

**RETHINKING
THE NEW PERSPECTIVE
ON PAUL**

**JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH AND PAUL'S GOSPEL
ACCORDING TO GALATIANS**

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DEDICATED TO MY MOTHER
WHO STILL LIVES
IN MY MEMORY AND IN GOD'S LOVE

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Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	D. N. Freedman, ed., <i>The Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> vols. 6 (New York: Doubleday, 1992)
BDAG	W. Bauer, W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich & F. W. Danker, <i>A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature</i> (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), Second edition.
Bib	Biblica
BibRes	Biblical Research
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
CT	Christianity Today
CTJ	Calvin Theological Journal
ExpTim	Expository Times
Hermeneia	Hermeneia – A Critical and Historical Commentary
HTR	Harvard Theological Review
ICC	International Critical Commentary
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JSNT	Journal for the Study of the New Testament
JSNTSS	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies

NIC	New International Commentary
NIDNTT	C. Brown, ed., <i>The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology</i> , 4 vols. (Grand Rapids: The Zondervan Corporation, 1986)
NTS	New Testament Studies
SB	Studia Biblica
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
TDNT	G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, eds., <i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> , 10 vols, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976)
Them	Themelios
T&L	Theology & Life
TynB	Tyndale Bulletin
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

Part 1

An overview of the New Perspective

1. Introduction

We live after the Reformation. It is well known that Luther was at the centre of the Reformation, and, furthermore, that the doctrine of justification by faith, in turn, was at the centre of the Reformation. The Lutheran version of this teaching can be found in the Augsburg Confession, Article IV.¹ Knowing that article IV is called the article with which the church stands or falls, one cannot overemphasise the fact that Luther put weight on this very teaching. In this respect, N. A. Dahl² is quite right:

For Luther and for Lutheran confessions, the doctrine of justification by faith is not simply one doctrine among many: it determines the whole understanding of Christianity in a way that revolutionized the structure of the church and of society.

Luther's understanding of the gospel has been regarded as an axiom during the last half of the millennium.³ A hurricane, however, came over the calm lake of Theology. Sanders⁴ was at the eye of the hurricane. Of course, there is nothing new under the sun. This hurricane was preceded

¹ K. O. Sandnes, "Justification by faith' – an outdated doctrine? the New Perspective on Paul – a presentation and appraisal", *T&L* 17-19 (1996), p. 127.

² N. A. Dahl, *Studies in Paul: theology of the early Christian mission* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977), p. 117.

³ S. J. Joseph Plevnik, *What are they saying about Paul?* (Mahwah, N. J.: Paulist Press, 1986), p. 83, points out that Protestant theologians have mostly been approaching the doctrine of justification by faith via Luther's discovery and special understanding of it.

⁴ E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestine Judaism* (London: SCM, 1977).

by a number of lesser winds. But there is no doubt that Sanders intensified this hurricane. His new interpretation of second-temple Judaism caused a reconsideration of Paul's view of the law and the meaning of justification by faith. The hurricane gave rise to the so-called New Perspective,⁵ especially on Pauline theology. The New Perspective, in its turn, caused, I think, the most powerful earthquake in this aspect of theology since the Reformation. As a result, Pauline scholars have almost been split in two.⁶

Now our predicament is clear. It is obvious that we cannot remain unaffected by the shock wave of the New Perspective. Therefore, we have to decide to either go against the wave and stick to the Old, or traditional, Perspective or we must ride the wave.⁷ It is impossible to be practising New Testament theology and to ignore the New Perspective.

A perspective may be compared to a window through which we have a particular view. Therefore, the New Perspective as a perspective may produce very many different outputs, and influence almost every aspect of Pauline theology. This means that an accurate evaluation of the New

⁵ J. D. G. Dunn coined this terminology first in his article, "The new perspective on Paul", *BJRJ* 65 (1983).

⁶ S. Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective: second thoughts on the origin of Paul's gospel* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2002), p. xiv, says,

Since the Reformation, I think no school of thought, not even the Bultmannian School, has exerted a greater influence upon Pauline scholarship that the school of the New Perspective.

⁷ I, here, want to point out that the New Perspective should not be interpreted as being radical anti-old perspective in the sense that there is something wrong with the notion of *sola fide* since no New Perspective proponent denies that Paul taught justification by faith and that he rejected self-righteousness. Cf. M. B. Thompson, *The New Perspective on Paul* (Cambridge: Grove Books, 2002).

Perspective necessarily needs the input of almost every dimension of Pauline theology. Therefore, I cannot avoid giving readers the impression that my study deals with a broad area of Pauline theology. I will, however, make an effort to concentrate on only two New Perspective arguments about justification by faith. These two arguments have given rise to most of the objections voiced by the followers of the Old Perspective.

One of the most important new contributions of the New Perspective is their interpretation of Paul's view of justification by faith.⁸ While the Old Perspective has been understanding justification by faith in the general terms of how human beings can be saved, proponents of the New Perspective usually agree on the following: **1) Paul developed the notion of justification by faith at a later stage 2) to defend his gentile mission.** It is on this very point that proponents of the Old Perspective strongly accuse New Perspective scholars of interpreting justification by faith in a narrow sense. We all know that justification by faith was the basis on which the Reformation stood. Therefore, this new understanding of justification by faith is worthy to draw our attention. I will evaluate the validity of the two proposals made by the New Perspective.

Regarding my research problem, **firstly**, I am strongly against the view of the New Perspective that Paul developed the notion of justification by faith at a later stage.

Secondly, I, nevertheless, wholeheartedly welcome the New Perspective in that they read the notion of justification by faith in the

⁸ For details, see "3. The problems of the New Perspective" on p. 26.

context of Paul's gentile mission. In this regard, it seems to me, that the New Perspective is definitely correct.

Thirdly, I believe, however, that the New Perspective fails in properly evaluating Paul's gentile mission itself so that it, in turn, fails in rightly understanding the meaning of its own excellent interpretation of justification by faith in Paul's gospel. As a result, the New Perspective can not escape being criticised for marginalising both the gentile mission and justification by faith in Paul's theology.

On the other hand, it must be noted that the Old Perspective also does not properly evaluate justification by faith and Paul's gentile mission. In other words, both the Old and New Perspectives do not properly evaluate Paul's gentile mission itself as part of the core of Paul's gospel. This is so because, having interpreted justification by faith in the context of *Paul's gentile mission*, many New Perspective scholars themselves conclude that justification by faith was a plea, a subsidiary thing, a peripheral one. In the case of proponents of the Old Perspective, they also regard the interpretation of justification by faith by the New Perspective (that is, the interpretation of justification by faith in the context of *Paul's gentile mission*) as a narrow interpretation. This means that even though both do not agree with each other on their respective interpretation of justification by faith, both agree with the view that Paul's gentile mission is not the essence of Paul's gospel.

In this regard, I will prove that, although I can in no way agree with the New Perspective on the late origin of justification by faith, the New

Perspective is right in reading justification by faith in the context of Paul's gentile mission. In this instance the New Perspective is right and the Old Perspective is wrong. I will, however, also show that the understanding of the New Perspective of Paul's gentile mission is problematic and I will suggest alternative. I intend to show that, for Paul, his gentile mission is the climax of his gospel, and that it must rather be regarded as his gospel itself. Finally, when the New Perspective scholars' justification by faith is reread in the light of my new understanding of Paul's gentile mission, it will reveal the true meaning of justification by faith.

The biblical scope of my study will be confined mainly to Galatians, but sometimes I will refer to Romans to support and verify my arguments. The reason for this is that the notion of justification by faith was formulated mainly in these two epistles. By selecting these two epistles, we should be able to decide rather easily whether or not the New Perspective covers the entire Pauline theology as a whole, because those two letters cover Paul's thinking from the early stages of his Christian life to the later.⁹

With regard to my method and structure, I will not spend much time dealing with Judaism itself, especially not with Sanders' representation of Palestine Judaism. I prefer to examine its soundness by asking if the New Perspective, based on Sanders' views of Judaism, can explain Paul's

⁹ For example, C. E. B. Cranfield, "The works of the law' in the Epistle to the Romans", *JSNT* 43 (1991), pp. 91, says that Dunn's explanation of the 'works of the law' has a certain plausibility in Galatians, but not in Romans.

teaching better than Old Perspective.

Firstly, after summarising the history of the New Perspective and the problems of the New Perspective in **Part 1**, I will examine the origin of Paul's Christ-Torah antithesis in **Part 2** to find out when Paul's notion of justification by faith originated.

Secondly, in **Part 3**, I will do my own **independent theological exegesis** to evaluate the argument of the New Perspective that justification by faith must be understood not in general terms of how human beings can be saved, but in the context of Paul's gentile mission.

Thirdly, I will show in **Part 4** that the gentile apostle, Paul, identifies his gospel with his gentile mission. This will be proved by means of my own exegesis of the word 'gospel' in Galatians in the redemptive historical context of the Abrahamic covenant.

Lastly, I will point out in the conclusion that justification by faith must be understood according to the New Perspective. In other words, Paul's works-belief antithesis must be interpreted not in general terms of good works, but in terms of **Paul's gentile mission** (pro the New Perspective). Nevertheless, considering the fact that, for Paul, his gentile mission itself was his gospel, this interpretation of justification by faith must not be regarded as a **simple** polemical response for Paul's mission,¹⁰ a **mere** late technical manoeuvre¹¹ nor a **subsidiary** crater¹²

¹⁰ Scholars such as Wrede and Davis view Paul's justification by faith as a simple polemical response. See J. Plevnik, **Paul**, p. 60.

¹¹ Kim, **Paul**, p. 82, says that Dunn regards Paul's justification by faith as a mere technical maneuver.

(*contra* the New Perspective) but the core of Paul's gentile mission as his gospel.¹³

2. Historical Background

2.1. Introduction

The New Perspective was not invented by one man in a day. It is helpful to have a brief look at the history of Pauline theology in order to properly evaluate the New Perspective and to correctly understand the objections of the Old Perspective.

There are several possible ways to survey developments in Pauline theology. For example, we can take philosophical influences on Pauline theology as a possible perspective, since the interpretation of Pauline theology has often been influenced by philosophy.¹⁴ Baur and Bultmann can serve as good examples in this regard: Baur interpreted Christian history in terms of Hegelian philosophy and Bultmann made use of Heidegger's existentialism. However, for our study it is better to

¹² A. Schweitzer, *The mysticism of Paul the apostle* (New York: Seabury Press, 1931), p. 225, regards justification by faith as a subsidiary crater.

¹³ This, however, does not mean that I will simply go back to Old Perspective since I will stress that Paul's gentile mission is the core of Paul's gospel in the light of the New Perspective.

¹⁴ H. Ridderbos, *Paul: an outline of his theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), p. 15.

approach this issue from two other perspectives, namely 1) Views on the central idea in Paul's theology; and 2) Palestine Judaism. Both relate directly to the New Perspective¹⁵ and so closely correlate to each other that the understanding of one of the two affects that of the other.¹⁶

2.2. An overview of the study of Judaism and the centre of Paul's theology

In the twentieth century Paul was criticised in many ways. Hunter¹⁷ points out that most liberal theologians thought that Paul distorted Christianity and regarded Paul as the founder of Christianity.¹⁸ Furthermore, there are many theologians who regard Paul's views as inconsistent.¹⁹ Especially under Räisänen's²⁰ influence, it has been

¹⁵ D. A. Hagner, "Paul and Judaism", in: P. Stuhlmacher, *Revisiting Paul's doctrine of justification: a challenge to the New Perspective* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity, 2001), p. 78, says,

These two main foundations of the New Perspective on Paul thus raise two fundamental questions: What was the nature of first century Judaism? and What is at the heart of Paul's Christianity?

¹⁶ For instance, A. Schweitzer (see n. 12) thought that the centre of Paul's theology was the mystical union with Jesus. It was a radically Jewish doctrine which Schweitzer understood against the background of apocalyptic Jewish doctrine. On the other hand, for him, justification by faith which carries a strong suggestive critique on Judaism, was a subsidiary crater to understand Paul's theology. Schweitzer's new understanding of the centre of Paul's theology led to the new evaluation of Judaism.

¹⁷ A. M. Hunter, *The fifth evangelist* (London: SCM, 1980), p. 3.

¹⁸ The criticism against traditional views started with W. Wrede in 1904. He declared that Paul was not Jesus' disciple but the second founder of Christianity. See J. G. Machen, *The origin of Paul's religion* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), pp. 26-27.

¹⁹ H. Räisänen, *Paul and the law* (WUNT 29, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983), p. 256, argues that the confusion and incoherence of Paul's arguments in Galatians and Romans indicates that he could not have been thinking along these lines for very long. T. L.

doubted if Paul could be regarded as thinking systematically.²¹ But even if we cannot regard him as a systematic thinker we have to believe that he was not self-contradictory but coherent at least.²² If so, what is the centre of Paul's theology? It is common knowledge that Luther regarded the Judaism that Paul opposed as legalism. It is also generally accepted that Luther considered the notion of justification by faith to be the centre of Paul's thought. But Lutherans are not the only people who view justification by faith as the central doctrine to the understanding of Christianity as a whole. Justification by faith plays a very important role in grasping the gospel in Calvinistic circles as well.²³

Bultmann²⁴ held European theology in sway during modern times. He believed that Paul took his central ideas from Hellenism, not from

Donaldson, "Zealot and convert: the origin of Paul's Christ-Torah antithesis", *CBQ* 51 (1989), pp. 661-662, basically agrees with Räisänen on this point. He says that Paul is incoherent and this is caused by the attempt to hold together incompatible convictions.

E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish people* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), p. 4, also says that it is not easy to distinguish between the reason why Paul held a view and the arguments which he adduces in favour of it. He, *ibid.*, pp. 80-81, then, says,

Paul attempts to hold these convictions together in different ways and each attempt springs from the same central conviction and is, in that sense, part of a coherent line of thought. But in and of themselves the attempts are not harmonious.

And see also Sanders, *Judaism*, pp. 144-148. But at least Sanders regards Paul as a coherent thinker.

²⁰ H. Räisänen, *ibid.*, p. 228, concludes that Paul runs into severe contradictions.

²¹ For this issue, see D. G. Reid, "Did Paul have a theology?", *CT* 39:5 (1995), pp. 18-22.

²² J. M. G. Barclay, "Paul and the law: observations on some recent debates", *Them* 12 (1987), p. 12, is content to let Paul remain unsystematic and incomplete. But he, *ibid.*, pp. 8, 11, sympathises with Sanders on the point that Paul is a coherent thinker.

²³ G. C. Berkouwer, "Faith and justification", *ExpTim* 66 (1954), pp. 72ff.

²⁴ R. Bultmann, *Primitive Christianity in its contemporary setting* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1956).

Judaism.²⁵ Bultmann²⁶ described first century Judaism as a legalistic religion which awarded an important position to good works, and which based the salvation of human beings on their merits. In this regard, he thought that there must have been an antithesis between Paul and Judaism.²⁷ On the other hand, he found the centre of Pauline theology in Paul's understanding of humankind. Bultmann understood justification by faith against the background of his existential understanding of anthropology. In this respect, he was following the Lutheran tradition in which justification by faith was regarded as the centre of Pauline theology.²⁸

In the twentieth century, Käsemann²⁹ brought about a change in the interpretation of the phrase 'righteousness of God' that, for Paul, was most closely related to faith.³⁰ While Luther thought that it meant a human being's righteousness before God (the objective genitive case), for Käsemann it was a problem which needed theological, rather than grammatical and historical, interpretation. He believed that it referred to Paul's understanding of God acting as the Lord of all creatures. For him, the special point of God's righteousness was his power (Rom. 1:17) which meant the validity of God's righteousness more than the simple imputation of his righteousness. Therefore, Käsemann's interpretation of

²⁵ See N. T. Wright, *What Saint Paul really said* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), p. 16.

²⁶ R. Bultmann, *Primitive Christianity*, pp. 68-69.

²⁷ E. P. Sanders, *Judaism*, p. 3.

²⁸ N. T. Wright, *Paul*, p. 17.

²⁹ E. Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), pp. 23-30.

³⁰ H. Ridderbos, *Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), p. 170, says that it is characteristic for Paul that faith and God's righteousness are in the closest relation.

justification by faith was dominated by an emphasis on God's creative action that made sinners righteous instead of the notion of forensic justification. Thus, even though he viewed justification by faith from a different angle, he still took it as the centre of Paul's theology and of the New Testament as well.³¹ We, now, can safely say that the idea of justification by faith, within the context of legalistic Judaism, has been traditionally regarded as central for Paul's theology since Luther.

Another noteworthy movement arose in the twentieth century. It did cast a doubt on Paul's view of Judaism by looking at Judaism in a different way. C. G. Montefiore³² believed that Paul had known not Palestine Judaism but another kind of Judaism. He concluded that the Judaism that Paul knew and opposed was not main-line Rabbinic but a poorer form of Judaism, that is, Hellenistic Judaism.³³ Parkes' solution³⁴ was basically the same as Montefiore's. He thought that Paul attacked not Rabbinic Judaism but Diaspora Judaism. H. J. Schoeps,³⁵ who was Jewish, thought that Paul totally misunderstood the law in the Jewish covenantal context. That is to say, the idea that righteousness can be earned by work, corresponds to non-typical Judaism and Paul was criticising an erroneous form of Judaism. Despite diversity of opinions between these scholars, the common point is that they all believed that Paul made a

³¹ J. Plevnik, *Paul*, p. 65.

³² C. G. Montefiore, *Judaism and St. Paul: two essays* (London: Max Goschen Ltd, 1914), p. 76.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 92-112.

³⁴ J. Parkes, *Jesus, Paul and the Jews* (London : SCM, 1936), pp. 123-124.

³⁵ H. J. Schoeps, *Paul: the theology of the apostle in the light of Jewish thought* (London: Lutterworth, 1961), p. 218.

mistake in evaluating Judaism by attacking the works of the law.³⁶

In addition to this movement, it is useful for us to scrutinise Schweitzer.³⁷ He provided a benchmark for subsequent studies, raising several important questions. One of them is how to conduct Pauline theology. Another is what should be regarded as the beginning and centre of Pauline theology.³⁸ He regarded Paul not as a Hellenistic but as a Jewish thinker. It means that Schweitzer was viewing Judaism from a different angle. Furthermore, for Schweitzer, the centre of Paul's theology was not justification by faith but Christ-mysticism. Thus for Schweitzer unification in Christ was the centre of Paul's theology.³⁹ On the other hand, justification by faith was a polemic thrust which was related to the issue of the inclusion of Gentiles into church. For Schweitzer,⁴⁰ the notion of justification by faith was a 'subsidiary crater'. He regarded Christ-mysticism as the centre of Pauline theology within the context of apocalyptic Judaism; not within the context of Hellenistic

³⁶ In this respect, the arguments of these scholars could be interpreted as that they thought that they know first century Judaism better than Paul did. Therefore, I want to apply to them, C. K Barrett's, *Paul* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1994), p. 78, remark about Sanders: "He is a bold man who supposes that he understands first century Judaism better than Paul did". However, I think that such criticism cannot apply to Sanders, because Sanders does not regard Paul's understanding of Judaism as wrong.

³⁷ A. Schweitzer, *Mysticism*.

³⁸ N. T. Wright, *Paul*, pp. 12-14.

³⁹ A. Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, pp. 225, 295, points out that when we, according to the Reformers, interpret justification by faith in forensic terms, it has no relation to the sinner's nature. Accordingly, there is difficulty to base ethics on this forensic understanding of justification by faith. However, if Christ-mysticism was the centre of Paul's theology, it could also function as the source for Pauline ethics.

⁴⁰ Schweitzer, *ibid.*, p. 225, says that while the mystical doctrine of redemption through being-in-Christ is the 'main' crater, the doctrine of righteousness by faith is a 'subsidiary' one.

Judaism.

However, Schweitzer's insight was not evaluated properly owing to the influence of Thackeray,⁴¹ whose views, in turn, were based on Weber's systematic theology.⁴² Thus Bultmann's views that Paul took his central ideas, motifs and theology not from Judaism, but from Hellenism, dominated research in the previous century. As I pointed out, first century Judaism was regarded by Bultmann as a legalistic religion. This view dominated the interpretation of Judaism of many scholars.⁴³

However, Schweitzer's idea was revived by W. D. Davis.⁴⁴ Arguing that it is ambiguous to differentiate between Hellenistic and Palestinian Judaism, Davis⁴⁵ pointed out that what Bultmann and other theologians attributed to Paul's Hellenistic background, could be found in Judaism. This was a different attitude towards Judaism. What is important for our discussion is that Davis found the centre of Paul's ideas not in justification by faith, but in the meaning of the Messiah Jesus. Davis regarded Jesus as the Messiah of a new exodus, who established a new Torah, and a new Israel so that for him, Christianity was not the antithesis but the fulfilment of Judaism.⁴⁶

Five years after Davis wrote the remarkable book that marks a

⁴¹ H. Thackeray, *The relation of St. Paul to contemporary Jewish thought* (London: Macmillan & Co, 1900).

⁴² E. P. Sanders, *Judaism*, pp. 2-3.

⁴³ N. T. Wright, *Paul*, p. 16.

⁴⁴ W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (London: SPCM, 1977).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-16.

⁴⁶ E. P. Sanders, *Judaism*, p. 9.

watershed in the scholarship on Paul and Judaism, Stendahl,⁴⁷ in his famous article, said that Paul did not see any fundamental problem in Judaism. In other words, the pre-Christian Paul did not have any agony in getting his salvation when he was part of Judaism, and, therefore, he had a robust conscience.⁴⁸ Blaming Augustine for making Paul a person who had an introspective conscience and, Luther for degrading Paul's justification by faith as an answer to individual salvation, Stendahl⁴⁹ identified Paul's Damascus encounter as a calling rather than a conversion, and interpreted the notion of justification by faith as related to Paul's Gentile mission. In this regard, we can hear the echo of Schweitzer's voice.

There has been a minority opinion that the notion of justification by faith resulted from Paul's Gentile mission as a polemic response against his opponents.⁵⁰ But it is E. P. Sanders who proposed a new view of Judaism in such a way that we can no longer ignore rethinking the minority opinion. He did not follow motif research which was common at his time, as a research method. He was opposed to the comparison of reduced essences (e.g., faith versus works) or individual motifs, and instead scrutinised Jewish religion as a whole by comparing 'patterns' of religions. A 'pattern' is the description of how the adherents of a religion

⁴⁷ K. Stendahl, "The apostle Paul and the introspective conscience of the West", *HTR* 56 (1963), pp. 199–215.

⁴⁸ The expression 'robust conscience' is Stendahl's.

⁴⁹ K. Stendahl, *Paul among Jews and Gentiles* (London: SCM, 1976), pp. 130–132.

⁵⁰ We can include Wrede as the founding father of this opinion. See J. D. G. Dunn, *Theology of Paul the apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), p. 380.

perceive it to function. 'Perceive to function' has the sense of how 'getting in' and 'staying in' are understood.⁵¹ He examined Tannaitic literature, the Dead Sea Scrolls and Apocryphal and Pseudepographical writings, from Ben Sirach to IV Ezra. Having taken everything into consideration, Sanders⁵² pointed out that, "In all the literature surveyed, obedience maintains one's position in the covenant, but it does not earn God's grace as such". Finally, Sanders⁵³ described the pattern of Palestinian Judaism as covenantal nomism.

On the other hand, Sanders⁵⁴ proposed that Paul's pattern of religious thought was one of participationist eschatology. Having compared the pattern between Paul and Judaism, he argued that the pattern of Paul's religion was different from that of Judaism in very important points such as righteousness, the function of repentance and the nature of sin. However, the difference between Paul and Judaism did not come from the antithesis between grace and works. According to Sanders, on this point there was in fact agreement. So he concluded that there were substantial agreements and a basic difference between Paul and Judaism. The difference can be summarised as follows: Judaism is not Christianity. Actually, the conclusion was derived from Paul's way of thinking, the so-called 'from solution to plight'. In other words, only after Sanders' Paul met Christ, did he come to see the problem of Judaism.

⁵¹ E. P. Sanders, *Judaism*, pp. 12, 17.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 420.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 422-423.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 543-552.

Thus before the Damascus road, Sanders' Paul could not find any plight in Judaism. On the other hand, for Sanders the main theme of Paul's theology is found in his participationist language rather than in the theme of righteousness by faith. For Sanders, the notion of justification by faith had a special function for Paul.⁵⁵ Of course, there were many who opposed the traditional view of Judaism before Sanders, but he argued his points in such a strong way that his research triggered the New Perspective.⁵⁶

In the light of the above, I can say with confidence that one's view of Judaism and one's view of the centre of Paul's thought are closely related.⁵⁷ To summarise, if the results of this overview may be

⁵⁵ E. P. Sanders, *Law*, p. 6, asserts that for Paul "being justified" is a term indicating a change from an unsaved to a saved state (see also charts on p. 8). And explaining Gal. 2-3, Sanders *ibid.*, p. 19, contends that Paul did oppose not faith nor works itself but the opinion that Gentiles must follow the law to become Abraham's true descendents. Donaldson, "Zealot", p. 667, evaluates Sanders' opinion as follows:

Sanders has clarified what he would like to call the ecclesiological nature of Paul's Christ-Torah antithesis. This antithesis emerged whenever the Torah was being insisted on as a boundary condition, a condition of entry into the community of salvation.

⁵⁶ I will point out later that some scholars who support the traditional viewpoints actually do not properly understand the covenant (see pp. 148-152). But considering Judaism, I, here in advance, have to say one thing regarding the covenant. If we must call Judaism legalistic, I think that we can then call Paul's religion legalistic too. Since having noticed the way in which grace and merit function in Judaism, many scholars found a synergism similar to Judaism in Paul. For instance, K. L. Yinger, *Paul, Judaism and judgment according to deeds* (SNTSMS 105, Cambridge: CUP, 1999), p. 105, argues that Christianity is different from Judaism, but nevertheless they are similar in the structure of grace and work, election and obedience and salvation and judgment.

My point is that if we fail in understanding Judaism and Christianity in terms of the covenant, we must end up regarding Christianity as legalistic. Without a proper understanding of the Biblical covenant, I cannot find a way to understand sayings of Paul such as Phil. 2:12 ("Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence, continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling") without regarding this as a legalistic expression. See also pp. 149-152.

⁵⁷ In this regard, we can say that Käsemann is unique, because he suggests a new

summarised in terms of the New Perspective, I would say that the overview of ‘the views of Judaism’ and ‘the centre of Paul’s theology’ shows that, at first, Pauline scholars interpreted Pauline theology in terms of Luther’s understanding of the notion of justification by faith and **mistook** Judaism for a religion of legalistic work-righteousness. At the next stage, scholars who studied Judaism itself concluded that Paul himself had mistaken Judaism, and it, now, seems that both Pauline theology and the study of Judaism via the New Perspective are trying to dispel the past misunderstandings about both Paul and Judaism.

3. The problems of the New Perspective - The theological implication of the Antioch incident -

In the previous section, we saw that traditionally Paul’s criticism of Judaism has been understood as that of a religion of legalistic work – righteousness – and that scholars usually thought that the notion of justification by faith was the centre of Pauline theology. I also pointed out that alternative interpretations of Judaism, which affected the

synthesis of Schweitzer (Paul’s true background can be found in eschatological Judaism) and Bultmann (justification is the centre of Pauline theology) in his commentary of Romans See N. T. Wright, **Paul**, p. 17.

understanding of justification by faith arose as early as Wrede, Schweitzer and Sanders. In particular, Sanders' research of Judaism became a seedbed for the New Perspective. However, although the New Perspective is based on the new evaluation of Judaism, it has a relatively wide scope so that it is neither easy nor accurate to summarise its views in a nutshell. Therefore, I have selected two characteristic aspects of justification by faith that the Old Perspective scholars have traditionally regarded as a central doctrine for understanding Paul's thought. These issues are commonly accepted by the New Perspective scholars, whereas the Old Perspective scholars strongly oppose exactly these two issues. The two issues are 1) the *origin* of the notion of justification by faith; and 2) the *function* of this notion.

The Antioch incident is one of the most important windows through which we can view the history of early Christianity and understand the background and the nature of justification by faith. Pointing out that we should not underestimate Paul's position at Antioch where he met and rebuked Peter, Dunn⁵⁸ says,

For the first time probably, he has come to see that the principle of 'justification through faith' applied not simply to the acceptance of the gospel in conversion, but also to the whole of the believer's life. That is to say, he saw that justification through faith was not simply a statement of how the believer entered into God's covenanted promises. It must also regulate his life as a believer. The covenantal nomism of Judaism and of the Jewish believers was in fact a contradiction of that agreed understanding of justification through faith ... Thus Paul *began to see, as*

⁵⁸ J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul, and the law: studies in Mark and Galatians* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990), pp. 158-159.

probably he had never seen before, that the principle of justification through faith meant a redefining of the relation between the believer and Israel – not an abandoning of that link, but a redefining of it – a redefining of how the inheritance of Abraham could embrace Gentiles apart from the law.⁵⁹ (Dunn’s emphasis in italics)

Watson,⁶⁰ in a more radical way, argues that having turned to the Gentiles out of frustration with his lack of success among the Jews, Paul found that Gentiles responded more readily when they were not required to submit to the law, and so abandoned this requirement to make it easier for Gentiles to become Christians. *Only when* Paul met with Jewish Christian oppositions did he defend his step theologically. Paul’s criticism of the law was an attempt to justify his essentially non – theological or pragmatic decision.

The common point in these views is that the notion of justification by faith is thought to have developed *at a later stage* than traditionally

⁵⁹On the other hand, Dunn does not accept a radical development theory. See J. D. G. Dunn, “Paul and justification by faith”, In: R. N. Longenecker (ed.), *The road from Damascus: the impact of Paul’s conversion on his life, thought, and ministry* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 1997, pp. 93–94:

We can indeed speak of Paul’s doctrine of justification as the immediate expression of his experience of God’s grace on the Damascus road ... In this way and in this sense Paul discovered justification by grace on the Damascus road (p. 94).

But I have to point out the fact that Dunn *does not use the expression ‘justification by faith’ - to my mind, on purpose*. And J. D. G. Dunn, *ibid.*, pp. 99–100, is trying to understand justification by faith in a later context, saying,

The principle was *implicit* in the revelation made to him on the Damascus road ... What his years of initial missionary work, climaxing in the Jerusalem consultation and the Antioch incident, brought home to him were the *ramification* of this basic revelation. The controversies ... forced him to *think through and to articulate* ... he summed it up in the classic slogan: justification from faith and not from works. (My italics)

⁶⁰ F. Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the gentiles: a sociological approach* (SNTSMS 56, Cambridge: CUP, 1986), pp. 34–36.

regarded. This is the first common notion in the New Perspective.⁶¹

With regard to the second issue, the Adam-Christ and the first Adam-last Adam typology of Paul, Stendahl⁶² believes that they were related to justification in Rom. 5:14, but not at all in 1 Cor. 15. He argues that the notion of justification by faith was not the pervasive organising doctrinal principle or insight of Paul, but that it had a very specific function in his thought. Stendahl⁶³ contends that, as 2 Cor. 14:11-12 is exclusive only to 2 Corinthians, so justification by faith is exclusive to Romans and Galatians. Finally, Stendahl⁶⁴ asserts that justification by faith is a notion that is related to Paul's Gentile mission.

Räsänen⁶⁵ argues in a similar way. He says that we should distinguish Paul's basic convictions from the arguments by which he explains and defends his convictions, and that the notion of justification by faith belongs to the latter, namely, his arguments. Furthermore, Räsänen⁶⁶ believes that Paul, after the Damascus encounter, accepted a Hellenistic Jewish Christianity in that had adopted a relaxed attitude

⁶¹ We can go back to Wrede for the beginning of this kind of view. In *The origin of the New Testament* (London: Harper, 1909), p. 19, Wrede calls Paul the first Christian theologian. But I think he does this in a negative sense, since he, *ibid.*, p. 23, says that there is a striking difference between Jesus' teaching and Paul's and that the step to dogma was taken by Paul. Furthermore, he interprets justification by faith in this context so that he (*ibid.*, p. 32), argues that the apostles accepted Paul's law-free gospel, but that the Judaizers in Galatia did not, and that when the Galatians succumbed to their views, Paul developed the doctrine. Wrede even says that the doctrine developed further so that the doctrine in Romans surpassed that in Galatians.

⁶² K. Stendahl, *Paul*, p. 27.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 130-132.

⁶⁵ H. Räsänen, "Paul's conversion and the development of his view of the law", *NTS* 33 (1987), pp. 401-419; see especially p. 410.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 404-405.

towards the Torah. Those who belonged to the Hellenistic Jewish Christianity had already accepted gentiles without circumcision and they did not actually think about the theological implications of their circumcision-free gentile mission. Paul simply adopted their unreflective liberalism, regarding the law as an *adiaphoron*. It was only when he had to respond to an attempt to impose the cultic law on the Gentiles that his internal attitude became theologically external. This attitude of Paul developed in a more radical direction only a good deal later. To prove his view, Räisänen points out that there is no critique of the law in 1 Thessalonians and that Paul used justification language only in a particular polemical situation. Saying that Paul shared the general view of the Antiochan church on the law before the Antioch incident but when he indicated his view in public at the Antioch incident he had to leave Barnabas and the Antioch church, Räisänen argues that Paul began developing something new at that stage. This was the notion of justification by faith, that was developed to justify his gentile mission. Therefore, Räisänen insists on *the late development* of the notion of justification by faith and *its polemic function* for Paul's Gentile mission, interpreting it as an argument by which Paul defended his conviction. I have already pointed out that Watson more radically argues that subsequent to this very pragmatic decision, Paul built up a whole battery of theological arguments *to justify* his abrogation of the law.

Furthermore, I have already pointed out that Sanders awards Paul's

justification by faith a special function.⁶⁷ Sanders⁶⁸ asserts that Paul's argument in Gal. 2-3 is not in favour of faith *per se*, nor is it against works *per se*. Paul very concretely refuted the argument that Gentiles must be required to keep the Mosaic law *in order to become Abraham's true descendants*.

On this point, Dunn⁶⁹ is basically of the same opinion. He believes that justification by faith arose first in Galatians within a context in which Paul was trying to identify and defend his understanding of justification against the views of Jewish Christians who came from Jerusalem and Antioch. Dunn⁷⁰ asserts that Paul was totally at one with his fellow Jews in asserting that justification was by faith. In other words, the profound recognition of God's initiative and grace, in first establishing and then maintaining his covenant, was integral to the idea of the covenant itself, and of God's continued action to maintain it. Dunn also says that it appears that justification by faith was not a distinctively Christian teaching. Therefore, Paul was not arguing with Christians who also happened to be Jews but with Jews who regarded Christian faith as an extension of Jewish faith. Dunn also says that the Lutheran approach destroys a proper historical exegesis. Dunn argues that, these things considered, when Paul opposed justification by works of the law, Paul was thinking of covenant works, works related to the covenant, works

⁶⁷ See n. 49.

⁶⁸ E. P. Sanders, *Judaism*, p. 19.

⁶⁹ J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus*, p. 188.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 190-191.

done in obedience to the law of the covenant – particular observations of the law like circumcision at Jerusalem and the food laws at Antioch – in consideration of the fact that Gal. 2:16 follows immediately on a reference to these events.⁷¹ Furthermore, Dunn⁷² puts great emphasis on the fact that these works functioned as ‘badges’ of the covenantal people. Paul’s asserting of justification by faith against works of the law as a ‘badge’ was an objection to the exclusive nationalism that confined covenantal people to being Jews.⁷³ Dunn thus interprets justification by faith as a response to those who regarded Christianity an extension of the Jewish religion, identifying God’s people by national boundaries. Consequently, the primary meaning of justification by faith was that God’s covenant of grace was for Gentiles as Gentiles.⁷⁴

The interpretations discussed above gave rise to a new understanding of justification by faith. The common point of this understanding is that justification by faith is understood in the sense of its function of defending Paul’s gentile mission.⁷⁵ This is the second characteristic of the New Perspective – one that, to my mind, is more important than the first.

⁷¹ J. D. G. Dunn, *ibid.*, p. 160, thinks that food laws was not discussed at Jerusalem council but only circumcision, so that the decision about food laws in Acts 15 reflected an agreement after the Antioch incident.

⁷² *ibid.*, p. 194.

⁷³ *ibid.*, p. 198.

⁷⁴ J. D. G. Dunn, *The partings of the ways* (London: SCM, 1991), p. 124.

⁷⁵ Actually, this idea can be traced back to W. Wrede, *Paul* (London: Philip Green, 1907), pp. 122-137, who views it not as a pivotal doctrine of soteriology but as ‘Kampfeslehre’, and to A. Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, p. 225, who regards justification by faith as a ‘subsidiary crater’.

To sum up, we can safely say that the New Perspective's interpretation of justification by faith is conspicuously characterised by the idea that it originated late and that its function was to defend Paul's Gentile mission. These two aspects are so closely related that one cannot easily draw a clear line between them. Nevertheless, I will treat them separately, since one does not necessarily imply the other.

It should also be pointed out that it is exactly these two characteristics of the New Perspective's interpretation of justification by faith that the Old Perspective scholars strongly object to. Firstly, when it comes to the first characteristic, that is, the origin of Paul's views on justification by faith, Machen⁷⁶ had already criticised Wrede and Schweitzer, arguing that Paul did not dedicate himself to justification by faith because of his Gentile mission, but, on the contrary, to his Gentile mission because of justification by faith. Kim⁷⁷ is also strongly opposed to the late development theory which Dunn's view represents. Emphasising the Christological component of revelation on the road to Damascus, he opposes Dunn's contention that Paul developed justification by faith after the Antioch incident.

Secondly, about the second characteristic, already when Stendahl newly interpreted justification by faith, Käsemann⁷⁸ contended that Paul's view of justification by faith must not be underestimated as a plea

⁷⁶ J. G. Machen, *Origin*, p. 278.

⁷⁷ S. Kim, *New Perspective*, pp. 4-19, 22-45, 53.

⁷⁸ E. Käsemann, *Perspective on Paul*, trans. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM, 1971), pp. 60-78.

for the equality of Jews and Gentiles in terms of salvation. In this respect, Hagner⁷⁹ agrees with Käsemann. He admits that there may be a controversy about whether justification by faith is the centre of Paul's theology. Nevertheless, he strongly opposes the New Perspective, claiming,

It is important whether for Paul, justification by faith is more important than a ploy which makes good progress in Paul's gentile mission and whether it is important to the extent that it is a doctrine absolutely necessary for Jews' salvation.

Having examined Dunn's idea, Hagner⁸⁰ concludes that to interpret justification by faith against the notion of Jewish boundary markers and national righteousness pushes justification by faith to the periphery, making it pertinent only to Gentiles.

Finding this interpretation too narrow, Kim⁸¹ points out that this is characteristic of the New Perspective as a whole. Furthermore Kim⁸² says,

The doctrine belongs to the centre of Paul's gospel, and it is not a mere tactical manoeuvre which developed fifteen to seventeen years after his conversion and call in order to fight the Judaisers in defence of his gentile mission.

C. K. Barrett⁸³ also basically agrees with this line of criticism. He says no more for Paul than for Luther was justification an instrument for

⁷⁹ D. A. Hagner, "Paul", p. 89.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 104-105.

⁸¹ S. Kim, *New Perspective*, p. 3.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 82.

⁸³ C. K. Barrett, "Paul and the introspective conscience", in: W. P. Stephens (ed.), *The Bible, the Reformation and the Church: essays in honour of James Atkinson* (JSNTS S 105, Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1995), p. 48.

validating the line of missionary work.

As we have seen above, the major differences of opinion between the New and the Old Perspectives in terms of the theological implication of the Antioch incident can be summarised in terms of the 'late and polemical' versus the 'early and universal' meaning of the notion of justification by faith. In this regard, I, first of all, am opposed to the argument that the notion of justification by faith developed in the wake of the Antioch incident. I, however, welcome the New Perspective in that Paul's view of justification by faith is originally and closely related to his missionary work. However, at the same time, I strongly object to the New Perspective in that, having interpreted justification by faith in the context of Paul's gentile mission, the New Perspective itself regards justification by faith as a plea, a subsidiary thing, a peripheral one. I guess that I, in this regard, might be classified as leaving both the Old and the New Perspectives in the strict sense of the word. On this, I am firstly going to relatively briefly consider I) the late development theory. And then, having divided the second characteristic of the New Perspective, that is II) the so-called narrow understanding of justification by faith, into two parts, I will scrutinise them in greater detail since I view them to be more important than the first characteristic. That is to say, I will investigate 1) whether the New Perspective's view that the notion of justification by faith is essentially related to Paul's gentile mission can be supported by the exegesis of Galatians; and 2) if it is proper, whether or not such correct exegesis by the New Perspective

must necessarily lead to a limited interpretation of justification by faith. In other words, does the exegesis of the New Perspective necessarily have to force us to regard justification by faith as a plea, a subsidiary thing, a peripheral one?

On the other hand, my answer to the second part (the so-called narrow understanding of justification by faith) might also be the answer to the first (the late development theory), because I will answer the second part by arguing that, for Paul, the Gentile mission is the core and climax of his gospel and is even the gospel itself, and that this implies that Paul's notion of justification by faith, which is essentially related to Paul's gentile mission, originated not after the Antioch incident but simultaneously with his gospel.

Part 2

The origin of Paul's notion of justification by faith

1. Introduction

One of the ways in which we consider the origin of the notion of justification by faith is to examine sections in the New Testament such as Phil. 3:7-9.¹ I, however, intend to examine the origin of the notion of justification by faith in relation to the law. The reason why I do so is that there is, in a strict sense, a radical discrepancy between the New and Old Perspectives about *the notion 'justification by faith' itself* with regard to the origin of the concept. That is to say, while the Old Perspective scholars assert that justification by faith came in *traditional* terms from the Damascus encounter, the New Perspective scholars contend that it came in *new* terms from the Antioch incident. In other words, both start with their own respective interpretation of justification by faith. Even though this discrepancy does not make it impossible to begin our study by scrutinising a text such as Phil. 3, I believe that it would be the best way to avoid pitfalls from the outset, to start, not from the notion of justification by faith as viewed by the New and Old Perspective, but from the law as a third starting point. Since Paul's notion of justification by

¹ P. Stuhlmacher, *Reconciliation, law and righteousness: essays in Biblical Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), pp. 139-141, and S. Kim, *The origin of Paul's gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), pp. 269-311, view this text as the key for claiming that the encounter with Jesus directly caused Paul's recognising what justification by faith really means.

faith emphasises justification not by works of the law but by faith, it means that justification is not possible by something that is related to the law in some way or other. I thus believe that to start from the law allows us to continue with the study without changing the nature of issue. At the same time, the study of the law can be used as background information against which we can properly evaluate the narrowness of the understanding of justification by faith by the New Perspective proponents at a later stage of this study.

2. Antithesis between Christ and the law

2.1. Starting point

We have seen that Räisänen's Paul discarded the law not for theological reasons, but because of simply adopting the unreflective liberalism of Hellenistic Christianity and that Watson's Paul did the same because of pragmatic reasons² and that, for them, the notion of justification by faith was a polemical issue. We also have noted that it was only after the Antioch incident that Dunn's Paul encountered problems with the law and developed the notion of justification by faith as a defensive weapon. If this is true, then questions such as the following arise: "When did Paul

² See pp. 52-54.

recognise the problems with the law?”, in other words, “When did Paul perceive the antithesis between Christ and the law?” and “If Paul was not aware of the antithesis at or before the Damascus encounter, why did Paul become a persecutor?”. These questions relate directly to the answer to the question of the origin of the notion of justification by faith. Therefore, we have good cause to look at the antithesis between Christ and the law. Let us begin with the reason for Paul’s persecution of Christians.

2.2. The reason for Paul’s persecution of Christians.

Why did Paul become a persecutor? The traditional view is that it was because of the law. That is, Paul persecuted the Hellenists for their lax attitude to the law.³ However, not all scholars are agree on this point. Even though this question looks simple, in fact, it is not, and it is very important. Some lay more stress on Christology⁴ and others on soteriology. For example, asserting that to proclaim the crucified Jesus as the Messiah was no crime, Bultmann⁵ contends that Paul heard the gospel of Hellenistic Jewish Christianity as a message of God’s condemnation of the Jews striving after righteousness by observing the

³ S. Kim, *New Perspective*, p. 22.

⁴ E.g., H. G. Wood, “The conversion of St. Paul: its nature, antecedents and consequences,” *NTS* 1 (1954–55), pp. 276–282.

⁵ R. Bultmann, “Paul” in: S. M. Ogden (ed.), *Existence and faith* (New York: Meridian, 1960), pp. 113–4; and *Theology of the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1952), pp. 187–188.

works of the law, and that the Torah was viewed in antithetical terms in that part of Christianity. According to the extent to which the kerygma itself is viewed as the cause of persecution, arguments, however, can be classified into two major groups. The one group attributes the cause of the persecution to the central kerygma – the Christian message – itself: the crucified Messiah was regarded as antithetical to the Torah in some way. The other takes, instead, the Hellenists' activity as the reason for the persecution.

2.2.1. The view that Paul's persecution was caused by the kerygma itself

According to this view, Christology is usually suggested as the reason for the persecution. In other words, a crucified Messiah was viewed as contradictory; therefore, Paul had to persecute both Jewish and Hellenist Christians owing to their denial of the judgment of the Torah. For instance, F. F. Bruce⁶ says that, according to the pre-Christian Paul's consideration of Jesus' social standing, Jesus never was the expected Messiah and the fact that Jesus was crucified convinced Paul that Jesus could definitely not have been the Messiah. Christ's crucifixion was considered to be self-contradictory and blasphemous so that those who proclaimed that Jesus was the Messiah had to be punished.

It may be objected that someone executed by crucifixion was not

⁶ F. F. Bruce, *Paul: apostle of the free spirit* (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1977), p. 71.

necessarily regarded as cursed.⁷ However, this was not the case with Jesus because he was judged not by gentiles, but by the Sanhedrin. I, however, still object to the theory that, viewing a crucified Messiah as contradictory, Paul persecuted both Jewish and Hellenist Christians because second century Judaism was sympathetic towards would-be messiahs (pseudo-messiahs).⁸ Furthermore, my objection can also be supported by the fact that explaining Paul's persecution of the Christians by means of the crucifixion of Jesus cannot fully explain why Paul came to have a Christ-Torah conflict fundamental enough to discard the law, as a mean of salvation after his conversion.⁹ That is to say, Bruce's view cannot persuasively explain the reason why Paul (who did not regard Jesus as the Messiah because of his crucifixion), when he came to believe in Jesus, realised that there was an antithesis between Christ and the Torah. Paul might have thought that the Sanhedrin made a mistake. Thus I cannot regard Christology as the reason for Paul's persecution.

Another approach is to move the reason for Paul's persecution from Christology to soteriology or ecclesiology. Ulrich Wilckens¹⁰ has a soteriological approach to this issue. He argues that Paul, in agreement

⁷ P. Fredricksen, "Paul and Augustine: conversion narratives, orthodox traditions and the retrospective self", *JTS* 37 (1986), p. 12, asserts that the spiritual status of the deceased cannot be inferred from the way in which they died. T. L. Donaldson, "Zealot", p. 677, agrees with Fredricksen, saying that if hanging or crucifixion had constituted a curse, Saul and Jonathan and the 800 people crucified by Jannaeus should have also been viewed as dying under God's curse.

⁸ J. Plevnik, *Paul*, p. 19.

⁹ T. L. Donaldson, "Zealot", pp. 677-678.

¹⁰ J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus*, pp. 90-91, introduces Wilckens' contention as the most forceful and influential exposition. See also T. L. Donaldson, "Zealot", p. 679.

with the Christian kerygma, realised that Christ had replaced the Torah as the centre of the salvation process. Christ seemed to Paul to be the end of the law. This assertion, however, loses its strength if one does not accept the traditional perspective that Judaism considered the Torah as the means of salvation. Furthermore, the biblical view of salvation is not individual but covenantal and communal.¹¹ Therefore, I think the ecclesiastical approach is better than the soteriological one. This approach suggests the main reason for Paul's persecution was that, according to the Christian message, the Messianic people was identified as those who were not in the main stream of the Torah. The Christian community included people whom the Torah did not call righteous and the Christian message declared that God's people could be identified not by the Torah but by faith in Christ. Thus, the reason given for Paul's persecution is that the Christian kerygma denied the old Torah-centred standard for salvation community and instead brought in a new alternative, a competitive Christ-centred one. Dibelius,¹² Davies¹³ and Gaventa¹⁴ fall into this category.¹⁵ Donaldson¹⁶ also welcomes this approach, asserting that persecution arose not because the Christians

¹¹ God promised the blessings of a covenantal community to Abraham and Peter declares that the promise is given to families, the smallest unit of the covenantal community, saying, "The promise is for you and your children (Acts 3:29)". We also find the same notion that God's salvation is covenantal and communal in Rom. 16:31.

¹² M. Dibelius, *Paul* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1953), pp. 50-52.

¹³ W. D. Davis, *Invitation to the New Testament* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1969), pp. 260-261.

¹⁴ B. R. Gaventa, *From darkness to light: aspects of conversion in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), p. 39.

¹⁵ T. L. Donaldson, "Zealot", p. 678.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 678-80.

had a different thinking and regulations but when they were regarded as a menace to Jewish social solidarity.¹⁷ Donaldson¹⁸ points out that the purpose of Paul's persecution was to reverse God's judgment from Israel by punishing wrong doers, that is, Christians.

Dunn¹⁹ also agrees with Donaldson. Having stressed the word zeal mentioned in Phil. 3:6 as the key to understand Paul's persecution and conversion, he examines the role of Simeon and Levi, Phinehas, and Elijah in terms of zeal, and concludes that in every case the zeal referred to was a dedicated defence of Israel's distinctiveness. But even if Dunn and Donaldson have much in common in their basic approach, they do not suggest the same reason for Paul's persecution. Even though both Dunn and Donaldson follow a social approach and stress the fact that when there was a social threat, Paul persecuted the church because of his zeal, they differ as follows: Donaldson²⁰ says, "A recognition of the sociological dimension, then, does not necessarily entail a rejection of the ideational or the ological dimension",²¹ and argues that the reason for the persecution was the kerygma of the whole of Christianity (both Jewish and Hellenistic) which implied another ecclesiology. Dunn,²²

¹⁷ I think that on this point, Donaldson does not totally exclude activities of the Christians. I guess that this is partly caused by the fact that we cannot make a clear distinction between purely kerygmatic reasons and purely practical reasons.

¹⁸ T. L. Donaldson, "Zealot", p. 674.

¹⁹ See J. D. G. Dunn, *Theology*, pp. 346-354; *Partings*, pp. 120-22.

²⁰ T. L. Donaldson, "Zealot", pp. 671-672.

²¹ I agree with him on this very point, but I will apply Donaldson's view to Dunn's in order to modify Dunn's idea. I believe that we can get a better idea by doing so. See p. 50.

²² J. D. G. Dunn, *Partings*, pp. 119-122.

however, suggests that it was the Hellenists that caused the persecution because they broke the boundaries of the Jewish community by their gentile mission.²³

The view that Paul's persecution was caused by kerygma itself, however, has its main shortcoming in that it totally and decidedly disregards the fact that the persecution was not against Christianity as a whole but only against the Hellenistic section.

2.2.2. The view that Paul's persecution was caused by certain actions of those who were persecuted

F. F. Bruce²⁴ argues that Paul did not only persecute the conservative Jewish group, but the Hellenistic one as well. Owing to this, some scholars such as Sanders²⁵ and Bultmann²⁶ think that persecution must have had something to do with only the Hellenists rather than with a more central kerygmatic element, shared by all Christians. It means that the Christ-Torah antithesis was not categorical but accidental, and was

²³ We, however, have to note that the difference between Dunn and Donaldson is not very big or fundamental, because Donaldson, "Zealot", p. 680, also says, "Initially, Paul's opposition to the movement would have been aroused only by those elements of it that posed a sociological threat".

The difference between the two is that while Donaldson thinks that as an opponent Paul quickly came to see more clearly than many other Christians that the kerygma implied a rival definition of the community of salvation and thus posed in itself a threat to the Torah, Dunn believes that Paul only realised this during the Antioch incident.

²⁴ F. F. Bruce, *New Testament history* (London: Oliphants, 1977), p. 215.

²⁵ E. P. Sanders, *Law*, pp. 204-205, says about 1 Thess. 2:15-16 in n. 77, "The main thrust of the criticism of the Jews, however, is that they hinder Paul and others from preaching to the Gentiles".

²⁶ R. Bultmann, "Paul", pp. 113-114.

based on the contingency of the Hellenistic group's approach to the Torah. On the other hand, even though some scholars have this same approach, they vary in their views of the exact reason for persecution. One can distinguish two groups. One group says that the Hellenistic group's persecution was directly related to the law itself. The other group says that it was caused by the gentile mission.

Those who adhere to the former view, think that Hellenistic Jewish Christianity gave up the observance of the law in practice and probably in principle also, and that this was the reason why they were persecuted. For instance, Bultmann²⁷ relates persecution to the law. He thinks that Paul heard the message of the Hellenistic Jewish Christianity that God's judgment was upon Jews who make an effort to earn their salvation by observance of the law. He is sure that this is why Paul became a persecutor. In other words, for Bultmann, the crucified Christ himself, was not the cause of the persecution. However, as Stuhlmacher²⁸ properly pointed out, if the cause of persecution had been the relaxation of observance of the Torah, more than half of population of Palestine would have been persecuted. Moreover, when we take into consideration that Donaldson²⁹ pointed out that the degeneration of the Torah observance itself, as well as the proclamation of Messiah, were not the

²⁷ R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, trans. Kendrick Grobel (London: SCM, 1983), pp. 187–188.

²⁸ W. Schmithals, *Paul and James* (London: SCM, 1965), p. 22.

²⁹ T. L. Donaldson, "Zealot", p. 670, says that persecution did not necessarily presuppose a radical rejection of the Torah and refers to the Qumran community and the Samaritans as examples.

cause of persecution, the above view loses its persuasive power.

Upholders of the latter view do not attribute the cause of persecution primarily to the law. Dunn,³⁰ representatively, says that Hellenistic Jewish Christians did not discard the law except for things pertaining to the attendance of the temple and its ritual. Therefore, they were not persecuted because of their giving up the law, but when they started the circumcision-free gentile mission, Paul thought that they were threatening the identity and distinctiveness of Israel; so Paul began to persecute them in line with the zeal of the zeal of Phinehas.³¹ Citing several examples, Dunn argues that zeal, at Paul's time, had a very specific meaning. It was marked by wholehearted dedication to safeguarding the privileges and prerogatives of Israel's distinctiveness, by using violence. Therefore, for Dunn,³² the cause of persecution was not the law, but the gentile mission.

I think that this makes sense because of the fact that those who were scattered as a result of the persecution of Stephen, travelled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, and spoke the word to none except

³⁰ J. D. G. Dunn, *Partings*, pp. 119-122. However, as I have already pointed out, his view actually in some way has something in common with Dibelius' and Donaldson's ecclesiastical approach.

³¹ It is on this point that Kim, *New Perspective*, pp. 25-26, strongly criticises Dunn. In other words, Kim says that the Hellenists who disregarded circumcision must have appeared to be disregarding the law. I agree with Kim on this very point (*pace* Dunn). In order to argue for the late origin of Paul's notion of justification by faith, Dunn is not willing to concede that the Hellenists did not oppose the law and that Paul also did not regard them as offending against the law.

I, however, do agree with Dunn that Stephen was faithful in keeping the law (*pace* Kim). See S. Kim, *New Perspective*, pp. 23-24.

³² J. D. G. Dunn, *The justice: a fresh look at the old doctrine of justification by faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), p. 23; *Partings*, p. 121.

Jews (Acts 11:19). Such action makes us guess that the persecution of the Hellenists around Stephen was caused by the gentile mission.³³ In addition, when we regard Paul's Damascus road encounter as a sort of turning point, we can carefully identify 'what the Christian Paul came to dedicate himself to' as well as what the 'pre-Christian Paul eagerly disturbed and destroyed'.³⁴ The main action of the Christian Paul was the gentile mission. This means that, read contrary, the main action of the pre-Christian Paul was destroying Christians in particular 'destroying the Hellenists', i.e. destroying the *gentile* mission. If this mirror reading is correct, we have to accept that Paul's persecution was caused not by the Christians' proclamation of the crucified Jesus as the Messiah, but more specifically by the Hellenists' *gentile* mission. Furthermore, in the light of the fact that when the Qumran community left Jerusalem and moved into the desert, they were no longer persecuted, Dunn's sociological approach makes more sense.

On the other hand, Donaldson points out that Paul did not distinguish between Jewish and Hellenistic groups when he was talking about his persecution of God's church (Gal. 1:22; 1 Thess. 2:14) and, therefore, Donaldson³⁵ denies the presupposition that Paul persecuted Hellenists because of something pertaining to them alone. Thus,

³³ For the probability of the conflict between Paul and Stephen who belonged to the Hellenist group, see M. Hengel, *The pre-Christian Paul* (London: SCM, 1991), pp. 68-69.

³⁴ I think that on this point, J. D. G. Dunn, *Justice*, p. 24, is quite right in saying that what the Pharisee Paul eagerly persecuted is what the Christian Paul eagerly protected.

³⁵ T. L. Donaldson, "Zealot", p. 671.

Donaldson³⁶ thinks that we cannot exclude the kerygma as reason for the persecution. As proof for this view, Donaldson argues that if the cause of Paul's persecution had not been something pertaining to the kerygma itself, Paul would have become a Christian Zealot for the law. According to Donaldson, the absence of a Christ-plus-Torah phase in Paul's life during which he believed in Jesus **and** kept the law at the same time, proves that this was not the case.³⁷

However, I do not think that the proof that Donaldson provides is convincing.³⁸ In other words, the fact that we cannot find any evidence of the presence of a Christ-plus-Torah phase in Paul's life, does not necessarily mean that Paul's reason for persecution of Christians was something related to the kerygma. If the Damascus encounter had been **only** about changing the reason for the pre-Christian Paul's persecution of Christians, the fact that Paul's antipathy to the Torah resulted from a kerygmatic revelation at the Damascus encounter may imply that the cause of Paul's persecution had not been something pertaining to the law. However, the Damascus encounter made Paul see that his reason for persecuting Christians was wrong, but the Damascus encounter was also an event through which Paul received kerygmatic³⁹ revelation through his calling.⁴⁰ We can thus accept that, before the Damascus encounter,

³⁶ See p. 43.

³⁷ T. L. Donaldson, "Zealot", p. 675.

³⁸ I think that the absence of Paul's Christ-plus-Torah phase might be the proof for the origin of Christ-Torah antithesis rather than the reason of Paul's persecution. See p. 57.

³⁹ For the character of the gospel revelation of the Damascus encounter, see S. Kim, **Origin**.

⁴⁰ For the Damascus encounter as Paul's calling, see p. 178.

Paul persecuted Hellenists because of something pertaining to them alone. However, through a kerygmatic revelation at the Damascus encounter, Paul realised that the reason for his persecution of Christians was wrong, and, furthermore, he came to have an antipathy to the law as well. Therefore, the fact that Paul did not go through an Christ-plus-Torah phase, and came to have an antipathy to the law right after the Damascus encounter, does not necessarily imply that the cause of Paul's persecution was something pertaining to the law. Thus Donaldson's argument that if the reason for Paul's persecution was not caused by the kerygma, he would have become a Christian Zealot, is not convincing.⁴¹

Furthermore, the members of the churches in Judaea did not know Paul personally (Gal. 1:22), which indicates that Paul did not persecute the Jewish group, otherwise they must have known Paul. Besides, Luke continually draws the readers' attention to the Hellenists by introducing the events around Philip after Stephen's death.

Therefore, I must admit that I am not totally satisfied with either one of the views of Dunn and Donaldson. My view is a compromise. Even though Dunn and Donaldson do not agree about the exact reason for Paul's persecution, I agree with the general trend of their approach, i.e. the emphasis on the ecclesiastical and social aspects. I agree, however, with Dunn that the immediate reason for Paul's persecution was the Hellenists' gentile mission. However, I cannot but object to

⁴¹ In this respect, it is a pity that Donaldson did not accentuate Paul's Damascus encounter as much as he accentuated Paul's zeal.

Dunn's view that the problem of the Hellenistic gentile mission was not the law, but only the gentile mission as such. It is here that I want to apply Donaldson's view, i.e. that a recognition of the sociological dimension does not necessarily entail a rejection of the ideational or theological dimension.⁴² He used it to argue that the reason for the persecution is that the kerygma of the whole of Christianity, irregardless of the Jewish and Hellenistic groups, implied another ecclesiology. I think it is better to accept Donaldson's view in this regard. The circumcision-free gentile mission directly and immediately caused a controversy with regard to the law.⁴³ As I have already said,⁴⁴ as part of the strategic placing of his chessmen for proving the late origin of justification by faith, Dunn cannot accept that the Hellenists had a Christ-Torah antithesis before the Antioch incident. But even if we can yield somewhat to Dunn in that the problem of the circumcision-free gentile mission was not the law itself, we have to realise that, as a competitive and exclusive criterion, the Hellenists' faith-based gentile mission led to a Christ-Torah antithesis. I will scrutinise this in greater detail in the following section.

⁴² See n. 21.

⁴³ In this respect S. Kim, *New Perspective*, pp. 26-27, is reasonable.

⁴⁴ See n. 31.

2.3. The origin of Paul's antipathy to the Torah

Now we can and must consider the time when Paul came to harbour an antipathy to the law. We can think of three cases in particular, that is, 1) before, 2) after and 3) at the Damascus encounter.

2.3.1. Before the Damascus encounter

According to this view, Paul experienced some frustration with the law before he met Jesus. Such frustration would later form the root of Paul's Christ-Torah antithesis after he became a gentile apostle. Before Paul converted to Christianity, he was striving for the righteousness of the law, but he became disappointed. The Damascus encounter was in a sense a result of this disappointment. J. S. Stewart⁴⁵ and A. Deissmann⁴⁶ fall into this category. In other words, Paul had already experienced difficulties with the law earlier on in his life. According to this view, even though the Damascus encounter was an important turning point, Paul's decisive steps had already been taken before the Damascus encounter. If Paul had a Jewish eschatological type of faith that said that when the Messiah came the Torah would cease, this view would make sense.⁴⁷

But as we have already seen, after Stendahl's⁴⁸ significant

⁴⁵ J. S. Stewart, *A man in Christ* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1935), pp. 83-88.

⁴⁶ A. Deissmann, *St. Paul: a study in social and religious history* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1912), pp. 93-98.

⁴⁷ A. Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, pp. 187-204, says that the cessation of the Torah was categorical in Jewish eschatology and Paul realised this more clearly than others.

⁴⁸ See n. 47 on p. 27.

contribution, we cannot accept the notion anymore that Paul was struggling to achieve the righteousness of the law and was distressed by it before the Damascus encounter.

2.3.2. After the Damascus encounter (the so-called development theory)

As we saw, Watson and Räisänen believe that Paul's frustration with the law developed at a later stage.⁴⁹ Räisänen argues that Paul simply adopted unreflective gentile Christian liberalism and only when the gentile Christians were asked to observe the law, did Paul develop his theological attitude to the law. On the other hand, Watson asserts that having failed in the Jewish mission, Paul and some of the other members of Christianity turned to the gentiles. They found that when the gentiles were not requested to follow the law, they reacted more easily; thus they discarded the insistence on the law because of this practical reason. They only took theological steps later. This view can be thought to be reasonable in the light of Rom. 11 which says the Jews' obstinacy made the gentile mission possible.⁵⁰

However, all these explanations make the mistake of putting practical and circumstantial issues before theological matters. This is the very point that causes the Old Perspective scholars to object, i.e. that Paul's theological views concerning the law (such as justification by

⁴⁹ See p. 29.

⁵⁰ See also E. P. Blair, "Paul's call to the gentile mission", *BibRes* 10 (1965), pp. 19-33.

faith) are regarded as a sort of a late-developed or a polemical theology, in fact, a belated lame excuse. I, however, firmly believe that there must have been clear theological reasons for the distinction between gentile and Jewish apostles and for Paul's not-Jews-but-gentile mission.⁵¹ If this is not so, then the development theory seems to me not to be a development theory in the positive sense, but an 'apologetic' theory which proposes that Paul just devised a kind of excuse.⁵² This is the case because, even though Watson portrays Paul as an arbitrary behaviourist, and Räisänen depicts Paul as an imprudent adopter, in answering the reason why Paul saw the antithesis between faith in Christ and dedication to Torah, none of them provides us with a convincing reason for the antithesis. In this regard we can say that they are having the same problem as Sanders, since he also does not suggest any positive reason either.⁵³

On the other hand, Donaldson⁵⁴ blames them for disregarding Paul's zeal. He admits that zeal itself does not exclude the development theory. To put it in another way, it is possible that Paul firstly became a Judaising Christian and then developed the Christ-Torah antithesis later.

⁵¹ See "The theological implications of Paul's apostleship to gentiles and his gospel of the uncircumcised in salvation history" on p. 191.

⁵² Dunn, who also accepts a development theory like Watson and Räisänen, differs from them at this point. Dunn does not emphasise Paul's theological negligence in discarding the law, but is more consistent in asserting that right after the Damascus encounter, Paul did not have any problem with the law, so that he was very positive towards the law, until he began to see the problems of the law at the Antioch incident. See J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus*, pp. 98-99; *Partings*, pp. 119-139; "Paul", pp. 91-100.

⁵³ See J. M. G. Barclay, "Paul and the law", pp. 11-12.

⁵⁴ T. L. Donaldson, "Zealot", pp. 662-664.

However, Donaldson is correct that, in view of Paul's zeal, it is unacceptable that, having been converted, Paul casually regarded the law as an *adiaphoron*. In Watson's case, the same objection can be made.

Furthermore, I think that Dunn's⁵⁵ development theory is somewhat better than Watson's and Räisänen's, because he says that Paul did not have any frustration with the law, neither before nor at the Damascus encounter. I think that, at least, Dunn does not make Paul arbitrary or imprudent. He contends that Paul only came to realise the problem of the law very slowly so that Paul developed his notion of justification not by the works of the law, but by faith in Christ, only after the Antioch incident. Yet the shortcoming in Dunn's theory is the disregard for Paul's zeal. In this respect, Kim⁵⁶ points out that Dunn stresses Paul's zeal and asserts that Paul persecuted Christians to protect Israel's boundary according to the zeal of Phinehas, yet Dunn does not stress Paul's zeal at all when he accepts that, until the Antioch incident, Paul had not developed the notion. As Kim puts it,

It is a fundamental problem of Dunn's that he emphasises or indeed maximizes the significance of Paul's 'zeal' for 'Judaism' up to the moment of the Damascus event only to refuse to consider it as a factor in the development of Paul's theology and missionary practice after that moment.

I am in agreement with Kim's comment. However, there is a point that I do not consider to be correct. While disproving that Paul was not aware of the problem of the law till the Antioch incident, Kim suggests several

⁵⁵ J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus*, pp. 98-99; *Partings*, pp. 119-139; "Paul", pp. 91-100.

⁵⁶ S. Kim, *New Perspective*, p. 32.

reasons in the section “The problem of the law” in Chapter 1. Especially in section (4), Kim deals with the time when Paul realised the problem with the law, in order to oppose Dunn’s development theory.⁵⁷ Here Kim condemns Dunn, saying that Dunn regards Paul as suffering from amnesia caused by a car accident. Kim spends 12 out of 23 pages to this, and it is one of Kim’s major criticisms that Dunn makes Paul an amnesic. It seems to me, that such criticism also applies to the argument of Räisänen and Watson, since they also assert that Paul discarded the observance of the law from the outset without any theological consideration, and that Paul only began to theologise on it late to protect and justify his gentile mission. In contrast, Dunn⁵⁸ says that Hellenists were not negative about the law and Paul did not persecute them because of their negligence towards the law. Paul was involved in the gentile mission, without finding any frustration with the law even after the Damascus incident, but as the conversion of the gentiles continued to increase, with more and more converts added, and the political situation in Judea was getting worse, the issue of the circumcision of gentiles came to the fore in the late 40’s. In the light of this, we can say that the Paul that Dunn depicts is not as arbitrary or imprudent as the Paul whom Räisänen and Watson portray. Dunn, in comparison to Räisänen and Watson, sees Paul as more consistent and less negligent of zeal. The plausibility of my argument can be supported by the fact that when Donaldson opposes the development

⁵⁷ Although Kim also opposes Donaldson’s theory in this section, he is in fact using his ‘Paul’s zeal’ theory to criticise Dunn.

⁵⁸ J. D. G. Dunn, *Partings*, pp. 126–127.

theory, he attacks Räisänen and Watson, yet does not even mention Dunn's name.

Therefore, I think that Kim's criticism in section (2) is more effective than that in section (4). In this section Kim⁵⁹ says,

In Paul's eyes they were subverting the law by preaching the false messiah Jesus and by ignoring 'circumcision and the practice of the covenant distinctives' in their dealing with the gentiles.

That is to say, the circumcision-free gentile mission must be viewed as a problem with the law rather than a problem with the mission itself. If so, Paul must have had certain ideas about the law itself. Let me put it in this way, Paul persecuted the Hellenists, because he regarded their law-free gentile mission as breaking the boundaries of Israel. If we are on the right track up to here, and if Paul came to have another view on the gentile mission at the Damascus encounter, we can logically expect Paul to have struggled with himself, himself being a sort of (passive) Judaiser, in the sense that he also thought that gentiles ought to be circumcised and follow the law in order not to break the boundaries of Israel. This would have happened before Paul fought the Judaizers in the churches in Galatia. Through this self-dispute, Paul must have come to the same conclusion, that is, the Christ-Torah antithesis, as he did at the controversy with the Judaizers in Galatia. I do not know of any other way in which one can logically understand the changed Paul unless one accepts a preceding faith-Torah antithesis.

On the other hand, I think that the strongest point of Dunn's

⁵⁹ S. Kim, *New Perspective*, p. 26.

arguments is that, if Paul had found Christ to be the end of the law, we cannot understand why such an incident as the Antioch incident did not take place earlier.⁶⁰ So Dunn distinguishes between ‘Paul’s calling at Damascus and justification by faith at Antioch’. In view of the absence of a Christ-plus-Torah phase in Paul’s life,⁶¹ his contention, however, loses its persuasiveness. Dunn must produce proof that can show the existence of a Christ-plus-Torah phase over and above Paul’s positive attitude towards the law. I will deal with this subject in detail in the following section.

In addition to this, finally, I have to say that circumcision was the centre of the dispute in Galatia. The nature of Paul’s gospel depended on it. And it seems almost certain that, even though Paul did not have an antipathy to the law right after the Damascus encounter, Paul did dedicate himself to the gentile mission without requesting circumcision.⁶² Therefore, if Paul had begun to ask for circumcision later than the Damascus encounter, he, who was preaching a circumcision-free gospel, could not have avoided self-contradiction, asserting that he himself preached the gospel that he received by revelation from Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:11-12). On the other hand, if Paul had asked for circumcision from the outset and if circumcision had been such a trivial matter that we

⁶⁰ J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus*, p. 98.

⁶¹ T. L. Donaldson, “Zealot”, p. 675.

⁶² S. Kim, *New Perspective*, p. 48, says that we can certainly accept the fact that Paul did not ask the gentiles for circumcision from the outset and that in the view of the report of the Antioch incident in Gal. 2:11-14, he did not insist on food and purity laws during his Antiochian ministry, either.

could not think that Paul did have any frustration with the law, we could not explain why Paul, later, regarded the circumcision issue as a pivotal matter that could pervert his gospel.

2.3.3. At the Damascus encounter

The view that Paul's particular idea about the law in Galatians and Romans was the immediate consequence of the Damascus encounter is the least popular one.⁶³ The new insights of soteriology and the law are traditionally viewed to be an essential part of the revelation at the Damascus road. Kim⁶⁴ summarises it in this way;

According to many upholders on the Old Perspective on Paul, Paul the Pharisee and 'Zealot' for the law persecuted the Hellenists because with their faith in Jesus Christ they sat loose to the law, But seeing Jesus crucified under the curse of the law appearing as the Messiah and Lord vindicated by God *on the Damascus road, Paul realised that Christ's death was indeed the eschatological atonement for us and therefore that Christ was 'the end of the law' for salvation* (Rom 10:4). Thus, Paul began to develop his distinctive soteriological formulation of the gospel in terms of justification through faith in Christ without works of the law. This new soteriology provided a theological basis for his gentile mission to which he was also called at the Damascus Christophany. (My italics)

According to Kim's summary of the traditional view, the origin of the Christ-Torah antithesis is the Damascus road and the reason for the antithesis is that Christ is the end of the law for salvation.

On the other hand, as we have already seen, the New Perspective tends to postpone Paul's recognition of the problem with the law until the Antioch incident, but there are some New Perspective scholars who think

⁶³ H. Räisänen, "Paul's conversion", p. 404.

⁶⁴ S. Kim, *New Perspective*, p. 22.

that Paul realised the problem with the law on the Damascus road. However, although they think that the Christ–Torah antithesis originated from the Damascus road, they interpret it from a different angle. K. Stendahl⁶⁵ says that since Augustine we tend to put ourselves and Paul in the same category. Yet Paul did not have a tendency to do introspection in terms of sin. Therefore, he did not feel the Lutheran qualms of conscience in the light of the law before he met Christ at the Damascus road. Consequently, we cannot find a Christ–Torah antithesis in the Paul whom Stendahl depicts at all. Treading in Stendahl’s steps, Sanders also thinks that Paul had not found something wrong with the law until the Damascus encounter. We can cite the famous phrase ‘from solution to plight’ as a barometer which intensively reveals his thinking.⁶⁶ The Paul of Sanders had not seen any plight of the law until he met Jesus at the Damascus road. The root of the plight rested on the fact that Judaism was not Christianity.⁶⁷ That is to say, Paul’s revised view of the law resulted from his conviction that salvation is accomplished by Christ’s death in God’s salvation history.⁶⁸ God planned to save his people through faith. So, by definition, salvation is not by the law. Gentiles, also, can be saved on the same basis as Jews so that the Jewish law, as a measure of entry, is excluded.⁶⁹ The fundamental critique of the law is that following the law does not result in one being found in

⁶⁵ K. Stendahl, *Paul*, pp. 16ff. For more, see p. 74.

⁶⁶ E. P. Sanders, *Judaism*, p. 548.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 552.

⁶⁸ E. P. Sanders, *Law*, p. 27.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

Christ.⁷⁰ On the other hand, I am not fully satisfied with the reason Sanders gives for Paul being opposed to the law, because he, in fact, did not give the reason for ‘therefore’ that salvation is by Christ and ‘therefore’ not by the law. He actually just makes statements without providing any proof.⁷¹

Donaldson⁷² unfolds his idea on the foundation of Sanders’ idea. Donaldson thinks that Paul’s Christ–Torah antithesis originated from the Damascus road experience. Although Kim and Donaldson do not agree with each other on whether Paul had a tendency towards introspection in terms of sin before he met Jesus on the Damascus road, they do agree that Paul came to realise the Christ–Torah antithesis on the Damascus road. As far as I know, Donaldson, together with Dunn, is the scholar who emphasises Paul’s zeal most.⁷³ When Gal. 1:14 and Phil. 3:5–6 are considered, there is no doubt that Paul’s zeal is the key to understanding Paul’s idea of the law.⁷⁴ If so, when we keep in mind the Paul who showed zeal for the law, we cannot but think that Paul could not have spent a long time in the dark before he realised the Christ–Torah

⁷⁰ E. P. Sanders, *Judaism*, p. 550.

⁷¹ Explaining Gal. 3:16–18, Sanders, *Law*, p. 26, says that Paul’s diverse statements in the text are not reasons but arguments, and Sanders himself follows the Paul whom he evaluated.

Donaldson, “Zealot”, p. 667, also praises Sanders, saying that he made the ecclesiastical character of the Christ–Torah antithesis clear. But Donaldson, *ibid.*, p. 668, points out that Sanders cannot give the reason why (if salvation is through Christ) salvation cannot be through the law.

⁷² T. L. Donaldson, “Zealot”, p. 668.

⁷³ Take note that Kim also takes Paul’s zeal as the logical key against the theory of the late development of justification by faith.

⁷⁴ J. D. G. Dunn, *Theology*, pp. 350–352.

antithesis. In addition, the absence of a Christ-plus-Torah phase makes this line of thinking more likely. The more we emphasise Paul's zeal, the less we can postpone the origin of Paul's Christ-Torah antithesis. This means that it is most likely that Paul came to realise the Christ-Torah antithesis right after the Damascus encounter. As we have seen above, however, Donaldson,⁷⁵ a New Perspective scholar, prefers the ecclesiastical and sociological approaches to answer the question why Paul persecuted Christians. Christ became the antithesis of the Torah, in ecclesiastical terms, by identifying God's people in terms of faith in Christ.

The reason why I, here, reintroduce Donaldson's proposal is that even if he is following the New Perspective and, therefore, explains the Christ-Torah antithesis from a different angle from the traditional one, he still maintains a traditional view in that the origin of the antithesis is the Damascus road experience. It is characteristic of the New Perspective circle, as a whole, to understand justification by faith in the sense of its function of defending Paul's gentile mission.⁷⁶ In other words, the Christ-Torah antithesis is interpreted in terms of the gentiles' being God's people, namely, ecclesiology. In this sense, Donaldson is definitely a New Perspective scholar. At the same time, he is a good example showing us that accepting the New Perspective does not inevitably mean

⁷⁵ T. L. Donaldson, "Zealot", pp. 678-680.

⁷⁶ S. Kim, *New Perspective*, p. 3.

that one has to accept the late origin of the Christ-Torah antithesis.⁷⁷ Now, accepting the New Perspective on the law, we can also contend that Paul realised the Chris-Torah antithesis *right after the Damascus encounter*.

If our conclusion, that the Christ-Torah antithesis came to the fore right after the Damascus encounter, is correct, it means that it is definitely impossible for us to postpone the origin of the Christ-Torah antithesis until the Antioch incident. If it is true that Paul realised that the identification of God's people is done either by the Torah or by faith in Christ, it is unimaginable that the origin of the notion of justification by faith in Christ can post-date the Antioch incident. Otherwise, the only other alternative that we have, is to give up the notion that Paul thought logically as a theologian. In other words, we have to sacrifice Paul's theological closeness, or accuracy, as Räisänen⁷⁸ does, who thinks that Paul simply adopted unreflective liberalism of the Hellenistic Jewish Christianity, regarding the law as an *adiaphoron* and only when the gentile Christians were asked to observe the law, did Paul develop his theological attitude to the law. We all know very well that such an alternative does not make sense. Therefore, some New Perspective scholars do not take this option. Rather, they choose to accept the notion

⁷⁷ I am not satisfied, however, with the fact that, although following a social and ecclesiastical approach, Donaldson did not fully emphasise ecclesiology in the context of the covenant. When we think of the church, the fact that the church is God's covenant people always immediately forces us to view it in terms of God's covenant. On the other hand, the inclusion of gentiles into God's people is the climax of Abraham's covenant. I will deal with it in detail in 2. of **Part 4**

⁷⁸ H. Räisänen, *Paul*, pp. 251-263.

of a late origin of Paul's Christ-Torah antithesis (e.g., Dunn), but as I have already said, only when we ignore Paul's zeal can such a late origin be accepted.⁷⁹

I, here, want to stress this once again. Only the view that the origin of Paul's antipathy towards the law originated at the Damascus road encounter, can guarantee the validity of Paul's argument that the gospel that he preached to the Galatians was the same as the one that he preached from the outset.⁸⁰ Paul says that he received his gospel through the Damascus revelation. If he had only become aware of his antipathy towards the law long after the Damascus encounter, for instance, after the Antioch incident, he could not have claimed in Galatians that what he was writing in the letter about (for example the issues of circumcision and food laws) was the same as the gospel that had been revealed to him. The antipathy towards the law was so decisively related to the core of those issues that he could not have simply disregarded it.

Finally, before we end this part, we still have one question to answer. If justification by faith originated not from the Antioch debate but from the Damascus encounter, why didn't other Christians have such a

⁷⁹ It is very interesting to see that even though Dunn stresses Paul's zeal, on this point, he minimises Paul's zeal by implication and thus loses consistency.

⁸⁰ Paul's gospel to the Galatians is the gospel that he received through the Damascus revelation (Gal. 1:11-17) and the revealed gospel was Christ's gospel that the Galatians received at the beginning and was about to leave (Gal. 1:6-8). The gospel that he delivered to the Galatians was the same as the one that he wrote in his letter to the Galatians. See also S. Kim, *New Perspective*, pp. 46-48.

negative view of the law as Paul did? Kim⁸¹ regards this as a very important and reasonable question.

2.4. Why only Paul?

Faith in Christ is the common Christian creed.⁸² Even though Dunn⁸³ asserts that justification by faith came to the fore in the wake of the Antioch incident, he does not say that when Paul met Jesus at the Damascus road Paul did not know this common kerygma. There was no distinction between the Jewish apostles, the Jewish Christians and Paul, the gentile apostle in their belief that salvation was by faith in Christ. Yet we cannot find any suggestion that the recognition of Christ's vindication by Jewish Christians caused them to have a negative view of the law.⁸⁴ In this regard we can cite such Bible texts as Acts 10:14 and 21:20. Thousands of Jewish Christians still zealously tried to keep the law (Acts 21:20) and even Peter uncritically accepted the law before he had the vision of a large sheet (Acts 10:14). In contrast, after Paul met Jesus on the Damascus road, he dedicated himself to a circumcision-free gentile

⁸¹ S. Kim, *New Perspective*, p. 41. He, however, does not point out that this question can be understood only by the proper understanding of Paul's calling as a gentile apostle. I will scrutinise this in *Part 4*. See pp. 178ff., 191ff.

⁸² R. Bultmann, "πιστεύω" *TDNT* 6, pp. 203-219.

⁸³ J. D. G. Dunn, "Justification by faith", pp. 99-100.

⁸⁴ E. P. Sanders, *Law*, pp. 25-26.

mission.⁸⁵ What made this difference?

Questioning this, Dunn⁸⁶ tries to support his late development theory of justification by faith by attacking scholars who assert that Paul began to realise the Christ-Torah antithesis through his Damascus encounter. In contrast to this view, I see a common tendency among scholars, who contend that the origin of the Christ-Torah antithesis and justification by faith is Damascus, to base their solutions, regardless of the New or the Old Perspectives, on Paul's individuality. However, I do not think any explanation that is not based on Paul's unique position as a gentile apostle but on his personality is a satisfying theological explanation. Sanders, Donaldson and Kim comment on these views.

Sanders⁸⁷ says frankly that he cannot solve this problem. The best answer he can give us is simply to appeal to Paul's uniqueness. Donaldson's⁸⁸ idea is not very different from that of Sanders. The fact that gentiles had to be saved necessarily caused the antithesis. The existence of the judaising party in Jerusalem supports this argument.⁸⁹ Therefore, Donaldson⁹⁰, welcoming Sander's view that Paul's charged view on the law was the result of his conviction that salvation was by Jesus, argues that the persecution led by Paul was caused by the elements that posed a social threat at first. Because the fact that the

⁸⁵ S. Kim, *New Perspective*, p. 34.

⁸⁶ J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus*, pp. 93, 99.

⁸⁷ E. P. Sanders, *Law*, pp. 153-154, and n. 154.

⁸⁸ T. L. Donaldson, "Zealot", pp. 668.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 665.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 680.

central Christian kerygma of the proclamation of the crucified Jesus competed with the law in identifying the community of salvation, and this posed a threat to the Torah, Paul persecuted Christianity in defence of the Torah. However, Paul began to realise the Christ-Torah antithesis on the Damascus road. As a former opponent Paul quickly came to realise this more clearly than many of the Christians. We, here, can say that Donaldson's explanation rests on Paul's past career. I, however, feel something is still lacking. Sanders and Donaldson have done well to point out the ecclesiological nature of Paul's Christ-Torah antithesis. If this is so, it is clear to me that Paul, the unique gentile apostle in salvation history, who was in a unique position in terms of the expansion of the Church, could see the antithesis that had an ecclesiological nature quicker and more clearly than other Christians. Therefore, I find it strange that they do not relate the reason for Paul's unique awareness of the Christ-Torah antithesis to Paul's apostleship, whereas they point out the ecclesiological nature of the antithesis.

On the other hand, in opposition to Dunn's belief that justification by faith was developed to defend Paul's gentile mission at a later stage, Kim⁹¹ emphasised Paul's receiving Jesus' revelation as a gospel at the Damascus encounter, emphasising the *universal* nature of justification by faith, which states that human beings can be saved by faith in Christ. If so, I think that Kim should explain why, while the revelation of gospel

⁹¹ S. Kim, *Origin*, pp. 330-335. See especially p. 6. See also Kim, *New Perspective*, pp. 1-21, 53-84.

(that is, justification by faith as *universal* soteriology) affected Paul's view on the law, it did not influence other Christians' views, including Peter, who also confessed the same *universal* soteriological doctrine. In other words, if the Torah-faith antithesis were concerned with human beings' salvation in general terms, why was there a difference even between Paul and the other apostles? Why did the faith of Jewish Christians in Christ not affect their observance of the law as Paul's did? If we follow Kim's logic, we come to realise the problem: How could justification by faith, as a *universal* doctrine of salvation, cause the difference between Paul and Jewish Christians, as well as between Paul and the other apostles? Or does it relate to Paul's *uniqueness*? I cannot understand how universality can explain the difference at all.

Kim⁹² who emphasised that Paul's gospel originated from the Damascus encounter, points out the distinctiveness of the Damascus encounter for the problem also. He says that the radical difference in Paul's attitude towards the law was caused by 1) the unique situation and nature of the Damascus revelation and 2) the depth of Paul's theological thinking triggered by the Damascus encounter. I, then, think that this implies that, when justification by faith in a *general* sense was *specially revealed to Paul* on the Damascus road, it had a more special and deeper theological meaning to Paul than to others. What I wish to point out here, is that, when attacking Dunn, Kim makes an all out effort to assert the *generality* of justification by faith, and to deny the contingency of it. His

⁹² S. Kim, *New Perspective*, p. 81.

purpose is to prove that justification by faith did not originate as a technical maneuver, from a specific polemical situation, but, as a *general* account of soteriology, at the Damascus encounter. In reply to the opinion that Paul had a unique view on the law, however, Kim appeals to the uniqueness of Paul's experience on the Damascus road. He does not seem to me to be inconsistent. Since Kim supports the universality of justification by faith by asserting its Damascus origin, he would be consistent if he also accepted the universality of Paul's Christ-Torah antithesis by accepting its Damascus origin as well.

Conversely, if the uniqueness of the Christ-Torah antithesis can be asserted, at the same time, can the uniqueness of justification by faith also be asserted? The deeper Paul's theology, including the Christ-Torah antithesis, triggered by his experience on the Damascus road, is in comparison with that of other Christians, the more special Paul's notion of justification by faith is. I think that if the difference between Paul's view on the law and the views of other Christians on it implies that Paul's Christ-Torah antithesis did not directly come from faith in Christ in general terms, this also logically implies the possibility that, for Paul, justification by faith against works of the law, may not directly mean justification by faith in such a general sense that human beings can be saved by faith in Christ. While Dunn, stressing its special meaning, argues for the Antioch origin of the notion of justification by faith, Kim, emphasising its universal meaning, asserts its Damascus origin. I think, however, that, just as Kim can argue for the uniqueness of Paul's Christ-

Torah antithesis by referring to the uniqueness of the Damascus encounter, so can we argue for the uniqueness of the notion of justification by faith by asserting the uniqueness of the Damascus encounter. To put it in a nut shell, the more unique the Damascus encounter is, the more unique the notion of justification by faith is. Yet I can hardly understand why Kim distinguishes between these two. In my eyes, by stressing the uniqueness of Paul's view on the law against the background of the uniqueness of the Damascus encounter, Kim is unknowingly preparing a base for the New Perspective that interprets justification by faith in a more *specific* sense, over against the Old Perspective that interprets it in a *general* sense.

In **Part 1**, I asserted that Paul's notion of the justification by faith originated not at the Antioch incident but at the Damascus encounter. In this regard, I agree with Kim. In **Part 3**, however, I will point out the unique meaning of the justification by faith that originated from the Damascus encounter. I will endeavour to show how these two ideas can go together. I believe that the key to this lies in Paul's unique position, that is, the unique gentile mission that was given to Paul through the Damascus encounter.⁹³ The strong points of such an approach are as follows: 1) Because this approach appeals not to Paul's individuality, e.g., his personal theological grounding or his career of persecution, but to *his unique*⁹⁴ *gentile apostleship*, it provides us with a more theological

⁹³ See also p. 178.

⁹⁴ For Paul's unique apostleship for the gentiles, see n. 80 (p. 201) of **Part 4** in which I

orientated reason, maintaining the uniqueness of Paul's view on the law and justification by faith. 2) Such an approach is directly supported by the apostles (Gal. 2:7-9). 3) Furthermore, such an approach helps us avoid the New Perspective's shortcoming of a limited interpretation of justification by faith. Just as Paul's unique gentile apostleship never implies the limitedness of his apostleship, so the uniqueness of justification by faith on the base of his apostolic works should be discerned from the limitedness of justification by faith. We must distinguish uniqueness from limitedness. I understand all of these in terms of 'the progression of salvation history'.⁹⁵ I will deal with this in detail in **Part 4**.

When we think of the Christian Paul, we know that he met the same Saviour Jesus as other Christians did, but we also have to realise that Paul did not meet the earthly Christ, but the One on the Damascus road. In this regard, his encounter was totally unique. Paul met Jesus who gave him a unique calling that was totally unique in comparison with that of other Christians and even that of other apostles. I believe that in this sense Paul was the unique gentile apostle and, at the same time, the last⁹⁶ apostle. We can thus say that Paul received a more progressed

scrutinise this in greater detail.

⁹⁵ My understanding of salvation history is this: While existentialistic theology understands history in terms of horizontal categories, salvation-history theology accepts that the Bible views history as a series of God's progressing actions centered on Christ's works.

⁹⁶ For a discussion of Paul as last apostle, see n. 80 (p. 201) of **Part 4** in which I discuss this in greater detail.

eschatological revelation through his eschatological apostleship.⁹⁷ We know that, until a certain time arrived in the progression of salvation history, even Jesus' disciples could not understand that Jesus was going to be crucified. Yet when the time arrived, the disciples, in their unique positions as disciples, came to know all things more clearly than other Jews and other followers of Jesus. However, their better understanding was not because of something that belonged to their own characters or abilities, but because of their unique position, as apostles. In the same way, as the unique and last gentile apostle, Paul came to see God's eschatological plan that was revealed through his calling, in some points, more quickly and more clearly than the other apostles to the Jews. However, this does not imply the inferiority of the other apostles. This was not because of Paul's personal character, but because of his apostleship to the gentiles. Thus, this means that, as the unique apostle to the gentiles and as the apostle chosen after the Jewish apostles were chosen, Paul had a unique insight in terms of the progress of salvation history. I will discuss the issues referred to in this section in greater detail in **Part 4**.

⁹⁷ See pp. 175ff., 201ff.

3. Summary

I argued that the interpretation of the notion of justification by faith according to the New Perspective is characterised by I) accepting the late development of the notion, and II) a limited interpretation of the notion. I also showed the unreasonableness of I) the late development of the notion. The origin of Paul's notion of justification by faith and the Christ-Torah antithesis must be located at the Damascus encounter. Of course, this does not mean that Paul was programmed at the very spot of the encounter on the Damascus road.

And I lastly argued that the fact that Paul, through his special Damascus encounter, realised the Christ-Torah antithesis more clearly than other Jewish Christians implies that Paul's understanding of justification by faith was unique. Now I will devote more attention to this issue, scrutinising the uniqueness of the notion of the justification by faith. This means that we have to investigate, in greater detail, whether or not the second characteristic of the view of the New Perspective on justification by faith: II) the limited interpretation of the notion, is reasonable. As I have already indicated, I will divide this into two stages; 1) The question whether the exegesis of the scholars of the New Perspective is proper or not; 2) The question, that if it is proper, whether or not the exegesis does necessarily require such a limited interpretation, that is, that justification by faith was a plea, a subsidiary thing, a peripheral one.

Part 3

The exegesis of the New Perspective evaluated

1. Introduction

In this section I will concentrate on ‘the works of the law’ and ‘the curse of the law’, because the interpretation of the two concepts is directly related and the interpretation of both decisively influences the interpretation of the notion of justification by faith. I, however, also have to take into account the presuppositions of many traditional scholars that can lead to prejudices regarding the issue, before I deal with ‘the works of the law’ and ‘the curse of the law’. Because the presuppositions might affect the direction of the interpretation of ‘the works of the law’ and ‘the curse of the law’, it is better, in order to guarantee a good start without prejudice, to firstly examine the presuppositions traditionally accepted as a matter of course. Let us observe two aspects that are closely connected to both ‘the works of the law’ and ‘the curse of the law’. They are ‘Paul’s conscience’ and ‘the possibility of observance of the law’.

2. Presuppositions

2.1. Paul's conscience

Knowledge of the pre-Christian Paul is necessary to understand the Christian Paul.¹ Whether or not Paul suffered the pangs of conscience as he tried to keep the law is directly related to the interpretation of Paul's view of the law, and can have an enormous influence on the interpretation of texts relating to the law. At the same time, it can also have an effect on our approach to Judaism and to justification by faith. If one interprets the pre-Christian Paul as being burdened by some sense of guilt, justification by faith can possibly be understood as an answer to individual agony or as an alternative to the impossibility of observance of the law. However, if one interprets Paul as someone with a good conscience, there is much more room for interpreting the issue in terms of salvation history than in terms of individual conscience.²

When it comes to Paul's conscience, Stendahl's famous article immediately comes to mind. Pointing out the error of readers of identifying themselves with the authors of the Bible, Stendahl³ blames the West for making Paul an introspective figure, something that happened since the time of Augustine. Due to Augustine's influence the

¹ M. Hengel, *The Pre-Christian Paul* (London: SCM, 1991), p. xiii.

² For my understanding of salvation history, see n. 95 on p. 70.

³ K. Stendahl, "Introspective conscience", pp. 199-215. This issue is continued in chapter 2, 'Call rather than conversion', in *Paul among Jews and Gentiles*. See p. 16 and pp. 22-23. He says that Augustine was the first truly Western man who applied the problem of men's introspective conscience to the issue of justification by faith. In other words, Augustine changed the notion of God giving salvation as part of salvation history into one of God working in individuals' consciences.

West has had the image of a Paul worrying about how human beings can earn their salvation before God. It has become tradition in the West to interpret justification by faith through this understanding of Paul. Luther then copied Augustine. Luther found himself by reflecting on Paul, thereby getting the answer to his own agony by means of his understanding of justification by faith. Thus Luther discovered in first century Judaism the problems of Roman Catholic Church of the sixteenth century.

I do not want to minimise Luther's positive contribution at all. But I consider Luther's approach to be essentially anachronistic.⁴ I welcome Stendahl's⁵ emphasis on the fact that we are psychologically inclined to be easily interested more in ourselves than in God or in the fate of his creation. However, Paul did not have any tendency of being introspective regarding his sin. Paul did not think of weakness in terms of sin, but in terms of the body; thus he had a robust conscience. Paul's robust conscience is seen in his letters too (2 Cor. 1:12).⁶

Stendahl finds the clue to Paul's observance of the law and his robust conscience in Phil. 3:5-9. The context has been traditionally understood as that Paul rejected righteousness by means of works of the law instead of righteousness by means of faith in Christ. For example,

⁴ In fact, Stendahl's idea was not totally new. As early as 1929, W. G. Kümmel, **Römer 7 und die Bekehrung des Paulus** (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1929), also pointed out the same errors.

⁵ K. Stendahl, **Paul**, p. 24.

⁶ **Ibid.**, pp. 40-52.

Hagner⁷ believes that the text merely says that measured by the standards of practising Pharisees, Paul had an exceptionally good performance record. Gundry⁸ also thinks that the focus of the text lies on external obedience. Cranfield⁹ even regards it as a legalistic misunderstanding. Schreiner¹⁰ argues that Paul gives us his pre-Christian view and that Paul's performance was excellent in comparison with many Jews of his own time. However, all these scholars tend to evaluate Paul's statements not in terms of the standards of *the law itself*, but in terms of other relative or external standards, such as those of the Pharisees. This means that their interpretation must add some words to the text. But the Greek phrase κατὰ δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐν νόμῳ itself demands that we should read Paul's faultlessness only in view of *the standards of the law itself*.

Furthermore, we have to consider the context of the text also. In Phil. 3:13, Paul does not say that he forgets his inability to keep the law, but his glorious achievement as a Jew.¹¹ About this text, Wright¹² correctly remarks that the context of Phil. 3:2-11 is not the Augustine-Pelagius debate, but that the Biblical text is clear that Paul does not

⁷ D. A. Hagner, "Paul", p. 91.

⁸ R. H. Gundry, "The moral frustration of Paul before his conversion: sexual lust in Romans 7:7-25", in: D. A. Hagner and M. J. Harris (eds.), *Pauline studies: essays presented to Professor F. F. Bruce on his seventieth birthday* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), p. 234.

⁹ C. E. B. Cranfield, *A critical and exegetical commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* 2 (ICC, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975, 1979), p. 847.

¹⁰ T. R. Schreiner, *The law and its fulfillment* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), pp. 70-71.

¹¹ K. Stendahl, *Paul*, p. 80.

¹² N. T. Wright, *Paul*, p. 124.

regard his covenant membership according to the flesh as something to exploit. Considering that Paul calls on Christians to be blameless (1 Thess. 3:13; 5:23; 1 Cor. 1:8), we can say that the pre-Christian Paul and the Christian Paul are of the same opinion on this matter.¹³ As Wrede¹⁴ pointed out earlier, Paul's guilty conscience resulted from the fact that he had persecuted the Christians. According to my view, what Paul is saying in Phil. 3 should be interpreted as follows: even though he, in fact, had not been faultless regarding legalistic righteousness, in Phil. 3, Paul – as Schreiner says – was referring to his pre-Christian viewpoint on his life. In this case it is obvious that the pre-Christian Paul, in his viewpoint, regarded himself as blameless regarding the righteousness of the law. In other words, Paul himself really believed in his own innocence.

There is a traditional understanding of Judaism and the law in line with the traditional interpretation of Phil. 3. The traditional view regards Judaism as a legalistic religion that teaches that man's salvation hinges upon their good deeds, namely, their achievement of the observance of the law. The traditional scholars think that Paul was suffering mental agony because of his inability to fulfil the law perfectly.¹⁵ To my mind, such an approach place too much emphasis on human nature. However,

¹³ E. P. Sanders, *Law*, p. 23, says that these texts agree with Phil. 3:6.

¹⁴ W. Wrede, *The origin of the New Testament*, trans. James S. Hill (London and New York: Harper & Brothers, 1909), pp. 13–15, says that Paul's conversion was not the turning back from a life of sin to be that of a saint. The guilt of his life was the denial of Jesus. Paul had a good conscience.

¹⁵ We can easily find a good example of this kind of view in Schreiner. See T. R. Schreiner, *Law*, pp. 41–71.

such an approach cannot be supported by a covenantal approach. The old covenantal system had already allowed for the likelihood of keeping the covenantal laws, by means of atonement for sins. Dunn¹⁶ asserts that there is no evidence that the law was understood in the sense that it demanded the perfect fulfilment of all of the laws, and that, because it was not possible, all human beings were thus under the curse of the law. The obedience that the law required functioned within the covenantal laws which included the atonement laws, and such obedience was regarded as possible. Both Paul the Pharisee and Paul the Apostle agreed on this point. Agreement has already been reached on the matter that Second Temple Judaism did not teach the need for perfection in law-keeping.¹⁷

Rather, confident of their righteousness, Jews tended to take it for granted that unlike the gentiles, they would be exempted from God's wrath.¹⁸ This can be confirmed by the parable of 'Pharisee and tax collector' (Luke 18) and the ruler saying, "All these I have observed from my youth" (Luke 18:21). Further confirmation of this belief is seen when Jesus accuses the Pharisees of their hypocrisy. Accusing Jesus of making friends with sinners, they regarded themselves as righteous and were not introspective about their inner beings. I am firmly convinced that only

¹⁶ J. D. G. Dunn, *Theology*, p. 361.

¹⁷ J. D. G. Dunn, "In search of common ground", in: J. D. G. Dunn (ed.), *Paul and the Mosaic law* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), p. 312.

¹⁸ Though he has the opposite view to what I want to say in this section, F. Büchsel, "κρίνω", in: G. Kittel (ed.), *TDNT* 3 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), p. 935, also admits that Pharisees' fear of God's wrath is more rarely expressed than their arrogant confidence in his good works, which blinded them to their sinfulness.

such a view of Israel can fully explain the situation in Rom. 2:1-4. Now, let us move to the possibility of the observance of the law.¹⁹

2.2. The possibility of observance of the law – ‘Intentional disobedience of the law’ or ‘impossibility of keeping the law in spite of all attempts to keep it?’ –

I could easily meet Korean Christians who would take it for granted that for sinful human beings to keep the law of the holy God is impossible. I also found that there has been a tendency amongst traditional scholars to take the impossibility of human beings’ keeping the law perfectly for granted, and to interpret Paul on that premise. Because this premise is directly connected to the following exegesis on which I will spend relatively much time, we should scrutinise ‘the possibility of observance of the law’ in terms of Paul’s conscience.

As I said above, the law itself provided for the atonement of sins. Schreiner²⁰ grants this, but dismisses any objections, arguing that, because, in Paul’s mind, the coming of Messiah ushered in a new stage in salvation history (in other words, as Jesus has provided the definitive atonement on the cross), the old covenantal sacrifices can no longer

¹⁹ For the problem of the identity of ἐγώ in Rom. 7, see “4.3. Rethinking Rom. 7” on pp. 146ff.

²⁰ T. R. Schreiner, *Law*, p. 44.

atone for sin. Das²¹ agrees Schreiner on this point. I, however, believe that their agreement does not have to do with the likelihood of keeping the law. The old covenantal sacrifices themselves could not, without Jesus, achieve atonement in any way for man's sins. But in the progress of salvation history, the old covenant sacrifices provided forgiveness in the foreseen effect of Jesus' redemptive works to the old covenantal members, who foresaw God's Messiah through the promise of the old covenant. This forgiveness itself, through expecting Jesus' accomplishment, was true. If this forgiveness were not true, we would be unable to admit the saving faith of the people of the old covenant. To make a long story short, regardless of whether or not sacrifices lost their validity owing to the coming of the new age, the Torah, as the law of the old covenant, allowed the possibility of keeping it.

In my view, it is the people raising a redemptive historical objection who are missing the viewpoint of salvation history, because their way of approaching is not so much different from that of 'empiricism', that is an emphasis on how people actually behaved.²² In addition, more important

²¹ A. A. Das, *Paul, the law, and the covenant* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2001), p. 4.

²² For example, having scrutinised Jer. 11 and Dan. 9 that, he says, are useful to interpret Gal. 3:10, Schreiner, *Law*, pp. 48-49, concludes that we can know that Israel did not experience the covenantal blessings due to her disobedience through only a brief reading of the Old Testament. And he asserts that, after reading this, Paul, probably, concluded that Israel was not able to keep the law. But in spite of the fact that the texts reveal the historical experience that Israel in history did not keep God's law, that does not automatically prove the impossibility of keeping the law. The purpose of many of the texts which accuse Israel of disobedience is not to prove the inability to keep the law. We can always read of the co-existence of the faithful to the covenant, in the history of stubborn Israel under the covenantal curse.

The point I want to make is, that if Schreiner can argue for the inability of the

is, as Schreiner says several times,²³ the fact that Israel intentionally disobeyed. The Israelites were not unable to keep the law, but they were sinful. I cannot understand why such brilliant scholars do not pay attention to the difference between ‘intentional disobedience of the law’ and ‘impossibility of keeping the law in spite of all attempts to keep it’. Actually, Schreiner’s mistake pointed out in note 22 was caused by this confusion. I find it impossible to accept the interpretation that shares a methodology with empiricism. Furthermore, I think, such an individual approach might destroy the viewpoint of salvation history. Though Schreiner cites the Old Testament on the issue whether Israel was able to keep the law or not, in the end, he connects this to the issue of men’s individual ability to observe the law. Such an individual approach does not agree with Paul’s writings. The issue of the law, for Paul, was an issue regarding ‘the inclusion of the gentiles’ in Christianity.²⁴ This means that the issue of Paul’s view of the law should be considered in terms of the relationship between Jews and gentiles in salvation history.²⁵ Besides, regardless of the fulfilment of the law, the law was not originally given to God’s people to get salvation.

It, however, appears some scholars think that God gave the

observance of the law by referring to Israel’s historical experience of disobedience, I also can argue for the likelihood of the keeping the law by referring to the existence of the faithful in terms of the standards of the covenant. Finding proof only in Israel’s historical facts without considering the purpose of the text is in fact, empirical demonstration by harnessing the text.

²³ T. R. Schreiner, *Law*, pp. 47ff.

²⁴ J. D. G. Dunn, *Theology*, p. 373.

²⁵ We will consider this again below.

alternative way of salvation, faith, because salvation by means of the law was not possible, because of man's inability to obey it perfectly. For instance, Cranfield²⁶ says that no flesh will be justified in God's sight on the grounds of works, because perfect obedience is not to be found among human beings. Schreiner²⁷ also says that if the law could be perfectly kept, men could earn salvation by means of the law. I firmly believe, however, that we must ask if God punishes human beings because of their inability. Let me start with Adam. We tend to think that God punished him very severely because of his trivial mistake. Yet, what we ought to bear in mind is that, when Adam received God's command, he was not as fallen as we are, rather because he was made according to God's image he was perfectly pure. So his action must not be evaluated by the same standard used to judge our actions. His breach was not the sort of mistake that we might easily make, but it was a terrible sin. He had a 100% ability to keep God's commands. God judged the first man, Adam, according to his command. This makes it clear that God cursed him not because of his lack of ability but because of his obvious and terrible intentional disobedience. In this first case, the object of God's punishment was not 'inability of keeping the law' but 'intentional disobedience of the law'.

As we progress further on the road of salvation history, nothing changes. Genesis says that Abraham obeyed God's commandments, the

²⁶ C. E. B. Cranfield, *Romans*, p. 198.

²⁷ T. R. Schreiner, *Law*, p. 73.

Torah (Gen. 26:5). Deuteronomy uses the same Hebrew words in the famous verse that exhorts Israel to keep the law, referring to curses and blessings (Deut. 30:16).²⁸ In terms of terminology, it is clear that the Old Testament says that there is no difference between Abraham before the written law and Israel after the written law, in that both had to keep the same God-given command. In other words, in God's eyes, what Abraham kept before God was not essentially different from what Israel had to keep before God. Indeed, what Abraham kept was considered to be the most difficult thing to be obeyed among all the commandments in the Bible. I cannot imagine a commandment that is more difficult to be kept, than the command to sacrifice one's one and only son. Nevertheless, Abraham obeyed. He did not fail in obeying God's most difficult commandment. In Genesis, it is said that he kept the Torah. If I am on the right track up to here, I can safely say that through Abraham's case, the Old Testament has already admitted the possibility of the observance of the most difficult commandment.²⁹

I cannot find any different idea in Deuteronomy. Unfortunately, it seems that scholars do not pay due attention to Deut. 30:11-14 when they study Paul's views on the law, especially in Galatians. We all know that before giving the law, God firstly gave the reason for Israel to keep

²⁸ The words used in Gen. 26:5 are קול (voice), משמרה (charge), מצוה (commandments), חקקה (statutes), and תורה (laws). And the words used in Deut. 30:16 are מצוה (commandments), חקקה (statutes), and משפט (ordinances).

²⁹ For the demonstration by means of Abraham's example, see "4.2. Law in a general sense in Rom. 4?" on pp. 142-146.

the law. Israel had been brought out of Egypt by the Lord. On the other hand, due to the threat of the curse, the receivers of the law must have been afraid of their inability to keep the law. In this context, the author of Deuteronomy made the declaration that included the whole account of Israel's receiving the law, before continuing to the last part of Deuteronomy, namely, the designation of the next leader Joshua. The declaration states that it is possible to follow the law, and God's commandments are not too difficult for Israelites. If some people cannot keep the law, it is not because of the difficulty to keep it, but because their lack of putting the word in their hearts. Thus, Deut. 30:11-14 promises the *easiness*³⁰ of following the law.

In this sense, the obedience of the law is both a demand and a promise. The obedience of the law is required on the premise of a faithful heart. So the works of the law are a kind of touchstone of faith. Therefore, the Lutheran way of thinking, namely that the true purpose of the law is not to fulfil it but, to reveal men's faults in order to lead men to Jesus does not come from, at least, Deuteronomy. We can still see that this view exists when we read Seifrid³¹ and Cranfield.³² I am, however, convinced that Stendahl³³ is correct when he points out that such a view

³⁰ לֹא־נִסְתָּר of Deut. 30:11 is translated as 'not hidden' in the KJV. This, however, can also be translated into 'not too hard or difficult' (e.g., RSV, NIV).

³¹ M. Seifrid, *Christ, our righteousness: Paul's theology of justification* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity, 2000), p. 124, says that condemnation of the law is the necessary counterpart to the gospel.

³² C. E. B. Cranfield, *Romans*, pp. 846-850, asserts that the law is firstly meant to enable sinful human beings to know their sin as sin so that sinners come to realise the impossibility of salvation by human works and finally need Jesus.

³³ K. Stendahl, *Paul*, p. 22.

turns what Paul said upside down, and that we can go directly to Jesus not through the tunnel of the law. Furthermore, I think that the view that the law cannot give the power to keep it, but that it only requires obedience, ought to be rethought, because only when we ignore the first canto of the Psalms, can this view make sense. The delight of the blessed is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. And he enjoys covenantal blessings. I also wish to pay attention to Jer. 31 which speaks of the new covenant. One of the promises of the new covenant is that God will be Israel's God and Israel shall be God's people. Important is the way God fulfils the promise. God promises to put his law within them, and he will write it upon their hearts (Jer. 31:33). Here we can easily and clearly find the same idea as is heard in Deuteronomy. It is stated that the law itself has no deficiency. The reason why the old covenant failed was not because of the impotence of the law, but because of Israel's intentional disobedience to keep the advice of Deut. 31, namely, putting God's word in their hearts. When we think of the law in the context of God's promise of blessings on those who enjoy and meditate on it, the law itself stands far from the image that it is too difficult to keep it.

Apart from first century Jewish literature, when I read, at least, the Old Testament, the nuance that the law is difficult to achieve, is strange to me. The Old Testament warns against 'intentional disobedience', rather than implying 'impossibility of keeping the law in spite of all

attempts to keep it'. In view of this, Ziesler³⁴ is quite right in saying that what Israel could not reach was not the law but true righteousness. Therefore, it is a wrongly-started approach to relate 'the **failure** of law-keeping caused by human beings' inability' to 'the curse of the law' when interpreting Deut. 27:26 in Gal. 3:10.³⁵ Gundry³⁶ can be pointed out here. It is, however, not the one who is unable to keep the law in spite of all attempts to keep it, who is cursed, but an **intentional** disobeyer.

Before I close this section, I also want to say in advance that the idea of the impossibility of the perfect observance of the law, goes along with the notion that if the law can be kept perfectly, righteousness by means of the law is in principle possible. Schreiner³⁷ agrees with this view. And Gundry³⁸ contends that Lev. 18:5 was cited in Gal. 3:12 in order to show that eternal life can be earned by the perfect obedience of the law. The law, however, does not produce righteousness, irregardless of its fulfilment. I will deal with this again when we consider Gal. 3:12. I did not examine all the main texts concerning this issue. Yet I will give them consideration as I proceed, especially the texts found in Romans. See: "4. Does Paul use the 'works of the law' in Romans **in a general sense?**" on pp. 139ff.

We, now, cannot accept as premise anymore that Paul suffered

³⁴ J. Ziesler, *Paul's Letter to the Romans* (London: SCM Press & Trinity Press International, 1989), p. 49.

³⁵ More detailed attention will be given to this issue in the next section.

³⁶ R. H. Gundry, "Grace, works and staying saved in Paul", *Biblica* 66 (1985), pp. 23-26.

³⁷ T. R. Schreiner, *Law*, p. 73.

³⁸ R. H. Gundry, "Grace", p. 25.

the pangs of conscience as he tried to keep the law, and that human beings are unable to keep the law perfectly in spite of all attempts to keep it. Now, being careful that our understanding of Paul is not affected by these premises, let us think of the works of the law that Paul himself refers to. Let us move to the interpretation of ‘the works of the law’ and ‘its curse’ and see if what we argued in this section, can be validated.

3. (The) ‘works of the law’ (ἔργων νόμου) and ‘the curse of the law’ (τῆς κατάρας τοῦ νόμου) in Galatians

3.1. Introduction

What did Paul fight against? This is an old but still important question. Since Luther, many have been distinguishing the law as God’s revelation from the law abused to achieve merits, in order to harmonise Paul’s diverse statements about the law.³⁹ Such division can be seen even amongst New Perspective scholars.⁴⁰ But the explanations of New Perspective scholars about how the law was abused are quite different from those of Old Perspective scholars. Sanders⁴¹ says that Paul’s

³⁹ For example see E. de Witt Burton, *A critical and exegetical commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* (ICC, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1921), pp. 443-460.

⁴⁰ See J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1- 8* (WBC 38, Dallas: WordBooks, 1988), p. lxxii.

⁴¹ E. P. Sanders, *Law*, p. 19.

argument is not in favour of faith, per se, nor is it against works, per se. On the other hand, Dunn⁴² says that the ‘works of the law’ in Gal. 2:16 are works related to the covenant. The ‘works of the law’ are particular observations of the law such as circumcision at Jerusalem and the food laws at Antioch. Furthermore, Dunn lays great emphasis on the fact that these works functioned as a badge for the covenantal people, or a boundary mark causing exclusive nationalism, confining covenantal people to being Jews.⁴³ In view of this, it is reasonable for Hagner⁴⁴ to point out that the New Perspective’s tenet is that Paul did not fight the law itself.

The traditional scholars’ common approach is to regard the ‘works of the law’ not as particular works, but as the works of the law in general, as good works to get righteousness before God. Therefore, they identify sinners as human beings in general terms who cannot keep the requirements of the law. And they argue that the curse comes upon sinners, because they fail to keep all the laws as good deeds. Representatively, Cranfield⁴⁵ says,

‘By works of the law’ (Rom 3:20) is not part of the quotation but is Paul’s own addition. It clarifies the psalmist’s statement, the intention of which was not to deny altogether the possibility of justification, but only to deny the possibility of a man’s being justified on the basis of his deserts ... No man will earn justification by his obedience to God’s requirements. The reason why this is so is that ‘works of the law’ in the

⁴² J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus*, pp. 190–198; *Partings*, p. 138.

⁴³ See pp. 31ff.

⁴⁴ D. A. Hagner, “Paul”, p. 79.

⁴⁵ C. E. B. Cranfield, *Romans* 1, pp. 197–198.

sense of such a perfect obedience as would merit justification are not forthcoming.

And in this context, the notion of justification by faith as the removal of the curse is formulated. So, if our understanding of ‘the meaning of works of the law’ and ‘the reason why the curse is pronounced’ are changed, the meaning of justification by faith must change accordingly. The phrase ‘works of the law’ appears five times in Galatians. Gal. 3:10 has been regarded as the prime proof verse on which the argument that Paul opposed the law because man cannot keep the law perfectly, is based.⁴⁶ So I will start with Gal. 3:10 to examine the ‘works of the law’ and ‘the curse of the law’.

3.2. (The) ‘works of the law’ (ἐργων νόμου)

3.2.1. Gal. 3:10

According to the traditional view, the reason for Paul’s citation of Deut. 27:26 is to prove that nobody can keep the law perfectly so that the law causes the curse.⁴⁷ In this Reformed view, ἐξ ἐργων νόμου is understood to be all who make an effort **to keep** the law in order to gain righteousness but who cannot keep the law perfectly.⁴⁸ In other words, people who are dedicated to the law, but who do not keep all things in

⁴⁶ E. P. Sanders, *Law*, p. 20.

⁴⁷ S. Kim, *New Perspective*, p. 129.

⁴⁸ S. Kim. *ibid*, p. 215, says that Schlier and Fuller exaggerate such a Reformed perspective.

the law. Why? Only one reason, namely that, unfortunately, they cannot keep it perfectly.⁴⁹ First of all, however, the text does not say *πάς ὃς οὐκ δύναται ἐμμένειν* – everyone who **cannot remain**, but just *πάς ὃς οὐκ ἐμμένει ἐν πάσιν τοῖς γεγραμμένοις ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τοῦ νόμου* – everyone who **does not remain** in all the things that are written in the book of the law – is cursed. I think that the difference between the two statements is simple but important. The traditional view reveals its fault in that the view is exactly opposed to the theology of Deuteronomy that the text itself cites⁵⁰ There might be someone who wants to object that Paul does not refer to the theology of Deuteronomy but to his own theology by citing Deuteronomy. What is interesting, however, is that it is a New Perspective scholar, Sanders,⁵¹ who says this, and an Old Perspective scholar, Gundry,⁵² who opposes it. I will say more about this in detail later. Anyway, even if it is the case that Paul cited Deuteronomy to convey his own idea, if the main reason for Paul's citation, as the traditional view argues, had been the impossibility of full law observance, Paul himself should not have been satisfied with such an expression that could not fully stress his point. In my eyes, it is obvious that Deuteronomy theology itself does not support such a view. Deut. 27:26 does not curse those who make an all-out effort to keep the law, but on the contrary, those who do not want to keep the law. Here, what I want

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 232-233.

⁵⁰ See pp. 83ff.

⁵¹ E. P. Sanders, *Law*, p. 22. See also note 30 on p. 54.

⁵² R. H. Gundry, "Grace", p. 24.

to pay attention to is that, in terms of the promise of Deut. 30, one who wants to live according to the law, that is to say, one who puts God's word in his heart, is one who can do it (Deut. 30:14). I think that 'the wanting one' is a synonym of 'the able one', at least, in Deut. 30:14.

Taking all the above into consideration, I think that Gundry's⁵³ idea that, since Paul does not speak of just the law but of the 'works of the law', Paul thinks not just of accepting the law but of doing the law, is narrow-minded. I think that his criticism of Sanders, namely that Sanders ignores the original meaning of the text in Deuteronomy, applies to himself.

- **E. P. Sanders**

Sanders,⁵⁴ who can be called the one who caused the New Perspective debate, does not distinguish the 'works of the law' from the law. On the other hand, Sanders⁵⁵ says,

The controversy centres on the admission rite, circumcision, but includes other aspects of the law as well, such as food and days. It thus appears that Paul's opponents took the position – which is, to repeat, entirely understandable – that Gentile converts to the people of God had to be circumcised and accept the rest of the law.

And when explaining the reason why Paul opposed it in Gal. 3:10-12,

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁵⁴ See the section of E. P. Sanders, *Law*, pp. 17-27, on Galatians 2-3. On the other hand, J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus*, pp. 200-201, blames Sanders, saying that Sanders' failure in reconstructing Paul's view on the law was the result of his failure in understanding the works of the law.

⁵⁵ E. P. Sanders, *ibid.*, p. 20.

Sanders⁵⁶ concludes that Paul objected to the ‘works of the law’ not because of the impossibility of keeping the law, but because of law’s other purpose in salvation history. That is to say, Paul rejected the ‘works of the law’ because he had the conviction that salvation was only possible by means of Jesus’ death so that the law did not have the purpose of salvation, but another purpose in God’s salvation history. To sum up, salvation was by Jesus, and, therefore, it was not by the law.

On the other hand, Sanders⁵⁷ stresses that the reason why Paul cited verses from the Old Testament is terminological. Because Paul wanted to include the gentiles, and the word ἔθνος appears in Gen. 18:18, the verse cited in Gal. 3:8 is not Gen. 12:3, but 18:18. Paul searched for a proof verse in LXX that says that gentiles receive God’s blessing through Abraham. He applies this to Gal. 3:10 also. He strongly opposes scholars who stress the word all – πᾶς?in ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς γεγραμμένοις ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τοῦ νόμου, and argues that the curse comes upon them because they cannot do all of it. He lays stress on the fact that Deut. 27:26 is the only verse in the LXX in which the words ‘cursed’ and ‘nomos’ are linked together. Paul simply cites this verse because of these two words, ‘cursed’ and ‘nomos’. Although I do not agree with him on several points, I do applaud the fact that he does not link the curse to the inability to keep the law and try to understand the verse in terms of salvation history.

We need to pay attention to the fact that Paul does not refer to the

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 26–27.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 20–21; See note 22 on p. 52 also.

‘works of the law’ but just to the law in the next verse. He compares becoming righteous with the law itself regardless of its fulfilment. Here, Paul uses a Christian axiom, i.e. that the righteous lives by faith, as the reason why no man can be justified before God by the law. According to the axiom, the righteousness has nothing directly to do with the law itself. This is, in some way, in line with Sanders’ contention that Paul objected to the law because of his conviction that salvation was by Jesus. And as I have said, Sanders thinks that Paul denied the law as a way to salvation because the law had another role in salvation history. His salvation – historical perspective can obviously be supported by the fact that Paul deals with the purpose of God’s giving the law in salvation history in the following paragraph (Gal. 3:15-26).

On the other hand, Gundry,⁵⁸ as I have indicated briefly above,⁵⁹ points out that, according to Sanders, we have to find not what the cited original text says but what Paul wants to say by the citation. Kim⁶⁰ also says that this interpretation has drawn strong criticism, because it does not pay attention to the actual content of Deut. 27:26 and it makes Paul incomprehensibly arbitrary. I partly agree with them. First of all, Sanders⁶¹ actually says that we have to find out what Paul himself wants to say. On this point, Sanders⁶² gives us the impression that Paul used the cited text arbitrarily. Furthermore, Sanders’ argument that Paul did

⁵⁸ R. H. Gundry, “Grace”, p. 24.

⁵⁹ See p. 90.

⁶⁰ S. Kim, *New Perspective*, p. 131.

⁶¹ E. P. Sanders, *Law*, p. 22, and n. 30 on p. 54.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 26.

not provide us the reason for his argument in Gal. 3:6-18 that no man is justified before God by the law, obviously makes Paul arbitrary. I cite his own words:

It seems that in Gal. 3:10-12 – indeed in 3:6-18 – we do not have an explicit statement of the reason for which Paul held that no one is righteous by the law. We see, rather, Paul’s skill in Jewish exegetical argument. He ‘proves’ by Scripture that accepting the law leads to a curse, that righteousness is by faith, that it is available for the Gentiles, and that the law is not by faith. These diverse statements are not reasons, they are arguments ... In Gal. 3:10-12, in other words, Paul states, with scriptural proof, what he considers to be the facts of God’s plan of salvation .

In addition, by saying that Paul did not pay attention to the word ‘all’ of Deut. 27:26, Sanders⁶³ also gives us the impression that Paul was not interested in what Deut. 27:26 said, but arbitrarily used Deut. 27:26 for what he wanted it to say. I believe that both Paul and Deut. 27:26 emphasise the word ‘all’. However, my reason for this is different from that of traditional scholars. I will discuss this in greater detail later.⁶⁴

Yet, even if Sanders gives us such a bad impression about Paul, I must say that what Deuteronomy originally said, is not against Sander’s final interpretation of Gal. 3. Because, as I have already stressed several times, Deuteronomy warns not those who are not able to keep the law, but those who do not want to keep it, or, those who do not want to put God’s words in their hearts (*contra* Gundry). A more strict interpretation than that of Gundry can be found in the Bultmannian School. Apart from

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-23.

⁶⁴ I will treat this later in greater detail. See pp. 95ff., 106ff.

the fulfilment of the law, the Bultmannian School tends to regard even the endeavours themselves to keep the law as sin.⁶⁵ But this view also distorts the theology of Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy *simply and clearly* warns against Israel's hardness not to live according to God's commands. I think that Schreiner⁶⁶ is correct in disagreeing with a Bultmannian, Heinrich Schlier, who believes that Gal. 3:10 says that those who do or try to do what the law requires are under the curse. Schreiner is also correct in saying that, on the contrary, the curse does not threaten those who keep the law. Kim⁶⁷ also says the same, opposing H. Schlier and D. F. Fuller who relate the curse to man's legalistic attitude. My point is that the reading of Deuteronomy itself does not connect man's inability and legalistic attitude itself to the curse, thus, although Sanders made some mistakes in explaining the principle and reason for the citation of Deut. 27:26, his explanation does not distort the original meaning of Deuteronomy.

Sanders, however, makes a clear mistake by not paying attention to the word 'all'. Kim⁶⁸ says that the fact that the word $\pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\upsilon\nu$ does not occur in the MT but only in the LXX implies that Paul stresses both 'the requirement of the law that all in it must be kept' and 'its impossibility'. I totally agree with Kim that Paul had in mind $\pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\upsilon\nu$, but I do not agree that Paul cited the LXX to stress the impossibility of keeping the law. It is on

⁶⁵ See R. Bultmann, *Theology*, p. 264. He says that man's efforts to keep the law to get salvation only leads him into sin, indeed this effort itself in the end *is already sin*.

⁶⁶ T. R. Schreiner, *Law*, p. 50.

⁶⁷ S. Kim, *New Perspective*, pp. 129-130.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, n. 59 on p. 141.

this very point that I think that Sanders and Kim are unable to fully consider the situation of Galatians. Because while, as Dunn⁶⁹ pointed out, Sanders identifies the ‘works of the law’ with the law, Kim⁷⁰ says that the ‘works of the law’ in Gal. 3:10 is referred to in a general sense beyond the observance of such things as food and days. Accepting that Paul referred to the law in Gal. 3:10 in a general sense, both of them interpret the ‘works of the law’ in Gal. 3:10 as the law as a whole. I think that on this point, they have not fully considered the special situation of the Galatian church. Furthermore, while Sanders does not stress the word ‘all’, Kim does stress the impossibility of the fulfilment of the law. The two of them interpret the quotation from Deuteronomy differently. Deuteronomy does stress the word ‘all’, but does not warn against the impossibility to fulfil the law, but against disobedience. Here, I want to introduce Dunn’s view before I made my own suggestion. I will use his view for my argument.

- **J. D. G. Dunn**

Dunn welcomes Sanders’ interpretation of Judaism in Paul’s time and in fact bases his interpretation on Sanders’ views. However, Dunn⁷¹ shows his dissatisfaction with Sanders’ negligence in not seeing how far Paul’s theology could be explained in relation to first-temple Judaism’s

⁶⁹ J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus*, p. 200.

⁷⁰ S. Kim. *New Perspective*, pp. 58-60.

⁷¹ J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus*, p. 186.

covenantal nomism. Dunn⁷² disagrees with Sanders, saying that Sanders' failure in reconstructing Paul's view on the law resulted from his mistake in understanding the short phrase 'works of the law'. That is to say, Sanders' mistake is that he simply identifies the 'works of the law' with the law.

In the chapter 'The New Perspective on Paul', Dunn⁷³ also stresses that justification by faith appears first in Galatians, in the context of Paul's attempt to identify and defend his understanding of justification against the understanding of it by the Jewish Christians who came from Jerusalem and Antioch. Dunn⁷⁴ scrutinises the meaning of being righteousness in order to find out what Paul exactly argues in Gal. 2:16. Dunn⁷⁵ says with regard to Gal. 2:15 ('we ourselves who are Jews by birth are not gentile sinners'),

This understanding of being justified is thus, evidently, something Jewish, something which belongs to Jews 'by nature', something which distinguishes them from 'Gentile sinners'. But this is covenantal language, the language of those conscious that they have been chosen as a people by God, and separated from the surrounding nations.

Therefore, the sinners in the text are not sinners in general terms, namely, sinful human beings, but those outside the covenant who do not know the law nor keep it, namely, the gentiles.⁷⁶ And furthermore, God's

⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 200-201.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 188-191.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 190.

⁷⁶ J. D. G. Dunn, *Justice*, pp. 21-22, asserts that Jesus said the same in Luke 6:33 and Matt. 5:47.

justification is God's acknowledgment that someone is in the covenant.⁷⁷ His view can also be supported by other biblical books such as Romans and Corinthians. Dunn⁷⁸ asserts that the antithesis ἐν νόμῳ/ἀνόμῳς in Rom. 2:12 together with ἔθνη τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα in verse 14 indicates that Jews and gentiles are defined by the law. 1 Cor. 9:20-21 voices the same idea when it calls 'Jews and Gentiles' 'those who are under the law' and 'those who are without the law'.

Dunn also asserts that what is more striking, is that Paul totally agrees with his fellow Jews in asserting that justification is by faith. In other words, he shares, with his fellow Jews, the same mind that God's initiative and grace are essential to 'God's covenant itself, and his continual action' in maintaining the covenant so that justification by faith is not a distinctively Christian teaching. Therefore, Paul is appealing not to Christians who also happen to be Jews, but to Jews who regard the Christian faith as an extension of Jewish one.

Having stressed the Jewish and covenantal context, Dunn⁷⁹ argues that the 'works of the law' are works in relation to the covenant and they

⁷⁷ This approach can be seen from Sanders, *Palestine Judaism*, pp. 7, 420, 544. He says that righteousness in Judaism is a term which implies the maintenance of status among the group of the elect.

⁷⁸ J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus*, p. 221, says,

In Rom. 2:12 the antithesis ἐν νόμῳ/ἀνόμῳς clearly has the force 'within the law', 'inside the law', and 'without the law', 'outside the law'. This is borne out by the fact that in verse 14 Paul goes on to define gentiles equivalently as ἔθνη τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα. In other words, the law and the Jew are coterminous; the law identifies the Jew as Jew and constitutes the boundary which separates him from the gentiles.

Furthermore Dunn, *ibid.*, p. 215, asserts that his view provides the key to solving Paul's inconsistency about the law, something that Sanders and Räisänen claim.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 190-191.

are in particular the observation of laws such as laws with regard to circumcision (discussed at Jerusalem) and the food laws (the issue at Antioch) in consideration of the fact that Gal. 2:16 follows immediately on the debates at Jerusalem and at Antioch. Why these particular works of the law? Greco-Roman literature in the period and Maccabees reveal that circumcision and food laws played a role as boundary marks of Israel.⁸⁰ The ongoing issue of food laws was more severe than the one-off issue of circumcision.⁸¹ Thus, when Paul was against the notion of justification by the ‘works of the law’, he had in mind particular observances of the law such as circumcision and food laws. Therefore, according to Dunn, the ‘works of the law’ does not mean good deeds in general, but is interpreted to have a very limited meaning.⁸² Explaining

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 191–193; J. D. G. Dunn, *Theology*, pp. 357–358.

⁸¹ J. D. G. Dunn, *Partings* p. 130. From J. Neusner’s calculation, *The Rabbinic traditions about the Pharisees before 70*. Vol. 3 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971), p. 297, that 229 of 341 rabbinic traditions were concerned with table-fellowship, we can infer how important, first-temple Judaism thought table-fellowship as fellowship before God was.

This suggests that the issue of the food laws in Antioch had the severe implication of whether gentile Christians could be regarded as companions with whom Jewish Christians have covenantal fellowship before God as righteous ones or not. And this situation, in turn, can explain Paul’s strong objections. Thus this makes Dunn’s arguments more likely to be correct.

⁸² J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8* p. lxxii, takes not the law itself but the law misused as the central idea of Paul’s negative thrust against the law and summarises it as follows:

Paul’s negative thrust against the law is against the law taken over too completely by Israel, the law misunderstood by a misplaced emphasis on boundary-marking ritual, the law become a tool of sin in its too close identification with matters of the flesh, the law sidetracked into a focus for nationalistic zeal.

I, in principal, agree with him. However, I think that it is useful to realise that the law itself as God’s command, originally had the function of the boundary mark before it was misused. The law originally had the boundary function for Israel to distinguish her from the surrounding gentiles and so that she could be holy (Lev. 11:45). Besides, I think that Jesus’ command also has the same function. John 13:35 (By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another) says that Jesus’ true people can

the following verse (16), Dunn⁸³ also points out that Paul, probably, cited Psalm 143:2 and changed the verse on purpose. Paul added ‘works of law’ and changed the words ‘no living’ to ‘no flesh’. As the result, ‘no living will be justified before you’ is rephrased as ‘by works of law no flesh will be justified’. Dunn contends that Paul, by means of this alteration, was attacking the attitude that God’s acceptance relies on a merely human relationship or a heritage determined by physical descent, that is to say, that God’s favour depends on their national identity as Jews, defined by the ‘works of the law’. I think that this interpretation is persuasive and that it agrees largely with his explanation of verse 15.

However, when Paul refers to the ‘works of the law’ he does not mean only circumcision and the food laws. Indeed, Dunn⁸⁴ stresses that this expression has been misunderstood. Although the ‘works of the law’ mean all that the law asks of faithful Jews to do, that is to say, what Sanders calls covenantal nomism – the conviction that someone’s status in the covenant is kept by doing what the law requires – the ‘works of the law’ focus on such things as circumcision because they are the markers of Israel’s identity and boundary.⁸⁵ Therefore, the expression ‘those who are ἐξ ἔργων νόμου’ refers to those who want to be identified as Jews by

be identified by their observance of Jesus’ command.

⁸³ J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus*, p. 199.

⁸⁴ J. D. G. Dunn, “Yet once more – the works of the law: a response”, *JSNT* 46 (1992), pp. 100–102. Dunn says that even Cranfield misunderstood this. See also *Theology*, n. 97 on p. 496.

⁸⁵ J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus*, pp. 194, 223; “Yet once more”, p. 100; *Theology*, pp. 492, 496. On the point that the law functioned as an identity indicator, F. Watson, *Paul*, pp. 62–72, and J. Barclay, *Obeying the truth: a study of Paul’s ethics in Galatians* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), pp. 82, 88, are not basically different from Dunn.

keeping the law as Israel's identity marker and covenantal norm.⁸⁶ The issue associated with this matter, was the issue of salvation history as to who could be identified as Jews, namely, God's true covenantal people, and how this could be done after Jesus' coming.⁸⁷ On this point, while the Judaisers thought that nothing had changed, Paul claimed that God's true covenantal people was identified only by their faith in Jesus. Therefore, what Paul was against was not activism, but exclusive nationalism that confined being covenantal people to being Jews.⁸⁸

I agree with Dunn's interpretation of the matter. To be more specific, I fully agree with his view in *contextual, historical and theological* respects. First of all, I have to say that his view does the context justice. His starting point, namely the identification of sinners, is directly and clearly elicited from Gal. 2:15. Considering that the traditional view tends to identify 'sinners' in individual dimensions, if I may exaggerate a little bit, I believe that whereas the traditional view is dominated by systematic theology, Dunn's view is dominated by an exegetical perspective. It should also be pointed out that the following verse, verse

⁸⁶ In addition, J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus*, p. 220, supports his view by stressing the genitive of the phrase 'the works of the law'. Relying on E. Lohmeyer and J. B. Tyson, he argues that the phrase 'the works of the law' should be interpreted as the service to the law. It means that the way of mankind's existence is stressed, that is to say, they belong to people of the law.

⁸⁷ Actually, Dunn's view is not totally new. The recognition that the core of the debate of the apostolic churches was the matter of gentile inclusion into Abraham's descendants had already started with historical criticism of the New Testament. We can see that already F. C. Baur, *The apostle of Jesus*. Vol. II (London: Williams and Norgate, 1875), 182-211, and W. Wrede, *Paul* (London: Philip Green, 1907), pp. 124-128, prominently related Paul's debates of the law to the matter of gentile inclusion.

⁸⁸ J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus*, p. 198.

16, is consistent with Dunn's starting point and, especially, his explanation of Paul's alteration of the verse from Psalm 143 carries weight. Dunn also makes the best use of the previous paragraph (2:11–14). In addition, his view gets support not only from the direct context, but also from other texts such as Rom. 2:12, 1 and Cor. 9:20–21.

Secondly, Dunn's view explains very well the historical situation of Paul's time. The view that the unjust and the just are distinguished not in terms of individual goodness but in terms of *Jews and gentiles*, is much more in line with the view of salvation in first century Judaism. Many present Christians do not pay attention to the meaning of the *covenantal* salvation of God's people as *a community in the historical relationship with non-covenantal people*. Accordingly, their view of salvation as *ahistorical, individual and spiritual* (i.e., that the righteous will enjoy supreme spiritual blessings in a state without the flesh after the end of the time-space universe) is strange to second temple Judaism.⁸⁹ The view of salvation in first century Judaism was that Israel's God would deliver her from the oppression of pagans.⁹⁰ The new covenant people trusted God's covenant faithfulness: that He would vindicate them and would give them his favourable judgment.⁹¹ On the other hand, the idea of salvation as the justification of individuals is strange and new. Salvation and justification were viewed in covenantal terms and not in

⁸⁹ See N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the people of God* (London: SPCK, 1991), p. 300.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 334.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 336–337.

individual and judicial terms, the covenant always being communal before being individual. Besides, this view nicely corresponds with the historical fact that the Pharisees were one of the parties leading contemporary Judaism and that they had a close relationship with the Maccabean movement.⁹²

Lastly, Dunn not only attaches importance to the direct context, but also seriously takes the covenant and salvation history into account so that his view gives us both a narrow and a wide perspectives at the same time. Biblical righteousness was concretely revealed through the Abrahamic covenant. The righteousness was not emphasised by the forgiveness of certain transgressions in the Abrahamic covenant.⁹³ Plevnik⁹⁴ rightly compares the secular concept of righteousness with righteousness as a biblical concept. He says that God made it possible for Israel to be justified in relation with God by means of the covenant that was his sovereign action. He also points out that man was viewed to be just in the Old Testament when he lived in accordance with the covenant. Dunn employs this notion in his exegesis. He leads us to pose a question, by means of the phrase ‘works of the law’, about who really was a member of the Abrahamic covenant. Consequently, his view has its

⁹² Most scholars think that Pharisees were the descendants of Hasideans who supported the Maccabees leading the independence movement against Greece in about 160 B.C. See G. C. Porton, “Diversity in postbiblical Judaism”, in: R. Kraft and G. Nickelsburg (eds.), *Early Judaism and its modern interpreters* (Atlanta: Schdars Press, 1986), pp. 69–72; E. P. Sanders, *Judaism*, pp. 380–412.

⁹³ For an illustration in terms of Abraham, see “4.2. Law in a general sense in Rom. 4?” on pp. 142–146.

⁹⁴ J. Plevnik, *Paul*, p. 58.

strongest point in the fact that it helps us look at the matter of Jews and gentiles from the perspective of *salvation history* in terms of righteousness rather than making us concentrate on the ahistorical matter of individuals' justification.

On the other hand, Kim⁹⁵ is aware that, even though Dunn emphasises circumcision and the food laws when he interprets the 'works of the law', Dunn also refers to all that the law requires. However, when Kim attacks the New Perspective including Dunn, he strongly argues that the 'works of the law' do not mean particular works such as circumcision, but general works of the law. Citing Romans, Kim asserts that Paul refers to the law in a general sense in Gal. 3:10-14 and Romans so that Paul has in mind the moral observance of the law as a whole in order to obtain righteousness. However, even though the 'works of the law' do not mean a part of the law but the law as a whole, this does not necessarily prove the mistakes of the New Perspective and the correctness of the Old Perspective in interpreting the attitude of getting righteousness by the 'works of the law'. Regardless of the scope of the law, while keeping a part of the law can be understood as legalistic observance, keeping the law as a whole can be interpreted as observance in terms of boundary markers. I will treat this again when dealing with the question whether Paul refers to the law in Romans in a general sense or not.

In conclusion, I think that Dunn interprets Paul's theology more coherently within Judaism as covenantal nomism than Sanders does. In

⁹⁵ S. Kim, *New Perspective*, pp. 57-60.

fact, it is on this very point that the difference between Sanders and Dunn is pivotal. Furthermore, I think that Dunn treats the context in a better way. Therefore, although I disagreed with Dunn on issue of the origin of justification by faith (in the previous section), I am willing to accept his interpretation of the ‘works of the law’ in order to explain Gal. 3:10.

However, although Dunn has correctly interpreted the concept the ‘works of the law’ in its general context, I do not feel satisfied about the fact that he did not pay proper attention to the specific situation of Galatians when he explained Gal 3:10. This is the case because he firstly **generalises** ‘all who are from the law’ in 3:10 and directly regards it as Israel as a whole. As I will explain below, I believe the expression specifically refers to the Judaisers in the Galatian church and the church members who were about to accept them.

Secondly, when Dunn explains the reason for the curse he does not interpret ‘all things’ in the sentence ‘Everyone who does not remain in **all things** which are written in the book of the law’ in terms of quantity but rather in terms of quality. Dunn⁹⁶ asserts that the reason why they are cursed is because they diminish the law, distort the covenant, put the priority on the, at best, second important aspect of the law and finally they fall short of the requirements of the law. Therefore, the curse in Gal. 3:10 is caused by the special lack of fellow Jews who confine God’s grace and promise to national Israel. But this explanation does not

⁹⁶ J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus*, pp. 226–229.

adequately explain the words ‘all things’ either – just as Sanders did not succeed in explaining them adequately. Besides, such an explanation cannot stress the activity of everyone who does not remain in all things which are written in the book of the law. According to Dunn’s view, we have to accept that everyone who does not remain in all the things which are written in the book of the law thinks that he is on the right track according to his own point of view, but in fact, from God’s point of view, he lacks the requirements of the law; thus he comes under the curse inadvertently.

However, I propose that Paul is not referring to Israel in generally, but concretely to the Judaisers in the Galatian churches who do not want to keep **all** things written in the book of the law in terms of quantity; thus they are under the curse of the law. (See below for detail.) Correspondingly, I can only agree with Dunn’s explanation of the concept the ‘works of the law’ in Gal. 3:10; not with the rest of his interpretation. Thus, I accept Dunn’s explanation of the concept the ‘works of the law’, but will add Jewett’s⁹⁷ views to it. In this way we can more accurately adequately take into account the specific situation in the Galatian churches. With due regard to the possibility of keeping the law, by supplementing Dunn’s views with that of Jewett, we will succeed in explaining Paul’s views much better.

Let me now try to summarise my view of Gal 3:10. Before I

⁹⁷ R. Jewett. “The agitators and the Galatian congregation”, *NTS* 17 (1971), pp. 198–212.

introduced Dunn's point of view, I argued against Kim' and Sanders' interpretation of the words '**all things**'. I argued that Sanders made a mistake by ignoring the words 'all things' cited from Deut. 27:26.⁹⁸ I believe that Paul actually emphasises the word 'all things'. However, my reason for stressing these words differs from the reason provided by Kim who also stresses 'all things'. As Dunn has explained, first-temple Judaism tried to confine the identity of God's people by the 'works of the law', for example by circumcision and food laws. In the same way, the Judaisers in the church of Galatia also stressed **the particular works of the law as a badge**. They must have claimed that they truly respected the Mosaic law and blamed Paul for disregarding the law, but the reason for their emphasis was very special. They had a very special purpose, namely to avoid the increasing persecution by the Zealots.⁹⁹ They probably maintained that the Galatians had to be circumcised to be fully accepted as Abraham's descendents, just as Genesis says, and they stressed the Sabbath and food laws as well. This was, however, a sort of program to escape persecution by the Zealots. Although they said that

⁹⁸ See p. 94.

⁹⁹ The starting point of Jewett, *ibid.*, pp. 198-212, is Gal. 6:12. He asserts that Jewish Christians in Judea were suspected of disregarding the law because of their relation to uncircumcised gentile Christians so that some of them thought that if the gentile Christians would be circumcised, the suspicion and persecution would disappear. Consequently, they circumcised Gentile Christians as a program to escape from persecution of the Jews. They were not necessarily interested in making full law observers out of these Gentiles. They were the agitators in the Galatian churches. This entire situation can be nicely explained against the background of Zealot nationalism in Judea arising in the late 40s in the first century.

However, I do not agree with Jewett in every respect. I am not in favour of Jewett's explanation of the way in which the agitators carried out the program in the Galatian churches. Nevertheless, I approve of his basic idea.

they regarded the Mosaic law highly, they **actually accentuated only** such laws as circumcision, Sabbath, and food laws to demonstrate the Galatians' adherence to the law, because these issues were the best proof of dedication to the law. Amongst these laws circumcision was of special importance. In other words, even though they laid stress on the Mosaic law, they, in fact, did not want the Galatians to keep the rest of the law and they themselves in practice did not keep the rest of the law either. They were not necessarily interested in making full law observers out of these Gentiles.

If it is the case that Paul had in mind only the observance of laws such as circumcision and food laws, because he wanted to point out the Judaisers' self-contradiction in this specific situation, the later half of verse 10 is quite appropriate for the special situation of the Galatian churches. The Judaisers did not actually intend to make full law observers out of these Gentiles and they themselves did not want to keep the whole law. However, the law requires full law observance. Therefore, we ought to see that the observance of such particular works of the law as circumcision immediately implies not the inability of the Judaisers, but their negligence or intentional denial of observance of the rest of the law. At least, this was how it must have seemed to Paul. Paul wanted the Galatians to see the implications of accepting the Judaisers' assertions. It was in this particular situation that Paul accentuated '**all things**'. Paul was warning the Galatians that their intention to be identified as Abraham's descendants by purposely keeping selected

aspects of the law would finally put them under the curse of the law owing to their lack of fulfilment of the whole law in terms of quantity. Thus, Paul did not emphasise ‘all things’ due to the impossibility of observing the whole law. We need to remember that since the Judaisers and Galatians did not consider the perfect observance of ‘all things’ in the law, as their final goal, so they did not even need to worry over their inability to keep it at all. In this concrete Galatian situation, ‘everyone who **does not remain** in **all thing** written in the book of the law’ in the citation exactly identified the Judaisers. They actually **did not remain** (not ‘could not remain’) in ‘**all things**’ according to their wilful negligence.

On the other hand, Gal 5:3 is often cited as a supporting verse for the argument that Paul was against the ‘works of the law’ because man cannot keep the law perfectly.¹⁰⁰ It is asserted that Paul returns to the argument of Gal 3:10. In this regard, Sanders¹⁰¹ does not want to temper his main point that Paul did not stress the word ‘all things’, saying that it was meant as a sort of threat: to accept circumcision meant to accept the whole (ὅλος) law. In my view, Sanders does not need to deny Paul’s accentuation of the **whole** law in order to maintain his point that Paul was not against the ‘works of the law’ because of man’s inability to keep all the things in the law. Rather, such a threat logically stresses the whole law. If Paul stressed the word ‘whole’ in Gal 5:3, there would be a strong possibility that Paul accentuated the word ‘**all things**’ in Gal 3:10 also.

¹⁰⁰ H. Hübner, *Law in Paul’s thought: studies in the New Testament and its world* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1983), pp. 24–25, 36–37; T. R. Schreiner, *Law*, p. 63.

¹⁰¹ E. P. Sanders, *Law*, p. 27.

Furthermore, Sanders¹⁰² says, “It thus appears that Paul’s opponents took the position that Gentile converts to the people of God had to be circumcised and accept the rest of the law”. If this is so, I cannot understand why Paul had to emphasise that to accept circumcision implies that one has to keep the whole law. On the other hand, if the Judaisers stressed such particular works of the law as circumcision, laws about special days, and food laws, Paul’s explanation of its implications makes sense. Over and above that, Sanders¹⁰³ asserts that, although the Judaisers thought that the gentiles should be brought into full observance of the law, they did not very strictly observe the law to maintain full fellowship with the gentile converts. They may have adopted a policy of gradualism so that they might have firstly required some of the major commandments (circumcision, food, days). Sanders, however, just refers to this, but does not apply this view to the interpretation of Gal. 3:10 and 5:3; thus neglecting the specific situation of the Galatian churches. Gal. 5:3 obviously shows that the Judaisers, at least tacitly, stressed only some parts of the law as boundary markers. That is in agreement with the situation I sketched, based on Jewett’s idea. The Judaisers did not teach the gentile converts to keep the whole law, nor did they intend to imply it.

In this context, Paul thus cited the LXX that includes the words ‘all things (πᾶς)’ for the purpose of pointing out the specific situation in the

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 29.

Galatian churches. Therefore, it is on this very point where Kim,¹⁰⁴ who thinks that Paul argues about the matter of the law in Gal. 3:10 in a general sense, does not appear to understand the situation. More accurately, he even argues against the flow of Paul's logic. Kim,¹⁰⁵ actually, makes an effort to explain the meaning of the 'works of the law' in Galatians as a whole, in a general sense. Kim says,

Our brief discussion of the passages in which it appears suggests rather that although in some passages in Galatians it has especially in view the Jewish covenant distinctives such as the laws of circumcision, purity, and festivals, it usually refers more generally to the deeds done in obedience to the law which are considered as human achievements or as good works done to earn God's favour. The reason why Paul can bundle the Jewish covenant distinctives together with the other deeds of the law and oppose them to faith in Christ is that he perceives the former as well as the latter as human achievements.

Consequently, I can safely say that Kim believes that Paul is opposed to the 'works of the law' as human achievement, in general terms, performed to earn justification by perfectly fulfilling the law, because it is not possible according to Gal. 3:10 also. But Paul, as we have clearly seen, is actually referring to a very specific situation when he uses the phrase 'works of the law'.

This argument is supported by Gal 6:13. If Paul had gradually generalised the matter of the law and had been against the Judaisers

¹⁰⁴ S. Kim, *New Perspective*, p. 58, says,

But already there Paul elevates the question of observing circumcision and the food laws to the level of trying to obtain justification through the efforts of law observance (2:19-21). This is clear in Gal 3:10-14.

Of course, I also think that Paul starts to move to a more principle level from verse 11 on. See p. 118.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

because his main reason for the objection had been the impossibility of full law observance, he would have clearly and strongly said “οὐδὲ γὰρ οἱ περιτεμνόμενοι αὐτοὶ νόμον δύναινται φυλάσσειν” or “ἰσχύουσι φυλάσσειν” in order to stress his own argument. However, the words Paul uses are just “οὐδὲ γὰρ οἱ περιτεμνόμενοι αὐτοὶ νόμον φυλάσσουσιν”.

3.2.2. Gal. 3:12

I believe that the interpretation that we have outlined above can be confirmed by the quotation from Lev. 18:5 in Gal. 3:12. There are many arguments for the reason why Paul cited Leviticus. Scholars, such as Gundry,¹⁰⁶ Hübner¹⁰⁷ and Ridderbos¹⁰⁸ who think that Paul is opposed to the law because of man’s inability, think that Paul cited it to prove the theory that eternal life, even though it was not possible, could be earned by perfect obedience. In other words, they think that Paul cited Lev. 18:5 to say that eternal life cannot *practically* be earned by perfect obedience, but it can *purely theoretically* be earned by perfect obedience. But as I have said above, I object to this interpretation as well as to the notion of the impossibility of full law observance.

Firstly, I want to refer to the concept ‘theory’. The concept ‘theory’ by nature includes practical possibility rather than excludes it, because a

¹⁰⁶ R. H. Gundry, “Grace”, p. 25.

¹⁰⁷ H. Hübner, *Law*, p. 19.

¹⁰⁸ H. Ridderbos, *Paul*, p. 134, says, “If one were to fulfil its requirement he would in fact live”.

theory expects to be put into practice. I am inclined to think that stating something merely as a theoretical possibility, in other words, a theory impossible to put into practice, is actually by definition a contradiction. The sentence itself speaks of the possibility of keeping the law in practice, because it simply states: “He who does them shall live in them”. Reading the text without any prejudice implies the practical possibility of keeping the law perfectly, rather than implying the practical impossibility of keeping the law perfectly. If Paul, in a serious debate, had wanted to produce a text to prove the impossibility of keeping the law, he should have produced another text that more clearly states “He who **can** do them”.

Secondly, with regard to Paul’s logic, if Paul cited Leviticus merely for a theoretical possibility, his logic would have been as follows: Paul must have thought that it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law (v. 11a) because he who does them shall live in them (v. 12b). That means that Paul ought to have connected the latter part of verse 12 directly with the former part of verse 11. Otherwise, the better option for supporting the notion that it is impossible to keep the law would have been for him to reverse the order of verses 10, 11 and 12. In other words, Paul should have said: “He who does them shall live in them (v. 12) → (but) it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law (v. 11) → for it is written ‘Cursed be every one who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, and do them’”. However, the order in which Paul placed his sentences, does not permit one to interpret it as

implying the impossibility of keeping the law.

I believe that we must deal with verse 11 very carefully. The text simply and clearly says “Now it is evident that no man is justified before God by the law, for he, who through faith is righteous, shall live”. By means of a ὅτι-clause Paul clearly produces the reason why man cannot be justified by the law. The reason provided is a Christian axiom that the one who through faith is righteous, shall live. The axiom is indicated by means of the word δῆλον. This axiom clearly states that, regardless of its fulfilment, the law is not the reason by which man can be justified, nor the principle by which the just can live. To put it another way, in no way is the law related to the faith through which man can only be justified. Tyson¹⁰⁹ basically follows the same approach. As a consequence of this argument, I must point out again that Sanders was surely right in that Paul tried to say that the law has a different function from faith in salvation history.

Paul also confirms this by saying “ὁ δὲ νόμος οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ πίστεως” in verse 12. Moreover, it is proved again by the development of the Paul’s point in 3:15–25 that his intention was to point out the basically different natures of law and faith in salvation history. Reinforcing his logic of the previous paragraph in verses 15–25, Paul asked the questions; “How are they different?” and “What is the law?” Paul discusses in detail the nature of the law, from the perspective of salvation history, whereas he very briefly speaks about the impossibility of keeping the law in verse 10 only.

¹⁰⁹ J. Tyson, “‘Works of law’ in Galatians”, *JBL* 92 (1973), p. 428.

This proves that man's inability to keep the law was not at the centre of Paul's thought.

Martyn¹¹⁰ also asserts that Paul, in Gal 3:11, begins to discuss not law observance as such, but the law itself. Paul disqualifies the law on the basis of its origin in comparison with faith (3:12a).¹¹¹ And Paul uses a textual contradiction, citing Hab. 2:4 and Lev. 18:5 in Gal. 3:11-12. Paul, however, does not want to dissolve the contradiction between the two texts. Instead, he accentuates the difference between the law that curses and God's voice that blesses.¹¹² Finally, Paul leads the readers to see the abyss between the two voices by attributing the blessing voice to God and the cursing one to the law given through angels.¹¹³ I agree with his idea that Paul considers the law itself, not law observance as such, trying to reveal the inferior level of the law.

Thirdly, I believe that verse 12b is meant as an explanation of verse 12a. If, as Gundry¹¹⁴ and Hübner¹¹⁵ argue, Paul had wanted to say in verse 12b that, although it is not possible, salvation in principle comes from doing the law, then, the reason for verse 12a, namely that "The law is not from faith" would in fact disappear. Paul reminds the readers of the fact that he who, through faith, is righteous shall live (v. 11). And then he says that the law is not from faith (v. 12a). Paul, however, has

¹¹⁰ J. L. Martyn, *Galatians: a new translation with introduction and commentary* (AB 33A, New York: Doubleday, 1998), p. 312.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 315.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 330-334.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 364-370.

¹¹⁴ R. H. Gundry, "Grace", p. 239.

¹¹⁵ H. Hübner, *Law*, p. 19.

not yet provided the reason why the law is not from faith. That no one can perfectly keep the whole law cannot be the reason why the law is not from faith. On the contrary, if, after claiming that the one who through faith is righteous shall live, Paul had argued that one who can keep the whole law shall live in principle, then it would imply that there is indeed a relationship between the law and faith. Of course, such a view goes against the previous sentence that the law is not from faith.

Let us yield one step to Gundry and Hübner. Suppose it is true that Paul merely suggested a theoretical possibility that, even though full observance of the law is impossible, salvation in principle can come from the observance of the law, as the reason why the law is not from faith. If Paul cited Leviticus in order to prove this, the emphasis of the citation falls on the two verbs ‘does’ and ‘(shall) live’ in Gal 3:12.¹¹⁶ However, even in this case, I cannot find any logical reason why the law is not from faith, if I examine the clause ‘He who *can do* them *shall live*’. In other words, I do not believe that what Paul wants to say, is that the law is not from faith (12a) (because) the law lays the basis of *living* on *the possibility of doing*. In this case, the logic, at best, would be that *doing is not faith*. In my eyes, this is not a reason but an argument. Thus, I

¹¹⁶ If Paul cited Leviticus in order to prove this theoretical possibility, the meaning of the phrase ‘ἐν αὐτοῖς’ in the cited verse would have been as follows: He who does them shall live *by* them. In that case, the emphasis of the citation falls on ‘does’, ‘(shall) live’, and ‘by them’ in Gal 3:12. However, the phrase ‘ἐν αὐτοῖς’ should be translated not into ‘by them’, but into ‘in them’ (for detail of the reason why it cannot be translated into ‘by them’, see p. 118). Therefore, the phrase ‘ἐν αὐτοῖς’ should not be included into the words on which the emphasis of the citation falls. For detail of the reason why it cannot be translated into ‘by them’, see p. 86.

disagree with the idea that Paul cited Leviticus in verse 12 to show that even though full observance of the law is impossible, salvation in principle can come from the observance of the law.

I believe that the effect of the citation of verse 12b is to explain verse 12a. I am not of the opinion that the emphasis of the citation falls on the two verbs '**does**' and '**shall live**' in Gal 3:12. Rather, I would argue that the emphasis falls on the phrase ἐν αὐτοῖς. I think that the many different explanations provided by scholars for Paul's citation of Lev. 18:5 are primarily caused by the fact the phrase ἐν αὐτοῖς is neglected. The word 'law', however, is one of the key words in Galatians, and in particular in Gal. 3:10-14. Although the word νόμος does not occur in the Greek clause cited in Gal. 3:12 and the original Hebrew clause does not have the word תורה, the pronouns in בְּהֵאֱלֹהִים (Lev. 18:5) and ἐν αὐτοῖς (Gal. 3:12) ultimately designate the law.¹¹⁷ Therefore, the phrase ἐν αὐτοῖς that contains the key word could not have been included by chance.

Why does Paul stress this phrase? To my mind he does it, because in Gal 3:12 he has Gal 2:20 in mind. Having explained that man can be justified not by the 'works of the law' but by faith in Christ in Gal 2:16, Paul moves on to his (obviously including all Christians) being in relationship with Christ's death (vv. 17-20). In doing so, Paul intensively uses the verb ζάω and the proposition ἐν. He uses the word ζάω five

¹¹⁷ Note the fact that the words קָן (statute) and מִשְׁפָּט (judgment) in Lev. 18:5 appear in Deut. 30: 9-10 and 16, referring to the contents of the book of the law.

times (once in v. 19 and four times in v. 20). He contrasts verse 19 with verse 20 by means of the word ζάω. Verse 19: through the law Paul died to the law, that he might live to God. Verse 20: Paul lives in faith. Therefore, the two verses say that to live in faith is to die to the law. Furthermore, Paul uses the preposition ἐν four times (once in v. 17 and three times in v. 20). His point is that the Christian Paul, now, lives in faith in Christ who lives in him. To put it another way, because for Christians to live in faith is for Christ to live in them, he who does not live in faith has nothing to do with Christ. In conclusion, to **live in faith** is to die to the law and to live in a new relationship with Christ.¹¹⁸

It is also necessary to point out that to interpret the phrase ἐν αὐτοῖς into ‘by them’ is to misinterpret Paul’s intention. It is grammatically possible to interpret ἐν αὐτοῖς as meaning ‘by them’.¹¹⁹ However, when we investigate the way in which Paul uses the preposition to indicate causal or instrumental usage, we see that when Paul says ‘by or through the law’ or ‘by or through the works of the law’ in Romans and Galatians where he intensively deals with the matter of the law, the prepositions that he usually employs are ἐκ and διὰ.¹²⁰ Paul actually uses the

¹¹⁸ J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus*, pp. 227–228, says that Paul contrasts two ‘from’ phrases with two ‘in’ phrases. There is certainly much truth in that. Especially by the contrast of the two ‘from faith’ phrases, Paul stresses the fact that the law is not from the faith that the righteous shall live from. However, it is a pity that Dunn did not connect Gal. 3:11–12 with Gal. 2: 19–20 (see also J. D. G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians, Black’s New Testament commentaries*, pp. 174–176), because any explanation that does not fully consider ‘in them’ in verse 12b in relation with Gal 2:19–20 is too weak to effectively explain why the law is not from faith.

¹¹⁹ W. Bauer, W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich & F. W. Danker, “ἐν”, *BDGA*, p. 260.

¹²⁰ Paul uses ἐκ two times and διὰ five times in Romans (2:12, 3:20, 4:13, 7:5, 7:7, 10:5) and ἐκ five times and διὰ two times in Galatians (2:16, 2:19, 2:21, 3:2, 3:5, 3:10, 3:21).

preposition ἐν only in Gal. 3:11–12. What is important is that just as Paul uses the preposition ἐν and the verb ζάω together on purpose in Gal. 2:19–20, so he uses ἐν and ζάω together on purpose in connection with the law in Gal. 3:11–12.¹²¹ And Gal. 3:11–12 is actually the only place where ἐν νόμῳ (ἐν αὐτοῖς) and ζάω appear at the same time.¹²² Thus I conclude that, only when Paul talks about the law in connection with the way of living, does he use the expression ἐν νόμῳ. In the light of this, I am convinced that Paul utters 3:11–12 trusting that the Galatians fully understand and still remember Gal. 2:19–20. Paul uses ἐν, as a key word together with another key word ζάω used in Gal. 2:19–20, in Gal. 3:11–12, and, by doing so, he reminds the Galatians of Gal. 2:19–20. The preposition ἐν is not usual to indicate the instrumental usage of the law. This special usage makes it impossible to interpret the preposition ἐν in ἐν νόμῳ and ἐν αὐτοῖς as ‘by’. Thus, the only correct interpretation is to read ἐν αὐτοῖς as ‘in them’ in Gal. 3:12.

Consequently, I am convinced that my assertion on page 117 that Paul stresses the phrase ἐν αὐτοῖς because in Gal. 3:12 he has Gal. 2:20 in mind was correct. At the same time, this was the base of my previous argument on page 116 that, if Paul cited Lev. 18:5 in Gal. 3:12b because

¹²¹ The phrase ‘in the law’ appears in Gal. 5:4 also. Referring to the breaking of the relationship with Christ, Paul also accentuates the same concept in Gal. 5:4 that he did in Gal. 2:19–20 and 3:11–12 where he stressed ἐν and ζάω, that is, to *live in faith* is to die to the law and to live in the new relationship with Christ. In other words, since Paul uses ἐν νόμῳ in the same way as in Gal. 2:19–20 and 3:11–12, Gal. 5:4 does not undermine my argument about Gal. 3:11–12.

¹²² Except for Gal. 3:11–12, the words νόμος and ζάω appear only in Gal. 2:19. But Gal. 2:19 does not need the use of the preposition ἐν so that the verse cannot negatively affect my argument.

of the impossibility of full law observance, the core of the citation would fall on ‘does’ and ‘live’ and not on ‘in them’.

In the light of this, Paul simply but clearly says that he who does the law shall live (*not in faith but in it*) (Lev. 18:5 and Gal. 3:12). Thus the law is irrelevant to a life related with Christ. In a word, believers live in faith, while law-doers live in the law so that the law is not from faith (Gal 3:12a).

Taking all of this into consideration, the purpose of the citation has nothing to do with the possibility or impossibility of full law observance. Therefore, it was not to indicate the theoretical possibility that salvation can come from the observance of the law but to give the reason for verse 12a, indicating that a life of doing the law, namely, a life in the law, is by nature different from the life in faith which gets righteousness.

3.2.3. The generalisation of the matter of the law in Gal. 3:10 - 14?

In the light of my argument about Gal. 3:10-12, when we think about the context, we can say that, after Paul has pointed out the Judaisers’ self-contradiction and the Galatians’ expected spiritual jeopardy in the specific situation in Gal. 3:10, he goes further to a more principle level in order to radically object to the Judaisers, explaining the reason why the law is irrelevant to the righteous. Kim,¹²³ however, who sticks to the

¹²³ S. Kim, *New Perspective*, pp. 56, 58-60. Especially, note that Kim, *ibid.*, p. 58, says, The works of the law usually refers more *generally* to the deeds done in

traditional view, asserts that from Gal. 3:10-14 on, Paul starts to generalise the issue of the ‘works of the law’ so that he thinks about human achievements or good works done to earn God’s favour.

However, Paul still speaks about the specific Galatian situation even in Gal. 3:10 and the principle explanation appears in verse 11, but we saw that Paul did not stress the impossibility of keeping the law. The function of this explanation was to solve the specific Galatian issue referred to in Gal. 3:10, namely why God’s people cannot be identified by the ‘works of the law’. In addition, Paul goes back to the Jew-Gentile issue in Gal. 3:14. He says that there is no social distinction in Christ and continues to discuss the question “Who is Abraham’s real descendants?” in Gal. 3:28-29. In chapter 4, he continues to argue for the gentile Galatians’ sonship of God (4:6-7, 221-28). In brief, Paul does not refer the ‘works of the law’ in a general sense, leaving the specific Galatian situation in Gal. 3:10-14, nor does he in chapter 4.

3.2.4. Summary of the interpretation of the ‘works of the law’

According to Sanders, Paul did not believe in the impossibility of perfect law observance and Paul merely cited the Old Testament because of the contrast between the words ‘law and curse’ and ‘faith and righteousness’. In this regard, Sanders provided us with a good interpretation.

obedience to the law which are considered as human achievements or as good works done to earn God’s favour. (My italics)

Unfortunately, he was apparently not able to explain Paul's motive for stressing the word 'all'; thus his explanation ignored the specific situation of Galatians.

In contrast, if Dunn's view (that the 'works of the law' refers to all that the law requires in terms of covenantal nomism with special laws such as food laws and circumcision functioning as boundary markers of Israel) is supplemented with Jewett's theory, Dunn's view can exactly explain the specific situation of Galatians. In other words, the emphasis on laws such as food laws and circumcision brought about the curse of the law because of the fact that the rest of the law was purposely ignored. Paul was pointing out this problem of intentional disobedience. Dunn's views thus provides a better explanation than Sanders in that Dunn gives us a good basis for our understanding. However, even Dunn, who explains the 'works of the law' correctly, did not stress the specific situation in Galatia, namely that the Judaisers did not intend to obey the **whole** law. That is why I pointed out that we have to alter Sanders' and Dunn's interpretations.

Nevertheless, the New Perspective scholars do provide us with a very important starting point and insight. Especially, the New Perspective can depict the concrete situation of Galatia better than the Old one that thinks that Paul generalises the matter of the law in Gal. 3:10ff. In comparison with the Old Perspective that stresses the word 'all' in Gal. 3:10 in a wrong way and regards the impossibility of full observance of the law as Paul's argument against the 'works of the law', the New

Perspective's view which, although it does not pay proper attention to the word 'all' in Gal. 3:10, does not take the impossibility of keeping the law as Paul's main arguments fits the context better.

Due to Luther's influence, the approach that emphasises the general question how human beings can be saved is still popular. However, one should realise that the central issue in the debate in the apostolic churches was the inclusion of the gentiles as part of Abraham's descendents; an insight that was already gained with the beginning of historical criticism. It appears that the New Perspective confirms that Baur and Wrede were right *on this point*.¹²⁴

3.3. 'The curse of the law' (τῆς κατάρτας τοῦ νόμου)

3.3.1. Gal. 3:13

The other factor, together with the 'works of the law', that directly affects the new understanding of New Perspective of justification by faith is the interpretation of 'the curse of the law'. Verse 13 is in the centre of the debate. And, in fact, the core of the debate is who is the 'us' in verse 13. While verse 13 is traditionally interpreted as that Christ removed the universal curse of human beings caused by the impossibility of full observation of the law and redeemed his people, the New Perspective

¹²⁴ F. C. Baur, *The apostle*, pp. 182-211, W. Wrede, *Paul* (London: Philip Green, 1907), pp. 124-128. See n. 87.

rejects the universal interpretation of the curse by the Old Perspective. Rather, they interpret the curse in a way similar to the way in which they interpret justification by faith, namely within the context of the identification of God's people. Accordingly, they tend to view Christ's redemptive work mentioned in verse 13 as referring to the Jews.

In the previous section I indicated that Dunn interpreted the 'works of the law' in Galatians 3:10 correctly. According to him, the expression 'all who are from the works of the law' refers to the Jews who abuse the law as part of their nationalism. Against the background of this interpretation, Dunn¹²⁵ interprets Christ's death in verse 13. He believes that verse 13 refers to Christ's removal of 'the curse of the law' not in a general sense, but to the curse linked in verse 10 to their abuse of the law. According to Dunn, this is confirmed by the latter part of the formulation of verse 13-14.

In the previous section, I have also already pointed out a limitation in Dunn's interpretation in that he does not give enough attention to the particular Galatian situation in his interpretation of the law in Gal. 3:10. He links it to the Jews and ignores the fact that 'all things' in this verse does not refer to the observance of the law in terms of quality but in terms of quantity. In spite of this, I agree with his view, since, in comparison to the traditional view, his interpretation of verse 13 against the background of verse 10 is a very faithful understanding in terms of the context. As we have seen in the previous section, we should not

¹²⁵ J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus*, pp. 228-230.

interpret the ‘works of the law’ in verse 10 as referring to meritorious good deeds in general. Therefore, neither should we accept that the curse was caused by the impossibility of fully keeping the law. Rather, we should accept that Paul has the specific situation of Galatia in mind, namely the curse that the Judaisers could cause by arguing that the Galatians ought to be identified as Abraham’s true descendants by observing a part of the law. Therefore, I should also point out that the traditional view accepts that right after Paul has referred to the very specific Galatian situation in verse 10, he then moves on to the curse in a general sense in verse 13 – an interpretation which ignores the logical flow. Furthermore, it is important to realise that Paul only uses the word curse in Gal. 3:10–13 (in verse 10 and 13) except for Gal. 1:8–9. This implies that Paul, in fact, explains the curse only in Gal. 3:10, as part of a previous step to indicate the meaning of Christ’s redemptive works in Gal. 3:13. Therefore, to understand the curse in Gal. 3:13 in a general sense is to ignore Paul’s logical link between verse 10 and verse 13. And if we keep in mind that Eph. 2:14 links Christ’s redemptive work to the removal of the dividing wall between Jews and gentiles, it adds further support.

However, I am inclined to think that Dunn¹²⁶ goes too far in stating that the curse that Christ removed, is the curse which had previously prevented the blessing of Abraham from reaching the Gentiles, the curse ‘*of*’ a wrong understanding of the law and that Christ’s work was specified as the deliverance of the heirs of the covenant promise from

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 229–230.

the ill effects of the too narrow understanding of the covenant and law held by the Jews, so that Jew and Gentile can enter into the fuller scope of the covenant promise. I think that this interpretation of Dunn results from his main argument, that is, the concept of the law misused as boundary marker. But it should be noted that the curse mentioned in Deuteronomy is not that of a wrong understanding but that of the break of the covenant. In this regard, Kim¹²⁷ correctly points out that Dunn shifts the meaning of ‘the curse of the law’. According to Kim, Dunn confuses the curse ‘for’ the wrong Jewish nationalistic interpretation of the law with the curse ‘of’ the wrong interpretation.

Furthermore, Dunn¹²⁸ goes too far in explaining Christ’s work in Gal. 3:13 as meaning that Jesus put himself under the curse and outside the covenant blessing, that is, Jesus put himself in the place of the gentiles. Dunn¹²⁹ believes that although the curse in verse 13 includes the curse of the gentiles, the primary reference is to the curse on Jewish sin. Dunn¹³⁰ does also says that the heirs of the promise, the Jews, were delivered together with gentiles. However, actually, he confines the object of Christ’s redemptive work in verse 13 almost totally to the gentiles by saying that the curse is the curse which had previously prevented the blessing from reaching the Gentiles, the curse of a wrong understanding of the law and *the ill effects of a too narrow understanding*

¹²⁷ S. Kim, *New Perspective*, p. 133.

¹²⁸ J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus*, p. 230.

¹²⁹ J. D. G. Dunn, *Theology*, p. 226.

¹³⁰ J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus*, pp. 229-230.

of covenant and law held by the Jews. It is on this very point that Cranfield¹³¹ criticises Dunn, saying that Dunn's exegesis strikes one as unconscionably tortuous and that it is a very narrow understanding of Christ's death. Kim¹³² also says that Dunn makes Jesus the crucified Christ only for gentiles. And he argues that, according to Dunn, Christ's redemptive work means for the Jews only the correction of the Jews' wrong understanding of the law.

To my mind, the essence of Christ's redemptive works in verses 13-14 is the renewal of the covenant. The break and renewal of the covenant depended on Israel who received the covenant, as a party of the covenant (Rom. 9:4). Gentiles, in principle, were not part of the covenant and its regulation, namely the law.¹³³ They did not obey the law and, apart from this, they were already under the curse of the covenant.¹³⁴ The spiritual war by which the gentiles' spiritual situation was decided was already over. On the other hand, Israel herself broke the covenant and was under the curse of the covenant, too. The fact that the Jews were under the curse due to their breaking of the covenant, resulted in the losing of a possibility for the gentiles to partake of the blessing of the covenant. Only after removing the curse on Israel to whom God originally gave his covenant and promise (Rom. 9:4) could the covenant be renewed. This was the condition that had to be fulfilled

¹³¹ C. E. B. Cranfield, "Works of the law", p. 92.

¹³² S. Kim, *New Perspective*, pp. 20-21, 133-134.

¹³³ J. D. G. Dunn, *Theology*, p. 223, says that gentiles are out side the law.

¹³⁴ Being out of the covenantal blessing is not different from being under the curse.

before gentiles could join the renewed covenant. Therefore, the gentiles' partaking of the Abrahamic blessing hinged on Israel.¹³⁵

This is the very reason why Paul links the curse mentioned in v. 13 to Israel. Christ removed the curse caused by Israel's breaking of the covenant and renewed the covenant – more accurately – established the new covenant. And the final purpose of the renewed covenant was that gentiles' would join the blessing.¹³⁶ Thus, Paul is pointing out the final result in verse 14.

Thus, although I agree with Dunn's interpretation of verse 13 within the context of verse 10, in particular the way in which he interprets Christ's work in terms of the relationship between Jews and gentiles, I cannot but disagree with the results of his interpretation.

Donaldson's interpretation differs from that of Dunn. According to Donaldson,¹³⁷ the antithesis between the law and faith should be

¹³⁵ See pp. 235ff.

¹³⁶ On this point, B. W. Longenecker, *The triumph of Abraham's God* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), p. 93, correctly points out that Christ took upon himself the Jewish condition of being cursed by the law (3:13b), and redeemed that condition (3:13a) in order that a new age could be established in which salvation was available to all in Christ (3:14). According to him, Israel's covenantal redemption was the condition for the redemption of gentiles.

Longenecker, *ibid.*, p. 92, notes the similarity between Gal. 3:13-14 and 4:4-5. In particular, he pays attention to the fact that the only other place in the Pauline corpus where the verb ἐξαγοράζω carries the same meaning as it does in Gal. 3:13 is 4:4-5. And then, he explains the *chiasmus* in 4:4-5: (1) the situation of Israel is the context into which God's Son was sent in order that (2) that same situation might be redeemed, with the result that (3) salvation might be offered on a universal scale, beyond the exclusive boundaries of the people of Israel. In the light of this understanding, he concludes that the 'us' in v. 13 refers to Jewish Christians.

¹³⁷ T. L. Donaldson, *Paul and gentiles: remapping the apostles convictional world* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), p. 182: In 3:13-14 Paul asserts that the blessing of the gentiles is dependent in some way on the deliverance from the curse of the law of a body of Jewish believers.

understood within the context of redefining the community of God's people. He interprets Christ's redemptive work in verse 13 as opening a new way of becoming a member of the community. Donaldson¹³⁸ argues that being 'under the law' should be viewed as a special way of being under the elemental spirits of the universe. Christ represents Israel who, in turn, represents human beings. Therefore, Christ represents all human beings. Due to this, human beings can become one with Christ. Donaldson thus excludes gentiles from the 'us' in verse 13, arguing that this is a modification of the traditional eschatology. Because gentiles, now, can become one with Christ without being Israelites, Israel loses its place of priority. Finally, Donaldson denies the scheme of 'gentiles after Israel's restoration' and concludes that the origin of Paul's gentile mission is not eschatological pilgrimage but proselytism.

I agree with Donaldson in that he primarily concentrates on Israel and his view that Christ delivered Israel as a representative of human beings. However, I cannot agree with him on the modification of the scheme of 'gentiles after Israel's restoration'. I believe that Israel had to be restored firstly. Although Donaldson does not believe that the restoration of Israel actually occurred, the restoration of Israel had already occurred together with the renewal of the covenant by Christ's death and resurrection. Israel's restoration was a necessary condition for

¹³⁸ T. L. Donaldson, "The 'curse of the law' and the inclusion of the gentiles: Galatians 3:13-14", *NTS* 32 (1986), pp. 104-106.

the renewal of the covenant.¹³⁹ The covenant was not changed, but renewed. Israel's position of priority still remained. Furthermore, I do not like his explanation for the reason why Israel represents all human beings. Donaldson¹⁴⁰ asserts that the key to understand Israel's plight and its meaning for gentiles lies in realising the specialty and universality mixed in Gal. 4:1-11, but actually he only repeats that being under the law is a special way of being under the elemental spirits of the universe and does not give any good motivation for his statement. I believe that only in the concept of the covenant we can find the reason why Israel represents all mankind.

The interpretation of Wright,¹⁴¹ also a New Perspective scholar, has much in common with that of Dunn in that, although he provides a different reason, he also believes that Gal. 3:10 refers to a curse on Israel in general, rather to individual transgressors. This also forms the background for his interpretation of verse 13. Wright does especially stress the covenant, asserting the theory of a continuing exile: Paul based his statement on the premise that Israel was still in exile. In spite of the fact whether one agrees or disagrees with his whole exile theory, I should point out that his explanation of the curse and Christ's redemptive work in verse 13 is better than Dunn's, because whereas Dunn limits Christ's redemptive work primarily to the gentiles, Wright firstly

¹³⁹ For detail, see "The maintenance of the distinction between gentiles and Jews in Abraham covenant" on p. 204.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 103-104.

¹⁴¹ N. T. Wright, *The climax of the covenant* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), pp. 137-156.

concentrates on Israel, the one party of the covenant, in verse 13 before moving on to the gentiles. According to Wright, the curse of verse 13 is the covenantal curse of Israel in exile. Dunn¹⁴² says that the promise was entrusted to Israel so that Israel was the agent of the promise. Israel, however, came under the curse caused by the failure of keeping the law as a whole and Christ received the curse on behalf of Israel.

I agree with Wright's interpretation, since I believe that one should focus on the curse of Israel before moving to that of the gentiles. I thus welcome Wright's concentration on Israel. As the agent of the covenant Israel's being under the curse implied the breaking of the Abrahamic covenant and its direct result was the blocking of the gentiles' partaking of the covenant. Viewed the other way round, Israel's restoration was the condition for the renewal of the covenant that preceded the gentiles' partaking of the covenant. Therefore, I am more satisfied with Wright's interpretation than with those of Dunn and Donaldson in that Wright pays attention to the redemption of Israel as the agent of the covenant in verse 13.

However, I cannot agree with his explanation of the reason for the curse. According to Wright,¹⁴³ what was an intrinsic aspect of the Abrahamic covenant was the fact that Israel delivered God's blessings to the gentiles. Israel, however, came under the curse of the law because of

¹⁴² J. D. G. Dunn, *Climax*, pp. 142-151.

¹⁴³ N. T. Wright, *Climax*, pp. 141-142, 146-147, 150, "Romans and the theology of Paul", in: David M. Hay and E. Elizabeth Johnson (eds.), *Pauline theology III: Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), p. 37.

her failure in carrying out the task of delivering God's blessings to the gentiles by being content with her being called as the agent of the covenant (Rom. 2). And to accept the law was to accept the way of life of Israel so that all who relied on the 'works of the law' were under 'the curse of the law'. But no matter how important the task given to Israel was, Israel's curse was caused directly by the breaking of the covenant because she did not keep the whole law in terms of quantity. On this point, it must be pointed that even Wright does not give proper attention to the specific situation of Galatians, namely that the Galatians were about to follow the footsteps of Israel who ignored the rest of the law by emphasising such laws as food law and circumcision so that they came under the curse of the law

On the other hand, Kim¹⁴⁴ criticises Scott¹⁴⁵ who also accepts the exile theory. According to Kim, Paul did not use the words 'Israel' or 'Jews' in verse 10 but 'all who rely on works of the law'. Kim believes that Paul did this, because he intended to include the Judaisers and the Galatians, and that Paul was both personalising and generalising his argument. Accordingly, Paul does not have Israel's exile in mind anymore. Considering the fact that Paul is focusing on the specific situation of the Galatians, I can agree with Kim that Paul intended to include the Judaisers and that he did not nationalise but personalise his argument.

¹⁴⁴ S. Kim, *New Perspective*, pp. 139-140.

¹⁴⁵ J. M. Scott, "'For as many as are of works of the law are under a curse' (Galatians 3:10)", in: Craig A. Evans, and James A. Sanders (eds.), *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), pp. 187-221.

However, this does not prove that it is wrong to interpret verse 13 as that Christ removed the covenantal curse of Israel; nor does it support the correctness of the traditional understanding that Paul generalised his argument, including all human beings. Kim fails to understand Paul's motive for moving from the specific situation in Galatia (v. 10) to the national situation of Israel (v. 13). The following argument will prove this:

I, now, will try to show that, when I am helped by Dunn's view and by Wright's idea, the scenario¹⁴⁶ that I argued in the previous section does explain verse 13 well. In the previous section, I suggested that Paul was pointing out in Gal. 3:10 the specific situation in Galatia that all who would accept the argument of the Judaisers in Galatia and, therefore, would want to be identified as Abraham's descendants by keeping some part of the law, rather, would be under the curse of the law by ignoring the rest of the law. Paul did not refer to the national curse of Israel in verse 10 yet, but in verse 11 he moved on to a more principal level. What is important, is the fact ***that even though the Judaisers in Galatia were so-called Christians, they were not different from the Jews at all in terms of their understanding of the law.*** I believe that the reason for Kim not following the development of Paul's perspective from verse 10 to verse 13 is that Kim did not understand this. The Judaisers in Galatia were exactly following the wrong footsteps of the Jews who, even if they were self-contented by identifying themselves as God's people because they kept some laws as boundary markers, actually were under the curse of

¹⁴⁶ See pp. 106ff.

the law. Therefore, Paul was trying to point out the mistakes of the Judaizers by revealing the true spiritual situation of Israel, their spiritual descendents, who were under the curse of the law. This he did in order to warn the Galatians about the inevitability of them being cursed if they would follow. This was the reason why Paul moved to a more principle level. After this, Paul returned in verse 14 to the Galatian issue discussed in verses 7-9, that is, the matter of gentiles' identification in God's salvation community. Therefore, I believe that Wright's view that Paul was thinking of the curse of Israel under the exile in verse 13 is reasonable.

Christ had already removed the curse of Israel under the exile by his death (v. 13).¹⁴⁷ Nevertheless, Galatians were exactly following the sin of Israel. In that sense, they were similar to Israel. Thus Paul pointed out

¹⁴⁷ In my eyes, one of the most powerful objections against the exile theory is that of M. Seifried. Seifried, "Blind alleys in the controversy over the Paul of history", *TynB* 45 (1994), p. 91, argues that the first coming of Christ did not indicate the ending of Israel's exile but a new beginning of it. Seifried, *Christ*, pp. 23-25, asserts that many Jews of Paul's time thought that Israel's exile was over. Furthermore, Seifried, "Alleys", p. 90, contends that Paul also regarded himself as a faithful one who was waiting for God's judgment.

On this point, Dunn agrees with Seifried. Dunn, *Theology*, n. 117, on p. 362, says that the view that Israel as a whole was still experiencing the Deuteronomic curses cannot explain how the pre-Christian Paul could have thought of himself as blameless (Phil. 3:6).

I, however, believe that whether or not Israel was in exile was not decided by the contemporary Jews' acknowledgement of it, but by God's judgment. Furthermore, the restoration of Israel did not depend on the number of Jews who thought that they were restored. Although those who returned from Babylon were a few, this was a definite restoration. In addition, I think that the fact that Paul regarded himself as faithful does not necessarily mean that Israel of his time should be regarded as restored. While Israel spent 40 years in the desert, Joshua was regarded as just. And, during the exile, Daniel was viewed as a faithful.

Israel was under the exile in God's view. By Christ's coming the faithful, remnants, were restored, but the evils were judged.

Israel's sin, taking advantage of the opportunity to deal with the Galatian issue. But this is not a simple national approach but **a redemptive-historical one**. To put it another way, in the context of the gentile mission, that is, in the redemptive-historical debate on the identification of Jews and gentiles, Paul maintained that the Judaisers were about to repeat the same sin that Israel committed in salvation history, because they were teaching gentiles that they could be identified as Abraham's children by accepting their false teaching. Unfortunately, I think that, in this regard, Wright did not properly show Paul's true motive. Paul's true motive in citing Deut. 3:10 in connection with v. 9, is to use Israel's national curse to deal with the specific Galatian issue, not to argue against the idea that the law is the way to become part of Abraham's family.

On the other hand, there are some scholars who assert that there is no *Heilsgeschichte* in Galatians.¹⁴⁸ Considering that the reference to faith in Gal. 3:6-9 and the reference to the seed in Gal. 3:16, 26-29 seem to ignore Israel entirely, the idea that Paul is making a connection between Abraham and the gentiles without any consideration of Israel looks reasonable. Representatively, Martyn¹⁴⁹ is of this opinion. He takes Gal.

¹⁴⁸ For instance, H. Boers, *Theology out of the ghetto* (Leiden: Brill, 1971), p. 81, says that the time between Abraham and Christ was a frozen time. B. W. Longenecker, *Triumph* p. 90, points out that according to J. L. Martyn, salvation history did not begin until Christ's coming, and Becker and Martyn believe that Paul in Galatians emphasises the discontinuous aspects of his gospel at the expense of a fully-articulated view of salvation history.

¹⁴⁹ J. L. Martyn, *Galatians* pp. 343-352. See, especially, Martyn, p. 350:

In Galatians, then, election is God's enactment of his promise in Christ, Abraham's only seed. It is the act by which God is now creating his church (the new creation; 6:15), not a deed carried out by God either in the time of Abraham or in the time of Moses.

3:16 as the key verse and says that Paul denies the redemptive-historical interpretation of the false teachers by pointing out that the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring which referred not to many but to one, Christ. According to Martyn,¹⁵⁰ for Paul in Galatians, there was no basic difference between gentiles and Jews. Mankind was monolith and Christ made human beings as a whole free. Reicke¹⁵¹ basically has the same idea. In his interpretation of Gal. 3:1-11 he emphasises *πάντων* in verse 9 and argues that Paul actually considers the entire non-Christian world, both Jewish and heathen, to be subject to the law or to the elements of the universe. According to him, being under the elemental spirits of the universe is the same as being under the law.

If Paul had thought of a single group and Christ's accomplishment had been universal in scope, it would be natural to include gentiles into the 'us' in Gal. 3:13. However, if we keep in mind the fact that Paul never said that the uncircumcised and non-Christian gentiles were under the law, this proposal runs into difficulties. Furthermore, that Paul was thinking of the general curse on Israel from a salvation-historical perspective can also be supported by the relationship between Rom. 15:8-9 and Gal. 4:4-5. Bruce Longenecker¹⁵² stresses that Paul placed Christ's coming in the historical context of Israel. He argues that this is obvious in verses such as Rom. 15:8-9. Rom. 15:8-9 makes it clear that

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 317-318.

¹⁵¹ B. Reicke, "The law and this world according to Paul: some thoughts concerning Gal. 4:1-11", *JBL* 70 (1951), p. 259.

¹⁵² B. W. Longenecker, *Triumph*, p. 91.

the extension of God's covenantal faithfulness to include even gentiles has passed through the terrain of Israel. Paul, here, views God's covenant with Israel from the perspective of the relationship between redemptive-history theology and eschatological salvation in Christ. This is what he does in Gal. 3:13-14, too. Therefore, Longenecker is of opinion that, on account of the similarity with Gal. 4:4-5, the 'us' of verse 13 indicates not Christians in general terms but Jewish Christians.¹⁵³

Boers¹⁵⁴ also understands Gal. 3:13-14 along similar lines as Gal. 4:4-5 and Rom. 15:8-9. Christ redeems those under the law from the law in order for those not under the law, namely, the uncircumcised, to partake of the blessing of Abraham, but the Galatians, were trying to reverse the order by being subject to the law through circumcision (Gal. 3:3).

Therefore, I cannot find any convincing reason why I have to reject my argument that, while Paul was responding to the issue of the identification of Jews and gentiles in redemptive-historical perspective, he used the national plight of Israelites who had already committed the same sin as Galatians were about to do, and who were

¹⁵³ On the other hand, concerning the 'us' in Gal. 3:13, although, for example, R. N. Longenecker, *Galatians* (WBC 41, Dallas: Word Books, 1990), pp. 121-123, thinks that the 'us' refers to gentiles who as yet had not submitted to circumcision, I think that the reason why Paul uses the first person plural in this case is that Paul, as H. D. Betz, *Galatians: a commentary on Paul's Letter to the churches in Galatia* (Hermeneia, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), pp. 149-151, argues, cites a pre-Pauline Jewish Christian confessional statement. Betz suggests Gal. 1:4 and 2:20 as parallels.

¹⁵⁴ H. Boers, *The justification of the gentiles: Paul's Letters to the Galatians and Romans* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), p. 69.

already suffering from the exile caused by the sin.

3.3.2. Summary of the interpretation of ‘the curse of the law’

As in the case of the ‘works of the law’, I could not agree with any New Perspective scholar’s view on ‘the curse of the law’. I indicated that I was not satisfied with Dunn’s views in that he did not pay attention to the aspect of the renewal of the covenant through Christ’s death and not with Wright’s views in that he did not refer to the specific Galatian situation that made Paul refer to the national curse on Israel. Furthermore, I was not in favour of Donaldson’s argument on Israel’s losing her place of priority. Nevertheless, I indicated that the New Perspective, that tries to understand the curse within the context of the relation between Jews and gentiles, is more faithful to the text than the Old Perspective, that prefers the more general interpretation that the curse is the curse on human beings caused by the impossibility of keeping the law as a whole.

However, we should distinguish between the accurate exegesis of scholars from the New Perspective and the results drawn by them from their exegetical results. As the traditional scholars object, one should ask whether these new exegetical results necessarily imply a narrow understanding of justification by faith. Therefore I need to scrutinise the characteristics of Paul’s gospel in Galatians, but before I do that, I am leaving Galatians for a while. The matter of ‘the law and righteousness’ is not a theme unique to Galatians. It occurs in Romans too. If the

information from Romans differs from our conclusions from Galatians, it would imply that we have made some mistakes in interpreting Galatians. Therefore, I will check whether Romans supports the idea that Paul refers to the ‘works of the law’ in a general sense.

4. Does Paul use the ‘works of the law’ in Romans in a general sense?

4.1. The ‘works of the law’ in Romans (Rom. 3:20, 28)

Cranfield¹⁵⁵ admits that Dunn’s view that the ‘works of the law’ refers to Jewish works such as observing the food laws and circumcision is possible in Galatians. However, he thinks that Dunn’s view does not hold for Romans. First of all, Cranfield¹⁵⁶ argues that Dunn does not take into account that Rom. 3:20 relates to the whole debate that starts not at 2:1 but at 1:18. Furthermore, Cranfield¹⁵⁷ argues that ‘the works of the law written in the (gentiles’) hearts’ referred to in Rom. 2:15 implies the fulfilment of the eschatological promise of Jer. 3:33. Thus, Paul wants to say here is not that gentiles have a natural law, as the Stoics teach, but that gentile Christians have the law. Therefore, he thinks that Rom. 3:20 says the same as Rom. 2:15. And then, pointing out that Dunn

¹⁵⁵ C. E. B. Cranfield, “Works of the law”, p. 91.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 94–95. See also C. E. B. Cranfield, *Romans*, pp. 156–159.

understands Rom. 3:28 in the same way as 3:20 and thinks that Rom. 3:27–31 is the consequence of the Jews’ self-understanding, Cranfield¹⁵⁸ says that the idea that Paul does not refer to the self-understanding of human beings in general but only to Jews right after 3:21–26, which repeats the conclusion of the whole argument of Rom. 1:18–3:20, disrupt the climax.

On the other hand, Dunn¹⁵⁹ pays attention to the way in which Paul goes about arguing on this universal indictment. He says that Paul refers to humanity in general, but, by saying that, even the Jews are in plight. Therefore, the summarised plight of 3:19 refers especially to the Jews and 3:20 also refers to the Jews. Considering Dunn’s¹⁶⁰ explanation that, since Paul attacks the attitude of the Jews, i.e. that in spite of their disobedience, they think that their sins are not so severe as that of the gentiles, and that they put confidence in their election and their flesh (that is, their works of the law as the badge of the elected), Paul emphasises ‘flesh’ in Rom. 2:28–29, I think that his Israel-centred approach has persuasive power. This is confirmed by the comparison of Jews and gentiles in Rom. 3:27ff., especially in verse 29. And what I think is decisive, is that Cranfield’s objection that to think of only Jews in Rom. 3:27–31 is to break the climax, cannot but lose its power in the

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

¹⁵⁹ J. D. G. Dunn, “Yet, once more”, p. 105. J. Ziesler agrees with Dunn on this point. J. Ziesler, *Pauline Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 87, asserts that Rom. 1:16–3:20 is intended not to point out the individual sinfulness of human beings but to show that Jews are also included in mankind’s plight. See also J. Ziesler, *Romans*, pp. 36, 39–42, 99–100.

¹⁶⁰ J. Ziesler, *Romans*, pp. 106–109.

light of Dunn's¹⁶¹ refutation, that is, Paul's deep concern for his brethren.

In addition, I think that Cranfield's view that Paul refers in Rom. 2:14 to the fulfilment of the eschatological promise of Jer. 31, which is suggested as a reason for his idea that the gentiles also have the law, and which forms the base of his argument, is not reasonable. He thinks that the gentiles in verse 14 are gentile Christians who, at first, did not have Christian faith (by nature), but came to believe in Christ later. What I want to pay attention to here, is that Rom. 2:12-14 explains Rom. 2:9. In other words, Rom. 2:12-14 provides the reason why even the Greeks, or gentiles, who do evil, must be punished. By the way, if one applies Cranfield's idea to this context, the text says that when gentiles sin, even they must be punished, not by natural law, but by the law in their hearts. However, to my mind, it does not seem reasonable for Paul to refer to the fulfilment of the new covenant of Jer. 31 in order to explain the judgement of the gentiles. The context definitely does not refer to the possibility of a judgment on the new covenantal people. Furthermore, even if we accept Cranfield's idea, there still remains one more problem. If, when gentiles believe in Christ, even they come to have the law and the law is the standard by which they must be judged, to which category do gentiles who have no relation to the new covenant, belong to? Therefore, the 'works of the law' in Rom. 3 are not works in the sense of general good deeds that the law requires human beings to do, but still refer to the 'works of the law' that function as a badge to discern Jews

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

from gentiles.

4.2. Law in a general sense in Rom. 4?

Pointing out that Sanders does not realise that ‘works’ and ‘grace’ are used in a general sense in Pauline letters, J. Barclay¹⁶² says,

In Romans the discussion broadens out still further, while the primary context in chapter 1-4 is the relation of the gospel to Jews and gentiles, and the main critique of Judaism concerns its national pride in the Torah (2:17ff.; 3:27-31), there are some points when ‘the law’ is discussed in such general terms as to include all rules (2:14; 4:14-15; even more so in chapter 7) and where ‘works’ are contrasted with ‘faith’ and ‘grace’ as if by some general theological principle (4:1-4).

Schreiner¹⁶³ is also of opinion that the illustration of Abraham in Rom. 4 confirms Rom. 3:27-31. Claiming that Dunn’s attempt to posit a distinction between ‘works’ and ‘works of law’ is unpersuasive, Schreiner argues that the phrase ‘works of the law’ in Rom. 3:20 and 28 directly connects with the conception of works developed in Rom. 4:1-8. The works of Rom. 4:1-8 do not concentrate on the specific laws that distinguishes Jews from gentiles. Cranfield¹⁶⁴ also asserts that Abraham’s moral flaw undercuts the argument that he fulfilled the law.

However, the works in the Abraham example are not the works of the law in general terms, but the ‘works of the law’ in the sense of a

¹⁶² J. M. G. Barclay, “Paul”, p. 5.

¹⁶³ T. R. Schreiner, *Law*, p. 54.

¹⁶⁴ C. E. B. Cranfield, *On Romans and other New Testament essays* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998), pp. 9-10.

national badge of the Jews.¹⁶⁵ What is conspicuous in Rom. 1:18–3:20, is the Jews’ privileged consciousness and elitism referred to in Rom. 2:17–20. Furthermore, after Rom. 3:21–26, Paul returns to the boast in Rom. 3:27–30. It is sure that Paul also has Rom. 2:17–24 in mind when he refers to the boast in verse 27, because he uses the word ‘boast’ only in Rom. 2:17 and 23. Therefore, the ‘works and boast’ of Rom. 3:27 do not mean self-achieving righteousness, but relates to the Jews’ privileged consciousness. This becomes clear in Rom. 3:27–29, because the reference to righteousness by works (v. 28) implies that God is only the God of the Jews (v. 29).¹⁶⁶ Furthermore, the boasting of verse 27 is also the same as the argument that God is the God only of the Jews. In Rom. 4, Paul again refers to the theme of boasting, again connecting works and boasting. Thus, it is logical to accept that Paul’s thinking in Rom. 3:27 continues in Rom. 4.¹⁶⁷ Therefore, the Abraham example does not refer to the works of the law in general terms, but to the ‘works of the law’ functioning as a badge for Jewish distinctiveness. This is proved by the fact that Paul returns to circumcision after the Abraham illustration (Rom. 4:9–12).

On the other hand, there are scholars who are of the opinion that the

¹⁶⁵ What has to be pointed out, is that, even if the works of the law might mean works of the law in a general sense, i.e. works beyond specific works such as circumcision, if such works function to distinguish between Jews and gentiles, they should also be regarded as works serving as a boundary marker. Thus, the issues whether ‘the works of the law’ refer to works in a general sense, is not crucial.

¹⁶⁶ J. D. G. Dunn, *Theology*, pp. 363–364.

¹⁶⁷ Actually, Paul’s concentration on boasting continues until Rom. 5:2 and 11. To translate the verb *καυχάομαι* as ‘rejoice’ is to ignore the relationship between Rom. 2–4 and 5. See J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, p. 248.

commercial example used by Paul indicates that the works are not works as an identification maker but works that are worth reward.¹⁶⁸ Käsemann¹⁶⁹ also thinks that Paul is attacking self-righteousness, saying that ἐργάζεσθαι does not mean ‘to work’ any more, but ‘to be concerned about works’. However, the commercial example is not used in order to point out that the works are meritorious, but to illustrate the principle that something that is based upon works cannot be called grace, since Abraham’s works in Rom. 4 do not refer to things such as sacrificing Isaac, but circumcision (vv. 10–11). This is clearly confirmed by the citation of David in verse 6ff. Traditional scholars, such as Schreiner,¹⁷⁰ think that the David illustration in Rom. 4:6–8 is another example of someone who did not achieve righteousness through deeds, like Abraham, thus confirming the traditional view. In other words, Paul has David’s adultery and murder in mind, thinking of good deeds in a general sense.

I, however, believe that David is cited not as another illustration but as evidence. Käsemann¹⁷¹ who follows the traditional view, also correctly points out that Paul cites Psalms according to the rabbinic tradition that one should cite as proof Nebiim or Kethubim in addition to the Torah, and according to the Jewish principle that two witnesses must testify the truth. The citation of David – not as another illustration but as

¹⁶⁸ For instance, T. R. Schreiner, *Law*, pp. 54–55.

¹⁶⁹ E. Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* (London: SCM, 1980), p. 110.

¹⁷⁰ T. R. Schreiner, *Law*, p. 55.

¹⁷¹ E. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 113.

evidence – does not end the Abraham illustration. Sanders¹⁷² also denies that David is cited as an example. He, however, does not offer a persuasive reason for it.

I find the best evidence for the fact that David is not cited as an example in verse 9a. The joy expressed in verse 9, as well as in verse 6, therefore, is the happiness of someone who is forgiven his sins (verses 7-8). Furthermore, if David had been cited as an example, what would the readers have answered to the question of verse 9a, i.e. “Is this blessing pronounced only upon the circumcised, or also upon the uncircumcised?” The readers must have replied that the blessing is pronounced upon the circumcised, because David was circumcised. If this is so, the logic of Paul’s argument from the Abraham example onwards, is undermined. Rather, then Paul should not have referred to David at all. Therefore, the citation of David is not for the purpose of another illustration and the person of David himself and his real life are not important.¹⁷³ The only reason why Paul mentions David is not that Paul has David’s severe sins such as adultery and murder in mind, but because David is an important figure next to Abraham and Moses. To summarise, Paul cites David not as a good example, but because he is one of the most important persons in Old Testament poetry.

Having noted this, I think that the basic reason why Paul refers to David, is that when David’s refers to blessedness, it is not linked to

¹⁷² E. P. Sanders, *Law*, n. 125 on P. 62.

¹⁷³ In this respect, Dunn, *Theology*, p. 364, who refers to ‘the righteousness of David’, is not correct.

either circumcision or uncircumcision. Therefore, because the blessing of forgiveness of sins that David referred to was not related to circumcision like Abraham's case, it is not confined to the Jews. Thus, even Abraham cannot boast before the gentiles, which means that Jews and gentiles are equal before God. That is what the text emphasises.¹⁷⁴

4.3. Rethinking Rom. 7

We have discussed the first four chapters of Romans thus far. What about Rom. 5-8? Barclay¹⁷⁵ says that if Rom. 1-4 is purely about Jews and gentiles, it is difficult to relate these chapters to Rom. 5-8. As I have already pointed out,¹⁷⁶ Barclay also says, "In Romans ... there are some points when 'the law' is discussed in such general terms as to include all rules (2:14; 4:14-15; *even more so in chapter 7*)" (my italics). Kim¹⁷⁷ argues that Paul is explaining the doctrine of justification in Rom. 5-8 without mentioning the inclusion of the gentiles into God's people. Kim¹⁷⁸ also asserts that only in the context of the observance of the whole law as good deeds can it make sense that Paul is explaining the dilemma by means of the example of a moral commandment (Rom. 7:7). Especially,

¹⁷⁴ J. Ziesler, *Romans*, p. 46.

¹⁷⁵ J. Barclay, *Obeying the truth*, p. 247.

¹⁷⁶ See p. 142.

¹⁷⁷ S. Kim, *New Perspective*, p. 54.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

Kim¹⁷⁹ maintains that law is referred to here in a general sense, saying that in Rom. 7 humankind as a whole suffers from the plight, because they cannot keep the whole law perfectly. This is even true of Israel, not because of her keeping the law in ethnic terms, but because of her inability of observing the whole law perfectly.

Here, I will suggest (1) the reason why the reference to the law in Rom. 7 tends to be general and (2) I will investigate Rom. 7 and show that it does not support the impossibility of the justification by the law due to the impossibility of the perfect observance of the law.

4.3.1. The context of Rom. 7 and its generality

When we read Rom. 7, what we have to keep in mind, is that Rom 5–8 presupposes that the reader fully understands the explanation up to Rom. 4. Paul indicated who is to be regarded as family of Abraham, and then, concluding, he clearly states in Rom. 5:1 that we are saved by the faith in Christ. And then Paul moves on to the theme of the believer’s peace with God.¹⁸⁰ The peace between God and his people means that God’s covenantal people enjoys the covenantal fellowship with their God.¹⁸¹ In

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, n. 234 on p. 70; p. 154.

¹⁸⁰ Following A. Nygren, *Commentary on Romans* (London: SCM, 1952), p. 287, we can view the subject throughout chapter 5–8 to be the meaning of the Christian life.

On the one hand, Rom. 5:12 that starts with *διὰ τοῦτο* should be understood not as the conclusion of the previous sentences, but as suggesting the reason for the already drawn conclusion. See O. Hofius, “The Adam–Christ antithesis and the law” in: J. D. G. Dunn (ed.), *Paul and the Mosaic law* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), p. 177.

¹⁸¹ See N. T. Wright, *New Testament*, p. 300.

this context, Paul is explaining the meaning of the law in the new covenantal life in order to avoid possible misunderstanding (Rom. 7:7). As we will see below, Rom. 7:7-25 explains Rom. 7:1-6¹⁸² and the purpose of Rom. 7:7-13 is to protect the law (vv. 7a, 12-13).¹⁸³ Against this background, the following verses (14-25) suggest the answer as to how the new covenantal people should serve God in the new way of Holy Spirit. This is done by using the example of a second marriage, which serves as a basis and explanation for Rom. 8. The point that I want to make is that Rom. 7 does not say how one gets membership of God's people for the first time. Therefore, the fact that Paul argues in a general sense in Rom. 7 must not be regarded as evidence that is necessarily against our interpretation of the 'works of the law' in Rom. 3-4.

In addition, there is still something else that should be pointed out. Kim¹⁸⁴ argues that the Judaism of Paul's time was afraid of losing their being God's people so that it became a synergistic nomism with an

¹⁸² See p. 155.

¹⁸³ On the other hand, with due regard to Paul's speaking of covetousness, the personalisation of sin (v. 8) and the fact that verse 9 can apply not to Paul but only to Adam, it is almost certain that Paul has the Adam account of Genesis in Rom. 7:7-13 in mind. If so, Paul regards the command that God gave to Adam as being equivalent to the law. By the way, what is important is that regardless of the observance of the command, life (the tree of life) had already been granted to Adam. Therefore, we should regard Adam as enjoying God's blessing before his command-observing. My point, here, is that the case of Adam implied in Rom. 7:7-13 does in no way relate law observance to getting life for the first time.

Besides, I have to point out that Adam did not fail in keeping the commandment in spite of all attempts to keep it, but disobeyed intentionally. Adam was perfect before the degradation. He was not as we are now. He was 100% able to keep the commandment. On this point, no other human beings who are born with depraved nature can be compared to Adam. In this regard, the implied Adam account does in no sense support the traditional view of the impossibility of 100% law-keeping.

¹⁸⁴ S. Kim, *New Perspective*, pp. 83-84. See n. 274.

element of works-righteousness. Furthermore, Kim¹⁸⁵ says that Paul at least tacitly understood the ‘works of the law’ to be *meritorious* for ‘staying in’ the covenant, that is for justification. However, there are some problems with this view. First of all, I think that if Israel had tried to get righteousness by the observance of the law, the prerequisite of the endeavour must have been the possibility of keeping the law perfectly. I think that if this had not been presupposed, Judaism could not have been legalistic. Therefore, Kim’s idea has a difficulty in itself. And, secondly, such legalism and Israel’s election do not concur. Exclusive elitism can easily produce boasting rather than fear. Following Kim’s idea, we cannot account for the fact that the Jews in Rom. 2:1–4 are depicted as being so proud of being God’s people that even though they are doing the same things as the gentiles, they believe that they could escape God’s judgment.

What is more important is, that, if Kim is correct and we have to call the obedience with fear the merit for justification, I cannot but assert that we must apply the same principle to the obedience in the new covenant. Paul says, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil 2:12). If we must take it to be a self-saving endeavour for the old covenantal people to keep the old covenantal regulations, or the law, with pious fear, must we then understand it as self-achieving salvation that the new covenantal people work out their own salvation with fear?

Here, I have to question the way in which Kim understands the

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

covenant,¹⁸⁶ because in my mind, according to Kim's view, not only the New Perspective scholars but also the **Reformers**, especially Calvin should be criticised by Kim who actually defends the **traditional** view. Calvin says that good works are not the condition for the salvation, but we are not justified without good deeds.¹⁸⁷ Furthermore, Calvin¹⁸⁸ says that the cause for God's people to enter into God's kingdom lies in God, but for its way, we have to pay attention to Psalm 15:2ff., which speaks of walking blamelessly and doing what is right. I cannot find any significant difference between Calvin's remark and the type of legalism that Kim is against. If Jews accepted a synergistic nomism because of fear – in other words, if fear were the reason that led Judaism of Paul's time to be legalistic, why could Paul and Peter not see the problem when they urged the new covenantal people to have fear (Phil. 2:12 and 1 Peter 1:17)? Why did Paul – who was strongly against Jewish legalism of his time – link the word fear to salvation? If we must accept legalism from the covenantal life linked to pious fear, I have to confess that I find the same thing in Calvinistic covenant theology. Hoekema¹⁸⁹ points out that Calvin says in his sermon on Deut. 27:11–15 that God's blessing in this place is **conditional**, that is, blessed is he who observes the law of God, who maintains his service purely. This human response is so

¹⁸⁶ T. Latto, *Paul and Judaism: an anthropological approach* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1995), p. 60, also says that if the soteriology of covenantal nomism implies 'getting in' and 'staying in', good works are the **conditio sine qua non** for the preservation of salvation.

¹⁸⁷ *Inst.*, III, 14–18.

¹⁸⁸ *Inst.*, III, 17, 6.

¹⁸⁹ A. A. Hoekema, "The covenant of grace in Calvin's teaching", *CTJ* 2 (1967), pp. 147–153.

important that Calvin even dares to call the promises of God **conditional**. Furthermore, Calvin also states in his Institution III, 21, 5-7 that God made the covenant not only with the elected, pointing out that there were many who were **cut off from** the covenant in the Old Testament. And Hoekema¹⁹⁰ asserts that, in later Calvinistic covenant theology, Calvin's teaching is often expressed in words such as these: the covenant of grace is **monopleuric** or **unilateral** in its origin but, **dipleuric** or **bilateral** in its fulfilment. According to Kim's view, should we then not say that not only the Judaism of Paul's time, but also the very covenant and the Old Testament itself as understood by Calvin and Calvinists have the aspects of self-achieving salvation? In this regard, I think that on this point, many traditional scholars (as represented by Kim) misunderstand God's covenant, or at least, do not follow Calvin's view, but Kuyper's view that God's covenant is only with the elect.¹⁹¹

The stage of being justified must be distinguished from the stage of living according to the covenantal regulations. In the latter stage, human beings are totally responsible, but such living in the covenant must not be regarded as a human endeavour for salvation. It is in the covenant that human beings' full responsibility meets God's full grace.¹⁹² And Rom. 7 is

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

¹⁹¹ See J. Van Genderen, *Covenant and election* (Neerlandia, Alberta, Canada: Inheritance, 1995) for the Reformed view on the relationship between covenant and election. Especially, see pp. 25-37 for Kuyper's view.

¹⁹² However, I cannot but be under the impression that many traditional scholars are confusing such human responsibility and life in the covenant with another salvational way. This is so, because it is on the basis of the idea that human beings cannot keep the whole law and thus not get salvation that many traditional scholars opt for a general interpretation of the law in Romans. In other words, the law, in principle, is regarded as

not explaining the first stage.

Therefore, Kim's¹⁹³ argument that only when the 'works of the law' refer to the observance of the whole law in general and meritorious terms as good deeds, Rom. 7-8 does make sense cannot be accepted. Even though the text refers to the law as a whole, it does so in order 1) not to argue for the impossibility of keeping the law perfectly; 2) nor to argue against the possibility of getting salvation through the perfect observance of the law, but to speak about the life of the covenant people. To speak of the whole law, does not necessarily imply the observance of the law in general and in meritorious terms. Now, let us move on to the question whether Rom. 7 does teach the plight caused by the impossibility of keeping the law perfectly, which forms one of the important bases of the traditional understanding of the law.

another way to get salvation on the condition of fulfilling it perfectly.

For instance, S. Westerholm, *Israel's law and the church's faith: Paul and his recent interpreters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), pp. 108-142, argues that human beings cannot get salvation because they cannot keep the law perfectly, saying that Paul regarded the gospel as being radically opposite to the law. According to him, the law and the new covenant actually indicate two ways of salvation. T. R. Schreiner, *Law*, p. 73, clearly summarises his argument in chapter 2 of his book in such a way that if the law could be perfectly kept, we could be justified through the law. Kim, *Origin*, pp. 4, 131-133, 282, 308, also maintains that Christ ended the law as a way to get righteousness or as a way of salvation.

However, the law was in no way given as a way through which human beings could be righteous. The covenant law itself as a regulation of God's saved people does not give salvation to its observers.

¹⁹³ S. Kim, *New Perspective*, p. 70,

4.3.2. Does Rom. 7 really support the impossibility of the perfect observance of the law?

In criticising Sanders' interpretation of the Judaism of Paul's time, Latto¹⁹⁴ stresses the anthropological premise. It should be noted that a difference in terms of anthropology might influence one's view of soteriology. Thus, the interpretation of the ego in Rom. 7 should be regarded as one of the key aspects to understanding Paul's view on the law.¹⁹⁵ On the other hand, Kim¹⁹⁶ argues that Rom. 7:7–25 clearly says that it is impossible to get righteousness through the observance of the law, because of the impossibility of the perfect observance and that Paul develops the argument of Gal. 3:10–11 in more detail here. Thus, Rom. 7 deserves our attention again.

The interpretation of Rom. 7 is regarded as one of the most difficult matters in the New Testament. This was already the case since the second century. The Greek Church fathers generally understood Paul as referring to the pre-Christians phase but, on the contrary, Augustine thought that Paul was thinking of Christians and his view was accepted by the medieval church.¹⁹⁷ However, the debate on this matter has not come to an end yet. The main logic for accepting that Paul is referring to non-Christians is that verses 14, 23, and 25 do not imply agony but

¹⁹⁴ T. Latto, *Paul*, pp. 146–167, argues that anthropological presuppositions of the Jewish and the Pauline patterns of religion led to a difference in soteriology. Whereas the optimism of Judaism led to synergism, Paul's pessimism led to a soteriology excluding human cooperation totally.

¹⁹⁵ E. P. Sanders, *Law*, p. 78.

¹⁹⁶ S. Kim, *New Perspective*, p. 154.

¹⁹⁷ A. Nygren, *Romans*, p. 284.

defeat.¹⁹⁸ On the other hand, the main arguments for accepting that Paul is referring to Christians are the change to the present tense in verse 14 and more decisively the thanksgiving in Rom. 7:25a.

However, as the long interpretation history indicates, it seems to be impossible to decide to which one of the two Rom. 7 refers to. Nevertheless, I think that the long history of interpretations does suggest one thing, namely that approaching the matter in terms of a choice between the two might not be a good place to start.¹⁹⁹ By focusing on the identification of the agonised ego, the centrality of the law has traditionally been ignored.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁸ J. Ziesler, *Romans*, p. 191.

¹⁹⁹ J. M. Espy, "Paul's 'robust conscience' re-examined", *NTS* 31 (1985), p. 173, asserts that the usual way of asking whether the ego in Rom. 7 is pre-Christian or Christian puts us on the wrong track.

²⁰⁰ K. Stendahl, *Paul*, p. 93. He asserts that Paul is protecting the law by separating the law from sins in Rom. 7:13–25. J. Ziesler, *Romans*, p. 195, also says that Paul's focus is not on the identification of the ego, but on the law. S. Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004) p. 397, agrees. He correctly states that Paul's point is that the law must be protected from the confusion between the law and sin and that the law must be recognised to be good even by those who do not do it.

On the other hand, Kümmel, *Römer 7*, p. 93, 126–131, already pointed out such confusion between the centrality of the law and the psychological interpretation of Rom. 7. He thinks that Rom. 7:7–25 is so rhetorical that it actually excludes Paul himself. I agree with him that we should not take the text to be a kind of autography of Paul. However, I think that to have a redemptive historical view is more important to avoid the confusion that Kümmel pointed out. Therefore, as to approach, I agree with E. Stauffer's, "ἐγώ", *TDNT* 2, pp. 358–362, redemptive historical perspective more than Kümmel's. D. H. Campbell, "The identity of ἐγώ in Romans 7:7–25", *SB* (78), p. 57, points out that modern interpretation has tended to fall into two categories: 1) understanding Rom. 7 as referring to man in general under the law (thus Kümmel); 2) regarding it as referring to redemptive history (thus E. Stauffer). If one has to choose between the two, one should agree with Stauffer.

In addition, Stauffer thinks that the ego in Rom. 7 refers to the people of the law, including Paul. Stauffer, *New Testament theology*, trans. John Marsh (London: SCM, 1955), p. 93, calls Rom. 7 'a chapter about the Jewish men who fights under the banner of the Torah, and therefore fights to the bitter end' (more recently, N. T. Wright, *Climax* p. 198, also interprets the ego as Jewish). However, even though I agree with Stauffer that Paul in Romans explains salvation history, I do not think that Rom. 7 explains the

Here is my suggestion: I think that Rom. 7:7-25 explains Rom. 7:1-6, especially verses 2-4.²⁰¹ The example is concluded in verse 4, namely that Christians have died to the law. The key words in the conclusion are 1) 'to the law and' 2) 'have died'. Verses 7-13 explain these key words. First, verses 7-13 explain the first key word, that is, the law. It seems as if Paul is protecting the law from the possible misunderstanding that the readers could have due to the conclusion in v. 4, namely that Christians have died to the law. The answer is provided in v. 14a (the law is spiritual). Next, Paul moves onto second key word, that is, why Christians must be dead to the law, more accurately why their 'bodies' must be dead to the law. I, here, suggest that Paul is speaking in hypothetical terms. In other words, he is not speaking of a situation that could possibly exist, but of *a situation that could not exist*.²⁰² We, Christians, who enjoy the peace with God have already died to sin (Rom. 6:2) and cannot commit sins (Rom. 6:15). This is not only a matter of principle, but we must live in that way. The reason for this is that

situation of the Jews. As I have said before, I agree with Nygren, *Romans*, pp. 287, 296, that Rom. 5-8 is speaking about the life of Christians

Above all, the verses in Rom. 6 indicating the reason why Christians must live a new life (Rom. 6:1-2, 4, 12, 15) strongly urge us to understand Rom. 7 as speaking of the Christians' new life in regard to the law.

²⁰¹ C. E. B. Cranfield, *Romans*, p. 330, also thinks that Rom. 7:7-25 is a necessary clarification of 7:1-6.

²⁰² Having already made up my mind that Paul is speaking of an impossible-to-be situation, I came to know through Nygren, *Romans*, pp. 294-5, that S. Odland had already argued earlier that in Rom. 7, Paul does not describe the real situation of the regenerate, but an abstraction. Nygren, however, objects that this view does not come from Paul, but from interpreters who make the wrong inference that, since the Christian has received the Holy Spirit, the flesh no longer plays any role. However, my choice for an impossible-to-be situation is not based on such an assumption.

Christians have already died to the law through the body of Christ (Rom. 7:4). But how? The answer lies in Rom. 8:9–10. If Christ is in Christians (i.e., the Holy Spirit is in Christians), their bodies are dead because of sin (εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν τὸ μὲν σῶμα νεκρὸν δι' ἁμαρτίαν). We, here, have to note that Paul does not refer to the answer to the problem, that is, the Holy Spirit, before Rom. 8. That is to say, Paul is purposely concealing the answer until he reaches that part of his argument.

To summarise, Paul is describing an impossible-to-be situation to be in, namely if the Holy Spirit were not in a Christian. This is done in order to present the answer to Rom. 6 (namely the Holy Spirit) and in order to prepare for Rom. 8 that explains ‘Christians’ death to the law through Christ’ in Rom. 7:4.²⁰³ That is to say, Paul is suggesting an impossible-to-be situation to show what would happen if a Christian, asked to live a new life, did not receive the Holy Spirit. To put it more accurately, ***the ego is a person who can in no way exist. He has faith but has not received the Holy Spirit.*** I believe that the past history of the interpretation of Rom. 7 that could not identify the ego neither as a Christian nor a pre-Christian indirectly supports my idea.²⁰⁴

²⁰³ On the other hand, Espy, “Paul’s robust conscience”, pp. 174–176, says that although it is wrong for Christians to evaluate themselves according to the law or to try to keep the law, to stand according to the flesh (without walking so) under the law may be a salutary reminder in explaining Rom. 7. He asserts that such self-checking is needed so that Rom. 7 does not necessarily mean lapsed Christians. According to Espy, *ibid.*, n. 71 on p. 174, the important characteristic of Christians is their receiving of the Holy Spirit so that it is impossible to abstractly think of the ego without the Holy Spirit. However, it is because no Christians without the Holy Spirit can exist, that Paul is creating a hypothetical situation.

²⁰⁴ On the other hand, Campbell, “ἐγώ”, p. 60, asserts that the present tense indicates that Paul is referring to a true situation. However, the present tense does not

Of course, when Christians are not full of the Holy Spirit, they might temporarily be under the situation of Rom 7, and the spiritual situation of Christians who live between old and new era may be similar to that of Rom. 7.²⁰⁵ However, the text definitely does not refer to the real situation of Christians. The hypothetical ego in the text is a being who has not received the Holy Spirit, but does have Christian faith. In this regard, he may be technically called a Christian. Especially, οὐκέτι (no more) in Rom. 7:17 indicates to us that Paul is technically speaking of a Christian.²⁰⁶ A case similar to this may be found from the Christians in Acts who had not been received the Holy Spirit yet. However, this should be regarded as being once-off in salvation history.

On the other hand, it is understandable that Ridderbos²⁰⁷ says that Paul is referring to a person in a transition period who still sticks to the law even though he has already confessed faith in Christ. However, the ego does not refer to a person in a transition period, since it definitely does not have the Holy Spirit.

On the other hand, the position of the ego is similar to that of the Jews in history in the sense that they had faith in God in some way, but,

necessarily mean that. The present tense can go well also with an unlikely situation.

²⁰⁵ We can take Nygren as an example. Nygren, *Romans*, pp. 293–296, 301, asserts that Rom. 5–8 is dualistic, because, although Christians belong to the new aeon, they live in the old one. He points out that, as long as Christians live in the flesh, this tension continues, but that this is due not to them being divided themselves, but due to the situation in which they find themselves. Among recent scholars, the idea of Dunn, *Romans*, pp. 393–399, 404–412, is similar. I, however, wish to emphasise Rom. 8:10: “If Christ is in you, your **body** is dead because of sin”.

²⁰⁶ A. Nygren, *Romans*, p. 300.

²⁰⁷ H. Ridderbos, *Paul*, n. 95 on p. 129.

at the same time, did not receive the Holy Spirit who descended on the Christian church at Pentecost. Therefore, in terms of examples that can be repeatedly seen up to now, that of the Jews is the closest. However, we have to keep in mind the fact that, in Rom. 5:1 (Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ), Paul begins to discuss Christians (Christians peace with God, or Christian life).²⁰⁸ We also have to take into consideration the fact that Rom. 6 refers to those who have received Christ's grace. Of course, Paul is using an unlikely situation to explain why those who have received Christ's grace cannot remain in sin (Rom. 6:1). Besides, Paul is referring to someone who technically died to the law. Therefore, he does not have the Jews in mind.

However, it is true that Paul is thinking in terms of salvation history. He wants to emphasise the role of the Holy Spirit in salvation history by proving that if believers did not receive the Holy Spirit (this is not a case of believers quenching the Spirit), they could not escape, not agony, but defeat. In other words, the structure of Rom. 5-7 is pushing forward to the Holy Spirit in Rom. 8 in terms of salvation history. And this, at the same time, might be understood to suggest the possible situation that the new covenantal people might suffer from when they act contrary to salvation history by trying to serve God not by the new way of the Holy Spirit, but the old way of the law (Rom. 7:6). In this respect, Ziesler²⁰⁹ is

²⁰⁸ See p. 147.

²⁰⁹ J. Ziesler, *Romans*, pp. 47-48.

quite right in pointing out in his explanation of Rom. 7:1-6 that Paul is not saying that Christians have died to the law as a way of salvation as Cranfield believes, but that his statement is unconditional. Paul denies the law as a power.

I, now, believe that we can grasp why Paul changes the tense from the past in Rom. 7:7-13 to the present from v. 14 onwards. While the past tense is enough to explain the role of the law in salvation history, the present tense is more needed for the subjective part that explains the reason why individuals have to die to the law. Of course, the present tense may be used to explain an unlikely situation.

If so, how can we understand the relation between Rom. 7:25a and 25b that is often suggested as a proof supporting that the ego in Rom. 7 is a Christian? I think that Rom. 7:4 is the conclusion of the example. That is to say, Christians have died to the law through the body of Christ. However, Paul has not given the reason in terms of the Holy Spirit yet. On the other hand, he clearly concludes *in terms of the Holy Spirit* in Rom. 8:9-10 that if the spirit of Christ, namely the Holy Spirit, dwells in Christians, their bodies are dead because of their sins but their spirits are alive. In between Rom 8 and 7:4, Rom. 7:25b is located. Therefore, the logic between Rom. 7:4 and 8:9-10 needs the logical step that the flesh must be separated from the ego in some way or another. In Rom. 7:4 Paul indicated that a Christian's body is dead to the law through the body of Christ and he wanted to provide the reason in terms of the Holy Spirit in Rom. 8:9-10. If so, he had to describe the situation in between

as a sort of premise in which the flesh and the spirit must be discerned from each other before he introduces the Holy Spirit. Paul is doing this in Rom. 7:14ff. by means of an impossible-to-be ego who is a Christian without the Holy Spirit. In other words, Paul must establish a logical and theoretical premise before he introduces the Holy Spirit. And if the premise can be provided, in fact, the conclusion in terms of the Holy Spirit in Rom. 8 is obvious. When Paul has established such a premise in the section up to verse 24, he ***has actually finished the theoretical basis on which he can draw the conclusion in Rom. 8.***²¹⁰ ***Here, we see Paul who hastily thanks God right before he summarises Rom. 7:14-24 in Rom. 7:25b.*** To my mind, this is an adequate response to those who believe that the ego in this verse is a Christian one.

I also have to point out one more thing that is remarkably interesting in regard to the argument of the impossibility of the perfect observance of the law. It is that the ego of the text is not unable but evil. The ego is not simply short of doing good deeds, but there is not any doing of good deeds in it (v. 18). He does not do the good, but does what he hates, that is, evil (vv. 15, 19). The ego of the text is not the ego who cannot achieve the goal of doing the good perfectly, but the anti-ego who, on the contrary, does the evil from the beginning. By disclosing the flesh's and sin's being evil, the text indicates ***the reason*** why the flesh doing the evil must die, and, at the same time, explains Rom. 7:4 and 8:10 by

²¹⁰ We, here, can see the reason why Paul emphasises the word 'body' in Rom. 7:4 when he uses the expression 'through the body of Christ' and why, having emphasised this body of death in v. 24, he speaks of 'body' in Rom. 8:10 again.

separating the flesh from the ego. Once again, the focus is not the impossibility of the perfect observance of the law, but on the intentional disobedience of the ego. As I have already indicated several times,²¹¹ God's judgment always comes not on the disability of keeping the law in spite of all attempts to keep it, but on intentional disobedience. The Bible says that Israel was punished not because it was impossible for them to keep the law, but by ever-continuing disobedience. I point out that the Israel that was punished after the exodus from Egypt was not *short of* doing good deeds, but *always disobeyed* God (Num. 14:22, Deut. 9:24, Acts 7:51, Heb. 3:10). The judgment of the book of Revelation also is not upon those who lack the perfect observance of the law, but upon those who keep doing evil and being filthy (Rev. 22:11). Rom. 7 is not any exception. It does not refer to the impossibility of the perfect observing of the law nor the agony caused by it.²¹²

²¹¹ See p. 79.

²¹² In this regard, K. Stendahl's, *Paul*, pp. 92-93, observation is correct:

It is most striking that the 'I', the ego, is not simply identified with sin and flesh. The observation that 'I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want to do is what I do' does not lead directly over to the exclamation: 'Wretched man that I am ...!', but, on the contrary, to the statement, 'Now if I do what I do not want, *then it is not I who do it* but the sin which dwells in me.' The argument is one of acquittal of the ego, not one of utter contrition. Such a line of thought would be impossible if Paul's intention were to describe man's predicament. (Stendahl's italics)

In this regard, N. T. Wright, *Climax* p. 197, says the same: The result of the argument is the acquittal not only of the Torah but also of the ego (Rom. 7:17-19).

On the other hand, when we must explain, in relation with Phil. 3:6 that says that although the pre-Christian Paul did not receive the Holy Spirit, he did not get frustrated, the reason why, in an impossible-to-be situation of a Christian without the Holy Spirit, he must get frustrated, the following would be the answer. The pre-Christian Paul's observance of the law was a faultless and valid way of life in the old covenant. Old covenantal people's observance of the law was faultless and valid in the old age. However, even though the law was kept perfectly, keeping the law cannot be the valid

Lastly, if Paul is explaining by means of an impossible-to-be situation the reason for Christians to live according to the Holy Spirit, or if, having a real situation of the church in Rome in mind,²¹³ he tries to show a possible misery that when Roman Christians run counter to salvation history by serving God not through the Holy Spirit but through the old way of the law, they could experience, Paul is in a situation that is not much different from that of Galatians. ***In this regard, I think that we will not be astonished to discover that the fact that, after Paul depicts the flesh negatively in Rom. 7, he says that the body is dead in the next chapter is in fact identical to what he says in Gal. 3:3: “Having begun with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh? (Gal. 3:3)”***. So I firmly believe that Romans does not oppose our previous interpretation of Galatians; rather it supports it.

new way of life for the new covenantal people in the new age. In this regard, Paul could say that although he was blameless in terms of the old covenantal way (Phil. 3:6), at the same time, in the new covenant, the requirements of the law might be fulfilled in us not with agony but with thanksgiving (Rom. 8:4). Both in the old and the new covenant, Paul did not get frustrated by the impossibility of keeping the law.

²¹³ It is, in fact, not important whether such a situation was true or hypothetical. Because even though such situation did not occur in the church in Rome, Paul, indicating the advent of the new age and necessity of the Holy Spirit, could develop his logic, having in his mind the hypothetical situation for the new covenantal people to stick to the old covenant.

5. Summary

I, now, think that we may conclude that the New Perspective is more faithful to the Pauline text, especially with regard to the law in Romans and Galatians. To put it in another way, it means that the reading of justification by faith through the New Perspective has a better exegetical foundation. However, such a good exegetical result does not necessarily guarantee that one interprets such a good result correctly. This is another question. Therefore, we should distinguish between the accurate exegesis of scholars from the New Perspective and the results drawn by them from such exegetical results. Is it really such a narrow interpretation to understand justification by faith in the context of the gentiles and the Jews, in comparison with the traditional view which regard it as referring to the salvation principle of *human beings in general terms*? Now, let us check if these new exegetical results necessarily imply a narrow understanding of justification by faith.

Part 4

The character of the eschatological gospel of Paul, the Jew, apostle to the gentiles

1. Introduction

It is understandable that, in comparison with the traditional view, this new view can be seen as a narrower view. I, however, think that this is because of a radical misunderstanding of the character of the eschatological gospel of Paul, apostle to the gentiles.¹

For instance, as I have already said, Kim is against Dunn, Räisänen and Watson's theory on the late origin of justification by faith and its polemical meaning for Paul's gentile mission, and although my reason is different, I do agree with him on the late origin of justification by faith. But even though Kim long and relatively logically criticises the notion of the late origin of justification by faith, he does not seem to provide persuasive arguments for its polemical meaning for Paul's gentile mission. He seems to disregard the fact that the context of Gal. 2-3 in which justification by faith appears, refers to Paul's gentile mission so that the direct meaning of justification by faith ought to be understood in this context. In chapter 1 of his book *Paul and the New Perspective*, Kim

¹ In fact, even New Perspective scholars did not take this aspect into full consideration. Although they correctly pointed out a new understanding of justification by faith, they did not properly explain the eschatological nature of Paul's gospel. Thus they do not escape criticism in this regard – just like Old Perspective scholars.

stresses the identity of Paul's Damascus encounter, disapproving of the late origin of justification by faith. Especially in the section 'The problem of the law', which is almost 24 pages long (pp. 22-45), he objects at length to the notion of the late origin of justification by faith also. However, in my eyes, the fact that justification by faith originated at the Damascus encounter does not necessarily prove that justification by faith deals with the general plight of human kind. Although justification by faith originated from Damascus, its meaning can be linked to Paul's gentile mission.² We can refer to Donaldson's view in this case. Consequently, I think that Kim, who so powerfully expressed his disapproval of the notion of the late origin of justification by faith, could not persuasively object to the narrowness of the new understanding of justification by faith.

In the chapter "What gospel did Paul preach before the Antioch and Galatian controversies?" in his book *Paul and the New Perspective*, Kim³ develops his logic, emphasising the Damascus origin of Paul's gospel rather than its content. It is worth noting that, when Kim speaks of the

² Of course, Kim, *New Perspective*, pp. 4-5, also agrees that justification by faith is related to Paul's gentile mission. Kim, *Origin*, p. 310, however, asserts that the Jesus whom Paul met on the Damascus road is the Lord of the universe and the Son of Almighty God so that Paul received the responsibility of the works for the gentiles also at this encounter. But, as I will indicate below, Paul claims that he received his gospel through the Damascus revelation. The revelation is linked to Paul's calling to the gentile mission, and Paul refers to his gospel in the context of the Abrahamic covenant. Therefore, I believe that, although the notion of universal salvation which includes gentiles also cannot but have to do with the universal Lord, salvation must be explained more directly in terms of Abraham's covenant. See "The theological implications of Paul's apostleship to gentiles and his gospel of the uncircumcised in salvation history" on p. 191 also.

³ S. Kim, *New Perspective*, pp. 45-53.

content of Paul's gospel in Galatians, he stresses the universality of Paul's gospel, namely that Christ died for the sins of human beings, whereas he in fact does not even refer to Gal. 2:14-16 and 3:6-14 – the pivotal verses concerning justification by faith. Even though Kim⁴ very briefly mentions Gal. 3:13 in brackets as proof together with other verses, he does not touch on verse 14, that is the final clause following verse 13, which starts with *ἵνα*. And in the section titled “The doctrine of justification developed only for the gentile mission?”, Kim⁵ also does not comment on verse 14, saying that the reason why Paul refers to justification by faith in terms of the ‘gentile inclusion’ is that this is an important issue of the Galatian church. In other words, the way in which Paul can effectively deny counterarguments is used to make his point on this issue. I think, however, that this kind of explanation might be effective to refute the late origin of the notion of justification by faith, but it is not powerful enough to refute the argument that the notion of justification by faith was originally related to the gentile mission. This is so, because the fact that Paul draws upon this issue to refute the counterarguments set out in Galatians, implies that the original meaning of justification by faith must be broader than the meaning of justification by faith in Galatians. It is also possible to assert that Paul could cope with the Galatian issue by means of the notion that originally was related to the gentiles. In fact, this argument would be more powerful than the

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

other one.

In addition to this, what we should pay attention to in Gal. 2:14–16, is the fact that when Paul introduces the notion of justification by faith in the context of the Antioch incident in order to solve the Galatian issue, he relates it to his gospel. In other words, in this section, the Antioch incident in which Paul states that Peter led gentiles to live like Jews, is introduced not as one of issues, but as the issue of the truth of gospel. And this is the case in Gal. 3 also.⁶

My point is that Kim asserts that the specific issue in the Galatian church can be answered by the general and major principle of the gospel. This is quite right. Paul, however, does not consider the Antioch incident and the Galatian issues as marginal issues, but as the central issue of gospel. To put it another way, Paul replies to the major issue concerning the gospel by arguing on the principle of the gospel. I think, therefore, that Kim's problem is that he has beforehand classified the Galatian issue of gentile inclusion as a marginal issue. Indeed, this tendency still continues and can be heard in the views of the New Perspective scholars.

To my mind, for Paul, the issue of the inclusion of the gentiles was not a marginal issue, but the heart of his gospel. The reason why Old Perspective scholars regard the reading of the New Perspective as a narrow understanding is due to the fact that Old Perspective scholars do not properly acknowledge the relationship between Paul's gentile mission and his gospel so that they are prejudiced from the start and think of

⁶ See pp. 228ff.

Paul's gentile mission as a minor 'thing'. However, many New Perspective scholars also make the same mistake.

The term εὐαγγέλιον in the vocabulary of the New Testament is thought to have been introduced by Paul.⁷ If this is true, it would be more meaningful to think of what the gospel means for Paul, than for others. Therefore, in the next section, I will show by means of the exegesis of εὐαγγέλιον⁸ in Galatians that for Paul, the apostle to the gentiles, his gospel is not essentially different from his calling, that is, his gentile mission. Thus, I will indicate that to understand justification by faith in the context of Paul's gentile mission does not necessarily imply that it should be understood in a narrow sense.

2. εὐαγγέλιον *in Galatians*

2.1. Galatians 1

2.1.1. Gospel as theme of Galatians

The paragraph in Gal. 1 in which the word 'gospel' appears, is vv. 6-9.

⁷ U. Becker, "Gospel, Evangelize, Evangelist", *NIDNTT* 2 p. 110. (pp. 107-115).

⁸ Although the verbal form of 'gospel' (εὐαγγελίζω) appears several times in Galatians (1:8-9, 16, 23, 4:13), in due consideration of the scope of my study, I will confine myself mainly to investigating the word 'gospel' in the noun form.

According to Betz's analysis,⁹ this belongs to the *exordium* (6-11). On the other hand, Vos¹⁰ asserts that 10-12 does not suggest an independent theme but supplements the theme of 6-9, firstly, because 10-12 does not begin with the ordinary introduction (εὐχαριστέω) but with θαυμάζω and, secondly, because 10-12 is connected to 6-9 by γάρ. Therefore, he considers 6-9 to be a proposition. On the other hand, because there is a tendency for a thanksgiving in Pauline letters to introduce the important themes of the letters or to summarise the contents of the letters in advance, and because θαυμάζω in Galatians acts as a substitute for εὐχαριστέω, and 6-10 takes the place of thanksgiving to settle the theme of the letter,¹¹ it is better to take 6-10 as an exceptional case in Pauline letters in that it suggests the theme through the introductory explanation of the present Galatian situation.

In this regard, the fact that the word 'gospel' appears for the first time in this introductory theme-suggesting paragraph and the fact that Paul uses the word five out of eight times in this paragraph allow us to conclude that 'gospel' is the theme word for Galatians. I firmly believe, therefore, that the purpose of the whole debate in Galatians is aimed at explaining Paul's gospel.

This gospel was not a human gospel. Paul did not receive the gospel from man, nor was he taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:11-12). Paul's gospel was not inferior to that of the

⁹ H. D. Betz, *Galatians*, pp. 16, 44-46.

¹⁰ J. S. Vos, "Paul's argumentation in Galatians 1-2", *HTR* 87:1 (1994), pp. 1-16.

¹¹ R. N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, p. 13.

Jewish apostles (2:6) and even though Paul's gospel was essentially the same as gospel of the Jewish apostles, there was a difference (in terms of their objectives) between the two (2:7-9). Furthermore, Paul's gospel was decisively connected to Abraham in Gal. 3:8 and was finally characterised by the inclusion of gentiles (3:8, 14). In this part, I will try to show the implications of this understanding of the concept 'gospel' by investigating the key word 'gospel'.

Before we go to the exegesis of Gal. 1:6 where the word 'gospel' appears for the first time, I have to refer to the flexibility in Paul's usage of the word gospel. Wright¹² asserts that *εὐαγγέλιον* is based firmly in Judaism and functions as an announcement about the true God and about the Messiah, and hence as a challenge to the powers of the world. Furthermore, Wright¹³ maintains that when Paul writes Galatians, 'gospel' has a fourfold announcement: 1) God is the true God. 2) Jesus is not merely Lord in some cosmic sense but he is actually the king of Israel.¹⁴ 3) Israel's exile is finished. 4) The pagan nations come to join Israel's blessing. Wright stresses the specific order, saying that Paul's opponents failed to understand the order. He also claims that his proposal explains why the references to the gospel in Galatians are **so apparently flexible**, covering what are quite a **wide range of issues**.

¹² N. T. Wright, "Gospel and theology in Galatians", in: L. Ann Jervis and Peter Richardson (eds.), *Gospel in Paul: studies on Corinthians, Galatians and Romans for Richard N. Longenecker* (JSNTSS 108, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994) p. 229.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 232-234.

¹⁴ On this point, Wright disagrees with Stuhlmacher.

On the other hand, Hughes¹⁵ says that ‘gospel’ in Galatians is used in various ways. His point is that for Paul, ‘gospel’ is **a flexible term** in its meaning and in the way Paul uses it. On this point, Hughes does not differ greatly from Wright. I agree that when Paul’s letters are studied holistically, for Paul, the word ‘gospel’ may be a wide term. I think, however, that at least in Galatians, **the consistency** of Paul’s use of the word ‘gospel’ is more dominant than its flexibility.¹⁶ We can easily take the fact that Paul was at spiritual war as one of the reasons for this. In comparison with Paul’s other letters (e.g., 1 Thessalonians), in Galatians Paul was engaged in a much more severe debate about the gospel itself. Is this not enough to make us think that Paul would have been consistent when referring to the gospel? It was the core of his gospel. By investigating the word ‘gospel’ in Galatians, consistent elements in Paul’s use of it, will be revealed.

2.1.2. ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον (1:6)

In Gal. 1:6–7 ‘gospel’ is used in the expression ‘another gospel’ and in

¹⁵ Frank W. Hughes, “The gospel and its rhetoric in Galatians”, in: L. Ann Jervis and Peter Richardson (eds.), ***Gospel in Paul: studies on Corinthians, Galatians and Romans for Richard N. Longenecker*** (JSNTSS 108, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994) pp. 219–221.

¹⁶ On the other hand, the importance of Paul’s use of the word ‘gospel’ cannot be indicated only in Galatians, but also in Romans in which Paul makes a strenuous effort to explain his gospel also. Concerning the consistency of the word ‘gospel’ in Romans, S. Mason, “‘For I am not ashamed of the gospel’ (Rom. 1:16): The gospel and the first readers of Romans”, in: L. Ann Jervis and Peter Richardson (eds.), ***Gospel in Paul: studies on Corinthians, Galatians and Romans for Richard N. Longenecker*** (JSNTSS 108, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), p. 277, points out that the word ‘gospel’ in Romans is used in relationship with Paul’s mission and gentiles.

the expression ‘the gospel of Christ’. We shall pay attention to the former. In verse 7, Paul says that some people are disturbing the Galatians. Paul has in mind his opponents’ arguments concerning the issue of the inclusion of the gentiles into God’s people. Here, what is surprising, is that Paul refers to another teaching, namely their teaching, as ‘another *gospel*’.¹⁷ Paul could have said that his opponents were teaching a false *thinking* and so forth, but Paul did not do that.

On the other hand, Friedrich¹⁸ says that Paul’s opponents themselves called their teachings ‘gospel’. Even if this is so, it is still true that Paul uses the word ‘gospel’ himself. Considering the fact that Paul’s opponents were so-called Christians (Gal. 2:4), we have to acknowledge that they confessed the major Christian creed, including aspects such as Jesus’ Lordship, messiahship, and resurrection. That means that we have to understand that they did not deny what we usually regard as the core of the gospel, namely, the life-saving faith (Rom.

¹⁷ I have to emphasise that Paul’s choice of the word ‘gospel’ cannot be taken lightly. H. D. Betz, *Galatians*, p. 7, properly says that Paul classified what his opponents preached as another ‘gospel’. On the other hand, Betz, *ibid.*, pp. 47, 100, takes τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς ἀκροβυστίας and (τὸ εὐαγγέλιον) τῆς περιτομῆς to be two gospels and says that the whole context of the Jerusalem counsel indicates that there were two gospels. There was an agreement between the Jerusalem church and Paul at the Jerusalem counsel, but the Jerusalem church was led by James, Peter and John (a sort of triarchy) and in fact one of three parts of Jerusalem church remained opposed to Paul at the time of the council. After the Antioch incident, Paul and his opponents came to deny the power of salvation of each other’s gospel. Furthermore, Betz *ibid.*, p. 48, asserts that Gal. 1:6, saying that there is not another gospel, and Gal. 2:7, referring to two gospels, are contradictory to each other.

I agree with Betz in that he emphasises the fact that Paul calls what his opponents preached ‘(another) gospel’. But I cannot accept the rest of his explanation. Nevertheless, the reason why I cited his argument at length is that he is quite well aware of the importance of the fact that Paul identifies his opponents’ argument as a sort of gospel.

¹⁸ G. Friedrich, “εὐαγγέλιον”, *TDNT* 2, p. 734.

10:9). They differed from Paul, not in terms of the important issues of Christianity, but only with regard to the condition which allowed gentiles to be included in God's people. Nevertheless, Paul said that they preached another gospel and did not proclaim a simple discipline (Heb. 12:5) or reproof or chastening (Rev. 3:19) but a curse (Gal. 1:8-9) on them. In fact, although Paul encounters many problems in Corinthians and Galatians, only when he faces the matter of Judaizing his gentile Christians does he regard this as a matter of gospel.¹⁹

This is an important window through which we can see Paul's gospel and curse: for Paul, the gospel, at least in Galatians, is related to the inclusion of the gentiles into God's people, which is the issue discussed in Galatians, and the curse is not a general discipline, but something that has arisen from a difference on the inclusion of the gentiles.²⁰

2.1.3. τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ (1:7)

The genitive can be either an objective genitive (content) or a subjective

¹⁹ S. Mason, "Gospel", pp. 283-285

²⁰ On the other hand, H. D. Betz, *Galatians*, p. 50, argues that the curse in Gal. 1:8-9 should be understood in relation to the conditional blessings in Gal. 6:16 so that the body of Galatians is bracketed by these conditional curses and blessings. There is truth in it. However, I think that the curse in Gal. 1:8-9 is firstly to be considered in terms of Gal. 3:8-13. The reason is that the important words of Gal. 1:8-9 are 'gospel' and 'curse' and that they are the pivotal words in Gal. 3:8-13, too. As we shall see later, Paul relates 'gospel' and 'curse' to 'the inclusion of gentiles' in Gal. 3:8-13 also.

genitive (source), or both²¹ The context, however, stresses the latter, namely, a subjective genitive, rather than the former.

In verse 7 Paul says “There is not another gospel” and “There are some who trouble you”. Paul denies the divine origin of ‘another gospel’ and points out the source (not the contents) of ‘another gospel’. In other words, Paul says that ‘another gospel’ only brings trouble for human beings. Therefore, I believe that in verse 7 Paul contrasts Christ with human beings as the origin of the gospel. This can be confirmed by the fact that subsequently, Paul denies that his gospel came **from** himself, a human being. He does this by including himself among those who preach Christ’s gospel. And then Paul enlarges the scope of comparison beyond human beings: even a false gospel coming **from** angels should be rejected. After this, repeating his previous warning, Paul stresses the correctness of his gospel in terms of its origin, and enlarges the possible scope of the origin of ‘another gospel’ by using *τίς* which covers all kinds of beings (human beings, spiritual beings, and even things).²² In a nutshell, Paul very strongly rejects to any other gospel from any kind of being except Christ.

Consequently, Paul stresses the **origin** of his gospel, namely Christ, more and more by changing the object of comparison (from human beings

²¹ R. N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, p. 16. H. D. Betz, *Galatians*, p. 50 (n. 69), also says that the meaning of the genitive is both, citing Stuhlmacher.

²² W. Bauer, W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich & F. W. Danker, “*τίς*”, *BDGA*, p. 819. On the other hand, Paul uses *τινές* in verse 7 also, but the word in verse 7 clearly means human beings. However, I think that *τίς* in verse 9 includes human beings and angels, because it is used after mentioning both groups.

to spiritual beings to any kind of being) so that the context does not allow preference for contents above origin when interpreting Christ's gospel. This view is confirmed by the fact that once he has stressed that his gospel did not come from men (verse 11), Paul accentuates the fact that he received it by the revelation from Christ.

2.1.4. τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τὸ εὐαγγελισθὲν ὑπ' ἐμοῦ ... δι' ἀποκαλύψεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ **(1:11- 12)**

In verses 7-9 Paul stresses the uniqueness and exclusiveness of Christ's gospel by emphasising its origin. I think that Paul, here, already has 1:16-17 and 2:6-10 in mind. Paul says that the origin of his gospel has nothing to do with any other persons, including other apostles – only with Christ. Along this line, Paul distinguishes himself from other apostles because of his gospel. In other words, he distinguishes his gospel from that of other apostles.²³

In this regard, Paul's defence of his apostleship in Gal. 2 can be better understood as a defence for his special *gentile* apostleship than for the equality of his apostleship. Paul emphasises the fact that the other important apostles added nothing (2:6), which indicates that Paul does not so much deny his lack or inferiority, but that he stresses the

²³ S. Mason, "Gospel", pp. 278-279. This distinction can be seen in Romans, too. Interpreting 'set aside' in Rom. 1:1, Mason points out that Paul was set aside from other apostles because of the gospel that was specially given to him. To put it another way, Paul distinguishes his gospel from that of other apostles.

distinction from the other apostles. The acknowledgment of Paul and the other apostles in the following verses 7–9 indicates the essential equality of their gospels, but his ultimate purpose is to stress the fact that although their gospels are essentially the same, there is a certain distinction between the two and that the apostles admitted that the distinction was caused by God's plan. In other words, Paul wants to accentuate the divine uniqueness of his gospel.²⁴

If Paul's thinking is considered holistically, I confirm that the genitive in 'the gospel of Christ' in verse 7 accentuates the origin of Christ's gospel and, in fact, is the same expression as 'the gospel ... through the revelation of Jesus Christ' in verse 12. Here, what I want to emphasise, is that Paul stresses the divine origin of his gospel and that he denies other gospels by attributing the origin of his gospel to Christ, but his ultimate purpose in doing this is to refute the possibility of any relationship between his gospel and any other ones, even those of other apostles. He wants his gospel to be identified by a certain character, namely the link to Christ's revelation. For Paul, his gospel is nothing other than the revelation on the Damascus road. This explains why Paul needs to start with his Damascus road Christophany on two occasions (Gal. 1, Phil. 3) when he defends himself.²⁵

Here we have to pay attention to the fact that while Paul unfolds his explanation of his gospel, he characterises the revelation by the

²⁴ See also pp. 188–194.

²⁵ J. D. G. Dunn, *Theology*, p. 346.

words ‘**God’s Son**’ and ‘**gentiles**’ (Gal. 1:16). That is to say, Paul’s gospel, the revelation on the Damascus road, is **preaching God’s Son among the gentiles**. Here we find that the content of Paul’s gospel is Christ and, at the same time, we see Paul purposely connecting his gospel directly to the gentiles. Paul does not draw a clear line between his gospel and his calling. Furthermore, considering that Paul uses the same sentence structure in Gal. 1:11–12 as in 1:1 when he refers to the divine origin of his gospel, in particular the double use of the word ‘human’: an apostle **not from man nor through man**, but through Jesus Christ – οὐκ ἀπ’ ἀνθρώπων οὐδὲ δι’ ἀνθρώπου ἀλλὰ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Gal. 1:1); the gospel ... **not from man ... Not ... from man**, but ... though the revelation of Jesus Christ – οὐκ ... κατὰ ἄνθρωπον· οὐδὲ ... παρὰ ἀνθρώπου ... ἀλλὰ δι’ ἀποκαλύψεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Gal. 1:11–12), it is clear that Paul stresses that, just as two sides of a coin cannot be separated, so his gospel and his apostleship cannot be separated.²⁶ In this light, the Damascus road encounter described in Galatians ought to be understood as Paul’s receiving of his calling as his gospel. At the same time, this encounter was the event through which Paul received his gospel, characterised by his calling. Thus after receiving his gospel, Paul did not receive his calling but he received his gospel as his calling for the gentile mission –

²⁶ G. Friedrich, “εὐαγγέλιον”, p. 733, already pointed out that for Paul, the apostolate and the gospel are extremely closely related.

Furthermore, U. Becker, “Gospel”, pp. 111–112, says that in the Pauline corpus, the gospel and the apostolate are closely associated and, since apostleship and the preaching the gospel belong together, every attack on Paul and his apostleship is an attack on the gospel, and **vice versa**.

one event.

Now I want to take a closer look at the Damascus road encounter. The fact that Paul links his gospel and apostleship closely, and, at the same time, the fact that he emphasises that he received his gospel through Christ's revelation, tell us that the interpretation of Paul's Damascus road Christophany can directly affect the interpretation of his gospel and requires us to investigate the event in detail.²⁷

- *The interpretation of the Damascus road Christophany*

- (1) *Introduction*

Jeremias²⁸ thinks that the key to Paul's thinking is not Judaism but the Damascus road encounter. This is true, since the Damascus road encounter affects the structure of Paul's thinking. There has been a tendency amongst traditional scholars to view the Damascus road encounter as a conversion. According to this view, Paul came to know, at the encounter, that Christ was the end of the law for salvation and started to develop his gospel in terms of justification by faith. This new soteriology was the foundation of his missiology.²⁹ According to this view, Paul, who was striving for the fulfilment of the law, converted on the Damascus road, and his conversion resulted in his gentile mission. But if the Damascus road encounter is primarily understood as a calling

²⁷ In this regard, J. Jeremias, "The key to Pauline theology", *ExpTim* 76 (1964/65), p. 17, is correct in saying that the key to Paul's thinking lies not in Judaism but in the Damascus encounter.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

²⁹ S. Kim, *New Perspective*, p. 22.

to his gentile mission,³⁰ then the development of Paul's thinking is linked to the following question: If salvation can be allowed to gentiles as gentiles, what meaning does the law have?³¹

In this regard we see that our previous survey of Paul's conscience, the possibility of the fulfilment of the law, and the meaning of the 'works of the law' go better with the latter view (a calling) than with the former (a conversion). And we shall see Paul actually regards the Damascus road encounter as a calling more than a conversion. Furthermore, this would be an opportunity to prove the correctness of our previous arguments.

(2) Why Arabia? (Gal. 1:16-17)

I have often met ministers of religion who thought that Paul went to Arabia to seek solitude for psychological reasons. In other words, he was trying to find himself. It seems that some claim, that for Paul, Arabia was equivalent to the wilderness where Jesus went to. It has also often been argued that the full significance of the Damascus road encounter, may only have come to him later or grown within Paul's conscious thought over a period.³²

³⁰ This view can be seen as early as Stendahl, *Paul*, pp. 7, 12. He views the Damascus encounter as a calling rather than a conversion and asserts that Paul did have a robust conscience.

³¹ When, in this way, we understand that the identification of the Damascus encounter can affect the structure of Paul's thinking and moreover his theology, we can also understand why Kim, *New Perspective*, pp. 7-19, 22-45, does in no way agree with Dunn who views the Damascus encounter as a calling.

³² E.g., T. L. Donaldson, "Paul's gentile mission", p. 63. Even though he is a New Perspective scholar and regards the Damascus road encounter as a conversion, he is

However, when we take into account that Paul went to Arabia for his mission after meeting Christ on the Damascus road, it is clear that Paul was immediately aware of his calling at the Damascus Christophany. 2 Corinthians (11:32) refers to Paul's persecution by the governor under king Aretas (B.C. 9 - A.D. 40) who ruled Arabia at that time. If Paul had been busy quietly meditating on his theology, we cannot find any reason for his persecution.³³ Paul probably went to Arabia, thinking that the prophecy of Isaiah 42 would be fulfilled through his mission.³⁴ In this regard, we must say that the best case similar to Paul's one is the calling of prophets in the Old Testament.

I, here, want to add two more reasons for saying this. Firstly, the structure of verse 16 indicating the Damascus Christophany and the following verse that describes Paul's reaction, states that going to Arabia was a missionary journey. Verse 16 indicates two facts:

A: God revealed his Son to Paul for *the gentile mission*.

B: Paul did not *consult any man*.

Verse 17 also has two facts:

B: Paul did not go to Jerusalem to *see other apostles*.

A: But Paul went to *Arabia*.

sceptical of Paul's receiving a vocal calling. For Donaldson, Paul's calling came to him through the process of re-evaluation. Another example is J. Dupont, "The conversion of Paul, and its influence on his understanding of salvation by faith", in: W. W. Gasque and R. P. Martin (eds.), *Apostolic history and the gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), p. 193.

³³ H. D. Betz, "Paul", *ABD* 5, p. 188.

³⁴ S. Kim, *New Perspective*, pp. 103-104, links Kedar and Sela with Navataea and Petra so that he claims that Kedar and Sela refer to Arabia, the Navataean kingdom whose major city was Petra.

Paul contrasts his gentile mission with meeting human beings in verse 16 and Jerusalem with Arabia in verse 17. I think that such a structure implies that Jerusalem is a place of human affairs, e.g., consultations and Arabia is a place of divine affairs, namely, the gentile mission.

Secondly, I think that the life situation of the pre-Christian Paul supports the notion of calling. Paul did not persecute Christians as many non-Christians in history did. Rather, Paul persecuted Hellenist Jewish Christians who preached the gospel to the gentiles.³⁵ His major purpose was not the elimination of Jesus-preaching, but the inclusion of gentiles without the observance of laws, such as circumcision. Thus, the pre-Christian Paul was destroying the false Christian gentile mission that seemed to him to be a sect of Judaism. Thus the reversal of such a direction of the pre-Christian Paul's life matches the notion of calling to a gentile mission better than a conversion.

On the other hand, recent accounts of the Damascus Christophany have stressed its soteriological aspect.³⁶ It seems to me, however, that, in this case, we can better explain why Paul especially went to Arabia, because his new understanding of soteriology could not immediately and necessarily lead him to the gentile mission. In other words, if it is true that Paul came to know the relation between the law and gospel on the way to Damascus, and he then began his universal mission based on the

³⁵ F. F. Bruce, *New Testament history* (New York: Anchor Books Doubleday & Company, Inc, 1969), p. 215.

³⁶ J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus*, p. 91.

foundation of his new understanding of soteriology, why would he have chosen Arabia? If the aspect of revelation of the gospel in general terms had been stronger than the aspect of calling, Paul would have gone to Jerusalem to meet Jews to inform them of or defend his new understanding before he went to Arabia.

Therefore, we can safely say that, in the wake of meeting Christ, Paul went to Arabia for his gentile mission. This means that Paul's encounter with Christ on the Damascus road is better understood as a calling to his gentile mission than as a conversion, and, since Paul's gospel is characterised by the Damascus road encounter (1:11-12), this also means that Paul's gospel is understood and identified by his Damascus revelation as a calling to the gentile mission (Gal. 1:11-12).³⁷

Why did Paul go to Arabia for his gentile mission after he had received his calling? The answer to this question is important for the understanding of the Damascus road revelation and is also vital in understanding his gospel. I believe that Paul's naming of Arabia does not only increase the fidelity of his action, but also indicates a number of theological points.

³⁷ What I want to stress is that for Paul, the apostle to the gentiles, his calling was God's revelation. Calvinists tend to regard all Christian occupations as God's calling, but an apostle's calling is different from that of ordinary Christians because God reveals his divine plan through the works of the apostles. God's calling of Paul as a unique apostle to the gentiles (for Paul's unique apostleship for the gentiles, see n. 80 on p. 201) reveals God's salvation plan for gentiles.

In this respect, I cannot be satisfied with Stendhal and Dunn who stress the aspect of Paul's calling at the Damascus road encounter and do not accentuate the aspect of revelation of it. For detail, see "The theological implications of Paul's apostleship to the gentiles and his gospel of the uncircumcised in salvation history" on pp. 191ff.

I refer to the relationship between Paul's gentile mission and the Abraham covenant. Hengel³⁸ says that the earliest Christian mission outside the Holy Land was nurtured by eschatological enthusiasm. The end that was expected to come before long prevented the first Christian missionaries from enlarging their missionary horizon. Hengel believes that the answer was simple. As descendants of Ishmael, the Arabs were genealogically and geographically close relatives of Israel even when viewed as *gentiles*, for Abraham was their ancestor. Abraham's promised blessings applied firstly to the closest neighbours of Abraham's physical descendents. The point for citing Hengel's remark is that Arabia was *the closest gentiles* (at least, could be regarded as such) in terms of Abraham's covenant. In other words, when Paul thought in terms of Abraham's covenant, Arabia had the priority to be the receivers among people who could be viewed as gentiles.

If this notion is correct, then Paul might have understood his gentile mission as the outset of the second, or eschatological stage of the fulfilment of Abraham's covenant in which gentiles could join its blessings. This is so, because Abraham's covenant consists of two stages. Its second, or last stage was supposed to be fulfilled by the gentiles' joining in its blessings.³⁹ I suggest, therefore, that Paul's gentile mission was not a gentile mission in the sense that, since Jesus died for human

³⁸ M. Hengel, "The attitude of Paul to the law in the unknown years between Damascus and Antioch", in: J. D. G. Dunn (ed.), *Paul and the Mosaic law* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), pp. 37-38.

³⁹ See "The stage of the gospel in the Abrahamic covenant and apostleship to the gentiles" on pp. 194ff.

beings, then, regardless of their nationality, anyone could join the salvation community, so that it did not matter to Paul to whom and where he went. Paul was actually thinking in terms of the Abrahamic covenant in Galatians (Gal. 3-4). As we have seen, in terms of the Abrahamic covenant, Arabia was a significant place. For Paul, Arabia was the first gentile land where the fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant would begin.

To my mind, the gospel has a historical side. The gospel in the Bible did not come to human beings all of a sudden. The gospel did not appear for the first time when Jesus lived on earth, but came into being during the time of the Old Testament, but it is through the Abrahamic covenant that the gospel has been concretely revealed. In this respect, the fulfilment was nothing but the fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant. At least, we can in no way imagine any other way in which the gospel could be fulfilled without the fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant. Now we should ask: “If Paul’s gentile mission that fulfils the last stage of the Abrahamic covenant was not the gospel for Paul, then what?”.

In conclusion, why Paul concretely names Arabia is *that he wants to characterise the Damascus revelation as his calling to the gentile mission, that is, the final fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant, and then connect his gentile mission with his gospel.*

*(Here ends “The interpretation of the Damascus road
Christophany”)*

We saw that Paul received his gospel through the revelation (1:11-12)

and the revelation was characterised by the preaching of God's Son among gentiles (1:16). Paul's going to Arabia confirms that the Damascus road encounter should be described as a calling. Therefore, Paul intended to identify his gospel with his gentile mission, which was his calling.

On the other hand, Paul's going to Arabia makes us guess that Paul might have understood his gentile mission as the final fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant. This provides us with an important guideline for interpreting Paul's gospel: as fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant, his gospel was his gentile mission as the final fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant.

To summarise, for Paul in Galatians, gospel is not understood in a general sense, i.e., how human beings in general can be saved, but it is specifically related to the question how the Abrahamic covenant can be fulfilled so that gentiles can join in its blessings also. In a nutshell, Paul's gospel was his calling to preach Jesus Christ amongst the gentiles. This shall become clearer as we continue to trace the word 'gospel' in Galatians further.

2.1.5. ἵνα εὐαγγελίζωμαι αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν (1:16)

Although I have already referred to this verse, I want to stress one thing again. Apart from the relationship between this verse and Gal. 1:11-12, Paul connects the concept 'gospel' with the preaching of God's Son to gentiles (which is the gentile mission) directly in this verse.

2.2. Galatians 2

2.2.1. τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ὃ κηρύσσω ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν (2:2)

From the fact that Paul speaks of his ‘gospel’ in the absolute form almost half the times he mentions it, we can see how important the concept of the gospel was in Paul’s eyes.⁴⁰ Paul does not need another noun or an adjective to modify his gospel. When Paul, however, specifically stresses the character of his gospel, he uses modifiers. As we have already seen, except for referring to ‘another gospel’ and ‘the gospel of Christ’, Paul speaks of ‘God’s gospel’, ‘my gospel’ and ‘our gospel’. Among these, ‘God’s gospel’ and ‘the gospel of Christ’ appear often. And sometimes, he modifies ‘gospel’ with words such as glory, peace, salvation and grace.⁴¹ However, we can hardly find any significant difference between these and the concept ‘gospel’ as it is usually understood. We also have some cases in which ‘gospel’ is connected to relative pronouns, that is, ‘the gospel that I preached’ in Gal 1:11 and 1 Cor. 15:1, and ‘another gospel that you did not receive’ in 2 Cor. 11:4. Yet, there actually is no big difference from those cases in which Paul uses the genitive forms, namely ‘my gospel’ and ‘our gospel’.

However, in the expression ‘the gospel that I preach among the gentiles’ Paul unusually and concretely modifies the gospel by ‘among (in) the gentiles’. And as we will see in Gal. 2:7, just as ‘the gospel of the circumcised’ and ‘the gospel of the uncircumcised’ characterise Paul’s

⁴⁰ G. Friedrich, “εὐαγγέλιον”, p. 729.

⁴¹ In the case of grace, it appears in Acts 20:24, as Paul’s own words to the elders of the church in Ephesus.

gospel, so this is a special expression that shows that Paul's gospel has an essential relationship with the uncircumcised, the gentiles. Therefore, I think that Paul does not simply want to inform us about the place where (or people to whom) he preaches the gospel, but, with theological implications, wants to stress the character of his gospel, namely that his gospel essentially relates to the gentiles.

2.2.2. ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ εὐαγγελίου (2:5)

Longenecker⁴² takes this expression as that it refers to the true gospel. Burton⁴³ explains that the truth is included in the gospel, so that it means the truth belongs to the gospel. To my mind, both interpretations are correct.

Yet, what is more important than the relationship between the gospel and the truth, is how the gospel is expressed in this textual context. What Paul concretely did in order for the truth of the gospel to remain in Galatians (2:5), was that he did not yield to the pressure to circumcise the Greek Titus (2:3, 5). We have seen before that the Judaisers in Galatians claimed circumcision as the major marker for showing the identity of God's people. In the Galatian context, Paul's behaviour should be understood as that he declared that even gentiles could be identified as God's true people without law-keeping such as circumcision, in other

⁴² R. N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, p. 53.

⁴³ E. de Witt Burton, *Galatians* (ICC, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1921), p. 86.

words, without becoming Jews.

Therefore, Paul claims that the fact that gentiles remain gentiles as part of God's people (e.g., Titus), means that the true gospel remains (διαμένω) in the Galatian churches (Gal. 2:5). To my mind, this is not different from saying that Paul's true gospel is about the inclusion of the gentiles in God's people.

2.2.3. τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς ἀκροβυστίας, (τὸ εὐαγγέλιον) τῆς περιτομῆς (2:7)

The gospel in verse 7 also appears in the context of the circumcised and the uncircumcised, namely, the Jews and the gentiles. Of course, not only Paul's gospel related to the uncircumcised, but Peter's gospel related to the circumcised are also mentioned. In this case it is reasonable not to connect only Paul's works related to the uncircumcised, to the gospel. But this does not mean that Paul, here, is referring to two gospels as Betz⁴⁴ argues. Nor does Paul want to say that there is an essential difference between the two.⁴⁵ Since Paul uses ἔθνος to indicate the audience of his gospel,⁴⁶ the gospel of the uncircumcised and the gospel

⁴⁴ See n. 17.

⁴⁵ G. Friedrich, "εὐαγγέλιον", pp. 733-734, says that for Paul there is only one gospel, and that τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς ἀκροβυστίας and τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς περιτομῆς (2:7) are not two distinct gospels.

R. N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, p. 260, says that Paul is referring not to the contents of the gospel, but to the audience and the type of mission.

⁴⁶ There are some scholars who understand ἔθνη in a territorial sense rather than a cultural one (e.g., E. de Witt Burton, *Galatians*, pp. 97-98), but Paul contrasts Peter, apostle of *the circumcised* with himself, apostle to *the gentiles* in verse 8 and the circumcised should be understood in a cultural sense. Thus, we cannot take ἔθνη to be territorial. We have to understand the uncircumcised in verse 7 as audience rather than

of the circumcised⁴⁷ should be understood to be an objective genitive that indicates not the contents of the gospel, but the audience of the gospel. Thus, Paul does not accentuate the different contents. Rather, we find just a hint as to the character of the gospel of Paul.

What is important is that, doing so, Paul does not use the expression ‘the gospel that is preached to the uncircumcised’. Rather, he strongly and directly modifies the gospel by using genitives, the ‘gospel of the uncircumcised’ and (the gospel) ‘of the circumcised’. Paul does not want to simply speak about the audience of his gospel, but is strongly and directly, even essentially, characterising his gospel not by its contents but by its audience. In a nutshell, Paul identifies his gospel as the gospel **for the gentiles**. We can put it in this way: Paul’s gospel is characterised by his calling, his gentile mission.

On the other hand, Tolmie⁴⁸ says that in the previous passage Paul stresses the divine origin of his gospel, but in Gal. 2:1–10 Paul changes his rhetorical strategy. In this passage, Paul devotes considerably more attention to the content of his gospel. Furthermore, Tolmie also indicates that Paul’s strategy can be summarised as an attempt to prove the origin

as mission area.

What is more important is that, as we have seen, the issue of Galatians was the cultural identity of God’s people. In the light of the context of Galatians, a cultural reading makes sense more than a territorial reading.

⁴⁷ H. D. Betz, *Galatians*, p. 97, regards the expression ‘the gospel of the uncircumcised’ and ‘the gospel of the circumcised’ as non-Pauline and says that it is because Paul cites a public statement that was made at the Jerusalem council. I admit that there may be a trace of Paul’s citing of a public statement. Even so, Paul does not cite without caution. Paul might have cited it, giving his own weight to it in his Galatian context.

⁴⁸ D. F. Tolmie, *A rhetorical analysis of the Letter to the Galatians* (Bloemfontein: University of the Free State, 2004), p. 73.

and contents of his gospel as acknowledged by the authorities in Jerusalem. Bearing this in mind, what I want to pay attention to, is that what the Jerusalem apostles realised (verse 7a), what they realised about the grace⁴⁹ given to Paul (verse 9) and the purpose of their handshaking, are directly connected to Paul's apostleship to the gentiles. Another important point to remember, is that the final clause of the participle *ιδόντες* in verse 7 follows in verses 7b-8, and that verse 8 is a subordinate clause of verse 7b which is connected by *γάρ*.⁵⁰ In verse 8 Paul indicates why the gospel of the uncircumcised was entrusted to him, namely from the fact that he became the apostle to the gentiles. Thus he closely links his gospel of the uncircumcised to his apostleship to the gentiles again.

Consequently, here, as I explained in the section "The interpretation of the Damascus road Christophany", I cannot miss the fact Paul's gospel is essentially intertwined with his gentile apostleship again.

Furthermore, the reason why Paul does so, is to show that there was a theological agreement between him and the apostles in Jerusalem about his apostleship and the gospel of the uncircumcised.⁵¹ Therefore, it is desperately necessary for understanding Paul's gospel to understand ***the meaning of the theological agreement and Paul's gentile apostleship***

⁴⁹ In fact, Paul's grace itself is Paul's apostleship. See n. 130.

⁵⁰ ἀλλὰ τοῦναντίον ἰδόντες ὅτι πεπίστευμαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς ἀκροβυστίας καθὼς Πέτρος τῇ περιτομῆς ὁ γὰρ ἐνεργήσας Πέτρῳ εἰς ἀποστολὴν τῆς περιτομῆς ἐνήργησεν καὶ ἐμοὶ εἰς τὰ ἔθνη (Gal. 2:7-8)

⁵¹ In this regard, R. N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, p. 55, is correct in stating that the participle *ιδόντες* suggests more theological insight than visual perception.

that he made an effort to defend. Thus, let us turn to investigate this in detail.⁵² As soon as we have finished this, we will resume the exegesis of the word ‘gospel’.

• ***The theological implications of Paul’s apostleship to the gentiles and his gospel for the uncircumcised in salvation history***⁵³

(1) ***Which aspect of his apostleship did Paul defend?***

We have seen that Paul defends his gospel and his apostleship at the same time. It would be more accurate to say that Paul defends them without distinguishing between them. This leads to the question exactly which aspect of his apostleship Paul wanted to defend. It is often argued that Paul claimed that he was not inferior to the other apostles, but that he had equal authority to them, i.e., that he was an apostle just like them, needing nothing more.⁵⁴ However, I have already pointed out that Paul’s

⁵² Because Paul did not give us a direct and complete account for this in Galatians for doing this, I have sometimes to go further. Furthermore, I do not think that I can easily find any systematic statement about this in the Pauline corpus. However, considering the fact that in Galatians Paul defended his gospel by accentuating his apostleship to the gentiles together with the Abrahamic covenant, I think that Paul argued on the basis of the salvation-historical meaning of his apostleship to the gentiles in the context of the Abrahamic covenant. Therefore, the absence of any systematic statement on this in the Pauline corpus needs systemising from my side. In this regard, I think that my way of thinking might give the impression that I tend to think according to a pre-conceived systematic scheme in some sense. Nevertheless, I think that to trace Paul’s basic thinking will serve as a useful basis for the exegesis of Galatians.

⁵³ This section will be the answer to the section “Why only Paul?” on p. 64 also. That is to say, the uniqueness of Paul, as apostle to the gentiles, explains the difference with regard to the recognition of the Christ-Torah antithesis between Paul and other Jewish Christians well. This section will show that Paul who was the apostle of a unique mission in salvation history came to view the Christ-Torah antithesis through his eschatological gospel more clearly than any other Jewish Christian.

⁵⁴ Scholars often use Gal. 1:1 to reconstruct the Galatian situation. Reading the verse reversely, they think that Paul’s opponents blamed Paul for the inferiority of his

defence of his apostleship in Gal. 2 could be better understood as a defence of his special apostleship to the **gentiles** rather than a defence of his equality as an apostle.⁵⁵ I have no doubt that in Galatians, Paul's final purpose is, besides defending the equality of his apostleship, to ultimately argue for the equal divine authority behind his apostleship to the **gentiles**. That is to say, in this process Paul stresses the notion of 'apostleship to the gentiles' more than the notion of 'the equality of his apostleship'.

It is obvious that Paul's opponents spoke ill of his apostleship. One of the matters we have to consider is that, if they asked the Galatians to be circumcised, this is, in essence, not different from arguing that gentiles must become Jews.⁵⁶ If this was the ultimate meaning of Paul's opponents, is it wrong to guess that they might have argued in this way? Gentiles must be Jews in order to be Abraham's true descendants, which means that being a gentile is, kind of, being in a provisional or transient stage before being accepted as one of Abraham's true descendants. So, the missionary works for gentiles should be regarded as being preparatory for the serious and real works for Judaised gentile Christians. ***If so, is an equal and full- authorised apostleship for the gentiles, who are only in the provisional stage, needed?*** According to their argument, the true and ultimate meaning of the apostolic works can be found not from

apostleship that has a human origin. See H. D. Betz, *Galatians*, p. 39.

⁵⁵ See p. 175.

⁵⁶ Paul refers to the Antioch incident, because the incident was essentially the same as the Galatian issue. Take also note that Paul regards Peter's behaviour as that of making gentiles live like Jews (Gal. 2:14).

the works for gentiles, but only from the works for Jews. To summarise, if all gentile Christians had to become Judaised Christians in the end, as Paul's opponents probably argued, for Paul, that meant nothing but a radical denial of the reason for the existence of a gentile apostle.

Although I accept that Paul's opponents did not concretely challenge Paul's apostleship to the *gentiles*, Paul, who, as we have seen, especially connected his apostleship to his gospel, must have regarded the fact that they spoke ill of his authority as a challenge to his *gentile* apostleship.

This can be confirmed by the following. I have said that for Paul, his gospel and his apostleship could not be separated. In his argument Paul connects his gospel gradually to the audience of his mission, that is, to gentiles and to the fact that his gospel allows gentiles as gentiles to become full members of the Abrahamic covenant. The gospel of Christ (1:7) → (the gospel) given to him through the revelation of Christ (1:12) → the revelation is for the purpose of preaching God's Son among *gentiles* (1:16) → the gospel that Paul preaches among *gentiles* (2:2) → the truth of the gospel that, concretely, does not ask of Titus, a *gentile*, to be circumcised (2:3, 5) → the gospel of *the uncircumcised* (2:7) → the truth of the gospel that does not ask of *gentiles* to live like Jews (2:14) → the gospel that all *gentiles* are blessed through Abraham (3:8).

In the meantime, Paul relates his apostleship gradually to the audience, the gentiles. Paul, an apostle sent from Jesus Christ and God (1:1) → Paul, an apostle, set apart in order to preach God's Son among *gentiles* (1:15-16) → Paul, an apostle to *the gentiles* (2:8).

In this regard, the ultimate purpose of Paul's defence of his apostleship is, beyond emphasising the equality of his apostleship to that of the other apostles, the identification of his gospel as a theme in Galatians⁵⁷ through the defence of his *gentile* apostleship.⁵⁸ But, unfortunately, this aspect of Paul's defence of apostleship has not been given much attention. It will further be shown in the session below that this aspect ought to be stressed more.

(2) *The stage of the gospel in the Abrahamic covenant and apostleship to the gentiles - The Abrahamic covenant: the covenant of all the families of the earth -*

Now we have the reason to and the responsibility of theologically investigate why an apostle to the gentiles was needed, and what meaning it had. This is the case when we keep in mind that the apostles of Jerusalem acknowledged not only the equality of Paul's apostleship,

⁵⁷ See p. 168.

⁵⁸ Many scholars take Paul to be a missionary sent not only to gentiles but also to Jews on the base of Paul's mission in Acts and 1 Cor. 9:19-23. For example, W. D. Davis, "Review of Galatians by H. D. Betz", *RSR* 7 (1981), p. 311, says that Paul was an apostle firstly sent to the Jewish community in Greece. J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul the apostle* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), p. 6, says, "The apostle to the Gentiles was apostle to Jew and Gentile alike". On the other hand, J. Munck, *Paul and the salvation of mankind* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1977), pp. 119-206, tried to harmonise Acts and the Pauline corpus, saying that Paul wanted to convert Jews but could only converted gentiles.

I, however, believe that Paul's mission among the Jews ultimately reveals his gentile mission in redemptive history. Paul, in Rom. 9-11, says that it was God's divine plan that the Jews' denial of the gospel would make the gospel go to the gentiles. In other words, his gentile mission was a result of God's eternal predestine revealed through the Jews' denial of the gospel. I think that Paul actually shows this divine plane through his missionary work. In addition to this, it is worth noting that, according to E. P. Sanders, *Law*, p. 182, there is no Pauline letter to Jews, nor is there one Jew mentioned in the Pauline letters who was converted by Paul's missionary work.

but concretely Paul's apostleship to the gentiles as well, and that they ultimately acknowledged Paul's gospel through his apostleship. Thus the theology behind the notion of an apostle to the gentiles, which the apostles of Jerusalem recognised through the *theological*⁵⁹ agreement at Jerusalem (Gal. 2:1-10), is the key to understand the meaning of Paul's gospel.

What was the fundamental reason why apostles had to be divided into two groups? I think that regardless of whether the word gentile should be interpreted in a territorial or a cultural sense,⁶⁰ we have to seriously ask why the apostles admitted a division in their missionary work. Should the division between the apostles be understood to be a sort of disintegration and a support of the Tübingen theory?⁶¹ Betz who, although regarding cultural barriers as one factor, basically says that the aspect of disunity of apostles can also be classified into the same category as the above.⁶² Alternatively, was it, as Schmithals and Longenecker think, a kind of strategy of Paul and the Jerusalem apostles'

⁵⁹ See n. 51. See n. 130 also.

⁶⁰ See n. 46, p. 188.

⁶¹ The theory developed on the base that early Christianity was divided into Jewish Christianity and Gentile Christianity, and that they were opposed to each other. The theory goes back to F. C. Baur. For a good summary, see L. M. McDonald and S. E. Porter, *Early Christianity and its sacred literature* (Massachusetts: Hendrickson Peabody, 2000), pp. 294-295.

⁶² H. D. Betz, *Galatians*, pp. 49, 99-101, claims that the Jerusalem church was led by James, Peter and John (a sort of triarchy) and, in fact, that one of the three parts of the Jerusalem church remained opposed to Paul at the time of the Jerusalem council and that after the Antioch incident, Paul and his opponents came to deny the power of salvation of each other's gospels. The historical compromise caused by the disunion and cultural barriers resulted in the division of missionary area.

mission that they agreed upon in order to escape Jewish persecution?⁶³ I, however, think that none of the above possibilities can give us the fundamental theological reason for this division.⁶⁴

Why does Paul so closely relate his gospel to his gentile mission? This matter has already been considered when we investigated the reason for Paul going to Arabia and will be considered in the exegesis of Gal. 3 below, when we have to pay attention to the fact that Paul in Galatians describes his gospel in terms of the Abrahamic promise (Gal. 3:6-9, 14, 16-18, 29, 4:21-31).⁶⁵ Donaldson⁶⁶ says that Paul, in Galatians,

⁶³ W. Schmithals, *Paul and James* (London: SCM, 1965), pp. 24-25, contends that Stephen who asked the Jews to discard the law, caused the Jewish persecution so that Paul promised at the Jerusalem council to preach only to the gentiles in order to escape any future persecution. R. N. Longenecker, *The ministry and message of Paul* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1971), pp. 30-32, 70, has the same approach. He thinks that the Jerusalem church sent Paul to Tarsus, wanting to avoid more persecution (Acts 9:30). Furthermore, according to him, this is the reason why the Jerusalem council could not publicly accept Paul's policy.

⁶⁴ For instance, R. N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, pp. 56-59, says in his exegesis of Gal. 2:9 that there is no evidence that the Jerusalem apostles acknowledged Paul's apostleship. There is no doubt that this does not affect any consideration of the theological meaning of the apostleship to the gentiles. In fact, he did not even try to explain the theological reason for the division of the apostles in his exegesis of Gal. 2:7-9, saying merely that they adopted a missionary strategy in their theological agreement.

Furthermore, following the southern Galatia theory, R. N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, pp. lxxii-lxxxviii, contends that the events of Gal. 2:1-10 took place before the Jerusalem council in Acts 15. Interpreting the council, he also shows a tendency to explain the Jerusalem council not in a theological way, but in a practical way. R. N. Longenecker, *Message of Paul*, pp. 69-72, asserts that the agreement at the council was a practical decision to prevent future persecution rather than a theological one and that James' regulation was also caused by a practical motive.

⁶⁵ U. Becker, "Gospel", p. 111, says that *εὐαγγέλιον* is linguistically and conceptually closely related to *εὐαγγέλιον*. It is important to note that, when the conflict of law and gospel appears in Pauline corpus, it appears in relationship with this term.

⁶⁶ T. L. Donaldson, "'The gospel that I proclaim among the gentiles' (Gal. 2:2): universalistic or Israel-centred?", in: L. Ann Jervis and Peter Richardson (eds.), *Gospel in Paul: studies on Corinthians, Galatians and Romans for Richard N. Longenecker* (JSNTSS 108, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), pp. 166-193, especially p. 181.

does not preach a universalistic gospel, but an Israel-centred one in a Jewish framework, the framework being that the Galatians were Abraham's offspring. I totally agree with him on this point.⁶⁷ I think that Paul understood his gospel within the framework of the Abrahamic covenant.⁶⁸ Logically, this also means that Paul's understanding of apostleship ought to be understood within this framework.

I think that the fact that the Abrahamic covenant is the covenant of ***all the families of the earth*** (Gen. 12:3) should be noted. The content of Abraham's covenant in Gen. 12:2-3 can be divided into two parts. The one is the blessings for the Jews as the direct result of Abraham himself and the other is the blessings for the gentiles. The former is that Abraham becomes a blessing and a great nation (Gen. 12:2), and the

⁶⁷ Donaldson, *ibid.* pp. 190-193, asserts that Paul thought that it was desirable to become a son of Abraham, but that Paul did not say this explicitly, only implicitly. The implicative way and the ambiguity of the teaching caused the Galatians to misunderstand that the gentiles ought to be circumcised. In fact, this is the point of his article. When Paul tried to remove the ambiguity and dissolve the tension between the universal gospel and the Jewish framework, Paul set up the dialectic that forged his theology.

However, when we consider the fact that Paul maintained that he preached the same gospel from the outset and the fact that being Abraham's sons (the Jewish framework in Galatians) was the main issue in Galatians, it is very likely that Paul ***clearly*** would have thought that the Galatians possessed the Abrahamic sonship.

On the other hand, if there was no issue of circumcision and Paul did not expect such a future issue as circumcision, there must not have been any reason why Paul would have hesitated to clearly say that his gospel is the fulfilment of Abraham's covenant and to describe the result that the Galatians were Abraham's sons. Otherwise, if Paul did expect such future debate, he must have warned against it very clearly and the Galatians would not have been tempted by the Judaisers.

Therefore, I believe the initial gospel of Paul in Galatians was far clearer and plainer than Donaldson argues so that it is more correct to say that Paul's gospel was preached to the Galatians within the context of the Abrahamic covenant framework.

⁶⁸ L. Goppelt, ***Typos, the typological interpretation of the Old Testament in the New*** (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), p. 136, says that for Paul, God's salvation work started from Abraham.

latter is that all the families of the earth are blessed by the blessed Abraham, that is, by the Jews as a great nation (Gen. 12:3).⁶⁹ This can be seen in Gen. 18:18. Firstly, Abraham becomes a great nation and then all nations are blessed by him, that is, by the Jews.

McComiskey⁷⁰ points out the following with regard to the nature of the Abrahamic covenant. The Abrahamic covenant appears in Gen. 12 for the first time. The content consists of six parts. The last part, according to which all nations will be blessed by Abraham (12:3b), says that God's covenantal grace will be enlarged to include ***gentiles and not only Jews*** (Gen. 12:10). McComiskey concludes by saying that God's promise given to the patriarchs reflects God's plan, namely that he will build ***a nation*** for himself. God promises his people prosperity in numbers and a secure home. Furthermore, the covenant confirms that the Israelites will be the mediators of the blessings and the instruments by means of which God's grace will not ***be limited to the Jews, but granted to the gentiles.***

Westermann⁷¹ classifies the contents of the Abrahamic promise in Gen. 12:2-3 into three parts, that is, vv. 2, 3a, and 3b. It is true, however, that it can be largely divided into two parts, because the promise in verse 2 is directed to Abraham's descendants, Israel, and the promise in verse 3 is directed to the gentiles including those who meet Abraham. By the way, Westermann points out that it is a gradual process. The three

⁶⁹ The order in which Paul refers to Jews and gentiles in Rom. 1:16 and 2:9-10 can be understood in the same way.

⁷⁰ T. E. McComiskey, ***The covenants of promise: a theology of the Old Testament covenants*** (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), pp. 15-17, 58.

⁷¹ C. Westermann, ***Genesis 12-36: a commentary*** (London: SPCK, 1986), pp. 149-152.

parts depict a broadening of the circle as a result of the blessing to Abraham. Furthermore, he says that, according to verse 3b, God's action proclaimed in the promise to Abraham is not limited to him and his posterity, but reaches the goal of the covenant **only when** it includes all the families of the earth. In other words, God's blessings proclaimed in the promise to Abraham are not fulfilled **until all the families on the earth are blessed**.⁷² In this regard, although I am not in complete agreement with him in that he modifies the message and kerygma by J, I agree with Wolff⁷³ in that 12:3b contains the **real** message of J and the kerygma of J can be discerned in its precise form **only in** 12:3b.

What I want to stress, is that the Abrahamic covenant can be largely divided into two parts according to the cultural division of the beneficiaries, the Jews and the gentiles. Furthermore, it enlarges and develops from the first stage, the Jewish part, to the second and final stage, the gentile part, so that it reaches its fulfilment at the final stage when the gentiles join in the blessing.⁷⁴ This can also be put as follows: the gospel as the fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant also has its fulfilment in gentiles' joining in Abraham's blessings. It is apparent to me once again that Paul's apostleship to the gentiles is closely connected to his gospel. God, who made the covenant with Abraham, finally began to fulfil **the last stage of his covenant** through the gentile mission of Paul,

⁷² C. Westermann, *A practical commentary on Genesis* trans. David Green (Grands Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), p. 157.

⁷³ Cited in C. Westermann, *Genesis 12- 36*, pp. 149, 151.

⁷⁴ N. T. Wright, *Climax*, p. 150, also thinks that the intrinsic aspect of the Abrahamic covenant is that Israel delivers God's blessing to the gentiles.

the apostle to the gentiles, in the eschatological time that his Son ushered in.⁷⁵ At the same time, through Paul's gentile mission, God added the final touches to the eschatological fulfilment of the gospel as the fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant.⁷⁶

In the light of this, it is quite correct for Sanders⁷⁷ to view Paul as being used for the final stage of God's plan. Sanders⁷⁸ also believes that in Rom. 15:16, Paul placed his own work within a well-known eschatological scheme of Judaism in which, in the last days, God would firstly restore Israel, and then the gentiles would make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to worship the God of Israel. In this scheme, Paul has a fundamental role in the latter part. Paul took himself to be an agent who put the latter part of God's plan into practice. In this aspect, I think we can finally find the theological clue for the reason why God distinguished Paul, the apostle to the gentiles, from the Jewish apostles, and ordained Paul *after the Jewish apostles*.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ J. D. G. Dunn, *Theology*, p. 144, claims that the main thrust of Gal 3 is not only one of land, and offspring but also of the blessing of the gentiles. It is obvious that Paul regarded the third one, the blessing of gentiles, as a fundamental feature of the promise to Abraham.

⁷⁶ I think that if Paul knew Jesus' saying of Matt. 24:14 that "This gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come", he must have been assured that his gentile mission was bringing the final stage of the gospel of the kingdom of God, that is, the end.

⁷⁷ E. P. Sanders, *Paul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 1.

⁷⁸ E. P. Sanders, *ibid.*, p. 3; *Law*, p. 179.

⁷⁹ According to K. Stendahl, *Paul*, pp. 69-70, in fact, the gentile mission was successfully progressing without Paul. We can find a good example in the Antioch church and Apollos' gentile mission. All the writings of the New Testament are directed at congregations containing gentiles. He even goes so far as say that there is not a single writing in the New Testament which is not directed at a congregation which is primarily gentile. Most of the New Testament developed from the Jewish roots of the Jesus movement in ways untouched by Paul's mission and specific understandings, and

What is also important here is that Paul became an apostle after the Jewish apostles and, at the same time, he became the last apostle.⁸⁰ Therefore, in Galatians, I interpret the fact that *Paul explains his gospel in the context of the Abrahamic covenant and connects his gospel to his apostleship to the gentiles*, as that Paul himself understood his gentile mission as the work of the final stage of God's plan with human beings and as the fulfilment of the gospel as the Abrahamic covenant.⁸¹ This interpretation matches our previous interpretation of the reason why Paul went to Arabia.

In this regard, I found that Mason⁸² has the same opinion as I. He

the gospel was well accepted.

In that case, why was Paul needed? I am referring to Paul as apostle to the gentiles. I believe, that although a lot of people dedicated themselves to the gentile mission, Paul was ordained as the unique gentile apostle in order to *uniquely and eschatologically* reveal God fulfilling his covenant to Abraham in the salvation history.

In addition, this scheme agrees with the scheme in Gal. 3:12 that Jesus' redemptive work firstly concentrates on the Jews before the gentiles.

⁸⁰ It should be noted that, irregardless of whether or not Paul was in fact the last apostle, Paul surely had the self-consciousness that he was the last apostle. In 1 Cor. 15:7-11, Paul compared himself with the other apostles. In this context, the words 'all the apostles' (v. 7) and '*last* of all' (v. 8) make us conclude that Paul understood, identified, and introduced himself as the last apostle of all the apostles. The fact that Paul is the apostle ordained after the Jewish apostles, that is the last apostle implies that, in comparison with the other apostles' gospel of the circumcised, Paul's gospel of the uncircumcised is revealed at the last stage of the progress of God's revelation.

Furthermore, Paul, the last apostle, is seen as the *unique* apostle for the gentiles as well. S. Mason, "Gospel", p. 279, says that Paul considers himself as the one apostle who has been charged with the Gentile mission. On the other hand, Acts. 14:4 and 14 calls Barnabas an apostle. But he was regarded as a missionary or a commissioner in a general sense so that his commission was different from Paul's that was specially and directly from Christ. See F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of the Acts* (NIC, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), n. 6 on p. 287.

⁸¹ On the other hand, J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus*, p. 198, correctly claims that Jewish observance disregarded the coming of the final stage in which a more radical identity marker, Abraham's faith, came. But as far as I could see, he does not stress it so much as to say that for Paul, Paul's gentile mission itself was the gospel.

⁸² S. Mason, "Gospel", p. 279.

maintains that in Gal. 2:7–9, Paul regards himself as the unique apostle ordained for the gentile mission in comparison with the other apostles, and, that in this context, Paul connects his gospel only to his gentile mission (Gal. 2:5, and 7). That is to say, Paul is different from the other apostles because of his gentile mission. Besides that, he says that if *euangelion* has a special meaning for Paul's gentile mission, it would make sense that Paul portrays himself in Rom. 1:1 as its special representative among the apostles. To summarise his point, Paul was the unique apostle because of his gospel, that is, his gentile mission.⁸³

I pointed out that the Abrahamic covenant can be divided into two parts according to its *two cultural groups of beneficiaries*. Therefore, the cultural distinction is significant for the Abrahamic covenant. Furthermore, the national distinction has significance for the gentile mission itself. Paul actually carried out his gentile mission according to nations. On the one hand, Paul, in fact, did not preach to all the gentile nations.⁸⁴ Paul and other missionaries could not go to every city and village. All gentiles in Greece and Asia Minor did not hear the gospel. If so, why did Paul want to go to Spain? I think that the most reasonable answer would be that Paul must have regarded Spain as the last mission area of Japheth's descendents according to the list of races in Gen. 10

⁸³ S. Mason, *ibid.*, pp. 277–282, contends that this is the case in Romans also and concludes that *euangelion*-language has special significance for Paul and his gentile mission.

⁸⁴ E. P. Sanders, *Law*, p. 275.

and the areas related to it.⁸⁵ Here again, it is clear that Paul understood his gentile mission as being carried out according to *nations* as *fulfilling* the Abrahamic covenant which states that *all the nations* will be blessed through Abraham.⁸⁶

Therefore, for Paul, the gospel was the fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant. We have already seen that the Abrahamic covenant has its final fulfilment in the inclusion of all nations, namely the gentiles. In this regard, if the gentiles could not partake of the Abrahamic blessing, the Abrahamic covenant as a covenant for all nations could not be fulfilled.⁸⁷ The Abrahamic covenant does not say that the gentiles can partake of the Abrahamic blessing only after they are Judaized. If gentiles as gentiles cannot be beneficiaries of the Abrahamic covenant, in other words, if they must be Jews, this implies the loss of the final stage of the covenant, it would mean the loss of its fulfilment. To Paul, the unique apostle for the gentiles, it would mean the loss of his gospel for the uncircumcised.

For Paul, the difference of the audience of the gospel was not merely the dissimilarity of the audience. In terms of the Abrahamic covenant, the difference of the audience meant the progress of the gospel. We perceive the progress of the fulfilment of the Abrahamic

⁸⁵ J. D. G. Dunn, *Theology*, p. 531.

⁸⁶ This is how I also understand the fact that Paul connects his apostolate and gospel to all gentiles, all nations, in the beginning and the end of Romans (1:5 and 16:26).

⁸⁷ In this regard, it is worthy to note that the Abrahamic covenant was the *Abrahamic* covenant. If Abraham could not be Abraham, the father of a multitude of *nations* (Gen. 17:5), in other words, if gentiles as gentiles could not be Abraham's children, the *Abrahamic* covenant could not be fulfilled as a covenant for *all nations*.

covenant when we consider Peter and Paul.⁸⁸ In this regard, the fact that the gospel was preached to the gentiles itself was, for Paul, (the fulfilment of) the gospel. In other words, the progress in salvation history in which the gentiles joined in Abraham's blessings, was the gospel. Here, I want to cite Gerhard Friedrich⁸⁹ who says that the gospel does not merely bear witness to salvation history. It is itself salvation history. If we can claim that, I believe that it could also be said that in terms of the redemptive-historical character of the last and unique apostle to the gentiles, the gentile mission itself was Paul's gospel.

(3) *The maintenance of the distinction between gentiles and Jews in the Abrahamic covenant - Rom. 11* -

I pointed out that the fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant was divided into two stages according to the beneficiaries, and the stage of gentiles' partaking of the blessings was the last stage of God's plan for mankind revealed by the Abrahamic covenant. If I am correct, I believe that this understanding can provide a reason why the apostles had to be divided in terms of their audiences and why Paul had to be **added** as an apostle after the replacement of Judas (Acts 1:26). Paul's calling as the apostle to the gentiles might be seen as a sort of signal in the sense that his calling indicated that the final stage of God's salvation works revealed by

⁸⁸ I think it is better to stress again that the progress of salvation history is not necessarily the essential distinction. Peter's vision in Acts 10 is not a calling to gentile mission but it clearly says that Peter's gospel is the same one as Paul's gentile gospel.

⁸⁹ G. Friedrich, "εὐαγγέλιον", p. 731.

the Abraham covenant, namely the stage of gentiles' partaking of the Abrahamic covenant, began to be fulfilled by his *apostolic* gentile mission. In the light of this, we saw that Sanders⁹⁰ was correct in arguing that Paul was used for the final stage of God's plan and he took himself to be an agent who put the latter part (gentiles' pilgrimage to Jerusalem) of God's plan into practice. Here, we can fully understand why Paul tried to defend his gentile mission together with his gospel.

On the basis of such an understanding, we, now, can and must consider the matter of 'the maintenance of the distinction between the gentiles and the Jews in the Abrahamic covenant' as the last part of the section "The theological implications of Paul's apostleship to the gentiles and his gospel of the uncircumcised in salvation history". And in fact this is one of the most important points in the understanding of Paul's gospel.

Does the distinction between gentiles and Jews not have any significance in the gospel? The major view on this in the second century was that Israel as a nation had lost its importance and, instead, that the church completely replaced it.⁹¹ The Christian Paul, however, did not give up being a Jew. He lived as a Jew (1 Cor. 9:20). Paul's being beaten in 2 Cor. 11:24 shows that he did not deny his Jewishness. If he had wanted to, he could have completely left Jewish society and could have escaped from the persecution.⁹² Paul did not ask those who wanted to be

⁹⁰ See p. 200.

⁹¹ D. E. Holwerda, *Jesus and Israel: one covenant or two?* (Grands Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), p. 150.

⁹² E. P. Sanders, *Law*, p. 192.

Christians to stop observing the law. The early Christians did not think that Christianity was a new religion, but they thought that Christianity was the climax of Judaism. And the first group in Jerusalem kept the law. Dunn⁹³ suggests that Acts 10:14 and 11:3 are proof of this. In Pauline theology, the aspects of the law that must not be accepted as essential to membership in the church, for example, circumcision, the observance of days and foods, were optional. In principle, the Jews who joined the Christian movement, did not give up anything.⁹⁴ In fact, it is significant that the meeting in Gal. 2:1-10 comes up within the context of the distinction between gentiles and Jews.

Davis⁹⁵ is representative of scholars who think that Israel would remain identifiably Israel until the end of times. According to him, it is not true that Israel as a whole disobeyed the Lord so that it was replaced by the gentile believers. Instead, the remnants of Israel still remained the core of the people, the church. That is to say, the church was still

⁹³ J. D. G. Dunn, *Partings*, p. 117. He gives us more reasons why Christianity was not regarded as a new religion. See p. 118.

⁹⁴ E. P. Sanders, *Law*, pp. 176-177. However, Sanders, *ibid.*, p. 178, maintains that the church is the third race, because the church was not established by admitting gentiles to Israel according to the flesh, but by admitting all, whether Jew or Greek, into the body of Christ by faith in Him. But although Sanders stresses the church as a third entity, Sanders, *ibid.*, pp. 192-198, still explains Rom. 11 on the basis of the racial distinction of Israel to the end.

L. Goppelt, *Typos*, p. 141, also refers to the new mankind. The church does not consist of Jews or those who converted into Judaism. The church is a newly created mankind, Abraham's children who miraculously came into being.

However, I believe that we have to remember that the Jews did not need to stop being Jews, nor the gentiles being gentiles before they established Christ's body. The aspect that I want to stress is that, first of all, gentiles as gentiles must enter into Christ body. That is the only way in which the Abrahamic covenant could be fulfilled as the covenant of all nations

⁹⁵ W. D. Davis, "Paul and the people of Israel", *NTS* 24 (1977), p. 34.

Jewish.⁹⁶ The time would come when all Jewish people would be saved. It is implied that the continued existence of the Jewish people as an ethnic or national entity was finally confirmed within the context of a cosmic hope.⁹⁷ To summarise Davis' idea: Paul shared the eschatology of Philo and the Palestinian sages so that he thought that the unity in Christ did not undo the ethnic differences.⁹⁸

The reason why I cited these authors is that, although they do not give much attention to the Abrahamic covenant, they are very interested in the importance of the continuance of Israel as a nation. If Paul understood his gospel in terms of the Abrahamic covenant and if he viewed his gentile mission as fulfilling the covenant and if the Abraham covenant had two stages of its fulfilment in terms of a cultural difference, would it not have been natural for him to understand that the Jews and the gentiles would continue to exist respectively, retaining their cultural distinction up to the end of the fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant, the gospel? Of course, there must not be any difference between the Jews and gentiles in the condition of being the body of Christ. However, when it is not an issue, ethnic Israel has an important role in Pauline theology. What is needed to understand Paul's interest of gentile mission, is an Israel-centred framework.⁹⁹

However, I do not agree with Davis, Donaldson, and Sanders,

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁹⁹ T. L. Donaldson, "Paul's gentile mission", pp. 76-77.

especially because Davis and Sanders argue that Paul gave up the traditional Jewish eschatological order. Explaining Rom. 11:25–32, Davis¹⁰⁰ claims that Paul certainly discarded the Jewish eschatological expectations that the Jews would firstly welcome the Messiah and then gentiles would do so. On this point, Donaldson, although he is more radical, generally agrees with Sanders. Sanders¹⁰¹ argues that the traditional restoration did not happen so that Paul changed the traditional scheme.¹⁰² Sanders¹⁰³ evaluates it as Paul’s original contribution and his real worth. However, the shortcomings are suggested by the explanation itself. When explaining Rom. 7 and 9–11, Sanders¹⁰⁴ argues that we cannot rely on the precise wording of his proof-text to establish Paul’s own view and that because Paul agonised so much, he was illogical. Accordingly, although he argued confidently, we cannot expect perfect logical consistency from him.

In my eyes, however, Sanders makes a severe mistake in his understanding of the eschatological order. Although Sanders thinks that Paul changed the eschatological scheme, because he had seen the dilemma between traditional eschatology and the existence of his gentile

¹⁰⁰ W. D. Davis, “Israel”, p. 28.

¹⁰¹ E. P. Sanders, *Law*, p. 184.

¹⁰² On this point, Donaldson, although he is more radical, generally agrees with Sanders. While Sanders puts weight on the reversal of the order of the traditional eschatology, Donaldson, “Paul’s gentile mission”, p. 78, stresses the consequence. That is to say, he stresses that the second, gentile mission took place because of the first, the restoration of Israel. Of course, on this point, he is correct. However, he thinks that the main matter is that although the gentile mission should be based on Israel’s restoration, Paul bases his gentile mission on Israel’s falling down.

¹⁰³ E. P. Sanders, *Paul*, p. 123.

¹⁰⁴ E. P. Sanders, *ibid.*, pp. 127–128; *Law*, pp. 190, 199.

mission, the dilemma and the lack of logic were not caused by Paul, but by Sanders. Israel was restored by Jesus' resurrection and the order was not changed.

Firstly, I believe that although the majority of Israel denied Christ, Israel was truly and fully restored through the renewal of the Abrahamic covenant by Christ's death on the cross. Sanders¹⁰⁵ himself, correctly said that the number of Israelites who were saved was not Paul's concern. Although he did not apply this to his understanding of the order of Paul's eschatology, I agree with his remark. I believe that it is not important how many Israelites came back at the first return led by Ezra. The return clearly and surely indicated that Israel's restoration had truly begun.¹⁰⁶

Secondly, the exegesis of Rom. 11 does not support Sanders and Davis. The prepositional phrase καὶ οὕτως of verse 26 does not read καὶ τότε. Therefore, it does not stress the chronological order, but the way of redemption. It must be interpreted as 'in the working out of the principle stated' or as 'after this manner'.¹⁰⁷ Thus, it is impossible to build the scheme that, after the restoration of the gentiles, Israel would come back to God. This is why, although Vos¹⁰⁸ maintains that there will be an eschatological massive repentance of Israel, he does not

¹⁰⁵ E. P. Sanders, *Paul*, p. 124.

¹⁰⁶ N. T. Wright, *Climax*, pp. 141, 146, 150-151, 196, 245, also thinks that Israel was personalised in Christ and she was recovered through Christ's resurrection. For Israel's recovery by the crucifixion, see also B. W. Longenecker, *Triumph*, pp. 89-95.

¹⁰⁷ G. Vos, *The Pauline eschatology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), p. 98

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 87-89. Especially, see n. 16.

rely on the phrase in verse 26, but on the fact that in verse 15 Paul relates Israel's restoration to the resurrection of the dead.

Furthermore, let us pay attention to the tense used in 11:5, 30 and 31. The present tense of these verses indicates that the restoration of Israel has already started. There may be some who object that there is a textual problem in verse 31. But concerning the textual problem in verse 31, when we consider the structure of verses 30 and 31, it is almost certain that $\nu\hat{\nu}\nu$ was originally included in this verse.¹⁰⁹ But, although Davis refers to verses 5 and 30, he never discusses verse 31. Therefore, I believe that the evidence of the text does not stress an event in the future, but the way in which Israel's restoration had already taken place during Paul's time.¹¹⁰

On the other hand, some want to connect Israel's future conversion to Jesus' second coming.¹¹¹ In this case, such a view implies that Israel will come to Jesus not because of the Church's preaching of the gospel in history, but because of Jesus Himself, at the time of his second coming.¹¹² Sanders¹¹³ can be included in this group. He asserts that,

¹⁰⁹ C. E. B. Cranfield, *Romans*, pp. 582-586, contends that verses 30 and 31 are in balance in six aspects. Each verse consists of two sentences and three aspects are allotted to each sentence. I agree with his analysis. This structure of verses 30 and 31 definitely allows us to be sure that the word 'now' was originally included in this verse.

D. E. Holwerda, *Jesus and Israel*, p. 173, n. 32, also believes that contemporary critics tend to include the word in the original text.

¹¹⁰ G. C. Berkouwer, *The return of Christ*, trans. James Van Oosterom (Grands Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), p. 347, points out that Paul did not try to account for future events, rather he was concerned about contemporary Israel.

¹¹¹ For instance, E. Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* (London: SCM, 1980), p. 314.

¹¹² D. E. Holwerda, *Jesus and Israel*, p. 172.

¹¹³ E. P. Sanders, *Law*, pp. 189-190, 192-198.

because the citations after Rom. 11:26 are cited regardless of the gentile mission, and the deliverer's coming mentioned in v. 26 indicates the time of Jesus' second coming, it should be understood as referring to a time in the future after the period of apostles' mission.

However, it is on this very point that Sanders' interpretation is wrong. First of all, considering the fact that $\tau\upsilon\acute{\nu}\alpha\varsigma$ in Rom. 11:14 can be naturally understood as a not inconsiderable number,¹¹⁴ I doubt that Israel's future coming to God on a large scale was needed. What is more important is that Paul's stress on the interdependence, or reciprocal relationship, of the salvation of Jews and the gentiles does not allow for such an interpretation (Rom. 11:11, 14, 19, 25). Israel's disobedience causes the salvation of the gentiles, and the salvation of the gentiles causes Israel's envy. In this way, the salvation of the gentiles and the Jews affect each other. Therefore, the salvation of either one of two cannot be only for the one.¹¹⁵

In addition to this, the view that Rom. 11:25ff. says that Israel will be saved regardless of faith in Jesus, is in agreement with the two-covenant

¹¹⁴ J. Munck, *Christ and Israel: an interpretation of Romans 9- 11* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), pp. 123-124, correctly says that $\tau\upsilon\acute{\nu}\alpha\varsigma$ does not necessarily mean a small number, but an indefinite number which the context must further define, that is, a not inconsiderable number. He contends that another period will come when Israel as a whole will be saved after the period in which the not inconsiderable number of Israelites were won for Jesus.

¹¹⁵ In this regard, it is correct that John H. Stek, *To the first: an exegetical examination of a New Testament theme* (Grands Rapids: Board of Home Mission of the Christian Reformed Church, 1973), p. 252, thinks that there will not be a last time when innumerable Israelites will come to God, because of the interdependence. For the detail of interdependence, see H. Ridderbos, *Paul*, pp. 354-361.

theory.¹¹⁶ This view also has the same basis as Donaldson's view of the 'righteous gentiles'.¹¹⁷ However, decisively, this line of thought must be rejected in the light of v. 23 which says that if Israel does not remain unfaithful, she will be grafted onto a good olive tree. The condition to be grafted onto a good olive tree is the same as that of the gentiles, namely faith in Jesus.

Thus, I believe that the view that Israel on large will come to God at the end in a very special way ought to be rejected once again.

Nevertheless, I have no doubt that in regard to the context,¹¹⁸ πᾶς Ἰσραήλ is ethnic Israel.¹¹⁹ On the other hand, some¹²⁰ consider all Israel to be the remnants of Christ's first coming to the second coming. Holwerda¹²¹ criticises this view for destroying Paul's dynamics, asserting that Rom. 11:25 implies that Israel's disobedience will be illuminated one day, because Paul refers to the interdependence of the gentiles and the Jews. Therefore, he thinks that it means more than the promise of the continual existence of the remnants.

I do not, however, think that the mutual relationship between Jews and gentiles necessarily implies removal of Israel's stubbornness, or

¹¹⁶ See L. Gaston, *Paul and the Torah* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987), who argues that for Paul the Torah continued to function as a legitimate and sufficient means for the righteousness of the Jews. However, the significance of Christ was that has made possible a parallel and distinct means of righteousness for gentiles.

¹¹⁷ T. L. Donaldson, "Paul's gentile mission", pp. 79-80.

¹¹⁸ Interpreting Rom. 11:11-12 in a collective sense, G. Vos, *Eschatology*, p. 89, says that the character of these two verses is that they use ethnic terms.

¹¹⁹ D. E. Holwerda, *Jesus and Israel*, pp. 169-170; J. D. G. Dunn, *Theology*, p. 527.

¹²⁰ W. Hendriksen, *Israel in prophecy* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1974), pp. 32-57; A. A. Hoekema, *The Bible and the future* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1979), p. 145.

¹²¹ D. E. Holwerda, *Jesus and Israel*, p. 170.

disobedience. Rather, the key to understanding the verse lies in the word ‘all’. It is thought that τὸ πλήρωμα αὐτῶν (the fullness of them – Israel, Rom. 11:12) should be understood in the same line as τὸ πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν (Rom. 11:25). In connection with this, all Israel also ought to be understood as the fullness of Israel.¹²² Furthermore, all Israel should be interpreted together with τοὺς πάντας (all men) in 11:32 and τὰ πάντα (all things) in 11:36.¹²³ We know that neither all gentiles nor an absolute majority of gentiles will be saved and that neither all human beings nor an absolute majority of human beings will be redeemed. Likewise, ‘all Israel’ does not mean all Israel nor an absolute majority of Israel. As the full number of gentiles, that is, all gentiles whom God wants to be saved, come in, so the full number of gentiles, that is, all Israel whom God wants to be saved, come in. Israel already began to come in. The full number of Israel has been filled and will be filled up to the end, not in a special way after the completion of gentile mission, but in the same way as before.

Nevertheless, because the fullness of both Israel and the gentiles have their roots in the blessing of the Jews, the covenantal order is maintained. Davis¹²⁴ explains this well. He says that the olive tree imagery illustrates Paul’s view well that gentiles are grafted onto a good olive tree, because the Jews accepted the gospel. Besides, he correctly

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 169; E. P. Sanders, *Law*, p. 196.

¹²³ E. P. Sanders, *Paul*, pp. 125–126.

¹²⁴ W. D. Davis, “The people of Israel”, pp. 29–34.

points out, that although the gentiles become God's people through Christ and share the benefits that come from the root, this does not remove the Jews' privilege in being the root. For Paul, the existence and continuance of Israel up to the limit of the historical process is grounded in the mysterious divine purpose and is, as such, a source of ultimate blessing.

It is important to note that the notion that the fulfilment of the blessing of the Abrahamic covenant gradually progresses and broadens its beneficiaries to the gentiles, remains unchanged in Romans as well. In other words, the reverse order, from gentiles to Jews, does not occur. Paul's remarks about the root of a good olive tree make it impossible. The order from Jews to gentiles existed at Paul's time and will remain unchanged until the end of the world.

According to this structure, the way in which a hardening has come upon part of Israel until the full number of the Gentiles come in (Rom. 11:25), also remains unchanged. Christ who came to his people was abandoned by his people. Preaching Jesus, Paul went to the synagogues first. However, Paul, like Jesus, was also rejected by the Jews. Paul's practice of mission shows us that the gospel was rejected by the Jews and because of this, the gospel could be preached to gentiles. Therefore, in my mind, the fact that Paul firstly went to synagogues does not necessarily support Beker's view¹²⁵ that Paul was an apostle for the Jews and the gentiles. 'Synagogues → rejection → market places' is the pattern of Acts. In Acts this is purposely recorded.¹²⁶ Thus

¹²⁵ J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul the apostle* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), p. 6.

¹²⁶ K. Stendahl, *Paul*, p. 29.

Paul reveals the redemptive historical place of his gospel in the structure 'none of the Jews → gentiles' accepting' the gospel.

What I want to make clear here, is that since the beginning of Israel's restoration, gentiles had been included in the blessing, but at the same time the restoration of Israel had been continuing. The broadening of the effect of Abraham's blessing did not exclude the inner circle, that is, Israel, but Israel was included as part of the same set. The broadening of the effect of the blessing, which started with the Jews, continued, including the gentiles. In this regard, the apostle Paul, himself, as a Jew on behalf of his fellow Jews, functioned as a source of blessings by preaching the gospel through which the gentiles could join in the blessings as well. In this regard, I believe that we can also properly understand why the unique gentile apostle was chosen not among the gentiles but among Jews.

To summarise, ethnic Israel and the gentiles must respectively exist during the time of the Church. Although Abraham's blessing flows from the root of the good olive tree, Israel, to the gentiles, Israel and the gentiles affect each other in terms of the mission due to their interdependence. And in this way, the fullness of Israel and the gentiles has been filled up and will be filling up until Jesus, our Lord's second coming.¹²⁷ In this respect, it was Paul's gentile mission that was the way to complete the gentiles' salvation and the final

¹²⁷ Israel as a nation got independence after the Holocaust. I do not believe that this makes ethnic Israel's future massive conversion more likely. Rather, I think that it confirms that in terms of Abraham's covenant, Israel must exist as Israel just as the gentiles must exist as gentiles up to the end of the world. Israel as Israel must exist, joining in Abraham's blessing, just as gentiles as gentiles exist, joining in the blessing too.

salvation of Israel that started by the acceptance of the gospel by the remnant of Israel at the same time. Therefore, the argument that the absolute majority of ethnic Israel would convert to God in the future in a very special way after the completion of the gentile mission, in other words, that the gospel will be directed back to Jews from the gentiles, cannot be proved from the text.¹²⁸

Therefore, I think that Paul thought that the fulfilment of the salvation of ‘Jews and gentiles’ was continued through *his gentile mission*, as the fulfilment of the gospel, in the interdependence of Jews and gentiles. And this exactly matches the essence of the Abraham covenant. Therefore, Paul’s *gentile mission* is 1) *the eschatological gospel* as the final fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant and 2) *the universal gospel* not only for gentiles but also for Jews in a mutual dependence of mission of gentiles and Jews.¹²⁹ This redemptive –historical plan revealed through the last apostle to the gentiles, the Jew, Paul, was God’s eschatological

¹²⁸ I think that it is useful to consider here Paul’s gentile mission in association with the scheme of Israel’s restoration and the joining of the gentiles. I do not think that Israel was restored through the work of Jesus, not because Israel was personalised in Jesus, but because Israel’s remnant accepted the gospel. Nevertheless, I welcome Wright’s view, *Climax* pp. 150–151, 196, that the origin of Paul’s gentile mission is an eschatological pilgrimage. Firstly, it is directly based on the Old Testament, and the order of eschatological pilgrimage, that is, the gentiles’ joining in after Israel’s restoration, corresponds to the order of the extension of Abraham’s blessing.

On the other hand, the only reason why Donaldson, “Paul’s gentile mission”, pp. 78–79, changed his mind from eschatological pilgrimage to gentile proselytism was the restoration of Israel. He asserts that Israel’s recovery must be presupposed, but it did not happen. Rather, he thinks that Israel’s rejection caused the salvation of the gentiles. However, this must be rejected, because as I have already said in n. 147 on p. 134, Israel’s recovery was accomplished by the resurrection of Jesus, the Messiah, who came for the lost of Israel (Matt. 15:24). God’s history cannot be evaluated in terms of numbers. It is the case especially in Paul’s letters who said that not all who are descended from Israel, belong to Israel (Rom. 9:6).

¹²⁹ For the view that Paul’s gospel to the gentiles can be regarded as the eschatological gospel covering all Jews, see H. Ridderbos, *Paul*, pp. 357–361.

plan so that its scheme would continue to the end of the world. The gentile mission of Paul is the practical proclamation of the scheme.

In this regard, that the apostles acknowledged τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς ἀκροβυστίας and (τὸ εὐαγγέλιον) τῆς περιτομῆς (Gal. 2:7) and that the Jerusalem apostles gave Paul the right hand of fellowship (v. 9), shows that the apostles theologically, apostolically and ecclesiastically proclaimed God's redemptive plan revealed by the Abrahamic covenant. The apostles revealed *the progress of the gospel* in salvation history, which was revealed by the works they did, as apostles, by admitting *their apostleships* (gentile apostleship and Jewish apostleship) and *their missions*.¹³⁰

¹³⁰ Concerning the apostles' admitting Paul's apostleship, already R. Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic tradition*, trans. John Marsh (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), p. 289, did not think that the Jerusalem apostles admitted Paul's apostleship. H. D. Betz, *Galatians*, p. 98, and R. N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, p. 56, are of the same mind.

I, however, am convinced that the expression 'the grace that was given to me (Paul)' of Gal. 2:9 is Paul's unique expression and is always associated with Paul's apostleship. First of all, the use of the article designates the grace of Gal. 1:15. And in Paul's case, whenever grace is modified by a relative clause 'that is given to me' (Rom. 12:3, 1 Cor. 3:10, 15:10, Eph. 3:2, 7), or by the prepositional phrase 'to me' (Eph. 3:8), 'grace' always means Paul's apostolic gift (Rom. 12:3 associates it with the gift and church office in 4-8), apostolic works, apostleship, or the revelation (the grace of Eph. 3 is in the context of gentile apostleship of Eph. 3:1-8). The grace of 2 Cor. 12:9 also means the revelation of v. 7, and Paul relates it to his apostleship (v. 11-12).

Furthermore, I think that the meeting of Gal. 2:1-10 was the famine visit of Acts 11 (see the introduction of R. N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, for detail). But let alone its identification. It is sure that the meeting was not purely private but public, at the least, apostolic. If we accept Betz's argument, *Galatians* p. 97, that the use of the name Peter and the non-Pauline concept of two gospels (for gentiles and Jews) of Gal. 2:7 indicates that Paul is citing a sort of public document, then the publicity of the meeting is more clear.

Therefore, although the meeting of Gal. 2:1-10 was not the Jerusalem council, the fact that the apostles respectively admitted their apostleships for Jews and gentiles and their apostolic works, must be regarded as an ecclesiastical agreement. Especially remembering what we have already seen, namely, that for Paul, his apostleship and gospel could not be separated, just as two sides of a coin cannot be separated, and considering that the Jerusalem apostles' acknowledgment of Paul's apostleship is

Therefore, the difference between Paul and the other apostles was not on the same level as that between other apostles. For Paul, not as an apostle but as the last apostle in the progress of salvation history, his apostolic works, namely, his making the gentiles join in Abraham's blessings, was the eschatological gospel itself.¹³¹ In this respect, the attack against Paul's gentile apostleship was an attack of his gospel itself.¹³²

(Here ends "The theological implication of Paul's gentile apostleship and his gospel of the uncircumcised in salvation history".)

Now, with this considered, we will return to the section "τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς ἀκροβυστίας, (τὸ εὐαγγέλιον) τῆς περιτομῆς". We, now, properly understand why Jews as Jews and gentiles as gentiles had to accept the gospel. When gentiles became Jews, in other words, when

ultimately the acknowledgement of his gospel, we have to view this meeting as the apostolic and ecclesiastical proclamation of God's redemptive plan revealed by Paul's gentile apostleship and his gentile mission. In other words, by acknowledging Paul's gentile apostleship, the other apostles declared that God's redemptive plan had entered into the last phase in which the last phase of God's promise given through Abraham began to be fulfilled and they admitted the character of Paul's eschatological gospel.

Thus, it is a pity that scholars regard the theological agreement as a strategy of mission or a mutual consent to solve an internal conflict (see p. 195). If the other apostles admitted that Paul's gentile apostleship was from God, they also must have admitted that Paul's gentile mission was not from a human consent but from the divine plan. This is confirmed by the Antioch incident that follows right after 2:7-9. Peter's action (regarded as a sort of violation of the apostolic admission of 2:7-9) was to make gentiles live as Jews (v. 14). This reversely shows that the apostolic meeting of vv. 7-9 declared that Jews as Jews and gentiles as gentiles can join in the Abraham's blessings.

The reason why Paul cited this apostolic acknowledgment of his gentile apostleship is to show that his gentile gospel was also accepted by apostles.

¹³¹ See the good study of S. Mason, "Gospel", pp. 283-285. He makes it clear by his independent exegesis that Paul's gospel in Romans and Galatians means his gentile mission.

¹³² U. Becker, "Gospel", p. 112.

gentiles disappeared in the Abrahamic covenant, the covenant lost its climax, purpose and final fulfilment. God in his wisdom established the way in which gentiles could experience Abraham's blessing, not by judaising gentiles but by including gentiles as gentiles into the Abrahamic covenant, in a way in which gentiles and Jews affected each other's mission by their interdependence. Thus, Paul's opponents were against God's counsel by judaising the gentiles. In light of this redemptive-historical view, Paul in Galatians, as the unique apostle to the gentiles, was presenting and protecting his gospel, as God's salvation counsel revealed his gentile mission. I believe that only in this context can we properly understand the full meaning of the gospel to the circumcision and the gospel to the uncircumcision. To reiterate, if the gentiles could not become part of the covenant as gentiles, it would mean the loss of its fulfilment. To Paul, it would mean the loss of his gospel for the gentiles. Such a gospel would be 'another gospel'.¹³³

¹³³ In fact, '*including gentiles in the Jew-gentiles context*' was characteristic of Paul's work from the beginning. The Paul-introductory account in Acts presents Paul in the context of the problem that the gospel could not go beyond the ethnical boundary of the Jews. The Christians who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word **to none except Jews** (Acts 11:19). But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus (Acts 11:26). And in Antioch the disciples were **for the first time** called **Christians** (Acts 11:26).

The issues that draw our attention in Acts 11:26 are the words 'for the first time (πρώτον)' and 'Christians'. D. Wenham, *Paul and Jesus: the true story* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmann, 2002), p. 29, says that the title Christians was used by authorities in order to distinguish Jewish Christians from disciples, or that the opponents gave the slanderous nickname to believers. The context suggests, however, that calling believers Christians was not a simple discernment, nor a sort of calumny at all, but was a positive statement as a result of a positive settlement. The word πρώτον shows that it is a positive word. It implies that being called Christians was what had been expected but delayed. The fact

To my mind it is a pity that this has not been realised in the many discussions of Pauline theology. Seifrid¹³⁴ blames the New Perspective for its limited interpretation, maintaining that when justification by faith was the main theme, the issues were neither nationalism nor ethnicity, but God's vindication, the judgment of his opponents, and the establishment of the right order in the new world. However, if the findings of this study are correct, we should say that ***for Paul, the issue of the inclusion of the gentiles in the Abrahamic covenant could in no sense be regarded as a problem of nationalism or ethnicity, but it had to be viewed as a vital issue, namely, the issue of the fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant, on which the restoration of the whole universe, as the fulfilment of the New Covenant depended.***¹³⁵ The restoration of the universe could not precede the gentiles' restoration, that is, their joining

that believers were called Christians informs us that, after Paul's work, the problem that the gospel could not proceed beyond the ethnic barrier was settled by all believers being Christians regardless of their nationalities.

On the other hand, why was the work of the other apostles which was done before Paul's work not linked to the title Christians? The gospel was preached only to the Jews before the mission in Antioch, which means that, before that time, believers were ***in fact*** Jews. Therefore, there was no need of any other title than Jews. However, the gospel in Paul's eschatological work, in fact, began to be preached not only to the Jews, but also to all nations. Therefore, this eschatological situation needed a third title that was not 'Jews' or 'gentiles'.

If this understanding is correct, I think that the character of Paul's (missionary) work in comparison with that of the other apostles, is not defined by the audience, but by preaching the gospel beyond the ethnic barrier '***in the context of Jews and gentiles***'.

¹³⁴ M. Seifrid, *Christ*, pp. 84–85.

¹³⁵ D. A. Campbell, "The ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ from Durham: Professor Dunn's *The theology of Paul the apostle*", *JSNT* 72 (1998), pp. 100–101, is not correct when he says that to blame Judaism of being ethnic per se would seem to be like accusing human beings of talking and breathing and that the Jews could deal with Paul's criticism on these terms simply by being more welcoming towards those outsiders who wanted to join them. But Paul's criticism was not a pure ethnic matter. It must be noted that no matter how many outsiders joined Israel, if they were welcomed as Jews, Jews were disturbing the eschatological fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant.

in Abraham's covenant. I do not believe that an interpretation that stresses the result in a broad sense is automatically viewed as a broad interpretation. I am of the opinion that Seifrid does not understand the place of gentiles in the fulfilment of the New covenant, nor can he, at least, discern a limited interpretation from a principle one.

We find such misunderstandings in Kim also. Kim¹³⁶ criticises Dunn, arguing that Paul rejected the law not because of Jewish nationalism:

The Judaisers were not denying that the gentiles *could* become members of God's people. They were insisting only that they could become such by getting circumcised and keeping the law in addition to believing in Christ. If, as Dunn claims, at Damascus Paul had received only the apostolic call to the gentiles and if his concern had been merely about the gentiles becoming members of God's people, why could he not happily have gone about doing his gentile mission in the way the Judaisers demanded - calling for faith in Christ and circumcision? It would have been much easier for the former 'Zealot' for the law! What was wrong with the gentile Christians observing the food laws? Did Paul operate with the modern idea of 'nationalism' and decide that imposing the law on the gentiles was a bad expression of 'Jewish nationalism', that is, Jewish 'racism' and 'imperialism'? (Kim's italic and my underlining)

But, even though Kim's criticism of Dunn is reasonable, it is necessary to argue against his own interpretation of 'gentile and the law'. Kim¹³⁷ claims only that Paul rejected the observance of the law as a sort of human merit, but he does not say anything about the theological implication that imposing the law on gentiles could have for them.

¹³⁶ S. Kim, *New Perspective*, p. 61.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

Although laws such as circumcision and foods have a nationalistic character, when it comes to the context of Abraham, it is not a matter of mere nationalism as nationalism any more. ***To impose circumcision on gentiles, in fact, is to turn gentiles into Jews.*** Paul's gospel, did not only concern gentiles' becoming God's people, but also gentiles' gentileship. Paul preached the gospel that gentiles as gentiles could become members of God's people without becoming, in a certain way, Jews. In this regard, Kim did not evaluate the immediate importance of the implication that imposing circumcision on gentiles could have on the Abrahamic covenant and Paul's gospel

Wright,¹³⁸ a New Perspective scholar, correctly explains that the gospel is the message that all nations will receive God's blessings in Abraham and that Christ accomplished the promise so that the one family promised to Abraham is formed and that the only marker of the family is faith. I believe, however, that even Wright¹³⁹ who stresses covenant theology, does not ponder on the radical meaning that other markers of Abraham family than faith could have in the Abrahamic covenant. Instead, he maintains that the gospel is a proclamation of God's kingship, so that arguing for another marker destroys the gospel, because it implies the denial of Christ's kingship.

However, Paul concretely refers to the 'works of the law', that is, the marker of Jewishness. We must not ignore this. Demanding the

¹³⁸ N. T. Wright, "Gospel and theology", p. 236.

¹³⁹ N. T. Wright, *Climax*, pp. 138, 140.

‘works of the law’, apart from faith, as a marker, implies most of all that the gentiles become part of the Abrahamic covenant without staying gentiles. When the ‘works of the law’ would be regarded as the marker for the beneficiaries of the Abrahamic covenant, this would mean the loss of gentiles from the covenant, and would imply the annihilation of the covenant. If the gospel were regarded as the fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant, the annihilation of the covenant should be viewed as the annihilation of the gospel.

If gentiles, as the Judaisers in Galatians maintained, had to accept the ‘works of the law’ that were functioning as a Jewish marker, in other words, if gentiles had to acquire Jewishness, this would mean that only Jews, and not gentiles, could enjoy Abraham’s blessings. It also means the denial of the advent of the final stage of God’s eschatological gospel in which God shows his grace to all humankind. It degrades God’s unconditional salvation to something given on the condition of being a Jew. It is not different from making the universal God a Jewish God. Such a gospel had no part in Paul’s unconditional, universal, and eschatological gospel.

With this understanding, we come to grasp why Paul in Gal. 1:6-9 calls his opponents’ judaising policy ‘another gospel’, and why he curses them severely, and why Titus’ circumcision is viewed as a matter of the truth of the gospel (2:5), and why Paul stresses the fact that the other apostles acknowledged his gentile apostleship and his gospel for gentiles

(2:7–9),¹⁴⁰ and, finally, why Paul considers the Antioch incident¹⁴¹ as a violation of the truth of the gospel. This is revealed more clearly in 3:8.

However, it seems that both the Old and New Perspective scholars could not evaluate Paul's gentile mission itself. On the one hand, although many New Perspective scholars relate justification by faith to Paul's gentile mission, they move justification by faith to the margin of Pauline theology or regard it a ploy that was invented later to protect his gentile mission. On the other hand, most Old Perspective scholars underestimate the importance of Paul's gentile mission in salvation history so much that they do not hesitate to interpret justification by faith in terms of Paul's gentile mission. Both interpretations, however, are understood by me to be based on the premise that Paul's gentile mission itself was only a small event in salvation history.

Paul's preaching the gospel *to gentiles* itself was his gospel. In this regard, Friedrich¹⁴² who claims that for Paul, the gospel had the double meaning of the gospel itself and *the proclamation of it*, and Becker¹⁴³ who believes that εὐαγγέλιον, as used by Paul, does not mean only the content of what is preached, but also the action, process and execution of the proclamation, grasp the point. Gal. 2:7 clearly says that Paul was

¹⁴⁰ The Judaisers' challenge to Paul's apostleship *to the gentiles* was a challenge to Paul's eschatological gospel. On this point, U. Becker, "Gospel", pp. 111–112, has well pointed out that although Paul's opponents attacked him, the attack against his apostolate was an attack against the gospel and *vice versa*, because Paul's apostleship and his preaching of the gospel were one.

¹⁴¹ We are going to consider this below in the discussion of v. 14.

¹⁴² G. Friedrich, "εὐαγγέλιον", pp. 729–730.

¹⁴³ U. Becker, "Gospel", p. 111.

entrusted with the ‘gospel of the uncircumcision’. The gospel given to Paul was the gospel of uncircumcision for the uncircumcised people. If Paul could not go to the gentiles as gentiles, he would lose his gospel.

I have spent many pages explaining the gospel of the circumcision and that of the uncircumcision of Gal. 2:7-9. To summarise this long explanation in one sentence, for Paul, *the proclamation of Abraham’s blessings to gentiles through his gentile apostleship in the process of salvation history* was his gospel.¹⁴⁴ Therefore, Paul’s defence of his gentile mission was a defence of his gospel so that he, in no way, interpreted justification by faith in a limited sense, i.e., by trying to defend his gentile mission through justification by faith. Rather, I firmly believe that this view generalises and universalises Paul’s notion, justification by faith, in a true sense. Only when we have a very limited understanding of Paul’s gospel can such criticism of the interpretation be possible.

2.2.4. ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ εὐαγγελίου (2:14)

The ‘truth of the gospel’ mentioned in Gal. 2:14 is closely related to Peter’s action. And his action is identified as compelling the gentiles to live like Jews. The word Ἰουδαΐζειν is the key to understanding Paul’s reprimand of Peter. Although the word is generally synonymous with Ἰουδαϊκῶς (in the conditional clause), it has a more Jewish nuance so that

¹⁴⁴ In fact, this sentence is exactly along the same lines as the point made by G. Friedrich, “εὐαγγέλιον”, pp. 721-736, that for Paul, the gospel was not only the content itself but also *salvation history*, *his apostleship*, and *the proclamation of the gospel*.

it means not only to live like Jews, but to become Jews.¹⁴⁵ That is to say, Paul viewed Peter's mistake as making gentiles Jews.¹⁴⁶ Therefore, we, here again, see the restatement of our understanding of Paul's gospel. In Paul's eyes, Peter was by his behaviour denying Paul's eschatological gospel which even Peter himself had admitted before.

What I want to pay attention to, is the fact that Gal. 2 was not written in a gentile context, but in a Jewish one. That is to say, the context does not discuss what gentiles have to do, but whether Jews have to give up the law to have fellowship with gentiles. Paul, however, purposely changes the matter of the covenantal nomism to the issue of whether gentiles must become Jews to gain full membership with Abraham's descendants. I think that Paul did that in order to put Peter's action in the same category as that of the false gospel of the judaisers in Galatia, so that he could connect both of them to the truth of the gospel. This he did, because Peter denied the apostolic proclamation that, through Paul's gentile mission, the Abrahamic covenant entered into its final stage and the judaisers in Galatia opposed the progress of salvation history that was revealed by Paul's gentile mission.

In this context, we find that justification by faith in the following verse (16), appears in the context in which it is said that gentiles do not

¹⁴⁵ R. N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, p. 78.

¹⁴⁶ On the other hand, J. D. G. Dunn, *Partings* p. 133, explains that Peter could not show that, if someone has entered into the covenant, he should live according to the covenantal way of living. This explanation is not wrong, but I am not satisfied with it. Peter's action must be identified as making gentiles Jews. In this sense, his hypocrisy should be understood as excluding gentiles as gentiles from Abraham's blessings. After all, his action was directly against Paul's gospel.

need to become Jews in order to become members of God's people.¹⁴⁷ However, Paul does not use justification by faith in a limited sense; instead he gives the readers the salvation-historical answer. Rather, interpreting justification by faith in the light not of 'historia salutis' but of 'ordo salutis', implies the replacement the view of salvation history with individualism.¹⁴⁸ This interpretation also subjectifies the notion of justification by faith in the Old Testament.¹⁴⁹ Therefore, I think that even though the New Perspective is not completely perfect, its basic approach and understanding of justification by faith does not make justification by

¹⁴⁷ I have already showed on p. 97 that I agree with Dunn's view that the understanding of being justified in Galatians is something Jewish and covenantal language, so that God's justification means God's acknowledgment that someone is in the covenant.

I think that such an interpretation takes into account not only Galatians but also Genesis at the same time. When the Old Testament refers to Abraham being justified, the context is not one of the forgiveness of Abraham's individual sins, but the desirable relationship between human beings and God. In other words, in the case of Abraham, justification was a within a covenantal context: he was regarded as a God's person in a good relationship with God.

The fact that, disregarding this context, many scholars in the past and present have been preferring to understand justification by faith in such a way that individuals, through faith, can be justified by being forgiven their individual sins shows that they have been more introspective, speculative and even philosophical than biblical. And even the Reformers who, without doubt, contributed greatly to understanding the truth of the Bible, also understood justification by faith in the light not of 'historia salutis' but of 'ordo salutis' and do not escape this criticism. For this criticism of the Reformers, see C. Seo, *The relationship between the law and the gospel* (Seoul: Emmaus, 1992), p. 14.

¹⁴⁸ K. Stendahl, "The introspective conscience", pp. 199-215, already pointed this out. See p. 74.

¹⁴⁹ W. Johnston, "Justification by faith revised", *ExpTim* 104 (1992), pp. 67-71, nicely indicates the errors of subjectivism of justification by faith. He maintains that there is a difference between justification by faith in the Old Testament and that of the traditional Christian belief. The Old Testament stresses not *subjective* reactions but the *objectivity* of God's grace. Especially in Deuteronomy, God's way of dealing with all human beings is parallel to his dealings with Israel. Applying this to the New Testament, he argues that in the relationship between Israel and the gentiles, the grace by which gentiles can become God's people, is radically objective so that it is not because of human faith, but because of the divine promise.

faith limited; rather the Old Perspective made it personal and lost the notion of salvational historicity of it by the removal of the Abrahamic context. To concretely identify the gospel (of Paul) and to describe it in detail in terms of the stage in salvation history, must be distinguished from explaining it in a limited sense.

2.3. Galatians 3

2.3.1. ἡ γραφή ... προεσηγγείσατο τῷ Ἀβραάμ (3:8)

Finally, we, here, see Paul using the word ‘gospel’ (in the form of verb) for gentiles experiencing Abraham’s blessings. If we bear in mind what has been pointed out earlier on in this study, we will realise that it is not by chance that Paul goes back to the Abraham account to attack the judaisers. The fact that they used the Abraham account to substantiate their argument does not weaken the fact that Paul’s understanding of his gospel has its roots in the Abrahamic covenant. Paul’s choice of words, that Scripture preached the gospel to Abraham, indicates again the radical nature of his gospel.

Furthermore, when explaining ‘the curse of the law’, I indicated that Gal. 3:13-14 and 4:4-5 ought to be understood in the same context as Rom. 15: 8-9.¹⁵⁰ In this regard, Paul speaks about the eschatological gospel in the scheme of salvation history in Gal. 3:13 and Gal. 4:4-5.

¹⁵⁰ See p. 137.

Here again, regarding the close relationship between the Abraham account of Gal. 3:8–9 and 3:13,¹⁵¹ the view that Paul interprets the gospel given to Abraham as the eschatological gospel in salvation history is confirmed.

Here it is also worth noting that when Paul speaks of the content of the gospel, he advertently cites only the last part of Abraham’s blessing in Gen 18:18, which says that gentiles (all the nations) shall be blessed.¹⁵² Paul wants to prove that the final stage of the Abrahamic covenant is being fulfilled by his gentile mission and that his very gentile mission must be regarded as the gospel itself, that was promised to Abraham.

This is confirmed by the following. The participle προἰδοῦσα is an additional statement to that of the main verb προεσηγγερίσατο¹⁵³ so that it supplementarily repeats the objective clause of the main verb, that is, the contents of the gospel, again. What Scripture foresaw, is the contents of the gospel and they are also related to the gentiles. Here, note that the terminological common point between the statement of the participle that God would justify the gentiles by faith and that of the main verb (“that in you shall all nations be blessed”), is τὰ ἔθνη. While Paul’s opponents probably attached weight to ‘in Abraham’, Paul gave weight to ‘all the

¹⁵¹ B. W. Longenecker, *Triumph*, p. 134. Blessing and curse (the situation of not enjoying the blessing) are contrasted.

¹⁵² Paul is citing not Gen. 12:3 but Gen. 18:18. See E. P. Sanders, *Law*, p. 21.

¹⁵³ R. N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, p. 115.

nations of the earth'.¹⁵⁴ Paul repeatedly identifies the gospel in terms of gentiles. Especially, when we consider that it is in Galatians that the word 'gospel' appears eleven times and that the word appears intensively up to 3:8 and that verse 8 is the peak, we can clearly grasp how eagerly Paul intended to relate the gospel to the gentiles' experiencing of Abraham's blessing.

In this context in which the gospel is defined by the gentiles' experiencing of Abraham's blessing, justification by faith appears again, because Paul includes justification by faith in the reference to the gentiles' experiencing of Abraham's blessing. Righteousness by faith is the blessing for the gentiles.¹⁵⁵ I cannot find any suggestion here that makes me think that Paul uses justification by faith in a limited sense. It must be remembered that Paul did not defend his gentile mission merely as a mission but as his eschatological gospel.

On this point, Wright,¹⁵⁶ who did not properly stress that the implication of the gentiles' accepting the 'works of the law' as another Christian mark implies the removal of gentiles from the Abrahamic covenant,¹⁵⁷ shows correct insight when he speaks of the preached gospel as ***the message that all nations receive the blessing in Abraham*** and that it tells how the one family promised to Abraham, comes about. This family has only one marker, that is, faith. For Paul, justification by

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

¹⁵⁵ P. Perkins, *Abraham's divided children: Galatians and the politics of faith* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2001), p. 66.

¹⁵⁶ N. T. Wright, "Gospel", pp. 235-236.

¹⁵⁷ See p. 222.

faith is not a doctrine concerned with how human beings can find a gracious God without legalism.

2.3.2. Χριστὸς ἡμᾶς ἐξηγόρασεν ἐκ τῆς κατάρας τοῦ νόμου γενόμενος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν κατάρᾳ ... ἵνα εἰς τὰ ἔθνη ἡ εὐλογία τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ γένηται ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ
(3:13-14)

As the last part of the exegesis, I want to investigate these two verses for the examination and support of my result thus far, although the word ‘gospel’ does not appear in them. As previously stated, the curse referred to in verse 13 was a national curse, that is, a curse on the Jews caused by their breaking of the covenant through their disobedience to the law. Furthermore, Christ took the curse on himself, on behalf of the Jews so that he made it possible for the gentiles to also become the beneficiaries of Abraham’s blessing.¹⁵⁸ I, however, delayed answering concretely to the criticism that this interpretation limits the significance of Christ’s death. I have showed that the Jews and the gentiles respectively join the Abrahamic covenant, and that the fact that the gentiles’, as gentiles, experienced the covenantal blessing, was, for Paul, the gospel as the eschatological fulfilment of the covenant. We, now, come to the proper place in which we can *synthetically* consider such an understanding based on the New Perspective, especially in terms of its limitations.

As we saw, many scholars do not agree with the reading of 3:14 as

¹⁵⁸ See p. 123.

interpreted by the New Perspective. Hamerton-Kelly¹⁵⁹ states that this understanding misses the full significance of Jesus' death, and Cranfield¹⁶⁰ is also surprised by such a limited view. However, such criticism is caused by misunderstanding the context. Although the word 'gospel' does not appear in verses 13-14, the verses must be interpreted to explain the gospel in the same context as the Abrahamic covenant of verses 8-9. This is so, because, just as Paul indicates in verse 8 that the gentiles experience Abraham's blessing, so he indicates in verse 14 that the blessing of Abraham falls on the gentiles, because whereas the blessing is mentioned in verses 8-9, in contrast, the curse ('to be cursed' is not 'to be blessed') is mentioned in verses 13-14.¹⁶¹ Furthermore, by telling the Galatians that they have received the Holy Spirit, Paul is trying to tell them that they already possess the promise given to Abraham.¹⁶² Therefore, I believe that the curse and the redemption mentioned in verse 13 ought to be thought of as the curse and the renewal of the Abrahamic covenant. The purpose of the renewal of the covenant is the inclusion of the gentiles into the Abrahamic blessing (14). We, here, come to see that Paul understands the redemptive death of God's Son in terms of the final stage of the fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant, that is, in terms of the inclusion of the gentiles. And this, as we saw before, is directly related to Paul's apostolic works, namely, his

¹⁵⁹ R. G. Hamerton-Kelly, "Sacred violence and 'works of law'", "Is Christ then an agent of sin?", *CBQ* 52 (90), p. 57

¹⁶⁰ C. E. B. Cranfield, "Works of the law", p. 92.

¹⁶¹ B. W. Longenecker, *Triumph*, p. 134.

¹⁶² P. Perkins, *Children*, p. 68.

gentile mission and it, itself, is Paul's gospel. In conclusion, verses 13–14 restate Paul's gospel exactly, as I described it, in terms of Christ's redemptive death.

If we do good exegesis of verses 13 and 14 as they are, without any prejudices, especially systematic ones, we have no choice but to conclude that the final purpose of Jesus' crucifixion given in verses 13–14 is to make the Abrahamic blessing include the gentiles. So, I contend, that if gentiles could only experience Abraham's blessings by becoming Jews, it would mean that Jesus' redemptive death had no purpose. I have already fully stressed the importance of the gentiles' joining the Abrahamic covenant as the final fulfilment of the eschatological gospel. If my emphasis is correct, it is not difficult to understand why Paul refers to the purpose of Jesus' death in terms of the gentiles' inclusion into the Abrahamic covenant. The view that the purpose of Christ's death is that the Abrahamic blessing will apply not only to the Jews but also the gentiles, is also found in Eph. 2:11–22.¹⁶³ Therefore, it is not satisfying that many Old Perspective scholars do not realise that the final fulfilment of the gospel as the fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant is aimed at gentiles and that the very text, verses 13–14, occur in such a context.

In Eph. 3:1–12, following Eph. 2, after having said that he realised the mystery of revelation, Paul continually speaks about gentiles. That is to say, *gentiles* can join in the promise *together*, and the unsearchable

¹⁶³ I think that Ephesians was written by Paul. For a discussion of Paul's authorship of Ephesians, see D. Guthrie, *New testament introduction* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1976), pp. 479–508.

riches of Christ are preached to gentiles (6-8).¹⁶⁴ Furthermore, Paul introduces the plan of the mystery hidden in God who created all things from the beginning of the world (9). Paul does this in order to point out that the mystery is not concerned only with human history, but with the history of the entire universe. In other words, the work that Paul received as God's grace, does not only concern gentiles, but has to do with the whole plan of God, the Creator, for the universe (7-9) and gentiles' experiencing God's promise is not an issue limited to gentiles, but is a universal and eschatological event. Actually, this intention of Paul's is already present in Eph. 1:7-10. The same tendency is found in Galatians and Romans. What Paul wants to do in Galatians and Romans, is to show that the righteousness of God, the Creator, goes beyond the covenantal obligation which is restricted to Israel, to the more basic covenantal obligation to the creation and all of mankind. This universal God is the God who calls gentiles also according to the same grace.¹⁶⁵ In this sense, the fact that even gentiles can experience God's promise through the same grace, is an universal event that proclaims the grace of the universal God. I, thus, cannot but think that the fact that many Old Perspective scholars regard Paul's gentile mission as a mere mission per

¹⁶⁴ The Greek *σύν* joined to three adjectives appears three times in verse 6. The NIV shows this well: through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs *together* with Israel, members *together* of one body, and sharers *together* in the promise in Christ Jesus. From this, we can see how strongly Paul wanted to stress the fact that *the gentiles* also join in the promise *together*.

¹⁶⁵ J. D. G. Dunn, "Justification by faith", p. 94. He believes that Paul goes beyond Moses to Adam (Rom. 5:12-21) and that it is the new covenant that relativises circumcision and uncircumcision (Gal. 6:15). This is the way in which Paul gets behind Israel's restrictiveness.

se, does show that they do not correctly view it in terms of the universal counsel of God, who restores the whole universe by the fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant.

Kim,¹⁶⁶ especially, criticises Dunn and Wright who prefer to interpret Gal. 3:10-14 in terms of Paul's defence of his gentile mission, saying especially about Dunn that his interpretation makes Jesus unconcerned about the Jews, and that a Messiah only for gentiles is a contradiction. However, it appears that Kim does not pay enough attention to verse 14, because he overlooks the *ἵνα* clause (v. 14) that shows the purpose of Christ's death mentioned in verse 13. It must be pointed out that in the book in which Kim criticises Dunn and Wright, he does not pay attention to the fact that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the gentiles (14a) is one of two purposes of Christ's death, according to verses 13 and 14.

Furthermore, Kim's claim that a Messiah only for gentiles is a contradiction, distorts the positive exegetical contribution of the New Perspective. If Dunn's interpretation of verse 14 had to be regarded as such a very restricted literal interpretation that it maintains that Christ was only for gentiles, then the interpretation that the curse referred to in verse 13 is the curse on Israel, should also be seen as such a very restricted literal interpretation in that the gentiles would in no way be linked to the curse of the law or to Christ's removal of the curse. However, the interpretation that the curse referred to in verse 13 is the

¹⁶⁶ S. Kim, *New Perspective*, pp. 130-141.

curse on Israel, is not such a restricted literal interpretation. Although it is true that the law was not given to the gentiles, and that they, therefore, were not directly concerned with the law, it is also true that the gentiles, in principle, were outside the covenant and its regulation, namely, the law as a divine standard for mankind to live by, so that they did not obey the law and, therefore, apart from the observance of the law, the gentiles were already under the curse of the covenant. We, here, have to remember that being outside the covenantal blessing is nothing less than being under the curse. In a word, the spiritual war by which gentiles' spiritual situation was decided was already over. Whether God's redemptive plan succeeded through the fulfilment of the covenant or not, then depended on the redemption of the Jews, the original party. In other words, the blessing of the gentiles depended on the blessing of the Jews.

Unfortunately, far from being a source of blessing, Israel, herself, broke the covenant and was under the curse of the covenant. The fact that Jews were under the curse as a result of their breaking of the covenant meant the loss of the way in which gentiles could partake of the blessing of the covenant. The covenantal blessing, that was supposed to flow to the gentiles through Israel, was blocked at its source, Israel. However, the gracious God made Israel blessed again so that gentiles could also partake of the blessing. God did this in such a way that the blessing of Israel, on which the blessing of gentiles depended, hinged on Christ. In this regard, Christ's work for Israel, also included the gentiles who would partake in the renewed covenant too. Only after removing the

curse of Israel, to whom God originally gave his covenant and his promise (Rom. 9:4), could the covenant be renewed. This was the precondition that had to be completed before the gentiles could join in the renewed covenant. All this considered, ***we have to know that Paul simply did not say every thing at the same time. In verse 13, Paul implies the curse on gentiles by referring to the curse on the Jews, and in verse 14, the Jews' experiencing the blessing of the covenant by referring to the gentiles' experiencing the blessing.*** Therefore, Kim's criticism that the interpretation by the New Perspective is such a very restricted literal interpretation that it maintains that Christ was only for the gentiles, is farfetched. I think that Paul's underlying intention of doing so is that he stresses his gentile mission as his eschatological gospel and defends it by not referring to both Jews and gentiles as being included in the promise of the Abrahamic covenant, but referring only to the gentiles' receiving the blessing.

However, it seems that not even some scholars among the Old Perspective circle interpreted Gal. 3:13-14 correctly in terms of the redemptive-historical sense of the Abrahamic covenant. That is why they have misunderstood Paul's expression and his gospel, ignoring the context of the covenant and salvation history. To my mind, the worst result of this is that they claim that Christ's cross was the climax of salvation history, but in fact they links Christ's death directly to individuals, ignoring the Abrahamic covenant and Israel. However, Jesus came to remove the curse on Israel and to establish the new covenant in

the context of the Abrahamic covenant, in terms of salvation history. And in the new covenant, even gentiles can partake of the blessing of Abraham. This is the point that Paul wanted to make in the text, and this issue is nothing but Paul's apostleship to the gentiles and the gentile mission that he tries to defend. Thus his explanation of his gospel cannot be anything else but a defence of his gentile mission. And it is in this context that the notion of justification by faith appears.

I cannot find any limited understanding in this interpretation. Rather, I have to say that many scholars who tried to explain justification by faith in the light of the Old Perspective did not succeed in viewing the concept of righteousness in terms of the collectivity of the covenant, but understood it in terms of individuals so that they followed a Greco-Roman interpretation of righteousness.¹⁶⁷

However, it is also very regrettable that even though some New Perspective scholars interpreted the text better than the Old Perspective scholars, they were unable to show the eschatological meaning of Paul's gentile mission. In other words, they did not stress it enough in that they did not realise that for Paul, the gentile mission was his gospel itself. Thus they could not but give the impression that the New Perspective

¹⁶⁷ See J. D. G. Dunn, *Justice*, pp. 31–42. While righteousness in Greco-Roman thinking is an ideal, in the Old Testament it is relational as a social phenomenon. It is identified in terms of the relation with God and with fellow human beings. Thus, it is not something that individuals can have independently of anyone else. Righteousness and justification that have the same etymological root in Hebrew and Greek are all of the same. Therefore, in Hebrew and earliest Christian thought it would not be possible for somebody to be righteous apart from, without reference to, that individual's responsibility to others.

understood Christ's redemptive work in a very limited sense.

3. Summary

In *Part 4*, I did exegesis of the concept 'gospel' in Galatians and showed that for Paul, the apostle to the gentiles, the content of the gospel was that gentiles as gentiles could experience the blessing of Abraham. Thus, that Paul used the notion of justification by faith in order to defend his gentile mission must be understood not only as a defence of his work, but also as a defence of his gospel. Therefore, to regard the interpretation of justification by faith in terms of Paul's gentile mission as a limited interpretation is caused by a limited understanding Paul's gospel itself.

Stuhlmacher¹⁶⁸ says that the gospel of 'justification by faith' is not a mere message to proclaim that, although gentiles are not circumcised, God accepts them, but the unique salvational revelation that God gives the eschatological salvation to all believers. This is true. I, however, think that this is a good example that shows that he radically reduces or basically misunderstands the meaning of circumcision and the inclusion

¹⁶⁸ P. Stuhlmacher, "The theme of Romans", in: K. P. Donfried (ed.), *The Romans debate* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), p. 337.

of gentiles in salvation history, especially in the Abrahamic covenant.

Kim¹⁶⁹ also repeats the same idea as the one Stuhlmacher had. He says,

How odd Paul's 'gospel' to the gentiles would have been if it only announced that through the crucifixion and resurrection of Israel's Messiah the God of Israel had shown his favour to the gentiles and welcomed them into his covenant relationship without requirements such as circumcision and the food laws, so that they could have table-fellowship with Jewish believers! Would anybody – Paul or any of his gentile hearers – have considered this announcement a 'gospel'?

But this distorts the whole meaning. That gentiles could join the covenant without the 'works of the law', must be understood to mean that gentiles as gentiles did not have to meet any condition to become God's people. To ask gentiles to accept the 'works of the law', would turn gentiles into Jews, and this meant that the membership of the saved community and the blessing of Abraham were confined only to Jews, or gentiles had to accept the condition to get them. Besides, Kim ignores the theological implication of the table fellowship. Partaking of table fellowship meant sharing the fellowship of God's people. It meant that that now anyone, even gentiles, could be God's people and share their fellowship without any restriction or condition. As we have seen, this, in fact, was the final purpose of the Abrahamic covenant.¹⁷⁰ If so, is this not the gospel, or

¹⁶⁹ S. Kim, *New Perspective*, p. 49.

¹⁷⁰ In this regard, justification by faith is not firstly interested in individuals but in the community. The new understanding that outsiders, especially gentiles, could join the community of God's people asks of us to do away with the idea that, since as individuals we are individually saved by our individual faith in Christ, we can individually live monastic lives apart from God's community. In this respect, Stendahl, *Among gentiles*, pp. 55-67, and Dunn, *Justice*, pp. 31-41, are correct when they say that communal love

what else? If this is true, the Judaisers in Galatia were hindering the gentiles, in other words, **all the gentiles**, from experiencing the blessing of Abraham. In this manner, they followed exactly in the footsteps of the Jews who confined the blessing of Abraham to themselves.¹⁷¹

Besides, Kim¹⁷² strongly criticises Dunn, calling Dunn's exegesis of Gal. 2:21 a 'strange' exegesis. He claims,

Dunn takes 'the grace of God' here as referring to 'the grace of God manifested in (Paul's) calling and in his successful missionary work (i.15; ii.9)'. Then Dunn comments: It was of the essence of that grace, in Paul's experience and understanding, that it was to be freely extended to the Gentiles as well. So any retreat back into a Judaism, or Jewish Christianity, which insisted that Jew and Gentile should eat separately was to render invalid the whole gospel—as indeed also Israel's own election (Rom xi.5-6)! I find it difficult to grasp the logic here, Any attempt to deny the gentile believers' full participation in the fellowship of God's people may be considered as rendering invalid God's grace given to Paul, i.e., making his apostleship for the gentiles invalid. But why is it also rendering 'the whole gospel' invalid?

To my mind, Kim does not understand that for Paul, the unique apostle to the gentiles, his gentile apostleship and its work, namely, the gentile mission, were the content of his gospel, the fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant that gentiles as gentiles could experience the blessing, without any conditions. At this very point, Kim is representative of the Old

is more important that individual integrity. Thus justification by faith is not only related to soteriology but also to ecclesiology.

¹⁷¹ If the context of '**gentiles' taking part of salvation**' of Isa. 56:3-7 cited by Jesus in Mark 11:17 indicates the reason why Jesus cursed the sellers, buyers, and moneychangers in the temple, the Judaisers in the church in Galatia can also be regarded as following the sellers, buyers, and moneychangers in the temple who prevented **all gentiles** (all nations) from praying to God in his house (Mark 11:17).

¹⁷² S. Kim, *New Perspective*, p. 62.

Perspective scholars.

If gentiles had to become Jews, such a gospel would be a gospel only for the Jews and it would be a restricted gospel. For Paul, such a gospel would no longer be a gospel. The loss of the gentiles from the Abrahamic covenant would be the loss of the final stage of the covenant, as well as its purpose. Justification by faith was the answer. By understanding justification by faith in the context of Paul's gentile mission, we can come to understand that Paul's gentile mission did not result in the notion of justification by faith having a limited sense, but that it reveals that Paul's gentile mission was the core of Paul's gospel. The mistake of not emphasising this enough is made by many New Perspective scholars.¹⁷³

¹⁷³ On this point, Dunn, *Justice*, pp. 24–25, gives us a relatively satisfying explanation: The insight which came to him was that God's purpose in choosing Israel in the first place always had the benefit of the Gentiles in view, the blessing of all nations. This he now saw to be the meaning of the original promise to Abraham ... This is what the doctrine of justification by faith meant for Paul ... But that distinctive character centred on the affirmation that the unconditional grace of God had Gentiles in view as much as Jews.

Dunn, *Theology*, p. 178, also says, "The resolution of the tension between Galatians 1 and 1 Cor. 15:1–7 confirms that Paul's sense of commission as apostle to the Gentiles was a distinctive feature of Paul's understanding of the gospel from the first". I agree fully with this explanation.

However, he does not go so far as to say that for Paul, the apostle to the gentiles, for gentiles as gentiles to partake of the blessing of Abraham, was the gospel itself as the eschatological fulfilment of the covenant in salvation history. Thus I think it is regrettable that although he stresses the unconditional grace in such a way that gentiles as gentiles could join the Abrahamic covenant, he did not clearly show that to ask gentiles to accept the works of the law meant to make gentiles Jews and it constituted the loss of the final fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant. In other words, it meant, for Paul, the loss of the gospel. By merely saying, "It was this interpretation of the shared gospel (the shared confession that Jesus died and was raised was to be preached to the gentiles) which Paul saw as his primary responsibility to carry out and proclaim", Dunn, *ibid*, p. 178, is giving the impression that Paul's essential gospel was the shared gospel with the other apostles and his responsibility was to interpret it in the context of his gentile mission and to proclaim it merely is one non-essential aspect of his distinctive work.

Part 5

Conclusion

I welcome the New Perspective. In particular, as I pointed out, its interpretation of justification by faith in terms of the context of the gentile mission must be regarded as being faithful to the text. I, however, have pointed out two shortcomings in the New Perspective. The one is the argument that justification by faith developed at a later stage. I have argued that its origin arose together with the origin of Paul's insight into the antithesis between Christ and the law on the Damascus road. The other shortcoming that I spent more time on, was that, although the New Perspective interpreted justification by faith correctly within the context of the gentile mission, they did not correctly evaluate the salvation-historical meaning of gentile mission in terms of the Abrahamic covenant. Thus the acceptability of the New Perspective's interpretation is impeded by this limitation.

However, for Paul, gentiles' partaking of the blessings of Abraham through his gentile mission, was the gospel as the eschatological fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant. Therefore, the interpretation of justification by faith within the context of Paul's gentile mission, is a salvation-historical, covenantal, and universal interpretation so that such an interpretation is in no way limited, but a thorough understanding. I have tried to present this view, because this is what the New Perspective

scholars failed to stress and it was the reason which makes that their interpretation is regarded as a limited understanding.

I believe that this new understanding of Paul's gentile mission allows us to understand Paul better. For instance, why did Paul say, "For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel ... but if not of my own will, I am entrusted with a commission" (1 Cor. 9:16-17)? There have been a lot of evangelists in the history of Christianity. All true missionaries must be seen as having received their own callings. If they gave up their callings, would there be 'woe to them'? If the answer is 'yes' then, Paul must have said this in such a way that all Christians should be faithful to their own callings. I think, however, that Paul meant it in another way. We have to remember that the last apostle (1 Cor. 15:8) was a Jew and Paul was the unique apostle to the gentiles (Gal. 2:7-9). All the investigation in this study show that this means that God was fulfilling his promise to Abraham that He would bless all nations in Abraham by the apostolic work of the last and unique apostle to the gentiles, namely, his gentile mission. Thus, it becomes clear, that if Paul would give up his calling, it would be woe to him. If Paul had stopped preaching the gospel, it would not only have meant discontinuing the delivery of the gospel, but the removal of the eschatological gospel. In salvation history, Paul had such a very special place. The other apostles also recognised this salvation-historical progress (Gal. 2:7-9). He was not one missionary among many, but he was the only Jew who was called to be the last and unique gentile apostle in redemptive history. Paul

understood himself through his work and through this understanding he comprehended his gospel.

On the other hand, it does not seem that this understanding of Paul's gospel applies only to Galatians. I have not fully scrutinised Romans due to the scope of my study. Nevertheless, I believe that only this understanding of the character of Paul's gospel can allow us to grasp the reason why Paul said to *Christians in Rome*, "I am eager to **preach the gospel** to you also who are in Rome" (Rom. 1:15).¹ Paul wanted to let the Romans know the character of his eschatological gospel that, because of the redemptive work of Christ, gentiles as gentiles, now, could become members of God's people and he tried to let the Romans, mostly Jews,² realise how they had to behave as part of God's salvation history. Paul's gospel in Romans also was nothing less than his gentile mission. Paul says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith, to the Jew first **and also to the Greek**" (Rom. 1:16). I think that this is the main theme that Paul wants to discuss in Romans, and – so to speak – the earthquake in Galatia that

¹ S. Mason, *ibid*, p. 282, maintains that the receivers in Rome must have been Jewish Christians and, that in Romans, Paul introduced his gospel that was not shared between himself and them. For example, he argues that, while Paul did not use the word 'gospel' purposely to refer to what the Romans had in Rom. 6:17, 15, and 20, he called what he was going to deliver without any common base, the 'gospel'. He concludes that Paul related his gospel only to his gentile mission.

Furthermore, Mason, *ibid*, pp. 279, 285, also claims that Paul clearly connected his gospel only to his gentile mission in Gal. 2:2, 5, and 7 too and that Paul did not call Peter's proclamation the gospel. Mason's Paul was the first Christian who used the gospel language in that sense.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 254-276.

shook the land of the Romans.³

Yes, the New Perspective opened to us a gate leading to a long road. The rethinking of the Lord's Word in the light of the New Perspective is the way we need to go.

³ The character of Paul's gospel that he wishes to show through Romans is also confirmed by the fact that he starts with the emphasis on all the nations in Rom. 1:5 and that he repeats the content of 1:5 (... according to my gospel ... according to the revelation of the mystery which ... is made known to all nations ... to bring about the obedience of faith (Rom. 16:25-26)), stating the purpose of his gospel. This approach can express exactly why Paul deals with the relationship between the Jews and the gentiles in Rom. 9-11 for so long. That forms part of the explanation of his gospel.

In this regard, J. D. G. Dunn, *Theology*, pp. 372-373, is correct in saying, "All' is one of the really key words in Romans ... the 'all' consistently means Jews as well as Gentiles, Gentiles as well as Jews". On the other hand, N. A. Dahl, *Studies*, pp. 79-94, argues that the central issue in Romans is not Paul's defense of his gentile mission but rather his missionary theology. Of course, he makes a good point. I, however, am not satisfied with his idea. I believe that he deals with Paul's gentile mission as a theology.

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to evaluate the New Perspective on Paul. One of the most important new contributions of the New Perspective, that is a new interpretation of Paul's view of justification by faith, is the main focus of this study. Especially, two New Perspective arguments that give rise to most of the objections voiced by the followers of the Old Perspective are noted: **1) Paul developed the notion of justification by faith only at a later stage 2) to defend his gentile mission**

In **Part 1** an overview of the history of the New Perspective is presented, and the problems of the New Perspective are pointed out.

In **Part 2** the origin of Paul's Christ-Torah antithesis is investigated to find out when Paul's notion of justification by faith originated. As a result, the view of the New Perspective that Paul developed the notion of justification by faith at a later stage is rejected.

In **Part 3**, independent theological exegesis is done to evaluate the argument of the New Perspective that justification by faith must be understood not in general terms of how human beings can be saved, but in the context of **Paul's gentile mission**. The exegesis concentrates on the concepts 'the works of the law' and 'the curse of the law' in Galatians. Romans 3, 4, and 7 are also investigated to confirm the exegetical results of Galatians. As a result, it is shown that the New Perspective is quite correct in that it reads the notion of justification by

faith in the context of *Paul's gentile mission*. However, it is also pointed out that the New Perspective fails in properly evaluating *Paul's gentile mission itself*, because it marginalises both the gentile mission and justification by faith in Paul's theology.

In *Part 4*, by means of the independent theological exegesis of the word εὐαγγέλιον in Galatians in the redemptive historical context of the Abrahamic covenant, it is proved that *for the unique apostle to the gentiles, Paul, his gentile mission was the climax of his gospel. In fact, it must rather be regarded as his gospel itself*. This means that, even though the interpretation of justification by faith by scholars from the New Perspective has a better exegetical foundation and leads to valid exegetical results, these results are interpreted wrongly by them.

In *Part 5*, finally, it is concluded that *when the interpretation of the Pauline notion of justification by faith by scholars from the New Perspective is reread in the light of the new understanding that Paul's gentile mission is his gospel, the true meaning of justification by faith is revealed*.

Abstrak

Die doel van hierdie studie is om die sogenaamde Nuwe Perspektief op Paulus te evalueer. Een van die belangrikste bydraes van die Nuwe Perspektief, naamlik die nuwe interpretasie van die Pauliniese konsep ‘regverdiging deur die geloof’, kry in hierdie studie die meeste aandag. Veral twee argumente van die Nuwe Perspektief word bespreek, naamlik 1) dat die konsep ‘regverdiging deur die geloof’ ’n latere ontwikkeling in Paulus se teologie verteenwoordig, en 2) dat dit ontwikkel is om Paulus se heidensending te verdedig.

In **Deel 1** word ’n oorsig van die geskiedenis van die Nuwe Perspektief gegee en word die probleme van hierdie siening uitgelig.

In **Deel 2** word die oorsprong van die Christus-Torah-antitese in Paulus se teologie ondersoek om te bepaal wanneer Paulus se siening van ‘regverdiging deur die geloof’ ontwikkel het. Die gevolgtrekking is dat die siening van die Nuwe Perspektief dat dit eers op ’n later stadium gebeur het, verwerp word.

In **Deel 3** word onafhanklike teologiese eksegese gedoen om te wys dat die argument van die Nuwe Perspektief dat ‘regverdiging deur die geloof’ nie in algemene sin verstaan moet word nie, maar wel binne die konteks van die **Pauliniese sending**, korrek is. Die eksegese konsentreer op die begrippe ‘werke van die wet’ en ‘vloek van wet’ in Galasiërs. Romeine 3, 4 en 7 word ook ondersoek om die eksegetiese

resultate ten opsigte van Galasiërs te bevestig. Daar word aangetoon dat die Nuwe Perspektief heeltemal korrek is wanneer ‘regverdiging deur die geloof’ in die konteks van die **Pauliniese sending** gelees word. Daar word egter ook aangetoon dat die Nuwe Perspektief nalaat om die **Pauliniese sending self** korrek te evalueer omdat dit sowel die heidensending as ‘regverdiging deur die geloof’ in die Pauliniese teologie marginaliseer.

In **Deel 4** word deur middel van onafhanklike teologiese eksegese van die begrip εὐαγγέλιον binne die heilshistoriese konteks van die verbond met Abraham aangetoon dat vir Paulus, **die unieke apostel na die heidene, sy heidensending die klimaks van sy evangelie was. In werklikheid moet dit as sy evangelie self beskou word.** Dit beteken dat, alhoewel die Nuwe Perspektief se interpretasie van ‘regverdiging deur die geloof’ ’n beter eksegetiese basis het en tot korrekte eksegetiese resultate aanleiding gee, die resultate self verkeerd gëinterpreteer word.

In **Deel 5** word ten slotte aangetoon dat **wanneer ’n mens die interpretasie van ‘regverdiging deur die geloof’ deur die Nuwe Perspektief in die lig van die nuwe verstaan van Paulus se heidensending herlees, die ware betekenis van ‘regverdiging deur die geloof’ na vore kom.**

Keywords

New Testament Studies

Pauline Theology

The New Perspective

The Letter to the Galatians

The Letter to the Romans

Justification by Faith

Paul's Gospel

The Works of the Law

Gentile Mission

Paul's Gentile Apostleship

Exegesis