckoned righteous by God. Since the parallel between the two is immediate and important,¹³⁷ it is likely that ἔργα νόμου (2.16) refers to “works of the law” understood both as the identity marker of the covenant community and as a condition of full membership in the people of God.¹³⁸

This interpretation of ἔργα νόμου fits very well with the issue of ἔργα νόμου in Galatians. Circumcision and food laws, which are the specific references of ἔργα νόμου in Galatians, function both as an identity-confirming and boundary-defining marker and as a condition of full membership in God’s people. As indicated already,

¹³⁴ It is widely acknowledged that Gal 3.1-5.12 (or 4.31) is the *probatio* and Gal 5.13-6.10 is the *exhortatio* of Galatians (§8.2.5.). J. Strugnell observed that 4QMMT has both sections (“MMT: Second Thought on a Forthcoming Edition,” in *The Community of the Renewed Covenant*, 57-73 (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 61.

¹³⁵ See Dunn “4QMMT,” 151-152.

¹³⁶ See Dunn “4QMMT,” 147-148.

¹³⁷ See Dunn “4QMMT,” 147-153; Mijoga, “The Pauline Notion of ‘Deeds of the Law,’” 182-185. Against N. T. Wright’s critique (“Paul and Qumran,” *Bible Review* 14/5 (1998), 18, 54) that the parallel between Paul’s use of ἔργα νόμου and 4QMMT C 27 is disproportionate, Dunn (“Noch Einmal,” 286) rightly argues, “Despite Wright, that parallel between MMT and Galatians is close and significant. Not because the specific issues/rulings/halakhoth/practices in view were the same. But because the attitude and concerns expressed in the phrase ‘works of the law’ were the same.” This statement could be a proper response to J. A. Fitzmyer’s criticism to Dunn’s thesis: “it is difficult to see how the restriction of the phrase that Paul uses can be understood in Dunn’s sense (“Paul’s Jewish Background and the Deeds of the Law,” in *According to Paul* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1993), 23).

¹³⁸ In light of the Greco-Roman literature of Paul’s time in which circumcision and food laws were widely regarded as characteristically and distinctively Jewish, Dunn (“Perspective,” 192) persuasively argues that circumcision and food laws “functioned as identity markers, they served to

the agitators demanded the Galatians be circumcised because circumcision is an important identity marker of the covenant people (§2.1.1.) and a requirement for proselytes to be authentic members of the covenant community (§2.1.2.). Peter's separation from the Antiochian Gentile Christians (2.12) indicates that the men from James required the Antiochians to keep dietary regulations if they were to be accepted as genuine members of the people of God and to have table-fellowship with them. In short, for the Gentile believers ἔργα νόμου, in particular circumcision and food laws, were required in order for them both to have fellowship with believing Jews (like "certain people came from James" (2.12) and Peter) and to be fully-approved members of the covenant community.¹³⁹

Here it is important to note that the soteriological function of ἔργα νόμου as a condition of becoming authentic members of God's people is an important reason for Paul's objection to ἔργα νόμου.¹⁴⁰ For Jews ἔργα νόμου were not entrance requirements into the covenant because the covenant was established before the law and they were born into a people already in covenant relationship with God.¹⁴¹ For the covenant people keeping ἔργα νόμου was necessary for "staying in" the covenant. In contrast, for the Gentiles "getting in" was on the basis of keeping ἔργα νόμου because they could not enter into the covenant without becoming proselytes through the observance of the deeds of the law, especially circumcision (§2.1.2.).¹⁴² The issue of ἔργα νόμου in Galatians is not so much concerned with how Jews should "stay in" the covenant community as with how Gentiles (ἄνθρωπος) should "get in" the

identify their practitioners as Jewish in the eyes of the wider public, they were the peculiar rites which marked out the Jews as that peculiar people."

¹³⁹ Dunn ("Noch Einmal," 279) rightly concludes: "In short, whatever else Gal 2:16 may mean or may be taken to mean, it certainly was intended to warn against 'works of the law' as constituting or erecting barriers to the free extension of God's grace to the Gentiles. The phrase did not include any thought evident on the surface of the argument that 'works of the law' were necessary to gain initial acceptance by God. What Paul objected to was the thought that the law, as expressed particularly in or epitomised by circumcision and food laws, continued to be a *sine qua non* requirement for believing Jews in governing their acceptance of and relations with believing Gentiles, or in a word, that works of the law were necessary in addition to faith in Christ."

¹⁴⁰ It appears that those who argue for the social function of ἔργα νόμου have not paid sufficient attention to the soteriological function of ἔργα νόμου.

¹⁴¹ So Hong, *Law*, 140, 189.

¹⁴² For the Jewish idea that Gentiles could enter fully into the religious community of Israel by circumcision and observation of the Torah, see Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C. – A.D. 135)*, vol. III, part 1, 148-176. Cf. §2.1.2.

covenant people of God (2.16).¹⁴³ The issue of justification not through ἔργα νόμου but through the faithfulness of Christ is about the requirement or condition of “getting in” the community of God’s people because ἔργα νόμου, in particular circumcision was demanded by the agitators in order for the Galatians enter into God’s people (§2.1.2). In short, Paul rejects the works of the law because the agitators argued that it is necessary for Gentile believers to observe the works of the law in order to be saved.¹⁴⁴

In light of the observations above, we can find the reason why Paul opposes ἔργα νόμου such as circumcision and dietary regulations in Galatians. Paul attacks ἔργα νόμου functioning as the legal and social boundary excluding Gentiles and protecting Israel from outsiders.¹⁴⁵ In consideration of the fact that ἔργα νόμου appears in a rhetorical context where the question of the inclusion of the Gentiles is the issue at stake, the key to Paul’s critique of ἔργα νόμου such as circumcision and food laws lies with the fact that they are the conditions of full membership of the people of God and thus deny the sufficiency of Christ’s faithfulness for justification.

¹⁴³ Noting that “righteousness by faith, not by law still has to do with transfer to, or membership in, the body of those who will be saved” (p. 43), Sanders (*PLJP*, 48) rightly argues that Paul is “against making acceptance of the law a condition of membership in the body of those who will be saved.” However, Gundry-Volf (*Paul and Perseverance*, 205-206) argues against Sanders by saying, “But the thrust of Paul’s argument in Galatians seems to suggest instead that the issue was how to “stay in.” Laato (*Paul and Judaism*, 175) also argues, “It is not in the Epistle to the Galatians a matter of whether the Gentiles must accept the Jewish law with the intent of entering the people of God. It is rather a matter of whether the Gentiles in the intention of staying in the people of God should subordinate themselves to Jewish customs.” Similarly Cosgrove, *Cross*, 12; Gundry, “Grace, Works, and Staying Saved in Paul,” 11. It is true that one of Paul’s purposes in Galatians is to persuade the Galatians to remain in salvation until its consummation (5.4-5). However, Gundry-Volf and Laato show little awareness to the fact that the crucial issue between Paul and the agitators is whether the Galatians must accept circumcision and the law (entrance requirements into the covenant community) in order to become the covenant people of God; for them salvation is within the boundary of the law exclusively within which Israel exists. For further see §2.1.2 and §3.1.2.3.

¹⁴⁴ See Kruse, *Paul*, 67-69.

¹⁴⁵ Tyson (“‘Works of the Law’ in Galatians,” 429) rightly notes, “He [Paul] was surely aware that food laws and circumcision served as signs of exclusivism and separation. They were understood as objective markings for God’s chosen people and signs of election.” According to Dunn, ἔργα νόμου “denotes the attitude of covenantal nomism as typically understood in the Second Temple Judaism in general, as focused in the principal identity-confirming and boundary-defining acts (like circumcision and food laws), since they excluded the Gentile by definition” (*The Partings*, 138). Cf. Dunn, “Noch Einmal,” 277-278. For the exclusivistic social function of the law, see Donaldson, *Paul*, 172; Dunn, *JPL*, 215-236; Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 97; J. Neusner, *Judaism* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1981), 72-75.

To sum up, the focus of Paul's critique of ἔργα νόμου (e.g. circumcision and food law) is not on being justified through meritorious deeds of the law (i.e. legalism), but both on the social function of ἔργα νόμου excluding Gentiles from enjoying God's saving grace and on its soteriological function as a condition of getting within the community of God's people (i.e. ethnocentric covenantalism or Jewish exclusivism). Since justification has been made possible by the faithfulness of Christ (i.e. the self-giving death of Christ), justification by the works of the law must be rejected.¹⁴⁶ In practice, since Christ's faithfulness brings about righteousness for Jews and Gentiles, Gentiles no longer need to observe the works of the law to be justified. To maintain ἔργα νόμου makes the death of Christ nothing (2.21) and means to deny the reconciling work of Christ (Gal 3.28; cf. Rom 10.12; Col 3.11; Eph 2.13-16). This key point for Paul is summed up in the antithesis between the law (and ἔργα νόμου) and the faithfulness of Christ.

6. 3. 2. Gal 3.21-26

The antithesis between the law and Christ's faithfulness is reinforced in 3.21-26. In 3.22 Paul speaks of πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ as the means of receiving the promise saying, ἀλλὰ συνέκλεισεν ἡ γραφή τὰ πάντα ὑπὸ ἁμαρτίαν, ἵνα ἡ ἐπαγγελία ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δοθῇ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν. As indicated already (§4.2.2.), ἡ ἐπαγγελία refers to God's promise of justification of Gentiles, which is equivalent to ἡ εὐλογία τοῦ Ἀβραάμ (3.14). In consideration of the parallel between ἡ δικαιοσύνη (3.21) and ἡ ἐπαγγελία (3.22), the promise seems to refer specifically to "righteousness." So Paul is speaking of justification ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in 3.22. What is the meaning of the phrase ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ? As argued earlier, ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ emerging in the context of justification means "by the faithfulness of Jesus Christ" because the phrase ἐκ πίστεως occurring in other justification passages in the letter (2.16-21; 3.24; 5.5-6 - in these passages justification occurs with πίστις all the time) means "by the faithfulness of Christ" (§6.1.). It is unreasonable to think that the meaning of πίστις in 3.22 is different from

¹⁴⁶ See Martyn, *Galatians*, 263-275.

πίστις in 2.16-21, 3.23-26, and 5.4-6. As scholars have noted,¹⁴⁷ furthermore, since there is reference to human believing, another reference to the faith of believers would be redundant. Thus it is likely that ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ means “through the faithfulness of Christ.” Should we take ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ with ἡ ἐπαγγελία or with δοθῆ? If the former is intended, it could mean that what was promised through Christ’s faithfulness might be given to those who believe, if the latter, God’s promise of justification of the Gentiles might be given, through Christ’s faithfulness, to those who believe. The former is unlikely not only because it is not developed in Galatians but also because the faithfulness of Christ is described as the means or basis of God’s justification of believers in Galatians (2.16; 3.23-26; 5.5-6). So, this is the force of 3.22: in contrast to the fact that righteousness could not come through the law (3.21), the promise (i.e. the Abrahamic blessing, righteousness) is given to believers through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ.¹⁴⁸

In 3.24 Paul argues that we are justified ἐκ πίστεως. As argued earlier, ἐκ πίστεως in 3.24 refers to “the faithfulness of Christ.” Paul’s theological basis for the claim is rooted in his conviction that God sent and revealed Christ’s faithfulness to justify humanity through Christ. The law is no longer the means of justification because the epoch of the law ended with the coming and revelation of Christ’s faithfulness. In the new aeon Christ’s faithfulness is the valid basis of justification. The custodial role of the law has been brought to an end by the arrival of Christ’s faithfulness.

In 3.26, Paul says, πάντες γὰρ υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἐστε διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. Here Paul argues that all believers are the children of God through πίστις. What is the meaning of πίστις? The meaning depends on how one interprets the phrase διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. Two questions remain to be answered. One is what is the grammatical relationship between διὰ τῆς πίστεως and ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. The other is what Paul means by the phrase διὰ τῆς πίστεως. It is likely that

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Hays, *Faith*, 124; Hooker, “ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ,” 329; Howard, *Paul*, 58, 65; Keck, “Jesus’ in Romans,” 454; Longenecker, *Triumph*, 106; Matera, *Galatians*, 135; Wallis, *The Faith*, 71; Williams, “Righteousness in Romans,” 273-274.

¹⁴⁸ The subjective genitive interpretation should be preferred in terms of the immediate literary context. See Hays, “ΠΙΣΤΙΣ,” 54; Hooker, “ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ,” 329-330.

the noun πίστις + ἐν construction should not be understood as “faith in.”¹⁴⁹ Thus the two prepositional phrases should not be taken together and translated as “through faith in Christ” as is done by KJV, NASB, and NIV.¹⁵⁰ Rather, διὰ τῆς πίστεως should be taken with υἱοὶ θεοῦ, with thus πίστις understood as the means of divine sonship and Christ as the sphere or locale in which one is a son of God.¹⁵¹ The two prepositional phrases describe the two grounds on which the Gentile believers become the children of God. We have noted earlier that Gentile Christians receive various soteriological benefits in the sphere of Christ (§3.2.1.). Here the question is, what is the meaning of the phrase διὰ τῆς πίστεως? It should not be doubted that ἡ πίστις points back to πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in 3.22.¹⁵² At the same time, it refers back to the πίστις references in 3.23-25. Since the πίστις references in 3.23-25 mean the faithfulness of Christ (§6.1.1.), ἡ πίστις (3.26) should be understood as “the faithfulness of Christ.” It is thus reasonable to claim that for Paul the faithfulness of Christ is the means by which all believers became the children of God.

In 3.21-26 it is quite important to note that Paul brings out the theme of justification by the faithfulness of Christ to argue against justification through the law (3.21). As noted earlier (§2.2.2.3.), the agitators argued that the only way for

¹⁴⁹ There are two clear examples with which many interpreters have struggled. One is John 3.15. As a matter of fact, the expression ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων ἐν αὐτῷ ἔχη ζωὴν αἰώνιον has caused confusion in the textual tradition. The text ἐπ’ αὐτῷ is read in p⁶⁶ L⁸ K D Q P Y and most MSS read εἰς αὐτόν. A reads ἐπ’ αὐτόν. B W p⁷⁵ and others have ἐν αὐτῷ. In this Gospel πιστεύειν is always followed by εἰς (34 times). Both the unusualness and the ambiguity speak for the originality of ἐν αὐτῷ. If ἐν αὐτῷ is original, then the formula must be viewed as an adverbial phrase, linked with ἔχη. See Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 204; N. Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. 3. Syntax (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963), 263. Recent commentators prefer to take ἐν αὐτῷ. E.g. D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 202; G. R. Beasley-Murray, *John* (Waco, Texas: Word, 1987), 45. The other is Rom 3.25 διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι - this should not be translated “through the faith in his blood” because after the noun “faith” the prepositions εἰς, πρὸς, or ἐπὶ always follow. See *EDNT* 1.93; Dunn, *Romans*, 1.161-164. Paul hardly employs πίστις + ἐν Χριστῷ when speaking of faith in Christ. Furthermore, the formula πίστις ἢ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (1 Tim 3.13, 2 Tim 1.13; 3.15) should not be translated as “faith in Christ Jesus” because ἡ in the phrase seems to function as relative pronoun (i.e. faith that is in Christ Jesus – cf. NRSV). This is vindicated by the phrases μετὰ πίστεως καὶ ἀγάπης τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (1 Tim 1.14) and ἐν πίστει καὶ ἀγάπῃ τῇ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (2 Tim 1.13). The phrase should be translated as “in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus” (NRSV).

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Dunn, *Galatians*, 202; idem, “ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ,” 66, n. 27; Hays, *Faith*, 169-170; Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 149; Matera, *Galatians*, 142; Oepke, *Galater*, 123; Schlier, *Galater*, 171.

¹⁵¹ Matera, *Galatians*, 142; NRSV.

¹⁵² Bruce, *Galatians*, 183.

Gentiles to gain access to the covenant membership of God's people and the divine sonship is by becoming members of the family of God through Torah-observance and circumcision. Against this Paul argues that the faithfulness of Christ, not the law is the soteriological basis upon which God's promise of justification is given to Gentile believers and the soteriological means by which the gift of righteousness and the privilege of divine sonship are given to them. For Paul the law and the faithfulness of Christ are two antithetical means of justification. The point is clearly expressed in Phil 3.9 (μὴ ἔχω ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ νόμου ἀλλὰ τὴν διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ).¹⁵³ If πίστις Χριστοῦ means the faithfulness of Christ, the law and the faithfulness of Christ are contrasted as two antithetical means of righteousness.

6. 3. 3. Summary and Corollary

On the basis of the observations above, we can conclude that Paul rejects justification by the law (the works of the law) through the antithesis between the law (the works of the law) and Christ's faithfulness as two antithetical means of justification. Paul formulates this antithesis to defend the truth of the gospel against the agitators who failed to see the incompatibility between the two and thus imposed the works of the law on the Galatians. The faithfulness of Christ is a pivotal theological theme in Galatians.¹⁵⁴ The faithfulness of Christ is the sufficient soteriological basis of the inclusion of the Gentiles into the eschatological people of God.¹⁵⁵ Christ's faithfulness as a salvific power came and was revealed eschatologically for the purpose of both giving freedom to those under the power of

¹⁵³ For details, see §3.3.2.3.

¹⁵⁴ Hays (*Faith*, 248): "for Paul the obedience and faithfulness of Jesus Christ are of central soteriological significance; the accent of the gospel story lies upon his faithfulness in accomplishing the promised redemption." Longenecker (*Triumph*, 3): the faithfulness of Christ "is crucial to the theological and corporate enterprise that Paul envisage in Galatians." W. Meeks: the faithfulness of Christ "is a foundational element of Paul's theologizing in the letters to Galatia and Rome" (*The Origins of Christian Morality* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 160). Martyn: the faithfulness of Christ "is crucial to an understanding not only of Galatians, but also of the whole of Paul's theology" (*Issues*, 151). R. Longenecker understands the faithfulness of Christ as a foundational conviction of New Testament Christology ("The Foundational Conviction of New Testament Christology," in *Jesus of Nazareth*, edited by J. B. Green and M. Turner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 473-488).

¹⁵⁵ Cf. G. Howard, "Introduction to the Second Edition" in *Paul* (2nd ed.; Cambridge: CUP, 1990), xxvii-xxix; B. W. Longenecker, "Contours of Covenant Theology in the Post-Conversion Paul," in *The Road from Damascus*, 132-135.

the law and granting the gift of righteousness and sonship to those who believe. It has salvific efficacy for the salvation of God's people.¹⁵⁶ The faithfulness of Christ is the soteriological basis upon which all of humanity is saved.¹⁵⁷ In short, in Galatians, justification by the faithfulness of Christ, not by the works of the law means substantively that Gentile believers do not need to observe the deeds of the law which are the identity markers of and entrance requirements into God's people; they are the people of God on the basis of Christ's obedient death and sacrificial love on the cross.

On the basis of the foregoing study, I would respond briefly to the major interpretive trends about the antithesis ἔργα νόμου and πίστις Χριστοῦ and suggest a new interpretation. On the basis of Luther's legacy, the antithesis has for too long been understood as the contrast between meritorious works-righteousness and faith in Christ.¹⁵⁸ This fundamental misunderstanding has skewed the whole exegesis of the letter. As observed earlier, ἔργα νόμου does not refer to meritorious human deeds for achieving righteousness before God and πίστις Χριστοῦ means Christ's faithfulness manifested by his self-giving death, not human faith in Christ. Hence the traditional interpretation of the antithesis as a microcosm of the incompatibility between Jewish legalism of justification by meritorious observance of the law and Christian gospel of justification by faith in Christ should be disputed. Moreover, we find no firm evidence to support the interpretation of the antithesis as deeds of the law which no one can keep perfectly vs. human faith in Christ.¹⁵⁹ The antithesis also should not be interpreted as the contrast between "works of the law" as Jewish identity markers and faith in Christ.¹⁶⁰ Nor are ἔργα νόμου and πίστις Χριστοῦ contrasted as the antithesis between human observance of ἔργα νόμου as a life

¹⁵⁶ Hays ("ΠΙΣΤΙΣ," 39) notes that the Christological interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ "highlights the salvific efficacy of Jesus Christ's faith(fulness) for God's people." See also Hays, "Jesus' Faith and Ours," 257-280.

¹⁵⁷ Longenecker, *Galatians*, 87; idem, "The Obedience of Christ in the Theology of the Early Church," 147.

¹⁵⁸ E.g. Betz, *Galatians*, 116-117; Bruce, *Galatians*, 137-139; Bultmann, *Theology*, 1.263-264; Burton, *Galatians*, 120-121; Ebeling, *Truth*, 176-177; Hübner, *Law*, 113-124; Ridderbos, *Paul*, 130-143; and most German commentators (e.g. Mußner, Schlier).

¹⁵⁹ Pace e.g. Moo, "'Law,' 'Works of the Law,' and Legalism in Paul," 98; Westerholm, *Israel's Law*, 111ff.

¹⁶⁰ Pace Dunn, *Galatians*, 134-139.

dedicated to nomistic service and human faith in Christ.¹⁶¹ These interpretations fail to recognise that πίστις Χριστοῦ refers to Christ's faithfulness, not the Christian's faith in Christ. The antithesis also cannot be understood as a contrast between the practice of the law within the Jewish community and the Christian confession of Jesus as the Messiah as a sociological rationale for the separation of the church from the Jewish community.¹⁶² Rather, as argued already, the antithesis should be understood as the incompatibility between human Torah-observance (in particular circumcision, food laws, and calendric regulations) and Christ's faithfulness as two mutually exclusive soteriological (theological) bases of justification.¹⁶³ Paul does not contrast the two as two different human acts,¹⁶⁴ rather he sets ἔργα νόμου in antithesis with Christ's faithfulness as the contrast between human act (Torah-observance) and divine act (the revelation and advent of Christ's faithfulness).¹⁶⁵ In short, the antithesis should not be interpreted as a representation of the contrast between law-observant Judaism (legalism,¹⁶⁶ or covenantal nomism,¹⁶⁷ or nationalistic covenantalism,¹⁶⁸ or Jewish life of nomistic service,¹⁶⁹ legalistic misunderstanding of the law¹⁷⁰) and the gospel of justification by faith in Christ. Nor should it be understood as the antithesis between life as a Jew and life as a

¹⁶¹ Pace Räisänen, *Paul*, 164-177.

¹⁶² Pace Watson (*PJG*) who argues, "the antithesis between faith and works merely asserts the separation of the church from the Jewish community; it does not provide a theoretical rationale for that separation." He argues the same point in connection with Phil 3 (p. 79) and Romans (pp. 112-123, 119-121, 130, 134-135, 165) by concluding, "It is therefore completely wrong to regard the phrase *sola gratia* as the key to Paul's theology; Paul does not believe that salvation is by grace alone. The view that he does so springs from a failure to recognise that the faith-works contrast is primarily sociological rather than theological in meaning. The faith-works contrast is only absolute as a contrast between the incompatible way of life practised by two different religious communities" (p. 179). But this view shows little awareness to the fact that Paul sets the works of the law in antithesis with Christ's faithfulness in terms of two antithetical theological (not sociological) conditions for justification; the antithesis comes when Paul discusses what is the valid condition on which Gentiles enter the people of God (Gal 2.16). Cf. Sanders, *PLJP*, 114.

¹⁶³ Similarly Martyn, *Galatians*, 250-251; Matera, *Galatians*, 99-102; idem, "Galatians in Perspective," 235-238.

¹⁶⁴ Pace Dunn, *JPL*, 263, n. 53; Hultgren, "The *Pistis Christou* Formulations in Paul," 259-260.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Hays, *Faith*, 147; Martyn, *Galatians*, 271.

¹⁶⁶ Pace scholars in n. 157.

¹⁶⁷ Pace Sanders, *PLJP*, 46-48.

¹⁶⁸ Pace Dunn, "Perspective," 188-200; Boers, *The Justification of the Gentiles*, 223-224.

¹⁶⁹ Pace E. Lohmeyer, "Probleme paulinischer Theologie II. 'Gesetzwerke'," *ZNW* 28 (1929), 195; Räisänen, *Paul*, 162-177; Tyson, "'Works of Law' in Galatians," 425, 431.

¹⁷⁰ Pace Cranfield, "Paul and the Law," 55; Fuller, "Paul and 'the Works of the Law,'" 31.

Christian¹⁷¹ or as the antithesis between legalism and the gospel of justification by Christ's faithfulness.¹⁷² I would suggest, rather, that the antithesis should be understood as shorthand for the incompatibility between ethnocentric covenantalism and the gospel of Christ's faithfulness as two mutually exclusive soteriological belief-systems. More precisely, in the context of Galatians, the antithesis represents the contrast between the agitators' modified ethnocentric covenantalism of justification through the works of the law and Paul's gospel of justification by Christ's faithfulness.¹⁷³

6. 4. Concluding Remarks

The antithesis between the law and Christ's faithfulness is significant for understanding Paul's view of the law and first century Judaism. With regard to why Paul denies the law as the basis of justification Sanders draws two conclusions. First, Paul denies righteousness through the works of the law "not because the law cannot be followed, nor because following it leads to legalism, self-righteousness and self-estrangement."¹⁷⁴ Second, it is because "God intended that entry to the body of the saved be available to all on the basis of faith in Christ."¹⁷⁵ He goes on to conclude, "The attack on righteousness by the law is against making acceptance of the law a condition of membership in the body of those who will be saved. The reasons for his position which are thus far visible can be immediately connected with one of his primary convictions: salvation is available to all on the same basis, faith."¹⁷⁶ We agree with Sanders' conclusion, except the reference of "faith." According to Sanders, it refers to human faith in Christ. However, as we have argued, it probably refers to the faithfulness of Christ. Christ's faithfulness manifested through his sacrificial death on the cross is the sole basis of salvation for all humanity. Paul's

¹⁷¹ Pace Barclay, *Obeying*, 82; Holmberg, "Jewish," 416; Watson, *PJG*, 65, 179.

¹⁷² Pace Longenecker, *Galatians*, 86.

¹⁷³ Hays does not give sufficient attention to the first element of the antithesis and Dunn does not interpret the second element Christologically. Although Martyn (*Galatians*, 250-251) and Matera (*Galatians*, 98) rightly note the antithesis between "observance of the Law" or "legal works" and "the faith of Christ Jesus," they do not explicitly interpret it as suggested above.

¹⁷⁴ Sanders, *PLJP*, 46.

¹⁷⁵ Sanders, *PLJP*, 47.

¹⁷⁶ Sanders, *PLJP*, 48.

theological rationale for his conviction that the faithfulness of Christ is the sole soteriological basis of righteousness is based on his apocalyptic interpretation of the advent and apocalypse of Christ's faithfulness (Gal 3.23-26).¹⁷⁷ Paul was convinced that the advent and revelation of Christ's faithfulness brought freedom from the law and justification to humanity. For Paul, the valid means of the justification of God's people is the faithfulness of Christ, so the law (and the works of the law) as the means of justification must be rejected. The law as the basis of justification had been superseded by Christ's faithfulness.

The antithesis between the law and Christ's faithfulness is significant for understanding Paul's critique of covenantal nomism. According to the traditional Jewish covenantalism, the gift of righteousness and the privilege of the children of God were limited to Jews and proselytes. On the contrary Paul argues that the prerogatives are not exclusive to Jews and proselytes, but inclusive of the Gentile believers because the privileges have become available to Gentiles through the faithfulness of Christ. Paul rejected the ethnocentric covenantalism which claimed that Jews alone are the recipients of God's blessing and members of God's covenant, because it rejects the sufficiency and efficiency of Christ's faithfulness which makes Gentile believers the recipients of righteousness (2.16), the Abrahamic blessing (3.22), God's children (3.26), without entering the covenant community through Torah-observance. Furthermore, Paul rejected covenantal nomism because it does not acknowledge that God's justification of the Gentiles was already fulfilled eschatologically through the advent and revelation of Christ's faithfulness (3.22-25). The faithfulness of Christ brought the law (as a means of justification) to an end so established a new way of right relationship with God. In short, with the antithesis between the law (and works of the law) and Christ's faithfulness is formulated to react not so much against Jewish legalism as against to the agitators' Jewish exclusivism.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ See Martyn, *Galatians*, 361-364.

¹⁷⁸ While J. D. G. Dunn understands πίστις Χριστοῦ as the Christian's faith in Christ, he is right in saying that Paul reacts against and rebukes "Jewish restrictiveness" on the basis of justification by πίστις Χριστοῦ, not by the works of the law ("Paul and Justification by Faith," in *The Road from Damascus*, 90-100).

CHAPTER 7

THE ANTITHESIS BETWEEN “CIRCUMCISION/UNCIRCUMCISION” AND ΠΙΣΤΙΣ

In the final antithesis Paul reverts to once again to the issue of circumcision in 5.6. To the Galatians who desire to undergo circumcision for justification, Paul says, ἐν γὰρ Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ οὔτε περιτομή τι ἰσχύει οὔτε ἀκροβυστία ἀλλὰ πίστις δι’ ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη (“For in Christ Jesus what is effective (for justification) is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision but Christ’s faithfulness working through love”). It is clear that Paul sets “circumcision/uncircumcision,” not just circumcision, in antithesis with πίστις δι’ ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη (i.e. Christ’s faithfulness working through his love)¹ as two antithetical bases of justification.² While most commentators have observed this antithesis,³ they have not satisfactorily expounded its force, function, and significance.

The questions for us here are: What is it that Paul wished to convey by this antithesis? Why does Paul argue that Christ’s faithfulness is the sufficient soteriological ground of justification? What is the significance of the antithesis for understanding Paul’s attitude toward the agitators’ gospel and first century Palestinian Judaism? In order to answer these questions, it is first necessary to exegete 5.6. Since we have dealt with πίστις δι’ ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη in the previous chapter, we will focus on the rest of 5.6.

¹ For the interpretation of πίστις δι’ ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη as “Christ’s faithfulness working through his love,” see §6.1.2.

² It seems that the antithesis between “circumcision/uncircumcision” and πίστις is a subset of the antithesis between the law and πίστις. As we shall see below, however, the former differs slightly from the latter on the point that the former tackles the issue of the Jewish covenantalism maintaining that the circumcised state is advantageous before God but the uncircumcised state is not, whereas the latter deals with the law as the means of justification.

³ E.g. Betz, Bruce, Burton, Dunn, Martyn, Mußner, Schlier.

7. 1. Exegesis of Gal 5.6

The γάρ (explanatory) indicates that the antithesis between “circumcision vs. uncircumcision” and Christ’s faithfulness elaborates the antithesis between the law and Christ’s faithfulness (ch. 6).⁴ As argued earlier (§3.2.1.), the phrase ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ means “in the sphere of Christ.”⁵ It is this key phrase that summarises Paul’s foregoing exposition, encapsulating God’s saving activity and the effects of the Christ-event in the sphere of Christ. It also represents Paul’s conviction regarding the eschatological “sphere-transfer” of God’s saving grace from the law to Christ.⁶

What is the meaning of περιτομή and ἀκροβυστία? The noun περιτομή occurs 36 times in the NT. In the Pauline corpus it appears 31 times. It is employed in the Pauline letters with three meanings: 1) the rite or act of circumcision (Rom 2.25a, 27; 4.11; Gal 2.12; 5.11; Phil 3.5; Col 2.11; 4.11; Tit 1.10); 2) the state of having been circumcised (Rom 2.25b, 26b, 28; 4.10; 1 Cor 7.19; Gal 5.6; 6.15); 3) circumcised Jews (Rom 3.30; 4.9, 12; 15.8; Gal 2.7, 8, 9; Col 3.11; Eph 2.11).⁷ The noun ἀκροβυστία occurs 20 times in the NT. It appears mainly in the Pauline corpus (19 times). Outside the Pauline letters the word emerges only in Acts 11.3. The word is used in two basic senses: 1) the state (or status) of being uncircumcised (non-Jewish) (Rom 2.25, 26b; 4.10, 11, 12; 1 Cor 7.18, 19; Gal 5.6; 6.15); 2) uncircumcised Gentiles (Rom 2.26a, 27; 3.30; 4.9; Gal 2.7; Eph 2.11; Col 3.11). It is probable that in 5.6 Paul does not think of περιτομή and ἀκροβυστία in terms of a ritual act because ἀκροβυστία is not a rite. Nor do περιτομή and ἀκροβυστία mean circumcised Jews and uncircumcised Gentiles because Paul’s description of περιτομή and ἀκροβυστία as “power”⁸ militates against this interpretation. Rather, περιτομή

⁴ Compare Dunn (“Circumcision,” 100-102) who thinks that 5.6 functions as the conclusion of 5.2-6 and elaborates the antithesis between circumcision and Christ, and Williams (*Galatians*, 138) who says that 5.6 grounds the warnings of 5.2-4.

⁵ The phrase is equivalent neither to “in Christianity” (*pace* Burton, *Galatians*, 279) nor to “union with Christ” (*pace* Fung, *Galatians*, 228).

⁶ Most commentators have not paid sufficient attention to Paul’s eschatological perspective reflected by the phrase (e.g. Burton, Fung, Longenecker, Matera, Williams, Witherington). For further, see §3.2.3. Cf. Dunn, *Galatians*, 272; Martyn, *Galatians*, 472-473.

⁷ See Cranfield, *Romans*, 1.171-173.

⁸ Both περιτομή and ἀκροβυστία are the subjects of the verb ἰσχύω.

refers to the state of having been circumcised⁹ and ἀκροβυστία the state of being uncircumcised.¹⁰

It is to be noted in 5.6 that Paul denies the effectiveness of both circumcision and uncircumcision.¹¹ In contrast to the agitators' argument that circumcision is of force for salvation (justification) (περιτομή ἰσχύει; cf. Rom 2.25 - περιτομή ὠφέλει),¹² Paul argues that the circumcised state has no salvific effectiveness for justification. At the same time, in contrast to the agitators' belief that the uncircumcised state prevents uncircumcised Gentiles from becoming members of the covenant people of God,¹³ Paul insists that the uncircumcised state also has no power to prevent uncircumcised Gentiles from enjoying the grace of God. Rather, for Paul, the faithfulness of Christ is effective as the sufficient soteriological basis for justification. It is thus fair to say that Paul rejects "circumcision/uncircumcision" by setting the ineffectiveness of "circumcision/uncircumcision" in antithesis with the effectiveness of Christ's faithfulness for justification.

7. 2. The Significance of "Circumcision/Uncircumcision" and Christ's Faithfulness

In order to appreciate the force of the antithesis we must clarify the significance of "circumcision/uncircumcision" and Christ's faithfulness working through his love. The antithesis is not simply to do with the contrast between a rite (circumcision) and the Christian's faith. Nor does Paul set circumcision per se in antithesis to Christ's faithfulness. With a view to two references to circumcision in

⁹ Cf. O. Betz, περιτομή, *EDNT* 3.79; Dunn, "Circumcision," 101.

¹⁰ Cf. O. Betz, ἀκροβυστία, *EDNT* 1.55; Dunn, "Circumcision," 101. *Contra* J. Marcus who translates Gal 5.6a (and 1 Cor 7.19; Gal 6.15a) "Neither a circumcised penis nor a foreskin counts for anything" ("The Circumcision and the Uncircumcision in Rome," *NTS* 35 (1989), 75). However, Marcus does not consider seriously that both περιτομή and ἀκροβυστία are the subjects of the verb ἰσχύω and that περιτομή is described as the basis of justification. It is difficult to think that a circumcised penis is powerful for justification.

¹¹ Dunn, *Galatians*, 271; Martyn, *Galatians*, 472.

¹² For the agitators' rationale for the salvific efficacy of circumcision, see §2.2.3.

¹³ The point can be inferred from the agitators' requirement of circumcision as an entrance requirement into the covenant community (§2.2.2.). Since the uncircumcised state of the Gentiles keeps them from becoming God's people, the agitators demanded the circumcision of the Galatians. Moreover, the uncircumcised Gentiles are seen as "the children of destruction" in *Jub.* 15.26. Cf. Donaldson, *Paul*, 53-54; W. Grundmann, ἰσχύω κτλ, *TDNT* 3.398.

5.2-3 and the antithesis between circumcision and Christ (5.2), one would normally expect Paul then to say that circumcision itself is inoperative for justification. Instead, he sets “circumcision/uncircumcision” in antithesis with Christ’s faithfulness.¹⁴ Here we could imagine that Paul regards “circumcision vs. uncircumcision” together as a kind of Jewish belief system that determines and characterises the belief and praxis of Israel.¹⁵ Since the larger complexes are summarised in the two terms and the tensions between the larger complexes come into focus in the antithesis,¹⁶ “circumcision vs. uncircumcision” and Christ’s faithfulness represent two incompatible belief-systems. The question for us here is: What are the two antithetical belief-systems epitomised by “circumcision vs. uncircumcision” and “Christ’s faithfulness”?

7. 2. 1. “Circumcision/Uncircumcision” Represented as Ethnocentric Covenantalism

In order to understand the socio-religious significance of “circumcision vs. uncircumcision,” we must know the social and soteriological function of circumcision. As we observed earlier, circumcision is the covenant sign between God and God’s people, which plays an important role as the identity marker of the Jews within Judaism (§2.2.1.). It is the *sine qua non* for Israel’s self-definition as the people of God distinguished from other peoples, designated as “the uncircumcised.” Circumcision was normally required for the Gentiles as a prerequisite for becoming members of the covenant people (§2.2.2.). As demonstrated already, moreover, there is a close link between circumcision and redemption; the salvific efficacy was ascribed to circumcision as a redemptive and apotropaic rite within Judaism (§2.2.3.). Furthermore, the circumcised state denotes those who consequently are entitled to receive the prerogatives of the Jews (Rom 2.25; 3.1; 4.10; Phil 3.3). Circumcision was a sign of the Jew’s privileged status as a member of God’s people

¹⁴ Cf. Dunn, *Galatians*, 271; Martyn, *Galatians*, 472. But Dunn and Martyn interpret πίστις as the Christian’s faith.

¹⁵ Betz (*Galatians*, 262) notes, “‘Circumcision’ and ‘uncircumcision’ belong together as technical terms of Jewish cultic law.” Martyn (*Galatians*, 472; cf. 378-383) calls it “a religious pair of opposites.” See also Dunn, “Circumcision,” 100.

¹⁶ See Dunn, “Circumcision,” 80.

who can participate in the inheritance of Abraham. Paul's contrast of "circumcision/uncircumcision" epitomized the privileged status of the Jews and the cursed status of the Gentiles (Rom 2.25); the phrase ἐν περιτομῇ expressing the state of Jewish privilege, and the phrase ἐν ἀκροβυστίᾳ indicating the state of the Gentiles untitled to receive the Jewish privileges (Rom 4.10).

In light of the socio-religious significance of circumcision, it is fairly clear that "circumcision/uncircumcision" reflects the Jewish perspective of distinguishing Jew from Gentile; the Jews could be categorised as περιτομή and the other people as ἀκροβυστία. The perspective is clearly present in the Old Testament (Judg 14.3; 15.18; 1 Sam 14.6; 31.4; 1 Chron 10.4; Ezek 28.10; 31.18; 32.24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 32; 44.7, 9). The perspective distinguishing "circumcision/uncircumcision" (i.e. Jew/Gentile) is explicitly expressed in Rom 2.26, 3.30, Gal 2.7, Col 3.11, and Eph 2.11. The ethnocentric perspective is based on the social function of circumcision (i.e. identity marker) that distinguishes between those who are in the covenant-community ("circumcision") and those who are outside the community ("uncircumcision").¹⁷ Thus "circumcision/uncircumcision" describes the self-understanding or identity of περιτομή (i.e. Jews) as God's chosen, distinguished and separated from ἀκροβυστία (i.e. Gentiles).¹⁸ The world-view encapsulates the Jewish perspective which views the Jews as God's elect and the Gentiles, by definition, as outside the orbit of God's election (e.g. Deut 7.1-6; Ezra 9.1-10.44; Neh 13.3-30; Pss 147.19-20; *Jub.* 22-23; 2 Macc. 6.12-16; Wis 12.19-22; 13.1-16.10) and sinners (e.g. 1 Sam 15.18; 1 Macc. 2.44, 62; 2 Macc. 12.23; 14.42; Gal 2.15).¹⁹ More importantly, "circumcision vs. uncircumcision" represents the traditional Jewish soteriological belief that the circumcised state is advantaged before God but the uncircumcised state is disadvantaged before God.²⁰ This ethnically-based perspective lays bare the

¹⁷ See Dunn, *Romans*, 1.119-120.

¹⁸ See also Yee, "You Who Were Called the Uncircumcision by the Circumcision," 96-104.

¹⁹ Dunn ("Incident at Antioch," 150-151) points out that "lawless," "sinner," and "gentile" are parallel terms.

²⁰ See Dunn, "Circumcision," 101.

agitators' tendency to exclude the Galatians from the community of Abraham's descendants, which caused the crisis in Galatia.

In light of the considerations above, we may justly conclude that "circumcision vs. uncircumcision" represents, by metonymy, Jewish ethnocentric covenantalism maintaining that the circumcised state is advantageous before God but the uncircumcised state is not, not only because circumcision is the covenant sign defining the identity of God's covenant people and has salvific efficacy but also because only the circumcised are entitled to enjoy the benefits of circumcision.²¹ In other words, it stands for Jewish exclusivism²² holding that only the circumcised are the elected people of God who are inside the covenant, but the uncircumcised are sinners who are outside the covenant.²³ "Circumcision/uncircumcision" seems to function as a Jewish slogan to maintain both Jewish identity as God's people and Jewish ethnocentric covenantalism.

7. 2. 2. Christ's Faithfulness Represented as the Gospel of the Cross

What does πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη represent? As already argued (§6.1.2.), the phrase should be understood not as the Christian's faith capable of expressing itself in love toward neighbour as an ethical principle of Christian behaviour but as a summary description of Christ's sacrificial death on the cross as an expression of his obedience to God and his self-giving love to humanity. It is probable therefore that πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη represents, by metonymy, the cross. In other words, the fuller theology behind the summary statement of πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη is Paul's gospel of the cross. This point is indicated both by the equivalence between Christ's faithfulness and Christ's death on the cross (§6.2.) and by the parallel between "circumcision/uncircumcision" vs. "Christ's faithfulness"

²¹ Compare Dunn ("Circumcision," 100) who says, "'circumcision' and 'uncircumcision' represent, by metonymy, ethnic identity, a whole corporate and national way of life epitomised by its most physically visible expression."

²² Sanders argues, "exclusivism was part and parcel of Judaism" although Jews maintained various kinds of relations with Gentiles (*Judaism*, 265-266). He places the discussion of exclusivism in the context of "doctrine of election."

²³ Betz (*Galatians*, 262) similarly writes, "In Judaism the terms ['circumcision' and 'uncircumcision'] symbolize the dividing line between those who belong to the Torah Covenant, and thus are insured of their salvation, and those who are outside of that Covenant."

and “circumcision” vs. “the cross” (5.11; 6.12-14); Christ’s faithfulness and the cross are synonymous in a broad sense.²⁴

7. 2. 3. Concluding Remarks

In light of the considerations above, we may conclude that what Paul intended his readers to understand by his summary antithesis is that justification depends not on the circumcised state or the uncircumcised state but on Christ’s faithfulness working through his sacrificial love. The antithesis was certainly intended both to abrogate the agitators’ ethnocentric covenantalism that assumes that Gentiles as such cannot enjoy God’s saving grace manifested through Christ’s death and also to add one further consideration to persuade the Galatians not to depend on circumcision for justification.

On the basis of the foregoing study, we should respond briefly to the traditional interpretation about the antithesis between περιτομή/ἀκροβυστία and πίστις δι’ ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη. Traditionally the antithesis has been understood largely in terms of the contrast between the Jewish distinction of “circumcision/uncircumcision” and the Christian’s faith expressing itself through love. According to the traditional view, in the old order the distinction between circumcision and uncircumcision has dominated the Jewish mind-set and community, whereas in the new order the Christian’s faith expressing itself through love determines the way of the Christian’s life. While most commentators have not developed the force of the antithesis, notably Martyn and Dunn attempted to explain it.

Martyn understands the antithesis as the antinomy between one world that had as its foundation a religious pair of opposites (e.g. circumcision and uncircumcision) and the other world characterized by the Christian’s faith active in mutual love.²⁵ Martyn argues that in 5.6 Paul indicates “the impotence of both circumcision and uncircumcision, thus signaling the termination of the cosmos that had its foundation a religious pair of opposites, and announcing the dawn of the

²⁴ See Hays, “ΠΙΣΤΙΣ,” 59; Hooker, “ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ,” 331; Martyn, *Galatians*, 259.

²⁵ Martyn, *Galatians*, 472-473.

cosmos that consists of the realm of Christ, the realm that lies beyond religious differentiations.”²⁶ But Martyn overlooks the fact that the newly-arriving power bringing down the power of “circumcision/uncircumcision” world-view and announcing the dawn of the new cosmos is not the Christian’s “faith active in mutual love” but “Christ’s faithfulness working through his love.” It is the advent and revelation of Christ’s faithfulness that brought about the apocalyptic transition to the new age and thus marked out the new age (3.23-26) in which the “circumcision/uncircumcision” value-system is no longer effective. It is surprising that Martyn thinks that an anthropological element (i.e. “the Christian’s faith active in mutual love”) results in the nonexistence of “circumcision/uncircumcision” world-view. Martyn’s interpretation of the antithesis in 5.6, furthermore, does not fit well with his understanding of the antithesis between “circumcision/uncircumcision” and *καλὴ κτίσις* (6.15) in the sense that the Christian’s “faith active in mutual love” is a human act, whereas *καλὴ κτίσις* is a divine act,²⁷ while, as he points out, Gal 5.6 and 6.15 are entirely harmonious in announcing the death of one cosmos and the dawn of another.²⁸ Moreover, Martyn’s interpretation of *πίστις* in 5.6 is inconsistent with his interpretation of *πίστις* in 2.16 and 3.22.

Dunn interprets the antithesis in terms of two different life-styles by stating that “The difference is that where circumcision implied the way of life typical and distinctive of Jews (“judaizing”, “works of the law”), faith implied a life lived out of and through the love embodied on the cross.”²⁹ Dunn, however, has failed to recognise that *πίστις δι’ ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη* means not the Christian’s faith active in love for others but Christ’s faithfulness operating through the sacrificial love of Christ. Dunn also misses the point that Paul’s use of both *περιτομή/ἀκροβυστία* and *πίστις* as the subject of the verb *ἰσχύω* suggests that he sets “circumcision vs. uncircumcision” in antithesis with *πίστις δι’ ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη* not as the two different ways of life but as the two mutually exclusive soteriological powers for

²⁶ Martyn, *Galatians*, 473.

²⁷ See n. 81 in this chapter.

²⁸ Martyn, *Galatians*, 473.

²⁹ Dunn, “Circumcision,” 102-104.

justification. The point can be substantiated by the fact that the argumentative situation of 5.6 is not so much concerned with how the individual should live as with what is the external soteriological ground of justification. Paul's redemptive-historical contrast between ἐν νόμῳ (5.4) and ἐν Χριστῷ (5.6) may also suggest that the antithesis between "circumcision/uncircumcision" and πίστις should be understood as two conflicting redemptive-historical powers, not as two contrasting ways of life.

If the interpretation above is correct, then, the antithesis between περιτομή/ἀκροβυστία and πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη should not be understood as the contrast between the Jewish value-system "circumcision vs. uncircumcision" and Christian ethics of love toward neighbour,³⁰ nor as Jewish life-style determined by ethnic identity vs. Christian life-style determined by faith expressing itself through love,³¹ nor as Jewish religion characterized by the distinction between circumcision and uncircumcision vs. Christian religion characterized by faith active in mutual love.³² Moreover, the antithesis should not be interpreted as the contrast between the law and the Christian faith expressing itself through love³³ or between "Nomosprinzip" and "Glaubenprinzip" (Sola-fide-Prinzip).³⁴ I would suggest, rather, that the antithesis between περιτομή/ἀκροβυστία and πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη should be interpreted as a microcosm of the two incompatible belief-systems between the agitators' ethnocentric covenantalism (i.e. the circumcised as the justified) and Paul's gospel of the cross (i.e. justification by Christ's death).

7. 3. The Gospel of the Cross as Paul's Theological Basis for His Opposition to Ethnocentric Covenantalism

In the previous section, we concluded that the force of 5.6 is that the inclusion of Gentiles into the people of God depends not on "ethnic identity" (i.e. "the circumcised state/the uncircumcised state") but on Christ's faithfulness working

³⁰ Pace Betz, *Galatians*, 262-264; Bruce, *Galatians*, 232-233.

³¹ Pace Dunn.

³² Pace Martyn.

³³ Pace Fung, *Galatians*, 228.

³⁴ Pace Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 352.

through his love (i.e. Christ's self-giving death on the cross). The questions for us here are: How does Paul understand the faithful self-giving death of Christ as a soteriological basis for the inclusion of Gentiles into the people of God in Galatians? What is the significance of Paul's gospel of the cross (i.e. the death of Christ) for Paul's opposition to the agitators' ethnocentric covenantalism? Without attempting to investigate Paul's theology of the death of Christ in Galatians,³⁵ we will focus on these two questions through an exegetical study of the relevant texts (1.4; 2.21; 3.13-14; 5.11; 6.12-14) where Paul emphasises the death of Christ and the cross both as the soteriological basis of salvation and as his theological rationale against the agitators' ethnocentric covenantalism. As argued already, πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη sums up the subject of Christ's faithful death on the cross and sacrificial love for the salvation of humanity, which he elaborated previously in Galatians. We recall again that 5.2-6 functions as summary of Paul's previous arguments; the antitheses as summary and the summary as antitheses.

7. 3. 1. Gal 1.4

In 1.4 Paul says, τοῦ δόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν, ὅπως ἐξέληται ἡμᾶς ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦ ἐνεστῶτος πονηροῦ κατὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν. It is important to note that Paul mentions the death of Jesus Christ in the greeting (1.1-5).³⁶ This suggests that Christ's death for the forgiveness of our sins and deliverance from the present evil age is an important theological theme³⁷ upon which Paul attempts to argue against the agitators' gospel (1.7) as well as the

³⁵ For a bibliography concerning Paul's theology of the death of Christ, see Dunn, *TPA*, 207-208. On Paul's *theologia crucis*, see P. Stuhlmacher, "Eighteen Theses on Paul's Theology of the Cross," in *Reconciliation, Law, & Righteousness*, 155-168. For the salvific efficaciousness of Christ's death in Paul, see L. Cerfaux, *Christ in the Theology of Paul* (Herder: Freiburg, 1959), 126-153. For a discussion of Paul's background of the vicariousness of Jesus' death, see D. Seeley, *The Noble Death* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990). For the significance of Jesus' death as the paradigm of self-sacrificing service for the whole community of Christian faith, see C. B. Cousar, "Paul and the Death of Jesus," *Int* 52 (1998), 38-52. For a fine presentation about Paul's theology of the death of Christ and the cross in Galatians, see F. J. Matera, "The Death of Christ and the Cross in Paul's Letter to the Galatians," *Louvain Studies* 18 (1993), 283-296.

³⁶ Burton, *Galatians*, 13-14.

³⁷ Martyn (*Galatians*, 90) takes 1.4 as "one of the topic sentences for the whole letter." Cf. D. Cook, "The Prescript as Programme in Galatians," *JTS* 43 (1992), 515-518; Smiles, *Gospel*, 68-70.

Galatians' desertion of the one who called them in the grace of Christ (1.6).³⁸ Paul describes Jesus Christ as the one who gives himself for the sins of Christians (τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν). The thought of Jesus given, or giving himself to death is one of the prominent Pauline Christological ideas (Rom 4.25; 8.32; Gal 1.4, 2.20; cf. Eph 5.2, 25; 1 Tim 2.6; Tit 2.14). According to the long-established Jewish belief-system, the sin-offering was considered as a means of atonement (Lev 4; 16.11-19). According to Maccabean martyr theology,³⁹ the self-sacrifice of martyrs for Israel was regarded as a sacrifice (2 Macc. 7.37-38; 4 Macc. 17.21-22).⁴⁰ In the Gospels tradition, Christ's death was understood as a voluntary sacrifice (Mk 10.45; Mt 26.28; Lk 22.19). In consideration of these observations, there can be little doubt that Paul understands Christ's death ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν in sacrificial terms (Rom 3.25; cf. Eph 5.2; 1 Tim 2.6).⁴¹

According to 1.4, the death of Christ has two purposes. First, Christ died for the forgiveness of the sins of humankind. Here Paul understands Christ's death as a sacrifice for sins (i.e. sin-offering), which has atoning power to set believers free from the power of sin.⁴² The idea of Christ's sacrificial death as the soteriological means of atonement is expressed in Rom 3.25, 8.3, 1 Cor 5.7, and 2 Cor 5.21.⁴³ For Paul Jesus died as sacrifice for the forgiveness of the sins of humankind (cf. Rom 4.25; 5.6, 8; 8.3; 1 Cor 15.3). Second, Christ died in order to rescue believers from the present evil age. Paul uses the verb ἐξαίρειν only once here. It means "to rescue" or "to deliver." But the verb is used in the LXX frequently in the same sense (e.g. Gen 37.22; Num 35.25; Deut 25.11; 1 Sam 12.10; 1 Ch. 16.35; 2 Ch 32.17; Pss 31.2;

³⁸ Gal 1.4 is the only statement about Christ's death in the greeting of a Pauline letter. See Matera, "Death," 286.

³⁹ For the subject, see Cummins, *Crucified*, 54-86; S. K. Williams, *Jesus' Death as Saving Event* (Missoula, Montana: Scholars press, 1975), 165-197; J. W. van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs as Saviours of the Jewish People* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997).

⁴⁰ See the discussion by van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs as Saviours of the Jewish People*, 140-184. Cf. Betz, *Galatians*, 42, n. 54.

⁴¹ See particularly J. D. G. Dunn, "Paul's Understanding of the Death of Jesus as Sacrifice," in *Sacrifice and Redemption*, edited by W. Sykes (Cambridge: CUP, 1991), 35-56; idem, *TPA*, 212-225. Cf. Betz, *Galatians*, 41, n. 53.

⁴² For the discussion of Paul's theology of Christ's atoning sacrificial death, see Dunn, *TPA*, 218-223.

⁴³ For the discussion of the texts, see Dunn, *TPA*, 212-217.

81.4; Isa 31.5; Jer 49.11; Ezek 34.10; Dan 6.14; Hos 2.12; Sir 51.8 – LXX). The verb describes rescue or deliverance from enemies and troubles. Here the trouble from which Christ's death rescued is "the present evil age." Paul is primarily dependent on his Jewish world-view at this point, according to which world history is divided into two ages, the present age and the age to come.⁴⁴ The present age is dominated by evil, but the age to come is glorious. The world-view is implicitly expressed in Qumran literature (CD 4.10; 1QpHab 5.7) and also found in the Gospel tradition (Matt 12.32; Mk 10.30; Lk 20.34-35) and Jewish apocalyptic literature such as 4 Ezra (6.9; 7.12-13, 50, 113; 8.1) and 2 Baruch (14.13; 15.8).⁴⁵ There is little doubt that Paul thinks that the present age is evil (1.4; cf. Eph 5.16) and under the dominion of sin (Rom 3.9; 6.14; 7.14; Gal 3.22). The point is that Christ's death will accomplish the forgiveness of sins and deliverance from the present evil age, which the law (first century Judaism) cannot do (cf. 3.21-22).⁴⁶

It is quite important to note that the object of forgiveness and deliverance is not Jews but Jews and Gentiles (ἡμῶν; ἡμᾶς - §2.2.2.4), in particular Paul and the Galatians. The point of Paul's statement is that Christ died not just for Jews as their Messiah but for Jews and Gentiles as the Saviour of all humankind. The point is indicated by means of such inclusive terms as "all" (πᾶς, πάντες)⁴⁷, "human being" (ἄνθρωπος),⁴⁸ and "we" (ἡμεῖς, ἡμᾶς).⁴⁹ These texts confirm the universalistic significance of Christ's death for the forgiveness and deliverance of humankind (Jews and Gentiles).⁵⁰

⁴⁴ Cf. Betz, *Galatians*, 42, n. 58; Dunn, *Galatians*, 36.

⁴⁵ Cf. Longenecker, *Galatians*, 8-9.

⁴⁶ Cf. Martyn, *Galatians*, 89-91, 263-275.

⁴⁷ "One man's (Christ's) act of righteousness leads to justification and life for *all*" (Rom 5.18); "he (Christ) died for *all*" (2 Cor 5.14-15).

⁴⁸ "We know that *a person* is justified not by the works of the law but through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ" (Gal 2.16).

⁴⁹ "Who (Christ) was handed over to death for *our* trespasses (Rom 4.25); "*we* have been justified by his blood" (Rom 5.9); "while *we* were enemies, *we* were reconciled to God through the death of his Son" (Rom 5.10); "Christ died for *us*" (Rom 5.8); "Christ died for our sins" (1 Cor 15.3) "who (Christ) died for *us*" (1 Thes 5.9).

⁵⁰ See also Donaldson, "'The Gospel That I Proclaim among the Gentiles' (Gal 2.2)," 173-175.

With a view to the observations above, it is not so difficult to understand the significance of Christ's death for Paul's opposition to the agitators' ethnocentric covenantalism claiming that the circumcised state is effective for salvation and that the uncircumcised state is not. As argued already (§2.2.3.), on the basis of the salvific efficacy of circumcision the agitators probably argued that the Galatians could receive the salvific benefits of circumcision (e.g. redemption, deliverance) when they accept circumcision. The agitators also probably taught that the Galatians could be protected from the eschatological wrath of God and delivered from the reign of evil powers by means of circumcision which saves God's people from destruction and mortal danger and guarantees a share in the world to come. According to Paul's gospel, on the contrary, the universalistic death of Christ is the means of the forgiveness of the sins of Jews and Gentiles and delivers them from the present evil age without distinction. In a word, it is not the salvific efficacy of circumcision but the atoning efficacy of the death of Christ that assures deliverance from the evil powers.⁵¹ In light of this, Paul perceives the agitators' message of circumcision (i.e. ethnocentric covenantalism) as a shattering of the universalistic significance of Christ's death for the salvation of humanity. Since Christ's death brings about the forgiveness and deliverance, the agitators' ethnocentric covenantalism must be rejected.⁵² For Paul, the agitators' ethnocentric covenantalism and the gospel of the universalistic death of Christ cannot coexist in harmony. In short, the universalistic death of Christ for the forgiveness of the sins of humankind and deliverance of humanity from the present evil age is part of Paul's theological rationale for both the inclusion of Gentile into God's people and his opposition to the agitators' ethnocentric covenantalism.

7. 3. 2. Gal 2.21

The point that justification depends not on the law but on Christ's death is indicated in Gal 2.21, where Paul argues that justification comes not through the law

⁵¹ Cf. Hall, "Circumcision," 1.1030.

⁵² Wright (*Climax*, 242) rightly argues, "The cross brings to a halt any suggestion of Jewish national privilege."

but through Christ's death by saying, εἰ γὰρ διὰ νόμου δικαιοσύνη, ἄρα Χριστὸς δωρεὰν ἀπέθανεν. Paul contrasts righteousness through the law to righteousness through the death of Christ,⁵³ which he regards as the sufficient soteriological means of justification. The point is clearly expressed in Rom 5.9 and 5.18-19. Paul says, "now having been justified by his blood" (δικαιωθέντες νῦν ἐν τῷ αἵματι αὐτοῦ - Rom 5.9). Here Paul means that we (i.e. Paul, a Jew, and the Romans) have been justified by Christ's death on the cross. If Christ's act of righteousness and his obedience in Rom 5.18-19 refer to Christ's death on the cross (Phil 2.8),⁵⁴ Paul understands Christ's death as the means of righteousness (διὰ τῆς ὑπακοῆς τοῦ ἐνὸς δίκαιοι κατασταθήσονται οἱ πολλοί). For Paul the death of Christ is the means of God's manifestation of his grace, welcoming Gentiles as members of his people apart from the law. As Dunn rightly argues, "Christ's death had been effective precisely because it undermined the assumption that God was only for 'the righteous', only for those who lived by 'works of the law', and had done so by demonstrating that God's Messiah completed his work in the rejection of the cross, 'numbered among the lawless' (Isa 53.12)."⁵⁵ Thus, justification of Jews and Gentiles is the consequence not of the observance of the works of the law (e.g. circumcision) but of the redemptive death of Christ on the cross.⁵⁶ With a view to the point, Paul rebukes the Galatians because they forgot the significance of Christ's death for their justification. So he urges them to visualise the crucified Christ so that they can depend not on the law but on the crucified Christ for their justification (Gal 3.1).

In light of the observations above, we can understand why Paul rejects the agitators' ethnocentric covenantalism (i.e. justification through the law). In contrast to the agitators' argument that it is necessary for the Gentiles to observe the law in

⁵³ Martyn (*Galatians*, 260) writes, "Here Paul provides the antinomy that will prove to be fundamental to the entire letter: God's making things right by Christ's cross rather than by the Law." See also Longenecker, *Galatians*, 95; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 185-186; Winger, *By What Law?* 156.

⁵⁴ Cf. Dunn, *Romans*, 297; Hays, *Faith*, 166-167; Longenecker, "The Obedience of Christ in the Theology of Early Church," 142-152; Moo, *Romans*, 344.

⁵⁵ Dunn, *Galatians*, 149.

⁵⁶ Käsemann, "The Saving Significance of the Death of Jesus in Paul," 46; Kruse, *Paul*, 281; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 186.

order to be part of the covenant community (§6.3.1.), Paul claims that God has provided the death of Christ as a sufficient means of salvation; therefore the law (and the works of the law) are not prerequisites for the inclusion of the Gentiles into the covenant community. For Paul justification through the law means to deny the sufficiency and universality of the saving death of Christ, and it nullifies the grace of God and the death of Christ (2.21).⁵⁷ One cannot hold on to both ethnocentric covenantalism and the gospel of the cross of Christ; the two are antithetical. In short, the antithesis between justification through the law and justification through the death of Christ is an important theological principle for Paul's opposition to the agitators' ethnocentric covenantalism (i.e. justification through Torah-observance).

7. 3. 3. Gal 3.13-14

The point that Christ's death is the sufficient soteriological ground of salvation is reinforced in Gal 3.13-14. The issue Paul tackles in 3.13-14 is how the Gentiles can enjoy the blessings (redemption, the blessing of Abraham, the promised Spirit) given exclusively to Jews in view of the curse preventing them from sharing in the blessings. From a Jewish perspective, Gentiles are law-less (ἄνομοι – Rom 2.12; οἱ ἄνομοι – 1 Cor 9.21; cf. Wis 17.2; 1 Macc. 9.58; 3 Macc. 6.9, 12). Because they do not have the law, they do not belong to the covenant community, and therefore they do not obey the law.⁵⁸ Since God curses those who disobey the commandments of God (Deut 11.26-29; 27.9-26; 28.15-68), they are inevitably under God's curse (the curse of the law). The idea that uncircumcision leads one to God's curse of death is reflected in Ezek 28.10, 31.18, and 32.19-32. In light of this Jewish tradition the agitators probably thought that uncircumcised Gentiles are under the curse of the law. In line with the Jewish tradition that the lawkeeper would be blessed (Deut 11.26-28; 28.1-14; 30.15-20; Josh 1.8; Pss 1; Mal 3.10), the agitators could have argued that Gentiles should observe the regulations of the law in order to receive God's blessings (e.g. the blessing of Abraham). Moreover, the agitators

⁵⁷ Cf. Betz, *Galatians*, 126-127; Burton, *Galatians*, 141; Dunn, *TPLG*, 87, n. 38; Martyn, *Galatians*, 260; Matera, *Galatians*, 188; Sanders, *PPJ*, 482.

⁵⁸ Cf. J. D. G. Dunn, "Pharisees," in *JPL*, 73-74; Longenecker, *Eschatology and the Covenant*, 30-31.

might have argued that it is necessary for the Gentile Galatians to be circumcised to secure deliverance from the curse, for, according to the agitators, the circumcised state is advantaged before God and protects the circumcised from God's wrath and the law's curse. Thus it may be fairly claimed that the agitators argued that Torah observance (in particular circumcision) is necessary for the Gentiles in order to share in the Jewish prerogatives and to enjoy all the blessings of God.

On the basis of Christ's death, however, Paul opposes the agitators' argument as such. Paul says in 3.13-14 that Christ redeemed us (i.e. Gentile and Jewish believers) from the curse of the law ἵνα εἰς τὰ ἔθνη ἡ εὐλογία τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ γένηται ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ἵνα τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος λάβωμεν διὰ τῆς πίστεως (3.14). First, Paul thinks of Christ's death as the means of redemption for all human beings.⁵⁹ Redemption is a salvific effect of Christ's death (cf. 4.5).⁶⁰ Second, Paul believes that the blessing of Abraham comes to the Gentiles (τὰ ἔθνη) as a result of Christ's becoming a curse for them.⁶¹ Third, he says that Gentile and Jewish believers (λάβωμεν) receive the promised Spirit as a result of Christ's death. As we noted earlier (§5.2.2.), the reception of the Spirit is empirical evidence of the Galatians' status as equal and full members of the covenant community. In contrast to the agitators' argument that Gentiles could gain access to the blessings in and through the law (3.11-12), Paul argues that the Galatians could participate in the blessing of Abraham through Christ's death that is its ultimate source.⁶² For Paul the curse of the law could no longer prevent the Gentile believers from receiving the privileges given to only Israel previously because Christ's death on the cross removed the boundary of the law and its consequent curse and liberated the blessings for all to enjoy.⁶³ In short, the cross is the soteriological means by which Gentile

⁵⁹ The thought is also found in Eph 1.7 ("we have redemption through his blood") and Tit 2.14 (Jesus Christ "gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity").

⁶⁰ For redemption from the curse of the law, see §2.2.2.1.

⁶¹ For the blessing of Abraham as a consequence of Christ's death, see §2.2.2.2 and §3.2.2.2.

⁶² As Dunn (*TPA*, 208) rightly says, "In Galatians Gal. 3.13-14, Christ accursed on the cross plays this same role as the decisive resolution to the problem of how the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles for whom it was also intended." See also Matera, "Death," 289-291.

⁶³ C. M. Pate (*The Reverse of the Curse* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2000) convincingly demonstrates his thesis: "Paul views Christ having removed the Deuteronomic curses by embracing divine judgment on the cross and thereby dispensing the Deuteronomic blessings to all who believe in him" (p. 1).

believers receive privileges such as redemption, the blessing of Abraham, and the promised Spirit, which were given to Jews exclusively before. This is part of Paul's theological reason why he opposes the agitators' ethnocentric covenantalism that assumes the privileged state of circumcised over uncircumcised.

7. 3. 4. Gal 5.11 and 6.12-14

Once again the cross as the primary soteriological basis of salvation is reflected in Gal 5.11 and 6.12-14 where Paul sets circumcision in antithesis with the cross.⁶⁴ We shall treat them in turn. First, in 5.11 Paul contrasts circumcision with the cross (εἰ περιτομὴν ἔτι κηρύσσω, τί ἔτι διώκομαι; ἄρα κατήργηται τὸ σκάνδαλον τοῦ σταυροῦ - 5.11).⁶⁵ As we tackle the antithesis in 5.11, we do not attempt to discuss Paul's much debated reference to "preaching circumcision," because the issue is not directly relevant to the present study.⁶⁶ Nor do we try to elaborate why Paul was persecuted and who persecuted him.⁶⁷ We will, rather, focus on the force of the antithesis between circumcision and the cross.

It is widely acknowledged that by εἰ περιτομὴν ἔτι κηρύσσω Paul must be alluding to some claim made by the agitators. No matter what the allusion may be, it is clear that for Paul requiring circumcision of Gentile believers means denying the scandal of the cross (σκάνδαλον)⁶⁸; the cross has been rendered inoperative (κατήργηται)⁶⁹ by preaching circumcision. In line with the Jewish tradition, as already argued (§2.2.), the agitators attempted to draw the Galatians into the covenant community by preaching circumcision to and demanding proselytization of

⁶⁴ See Cousar, *A Theology of the Cross*, 137-148; Dunn, *TPLG*, 28-33.

⁶⁵ See Longenecker, *Galatians*, 233; J. Schneider, σταυρός, *TDNT* 7.576; Witherington, *Grace*, 374.

⁶⁶ For the debate see e.g. Baarda, "τί ἔτι διώκομαι in Gal 5:11," 250-256; Borgen, "Paul Preaches Circumcision and Pleases Men," 37-46; Donaldson, *Paul*, 275-284; Dunn, *Galatians*, 278-280; Lambrecht, "Is Gal 5:11b a Parenthesis?" 237-241; Saldanha, "The Concept of Freedom in Galatians," 249-259.

⁶⁷ For a reconstruction of the background, see Jewett, "Agitators," 198-212.

⁶⁸ For Jews crucified Messiah was scandalous. The scandal lies both in the fact that the one upon whom the law (Deut 21.23) pronounced a curse (Gal 3.13) is the source of salvation and in the fact that a crucified Messiah is not in accordance with the traditional Jewish expectation for a royal and triumphant Messiah with power (e.g. *Pss. Sol.* 17). For Jews a crucified Christ is folly (1Cor 1.23) because to them it was a sign of weakness and not of power.

⁶⁹ For the meaning of the verb κατήργηται, see §3.1.1.

the Galatians.⁷⁰ But for Paul to preach circumcision is to abolish the offence which Paul's gospel of the cross caused for ethnocentric covenantalism in the sense that the "circumcision vs. uncircumcision" belief-system nullifies the universalistic death of Christ which includes the Gentiles into the people of God without circumcision. To put it differently, the message about the cross, which is the power of God (1 Cor 1.18; cf. 1.24) to Paul but a stumbling block to Jews (1 Cor 1.23), has been rendered inoperative for salvation by upholding ethnocentric covenantalism represented by preaching circumcision.

Secondly, the antithesis between circumcision and the cross emerges also in the conclusion of Galatians (6.12-14).⁷¹ Paul says, οὐδὲ γὰρ οἱ περιτεμνόμενοι αὐτοὶ νόμον φυλάσσουσιν ἀλλὰ θέλουσιν ὑμᾶς περιτέμνεσθαι, ἵνα ἐν τῇ ὑμετέρᾳ σαρκὶ καυχῆσονται. ἐμοὶ δὲ μὴ γένοιτο καυχᾶσθαι εἰ μὴ ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. It is important to note that Paul sets "boasting in the flesh" in antithesis with "boasting in the cross of Jesus Christ." The agitators wanted the Galatians to be circumcised in order that they may boast about the flesh of the Galatians. Since here Paul was presumably thinking of the flesh as the circumcised flesh (cf. Gal 3.3; Gen 17. 11, 13, 14; *Jub.* 15.26, 34; Rom 2.28; Phil 3.3-5; Col 2.11, 13),⁷² it is fairly obvious that the agitators boasted in the Galatians' circumcised flesh because circumcision is a marker of pride in their choice as God's people, a sign of Israel's privileges, a mark of covenant membership, and the ground of salvation.⁷³

In contrast to the agitators' preaching and boasting in circumcision, Paul preaches Christ (crucified) (Gal 1.16; 1 Cor 1.23) and boasts in the cross of Jesus Christ (6.14). Why? It is fairly clear from his earlier exposition of the death of Christ. The basic point is that the cross is the sole ground of salvation. As noted

⁷⁰ Sanders, *PLJP*, 19.

⁷¹ Cf. Dunn, *TPLG*, 28-33.

⁷² Cf. Dunn, "Circumcision," 89; Martyn, *Galatians*, 561; Matera, "Death," 295. The term must be taken literally, not in a moral sense (cf. Witherington, *Grace*, 449). Cf. §2.1.3. n. 61. Thus it should not be understood as self achieved merit (*pace* Betz, *Galatians*, 318; Bruce, *Galatians*, 271; Fung, *Galatians*, 306) nor as "merely human attainments" (*pace* Longenecker, *Galatians*, 294). In a broad sense, however, "flesh" may refer to Jewish heritage or privilege. This can be found in Phil 3.4. When Paul speaks of his confidence in the flesh, he lays out his Jewish heritage and privilege as a Jew chosen by God. Cf. Dunn, *Galatians*, 339-340.

⁷³ So rightly Dunn, "Circumcision," 90-92.

earlier, for Paul the cross is the soteriological means by which Gentile believers receive salvific privileges such as the forgiveness of the sin (1.4), righteousness (2.21), redemption (from the present evil age - 1.4 and the curse of the law - 3.13), the blessing of Abraham (3.14), and the promised Spirit (3.14), which Jews assumed to be theirs exclusively.⁷⁴ For Paul the gospel of the cross is such a powerful counterbalance to ethnocentric covenantalism represented by the agitators' message of circumcision since the inclusion of the Gentiles into the covenant community depends not on circumcision but on the cross; the cross marks the end of a clear dividing line between covenant Jew and outlaw Gentile.⁷⁵ Christ's death as the saving power of God for Jews and Gentiles is a central content of Paul's gospel (1 Cor 1.17-18, 24).⁷⁶ In short, Paul emphasises the sufficiency of the cross for the salvation of humanity both to argue against the agitators' message of circumcision and to persuade the Galatians not to depend on the agitators' ethnocentric covenantalism represented by their message of circumcision.

7. 3. 5. Conclusion

In light of the preceding study, we may justly conclude that Paul's main argument in the antithesis is to redefine the soteriological basis of justification. For Paul not the privileged Jewish identity as "circumcision" but Christ's death on the cross is the soteriological basis of salvation (forgiveness of sins, deliverance from the present evil age, justification, redemption, the blessing of Abraham, and receiving the Spirit). Not circumcision but Christ's death has power for forgiveness of sins, deliverance from the present evil age, justification, and redemption. The cross in Galatians plays an important role as a polemic directed against the ethnocentric covenantalism of the agitators.⁷⁷ Paul believes that the gospel of the

⁷⁴ See M. D. Hooker, *Not Ashamed of the Gospel* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1994), 29-34; Matera, "Death," 283-296.

⁷⁵ See J. T. Carroll and J. B. Green, *The Death of Jesus in Early Christianity* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1995), 118; Dunn, *Galatians*, 281.

⁷⁶ For the cross as a symbol of power, see Schütz, *Paul*, 187-203.

⁷⁷ E. Käsemann rightly notes that the cross in Paul's gospel is polemical countering misunderstandings of the truth of the gospel ("The Saving Significance of the Death of Jesus in Paul," in *Perspectives on Paul*, 38). According to him, however, the real object of Paul's polemic through the cross is the legalistic piety of Jewish-Christian circles and the enthusiasm of the Hellenistic church.

cross nullifies the agitators' ethnocentric covenantalism and thus marks the end of a clear dividing line between covenant Jew and outlaw Gentile.⁷⁸ For Paul, in the sphere of Christ the Jewish perspective "circumcision/uncircumcision" which kept Jew and Gentile apart so far has been brought to an end by the power of Christ's faithfulness (i.e. the power of the message of the cross). In short, Paul formulates the antithesis both to argue against the agitators' ethnocentric covenantalism and to achieve his goal of persuading the Galatians to accept not the ethnocentric covenantalism of the agitators but the gospel of the cross. Those who continue to rely on circumcision render Christ's saving death ineffective and nullified. The antithesis entails two practical implications: 1) the equation of the status of Gentile and Jew before God; 2) the same ground on which justification of Jews and Gentiles is dependent: all need Christ's faithfulness.

7. 4. Significance of the Antithesis

First, what is the significance of the antithesis between "circumcision vs. uncircumcision" and Christ's faithfulness for Paul's opposition to Second Temple Judaism? It is important to see that the imagery of redemptive battle between ethnocentric covenantalism and Paul's gospel of the cross is reflected in the antithesis. The power to wage war against the power of "circumcision vs. uncircumcision" (τὸ ἰσχύει) which determines and dominates the Jewish mind-set and community is "Christ's faithfulness working through his love" (5.6).⁷⁹ Christ's faithfulness came to the world and was revealed by God to redeem those under the power of the law (3.23). It destroys the regime of the law and gives believers freedom from the dominion of the law (3.23-25). Christ's faithfulness battles against the power of "circumcision vs. uncircumcision" and wins over it (5.6). Furthermore,

⁷⁸ Dunn (*TPLG*, 30) likewise argues, "the cross was of such epochal significance that it relativized everything else, the distinction between circumcision and uncircumcision not least." For the social significance of the Death of Jesus Christ in Galatians, see K. Grayston, *Dying, We Live* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 68-86.

⁷⁹ As we noted in §6.1.1. and §6.1.2., the powerful nature of "Christ's faithfulness" is confirmed by both the exposition of Gal 3.23-25 and the analysis of the two verbs ἰσχύω and ἐνεργέω, of which πίστις is the subject.

the contrast between ἐν νόμῳ (5.4) and ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (5.6)⁸⁰ also suggests that in contrast to the fact that in the sphere of the law “circumcision vs. uncircumcision” was effective, in the sphere of Christ it is not, because the eschatological “sphere-transfer” relativized the Jewish value-system distinguishing Jew from Gentile. On the basis of the observations above, we may say that Paul rejects Jewish ethnocentric covenantalism because it has been nullified by the advent and revelation of Christ’s faithfulness in the sphere of Christ and thus is inoperative for justification.

Moreover, the obliteration of Jewish ethnocentric covenantalism is clearly expressed again in Gal 6.15 in which “circumcision/uncircumcision” is contrasted to καινὴ κτίσις (new creation or a new cosmic order).⁸¹ As Martyn rightly observes,⁸² here Paul contrasts between the ethnocentric Jewish value-system epitomised in

⁸⁰ Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 352.

⁸¹ With regard to the meaning of καινὴ κτίσις, there is no consensus amongst scholars. It has been suggested that καινὴ κτίσις refers to the individual believer, the believing community, or a newly-created cosmic order. Many interpreters have seen that the theme of the καινὴ κτίσις has its roots in the OT and in Judaism (*Jub.* 4.26; *1 Enoch* 72.1; 4 *Ezra* 7.75; 2 *Apoc. Bar.* 32.6; *1QS* 4.25; *1QH* 11.10-14; 13.11-12). It is likely that the concept of καινὴ κτίσις is derived from the OT (*Isa* 43.18-19; 65.17-25; 66.22). In these passages, the author alludes to the “new world” which is the creation of God. There were various developments within post-biblical Judaism. It is likely that the concept of καινὴ κτίσις in Pauline literature is derived from the OT references to God’s creation of the world and of human beings. U. Mell convincingly argues that καινὴ κτίσις was a technical term in Jewish apocalypticism, referring to the new or transformed creation expected to follow the destruction or renewal of the world (*Neue Schöpfung* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1989)). Thus καινὴ κτίσις probably means “new creation” or a new cosmic order. This interpretation can be substantiated by Paul’s use of καινὴ κτίσις in 2 *Cor* 5.17. Some interpreters have suggested that καινὴ κτίσις is not concerned with the individual believer, therefore, Paul is talking of a “new act of creation,” not the personal dimension of a new birth. Cf. R. P. Martin, *2 Corinthians* (Waco, Texas: Word, 1986), 152; idem, *Reconciliation* (Atlanta: JKP, 1981), 104; V. P. Furnish, *II Corinthians* (AB; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1984), 332; M. J. Harris, “2 Corinthians,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 10 (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 1976), 353. Some interpreters interpreted that the phrase means “newly-created being.” M. E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994), 1.426; Fitzmyer, *Paul*, 70. The chief argument in favour of the former view is the meaning of the phrases τὰ ἀρχαῖα and τὰ καινά. Although Paul does not define the phrases, presumably the phrases could be interpreted that “the old creation has gone, and now the new one is here” (JB). Moreover, it is plausible that Paul had in mind the passages in Isaiah which speak of a new heaven and earth (*Isa* 43.18-19; 65.17; 66.22). In light of the considerations above, it is likely that καινὴ κτίσις refers to God’s “new creation.” Although Paul does not define “new creation” in Galatians, it can be understood as God’s new act of creation in and through Christ and the Spirit. It could also mean “newly created order” brought by God’s sending of Christ and the Spirit. Martyn (*Galatians*, 565, n. 64) writes, “Paul uses the expression to announce and to identify what God has done in Christ, inaugurating the end time struggle (Gal 6.15; 2 *Cor* 5.17). See also scholars he quoted; E. Adams, *Constructing the World* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2000), 226-228; Dunn, *Galatians*, 343.

⁸² Martyn, “Apocalyptic Antinomies,” 111-123; idem, “Events in Galatia,” 161.

“circumcision vs. uncircumcision” and God’s new creation by saying οὔτε γὰρ περιτομή τί ἐστίν οὔτε ἀκροβυστία ἀλλὰ καινὴ κτίσις. God’s new creation came to its existence through God’s sending of Christ and the Spirit and his sending and revealing of Christ’s faithfulness. As Martyn convincingly argues, God destroys the world-view of the old-world whose structure lies in the particular “pairs of opposites” such as, circumcision/uncircumcision, Jew and Gentile, male and female, and Law/Un-Law.⁸³ The antithesis between “circumcision/uncircumcision” and new creation means that the Jewish ethnocentric value-system has lost its meaning and function because the belief-system maintaining that the circumcised are the chosen people of God and the uncircumcised are not belongs to the old creation.⁸⁴ Since the value-system is part of the old creation, it is no longer relevant and significant to those who live in the newly-created world (i.e. the Christian).⁸⁵ Paul appears to be employing apocalyptic motif to describe a new pattern of belief-system created by God’s new creation, a new belief-system which overthrows the ethnocentric covenantalism. There is, in Paul’s view, no basis in Paul’s gospel for taking over this ethnocentric covenantalism, because the truth of the gospel does not share the same belief-system. In short, God’s new creation through Christ and the Spirit is one of Paul’s theological rationales for his rejection of ethnocentric covenantalism.

The statement that the belief-system of “circumcision/uncircumcision” is impotent and inoperative would be a bold challenge to Paul’s fellow Jews and the agitators not only because circumcision is both a physical symbol of the covenant community and a sign of election but also because “circumcision/uncircumcision” is one of the most important soteriological principles of covenantal nomism. This surprising theological declaration of Paul is based on his apocalyptic world-view that God’s apocalyptic invasion into the world through both sending Christ and the Spirit (4.4-6) and revealing (3.23) and sending Christ’s faithfulness (3.23, 25) made the ethnocentric covenantalism (of the agitators) inoperative and meaningless. From what we have said so far, we can conclude that Paul rejects Jewish ethnocentric

⁸³ Martyn, *Galatians*, 570-574.

⁸⁴ Cf. Betz, *Galatians*, 320; Martyn, *Galatians*, 570-571; Longenecker, *Triumph*, 43-44.

⁸⁵ Cf. Adams, *Constructing the World*, 228.

covenantalism (i.e. Jewish pride in ethnicity and boast in the circumcised flesh as a sign of election) because in the sphere of Christ it has been nullified by the advent and revelation of Christ's faithfulness and God's new creation through Christ and the Spirit.

Second, the antithesis is one of Paul's theological rationales for denying any distinction between Jewish and Gentile believers.⁸⁶ The antithesis signifies a redefinition of the social relationship in which the "old world" social division between "circumcision" and "uncircumcision" is abolished (Gal 6.15; 1 Cor 7.19; Col 3.11; cf. Rom 3.22, 30; 4.9) and a new social relationship is created. With the antithesis Paul answers one of the issues at stake both in Antioch and in Galatia, i.e. the relationship between Jewish and Gentile believers. As a result of the triumph of Christ's faithfulness over the power of the distinction between circumcision and uncircumcision, the old epoch's distinction between Jew (Jewish believers) and Gentile (Gentile believers) based on Jewish exclusivism has been rendered inoperative. In other words, Christ's death is the antidote to the distinction between Jewish and Gentile Christians. In the sphere of the old age (the law's sphere) the distinction was effective, but in the sphere of Christ there is no such distinction. Thus, the defective status of Gentiles as outside the orbit of God's elect is now redefined as inside that sphere. In short, the antithesis is Paul's theological basis for the annulment of the social distinction between the two groups of Christians.

Third, the antithesis is significant for Paul's view on the issue whether Gentile Christians must accept the customs, practices, and culture of Second Temple Judaism. The agitators argued that the Galatians could become descendants of Abraham by observing those works of the law that traditionally identify Jews as Jews: circumcision; food regulations, Sabbath and festival observances (4.10). The antithesis between "circumcision/uncircumcision" and "Christ's faithfulness" implies that the Christian's belief and praxis are not to be determined by the value-system of ethnocentric covenantalism which requires those works of the law, but by

⁸⁶ No distinction between "the circumcision" and "the uncircumcision" in the Church is clearly expressed in 1 Cor 7.19 (ἡ περιτομή οὐδέν ἐστιν καὶ ἡ ἀκροβυστία οὐδέν ἐστιν). See further Braxton, *Tyranny*, 161-173.

the gospel of the cross. However, Donaldson argues that the uselessness or powerlessness of the distinction between circumcision and uncircumcision does not necessarily mean that Paul abandons ethnocentric covenantalism entirely in light of Rom 3.1 and 11.1, 29. He argues, “one should not be in haste to read the statements of ‘no distinction’ in a global and categorical way; the distinction being denied may well pertain to a much more limited domain.”⁸⁷ According to Donaldson, in 5.6 “no distinction” between Jew and Gentiles has to do with Paul’s theological conviction that ethnocentric covenantalism is not operative for justification. But he has missed the significance of “circumcision/uncircumcision” already outlined above, the importance of “circumcision/uncircumcision” as a shorthand for the Jewish ethnocentric world-view characterising the belief and praxis of Israel. Moreover he does not pay sufficient attention to the fact that the act of circumcision requires complete devotion to the observance of the law and the Jewish way of life (Esther 8.17 LXX; Sir 44.20; Jdth 14.10; Josephus *Vit.* 113, 149; idem, *Ant.* 13.257; 20.39-46, 145-146). As Thielman rightly criticises,

“It is not clear to me, for example, why passages that appear to preserve ethnic distinctions within the people of God should control our understanding of passages where the dissolution of those distinctions seems to be a basic conviction. After all, Paul can speak of the dissolution of distinctions not only when discussing entrance requirements but when speaking of living as a member of God’s people as well (1 Cor 9.19-21; Gal 2.11-14; Rom 14.3b-4, 10).”⁸⁸

It is likely, therefore, that the negation of the Jewish world-view “circumcision vs. uncircumcision” is one of the theological rationales why Paul urged the Galatians not to adopt the customs and practices of Judaism.

⁸⁷ Donaldson, *Paul*, 93.

⁸⁸ F. Thielman, “Review of *Paul and the Gentiles* (T. L. Donaldson),” *JBL* 118 (1999), 368.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION: SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PAULINE INTERPRETATION

The preceding chapters (chs. 1-7) have carried through an analysis of a single block of Paul's theological prose (Gal 5.2-6) where the six antitheses appear. In general, it may be fairly claimed that in spite of the significance of the antitheses in 5.2-6 for the interpretation of Galatians, the antitheses have not been given sufficient attention in previous studies of Galatians. The present study has attempted to provide a satisfactory explanation regarding the force and function of the antitheses in relation to the crisis and the issues at stake in Galatia and their significance for Paul's view of circumcision, the law, and first century Palestinian Judaism. Since summaries or conclusions are provided at the end of each chapter, it is more useful to summarise briefly the force, function, and significance of the antitheses as a whole on the basis of the observations in each chapter. And also it is appropriate to suggest the implications of the present study for the interpretation of Galatians and Pauline interpretation.

8. 1. Summary of the Antitheses

1. The antitheses in 5.2-6 are shorthand for deeper and larger conflicts between two gospels: "the other gospel" of the agitators based on covenantal nomism is contrasted with Paul's gospel ("the truth of the Gospel") based on God's saving act in and through Christ and the Spirit.
2. The antitheses are Paul's polemical response to the agitators' gospel. Paul negates the essential contents of the agitators' gospel (i.e. justification in the sphere of the law and by Torah-observance, especially circumcision); since

salvation is in the sphere of Christ and by God's grace, the Spirit, and Christ's faithfulness, it is not in the sphere of the law or by the law and circumcision. The agitators hold together circumcision and Christ, the law and Christ, the law and God's grace, the law and the Spirit, and the law and Christ's faithfulness. But Paul separates what they wish hold together and denies circumcision and the law as the soteriological basis of salvation. For Paul there is no compromise in each antithesis.

3. The antitheses play a role as the solution of the crisis in Galatia (i.e. the apostasy of the Galatians and "the other gospel" of the agitators – 1.6-9) in the sense that the antitheses were designed to persuade the Galatians not to defect from the truth of the gospel both by warning them of the fatal consequences of following the other gospel (i.e. forfeiture of Christ's benefits, slavery under the law, separation from Christ and God's grace) and by reminding them of the salvific significance of God's grace, Christ (Christ's benefits, Christ as the sphere of justification, Christ's faithfulness), and the Spirit. In addition, the antitheses negate the central message of "the other gospel": justification in the law and through Torah-observance, especially circumcision.
4. The antitheses provide the answer to the pivotal issue at stake in Galatia: what are the legitimate conditions on which Gentiles enter the people of God? According to Paul's gospel, neither circumcision nor the law, but Christ (Christ's salvific benefits, Christ as the sphere of justification, and Christ's faithfulness), God's grace, and the Spirit are the valid and sufficient soteriological bases of justification.
5. The antitheses are the succinct summaries of Paul's view of the law and circumcision in Galatians; the antitheses encapsulate his view of the ineffectiveness of the law for justification and his reason for the rejection of circumcision (e.g. no justification in and through the law, the uselessness and inefficacy of circumcision).
6. The antitheses represent Paul's theological horizon and conviction in Galatians; the antitheses portray the fact that God's saving act in and through Christ and the Spirit has brought about "the eschatological transition" by

which the old belief-system (represented by circumcision and the law) has been superseded by the new (represented by God's grace, Christ, the Spirit, and Christ's faithfulness). The antitheses are central to Paul's theology; they represent the paradigm shift from soteriology based on the law and circumcision to soteriology based on God's grace, Christ, and the Spirit.

7. The antitheses contain Paul's theological conviction for his mission to the Gentiles (i.e. denial of circumcision, no justification in and through the law, God's grace antithetical to ethnocentric Jewish proselytism, the fulfilment of the promise to Abraham, the coming of the Spirit into the heart of the Gentiles, and the obliteration of the distinction between Jew and Gentile by Christ's faithfulness).
8. The antitheses reflect Paul's theological reason for rejecting law-observant Judaism (the denial of circumcision as the sign of the covenant, the transition of the sphere of justification from the law to Christ, the change of the means of becoming the eschatological people of God from the law to God's grace and Christ's faithfulness, the change of the identity marker from the law to the Spirit, and the denial of a "circumcision vs. uncircumcision" value-system).
9. The antitheses serve as Paul's answer to one of the thorny and inescapable questions in the beginnings of Christianity: Who are the people of God? To the question Paul answers that those who receive the salvific benefits of Christ, the Spirit, God's grace through Christ and the Spirit and those in Christ are the people of God, not those who accept circumcision and observe the law or those in the law. Neither circumcision nor the law but Christ and the Spirit define the people of God. Gentile believers are "children of God" (3.26; 4.6,7), "offspring of Abraham" (3.29), "heirs" (3.29), "children of the promise" (4.28), "children of freedom" (4.31). The antitheses seem to imply the exclusion of ethnic Israel from the eschatological people of God.
10. The antitheses function as a hermeneutical key for the interpretation of Galatians; the antitheses summarise Paul's previous argument, foreshadow his following argument, represent Paul's theological perspective and conviction, and answer the issues at stake in Galatians.

8. 2. Implications for the Interpretation of Galatians

In this section, on the basis of the investigation of Gal 5.2-6, we shall attempt to suggest the implications of the present study for the interpretation of Galatians. Some fairly definite implications for the truth of the gospel in Galatians, Paul's theological view on salvation history in Galatians, Paul's critique of the law in Galatians, the rhetorical function of Gal 5.2-12 within Galatians, and the theme of 5.2-6, may be drawn in light of the present study. While it is not possible to explore these issues in this study, this section will seek to suggest the potential significance of this study for these issues and to indicate some of the directions in which further inquiry might proceed.

8. 2. 1. "The Truth of the Gospel" in Galatians

It is clear that the agitators preached the Galatians a different gospel (1.6-7) and wanted to pervert "the gospel of Christ" (1.7). Having been persuaded by the agitators' gospel, the Galatians were following another gospel (1.6). The crucial issue at stake in Galatia was the Galatians' apostasy from the truth of the gospel as a consequence of the agitators' perversion of the truth of the gospel (1.6-9). Thus Paul wrote Galatians in order to solve the problems of both the Galatians' apostasy and the agitators' distortion of the truth of the gospel by proclaiming ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ εὐαγγελίου¹ to the Galatians. With "the truth of the gospel," Paul makes a polemical attack on the agitators and their gospel.² What then is "the truth of the gospel" in Galatians? It is very difficult to answer the question because Paul did not explicitly tell us what it is. Is there any clue in Galatians as to what it is? Gal 2.5 and 2.14 do not seem to state explicitly its content. Gal 5.7, however, might present the reference of the truth of the gospel because it appears that "the truth" in 5.7 might refer to what

¹ What is the meaning of the phrase ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ εὐαγγελίου? It depends on how one interprets the genitive τοῦ εὐαγγελίου. Grammatically the genitive could be taken as subjective ("the truth that the gospel pronounces"), possessive ("the truth belonging to the gospel"), or epexegetic ("the truth which is the gospel"). It is natural to construe the genitive as possessive and thus the truth of the gospel refers to "the true message contained in the gospel." Cf. Burton, *Galatians*, 86.

² See F. W. Hughes, "The Gospel and Its Rhetoric in Galatians," in *Gospel in Paul*, 210-221.

Paul has said in 5.2-6 in which he attempted to solve the issue of “the other gospel” through the truth of the gospel. For the reference of “the truth” (5.7) is “the truth of the gospel” (2.5, 14).³ In other words, Paul’s statement in 5.2-6 could be Paul’s “truth-claim” in the letter, which Paul told to the Galatians (4.16) and by which he attempts to persuade the Galatians to obey the truth of the gospel and argues against the persuasion of the other gospel (5.8).⁴

As we observed in this study, in 5.2-6 Paul succinctly summarises the most important conclusions of his entire argument in Galatians. So the truth of the gospel seems to be represented and summarised in the six antitheses in 5.2-6 because the antitheses encapsulate the substance of Paul’s theological convictions and arguments and crystallise Paul’s view of circumcision, Christ, the law, the Spirit, grace, Christ’s faithfulness, and justification. Paul formulates the antitheses to express the true message contained in the gospel on which, and for which, he had fought to safeguard the truth of the gospel in Galatia (and Jerusalem and Antioch). The Pauline idea of the benefit of Christ (5.2) encapsulates many of the salvific effects of the saving work of Christ that Paul elaborated in Galatians (§2.2.2.). In the passage, moreover, there is significant vocabulary that encapsulates various central and pivotal terms appearing in the rest of the letter (§1.2.). And also 5.2-6 summarises important themes in the previous section (e.g. God’s grace, the Spirit, justification, Christ’s faithfulness). It is the phrase ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (5.6 - “in the sphere of Christ”) that encapsulates Paul’s foregoing exposition and represents his theological perspective by summarising God’s saving activities, which have happened in Christ, as well as the salvific effects of the Christ-event available in Christ (§3.2.1.). It also represents Paul’s conviction of the eschatological “sphere-transfer” of God’s saving grace from

³ (ἡ) ἀλήθεια is an abbreviation of ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ εὐαγγελίου (2.5, 14). Paul usually abbreviates the long phrases στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου (Gal 4.3) to στοιχεῖα (Gal 4.9) and πίστις Χριστοῦ (2.16; 3.22) to πίστις (3.23-25, 5.5). For further see ch. 6, n. 2.

⁴ While J. Lambrecht (“Paul’s Argumentation in Galatians and Its Relevance for Today,” in *The Truth of the Gospel*, 239-241) rightly pays special attention to “the truth of the gospel,” he wastes no ink on its content, without noticing the significance of Gal 5.2-6 for the topic. Although J. L. Martyn (“The Apocalyptic Gospel in Galatians,” *Int* 54 (2000), 246-266) correctly states, “the gospel is not about human movement into blessedness, but about God’s liberating invasion of the cosmos” (p. 246), he fails to note the significance of 5.2-6 for understanding the truth of the gospel in Galatians.

the law to Christ (§3.3.). The antitheses contain Paul's theological conviction for his law-free gospel and τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς ἀκροβυστίας (2.7). Finally, the antitheses in 5.2-6 provide a solution to the issues at stake (e.g. circumcision, justification) and the crisis (i.e. the apostasy of the Galatians and "the other gospel" of the agitators – 1.6-9) in Galatia. In light of the observations above, it is fair to say that Gal 5.2-6 contains the truth of Paul's gospel in Galatians.

What then is the truth-claim of Paul's gospel encapsulated in 5.2-6? On the basis of the study of the preceding chapters, we may summarise the essential contents of Paul's gospel as follows. 1) God accepts the Gentiles as the people of God not through circumcision but through the salvific benefits of Christ that God has provided in and through Christ (ch. 2). 2) God justifies Jews and Gentiles not within the sphere of the law but within the sphere of Christ (ch. 3). Participation in Christ as the soteriological basis of justification is a central content of Paul's gospel.⁵ In the sphere of Christ, God creates the community of God's people within which there is intimacy and commensality between Jewish and Gentile believers, not distinction between the two groups.⁶ 3) God saves Jews and Gentiles by God's grace, and thus the Gentiles have become God's people through neither circumcision nor Torah-observance but through God's saving activities (i.e. grace), such as God's calling, God's promise, God's sending of Christ and the Spirit, and God's knowing (ch. 4).⁷ 4) The antithesis between the law and the Spirit suggests that God's justification of

⁵ Sanders suggests that "participation in Christ" is the centre of Paul's theology (*PPJ*, 456, 466-467, 498-499, 502-508, 514). For the relationship between "participation in Christ" and "justification," see Hays, *Faith*, 250-254.

⁶ While Hays does not discuss the antithesis between the law and Christ (5.3 - ch. 3), he understands the community "in Christ" as an integral aspect of the gospel ("Crucified with Christ," 233). For the social implication of the truth of the gospel (2.14), see R. Jewett, "Gospel and Commensality," in *Gospel in Paul*, 240-252.

⁷ Dunn (*TPLG*, 26) argues, "What Paul meant by 'the truth of the gospel' is hinted at in his reference to it as 'the gospel of Christ' and as focusing on God's call 'in grace' (1.6-7). This characterization of the gospel in terms of grace is a central element in Paul's theology in Galatians (1.15; 2.9, 21; 5.4)." He also argues, "integral to the truth of the gospel for Paul was that it was a gospel of grace for the Gentiles" (p. 27). Cummins (*Crucified*, 232) suggests, "for Paul the truth of the gospel centred upon the outworking of God's grace in the death and resurrection of Christ." Both Dunn and Cummins rightly take God's saving grace as a pivotal component of the truth of the gospel. The point that for Paul justification is wholly of God's grace is clearly expressed in Rom 3.24 (δικαιούμενοι δωρεάν τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι). In Ephesians, furthermore, "grace" is understood as the basis of salvation (Eph 2.5, 8; cf. Acts 15.11).

the Gentiles by the Spirit, not by the law (and the works of the law), is a central component of Paul's gospel (ch. 5). 5) God justifies humanity not by the law but by Christ's faithfulness, i.e. the death of Christ on the cross (chs. 6 and 7), which is the heart of Paul's gospel (cf. 1 Cor 1.17-24).⁸

In light of the observations above, we can conclude that the truth of Paul's gospel in Galatians is an announcement about God's (past, present, and future) salvation (especially justification) of humanity (Jews and the Gentiles) not in and through the law, but in and through Christ (and Christ's faithfulness) and the Spirit.⁹

⁸ If this is true, then the traditional understanding (especially in German [Lutheran] scholarship – e.g. H. D. Wendland, W. G. Kümmel, E. Käsemann, H. Conzelmann, G. Bornkamm) of the truth or centre of the gospel as justification by the Christian's faith in Christ should be disputed. For the centrality of "justification by faith" in Luther's works, see Westerholm, *Israel's Law*, 4-6. Pace Mußner (*Galaterbrief*, 71-76) who argues that "Die iustification impii sola fide et gratia" as "die 'Mitte des Evangeliums' nach dem Galaterbrief" and Moo (*Romans*, 90); Seifrid, *Justification by Faith*, 270; who understands justification by faith as the heart of the gospel. According to Hays (*Faith*, 249), however, justification by the faithfulness of Jesus Christ is "the whole meaning of the gospel story."

⁹ Martyn (*Galatians*, 406) argues, "the sentence comprising Gal 4:3-5 is the theological center of the entire gospel, relating its major motifs to one another in such a way that we may call the good news of Paul's letter to the Galatians. The center of this center is the news that God sent his Son." Martyn (*Galatians*, 198) also notes that the truth of the gospel is "the end-time event of God's redemption in Christ." N. T. Wright ("Gospel and Theology in Galatians," in *Gospel in Paul*, 232) proposes that the gospel, for Paul writing Galatians, is the fourfold announcement: 1) "that the Lord of Israel is the one true God, and that the pagan deities are mere idols"; 2) "that Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified and risen one, is not merely 'Lord' in some cosmic sense, but is actually King – King of Israel, and hence (on the Davidic model of passages such as Psalm 89) the King before whom all the kings of the earth shall bow; 3) "that Israel's destiny has been fulfilled, her exile finished, her salvation won, but in a manner which undermine the Jewish ethnic and nationalistic hope that Paul had formerly espoused; 4) "that the rule of the pagan idols, which have kept the pagan nations in their iron grip, has been broken, and that those who follow and serve them are now summoned to share in the blessings of Israel's 'age to come'." Matera ("Galatians in Perspective," 245) suggests, "The truth of the gospel is the proclamation of the saving event that God has effected in Christ, apart from the works of the law." While Martyn, Wright, and Matera rightly point out that the gospel in Galatians centres upon God's salvation in and through Christ, as far as these statements are concerned, they do not pay sufficient attention to the equally important content of Paul's gospel, that is, God's salvation through the Spirit. Esler (*Galatians*, 119) suggests, "For Paul, in fact, the 'truth of the gospel' means the freedom with which his Israelite and gentile converts can be members of the same congregation without having their 'freedom' replaced with the demands of the Mosaic law." But freedom is one of the salvific effects of the Christ-event (2.4; 5.1). Sanders (*PLJP*, 5) identifies the basic conviction underlying Paul's argumentation as "God had sent Jesus Christ to provide for the salvation of all; that salvation is thus available for all, whether Jew or Greek, on the same basis ("faith in Christ," "dying with Christ"); that the Lord would soon return; that he, Paul, was called by God to be the apostle to the Gentiles; and that Christians should live in accordance with the will of God." I would like to add one thing to Sanders' statement: God had sent *the Spirit* as well as Jesus Christ to provide for the salvation of all (Gal 4.3-7). Interestingly, V. P. Furnish states, "If my earlier

This is the truth of the gospel which Paul attempted to defend against “false brothers” in Jerusalem (2.4-5), “certain people from James” and Peter in Antioch (2.11-14), and the agitators in Galatia (5.7; cf. 4.16). The truth of the gospel allows for no supplementation or augmentation by the law or any other different gospel (i.e. “the singularity of the Gospel”).¹⁰ God’s justification of the Gentiles in and through Christ and by the Spirit, apart from Torah-observance is Paul’s “Torah-free” gospel. God’s salvation of the Gentiles without circumcision is τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς ἀκροβυστίας (Gal 2.7), which Paul proclaimed among the Gentiles (2.2). The truth of the gospel (2.5, 14) upon which Paul rebukes Peter, who compels the Gentiles to live like Jews, is that God includes Christ-believing Gentiles to the eschatological people of God through Christ and the Spirit, without Torah-observance (e.g. circumcision, food laws), and thus Jewish Christians and Gentile could have the fellowship of commensality.¹¹ This is the truth of the gospel that must be remained with the Galatians (2.5) and they must obey (5.7), and thus should not attempt to depend on the law and circumcision for justification.

The above suggestion is consistent with Gal 2.15-21, which is Paul’s restatement of the truth of the gospel (2.14) he argued for at Antioch, and thus, it contains the core of the truth of the gospel.¹² The thesis of 2.16-21 is God’s justification of Jews and Gentiles by the faithfulness of Christ, not through the works of the law.¹³ The gospel that scripture preached in advance to Abraham is the message about God’s blessing of all the nations (i.e. God’s justification of all nations ἐκ πίστεως) through the seed of Abraham, i.e. Christ (described in Abraham - 3.8),

suggestion is correct, that for Paul the gospel is ‘the actual, eventful working of God’s own saving power,’ then at its core ‘the truth of the gospel’ concerns God’s will and power to save; or, expressed differently, it concerns the enduring reality of God’s justice and faithfulness” (“Where is ‘the Truth’ in Paul’s Gospel?” in *Pauline Theology* vol. 4, 173).

¹⁰ Gaventa, “Singularity,” 147-159.

¹¹ Holmberg, (“Jewish,” 414) similarly writes, “the phrase ‘the truth of the gospel’ (ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ εὐαγγελίου) in 2:14 refers to the Jerusalem agreement, in which it had been decided that Christ-believing baptized Gentiles belong to the church of God without having to be circumcized and to put on the yoke of the Law.”

¹² So Barclay, *Obeying*, 77; Kok, “Truth”; Matera, “Galatians in Perspective,” 235.

¹³ So Longenecker, Martyn, Matera, Williams, Witherington; in particular, see Kok, “Truth.”

not within the sphere of the law or through the works of the law.¹⁴ Furthermore, this suggestion fits well with Paul's understanding of the central content of the gospel as δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ ("God's saving activity" or "God's covenantal faithfulness")¹⁵ in

¹⁴ Gaston (*Paul and the Torah*, 13) understands the centre of Paul's gospel to be that God, who is faithful, is fulfilling God's promise to Abraham to bless the Gentiles.

¹⁵ The focus of much discussion concerning δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is the nature of the genitive θεοῦ. There are four main options: 1) objective genitive - "the righteousness which is valid before God"; 2) subjective genitive - "righteousness as an attribute or quality of God"; 3) genitive of authorship - "righteousness which goes forth from God"; 4) genitive of origin - "human's righteousness which is the result of God's action of justifying." Generally, the Reformers and their theological heirs have interpreted the righteousness of God as an objective genitive. Bultmann (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, 12-16) attempted to combine both the objective and subjective aspects of the righteousness of God, suggesting a "genitive of authorship" to describe God's righteousness which is given to believers as the basis of one's relationship with God. E. Käsemann argues that the righteousness of God is a technical phrase in Jewish apocalyptic (Dn 6.10; 1 QS 11.12), where it denotes God's saving power and activity as it is exercised in commitment to the covenant. He claimed that δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (a subjective genitive) speaks of a divine activity: it is for Paul "God's sovereignty over the world revealing itself eschatologically" ("The Righteousness of God in Paul," 180). C. Müller (*Gottesgerechtigkeit und Gottesvolk* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964), Stuhlmacher (*Gerechtigkeit Gottes bei Paulus*), and Kertelege ("*Rechtfertigung bei Paulus*") follow a similar line of thought to that of Käsemann. Nevertheless, the correctness of Käsemann's interpretation is challenged by Cranfield (*Romans*, 1.97, 99), Stendahl (*Paul*, 78-96), and S. K. Williams ("The 'Righteousness of God' in Romans," *JBL* 99 (1980), 241-290). While scholars have debated the meaning of the phrase, there is no consensus among scholars. It seems a dominant view that δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is to be interpreted as subjective genitive and not as objective genitive or as genitive of origin. Thus δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ has been understood as "the righteousness of God" is God's salvation-creating-activity: Michel ("the eschatological salvatory action of God" - *Der Brief an die Römer*, 54, 171); Käsemann ("God's sovereignty over the world revealing itself eschatologically in Jesus" - "The Righteousness of God in Paul," 180; "God's own faithfulness and power in preserving his creation" - *Romans*, 24); Stuhlmacher ("the salvific activity of God the creator and judge" - *Romans*, 31f); Kertelege ("Heilshandeln Gottes" - *Rechtfertigung bei Paulus*, 296); Campbell ("God's saving purpose and activity" - *The Rhetoric*, 156); M. L. Soards ("God's saving activity" - "The Righteousness of God in the Writings of the Apostle Paul," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 15 (1985), 109); Moo (God's "eschatological justifying activity" - *Romans*, 219). While this view is widely accepted, alternatively a growing number of scholars interpret the phrase as "God's covenantal faithfulness": (Williams ("God's faithfulness in keeping his promise to Abraham" - "Righteousness of God in Romans," 265); N. T. Wright ("God's covenantal faithfulness" - "On Becoming the Righteousness of God," in *Pauline Theology* vol. 2, edited by D. M. Hay (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 202); J. Piper ("God's absolute faithfulness always to act for his name's sake and for the preservation and display of his glory" - *The Justification of God* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 150). Although many scholars agree that "the righteousness of God" refers to God's salvation-creating activity, some (e.g. Moo, *Romans*, 85 and scholars that he quotes; Seifrid, *Justification by Faith*, 99-108) dispute that the expression is an apocalyptic *terminus technicus*, as Käsemann and Stuhlmacher maintain. For further discussion, see M. T. Brauch, "Perspectives on 'God's Righteousness' in Recent German Discussion," in *PPJ*, 523-542; P. T. O'Brien, "Justification in Paul and Some Crucial Issues of the Last Two Decades," in *Right with God*, edited by D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 70-78.

Romans (Rom 1.17).¹⁶ Furthermore, this proposal is coherent with the theme of Rom 3.21-26, which is God's righteousness in Christ and through the death of Christ, which contains an essential content of Paul's gospel in Romans.¹⁷ The real content of the gospel in Romans is God's saving act (i.e. God's righteousness) that has been revealed and carried out in and through Christ and the Spirit.¹⁸ The Pauline gospel as the message about God's salvation by his grace is reflected in Eph 2.8-10¹⁹ and other Pauline letters (cf. 2 Tim 1.9; Tit 2.11; 3.7). Although it would be anachronistic to read Paul in the light of later "Trinitarian" formulations and creeds of the Early Church, it is nonetheless possible that the truth of the gospel is an announcement about the salvation of the sovereign divinity who is one in terms of three interrelated figures: God, Jesus Christ, and the Spirit. If this is true, "Trinitarian soteriology"²⁰

¹⁶ Most commentators agree that δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is a pivotal theme of Romans and that Rom 1.16-17 is the summary statement or theme of the letter. Cf. e.g. Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 92; B. Byrne, *Romans* (Collegiville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 51-54; Cranfield, *Romans*, 1.87-102; Dunn, *Romans*, 1.36-49; J. A. Fitzmyer, *Romans* (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 253-265; Moo, *Romans*, 63-79; J. Ziesler, *Paul's Letter to the Romans* (London: SCM, 1989), 67. In particular, Käsemann ("The Righteousness of God in Paul," 168-182) understands the motif of God's righteousness as the centre of Paul's theology. P. Stuhlmacher understands the righteousness of God as an essential content of the gospel ("The Apostle Paul's view of Righteousness," in *Reconciliation, Law, & Righteousness*, 77-82; idem, *Romans*, 25-29).

¹⁷ W. S. Campbell, "Romans iii as a Key to the Structure and Thought of the Letter," *NovT* 23 (1981), 24-30; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 341; A. J. Hultgren, *Paul's Gospel and Mission* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 47, 71; Käsemann, *Romans*, 91-101; Moo, *Romans*, 218; J. Reumann, "The Gospel of the Righteousness of God," *Int* 20 (1966), 432-452; P. Stuhlmacher, "The Theme of Romans," in *The Romans Debate*, edited by K. P. Donfried (2nd ed.; Hendrickson: Peabody, 1991), 333-345; idem, *Romans*, 57. Interestingly, however, Campbell (*The Rhetoric*, 203) suggests, "Rom 3.21-26 is probably neither thesis paragraph of the letter, nor even perhaps a programmatic statement of Paul's gospel" without denying that the text contains a pivotal content of the gospel.

¹⁸ See Hultgren, *Paul's Gospel and Mission*, 12-81; K. Snodgrass, "The Gospel in Romans," in *Gospel in Paul*, 288-314; D. A. Campbell, "Determining the Gospel through Rhetorical Analysis in Paul's Letter to the Roman Christians," in *Gospel in Paul*, 315-336. Stuhlmacher (*Romans*, 31) takes "the righteousness of God" as the centre of the gospel.

¹⁹ C. L. Mitton (*The Epistle to the Ephesians* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1951), 155) says that Eph 2.8-10 "provide us with the most effective summary we have of the Pauline doctrine of salvation by grace through faith." C. L. Mitton (*Ephesians* (London: Oliphant, 1976), 100) states that Eph 2.8-10 "admirably express in summary the essence of Paul's gospel." Crowther ("Works, work and Good Works," 167) characterizes Eph 2.8-10 as "a brilliant summary in the whole of the Pauline Corpus of Paul's Understanding of the Gospel, and more comprehensive and complete than any single passage to be found in Romans or Galatians." Cf. P. T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 174. For a critical evaluation of the suggestions and fine discussion of the text, see A. T. Lincoln, "Ephesians 2:8-10," *CBQ* 45 (1983), 617-630.

²⁰ G. D. Fee ("Paul's Conversion as Key to His Understanding of the Spirit," in *The Road from Damascus*, 176) notes that "Paul's Trinitarian soteriology is in full display" in Gal 4.4-7, in

could be a “coherent centre” (Beker) or “the fulcrum point” (Dunn) of Paul’s gospel (or theology).²¹

If the claim above is true, Gal 5.2-6 is significant for further inquiry into the coherence of Paul’s gospel. Many students of Paul have attempted to find the coherent centre of Paul’s gospel (or theology)²² on the basis of the assumption that he is not an inconsistent thinker and there is a coherent centre in Paul’s gospel.²³ However, despite their diligent efforts, there is no consensus. Nevertheless, as P. Meyer indicates, although the labours of the Pauline Theology Group of SBL brought out no consensus in the interpretation of Paul’s theology, most scholars of the group seem to accept Beker’s interpretive model in pursuit of the coherence of Paul’s gospel.²⁴ With regard to the model Beker writes,

Paul’s hermeneutic cannot be divorced from the content of his thought, because he relates the coherent truth claim of the gospel directly to the particular situation to which it is addressed. His hermeneutic consists in the constant interaction between the coherent center of the gospel and its contingent interpretation.²⁵

which the heart of Paul’s gospel is represented. Cf. G. D. Fee, “Christology and Pneumatology in Romans 8:9-11 – and Elsewhere: Some Reflections on Paul as a Trinitarian,” in *Jesus of Nazareth*, 312-329.

²¹ On the basis of an increasing consensus that justification by faith (i.e. the Christian’s faith) can no longer be considered the centre of Paul’s gospel or theology (e.g. W. Wrede, A. Schweitzer, K. Stendahl, E. P. Sanders), during last twenty years or so most interpreters of Paul have attempted to find the coherence or core of Paul’s theology in Paul’s *Christology* (for a list of scholars, see Koperski, *Saying*, 93-103). But they have not considered seriously Paul’s “God-Christ-the Spirit-centred soteriology” as a coherence of Paul’s gospel (or theology).

²² For a brief survey of the study of the centre of Paul’s theology, see Koperski, *Saying*, 93-103; D. N. Howell, “The Center of Pauline Theology,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 151 (1994), 50-70; J. H. Plevnik, “The Center of Pauline Theology,” *CBQ* 51 (1989), 461-478.

²³ *Contra* H. Boers who writes, “what gives coherence to Paul’s thought is contradiction at its most fundamental level” (“The Foundation of Paul’s Thought,” *Studia Theologica* 42 (1988), 68); Räisänen who contends that “contradictions and tensions have to be accepted as constant features of Paul’s theology of the law.” Räisänen, *Paul*, 11. See also H. Räisänen, “Paul’s Theological Difficulties with the Law,” *Studia Biblica 1978:III* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980), 301-320. For a critique of Räisänen’s work, see C. E. B. Cranfield, “Giving a Dog a Bad Name,” *JSNT* 38 (1990), 77-85; Westerholm, *Israel’s Law*, 93-101. In particular, see T. E. Van Spanje, *Inconsistency in Paul? A Critique of the Work of Heikki Räisänen* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1999). Sanders (*PLJP*, 147) writes, “I still see Paul as on the whole a ‘coherent,’ though not a ‘systematic thinker.’” For a list of scholars who argue that Paul has consistent view of the law, see Koperski, *Saying*, 55-63. For a view of Paul as a coherent thinker, see Beker, *Paul the Apostle*; Silva, *Explorations in Exegetical Method*, 143-150.

²⁴ P. W. Meyer, “Pauline Theology,” in *Pauline Theology* vol. 4, 140.

²⁵ Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 11.

According to Beker, coherence refers to the stable, constant element which expresses the convictional basis of Paul's proclamation of the gospel. He considers the coherence as "the truth of the gospel (Gal 2.5, 14), apostasy from which elicits an apocalyptic curse (Gal 1.8, 9; see also Phil 1.27; 2 Thess 1.8; 2.12)."²⁶ He further argues, "'the truth of the gospel,' that is, the apocalyptic interpretation of the cross and resurrection of Christ, is not only the abiding solution to Paul's private contingency (in answering the crisis of his personal life) but also the abiding solution to the various problems of his churches (in answering their several crises)."²⁷ He also suggests, "that coherence is constituted by the range of Paul's abiding theological convictions and comprises a network of symbolic relations, which are held together by Paul's apocalyptic interpretation of the Christ-event, the ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Gal 1.12; cf. 1.16; 2.2). Apocalyptic motifs form the substratum of Paul's thought, in that apocalyptic served as the filter, context, and grammar for his understanding the Christ-event."²⁸ Beker had argued that Galatians does not support the coherent theme of the triumph of God because of the contingent crisis in Galatia.²⁹ J. L. Martyn remarked, however, that Beker does not pay attention to the nature of Paul's apocalyptic in Galatians and thus excluded the letter from the coherent centre of Paul's theology.³⁰ In response to Martyn's remark, Beker states, "the thesis that Paul did not stress the theme of triumph of God in Galatians is no longer tenable."³¹ Thus, Beker and Martyn agree that Galatians does support the apocalyptic theme of the Gospel and can shed some light on the coherence of Paul's gospel. My suggestion is that if Beker's model is correct in understanding the theology of Paul and the truth of the gospel and Martyn's apocalyptic interpretation of Galatians is right, then, Gal 5.2-6 is significant for further inquiry into the coherence of Paul's gospel (or theology) expressed in other letters of Paul. As noted

²⁶ J. C. Beker, "Recasting Pauline Theology," in *Pauline Theology* vol. 1, 15; idem, *The Triumph of God* (Translated by Loren T. Stuckenbruck; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 15-19.

²⁷ Beker, "Recasting Pauline Theology," 17.

²⁸ J. C. Beker, "Paul the Theologian," *Int* 34 (1989), 356.

²⁹ Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, x.

³⁰ J. L. Martyn, "Review of *Paul the Apostle* (J. Christiaan Beker)," *Word and World* 2 (1982), 194-198; idem, "Apocalyptic Antinomies," 113.

³¹ Beker, *The Triumph of God*, 65. See also Beker, *Paul the apostle*, xix.

earlier, Gal 5.2-6 contains the coherence of Paul's gospel not only because 5.2-6 is Paul's truth claim of his gospel in Galatians, but also because 5.2-6 provides Paul's apocalyptic interpretation of God's saving-event in and through Christ and the Spirit as the abiding solution to the crisis and issues at stake in Galatia.

8. 2. 2. The Antitheses and Salvation History in Galatians

While salvation history in Galatians has been a controversial subject in recent Pauline scholarship, the importance of the antitheses in 5.2-6 for the subject has not been given sufficient recognition in the recent debate.³² Without attempting to engage in the debate,³³ it is sufficient to indicate that our findings in the previous study of the antitheses generate further reflection and conversation on the issue.

Our study of the antitheses suggests that Paul would have assigned the Jewish religion (i.e. ethnocentric covenantalism) represented by circumcision, the law, and the old Jewish value-system (i.e. circumcision/uncircumcision, Jew/Gentile, the Law/the Not-Law) to the old creation. According to Paul, ethnocentric covenantalism has now been superseded by the new creation represented by God's salvific act and effects in and through Christ, God's sending of the Spirit, and the advent and revelation of Christ's faithfulness. With God's new creation, the old antitheses, and thus the world based on the old value-system, have come to an end. Martyn perceptively notes that with the advent of Christ and God's new creation the old antinomies (i.e. Jew vs. Gentile, male vs. female, slave vs. free, circumcision vs. uncircumcision, the Law vs. the Not-Law) have disappeared and the new antinomies (i.e. the Spirit vs. the Flesh; the death of Christ vs. the Law) have emerged.³⁴ But he fails to observe that God's new saving act through Christ and the Spirit has brought

³² Although the issue of salvation history in Galatians has been the object of the considerable discussion in the Pauline Theology Group of SBL (Dunn, "The Theology of Galatians," 125-146; Gaventa, "Singularity," 147-159; R. B. Hays, "Salvation History," in *Pauline Theology* vol. 1, 227-246; D. J. Lull, "Salvation History," in *Pauline Theology* vol. 1, 247-265; Martyn, "Events in Galatia," 160-179), it seems that they have not satisfactorily explained the significance of the antitheses in 5.2-6 for the issue. Unfortunately, Barclay (*Obeying*, 96-104) and Longenecker (*Triumph*, 5-23; 174-179) also did not pay sufficient attention to Gal 5.2-6. For an excellent study regarding the problem of continuity and discontinuity, see J. D. G. Dunn, "How New Was Paul's Gospel?" in *Gospel in Paul*, 367-388.

³³ For the debate, see Longenecker, *Triumph*, 9-20.

³⁴ Martyn, *Galatians*, 570-572.

out other new sets of antitheses, such as circumcision vs. Christ, the law vs. Christ, the law vs. grace, the law vs. the Spirit, the law vs. Christ's faithfulness, and "circumcision/uncircumcision" vs. Christ's faithfulness. He also overlooks the significance of these antitheses for understanding Paul's view of salvation history.

God's eschatological saving act (or "God's apocalyptic invasion into the world" - Martyn) through Christ and Spirit and the advent and revelation of Christ's faithfulness seem to indicate the *heilsgeschichtlich* discontinuity between the Israelites' (and the agitators') story about God's salvation and Paul's gospel of God's new saving act through Christ and the Spirit. As observed earlier, the salvific efficacy and benefit of circumcision has been negated by the salvific act and benefit of Christ. The age of the law was superseded by the new age created by God's sending of the Spirit and the advent and revelation of Christ's faithfulness, in which the law and circumcision is no longer effective, but Christ (and Christ's faithfulness), the Spirit, and God's grace are operative for the salvation of humanity.³⁵ The antitheses also indicate that God transferred the redemptive-historical salvific sphere from the law to Christ, the means of justification from the law to Christ (Christ's faithfulness) and the Spirit, and the identity marker of the people of God from circumcision and the law to Christ and the Spirit. The sphere of the law is no longer the realm of the existence of God's people; the sphere of Christ is a new sphere of existence. There is no linear *heilsgeschichtlich* continuity between those in the law (Jews) and those in Christ (Christians); the boundary redrawn (i.e. the boundary of Christ) excludes the boundary of the law. This implies the sociological discontinuity between the two groups; the perspective that those in Christ have been included into Israel in line with Israel's unfolding redemptive-history is not in view in Galatians.³⁶ The advent and revelation of Christ's faithfulness (3.23-25) indicates that the discontinuity between ethnocentric covenantalism and Paul's gospel became logically inevitable at the very moment when the claim was raised that Christ's

³⁵ The contrast between ἐν νόμῳ and ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ shows that the old redemptive-historical era (i.e. the age of the law) has been superseded by the new redemptive-historical era (i.e. the age of Christ). Cf. §3.2.3.

³⁶ Cf. Longenecker, *Triumph*, 175-176.

faithfulness is the only way to salvation (2.16).³⁷ God's sending of the Spirit (4.6) at the fullness of time (4.4) also points out that there is no continuity between the past and present activity of the Spirit as a soteriological agent of God's universal salvation.³⁸ And also the universalistic death of Christ brought to an end the "circumcision/uncircumcision" belief-system. In short, as far as Galatians is concerned, there is no continuity between the age of the law and that of Christ, no overlap between the sphere of the law and that of Christ, and no intimate fellowship between those in the law and those in Christ, no continuity between God's past and present dealings with his people, no relationship between the law and God's grace as the basis of justification, and no continuity between the past and present activity of the Spirit as an agent of justification of the Gentiles.

Furthermore, the antitheses suggest that there is no continuity between the Abrahamic covenant and covenantal nomism. Rather for Paul there is continuity between the Abrahamic covenant and the gospel of Christ, jumping over the intervening period of "Mosaic dispensation." As noted earlier (ch. 4), Paul understands that God's justification of the Gentiles in and through Christ is in full continuity not with the Sinai covenant, but with the Abrahamic covenant (i.e. God's promise to Abraham). Paul relates the Abrahamic covenant, not with the law, but with Christ (cf. 3.15-18).³⁹ As Sanders rightly notes, "the covenantal promises to Abraham do not apply to his descendants, but to Christians (Rom 4.13-25; Gal 3.15-29)."⁴⁰ In Gal 4.21-31 Paul dissociates the Sarah covenant with the Mosaic (Sinai) covenant by contrasting the two covenants.⁴¹ Furthermore, Paul has seen the death of the world defined by the nationalistic law and the old antitheses and now lives in a

³⁷ While Räisänen ("Galatians 2.16") notes the significance of Gal 2.16 for Paul's break with Judaism, he interprets πίστις Χριστοῦ as the Christian's faith in Christ.

³⁸ While Lull (*Spirit*, 175) rightly indicates the discontinuity, he overstates that "before the πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου, there was no activity of the Spirit *in the world*." In fact, there was the Spirit's activity before the πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου, as testified in the OT. In my view, it is more appropriate to say that there was no activity of the Spirit before the time as a salvific agent of justification of non-proselyte Gentiles.

³⁹ Martyn (*Galatians*, 347-348) rightly notes, "the covenantal promise uttered by God seems to have remained in a docetic state until the advent of the singular seed." See also Das, *Paul*, 71-74; Longenecker, *Triumph*, 117-118.

⁴⁰ Sanders, *PPJ*, 551.

⁴¹ Das, *Paul*, 74-76; Martyn, *Galatians*, 447-457.

newly created world which came into existence through God's new creation in and through Christ and the Spirit (cf. 6.14-15).⁴² Whereas, first century Judaism divided the world into Jew and Gentile, circumcision and uncircumcision, those in the law and those outside the law, the apocalyptic perspective divided the world into those in Christ and those outside Christ, creation into the old creation and the new, and time into old age and new age.⁴³ We can therefore conclude that Paul does not interpret the story about God's saving event through Christ and the Spirit as a simple linear *Heilsgeschichte* from covenantal nomism to the gospel of Christ.⁴⁴ The horizon is in contrast to the agitators' assumption of continuity between their own Jewish religious heritage (i.e. covenantal nomism) and the gospel of Christ.⁴⁵

In light of the observations above, it is fair to say that there is no linear *heilsgeschichtlich* continuity between Israel's unfolding redemptive-history and the new redemptive-history of God through Christ and the Spirit.⁴⁶ For Paul, God's invasion into human history by sending Christ and the Spirit and through the advent and revelation of Christ's faithfulness has introduced a redemptive-historical discontinuity between ethnocentric covenantal nomism and the gospel of Christ.⁴⁷ Paul believes that with God's new creation through Christ (Christ's faithfulness) and the Spirit, the old Jewish religious system whose structure lies in the old set of antitheses, had disappeared and the new religious system whose structure lies in the

⁴² Martyn (*Galatians*, 571) notes, "For crucifixion with Christ means the death of the cosmos of religion." See also Martyn, *Galatians*, 564.

⁴³ Martyn, "Apocalyptic Antinomies," 112-123.

⁴⁴ For the character of discontinuity in Galatians, see Dunn, *TPLG*, 46-51; idem, "In Search of Common Ground," 318-319. For the discontinuity of the gospel in Pauline letters, see Dunn, "How New Was Paul's Gospel?" 374-378.

⁴⁵ See Martyn, "Events in Galatia," 179.

⁴⁶ Cf. Hays, "Crucified with Christ," 237; Longenecker, *Triumph*, 175; Martyn, "Events in Galatia," 178-179.

⁴⁷ However, this does not necessarily mean that Paul denies the existence of covenant relationship between God and ethnic Israel prior to Christ. Paul cuts the line of continuity between Mosaic religious system and the gospel of Christ in the sense that a form of covenant relationship has been changed from the old covenant based on the law to the new covenant based on Christ and the Spirit. The perspective is clearly expressed in the Hagar-Sarah allegory (Gal 4.21-31) and 2 Cor 3.6-18. Cf. Grindheim, "The Law Kills But the Gospel Gives Life," 97-115; Longenecker, *Triumph*, 174-179. *Contra* Martyn ("Events in Galatia," 174): Galatians gives "no indication of a covenant-created people of God during the time of the Law." Furthermore, there is continuity between God's promise to Abraham and Paul's gospel (cf. 3.8). For the continuity of the gospel, see Dunn, "How New Was Paul's Gospel?" 369-374.

new set of antitheses has emerged.⁴⁸ In short, in consideration of Paul's heated, stern and uncompromising letter to the Galatians and the exclusivistic and eschatological character of the antitheses, we can conclude that Galatians lacks a full-blown form of salvation-historical linearity. If the observations above are right, then this suggestion agrees in large measure with the positions of Beker,⁴⁹ Martyn,⁵⁰ and B. W. Longenecker⁵¹ and also differs from the position of Wright.⁵²

8. 2. 3. Paul's Critique of the Law in Galatians

What is the significance of the antitheses for understanding Paul's critical attitude to the agitators' view of the law in Galatians?⁵³ We have observed that Paul formulates the antitheses to argue against the law as both the soteriological means of justification and the salvific and social boundary within which covenant membership is given. In our analysis of the antitheses in which Paul's view of the law is

⁴⁸ Betz (*Galatians*, 263) went as far as to say that 5.6 implies that "Paul separates Gentile Christianity from Judaism and establishes it *de facto* as a new religion."

⁴⁹ Beker (*Paul the Apostle*, 51) argues, "The peculiar logic of the argument shows that the salvation-historical thrust of the Abraham story can be used by Paul against the Judaizers only if he centres the story Christocentrically (Christ as the exclusive seed) and therefore discontinuously Because the Judaizers stress the continuity in salvation-history between Abraham, Torah, circumcision, and Christ, Paul can use the Abraham story only in terms of discontinuity." See also Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 99-100.

⁵⁰ Martyn ("Events in Galatia," 179) concludes, "Galatians shows us a Paul who does not accept 'covenant' as a term indicating a fundamental building block of his theology. However disappointing it may be to have to say so, this apostle is not a covenantal theologian Neither does he present his theology a form of *Heilsgeschichte* in which Christ is interpreted in line with Israel's history."

⁵¹ B. Longenecker (*Triumph*, 175-176) states, "it may be that, on the basis of Galatians, a notion of linear salvific history that stretches from the early Hebrews at one end and includes Christian believers at the other must be relegated to the position of a peripheral extra in Pauline theology; the unfolding story of ethnic Israel as the context into which believers have been included is not a central, essential, irreplaceable feature of Paul's theology." But he is distinctive from Beker and Martyn when he contends, "If in Galatians Paul does not defend a line of salvation-historical continuity leading from the covenant people of Israel and culminating in Christ, neither does he intend to repudiate that a form of covenant relationship existed between God and ethnic Israel prior to Christ" (*Triumph*, 178-179).

⁵² Wright says, "The Pharisee [Paul] . . . had been zealous for the one true god, longing for his victory over paganism on behalf of his ethnic people of Israel, [and] had become convinced that the victory had after all been won in Christ, and that the one true god was thereby revealed" ("Gospel and Theology in Galatians," 231). Wright (*Climax*) interprets the Christ-event as the climax of the covenant.

⁵³ As noted already (ch. 2, n. 5), Paul's arguments concerning the law (and the works of the law and circumcision) were formulated in dispute not with non-Christian Jews, but with fellow Christian Jews (i.e. the agitators).

represented, we have found no firm evidence to support the traditional understanding of Paul's critique of the law, that Paul was arguing against legalism that one could earn salvation by meritorious works of the law. What then is the focus of Paul's critique of the law? In light of the preceding study (chs. 3-6), we may summarise Paul's theological rationale for his rejection of the law as follows: **1)** For Paul the law is no longer the legitimate sphere of God's justification because God created a new place, i.e. the sphere of Christ within which the gift of righteousness is granted to all humanity freely and universally (ch. 3). The valid realm of salvation has been transposed from the realm of salvation provided by the law (i.e. "in the law") into the sphere of salvation "in Christ" created by the Christ-event. Paul's attack on the law is focused on the law functioning as the salvific boundary of justification both protecting Israel from outsiders and preventing Gentiles from enjoying God's grace. **2)** Paul rejects the law as the soteriological basis of justification not only because the exclusivistic law prevents the Gentiles from enjoying the salvific effects (e.g. righteousness, the Abrahamic blessing, sonship, election) of God's saving activity through Christ and the Spirit, but because God's eschatological salvific acts (e.g. God's calling, God's promise, God's sending of Christ and the Spirit, God's knowing) brought these salvific blessings to the Gentiles apart from the law (ch. 4).⁵⁴ For Paul the law as a means of justification is incompatible with God's grace through Christ and the Spirit (especially God's promise to bless the nations) making the Gentiles the people of God, and thus to add Torah-observance to God's grace nullifies the sufficiency of God's grace for the salvation of Gentiles.⁵⁵ **3)** Paul no longer accepts the law both as the soteriological basis of justification and as an identity marker of God's elect in Judaism because the true soteriological basis of justification and identity marker of God's people has been transferred from the law

⁵⁴ Dunn (*The Partings*, 137) convincingly argues, "Thus it begins to become clear that Paul was not against the law as such – far less against 'good' works. What he aimed his arguments against was the law understood and practised in such a way as to limit the grace of God, to prevent Gentiles as Gentiles enjoying it in full measure." See also Howard, *Paul*, 46-65.

⁵⁵ Sanders (*PLJP*, 47) argues similarly, "What is wrong with the law, and thus with Judaism, is that it does not provide for God's ultimate purpose, that of saving the entire world through faith in Christ, and without the privilege accorded to Jews through the promises, the

(and circumcision) to the Spirit (ch. 5). 4) Paul denies the law as a soteriological means of justification on the basis of justification by the faithfulness of Christ; the valid means of full membership of the people of God is not the law (and the works of the law) but the faithfulness of Christ (ch. 6). Christ's faithfulness is the soteriological means by which God's promise (i.e. God's justification of the Gentiles), righteousness, and God's adoption as sons are freely and universally given to Gentile believers.

In light of the considerations above, we may justly conclude that Paul denies the law (and the works of the law) neither because the law cannot be obeyed, nor because the observance of the law leads to legalism, i.e. meritorious self-righteousness. Nor is it completely satisfactory that Paul's problem with the law is limited to its social function (i.e. boundary marking feature) as the barrier between Jews and Gentiles, which makes it difficult for Gentiles to accept Christianity.⁵⁶ Rather Paul's critique of the law focuses on both its sociological role as a boundary of God's people⁵⁷ and its soteriological role as the salvific sphere (3.11; 5.4) and means of justification (2.16, 21; 3.18, 21).⁵⁸ To put it differently, Paul rejects the law

covenants, and the law." As I have already pointed out (§6.4.), however, I disagree with Sanders' anthropological interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ.

⁵⁶ Pace Dunn (*JPL*, 224) who argues, "For what he [Paul] is attacking is a particular attitude to the law as such, the law as a whole in its social function as distinguishing Jew from Gentile" and Watson, *PJG*, 177-178. Das (*Paul*, 273) argues, "the 'new perspective' went astray in limiting Paul's critique of the law to its ethnic, boundary marking features." See also Gathercole, "After the New Perspective," 180-207.

⁵⁷ This is properly pointed out by Dunn's works (e.g. *JPL*). See also J. Buckel, *Free to Love* (Louvain: Peters/Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 125-126. While Smiles (*Gospel*, 125-128) rightly notes that Paul's critique of the law is closely bound up with its theological function (i.e. the law as the soteriological basis of the right relationship between humanity and God), he does not justice to the social function of the law.

⁵⁸ Paul thinks that the agitators ascribe saving value to the law (the works of the law) in terms of the sphere and means of justification. This point is different from Räisänen's argument that Paul thinks that Jews "ascribe saving value to the fulfillment of the precepts of the law" (*Paul*, 162-164) and thus Paul misconstrues Jewish soteriology (i.e. covenantal nomism) by considering the law as the Jewish gateway to righteousness (pp. 177-191). For the argument that obedience to Torah was a basis for vindication at the eschaton in Early Judaism, see Gathercole, "After the New Perspective," 40-134. However, we have to differentiate between that in the agitators' view Torah observance is necessary for the salvation of Gentiles and that in Paul's view Torah-observance is the path Jews pursue for salvation. As noted already, for Jews Torah observance is not the means of "getting in" because the covenant was established before the law and they were born into a people already in covenant relationship with God. In contrast, for the Gentiles "getting in" (i.e. salvation) was on the basis of keeping ἔργα νόμου because they could not enter into the

as a sphere and means of justification not only because God changed the redemptive-historical salvific sphere from the law to Christ, the means of justification from the law to Christ (Christ's faithfulness) and the Spirit, and the identity marker of the people of God from the law to the Spirit, but also because the law excludes Gentiles from enjoying God's grace. This conviction provoked Paul's view of the law that differs considerably from the agitators who argued that the Galatians should accept Christ and also be circumcised and accept the law for salvation. In short, Paul renounces the law as the soteriological basis of salvation not only because the law is incompatible with God's saving grace, Christ (and Christ's faithfulness), and the Spirit, but also because the former has been replaced by the latter.⁵⁹ Since salvation is by God's grace, Christ (and Christ's faithfulness), and the Spirit, it is not by the law. Paul's critical attitude to the law as such is based on his "God-Christ-the Spirit-centred soteriology" that is, God has provided the new way of salvation in and through Christ and the Spirit, and thus the law as a means of salvation has been superseded by God's grace through Christ and the Spirit. This suggestion might be significant for further inquiry into the reason why Paul argues that the law cannot save.⁶⁰

8. 2. 4. The Rhetorical Function of Gal 5.2-12 within Galatians

Our investigation of Gal 5.2-6 is significant for understanding the rhetorical function of Gal 5.2-12 within Galatians. In 5.2-12, one can find significant data that motivates an investigation into the function of Gal 5.2-12 within Galatians. As we already observed, in 5.2-6, there are six antitheses that summarise and recapitulate

covenant without becoming proselytes through the observance of the deeds of the law, especially circumcision (§2.1.2.). It should be kept in mind that Paul attacks the agitators' notion of the law as the soteriological basis of justification, not that of the Jews.

⁵⁹ It is not completely satisfactory to argue that Paul's major difficulty with the law is based on Paul's "exclusivist Christological soteriology" alone. This perspective does not do justice to Paul's "exclusivistic pneumatological soteriology" upon which he rejects the law as a valid means of justification (ch. 5). *Pace Sanders, PPJ*, 550-551; Buckel, *Free to Love*, 129.

⁶⁰ For a brief survey of scholars' answer to the question, see R. B. Sloan, "Paul and the Law: Why the Law Cannot Save," *NovT* 33 (1991), 42-46. According to Sloan's survey of scholars' proposals, we cannot find any proposal which paid due attention to God's eschatological replacement of the means of justification from the law to Christ (and Christ's faithfulness) and the Spirit as Paul's theological reason for his rejection of the law as a means of salvation.

most of the pivotal theological themes and issues of the letter. In 5.2-12, moreover, there is significant vocabulary that encapsulates various central and pivotal terms appearing in the rest of the letter (circumcision, being justified, righteousness, the law, Christ, grace, faith, the Spirit, love, truth, the cross).⁶¹ In this section, Paul attempts to solve the crisis in Galatia, that is “Galatian apostasy” and the agitators’ perversion of “the gospel of Christ” (1.6-7 – 5.2-12). The passage also tackles the issue of circumcision first, which is the real bone of contention in Galatians. It is also to be noted that in this section Paul deals with specific issues at stake in Galatia: justification (2.15-21; 3.6-4.7 – 5.4-5), circumcision (2.3-5; 6.12-13 – 5.2-3, 6, 11), the other gospel (1.6-9 – 5.8-10), and the agitators (1.7-9; 6.12-13 – 5.7-12). In 5.2-6 Paul solemnly answers the central issue at stake in Galatia: what is the soteriological ground of the inclusion of the Gentiles into the people of God? In 5.2-6 Paul uses the Pauline emphatic ἐγὼ (5.2, 5.10, 5.11) and several formulas of solemn affirmation (“Ἴδε ἐγὼ Παῦλος λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι in 5.2, μαρτύρομαι δὲ πάλιν in 5.3, and ἐγὼ πέποιθα εἰς ὑμᾶς ἐν κυρίῳ ὅτι in 5.10). Gal 5.2-6 provides a highly-condensed summary of Paul’s previous argument and the truth of the gospel. Because of its summarising character, the passage is extremely concise and consists of dogmatic abbreviations. Furthermore, in 5.7-12 we find what appears to be “a rambling collection of pointed remarks, rhetorical questions, proverbial expressions, threats, irony, and, climaxing it all, a joke of stark sarcasm.”⁶² In particular, as several scholars have observed,⁶³ we have significant parallels between “5.2-12” and “1.6-10 and 6.11-18.” We need to explain the function of 5.2-12 in relation to the parallels in 1.6-10 in which the issues at stake in Galatia are raised and 6.11-18 in which there are the concluding remarks of the letter.⁶⁴ In short, all of these observations lead us to conclude that the section 5.2-12 plays a very important rhetorical role within Galatians.

⁶¹ See §1.2.

⁶² Betz, *Galatians*, 264.

⁶³ Dunn, *Galatians*, 261; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 222; Matera, “Culmination,” 83 and 90, n. 14; Witherington, *Grace*, 360.

⁶⁴ Betz, *Galatians*, 313; Weima, “Gal. 6:11-18,” 90-107.

Commentators have disputed the literary function of Gal 5.2-12 within Galatians. The material in 5.2-12 has sometimes been regarded as part of Paul's paraenesis in 5.1-6.10.⁶⁵ Some commentators have taken it as part of a "request section."⁶⁶ The section has often been understood as a summary and conclusion to the main body of the letter.⁶⁷ Recently some scholars have regarded the section as a climactic piece that culminates the previous arguments and foreshadows what follows.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, in my view, although there are, of course, some elements of truth in the views just mentioned, these views are not completely satisfactory because these proposals have missed an important dimension of the problem. Once again, I refer, in particular, to the six antitheses which play an important role in summing up Paul's view of the law and the substance of the theology of Galatians. Moreover, they have not paid appropriate attention to the way in which Paul deals with the crisis and the specific issues at stake in Galatia.

On the basis of the analysis of the antitheses in 5.2-6 and the observations above, it is fair to say that 5.2-12 is not part of Paul's paraenesis in 5.1-6.10.⁶⁹ Moreover, the section is more than a summary or conclusion of the previous argument. The function of the section can be divided into two parts. On the one hand, Gal 5.2-12 is the climax of Galatians because it summarises the preceding part and introduces a new phase of argument.⁷⁰ The passage is the climax of Paul's argument within Galatians with regard to the crisis in Galatia in the sense that here

⁶⁵ E.g. Betz, *Galatians*, 253; Bligh, *Galatians*, 416; Burton, *Galatians*, 269; L. L. Cranford, "A Rhetorical Reading of Galatians," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 37 (1994) 4-10; Ebeling, *Truth*, 239-245; Guthrie, *Galatians*, 127; G. W. Hansen, *Galatians* (Downers Grove, IL. IVP, 1994), 151-161; Hong, *Law*, 73; Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*, 147-151; Kraftchick, "Ethos and Pathos," 271-272; Russell, *The Flesh/Spirit Conflict in Galatians*, 60; Ziesler, *Galatians*, 71.

⁶⁶ Hansen, *Abraham*, 53-54; idem, *Galatians*, 30; Longenecker, *Galatians*, cix.

⁶⁷ Amadi-Azuogu, *Paul*, 296-297; Anderson, *Rhetorical*, 158; Fung, *Galatians*, 221; Lührmann, *Galatians*, 98; McKnight, *Galatians*, 251; Merk, "Der Beginn der Paränese im Galaterbrief," 100; Ridderbos, *Galatia*, 186; Schlier, *Galater*, 229; Smit, "The Letter of Paul to the Galatians," 19.

⁶⁸ Matera, *Galatians*, 185; idem, "Culmination," 79-80; Witherington, *Grace*, 359-360. Although Dunn views 5.1-12 as the conclusion to the main argument, he also notes the climactic character of the section in Galatians (*Galatians*, 260-261).

⁶⁹ See Witherington, *Grace*, 359-364. *Pace* e.g. Betz, Burton, Ebeling, Lightfoot, Guthrie.

⁷⁰ See Matera, *Galatians*, 185-186; Witherington, *Grace*, 359-364.

Paul attempts to solve the crisis in Galatia and to answer the specific issues at stake in Galatia. Since 5.2-6 contains the truth of the gospel, it is Paul's climactic statement of his argument to the Galatians. Since Galatians is designed to defend the truth of the gospel,⁷¹ Gal 5.2-12 is the apex of the defence. On the other hand, the passage is a *crux interpretum* for the interpretation of Galatians in the sense that 5.2-6 is Paul's truth-claim for his Gospel in Galatians and the section not only summarises the theological themes of Galatians but also presents Paul's theological conviction and horizon. As noted earlier, the antitheses are vital interpretive clues for understanding the substance of Paul's theology in Galatians, Paul's pivotal arguments against the agitators, and Paul's view of circumcision, the law, justification. The passage also contains Paul's solution to the pivotal issues and crisis in Galatia. In light of the considerations above, the thesis that I would suggest is that 5.2-12, which is the summarising review of 1.1-5.1 and the preview of 6.11-18, is both the climax of Paul's argument to the Galatians and a *crux interpretum* or hermeneutical centre for the interpretation of the letter.⁷²

8. 2. 5. The Theme of Gal 5.2-6

Most commentators have understood that the theme of 5.2-6 is "freedom" under the assumption that "freedom" in 5.1 is the headline theme of 5.1-12.⁷³ Nevertheless, this view is unlikely because 5.1 seems to function not as the headline of 5.1-12 but as the conclusion of 4.21-31.⁷⁴ The reasons are as follows: 1) 5.1

⁷¹ D. E. Garland, "Paul's Defence of the Truth of the Gospel Regarding Gentiles (Galatians 2.15-3.22)," *RevExp* 91 (1994), 165-181.

⁷² Compare Hays ("Crucified with Christ," 242) who suggests that Gal 2.20-21 looks like the hermeneutical centre of the letter and Weima ("Gal. 6.11-18," 90-107) and Betz (*Galatians*, 313) claiming that Gal 6.11-18 is a hermeneutical key to the Galatian letter.

⁷³ E.g. Betz, *Galatians*, 256; Bruce, *Galatians*, 228; Burton, *Galatians*, 269; Dunn, *Galatians*, 260; Ebeling, *Truth*, 244; Eckstein, *Verheißung und Gesetz*, 247-248; Hong, *Law*, 75; K. Kertelege, "Freiheitsbotschaft und Libesgebot im Galaterbrief," in *Grundthemen paulinischer Theologie* (Freiburg: Herder, 1991), 197-202; idem, "Gesetz und Freiheit im Galaterbrief," in *Grundthemen paulinischer Theologie*, 191; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 220; Morris, *Galatians*, 151-162; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 342; Saldanha, "The Concept of Freedom in Galatians."

⁷⁴ Cf. Bruce, Cole, Duncan, Lightfoot, Martyn, NEB, NRSV, UBSGT. Some exegetes have rendered it as a transitional or independent verse (Burton, Cousar, Fung, Longenecker, Williams, Witherington).

functions as the conclusion of the Hagar-Sarah allegory⁷⁵ because there are linguistic and conceptual links between 4.21-31 and 5.1 (“freedom,” a call to “stand fast,” and “slavery”).⁷⁶ Paul’s response to the issue of the Galatians’ subjection to the law raised in the beginning of the section (4.21) is summed up in 5.1. 2) Ἴδε ἐγὼ Παῦλος λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι (5.2a) strongly indicates that 5.2 is a new beginning of his argument.⁷⁷ Moreover, a good number of interpreters have maintained that the theme of 5.2-6 is “freedom” on the basis of that 5.1 is the beginning of the paraenetic material and thus the heading of 5.1-12. No consensus has been reached among scholars concerning the issue where the paraenetic material begins.⁷⁸ There are four major views on the beginning of the paraenesis in Galatians: 1) 5.1 (Betz, Burton, Ebeling, Guthrie, Lightfoot); 2) 5.13 (Barclay, Dunn, Fung, Howard, Hübner, Lührmann, Martyn, Matera, Merk, Mußner, Oepke); 3) 4.12 (Longenecker, Hansen); 4) 5.2 (Bruce, Cousar). In my view, the second view is more preferable not only because there are no imperative and hortatory verbs in 5.2-12, but also because 5.2-12 is the summary and climax of the previous argument (§8.2.4.). Furthermore, the theme “freedom” is not further developed in the section 5.2-12. The word “freedom” and its cognates emerge not in 5.2-12 but in 5.1 and 5.13. The theme is the subject of the Hagar-Sarah allegory rather than 5.2-12. In light of the observations above, it is unlikely that “freedom” in 5.1 is the headline theme of 5.1-12. What then is the theme of the passage? The theme of 5.2-6 is, as we already argued, God’s salvation (i.e. justification) of humanity (Jews and Gentiles) neither within the boundary of the law nor through the law (the works of the law - especially circumcision), but within the boundary of Christ and through Christ, the Spirit, and Christ’s faithfulness.

8. 3. Implications for Pauline Interpretation

In this section, on the basis of the investigation of Gal 5.2-6, in particular the six antitheses, we attempt to suggest the implications of the present study for Paul’s

⁷⁵ Martyn, *Galatians*, 468.

⁷⁶ Longenecker, *Galatians*, 223.

⁷⁷ It is noteworthy that ἐγὼ Παῦλος + verb signals an introduction of a new and important argument (Rom 15.14; 2 Cor 10.1; 1 Thes 2.18; Phm 19). Cf. Martyn, *Galatians*, 468.

⁷⁸ For a list of different views, Kern, *Rhetoric and Galatians*, 113-114.

critique of covenantal nomism, Paul's mission to the Gentiles, and the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ.

8. 3. 1. Paul's Critique of Palestinian Judaism (Covenantal Nomism)

Although the immediate target of Paul's polemic in Galatians is the agitators' "modified covenantal nomism," the antitheses reflect Paul's critique of first-century Palestinian Judaism. On the basis of the analysis of the antitheses in the previous chapters, we may summarise Paul's theological rationale for his criticism of ethnocentric covenantalism as follows: **1)** Paul opposes covenantal nomism maintaining that the Gentiles can enter the covenant community of God through circumcision because it is not circumcision but rather the salvific benefits of Christ which are the valid basis and guarantor of participation in God's people. (ch. 2). **2)** Paul criticises covenantal nomism asserting that salvation is available only within the boundary of the law (i.e. covenant) because it is antithetical to God's justification of the Gentiles in the sphere of Christ (ch. 3).⁷⁹ **3)** Paul denies the ethnocentric or nationalistic "covenantal nomism" claiming that God's grace extends only to the circumcised and that covenant status of non-proselyte Gentiles is dependent upon observance of the law⁸⁰ because it denies and nullifies God's universal saving grace welcoming Gentile believers as the offspring of Abraham, God's children, and as equal and full members of the people of God apart from the observance of the law and circumcision (ch. 4). Paul's rejection of covenantal nomism is based on his conviction that God's promise of justification of Gentiles was fulfilled through Christ and the Spirit.⁸¹ **4)** Paul resists covenantal nomism not only because it

⁷⁹ While he does not note the antithesis between the law and Christ as two antithetical spheres of justification, Dunn similarly argues, "Paul was attacking neither the law, nor the covenant, but a covenantal nomism which insisted on treating the law a boundary round Israel, marking off Jew from Gentile, with only those inside as heirs of God's promise to Abraham" (*The Partings*, 138).

⁸⁰ Barclay, *Obeying*, 240; Dunn, "Perspective," 95-122; idem, "The Theology of Galatians," 125-146.

⁸¹ Hong (*Law*, 193) similarly argues, "the reason for Paul's rejection of Judaism is that he realizes, in the light of the Christ event, that by carrying away the curse of the law fallen on the Jews because of their transgression (Gal. 3.10, 13) Christ has fulfilled the promise of universal salvation which had been given to Abraham (Gen. 12.3; cf. Gal 3.8) and has thus established a new covenant with all mankind in him."

renounces the work and power of the Spirit making the Gentiles members God's people, but also because it denies the fact that God sent the Spirit of his Son into the hearts of non-proselyte Gentile believers (ch. 5). For Paul, the Spirit is the sufficient soteriological basis of justification in the sense that the Spirit is the new identity marker of God's people, the medium of the blessing of Abraham, and the agent of sonship. 5) Paul negates covenantal nomism because it denies the soteriological sufficiency of Christ's faithfulness (i.e. the self-giving death of Christ on the cross), which welcomes Gentile believers as the recipients of the gift of righteousness (2.16), the Abrahamic blessing (3.22), and God's children (3.26) apart from the law (ch. 6). 6) Paul rejects ethnocentric covenantal nomism represented by "circumcision vs. uncircumcision" belief-system not only because the advent and revelation of Christ's faithfulness and the cross have ended ethnocentric covenantal nomism, but also because for Paul "ethnocentric covenantalism" is no longer operative in the new redemptive-historical age that God brought into human history (ch. 7).

In light of the observations above, it is reasonable to claim that Paul rejects covenantal nomism not only because it denies the fact that God has provided for the salvation of all who believe in and through Christ and the Spirit, but also because it excludes the Gentiles accepted by God through his grace from the people of God and thus nullifies the grace of God making the Gentiles full members of the community of God's people and children of God.⁸² Paul criticised Jews who relied on God's election based on both the law and the covenant of circumcision (cf. Rom 2.17, 25; 3.1) because they rejected God's universal saving grace, Christ (Christ's salvific benefits, Christ's faithfulness), and the Spirit as the legitimate basis of salvation.⁸³ Paul's denial of circumcision and the law (i.e. identity markers of God's people)

⁸² Sanders' argument (*PLJP*, 155) that Paul's criticism of Judaism has two focuses: "the lack of faith in Christ and the lack of equality for the Gentiles" is not completely satisfactory because he scarcely pays attention to other convictions of Paul upon which he criticizes Judaism (e.g. the salvific benefits of Christ, Christ's faithfulness, the Spirit).

⁸³ Paul's criticism toward the Jews maintaining nationalistic covenantal nomism is reflected in 1 Thes 2.15-16 ("they displease God and oppose everyone by hindering us [Paul and his coworkers] from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved. Thus they have constantly been filling up the measure of their sins; but God's wrath has overtaken them at last" - NRSV). Cf. Hamerton-Kelly, "Sacred Violence and 'Works of the Law'," 64. For Israel's current hardened rejection of the gospel, see 2 Cor 3.14-15. Cf. Hafemann, *Paul*, 363-386.

implies his rejection of covenantal nomism's emphasis on Israel's election evidenced by circumcision and the law.⁸⁴ In short, the antitheses indicate that Paul denies the very fundamentals of Judaism: election, covenant, Torah, and other Jewish salvific prerogatives (e.g. adoption, redemption) exclusive to Jews,⁸⁵ and thus seems to mark his break with covenantal nomism.⁸⁶ In conclusion, Paul's criticism of first century Palestinian Judaism is not so much concerned with Jewish legalism (i.e. justification by meritorious works of the law)⁸⁷ as with ethnocentric covenantal nomism that the Gentiles must accept circumcision and observe the works prescribed in the Mosaic law in order to become full members of the covenant community of God.

8. 3. 2. Paul's Mission to the Gentiles

What is the significance of the antitheses for understanding Paul's theological rationale for his mission to the Gentiles?⁸⁸ On the basis of the analysis of the antitheses in the present study, we may summarise Paul's theological rationale as

⁸⁴ For an excellent discussion about the issue of whether Paul affirms covenantal nomism's emphasis on Israel's election, see Das, *Paul*, 95-112. Das concludes, "Israel's election, insofar as it offers a place in the world to come for an ethnic people, is probably the most crucial element in covenantal nomism's gracious framework. The concept of election has been redefined by Paul in terms of those (especially Israelites) who believe in Christ. The law that had served as the mark of an elect people no longer serves that function" (p. 112).

⁸⁵ Sanders (*PPJ*, 551) rightly argues, "Paul in fact explicitly denies that the Jewish covenant can be effective for salvation, thus consciously denying the basis of Judaism." See also Sanders, *PLJP*, 46-47. While not paying sufficient attention to the significance of the antitheses in Gal 5.2-6 for Paul's critique of Judaism, Sanders (*PLJP*, 208) is right in saying that Paul denies "two pillars common to all forms of Judaism: the election of Israel and faithfulness to the Mosaic law." On the basis of the comparison the key motifs of covenant, election, and sacrifice in Paul and in covenantal nomism (*Paul*, 70-144), Das concludes, "Paul nullifies the gracious framework of covenant, election, and sacrifice in favor of a very different framework centered on Christ" (p. 269).

⁸⁶ Grabbe, "Orthodoxy in First Century Judaism," 150-151; Räisänen, "Galatians 2.16," 548-550.

⁸⁷ Sanders (*PPJ*, 233) convincingly argues that the "view that Rabbinic religion was a religion of legalistic work-righteousness in which a man was saved by fulfilling more commandments than he committed transgression" is "completely wrong": "it proceeds from theological presuppositions and is supported by systematically misunderstanding and misconstruing passages in Rabbinic literature."

⁸⁸ For a comprehensive study about Paul's conviction for his mission to the Gentiles, see Donaldson, *Paul*. Unfortunately, Donaldson fails to give enough weight to the significance of the antitheses in Gal 5.2-6 for Paul's conviction to the mission to the Gentiles. It is remarkable, in particular, that Donaldson's work contains no discussion concerning the Spirit as the ground of Paul's mission to the Gentiles. For Paul the Spirit is a soteriological basis of justification of the Gentiles and a new identity marker of God's people (§5.2.).

follows: **1)** Gentiles become members of the community of God's people not by accepting circumcision but by receiving the salvific benefits of Christ (ch. 2). Israel's unique privileges (e.g. righteousness, sonship, the blessing of Abraham) were granted universally to the Gentiles by means of the Christ-event, without their becoming proselytes through circumcision. **2)** Gentiles can become God's people within the boundary of Christ without entering within the boundary of the law (i.e. Israel) through proselytization (ch. 3). **3)** God's saving grace was shown to Jews and Gentiles together, not limited to Jews only (ch. 4). The fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham through God's saving work by Christ and the Spirit is a central theological basis for Paul's mission to the Gentiles.⁸⁹ **4)** God accepts Gentiles as God's people by granting the Spirit to non-proselyte Gentile believers, apart from Torah observance (ch. 5). **5)** God justifies Jews and Gentiles through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ, not through the works of the law (ch. 6). **6)** In the sphere of Christ, the Jewish perspective "circumcision/uncircumcision," which kept Jew and Gentile apart, has been brought to an end by the power of Christ' faithfulness and Christ's death is universalistic and effective for the salvation of all humankind (ch. 7).

The antitheses represent Paul's theological transition from "ethnocentric soteriology" (i.e. Israel-centered soteriology – justification in and through the law) to "Christocentric and pneumacentric soteriology" (i.e. justification in and through Christ and the Spirit). The antitheses function as the theological basis for Paul's law-free and circumcision-free mission to the Gentiles and τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς ἀκροβυστίας (Gal 2.7). Paul's theological conviction that leads him to the mission to the Gentiles is that God justifies Gentiles as well as Jews not in and through the law (Jewish particularism) but in and through Christ and the Spirit (Christian universalism). This conviction is based on Paul's Christological and pneumatological interpretation of God's universal salvation in and through Christ and the Spirit. In short, as far as Galatians is concerned, Paul's mission to the Gentiles is based on his conviction that God's promise to bless the nations (Gen 12.3; 18.18; cited in Gal 3.8)

⁸⁹ Barclay (*Obeying*, 88) rightly notes, "the Abrahamic promises already legitimated Paul's law-free mission to the Gentiles." See also T. R. Schreiner, *Paul* (Leicester, England: Apollos, 2001), 73-85.

always had the justification of the Gentiles in view from the beginning and was fulfilled at a preordained time by God's sending of his Son and the Spirit and the advent and revelation of Christ's faithfulness. This conviction far exceeds some form of Jewish universalism,⁹⁰ such as a concept of "righteous Gentiles," a concept of "eschatological pilgrimage," and Jewish proselytism.⁹¹ Paul's Christological and pneumatological universalism has no true antecedents or equivalents in pre-Christian Jewish literature.⁹²

8. 3. 3. Meaning of Πίστις Χριστοῦ

The present study is significant for the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate. In light of the fact that the unqualified πίστις references in 3.23-25 and 5.5-6 refer to "the faithfulness of Christ," all the πίστις occurrences in Galatians (πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ - Gal 2.16; 3.22, its equivalents,⁹³ and the noun πίστις) which emerge in the context of justification probably denote "the faithfulness of Christ."⁹⁴ The phrase ἐκ πίστεως (5.5) is a dogmatic formulaic summary⁹⁵ which recapitulates the various phrases διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (2.16a), ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ (2.16b), ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (3.22), ἐκ πίστεως (3.8), and διὰ τῆς πίστεως (3.26) which describe the instrument of justification.⁹⁶ One corollary is to be mentioned. From the claim in the preceding study, we can infer that ἐκ πίστεως (Rom 3.30; 5.1; 9.30, 32;

⁹⁰ Similarly Smiles, *Gospel*, 139.

⁹¹ For these various patterns of Jewish universalism, see Donaldson, *Paul*, 51-78.

⁹² *Pace* Donaldson (*Paul*) who argues that Paul's mission to the Gentiles should be understood in terms of a revision of Jewish universalism rather than a rejection of Jewish particularism.

⁹³ πίστις Ἰησοῦ (Gal 2.16); πίστις τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ (Gal 2.20); ἐκ πίστεως (Gal 3.8, 24; 5.5); διὰ τῆς πίστεως (Gal 3.26).

⁹⁴ Dunn ("ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ," 74) states, "The irony of the subjective genitive reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ, therefore, is that in order to sustain it, other unqualified references to 'faith' have to be taken as echoing or pointing forward to that meaning, 'Christ's faith'." The irony seems to be resolved by our exegetical study of the unqualified πίστις references in 3.23-25 and 5.5-6 (§6.1.).

⁹⁵ Betz, *Galatians*, 262.

⁹⁶ Campbell ("Romans 1.17," 267) seems to argue that ἐκ πίστεως in Rom 1.17 is a formulaic summary when he suggests that Rom 1.17 "clearly deploys the critical phrase ἐκ πίστεως as an intertextually motivated allusion to the faithful death of Christ . . . , such a christological reading of Rom 1.17 has powerful implications for Paul's repeated use of this phrase – and πίστις itself – in the famous arguments that follow."

10.6), διὰ τῆς πίστεως (Rom 3.30), and δια πίστεως Χριστοῦ (Phil 3.9) which appear in the context of justification mean “by or through the faithfulness of Christ.”

On the basis of the exegetical study of the πίστις references in Gal 5.5-6, I would suggest that Gal 5.5-6 is a *crux interpretum* for the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate (at least in Galatians).⁹⁷ Gal 5.5-6 (and Gal 3.23-25) can be seen as determinative of Paul’s usage of πίστις Χριστοῦ in the rhetorical context of the justification issue. The πίστις references in Gal 5.5-6 are neglected evidence for the interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ as “the faithfulness of Christ” in the history of the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate. Also Gal 5.6 is an important text both for understanding the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ as Christ’s faithfulness working powerfully for justification through his self-giving love on the cross (cf. Gal 3.23-25) and for considering humanity as the object to which Christ’s faithfulness is displayed.

8. 4. Concluding Remarks

In spite of the significance of 5.2-6 for the interpretation of Galatians and its contribution to Pauline interpretation, it has been neglected in the history of interpretation of Galatians. This project has attempted to shed some fresh light on the issues in Galatians, particularly the six antitheses in 5.2-6, circumcision, the salvific benefits of Christ, justification ἐν νόμῳ and ἐν Χριστῷ, the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ, the truth of Paul’s Gospel in Galatians, the issue of salvation history in Galatians, and Paul’s view of the law in Galatians. The present study has also sought to contribute to understanding some important issues, such as Paul’s critique of covenantal nomism, Paul’s denial of circumcision, Paul’s mission to the Gentiles, and the antithesis between ἔργα νόμου and πίστις Χριστοῦ. Moreover, this thesis attempted to clarify the rhetorical function of Gal 5.2-12 within Galatians and the theme of Gal 5.2-6.

This investigation has sustained the thesis that Gal 5.2-6 encapsulates the truth of Paul’s gospel and represents the heart of Paul’s theological interpretation of

⁹⁷ Campbell proposed that Rom 1.17 and its messianic use of Hab 2.4 is a *crux interpretum* for the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate (“Romans 1.17,” 265-285; idem, “False Presuppositions in the ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ Debate,” 713-719).

God's eschatological saving event in and through Christ and the Spirit. Moreover, this thesis has established that the antitheses in Gal 5.2-6 contain interpretive clues for understanding Paul's view of circumcision, the law, the inclusion of the Gentiles into the people of God, and the truth of the gospel in Galatians. Furthermore, I advanced the claim that the antitheses function as a summary of Paul's argument to the Galatians, the answer to the pivotal issues at stake in Galatians, the solution of the crisis in Galatia, and the rationale for Paul's opposition to the agitators' gospel. In conclusion, Gal 5.2-6, where the six antitheses appear, is the truth-claim of Paul's gospel, the summary and climax of Paul's argument to the Galatians, and a hermeneutical key to Paul's letter to the Galatians.

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