

Sons, Seed, and Children of Promise in Galatians:
Discerning the Coherence in Paul's Model of Abrahamic Descent

by

Bradley R. Trick

Department of Religion
Duke University

Date: _____

Approved:

Richard B. Hays, Supervisor

Douglas Campbell

Mark Goodacre

Stephen Chapman

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of
Religion in the Graduate School
of Duke University

2010

ABSTRACT

Sons, Seed, and Children of Promise in Galatians:

Discerning the Coherence in Paul's Model of Abrahamic Descent

by

Bradley R. Trick

Department of Religion
Duke University

Date: _____

Approved:

Richard B. Hays, Supervisor

Douglas Campbell

Mark Goodacre

Stephen Chapman

An abstract of a dissertation submitted in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of
Religion in the Graduate School
of Duke University

2010

Copyright by
Bradley R. Trick
2010

Abstract

The central portion of Paul's letter to the Galatians consists of three main arguments, each of which invokes a different image of Abrahamic descent: sons (3:7) in 3:6-14, seed (3:16, 29) in 3:15-4:11, and children of promise (4:28) in 4:21-5:1. Current interpretations of these Abrahamic appeals typically portray them as logically problematical, collectively inconsistent, and/or generally unpersuasive, a situation that then leads most scholars to identify them as *ad hoc* responses to the Galatian agitators. This inability to find a coherent model of Abrahamic descent in Galatians, however, threatens to undermine the very gospel itself by suggesting that it cannot effectively counter a Judaizing call that derives from a simple appeal to Abraham.

This dissertation argues that Paul does indeed present the Galatians with a coherent account of Abrahamic descent that accords with his persuasive intent of refuting a law-based circumcision. Its key insight lies in the suggestion that Paul understands the Abrahamic διαθήκη in 3:15-18 as akin to a Hellenistic adoptive testament. As a result, the promised Abrahamic seed must be both a son of Abraham and, because of Abraham's divine adoption through the διαθήκη, a son of God, hence Paul's identification of Christ as Abraham's sole seed (3:16).

This twofold nature of the Abrahamic seed then suggests a distinction in Paul's other terms for Abrahamic descent. The dissertation accordingly contends that "sons of Abraham" in 3:7 designates, as it typically did in the mid-first century C.E., the Jews, i.e., those physical descendants of Abraham who also share his faith. In contrast, "children of

promise” in 4:28 designates gentiles who have through faith received the Abrahamic blessing, i.e., the Spirit of sonship that makes them children of God. Each group thus requires incorporation into Christ to establish their status as Abrahamic seed: the Jews so that they might share in the gentiles’ divine sonship, the gentiles so that they might share in the Jews’ Abrahamic sonship. This interdependent union of the Jewish sons of Abraham and the gentile sons of God in Christ then constitutes the single divine Abrahamic seed who inherits (3:29).

Paul employs this model to refute the necessity of law observance as follows. In 3:6-14, he argues that Christ’s accursed death on the cross divides faith from law observance as a means of justification for Jews; the full sons of Abraham accordingly become those Jews who, by dying to the law and embracing Christ, exhibit the same radical trust in God as their forefather exhibited. In 3:15-4:11, he argues that God added the law and its curse to ensure that the Jews could not receive the Abrahamic blessing promised to the nations—i.e., the Spirit that would make the Jews sons of God and, thus, Abrahamic seed—apart from the one seed, Christ. Finally, in 4:21-5:1, he argues that, like Hagar, the non-adoptive Sinaitic διαθήκη produces Abrahamic descendants (i.e., non-Christian Jews) who share the general human enslavement to the στοιχῆ̃α, whereas the adoptive Abrahamic διαθήκη produces Abrahamic descendants (i.e., Christian Jews) whose divine adoption frees them from this enslavement. Each appeal to Abraham thus undermines the gentile Christians’ motivation for submitting to the law by demonstrating that Jewish Christians do not even remain under the law.

Dedication

For Elizabeth: Τετέλεστοι.

Contents

Abstract.....	iv
Acknowledgments.....	xii
1. Sons, seed, and children of promise: Abrahamic descent in Galatians	1
1.1 The challenge of Abrahamic descent in Galatians.....	1
1.2 Paul’s persuasive intent as a crucial constraint on interpretations of his Abrahamic arguments	9
1.3 Identifying a coherent model of Abrahamic descent that accords with Paul’s persuasive intent.....	38
2. “These are sons of Abraham”: Jewish sonship and the Abrahamic blessing of the gentiles in Galatians 3:6-14	41
2.1 Introduction.....	41
2.2 Galatians 3:6-7: Justification by faith as the basis of Jewish Abrahamic sonship	45
2.2.1 The role of 3:6 in Paul’s argument: Establishing 3:6-7 as a deductive argument for sonship based on Abraham’s example of justification by faith	48
2.2.1.1 Problems with 3:5-6 as an inductive argument.....	49
2.2.1.2 The coherence of 3:6-7 as a deductive argument that appeals to the authority of Abraham’s example rather than the authority of scripture.....	53
EXCURSUS: Douglas Campbell and the nature of “justification by faith”.....	65
2.2.2 Problems with 3:6-7 as a christological argument for gentile sonship	71
2.2.3 Putting it all together: The case for Jewish sonship in 3:6-7	83
2.3 Galatians 3:8-10: God justifies the gentiles by faith apart from law	94
2.3.1 Problems with 3:8-9 as an argument from Abraham	97

2.3.1.1 Problems deriving the πίστις-based justification of the gentiles from Abraham in 3:8	98
EXCURSUS: Problems with 3:8-9 as an argument from experience.....	108
2.3.1.2 Problems determining the function of the conclusion in 3:9	112
2.3.1.3 Problems understanding why ὅσοι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου are under a curse in 3:10	124
2.3.2 Resolving the problems: 3:8-10 as an argument from the integrity of scripture for the gentiles' justification by faith.....	146
2.4 Galatians 3:11-12: Jewish justification also ultimately rests on faith, not law observance.....	157
2.4.1 Galatians 3:11 as a reference to Jewish—not Christian—justifying faith.....	159
2.4.2 Galatians 3:12 as an argument for faith's primacy over—not independence from—law	166
2.5 Galatians 3:13-14: The christological twist.....	176
2.5.1 The C-C' twist (3:11-12, 3:13): Freeing the Jews from (the curse of) the law.....	181
2.5.2 The B-B' twist (3:8-10, 3:14a): So to the gentiles the blessing might come in Christ.....	193
2.5.3 The A-A' twist (3:6-7, 3:14b): So the Jews might receive the promised Spirit of sonship.....	196
2.6 Conclusion	207
3. "One [seed], who is Christ": Abrahamic inheritance, the law, and the dual sonship of the Abrahamic seed in 3:15-4:11	212
3.1 Introduction.....	212
3.2 "One [seed], who is Christ": Testamentary adoption and the identification of Christ as Abraham's seed in 3:15-4:11	218
3.2.1 The historical viability of Greek testamentary adoption as a potential background for Gal 3:15-4:11.....	224

3.2.2 Paul’s διαθήκη: A Greek testament rather than a Jewish covenant.....	240
3.2.3 The Greek background of Paul’s adoption (υιοθεσία) language.....	255
3.2.4 Greek testamentary adoption as the overarching background for Gal 3:15-4:11	271
3.2.5 Testamentary adoption and the identification of Christ as Abraham’s sole seed	277
3.3 “Not . . . as concerning many but as concerning one”: The singular seed and the elimination of the law as a basis for the promised inheritance in Gal 3:15-20....	288
3.3.1 The structural unity of Gal 3:15-20	293
3.3.2 The law’s inability to cancel the promise inherent in the earlier Abrahamic διαθήκη in 3:17-18.....	297
3.3.3 The singular seed in Gal 3:16 and the plurality of Israelites who receive the law in Gal 3:19-20.....	304
3.4 “Until the seed should come”: The united Abrahamic seed as the fulfillment and end of the law in Gal 3:19a and 3:21-4:11	314
3.4.1 “It was added for the sake of transgressions”: The twofold role of the law in promoting both faith and Christ according to Gal 3:19, 21-22.....	319
3.4.2 “All of you are one in Christ Jesus . . . You are Abraham’s seed”: The dual nature of Abraham’s single seed and the end of the law in Gal 3:23-4:11	330
3.4.2.1 “We are no longer under [law]”: Implications for Jews of gentiles’ becoming sons of Abraham in Christ (Gal 3:23-29).....	332
3.4.2.2 “You are no longer slaves”: Implications for gentiles of Jews’ becoming sons of God in Christ (Gal 4:1-11).....	366
3.5 Conclusion	392
4. “You are children of promise”: The gentile children according to Isaac and the Jewish children of the free woman in Galatians 4:21-5:1.....	397
4.1 Introduction.....	397

4.2 “These women are two διαθήκαι”: The contrast of non-adoptive (Sinaitic) and adoptive (Abrahamic) testaments—not covenants—in Gal 4:24-27	401
4.2.1 The Sinaitic διαθήκη: A non-adoptive testament failing to liberate its charges from the στοιχεῖα rather than a covenant enslaving them to the law	403
4.2.1.1 The enslavement associated with the Sinaitic διαθήκη	406
4.2.1.2 Situating a Sinaitic enslavement to the στοιχεῖα in the flow of Paul’s argument	416
4.2.2 The Abrahamic διαθήκη: An adoptive testament enabling entrance into the free Jerusalem above according to Isa 54:1	428
4.2.3 “These women are . . . διαθήκαι”: The typological nature of a testamentary reading in Gal 4:24-27	446
4.2.4 Conclusion	466
4.3 Identifying the free children of promise: Distinguishing non-Christian Jews, Christian Jews, and Christian gentiles as sons of Abraham in Gal 4:21-5:1	468
4.3.1 Problems with a two-column approach to Gal 4:21-5:1	471
4.3.2 Sons of the slave woman and sons of the free woman in Gal 4:24-27: Distinguishing non-Christian Jews and Christian Jews as sons of Abraham	484
4.3.3 Sons of flesh and sons of promise in Gal 4:28: Distinguishing Jews and gentile Christians as sons of Abraham	493
4.3.4 Merging the typologies in Gal 4:29-30: The union of Jew and gentile in Christ as the true fulfillment of the free woman’s children of promise	496
4.3.4.1 Galatians 4:29: Locating Jewish Christians in the flesh (Jew) / promise (gentile Christian) typology	498
4.3.4.2 Galatians 4:30: Locating gentile Christians in the slave (non-Christian Jew) / free (Christian Jew) typology	508
4.3.5 Concluding summary and exhortation in Gal 4:31-5:1: Gentile Christians must stand firm with their free Jewish counterparts	513
4.4 Conclusion	517

5. Conclusion	520
5.1 Jewish sons, Christ the seed, and the gentile children of promise: A coherent model of Abrahamic descent in Galatians	520
5.2 Implications and areas for further research.....	527
Bibliography	537
Biography.....	563

Acknowledgments

This dissertation culminates eight years of study in the New Testament doctoral program at Duke University. Many people have accordingly contributed to its completion in one way or another, only a few of whom can I highlight here.

First, the generous financial support of The Duke Endowment (academic years 2002-2007; summer 2007) and, subsequently, the Dolores Zohrab Liebmann Fund (academic years 2007-2010) enabled me to take the time that I needed to research an argument that took many unexpected turns.

Second, I am indebted to my colleagues and friends at Duke—many of whom were also working on Galatians—for their collegiality and scholarship. In this regard I should also mention the attendees of the October 2009 Duke New Testament and Judaic Studies Colloquium, where I delivered a paper on the Hellenistic background of Paul’s *διαθήκη* language. The lively discussion that followed my presentation helped to shape what is now a section of Chapter 3.

Third, I would like to thank the members of my dissertation committee: Richard Hays, Douglas Campbell, Stephen Chapman, and Mark Goodacre. Of this group, Hays and Campbell deserve special mention for meticulously reviewing preliminary drafts of each chapter. Their comments and questions have greatly strengthened the final product by exposing unclear arguments, sharpening my understanding of others’ positions, and highlighting potential problems. Problems that remain are, of course, entirely my own.

Fourth, for my wife Elizabeth, who has steadfastly supported, encouraged, and enabled me throughout this process in ways both big and small, and for my 2-year-old daughter Makara, who always brings me the books I have failed to put away with an exultant smile, I am eternally grateful. This dissertation is as much theirs as it is mine.

Finally, I pray that this dissertation might glorify the God who has made it possible and whose grand design it seeks to articulate. To him and to his son, the sole seed of Abraham, be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

1. Sons, seed, and children of promise: Abrahamic descent in Galatians

1.1 The challenge of Abrahamic descent in Galatians

The concept of Abrahamic descent looms large in Paul's letter to the churches of Galatia. It first appears in Gal 3:6-14, which infers from a citation of Gen 15:6 that οἱ ἐκ πίστεως are "sons of Abraham" (υἱοὶ Ἀβραάμ, 3:7). Galatians 3:15-4:11 then focuses on the single "seed of Abraham" (τοῦ Ἀβραάμ σπέρμα), a designation that Paul applies to Christ (3:16) and, subsequently, to those who are "of Christ" (3:29). Finally, Gal 4:21-5:1 develops an allegorical interpretation of Abraham's two sons and their mothers in which Paul identifies the Galatians as Abrahamic "children of promise" (ἐπαγγελίας τέκνα, 4:28). The bulk of Gal 3-4—roughly a third of the total letter—thus consists of three main arguments, each of which invokes a different image of Abrahamic descent: sons, seed, and children of promise, respectively.

Not only do these Abrahamic appeals occupy a significant portion of the letter, but they also provide the primary scriptural/theological grounding for the letter's intensely polemical argument. Although scholars debate the precise details of the Galatian controversy, at least one central point of contention seems fairly certain: those whom Paul identifies as "agitators" (5:12; cf. 1:7, 5:10) were, in accordance with the

Jewish law, advocating circumcision for the Galatian Christians (6:12-13).¹ Paul finds this position so inimical to the gospel that the Galatians' acceptance of it would sever their relationship to Christ (5:2-4) and render Paul's labor among them vain (4:11). He accordingly writes—with great passion and vehemence (cf., e.g., 1:8-9; 5:12)—to exhort the Galatian Christians to stand firm in their uncircumcised state and refrain from coming under the Jewish law (e.g., 5:1-6).

At first glance, Abraham appears to be a rather odd choice for grounding an argument against the necessity of a subsequent circumcision. After all, Abraham himself receives circumcision (Gen 17:9-14) *after* he is reckoned righteous for his trust in God (Gen 15:6, cited in Gal 3:6), a point that Paul himself makes in Rom 4:9-12. Genesis 17:9-14 also expressly commands the circumcision of any male belonging to the household of Abraham. Thus, whether as authoritative example or as familial progenitor, the patriarch would seem to support the agitators'—not Paul's—position. For many scholars, the actual details of Paul's argument do little to allay this initial assessment.

Considering the arguments individually, for instance, the seemingly universal conclusion that 3:6-7 redefines Abrahamic sonship based solely on faith creates problems for Paul's continuing recognition of Israel as a distinct, ethnic-based entity. Scholars also often question the basis for—and, accordingly, the cogency of—identifying Abraham's sole seed as Christ rather than Isaac in 3:16. As for the allegorical interpretation of Abraham's family offered in 4:21-5:1, the aligning of such traditionally Jewish entities as

¹ See, e.g., John M. G. Barclay, "Mirror-Reading a Polemical Letter: Galatians as a Test Case," *JSNT* 31 (1987): 73-93, 86, 88.

the Sinaitic διαθήκη and the present Jerusalem with the slave woman Hagar rather than with the Jewish matriarch Sarah strikes many readers as an unjustified twisting of the Genesis narrative.

Determining how the various portrayals of Abrahamic descent fit together collectively raises even more difficulties. Does Abrahamic descent depend on πίστις alone (3:7), on integration into Christ (3:29), or both? If both, i.e., if we understand πίστις and Christ as essentially inseparable, then on what basis does Christ himself become Abraham's sole seed (3:16), and how does Abraham's theocentric faith become the sole criterion of a sonship that purportedly includes only Christians (3:6-7)? Or again, if, according to Gal 3:16, Isaac is not Abraham's promised seed, then how can Paul invoke Isaac as the pre-eminent example (κατὰ Ἰσαάκ) of the children of promise in 4:28? These issues arise just within Galatians; trying to reconcile the portrayals with the discussions of Abrahamic descent in Rom 4:1-25 and 9:6-13 complicates matters even further.

Even apart from their Abrahamic aspects, Gal 3:6-14, 3:15-4:11, and 4:21-5:1 all employ arguments that often appear convoluted and arbitrary to later interpreters. To note just a few of the questions that perplex modern readers, how does the claim that "everyone who does not abide by everything written in the book of the law is cursed" prove that "as many as are [justified] on the basis of works of law are under a curse" in 3:10? Why does the mediated nature of the law pose a problem in 3:19-20 when Christ also seems to mediate on behalf of believers (cf. 3:29)? Finally, on what basis does Paul apply Isa 54:1 to his allegorical interpretation of Sarah and Hagar in Gal 4:27?

As the ensuing chapters of this dissertation will detail, current interpretations of Galatians largely fail to resolve these issues in a compelling manner. Whether or not interpreters acknowledge the difficulties, most readings present Paul's Abrahamic arguments as logically problematical and/or collectively inconsistent. Moreover, to the extent that scholars do manage to resolve the various logical issues, they tend to resolve them in creative ways that, for one reason or another, would seem to have little chance of convincing the Galatians. The latter type of interpretation thus preserves coherent theological content at the expense of the letter's intended persuasive function; the former type sacrifices even the content.

It is, of course, possible that Paul simply makes a series of poor arguments or that he misjudges his audience's capacity to follow his reasoning. Indeed, scholars can even point to evidence that seems to justify such conclusions. They account for the arguments' seemingly incoherent nature, for example, by identifying the Abrahamic appeals as *ad hoc* responses to the agitators' use of Abraham. That is to say, they explain the apparent weakness of Paul's appeals by suggesting that the agitators have trapped him into arguing from a bad position; had he been free to make his own case—so the reasoning goes—he would surely have provided a more compelling argument against the necessity of a subsequent circumcision.² As for the letter's persuasive function, the contrast between the expectation in 1 Cor 16:1-4 that the Galatian churches would participate in the collection for Jerusalem and the churches' conspicuous absence from the list of contributing

² See, e.g., C. K. Barrett, "The Allegory of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar in the Argument of Galatians," in *Essays on Paul* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982), 154-70, 162.

churches in Rom 15:25-27 suggests that the agitators largely succeeded in weaning the churches away from Paul.³ We therefore have good reason to believe that Paul's letter did not actually succeed in persuading the Galatians.

The conclusion that Paul makes a poor or insufficiently clear argument, however, has troubling implications in light of the high stakes that Paul attributes to the controversy in Galatia. Regardless of the letter's ultimate effectiveness (or lack thereof), Paul clearly intends to present an argument that he believes the Galatians should find compelling. Christopher Stanley thus rightly highlights the danger inherent in ignoring Paul's persuasive intent as an evaluative criterion:

the modern interpreter [needs to] keep one question in mind at every point in attempting to analyze Paul's letter to the Galatians: how does this fit into Paul's strategy to persuade his Galatian readers? Too often a single-minded focus on Paul's 'theology' or his 'opponents' has been allowed to obscure this fundamental question, leading to false deductions regarding Paul's own ideas or the identity and position of those whose views he is seeking to counter. . . . it is Paul's persuasive intent that remains primary at every point, and the modern interpreter must read all that he says in the light of this concern or else risk misunderstanding.⁴

Coherent interpretations of the argument that nevertheless foreseeably have little chance of persuading the Galatians accordingly seem unlikely to represent Paul's line of thought,

³ J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 33A; New York: Doubleday, 1997), 29, 222-28.

⁴ Christopher D. Stanley, "'Under a Curse': A Fresh Reading of Galatians 3.10-14," *NTS* 36 (1990): 481-511, 491-92.

raising the distinct possibility that such resolutions effectively articulate a different, distorted understanding of the gospel (cf. 1:6-7).

Even more troubling, the inability to find a coherent model of Abrahamic descent in Galatians—especially when set against the relative ease with which scholars “reconstruct” the agitators’ purported argument from Abraham⁵—threatens to undermine the very gospel itself by suggesting that it cannot effectively counter a Judaizing call that derives from a simple appeal to Abraham. This inability implies, in other words, that the agitators actually do have the stronger argument. The hermeneutical implications for Jewish-Christian relations resonate throughout the ensuing centuries: if an arbitrary and admittedly unpersuasive series of arguments represents the best scriptural defense that Christianity has to offer in response to Judaism, then is it any wonder that Christian interactions with Jews have so often substituted unjustified caricature, arbitrary fiat, and violence for reasoned dialogue?

Fortunately, other factors point to the likelihood that Paul offers a stronger argument in Galatians than interpreters generally recognize. First and foremost among these factors stands the battle-tested nature of Paul’s Abrahamic gospel. Paul could have undercut the agitators’ ability to appeal to Abraham as a basis for circumcision simply by denying the necessity of Abrahamic descent for Christians. That he does not, in fact, make such a claim accordingly suggests that Abrahamic descent plays an integral role in his own understanding of the gospel, a suggestion further supported by the re-affirmation

⁵ See, e.g., Martyn, *Galatians*, 303-6, who purports to have reconstructed the agitators’ sermon on Abrahamic descent “with a reasonable degree of probability.”

of this descent in Romans (e.g., 4:11-12).⁶ Moreover, Paul has already encountered Judaizing arguments in both Jerusalem (2:1-10) and Antioch (2:11-18), successfully overcoming them in at least the former instance. Given the apparent importance of Abraham both to Paul's gospel and to the case for Judaizing, it seems improbable that Paul could have emerged from such episodes—not to mention his own transition from persecutor to apostle (1:15-24)—without devising a coherent understanding of Abraham's role. He also exhibits no awareness that his audience might find his argument problematical. Thus, while subtle difficulties might remain, we would not expect his argument to exhibit the kind of blatant problems identified above. Indeed, arguing his case so poorly would only strengthen the agitators' position by exposing the relative theological bankruptcy of Paul's gospel.⁷

Certain physical realities of first-century letter composition also increase the probability of a more coherent argument. As E. Randolph Richards observes, Paul's claim to write in his own hand beginning in 6:11 indicates that a secretary penned the rest of the letter.⁸ Noting that the use of a secretary would have required a minimum of four drafts (including at least one revision), Richards then calculates that a letter the size of

⁶ Cf. James Hardy Ropes, *The Singular Problem of the Epistle to the Galatians* (HTS 14; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929), 7-8.

⁷ Cf. Daniel Hayden King, "Paul and the Tannaim: A Study in Galatians," *WTJ* 45 (1983): 340-70, 341: "[Paul's argument] is coolly [sic] reasoned and systematically set forth. For Paul to have approached his subject otherwise would have been disastrous for his cause in the central Asia Minor province and would have had ramifications in churches both far and near."

⁸ E. Randolph Richards, *Paul and First-Century Letter Writing: Secretaries, Composition and Collection* (Downer's Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2004), 24 n. 19, 81.

Galatians would have taken, at minimum, four days to complete.⁹ This extended composition time makes it difficult to attribute any ill-formed arguments to haste or the passion of the moment. Moreover, both the secretary and Paul’s co-authors—“all the brothers with [him]” (1:2)—would have been party to his dictation and thus able to offer constructive criticisms of poor arguments.¹⁰ Granted, later revisions and the input of co-authors could also introduce inconsistencies, but Paul seems unlikely to have allowed or overlooked the introduction of fundamentally incoherent or inconsistent arguments.

These considerations lead to the *a priori* expectation that Paul would offer a coherent and potentially persuasive argument. In accordance with this expectation, I will ultimately argue that Galatians does indeed present such an argument. Before turning to the substance of this claim, however, I first need to define the criterion of “potential persuasiveness” more concretely. After all, while “coherence” provides a fairly objective criterion for assessment—either the argument holds together logically or it does not—“persuasiveness” would seem to constitute an inherently subjective standard. How, then, can we determine what counts as a potentially persuasive argument (and, perhaps more importantly, what does not) without lapsing into subjective judgments, especially given the aforementioned probability that Paul’s argument did not actually persuade the Galatians? The answer, I suggest, lies in allowing the letter’s rhetorical situation to establish the criterion’s parameters.

⁹ Ibid., 164-65.

¹⁰ Ibid., 45.

1.2 Paul's persuasive intent as a crucial constraint on interpretations of his Abrahamic arguments

Lloyd Bitzer seminally defines a “rhetorical situation” as

a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence.¹¹

It thus comprises an exigence (“an imperfection [in the situation] marked by urgency”), an audience capable of remedying or mitigating that exigence, and the constraints with which a rhetor must work.¹² Furthermore, Bitzer notes that a rhetorical situation necessarily shapes the discourse to which it gives rise: “every situation prescribes its fitting response.”¹³ A rhetorical situation, in other words, determines not only a rhetor’s persuasive intent but also the appropriate expression of that intent. Correctly discerning

¹¹ Lloyd F. Bitzer, “The Rhetorical Situation,” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 1 (1968): 1-14, 6. For a more nuanced development of Bitzer’s insights that takes advantage of the intervening literature, see Keith Grant-Davie, “Rhetorical Situations and Their Constituents,” *Rhetoric Review* 15 (1994): 264-79. See also Christopher D. Stanley, *Arguing with Scripture: The Rhetoric of Quotations in the Letters of Paul* (New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 14-19, whose presentation of Eugene White’s development of the rhetorical model emphasizes the need for criteria that enable an evaluation of the rhetoric’s effectiveness. B. C. Lategan, “The Argumentative Situation of Galatians,” in *The Galatians Debate: Contemporary Issues in Rhetorical and Historical Interpretation* (ed. Mark D. Nanos; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2002), 383-95, 384; repr. from *Neot* 26.2 (1992): 257-70, distinguishes between the rhetorical situation (focused on strategies) and the argumentative situation (focused on issues), a distinction I do not observe above.

¹² Bitzer, “Rhetorical,” 8. He also identifies the rhetor and the discourse as additional constituents that subsequently enter into the situation. On the nature of “constraints” as a neutral term encompassing both helpful and restrictive elements, see Grant-Davie, “Rhetorical,” 272.

¹³ Bitzer, “Rhetorical,” 11.

the rhetorical situation of Galatians accordingly provides a necessary level of objectivity in evaluating interpretations of Paul's argument: we need only to establish the nature of the rhetorical situation and then determine how its various features constrain Paul's argument.¹⁴ Of course, we cannot assume that Paul always makes a rhetorically appropriate argument—as Bitzer observes, “a rhetor may or may not read the [situation's] prescription accurately”¹⁵—but we should, I suggest, nevertheless prefer interpretations that better fit the rhetorical situation.

This task of determining the rhetorical situation presents quite a challenge for Galatians. To be sure, throughout much of the church's history, interpreters found the letter to provide a relatively clear reflection of its historical-rhetorical situation: the identification of the Galatian agitators as Jewish Christians who regard Torah observance (and circumcision specifically) as necessary for salvation or, possibly, perfection has dominated both ancient and modern interpretations.¹⁶ Within the last century, however, alternative scenarios have begun to proliferate as scholars have wrestled with ambiguities and tensions inherent both in this traditional reconstruction and in the letter itself. Proposals now debate such issues as whether the Galatian agitators were Jews, Jewish

¹⁴ While the irrational nature of human beings and the multiplicity of factors that can affect a person's judgment make it impossible to determine an argument's actual persuasiveness apart from results, we can assess the types of argument that would be most likely to persuade in a given situation. The resulting focus on persuasive intent thus renders the letter's actual persuasiveness, whether to the Galatians or to anyone else, irrelevant.

¹⁵ Bitzer, “Rhetorical,” 11.

¹⁶ See, e.g., J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 33A; New York: Doubleday, 1997); Richard B. Hays, “The Letter to the Galatians,” (NIB 11; Nashville: Abingdon, 2000), 181-348.

Christians, or gentile Christian proselytes; whether they saw themselves as opponents of Paul or as furthering his work; whether they were indigenous to Galatia / the Galatian churches or only recently arrived; whether or not they were related to the Jerusalem church; whether or not the community had divided over their influence; and what, exactly, they preached.

I do not propose to try to resolve all of these issues here. Indeed, the interdependence of the rhetorical situation and Paul's argument makes it impossible to resolve one completely without resolving the other: just as the rhetorical situation provides a check on interpretations of Paul's argument, so the interpretation of Paul's argument helps to determine the nature of the rhetorical situation. Thus, for instance, Walter Schmithals's admission that the letter's extensive Abrahamic arguments engage a typical Jewish view of law effectively undermines his suggestion that the letter opposes a gnostic group advocating circumcision apart from any requirements for full law observance.¹⁷ More positive attempts to identify implications of the Abrahamic passages for the rhetorical situation include the suggestions 1) that the "surprising" introduction of Abrahamic sonship in 3:7 identifies this sonship as Paul's key point of contention with the agitators;¹⁸ 2) that the superfluous nature of the Abrahamic argument signals the need

¹⁷ Walter Schmithals, *Paul and the Gnostics* (trans. John E. Steely; Nashville: Abingdon, 1972), 41. He suggests that the Abrahamic passages' lack of specific references to the Galatian situation identify these sections as preformed segments from Paul's debates with Jews that the apostle inserts here only to establish his own view of circumcision, namely that, since it entails an obligation to do the entire law, "[f]or the believers, the law can claim *no sort* of validity any longer." As many scholars have noted, this suggestion cannot explain why Paul would include these essentially unrelated arguments instead of simply engaging the position he was purportedly refuting.

¹⁸ A common conclusion. See, e.g., Martyn, *Galatians*, 299-300.

to address a second oppositional group, namely, “spiritual perfectionists” with no appreciation of Christianity’s Jewish roots;¹⁹ and 3) that Paul’s establishing of Christ as the one true Abrahamic seed in 3:16 points to a non-Christian Jewish opposition.²⁰ Fully evaluating such claims requires the kind of careful consideration of Paul’s Abrahamic argument that is the burden of this dissertation. I will accordingly observe here only that the letter’s lack of an explicit differentiation between opponents suggests that Paul envisions a single oppositional group.²¹

Rather than trying to provide a comprehensive analysis of the rhetorical situation, this section therefore focuses instead on establishing a few basic elements that will help ground—and be tested by—the subsequent analysis. I should note, too, that in seeking to establish the rhetorical situation, I am seeking to reconstruct not the actual historical situation in Galatia but Paul’s perception of that situation. After all, it is his perception of the crisis that shapes his response.²² Accordingly, regardless of their potential historical

¹⁹ Ropes, *Singular Problem*, 7-11. Cf. Wilhelm Lütgert, *Gesetz und Geist: Eine Untersuchung zur Vorgeschichte des Galaterbriefes* (BFCT 22/6; Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1919), 60-61.

²⁰ Mark D. Nanos, *The Irony of Galatians: Paul’s Letter in First-Century Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 154-55; Nikolaus Walter, “Paulus und die Gegner des Christevangeliums in Galatien,” in *L’apôtre Paul: Personnalité, style, et conception du ministère* (ed. A. Vanhoye; BETL 73; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1986), 351-56, 354. Cf. John Muddiman, “An Anatomy of Galatians,” in *Crossing the Boundaries: Essays in Biblical Interpretation in Honor of Michael D. Goulder* (eds. Stanley E. Porter, et al.; BIS 8; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994), 257-70, 266, who draws a similar implication from the more general fact that Paul appeals to Abraham at all.

²¹ The majority position. See, e.g., Frederic R. Crownfield, “The Singular Problem of the Dual Galatians,” *JBL* 64 (1945): 491-500, 492: “[T]he Epistle gives not the slightest indication of being addressed to such a sharply divided audience.”

²² Cf. Stanley, “Curse,” 488; Lategan, “Situation,” 384. Since Galatians provides direct evidence for Paul’s perception but only secondary evidence for the situation in Galatia, reconstructing the former avoids the methodological difficulties that arise when trying to move from the letter to the actual situation in Galatia.

value, proposals claiming, e.g., that Paul misunderstood and therefore misidentified the agitators have no relevance to this discussion.²³ This dissertation will also follow Paul's lead in referring to the group that he opposes as "agitators." Although scholars seeking to understand these agitators on their own terms rightly note the prejudicial nature of Paul's label,²⁴ it is this prejudice that informs Paul's argument.

How, then, does Paul understand the situation in Galatia? The clearest indications come in 6:12-13 as part of the coda that Paul adds in his own hand (6:11):

¹²As many as desire to make a good showing in [the] flesh, these compel [ἀναγκάζουσιν] you to be circumcised [περιτέμνεσθαι] simply so that for the cross of Christ they might not be persecuted. ¹³For not even οἱ περιτεμνόμενοι themselves keep [the] law, but they desire you to be circumcised [περιτέμνεσθαι] so that in your flesh they might boast.

Several points deserve mention. To begin, the verses explicitly portray the agitators as compelling (ἀναγκάζουσιν) the Galatian Christians to be circumcised, a phrasing that sets them in parallel to Peter, who compelled (ἀναγκάζεις) the gentiles to Judaize at Antioch (2:14), and in contrast to "those of reputation" in Jerusalem who did *not* compel (οὐδέ . . . ἠναγκάσθη) Titus to be circumcised (2:3). Combined with circumcision's

²³ E.g., Willi Marxsen, *Introduction to the New Testament: An Approach to its Problems* (trans. Geoffrey Buswell; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968), 53-56, who suggests that Paul "did not fully understand the position of his opponents" (55) and therefore interpreted his gnostic opponents as more familiar "Pharisaic Judaists." Notably, Marxsen abandons this suggestion in the book's subsequent fourth German edition. See Willi Marxsen, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament: Eine Einführung in ihre Probleme* (4th ed.; Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1978), 66-70.

²⁴ For discussion of the various labels that interpreters have applied to this group, see Nanos, *Irony*, 115-31.

prominence throughout the letter (2:3, 7-9, 12; 5:2, 3, 6, 11; 6:12-15) and the lack of any other positions explicitly attributed to the agitators, this observation suggests that their advocacy of circumcision forms the immediate point of contention. That Paul justifies (γάρ) his own proposal for the agitators' motivation (6:12) by asserting that even οἱ περιτεμνόμενοι do not keep [the] law (6:13) then implies (among other things) that he understood the agitators to promote circumcision on the grounds of keeping the law (cf. Exod 12:48; Lev 12:3).

This focus on circumcision enables us to define the major parties. The Galatians' uncircumcised state clearly identifies Paul's intended audience as gentiles.²⁵ In contrast, the advocacy of law-based circumcision identifies the agitators as in some sense Jewish, whether non-Christian Jews, gentile Christian proselytes, or, as most interpreters have

²⁵ Contra Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Letters of Paul* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), 178-79, who instead understand Paul's argument as urging Hellenistic Israelites in the diaspora to resist the pressure to follow specifically Judean Israelite customs. This conclusion stems primarily from the observation that "Paul's proclamation was Israelite-specific in all of its dimensions: in its means of transmission . . . in its origin . . . in its medium . . . in its content . . . and in its rationale . . . Hence it is fairly obvious that this proclamation was meant specifically for Israelites" (12; cf. 14, 23). Within Galatians, Malina and Pilch find support for this conclusion in 2:15, where Paul purportedly characterizes the Galatians ("we") as "'Judeans by nature' and not sinners of non-Israelite origin" (200). Interpreting φύσει as indicative of what was customary, natural and "traceable to origins, to creation," they then conclude that, "[g]iven this understanding of nature [and the non-Israelites' sinful nature], it should be apparent that non-Israelites could not 'convert' to Judaism, the customary and usual qualities and behaviors of Judeans" (200). Even allowing this problematical understanding of φύσις—did God not have to overcome the Israelites' Adamic φύσις at some point?—this reading of 2:15 still requires that Paul "uses the non-Israelite name [i.e., 'Judeans'] for Israelites" (200), but nothing in the text signals a shift to this "outsider" use of Ἰουδαῖοι after the necessarily more limited, "insider" use of Ἰουδαῖος/Ἰουδαϊκῶς to refer to Judeans and their customs in 2:13-14. More importantly, since the Jesus movement did spread relatively quickly to gentiles and since the church has consistently associated Paul with this extension, Malina and Pilch need to establish not just that we *can* read Paul as an apostle to [the non-Judean Israelites among] the nations, but that we *should*. In other words, they need to show why the traditional understanding of Paul's gentile-mission fails to make sense of his texts. Simply observing that his gospel derived from and concerned Israelite traditions cannot justify such a massive re-reading of the evidence since the traditional understanding of Paul's gospel and mission already incorporates and accounts for these Israelite features.

claimed, Jewish Christians. Other aspects of 6:12-13 help us to decide between these three options.

For example, the agitators' proposed motivation of avoiding persecution for "the cross of Christ" in 6:12 suggests that they are Christian, a conclusion finding further support in the portrayal of their message as a different "gospel" (εὐαγγέλιον) that effectively distorts "the gospel of Christ" in 1:6-7.²⁶ Mark Nanos challenges this consensus view, however. According to Nanos, since the gentile Galatian Christians would not have accepted any devaluing of Christ's significance in favor of Jewish practices, specifically Christian "influencers" would have to have shared Paul's understanding that Christ makes the gentiles full members of the people of God apart from circumcision and law observance.²⁷ The claim in 6:12 would then undermine the influencers' professed commitment to both the Christian (since they surrender core beliefs in the face of persecution) and the Jewish (since they adopt Jewish measures only out of expediency and promote them only out of a desire for self-aggrandizement) aspects of their faith. Given the missionary zeal that this supposedly irresolute and insincere faith has produced, Paul could hardly expect such an attack to convince his addressees. Nanos therefore instead identifies the influencers as non-Christian Jews, arguing that Paul uses εὐαγγέλιον ironically to describe a non-Christian message in 1:6-7 and that the agitators

²⁶ So, e.g., Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians* (WBC 41; Nashville: Nelson Reference & Electronic, 1990), xciv.

²⁷ Nanos, *Irony*, 222 n. 24, notes that the other option—duplicity—would risk exposure.

shun persecution for the cross in 6:12 because they do not wish to be persecuted for a belief they do not share.²⁸

Nanos's critique of the traditional interpretation fails to convince, in large part because he unnecessarily restricts the possible scenarios involving Christian agitators. That is to say, his operating assumptions 1) that gentile Christians would not accept a "devalued" Christ and 2) that the influencers' motivation of enhancing their standing would keep them from making such an argument essentially presume that both the gentile Galatian Christians and their influencers privilege these other principles—a high view of Christ's significance and enhanced standing, respectively—above the truth of the gospel. Nanos's criteria thus presume that both groups exhibit the very irresoluteness that he rightly criticizes as untenable in the one Christian-influencer scenario that he considers.²⁹ In fact, the Galatians' opting for a gospel that effectively devalued Christ would seem to accord well with the letter's expressions of perplexed frustration and disappointment (e.g., 1:6; 3:1). The contrast between the agitators' "boasting" in the Galatians' flesh (6:13) and Paul's "boasting" in the cross (6:14) also seems to draw its argumentative force from the two parties' supposedly shared Christian outlook.

The proposed motivation of avoiding persecution for the cross in 6:12 also fits poorly with the identification of the agitators as non-Christian Jews. The problem arises

²⁸ Ibid., 284-316 (on 1:6-7) and 219-24, esp. 222-23 (on 6:12). See also Walter, "Paulus," 351-56.

²⁹ Nanos reaches this conclusion in part because he assumes that Paul's accusation in 6:12 accurately reflects the agitators' conscious motives. See, e.g., Nanos, *Irony*, 221-22. I see no reason, however, why we should assume that the agitators would endorse Paul's charge. Indeed, the need for Paul to justify (γάρ, 6:13) his accusation suggests that 6:12 makes a controversial claim.

in trying to imagine how this proposed motivation might apply to non-Christian agitators. If, as Nanos suggests, the gentile Christians' desire for Jewish acceptance drives the Galatian crisis, then non-Christian Jewish agitators would require circumcision not because they feared persecution by Jewish "social control agents"³⁰ but because they themselves regarded circumcision as a necessary component of Jewish identity. To criticize their motivation as a fear of persecution would therefore substitute a blatantly artificial accusation for the more obvious and compelling criticism that their position simply failed to take account of the cross.

The motivation in 6:12 could accordingly characterize non-Christian agitators accurately only if the potential persecution came from a third party who both 1) identified the uncircumcised Christians as Jews and 2) saw this identification as worthy of instigating persecution. Thus, non-Christian Jewish agitators might fear, for instance, that cross-based Christian claims to Jewish identity could lead the Romans to revoke the Jews' traditional religious privileges. In such a scenario, however, the threat of persecution would fall on the gentile Christians as well as on the Jewish agitators, yet Paul never implies that the agitators present such a threat as a potential motivation for the gentiles' circumcision, nor does he acknowledge it himself.³¹ Furthermore, 5:11 specifically characterizes the circumcision gospel as removing the "stumbling block of

³⁰ Ibid., 223. Even if non-Christian Jewish agitators did fear persecution by other Jews, the persecution would not be because of the cross—an object whose significance the agitators do not acknowledge in this scenario—but because of the gentiles' uncircumcision.

³¹ For Paul's applying the fear of persecution only to the agitators, see, e.g., Robert Jewett, "The Agitators and the Galatian Congregation," *NTS* 17 (1971): 198-212, 203; Nanos, *Irony*, 219-20.

the cross” (τὸ σκάνδαλον τοῦ σταυροῦ) that causes persecution, language suggesting that persecution for the cross comes from Jews (cf. 1 Cor 1:23). Accordingly, since it eliminates these problems and integrates well with the letter’s other instances of διώκω, all of which refer to Jewish persecution of Christians (1:13, 23; 4:29; 5:11), the traditional scenario in which Paul accuses Christian agitators of seeking to avoid persecution from non-Christian Jews better suits the argument in 6:12.

We must next ask whether Paul perceives these Jewish Christian agitators to be naturally born Jews or gentile Christian proselytes. Emanuel Hirsch makes perhaps the strongest case for gentile proselytes. He first suggests that the desire expressed in 5:12 for the agitators to go all the way and “castrate themselves” (ἀποκόψονται) makes superior sense if Paul directs it to those who undertook circumcision freely for the sake of Christianity, i.e., to gentile proselytes.³² Recognizing that such passionate outbursts need not be strictly logical, however, Hirsch builds his case primarily on the description of the agitators as οἱ περιτεμνόμενοι in 6:13, arguing that the participle’s present tense better fits the situation of recently circumcised gentile Christians than of Jews who had been circumcised shortly after birth.³³ He accordingly identifies the agitators as gentile

³² Emanuel Hirsch, “Zwei Fragen zu Galater 6,” *ZNW* 29 (1930): 192-97, 192. Cf. Peter Richardson, *Israel in the Apostolic Church* (SNTSMS 10; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 88-89.

³³ Hirsch, “Zwei Fragen,” 193. Cf. A. E. Harvey, “The Opposition to Paul,” in *The Galatians Debate: Contemporary Issues in Rhetorical and Historical Interpretation* (ed. Mark D. Nanos; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2007), 321-33, 326; repr. from vol. 4 of *Studia evangelica* (ed. F. L. Cross; TUGAL 102; Berlin: Akademie, 1968); Johannes Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind* (trans. Clarke Frank; Richmond: John Knox, 1959), 87-89; Richardson, *Israel*, 88-89.

evangelists who had been circumcised in conjunction with the controversy at Antioch. Finding themselves unable to keep the law as well as their more practiced Jewish counterparts (6:13), these proselytes nevertheless sought to make up for their failings as Jews and earn glory through the law by winning converts to circumcision.³⁴

Despite its promise of explaining the present tense of περιτεμνόμενοι, this understanding of the agitators as gentile proselytes nevertheless encounters two major problems. First, George Howard rightly questions whether it actually does account for the participle's present tense, noting that it "presses the contemporaneity of a verb which denotes a one time event."³⁵ While the participle might reasonably refer to those Galatian gentiles being circumcised in the present situation, we have little warrant for extending the scope of the present tense to include the prior circumcision *only* of gentiles. This observation then raises the possibility of a homegrown agitation,³⁶ but the consistency with which Paul refers to the agitators in the third person, distinguishing them from the

³⁴ Ibid., 194-95.

³⁵ George Howard, *Crisis in Galatia* (2d ed.; SNTSMS 35; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 17. Cf. Jewett, "Agitators," 202-3, who further notes that reading περιτεμνόμενοι as a present middle causative participle would accurately reflect the agitators' present advocacy of circumcision.

³⁶ Ernest de Witt Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1980), 352-54, offers an alternative explanation in which οἱ περιτεμνόμενοι designates those who receive circumcision at the insistence of the agitators rather than the agitators themselves. This explanation falters in that the syntax of 6:13 seems to identify οἱ περιτεμνόμενοι in 6:13a as the grammatical subject of the following θέλουσιν in 6:13b, a verb that clearly does refer to the agitators.

Galatians (“you”) and never addressing them directly,³⁷ argues against it, as does the other major problem.

Second and more importantly, since the claim that οἱ περιτεμνόμενοι “do not themselves keep the law” (6:13) does not relate directly to the agitators’ proposed motivation of avoiding persecution in 6:12, it most likely justifies (γάρ) the preceding assertion by attacking the agitators’ ostensible motive for preaching circumcision. This observation in turn suggests that the agitators promoted circumcision based on the necessity of law observance, a motivation that their failure to keep the law in 6:13 would then purportedly expose as insincere. Paul, however, would likely have a difficult time advancing this charge of insincerity with respect to gentile proselytes who had themselves recently submitted to the painful process of circumcision. Furthermore, a failure to keep the law does not thereby invalidate the desire or need to keep it. Galatians 6:13 therefore truly justifies 6:12—i.e., truly exposes the agitators’ professed motive for preaching circumcision as insincere—only if the agitators intentionally disregard at least part of the law, a hard case to make for recent gentile proselytes or even traditional Jews. Paul could, however, legitimately make this charge against Christian Jews since, according to his gospel, they must have died to the law (2:19) in order to unite with the cursed-under-law Christ (3:13), thereby implicitly acknowledging that the law no longer

³⁷ For the problems with the suggestion of Troy W. Martin, “Apostasy to Paganism: The Rhetorical Stasis of the Galatian Controversy,” *JBL* 114 (1995): 437-61, 450-51, that 4:21-5:6 addresses the agitators, see §4.3.1.

applies in Christ (2:18; cf. 2:15-16).³⁸ Accordingly, however we understand the precise nuance of περιτεμνόμενοι,³⁹ the argument in 6:12-13 appears to suggest that the participle characterizes Christian Jews rather than recent gentile proselytes.

The traditional understanding of the agitators as Jewish Christians therefore seems correct. Paul's use of the present tense to portray their actions in the community (ζηλοῦσιν ὑμᾶς, 4:17; ἀναγκάζουσιν ὑμᾶς περιτέμνεσθαι, 6:12; cf. 6:13) and to characterize them as troublemakers (τινὲς εἰσὶν οἱ ταρασσόντες ὑμᾶς, 1:7 / ὁ . . . ταρασσὼν ὑμᾶς, 5:10) and agitators (οἱ ἀναστατοῦντες ὑμᾶς, 5:12) then further suggests that he assumes their continued presence in the Galatian churches.⁴⁰ As for the Galatians themselves, they have apparently found the agitators' arguments rather compelling (cf. 1:6-7; 3:1; 4:21; 5:7-8).⁴¹ Their attitude toward Paul also seems to have changed. Although they had originally received him "as an angel from God," even "as Christ Jesus" himself (4:14), Paul senses that they have now become hostile to him: "Where,

³⁸ On this point, see the fuller discussion in §2.5. Of course, this understanding of 6:13 also works if the perfect participle περιτετμημένοι represents the original reading.

³⁹ For the various ways of interpreting περιτεμνόμενοι and its variant περιτετμημένοι, see Nanos, *Irony*, 234-35; Richardson, *Israel*, 85-87.

⁴⁰ Stanley, "Curse," 489. Walter, "Paulus," 355, suggests that Paul does not view the agitators as present when the Galatian churches assemble since he does not address them directly and vigorously warns against their influence, a view that supports Walter's claim of Jewish opposition. Even this reading, however, still allows for the agitators' presence in the area—just not in the Christian assembly—and the lack of direct address could just as easily signify that Paul does not know the agitators and/or does not feel the same level of responsibility for them as he does for the Galatian Christians.

⁴¹ See, e.g., Barclay, "Mirror-Reading," 88.

then, is your blessing [ὁ μακαρισμὸς ὑμῶν]?⁴² . . . Have I become your enemy [ἐχθρός] by speaking truth to you?” (4:15-16).⁴³ Combined with the letter’s fierce rhetoric (e.g., 1:8-9; 5:12), these last two observations then make it difficult to see how the agitators could have viewed Paul favorably.⁴⁴ After all, given the Galatians’ favorable inclination toward this new teaching, why would they now see Paul as their enemy (4:16) if the agitators had presented themselves as allies who were simply completing his work (cf. 3:3)?

Paul himself appears to attribute this shift in affection to an allegation of the agitators, an allegation that we can discern through the practice of “mirror-reading.” John Barclay defines “mirror-reading” as the attempt to use a polemical text “as a *mirror* in which we can see reflected the people and the arguments under attack.”⁴⁵ He rightly notes the difficulties inherent in such a method, not the least of which involves discerning

⁴² Whether ὁ μακαρισμὸς ὑμῶν refers to the Galatians’ blessing of Paul or to their sense of being blessed by him, the question indicates a perceived shift in their attitude toward him.

⁴³ So, e.g., Martyn, *Galatians*, 419.

⁴⁴ For the agitators’ self-perception as allies of Paul, see, e.g., Howard, *Crisis*, 9-10; Francis Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles: Beyond the New Perspective* (rev. and exp. ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 113-15; Peder Borgen, “Paul Preaches Circumcision and Pleases Men,” in *Paul Preaches Circumcision and Pleases Men: and Other Essays on Christian Origins* (Trondheim, Norway: Tapir, 1983), 37-46, 39. With regard to the letter’s fierce rhetoric, Watson’s suggestion that Paul would adopt such a polemical tone simply “to make it unambiguously clear that he *does* oppose [the agitators], that he *does not* regard their activity as the completion and fulfillment of his own” (emphasis original) vastly understates the intent of a polemic that actively curses its opponents (1:8-9) and wishes for their castration (5:12). Such rhetoric seems more appropriate for striking back at an active opposition than for clarifying an innocent—albeit serious—misunderstanding.

⁴⁵ Barclay, “Mirror-Reading,” 73-74.

which statements (if any) directly rebut an opponent’s charge.⁴⁶ Indeed, George Lyons attributes most of the variation in scholarly reconstructions of the Galatian situation to the rather arbitrary selection of differing claims as refutations of the agitators’ key positions.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, Paul makes claims in 1:10 and 5:11 that, because they seek to correct mischaracterizations of the apostle, appear to have the clear character of refutations:

Gal 1:10

^aἌρτι γὰρ ἀνθρώπους πείθω ἢ τὸν θεόν; ^bἢ ζητῶ ἀνθρώποις ἀρέσκειν; ^cεἰ ἔτι ἀνθρώποις ἤρεσκον, Χριστοῦ δοῦλος οὐκ ἂν ἦμην.

^a*For now am I seeking favor with men or God?* ^b*Or am I seeking to please men?*
^c*If I were still pleasing men, I would not be a slave of Christ.*

Gal 5:11

^aἘγὼ δέ, ἀδελφοί, εἰ περιτομὴν ἔτι κηρύσσω, τί ἔτι διώκομαι; ^bἄρα κατήργηται τὸ σκάνδαλον τοῦ σταυροῦ.

^a*But as for me, brothers, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted?*
^b*Then the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished.*

Of the two statements, the one in 5:11 more obviously functions as a refutation: the rhetorical question in the apodosis—“why am I still persecuted?”—highlights a fatal

⁴⁶ Barclay identifies four primary pitfalls: undue selectivity, over-interpretation, mishandling polemics, and latching onto particular phrases or words as echoes of the opponents’ vocabulary. See *Ibid.*, 79-83.

⁴⁷ George Lyons, *Pauline Autobiography: Toward a New Understanding* (SBLDS 73; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), 95.

flaw with the picture of Paul as a preacher of circumcision (cf. 5:11b), thereby indicating that the statement as a whole serves to disprove the possibility put forward in the protasis.⁴⁸ Since Paul clearly did not preach circumcision to the Galatians, the need for him to deny his status as such a preacher provides strong evidence that the agitators had portrayed him in that way.⁴⁹

In contrast, in the parallel εἰ + ἔτι construction of 1:10c, the apodosis—“I would not be a slave of Christ”—does not refute the possibility put forward in its protasis so much as it highlights a troubling implication. Designating oneself as a “slave of Christ,” after all, hardly represents the kind of objective evidence that would overturn an accusation of people-pleasing.⁵⁰ By providing a compelling reason for Paul to avoid such behavior, however, the statement does effectively affirm his commitment to integrity in the present argument. It thus implies a negative answer to the preceding question in 1:10b, “am I seeking to please men?” The critical issue, then, is whether this affirmation of sincerity seeks to rebut a prior accusation or simply adds rhetorical flourish.

⁴⁸ Whether the ἔτι implies that Paul formerly preached circumcision before his encounter with Christ or earlier in his Christian life—or something else altogether—need not concern us here.

⁴⁹ Contra, e.g., Jürgen Becker, “Der Brief an die Galater,” in *Die Briefe an die Galater, Epheser und Kolosser* (NTD 8/1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 9-103, 79-80, who, finding it strange that Paul would not address such an accusation earlier in the letter, suggests that “preach circumcision” instead constitutes a Pauline antithesis to “proclaim Christ” that invites the Galatians to reflect on the different content of the two gospels. The critique of Borgen, “Circumcision,” 44 n. 3, that Becker’s suggestion does not take sufficient account of the assumed-to-be-true nature of Paul’s first-class conditional has force even if it does not ultimately prove decisive.

⁵⁰ Cf. Burton, *Galatians*, 33: “The appeal, however, is not to the *fact* that he was a servant of Christ—this his opponents to whose criticisms he is at this moment addressing himself, would not have conceded—but to his own consciousness of the incongruity of men-pleasing and the service of Christ.”

Although a few scholars deny that 1:10 responds to a claim of the agitators,⁵¹ contextual considerations suggest otherwise. First, the agitators would have to explain why, if Paul preaches circumcision (cf. 5:11), he failed to preach circumcision in Galatia. The accusation that Paul had compromised the gospel to make it more agreeable to the gentile Galatians thus fulfills a requirement of the basic scenario. Second, the threefold repetition of the rhetorical point in 1:10 gives the verse a strong polemical edge, as does the emphatic ἄρτι. Third, whether the γάρ in 1:10 has its customary causal sense (likely identifying the verse as a justification for the presupposition of 1:8-9 that Paul everywhere preaches the same gospel) or a more inferential force,⁵² it suggests that 1:10 takes Paul's present (ἄρτι; cf. 1:9) willingness to pronounce a curse on anyone—including himself—who preaches a different gospel (1:8-9) as evidence that he does not seek to please people at the expense of the gospel.⁵³ This need for 1:10 to establish his evangelistic integrity then suggests that the verse functions as a refutation. Finally, that the remainder of Gal 1-2 seeks to establish the divine, revelatory nature of Paul's law-free gospel (1:11-12; cf. 1:15-19; 2:6-10)—i.e., showing that it is not a truncated Pauline

⁵¹ E.g., Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 56, esp. n. 115; Lyons, *Pauline Autobiography*, 91-95; Jerry L. Sumney, 'Servants of Satan', 'False Brothers' and Other Opponents of Paul (JSNTSup 188; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 148-49.

⁵² On the dearth of clear evidence for the existence of an inferential γάρ, see Geneva Misener, *The Meaning of ΓΑΡ* (Baltimore: The Lord Baltimore Press, 1904), followed by Burton, *Galatians*, 31.

⁵³ So, e.g., Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, "Critical and Exegetical Hand-book to the Epistle to the Galatians," in *Galatians and Ephesians* (Meyer's Commentary on the New Testament 7; New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1884), 1-275, 20: "explanatory justification (γάρ) of the harsh language [in 1:8-9]."

construction—and his faithfulness to it even in the face of oppositon (e.g., 2:5, 11-14) also supports this scenario.⁵⁴

The agitators thus seem to have portrayed Paul as someone who prized pleasing people over the truth of the gospel. Their own advocacy of the circumcision gospel and the extended defense of the law-free gospel's revelatory nature in Gal 1-2 indicate that they interpreted his preaching of the law-free gospel in this way.⁵⁵ His purported preaching of circumcision (cf. 5:11) would then serve as a proof for the compromised nature of the law-free gospel and/or as a further illustration of the tainted character of all Paul's evangelistic efforts.⁵⁶ Either way, the alleged duplicity accounts for the Galatians'

⁵⁴ For the problems with traditional views that interpret Gal 1-2—and the programmatic 1:11-12 in particular—as primarily defending Paul's apostleship and his relationship (or lack thereof) to Jerusalem, see, e.g., Lyons, *Pauline Autobiography*, 83-91; Bernard Lategan, "Is Paul Defending His Apostleship in Galatians? The Function of Galatians 1.11-12 and 2.19-20 in the Development of Paul's Argument," *NTS* 34 (1988): 411-30.

⁵⁵ Despite the improbability that circumcision advocates would appeal to Paul's purported preaching of circumcision as the compromise proving his willingness to please people at the expense of the gospel, a few scholars still suggest ways to maintain this way of connecting the two accusations. For example, Ropes, *Singular Problem*, 21-22, appeals to the connection's improbability as evidence not that the charge of compromising the gospel has a different basis but that Paul faces a second oppositional party, an unlikely scenario given the lack of explicit differentiation in Paul's argument. Borgen, "Circumcision," 41-42, in contrast, argues for the connection by suggesting that "people-pleasing" represents Paul's own negative characterization of the agitators' positive-but-mistaken endorsement of him as a preacher of circumcision. The defense of Paul's law-free gospel in Gal 1-2 undermines this latter suggestion.

⁵⁶ For Paul's preaching of circumcision (5:11) as the agitators' proof for the compromised nature of his law-free gospel (1:10)—a view often associated with the more problematical claim that the agitators also accused Paul of dependence on Jerusalem—see, e.g. Johannes Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind* (trans. Clarke Frank; Richmond: John Knox, 1959), 90. For the view that the agitators more sinisterly portrayed Paul's preaching of circumcision as equally tainted, see, e.g., Ronald Y. K. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 48, 240, who glosses the phrase "preach circumcision" in typical fashion as "not discountenancing the practice of circumcision among Jewish Christians" (240). This latter view can appeal to 1 Cor 9:20-23 for support—"And I became to the Jews as a Jew so that I might win Jews . . . to those without law as one without law . . . so that I might win those without law . . . to all people I have become all things so that by all means I might save some"—but it has a major difficulty: as the awkwardness of Fung's gloss highlights, the concept of "preaching circumcision" relates more naturally to the context of a gentile mission where it would be a live question. Even granting

newfound hostility in 4:15-16: they believe that Paul lied to them, that he knowingly presented them with a truncated, and thus false, gospel. That the Galatians could believe him capable of such duplicity explains Paul's perplexity and his desire to be with them in 4:20. Surely, he seems to say, he has misunderstood the situation; if only he were present with them he would be able to change his tone (ἀλλάξαι τὴν φωνήν μου, 4:20).

Paul might indeed have an inaccurate grasp of the actual circumstances in Galatia, but it is that potentially inaccurate grasp that nevertheless shapes his understanding of the task at hand. In short, he needs to refute the rather compelling arguments of the still-present Jewish Christian agitators so as to persuade the presently-hostile gentile Galatian Christians to return to the true gospel of Christ. Even when interpreters have recognized this situation, they still often fail to appreciate the rhetorical demands that it imposes, demands that Paul would no doubt have felt keenly given his conviction that a failure to persuade would effectively bring his labor among the Galatians—and all that they have

that the charge envisions the preaching of circumcision to Jews (cf. Acts 21:21), however, I see no reason for the agitators to regard such a preaching of the, from their perspective, true gospel to Jews as insincere. D. W. B. Robinson, "The Circumcision of Titus, and Paul's 'Liberty,'" *ABR* 12 (1964): 24-42, 36, accordingly presents a much stronger case for this latter option when he suggests that the accusation derives from Paul's occasional circumcising of *gentiles* to please *Jews*. Pointing to the claim in Gal 2:3 that the Jerusalem apostles did not *compel* Titus's circumcision, Robinson suggests that Titus was, in fact, circumcised with Paul's blessing/encouragement, just not under compulsion (cf. the δέ in 2:4). The "false brothers" who observed this act of Christian "liberty" then wrongly sought to transform circumcision into a requirement of the gospel (2:4), a position that Paul refused to countenance (2:5). Nevertheless, such a scenario could easily give rise to the characterization of Paul as one who "varied his policy on circumcision to please men." Cf., too, Acts 16:3, where Paul reportedly circumcises Timothy—the son of a Jewish mother and Greek father in Lystra—"because of the Jews." Robinson's proposed scenario would certainly enable the agitators to question the sincerity of Paul's circumcision preaching, yet another problem remains: the initial ἔτι, the explanation in 5:11b—superfluous and awkward if, as in Robinson's scenario, the mere fact of the persecution rebuts the charge that Paul seeks to placate Jews (*Ibid.*, 38)—and the role of 5:11 in the context of 5:2-12 all seem to presuppose a sincere preaching of circumcision.

suffered—to naught (4:11; cf. 3:4). We must accordingly ask, in light of this situation, what type(s) of argument would Paul consider likely to persuade the Galatians?

An argument that accords with Paul’s persuasive intent should account for two factors in particular. First, so far as Paul knows, the agitators remain with the Galatians; they will accordingly enjoy the last word in the debate. They will have the freedom to rebut the letter’s arguments and reassert their own understanding of the gospel with relative impunity. Furthermore, the agitators have successfully marginalized Paul’s gospel once already. He therefore needs an argument robust enough to withstand a knowledgeable and skilled rebuttal.⁵⁷ In this respect, regardless of whether or not the agitators introduced Abraham into the discussion, scholarly reconstructions of the agitators’ purported Abrahamic argument provide a helpful gauge for understanding the position that Paul’s argument must ultimately overcome.⁵⁸

Second, the agitators—not Paul—currently enjoy the Galatians’ favor. Even if one questions the specific reconstruction offered above, the apologetic nature of Gal 1-2 suggests that Paul understands the agitators to have in some way impugned his gospel and, thus, his authority. The lack-of-blessing / “enemy” language in 4:15-16 would then seem to portray the Galatians as at best neutral in their attitude toward Paul. Paul

⁵⁷ If, as Stanley, “Curse,” 489, suggests, Paul’s vague references to the agitators—he refers to them as “certain ones” (τινές, 1:7), twice asks “who” (τίς) has bewitched (3:1) / hindered (5:7) the Galatians, and dismisses the one troubling them as “whoever he is” (ὅστις ἐάν ᾤ, 5:10)—indicate his ignorance as to the identity and, thus, weaknesses of his rhetorical adversaries, then the need for a robust argument would only increase. Paul could, however, have referred to the agitators in these vague terms simply to belittle them.

⁵⁸ See, e.g., Martyn, *Galatians*, 303-6.

therefore cannot expect the Galatians to accept any conclusions based solely on his apostolic authority. (Significantly, he does not reassert the privileges of such authority until the end of the letter, i.e., until he has already re-established the trustworthiness of his gospel on other grounds: “From now on, let no one make trouble for me, for I bear the scars of Christ in my body” [6:17].) Moreover, although modern scholars—especially those who look to Paul for an authoritative articulation of their shared faith—often grant him the benefit of the doubt in trying to make sense of his argument, we have no indication that he would have expected the same courtesy from his original audience. He cannot assume that the Galatians would puzzle over his meaning through multiple readings and in-depth study of his letter. That is to say, he cannot assume that he has more than one shot to make a compelling case for both the truth of his own gospel and the inadequacy of the agitators’ position.

Paul therefore needs a compelling argument that is both 1) easily comprehended by the gentile Galatians and 2) resistant to easy refutation by the Jewish agitators. At a very basic level, then, we should expect a straightforwardly coherent argument; otherwise, the agitators could refute it simply by pointing out inconsistencies and/or logical problems. Furthermore, we would expect Paul to ground his argument in a logic accessible to the gentile Galatians. The standard propositional and syllogistic formulations of Aristotelian and Stoic logic,⁵⁹ e.g., therefore seem more likely to shape his argument than implicit appeals to peculiarly Jewish forms of reasoning such as

⁵⁹ On logic in the ancient world, see Moisés Mayordomo, *Argumentiert Paulus logisch? Eine Analyse vor dem Hintergrund antiker Logik* (WUNT 188; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 27-90.

midrashic or rabbinic logic. Interpretations that depend on appeals to rare meanings of conjunctions and other words seem similarly unlikely to reflect Paul's intended argument.

These two criteria also limit the way in which a potentially persuasive argument could presume upon shared knowledge. To the extent that the argument relies on unstated premises or steps, these presumed elements should be both obvious to the Galatians (lest they lose Paul's train of thought) and fundamentally acceptable to all involved (lest the agitators refute Paul's conclusions as unwarranted). The first point diminishes the attraction of interpretations requiring that the gentile Galatians supply information from, e.g., Jewish apocalyptic thought, a body of thought with which they seem unlikely to have been very familiar. The second casts doubt upon attempts to ground perceived logical leaps in implicit appeals to Paul's former teachings, i.e., teachings that the agitators have already succeeded in calling into question. Of course, the Galatians would presumably remember at least the broad outlines and major emphases of his gospel. Paul's prior teachings thus form an important background against which he could expect the Galatians to hear his letter. Nevertheless, a step-by-step argument building from first principles would have a much better chance of success than an argument where crucial steps depend on the Galatians' ability and willingness to supply detailed information that they may have forgotten, rejected, or never known in the first place.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Douglas A. Campbell, *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 836, observes that the Galatians "prolonged exposure to [Paul's] teaching"—including a likely second visit (cf. τὸ πρότερον, 4:13)—would enable Paul to "presuppose a great deal of information." Even granting this observation, the Galatians' current distrust of Paul's gospel and the agitators' ability to refute his position temper the degree to which we would therefore expect an argument characterized by "concise," "abbreviated allusion," especially with regard to potentially controversial points.

Scriptural citations and allusions—which appear especially frequently in Gal 3:6-14—present a special type of appeal to shared knowledge and accordingly deserve a separate discussion.⁶¹ Scholars have increasingly sought to explain portions of Paul’s argument by appealing to the original context of his scriptural citations. While I affirm that New Testament authors can and do use citations to evoke larger narratives and patterns, it seems an improbable strategy for Paul to employ in Galatians given the letter’s intensely polemical context. That is to say, he seems unlikely to stake the Galatians’ fate on their desire and ability to intuit such complex arguments, especially since we have no reason to suspect that they would have been sufficiently familiar with Israel’s scriptures for such evocations to work. Both Paul’s references to their pagan past (4:8-10) and his claim to have evangelized them due to an infirmity (4:13)⁶²—significantly, not because they heard him preaching in a synagogue (as, e.g., in Acts 13:43; 14:1; 17:1-4, 10-12; 18:4)—argue against understanding the Galatians as synagogue-attending God-fearers before their conversion.⁶³ Their understanding of the

⁶¹ For a critical examination of the assumptions scholars often make regarding Paul’s biblical citations, including issues of the access to texts, study habits, and overall scriptural familiarity and competency of a typical Pauline congregation, see Stanley, *Arguing*, 40-60.

⁶² Lit., “a weakness of the flesh.” Troy W. Martin, “Whose Flesh? What Temptation? (Galatians 4.13-14),” *JSNT* 74 (1999): 65-91, 78, relates the phrase to the Galatians’ uncircumcised state, with Paul’s circumcised flesh then constituting the potential temptation for disdain in 4:14. According to Paul’s gospel, however, an uncircumcised state does *not* represent a weakness of the flesh, making this reading of ἀσθένειαν τῆς σαρκός an odd concession to the agitators’ position as well as an odd way of characterizing the reason for Paul’s evangelizing the Galatians.

⁶³ Contra, e.g., A. E. Harvey, “The Opposition to Paul,” in *The Galatians Debate: Contemporary Issues in Rhetorical and Historical Interpretation* (ed. Mark D. Nanos; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2007), 321-33, 325; repr. from vol. 4 of *Studia evangelica* (ed. F. L. Cross; TUGAL 102; Berlin: Akademie, 1968), who suggests that Paul’s arguments “could only have been followed by [Jews and]

scriptures would therefore have to have come from Paul's teachings, teachings that, as noted above, Paul would presumably want to justify and explain rather than assume.⁶⁴

At the same time, however, Paul would also need to make sure that the significance he attributes to his scriptural citations conforms to their original context. The agitators would surely have little trouble refuting arguments that depended on misquotations or misapplications of scripture: they would need only to read (or cite from memory if texts were not available) the quoted verse in its original context to expose such misappropriations.⁶⁵ Accordingly, to have the best chance at persuasion, an argument would cite scripture in such a way that Paul's point would be clear even to those with little scriptural knowledge while its validity would be clear even to those with extensive scriptural knowledge.⁶⁶ In other words, the significance that Paul attributes to a citation should ideally agree with but not depend on its original context.

Gentiles who were already well grounded in the Old Testament and in Jewish methods of scriptural exegesis," i.e., God-fearers from the synagogue.

⁶⁴ Cf. Stanley, *Arguing*, 64: "[E]ven where Paul had taught his audiences personally from the Jewish scriptures (as in Galatia and Corinth), he could not be certain how much they would recall from his earlier instruction, and he had no way of knowing precisely which passages they had discussed in his absence."

⁶⁵ Stanley notes that we cannot assume Pauline congregations would have had access to biblical scrolls (Ibid., 41-43). The agitators, however, could have brought a few scrolls with them (cf. 2 Tim 4:13), and different congregations in Galatia might have had access to different scrolls, meaning that Paul's safest course would be to make arguments that neither assumed nor hoped to avoid such access.

⁶⁶ On the interpretive implications of the probable variation in scriptural literacy among Paul's audience members—including a four-fold "typology of possible audience reactions to Paul's biblical quotations"—see Ibid., 66-68.

To conclude, given Paul's understanding of the rhetorical situation, a potentially persuasive argument would be an argument that the gentile Galatians could easily comprehend and the Jewish agitators could not easily refute. It should therefore cohere logically in both part and whole, use language in a straightforward manner, and explicitly articulate its crucial steps. It should not make implicit appeals to Jewish literature / thought or Jewish forms of reasoning with which Paul's gentile audience would likely be unfamiliar. Finally, the scriptural appeals in such an argument should be both eminently clear and exegetically reasonable. I could perhaps add other characteristics as well, but this discussion hopefully suffices to establish the basic way in which Paul's persuasive intent functions as an evaluative criterion.

Once again, we cannot simply assume that Paul's argument will always conform to this ideal any more than we can assume that the presence of such an argument would necessarily persuade the Galatians. Paul might, for instance, lapse into a particularly Jewish way of reasoning without realizing that the gentile Galatians might have difficulty following his argument. At every step, then, we will have to examine the actual argument to see how close it comes to this ideal. Given the aforementioned indications that the letter contains a potentially persuasive argument, however, I do suggest that, as a general principle, we should prefer interpretations that conform more closely to this standard. Furthermore, even if we ultimately conclude that Paul does not present a potentially persuasive argument, foregrounding the issue still provides a helpful check against interpretations where it seems not to have factored at all.

J. Louis Martyn's analysis provides perhaps the pre-eminent illustration of this need for a criterion of persuasive intent, if only because his grasp of the rhetorical situation seems so promising:

The document is a letter, crafted in order to speak to a circle of listeners who were well known to Paul, and whom he considered to be in a life-and-death crisis. Paul knew, in fact, that the Galatians would hear his letter with the sermons of the Teachers still ringing in their ears, and with the Teachers themselves still in their midst, more than ready to continue their sermons, forming them largely as interpretive refutations of Paul's letter. In this situation Paul gave considerable thought to the way in which his words would strike the ears of the original listeners, one of his major concerns being to draw unmistakable distinctions between his own theology and that of the Teachers. . . . It becomes doubly important, then, for the modern interpreter to take a seat in one of the Galatian congregations, in order—as far as possible—to listen to the letter with Galatian ears.⁶⁷

Martyn rightly notes the controversy's high stakes ("life-and-death crisis") and the agitators' ability to refute Paul's arguments. The characterization of Paul's primary task as distinguishing his gospel from the gospel of the Teachers rather than as persuading the Galatians of the correctness of his gospel seems more problematical. This characterization, however, is hardly accidental.

Martyn strongly resists the idea that Paul would seek to persuade his audience rhetorically, explaining his position in this way:

because Paul's rhetoric presupposes God's action through Paul's words, this rhetoric proves to be more revelatory and performative than hortatory and

⁶⁷ Martyn, *Galatians*, 42.

persuasive, although it is both. . . . To take an example, in writing this letter, Paul is not at all formulating an argument designed to persuade the Galatians that faith is better than observance of the Law. He is constructing an announcement designed to wake the Galatians up to the real cosmos.⁶⁸

Martyn thus contends that the letter constitutes a re-proclamation of the gospel rather than a piece of persuasive rhetoric. Indeed, a brief look at Martyn's interpretation of the first few verses of Paul's Abrahamic argument reveals a reading with practically no foreseeable chance of persuading the Galatians outside of divine intervention.

Noting that Gal 3:6-4:7 "places a heavier interpretive burden on [Paul's] Galatian audience,"⁶⁹ Martyn begins by suggesting that the identification of "faith-people" as Abraham's sons (3:7) based on Abraham's example (3:6) effectively locates the antinomy between "Law-people" and "faith-people" in the Abraham story itself.⁷⁰ The very existence of this antinomy, however, would constitute the core of Paul's disagreement with the agitators. To persuade his audience, he would accordingly need to establish this antinomy, not presume/proclaim it as he does in Martyn's analysis.

Moving to 3:8, Martyn argues that Paul employs a "simple syllogism": A. God is rectifying the gentiles based on the faith of Jesus Christ; B. The God who performs this rectification is Abraham's God; therefore, C. The promise to bless the nations spoken to Abraham was the gospel of Christ.⁷¹ Needless to say, the two suggested premises do not

⁶⁸ Ibid., 23.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 296.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 299.

⁷¹ Ibid., 301.

lead to the proposed conclusion: that the God who promises to bless the gentiles also rectifies the gentiles based on the faith of Jesus does not imply that this faith-based rectification must be the promised blessing. The proposed argument thus once again presumes the very point the agitators would dispute.

As for 3:9, Martyn suggests that Paul somehow derives the conclusion that “οἱ ἐκ πίστεως are blessed with Abraham” from the preceding claims that “οἱ ἐκ πίστεως are sons of Abraham” (3:7) and that “all the gentiles will be blessed in [Abraham]” (3:8, citing Gen 12:3 according to Martyn).⁷² I will detail the problems with this proposed derivation more fully in §2.3.1.2; here I simply note that, not only do the proposed premises require the introduction of an additional (problematical) implied premise to produce the given conclusion logically, but identifying the potential motive for an argument that appeals to the gentiles’ reception of the Abrahamic blessing to make a broader claim about οἱ ἐκ πίστεως also proves difficult. Nevertheless, Martyn’s most puzzling claim comes in his analysis of 3:10, where he claims that Paul interprets a text cursing non-observers of the law (3:10b, citing Deut 27:26) as applying to observers of the law (3:10a) in order to establish that “the curse of the Law falls on both observer and non-observer.”⁷³

Regardless of whether or not Martyn correctly classifies Galatians as kerygmatic proclamation, the letter clearly makes arguments. It puts forth premises and draws

⁷² Ibid., 302.

⁷³ Ibid., 311.

conclusions. While I can appreciate and even agree with the claim that Paul understands the effectiveness of his gospel to depend on divine empowering and illumination rather than rhetorical sophistry, I can also see no reason why the apostle would therefore purposely make bad arguments. Nor do I suggest that Martyn intends this implication; his comments serve primarily to highlight the “limits to the pertinence of [formal] rhetorical analysis.”⁷⁴ Martyn does contend, however, that by incorporating the phrase “sons of Abraham,” Gen 12:3, and Deut 27:26 into his argument in Gal 3:6-10, Paul effectively turns these key elements of the agitators’ gospel against them.⁷⁵ I find it hard to imagine that Paul would expect anyone not only to follow such convoluted and illogical arguments but also to find them more compelling than the agitators’ purported alternative reading of the Abrahamic evidence.

In short, I suggest that Martyn’s analysis goes astray because his Paul does not engage in the very task that Martyn himself rightly encourages later interpreters to do, namely, putting himself in the place of the Galatian congregation. In other words, Martyn’s Paul does not seem to have considered what kind of arguments the Galatians might find persuasive in the given situation. Surely a Paul who found his Galatian converts, his children in the gospel (4:19), in danger of being severed from Christ (5:4) would offer a more compelling defense of his gospel than this reading of 3:6-10 suggests!

⁷⁴ Ibid., 21. He even claims that “Paul is free to use all the rhetorical skill he can muster, taking every stratagem captive to Christ, so as to preach the gospel itself in the form of an evangelical argument” (148).

⁷⁵ Ibid., 299, 301, 309-11.

As the following chapters of this dissertation will document, however, Martyn hardly stands alone—his puzzling interpretation of 3:10 notwithstanding—in suggesting these kinds of problematical readings of Paul’s Abrahamic arguments.

1.3 Identifying a coherent model of Abrahamic descent that accords with Paul’s persuasive intent

This dissertation argues that Paul does indeed present the Galatians with a coherent account of Abrahamic descent that accords with his persuasive intent to refute the agitators’ call for a law-based circumcision. Its key insight lies in the suggestion that Paul understands the Abrahamic διαθήκη in 3:15-18 as akin to a Hellenistic adoptive testament. As a result, the promised Abrahamic seed must be both a son of Abraham and, because of Abraham’s divine adoption through the διαθήκη, a son of God, hence Paul’s identification of Christ as Abraham’s sole seed (3:16).

This twofold understanding of the Abrahamic seed then suggests a distinction in Paul’s other terms for Abrahamic descent. I accordingly argue that “sons of Abraham” in 3:7 designates, as it typically did in the mid-first century C.E., the Jews, i.e., those physical descendants of Abraham who also share his faith. In contrast, “children of promise” in 4:28 designates gentiles who have through faith received the Abrahamic blessing, i.e., the Spirit of sonship that makes them children of God.⁷⁶ Each group thus

⁷⁶ As the end of the paragraph will make clear, it is the gentiles’ union with the Jewish sons of Abraham in Christ that actually makes them Abrahamic children of promise.

requires incorporation into Christ to establish their status as Abrahamic seed, but they require it for different reasons. The Jews require incorporation so that they might share in the gentiles' divine sonship; the gentiles require incorporation so that they might share in the Jews' Abrahamic sonship. The resulting union of Jew and gentile in Christ—the union, that is, of the Jewish sons of Abraham and the gentile sons of God—then constitutes the single divine Abrahamic seed who inherits (3:29).

As the following pages will show, this understanding of Abrahamic descent results from the search for a coherent argument in Gal 3-4 that accords with Paul's persuasive intent. The apparent demise of the Hellenistic practice of testamentary adoption in the centuries after Paul also helps to explain why even the ancient commentators on Galatians seem oblivious to this understanding. Without an awareness of the practice of testamentary adoption, it becomes easier to conflate the different terms for Abrahamic descent, especially once the church had grown comfortable with the idea, promoted in Galatians, of gentile Christians as Abrahamic seed. This tendency to conflate the different terms then leads to the problematical, often incoherent arguments that typically characterize both ancient and modern interpretations.

To make its case, the dissertation devotes a chapter to analyzing each term of Abrahamic descent in the context of its surrounding argument. In general, each chapter steps through the specified portion of Paul's argument, highlighting the various problems with current interpretations before making its constructive proposals. Although the focus lies on establishing the coherent theological content in Paul's argument, the appeal to Paul's persuasive intent as a guide to discerning that content requires that I also consider

the various rhetorical strategies that he employs. Rather than seeking to classify the arguments according to particular rhetorical models or categories, however, I instead employ a text-based approach that seeks simply to articulate the logic of Paul's arguments.⁷⁷

Since the Abrahamic seed's dual nature provides the overarching theological framework that justifies the proposed distinction between sons, seed, and children of promise as images of Abrahamic descent, it would in many ways make sense to begin the dissertation, as I did the brief summary above, with the analysis of Paul's "seed" language in 3:15-4:11. The first reference to Abrahamic descent, however, comes in 3:6-14, and we cannot assume that the Galatians would initially understand this earlier argument in light of a framework that Paul does not develop until 3:15-4:11. The dissertation's structure accordingly follows Paul's lead, opening in Chapter 2 with a largely independent argument for the necessity of understanding "sons of Abraham" in the context of 3:6-14 as a reference to Jews. The foundational analysis of Christ as the sole Abrahamic "seed" in 3:15-4:11 then follows in Chapter 3, with Chapter 4 discussing the portrayal of the gentile Galatians as "children of promise" in 4:21-5:1. Finally, Chapter 5 concludes the dissertation by summarizing the results, drawing implications, and identifying areas for further research.

⁷⁷ For defense of a similar text-based approach to Paul's rhetoric, see, e.g., D. Francois Tolmie, *Persuading the Galatians: A Text-Centred Rhetorical Analysis of a Pauline Letter* (WUNT 2 / 190; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 24-28. He notes several problems with the alternative, oft-employed strategy of seeking to apply a particular rhetorical system to Paul's argument: the "stretching" of the model to fit the data that often occurs; the lack of a unified rhetorical system in antiquity; the reliance on rhetorical handbooks as guides to evaluating rather than composing speeches; and our ignorance of any formal rhetorical training on Paul's part.

2. “These are sons of Abraham”: Jewish sonship and the Abrahamic blessing of the gentiles in Galatians 3:6-14

2.1 Introduction

Paul first introduces Abraham and the concept of Abrahamic descent into the argument of Galatians through a citation of Gen 15:6 in Gal 3:6-7:

Just as Abraham “believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness” [Gen 15:6], so you know that οἱ ἐκ πίστεως, these are sons of Abraham.

According to Hans Dieter Betz, these two verses establish the “exegetical thesis” that Paul seeks to prove in 3:6-14 through a series of scriptural appeals, namely, that “[t]he sons of the ‘believer’ Abraham are the Christians [i.e., Jews and gentiles] who believe like Abraham.”¹ As the concluding reference to the reception of the Spirit in 3:14b then shows, this “argument from scripture” parallels and complements the preceding argument from the Galatians’ experience of the Spirit in 3:1-5. Experience and scripture thus agree on the legitimacy and sufficiency of the gentiles’ faith apart from Torah.²

While scholars might differ with the particular details of Betz’s analysis, his basic suggestion that 3:6-14 serves to induct the gentiles into Abraham’s family on the basis of

¹ Betz, *Galatians*, 138, 31.

² *Ibid.*, 31, 138-39.

faith alone stands as the almost axiomatic conclusion of a nearly universal tradition that stretches back at least as far as the earliest extant complete commentary on Galatians by John Chrysostom (ca. 400).³ In fact, the majority of scholarship both ancient and modern views the series of scriptural arguments in 3:6-14 primarily as a defense of this “Christian” sonship of Abraham. Having established this premise in 3:6-7 (so the argument goes), Paul shows in 3:8-9 that these ἐκ πίστεως (i.e., “Christian”) sons who receive Abraham’s blessing explicitly include gentiles. He then follows this positive argument for the inclusion of gentiles with a negative argument in 3:10-12 that essentially pits blessed Christian faith against cursed Jewish law observance so as to exclude—at the very least—Jews who do not believe in Jesus. Finally, 3:13-14 explains how Christ makes the possibility of attaining this blessed sonship available to everyone, to Jews and to gentiles, through the atonement wrought on the cross. The whole argument thus shows how the redefining of Abrahamic sonship based on faith in/of Christ allows the gentiles to partake as full members of Abraham’s family without Torah.

At the same time, modern scholars also largely agree on the rather arbitrary nature of the exegesis in this so-called argument from scripture. Many admit its problematical nature outright, often trying to salvage Paul’s apparently poor logic by appealing to his need to respond to the agitators’ arguments.⁴ Even the more restrained critiques typically include the caveat that we must judge Paul’s exegetical moves on the

³ Chrysostom, *In epistolam ad Galatas commentarius* (PG 61.650-653).

⁴ I will note examples throughout the chapter.

basis of first-century standards and not on the basis of modern historical-critical practice,⁵ a tacit admission that his argument has difficulties. These appeals to first-century standards then highlight the additional problem that this perceived argument makes little sense within the context of a first-century Jewish covenantal nomism that understood law observance as a grateful and faithful response to God's prior grace.

This chapter will argue that the logic of this passage appears so problematical because the traditional understanding of Abrahamic sonship in 3:6-14 fundamentally misreads both Paul's intention and his argument in this section of Galatians. To be sure, 3:8-13 does function largely as an argument from scripture (although not in the way typically described), and 3:8-10 does provide a scriptural basis for the gentiles' experience of the Spirit in 3:1-5. These elements, however, are only pieces of the larger argument that 3:6-14 makes about Abrahamic sonship. As I intend to show, this argument for sonship does not rest primarily on scripture, nor, more importantly, does it concern Christians more widely. Instead, 3:6-14 argues that *Jews* truly become Abraham's sons when they die to the law and effectively become gentiles by embracing the accursed Christ, an act of faith that proves them worthy of their forefather's example and enables them to share in the blessing that comes to the nations, i.e., the Spirit. Thus, in the type of counter-intuitive reversal characteristic of the gospel (cf. Mark 8:35 parr.; 1 Cor 1:21-25), Abraham's physical descendants through Isaac truly become full sons of Abraham only by abandoning their status as sons of Abraham.

⁵ E.g., Betz, *Galatians*, 137-38; Ben Witherington, III, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 218; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 110.

In other words, I contend that interpreters have consistently reversed the nature of Paul's argument in 3:6-14. The passage does not address how gentiles can become sons of Abraham and thus qualify for a share in Israel's blessing. Rather, it addresses how the sons of Abraham (i.e., the Jews) can qualify for a share in the gentiles' promised blessing, thereby showing the futility of the gentiles' seeking to become Jews. The pages that follow will identify the many factors that have contributed to this standard misreading, not the least of which is the assumption that οἱ ἐκ πίστεως stands as a synonym for "Christian."

According to my analysis, Paul's argument in 3:6-14 moves through four stages. Galatians 3:6-7 reminds his readers that Abraham's true sons must have a righteousness grounded in faith, a statement every good Jew could affirm. In 3:8-10, he proceeds to establish that gentiles receive Abraham's blessing through a righteousness grounded in a faith that does not—indeed, cannot—involve law observance. The introduction of this division between faith and law then provides the basis for the claim in 3:11-12 that the Jews' justification also ultimately rests on their faith and not on their works. Having carefully established each point, Paul finally concludes the argument in 3:13-14 by chiasmatically applying a christological twist to each of the preceding steps, with the result that 3:14b identifies the true sons of Abraham in 3:6-7 as those Jews who trust God enough to forsake the law and embrace the cursed Christ as gentiles. The argument thus justifies the division in 3:2-5 between a mere hearing of faith and a faith expressed through works of law, concluding that the former rather than the latter constitutes the basis for the Jews' reception of the Spirit even as it does for the gentiles.

This chapter will make its case by proceeding through the four suggested stages of Paul’s argument in 3:6-14. Each section will begin by discussing the problems that current interpretations of the given verses raise. It will then proceed to show how my proposed analysis makes better sense of the text, resolving the outstanding issues and identifying an argument that might actually have a chance of persuading the Galatians.

2.2 Galatians 3:6-7: Justification by faith as the basis of Jewish Abrahamic sonship

Gal 3:6-7

⁶καθὼς Ἀβραὰμ ἐπίστευσεν τῷ θεῷ, καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην.
⁷Γινώσκετε ἄρα ὅτι οἱ ἐκ πίστεως, οὗτοι υἱοὶ εἰσὶν Ἀβραάμ.

⁶Just as Abraham “believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness” [Gen 15:6], ⁷you know therefore that the ones [who are righteous] on the basis of faith, these are sons of Abraham.

From his appeal to Abraham in 3:6, Paul invites his readers to “know (γινώσκετε) that the ones who are ἐκ πίστεως, these (οὗτοι) are sons of Abraham.” Two related observations affect our understanding of this claim. First, the γινώσκετε could be either indicative or imperative. Second, and more importantly, the unnecessary—and, hence, emphatic—οὗτοι in 3:7 gives this conclusion a clear polemical thrust: Paul is not arguing that these *are* sons of Abraham so much as he is arguing that *these* are sons of Abraham. As most scholars note, the claim thus establishes an implicit contrast with alternative understandings of Abrahamic sonship, effectively excluding

anyone who is not ἐκ πίστεως. Determining whom Paul intends to identify as these ἐκ πίστεως sons of Abraham therefore becomes the key to understanding the argument.

The inference in 3:7 admits of two possible interpretations. Scholars typically read it as indicating that everyone who is ἐκ πίστεως is a son of Abraham, but it could also indicate that every true son of Abraham must be ἐκ πίστεως. The former option would redefine Abrahamic sonship based solely on πίστις, thereby enabling the inclusion of both Jews and, significantly, gentiles. The radical nature of this redefinition would then suggest that the γινώσκετε functions as an imperative inviting the readers to draw this novel conclusion.⁶ The latter option, in contrast, would simply highlight a characteristic of those generally acknowledged to be sons of Abraham, i.e., the Jews. In this case, the γινώσκετε would likely function as an indicative serving to remind the readers of something they already know.⁷

The seemingly universal consensus that 3:6-7 redefines Abrahamic sonship so as to include uncircumcised gentiles in Abraham's family ἐκ πίστεως seems to draw

⁶ So, e.g., Charles J. Ellicott, *A Commentary, Critical and Grammatical, on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, with a Revised Translation* (Andover: Warren F. Draper, 1865), 69; James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (BNTC; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1993), 162; Frank J. Matera, *Galatians* (SP 9; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 1992), 117; Fung, *Galatians*, 138; Burton, *Galatians*, 155; Betz, *Galatians*, 141; M. J. Lagrange, *Saint Paul Épître aux Galates* (2d ed.; EBib; Paris: Gabalda, 1950), 64; Meyer, "Galatians," 109.

⁷ Although he regards 3:7 as redefining Abrahamic sonship, Longenecker, *Galatians*, 114, opts for the indicative on the grounds that γινώσκετε ἄρα ὅτι constitutes a common disclosure formula in ancient Hellenistic letters. Cf. Stanley, "Curse," 494; Witherington, *Grace*, 226; Martyn, *Galatians*, 299; J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians: A Revised Text with Introduction, Notes and Dissertations* (1865; repr., Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1999), 137; Donald Guthrie, *Galatians* (NCB; London: Oliphants, 1974; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 95.

support from the close association of gentiles with faith in both the preceding and the ensuing verses: 3:5 refers to the (gentile) Galatians' having received the Spirit ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως, while 3:8 affirms that God justifies the gentiles ἐκ πίστεως.⁸ Nevertheless, this reading raises substantial contextual and theological problems, difficulties that §2.2.2 will describe in detail. I will accordingly argue in §2.2.3 that we should therefore adopt the alternative construal in which 3:6-7 highlights faith as an essential component of Jewish claims to Abrahamic sonship.

First, however, I need to address an interpretive move that often undergirds the standard reading of 3:6-7, namely, the widespread suggestion that the initial καθώς in 3:6 links—and thereby validates—the gentile Galatians' faith-based reception of the Spirit in 3:5 with Abraham's example. Scholars occasionally make this connection by inserting a paragraph break between 3:6 and 3:7 so that 3:6 becomes the explicit conclusion to 3:1-5.⁹ More often, they group 3:6 with the verse(s) that follow but then contend that the καθώς provides a bridge connecting this new passage to its

⁸ For a recent exception to the consensus, see Malina and Pilch, *Social-Science*, 203, who understand Paul's argument to be directed to Hellenistic Israelites in the diaspora rather than to gentiles. For the problems with this understanding, see §1.2.

⁹ See UBS⁴, NAB, ESV, NEB, Gordon D. Fee, *Galatians* (Pentecostal Commentary; Blandford Forum, U.K.: Deo, 2007), 112-13; Andrew H. Wakefield, *Where to Live: The Hermeneutical Significance of Paul's Citations from Scripture in Galatians 3:1-14* (Society of Biblical Literature Academia Biblica; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 136 n. 16, 161; Matera, *Galatians*, 113; R. Alan Cole, *The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians: An Introduction and Commentary* (2d ed.; TNTC 9; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 134; Fung, *Galatians*, 128; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 152.

predecessor.¹⁰ My analysis of these verses therefore begins in §2.2.1 by considering the more foundational question of the role that 3:6 plays in Paul’s argument.

2.2.1 The role of 3:6 in Paul’s argument: Establishing 3:6-7 as a deductive argument for sonship based on Abraham’s example of justification by faith

Galatians 3:6 opens with a comparative καθώς. The function of the verse in Paul’s argument accordingly depends on the direction of the intended comparison, whether it looks back to 3:5, looks forward to 3:7, or looks both ways as a Janus verse. As Andrew Wakefield helpfully observes, if the verse looks back to 3:5, then it provides *inductive* support for the preceding argument from experience; if it instead looks forward, then the inferential ἄρα particle in 3:7 suggests that 3:6 functions as a premise in a *deductive* argument.¹¹ Although he cautions that the vagaries of the καθώς preclude a definitive decision, Wakefield nevertheless favors the former scenario since “it is not

¹⁰ So, e.g., Heinrich Schlier, *Der Brief an die Galater* (12th, rev. ed.; KEK 7; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962), 127; Martyn, *Galatians*, 296-97; Sam K. Williams, “Justification and the Spirit in Galatians,” *JSNT* 29 (1987): 91-100, 92-93; Stanley, *Arguing*, 121; Richard B. Hays, “The Letter to the Galatians,” in *2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon* (11; Nashville: Abingdon, 2000), 181-348, 255; Witherington, *Grace*, 217-18; G. Walter Hansen, *Galatians* (The IVP New Testament Commentary Series; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1994), 86; Albrecht Oepke, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Galater* (ed Joachim Rohde; 4th ed.; THKNT 9; Berlin: Evangelische, 1979), 103; Franz Mußner, *Der Galaterbrief* (HTKNT 9; St. Benno: Leipzig, 1974), 213; Lagrange, *Galates*, 62. Scholars who argue that the καθώς looks only forward include François Vouga, *An die Galater* (HNT 10; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 71; Dunn, *Galatians*, 160; Betz, *Galatians*, 140.

¹¹ Wakefield, *Where to Live*, 160-61.

entirely clear how the citation of Gen 15:6 in Gal 3:6 might logically lead to the conclusion expressed in Gal 3:7.”¹² In contrast, I hope to show that the appeal to Abraham’s example in 3:6 does indeed look forward to the deductive conclusion in 3:7, a significant result because it enables the differentiation of 3:6-7 from the gentile context of 3:1-5.

2.2.1.1 Problems with 3:5-6 as an inductive argument

Wakefield’s preference notwithstanding, a backward-looking καθώς actually forms a rather weak connection to 3:5. Beginning with syntactical considerations, the comparative adverb καθώς expects a complementary clause identifying a parallel to the situation portrayed in 3:6. Galatians 3:5 cannot function as that complementary phrase since it asks a question, namely, whether God supplies the Galatians with the Spirit and works miracles among them ἐξ ἔργων νόμου or ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως. For the καθώς to refer back to 3:5, then, it must stand absolutely (e.g., “in the same way,” “thus”)—a rare use of the word at best¹³—and form a parallel with the implied answer to the preceding question. Furthermore, since Paul obviously does not intend to compare God with

¹² Ibid., 161.

¹³ Longenecker, *Galatians*, 112. BDAG lists two other examples where a missing clause must be supplied from context: POxy 1299, 9 and 1 Tim 1:3. Contra Fung, *Galatians*, 128, these two examples do not parallel the proposed use in Gal 3:6 since each implies an imperative: “[Do] just as I urged (1 Tim) / have instructed (POxy).” Without citing specific verses, Sam K. Williams, *Galatians* (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon, 1997), 85, does suggest, however, that several instances of καθώς in the LXX are best rendered “in the same way.”

Abraham (the differing subjects of 3:5 and 3:6, respectively), even this implied answer would not create a direct syntactical parallel.

Interpreting the καθώς as a shortened form of καθὼς γέγραπται (“just as it is written”) would help alleviate some of this syntactical awkwardness by attributing it to Paul’s use of a citation,¹⁴ although this potential value in clarifying the argument then makes it difficult to understand why Paul would omit his customary γέγραπται. Regardless, the nature of 3:6 as a citation means that the focus on God in the Pauline formulation of 3:5 would determine the emphasis of a connection between the two verses.¹⁵ This emphasis on God’s role does not pose a problem in and of itself, but it does run counter to the focus on Abraham in 3:6, a focus that, as I will demonstrate below, does not seem to derive solely from the verse’s nature as a citation. In other words, the focus on Abraham in 3:6 suggests that a backward-looking καθὼς should highlight—as most scholars assume that it does—his connection to the Galatians, but the phrasing of 3:5 would instead focus the comparison on God’s role.

George Howard argues that this focus on God’s role in 3:5-6 makes it “incorrect” to conclude from the καθὼς that “as the Galatians believed so Abraham believed. . . . [Instead,] The point is: As God ‘supplies’ and ‘works’ to and among the Galatians, so he

¹⁴ Cf. Rom 8:35-36, in which a citation introduced by καθὼς γέγραπται (8:36) immediately follows a rhetorical question (8:35) and expresses a scriptural parallel to the situation underlying the preceding question.

¹⁵ Cf. Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11* (2d ed.; Biblical Resource Series; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 170.

‘reckoned’ to Abraham.”¹⁶ Even highlighting these divine actions, however, a backward-looking καθώς would still seem to require that Abraham’s believing (ἐπίστευσεν) in 3:6 parallel the πίστις in 3:5 as the basis for God’s response; otherwise, these two verses would have nothing in common (καθώς) except the generic fact that God acts, an undisputed point that the question in 3:5 itself already presupposes. (Howard’s suggestion that divine grace underlies and, thus, connects the divine actions unjustifiably substitutes an unmentioned basis of comparison for one explicitly signaled by the lexical connections in the text.¹⁷) Accordingly, if 3:6 looks back to 3:5, then the two instances of the πιστ- root must interpret one another: the parallel with Abraham’s believing would indicate that ἀκοῆς πίστεως in 3:5 signifies the Galatians’ “hearing of/with faith,”¹⁸ while the implication in Gal 3:5 that God “supplies” and “works” ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως rather than ἐξ ἔργων νόμου would suggest that Paul understands Gen 15:6 to refer to Abraham’s faith considered apart from his works. Contrary to Howard’s analysis, then, a

¹⁶ Howard, *Crisis*, 55.

¹⁷ See *Ibid.*, 55-57. He grounds this analysis on Paul’s use of Gen 15:6 in Rom 4.

¹⁸ Cf. Sam K. Williams, “The Hearing of Faith: ΑΚΟΗ ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ in Galatians 3,” *NTS* 35 (1989): 82-93, 87. A backward-looking καθώς would therefore rule out interpretations that render the πίστις in ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως christologically (“based on the report/hearing about the faithful one”; cf. Campbell, *Deliverance*, 853-56, who presumes a forward-looking καθώς) or that render the ἀκοή as “report” (“based on the report of / that enables faith”; cf. Hays, *Faith*, 124-132). A christological reading of the πίστις in 3:5 (“report about the faithful one”) would enable a parallel between Christ and Abraham, but the introduction of ἀκοή in 3:5 prevents such a parallel from forming the syntactical basis of comparison. God’s work among the Galatians would not proceed, as it does in Abraham’s case, based on πίστις but based on the *report* of πίστις, a distinction that, in this reading, unnecessarily and problematically shifts the focus from Christ’s πίστις to the Galatians’ reception of the message.

backward-looking καθώς would have to entail that “as the Galatians believed so Abraham believed.”

In fact, however, these two “faiths” exhibit significant differences. Abraham believes in God’s promise that his descendants will be as numerous as the stars (Gen 15:4-5), in response to which God reckons righteousness to him. The Galatians believe in the gospel (Gal 3:1-5), in response to which God supplies them with the Spirit and works miracles among them. Correlating these faiths as a basis of comparison therefore necessitates that their specific content and effects be abstracted into generality.¹⁹ Sam Williams, for example, identifies three components that unite the faiths of Abraham and the Galatians: in each case, “faith” is 1) belief constituting the appropriate human response 2) to a word of divine initiative that 3) results in divine blessing.²⁰ Such generic connections seem unlikely to create a persuasive inductive argument—the scriptural citation would show only that God can respond positively to faith, a conclusion that the Galatians’ own experience (3:1-5) already suffices to establish—not to mention that the necessary abstraction logically expands the potential number of “believers” qualifying for Abrahamic sonship (3:7) far beyond those who simply believe the gospel.

A somewhat stronger connection results if God’s blessings in 3:5 could come only to the righteous. In that case, the Galatians’ reception of the Spirit in 3:5 would

¹⁹ Paul does claim in 3:8 that the scripture pre-preached the gospel to Abraham (προεσηγγέλιστο), but he explains this claim by citing a different Abrahamic promise, namely, the promise to bless the nations. Indeed, the very need for this explanation in 3:8 suggests that the earlier 3:6 does not presume Abraham’s faith in the gospel.

²⁰ Williams, “Justification,” 93-94; Williams, *Galatians*, 85-86. Cf. Hansen, *Galatians*, 86-88.

necessarily presume their justification; God’s “supplying the Spirit by the hearing of faith” would effectively mean “supplying the Spirit [by virtue of your justification] by the hearing of faith.” This interpretation strengthens the potential tie to 3:6 because the similar result of the faiths in each verse—i.e., justification—relieves the need for the faiths to be equivalent. Nevertheless, although this interpretation likely reflects the true sense of 3:5, it still creates a rather awkward parallel between God’s faith-based justification of Abraham on the one hand and his faith-based justification of the Galatians in the unstated step of the implied answer to the question in 3:5 on the other. Too many crucial elements remain unstated.

2.2.1.2 The coherence of 3:6-7 as a deductive argument that appeals to the authority of Abraham’s example rather than the authority of scripture

When coupled with the stronger syntactical (καθώς . . . ἄρα) and lexical (Ἀβραὰμ ἐπίστευσεν, 3:6 / οἱ ἐκ πίστεως . . . υἱοὶ . . . Ἀβραάμ, 3:7) ties that link 3:6 to 3:7,²¹ these difficulties with a backward-looking καθώς suggest that the καθώς instead looks forward. A compelling case for a forward-looking καθώς, however, must

²¹ Even if the ἄρα refers back to 3:1-6 more broadly, the references to Abraham and faith in 3:7 would indicate that 3:6 forms the main point of connection. Williams, “Justification,” 93, argues against 3:6-7 as a respective protasis and apodosis on the grounds that the three other instances of ἄρα-apodosis clauses in Galatians (2:21; 3:29; 5:11) all have an if-clause as the protasis and ἄρα as the first word in the apodosis (rather than its second position in 3:7). First Corinthians 15:14, however, provides a clear precedent for Paul’s use of ἄρα as the second word in an apodosis. It is perhaps also worth noting that the element appearing before the ἄρα in Gal 3:7 is a second-person verb (γινώσκετε) that falls outside the scope of the actual comparison.

confront Wakefield's aforementioned claim that a connection between 3:6 and 3:7 would employ rather enigmatic logic.

I suggest that Wakefield has trouble discerning a logical connection between 3:6 and 3:7 because he assumes that the καθώς would appeal to the authoritative nature of both Abraham's example and the citation's scriptural origins. This expectation is perfectly reasonable since the ensuing clause discusses Abraham through a near-verbatim citation of Gen 15:6: Ἀβραὰμ ἐπίστευσεν [LXX: ἐπίστευσεν Ἀβραὰμ] τῷ θεῷ, καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην. For the καθώς to invoke both of these authorities, however, the argument would have to ground Abraham's paradigmatic value in elements explicitly stated in the citation; only then would the full authority of scripture support an appeal to Abraham's example. In effect, then, Paul would have to use the citation to establish the principle that God reckons faith as righteousness. Although a backward-looking καθώς would presumably employ the citation in this way, a forward-looking καθώς would instead have to lead to the conclusion about Abrahamic sons in 3:7. Since Gen 15:6 says nothing about sonship, Wakefield understandably expresses his perplexity.

The solution to this enigma seems to lie in differentiating the potential argumentative grounds. That is to say, a forward-looking καθώς could either emphasize Abraham's example with the citation's scriptural nature becoming largely incidental or else establish 3:6 as a scriptural citation without regard for the paradigmatic nature of Abraham's actions. Although I know of no scholar who explicitly distinguishes the

potential argumentative bases in this way, these two options effectively reflect the two basic ways that scholars interpret a connection between 3:6 and 3:7.

Most interpreters opt for an Abraham-based construal in which the patriarch's trust in God establishes faith as the basis for an individual's justification. In such interpretations, ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην in 3:6 attributes righteousness to Abraham, οἱ ἐκ πίστεως in 3:7 designates those who imitate Abraham's faith, and the resulting Abrahamic sonship is defined in terms of likeness/similarity. Scripture-based construals, in contrast, see Abraham's significance as securing the promise that enables the inclusion of uncircumcised gentiles among God's people. Viewed in this way, ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην signifies God's crediting a future act of divine righteousness to Abraham's account, an act that Paul subsequently identifies in Gal 3:8 with the divine promise to bless the nations *in* Abraham (cf. Isa 51:1-8; Sir 44:19-21).²² The πίστις in οἱ ἐκ πίστεως then refers to Abraham's faithfulness that secures the promise, to God's faithfulness in fulfilling the promise, to Christ's faithfulness as the means of fulfilling the promise, or to some mixture of the three. Finally, these scripture-based interpretations define Abrahamic sonship in terms of ancestry / descent (cf. 3:29).

These two internally coherent interpretations of Paul's argument in 3:6-7 constitute fundamentally opposed readings; attempts to mix their various elements result only in a muddled argument. Understanding the potential logic connecting 3:6 to 3:7

²² See, e.g., Campbell, *Deliverance*, 730-32, who discusses the citation in Rom 4:3, and Lloyd Gaston, *Paul and the Torah* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987; repr., Eugene, Ore.: Wipf and Stock, 2006), 54-55.

therefore requires that we discern between them. In other words, we must discern whether a forward-looking καθώς would stand as an effective abbreviation of καθώς γέγραπται (“Just as it is written”) or as a pointer to Abraham (“Take Abraham for example” / “Just as Abraham”).

The precision of the citation and the high density of scriptural quotations in 3:6-14—six citations in nine verses—give credence to the view of 3:6-7 as an argument from scripture, as does the slight manuscript evidence (G, Ambrosiaster, and vg^{clm}) indicating that at least a few ancient scribes and interpreters read the text as καθώς γέγραπται.²³ Nevertheless, this reading seems unlikely. Not only does the identification of καθώς as a shortened form of καθώς γέγραπται have no precedent in Paul (or, to my knowledge, elsewhere),²⁴ but the text also lacks the one element that would focus attention on the citation *as* a citation, namely, the γέγραπται.²⁵

²³ For this view, see Betz, *Galatians*, 140, esp. n. 13; Dunn, *Galatians*, 160; Oepke, *Galater*, 103; Schlier, *Galater*, 127 n. 3; Lagrange, *Galates*, 62; Hilary Le Cornu and Joseph Shulam, *A Commentary on the Jewish Roots of Galatians* (Jerusalem: Academon, 2005), 182; Campbell, *Deliverance*, 857.

²⁴ καθώς γέγραπται appears 18 times in Paul’s extant letters: Rom 1:17; 2:24; 3:4, 10; 4:17; 8:36; 9:13, 33; 10:15; 11:8, 26; 15:3, 9, 21; 1 Cor 1:31; 2:9; 2 Cor 8:15; 9:9. Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, “The Use of Explicit Old Testament Quotations in Qumran Literature and in the New Testament,” *NTS* 7 (1961): 297-333, 299-305, finds no parallels in the DSS to this proposed absolute use of καθώς to introduce a citation.

²⁵ Campbell, *Deliverance*, 857, suggests that, given the string of citations introduced by “abbreviated” textual markers in 3:6-14 and Paul’s frequent use of καθώς γέγραπται to introduce citations, the expansion of ὅτι with γέγραπται in 3:10 and 3:13 likely implies the “unspoken presence” of the γέγραπται in 3:6 (as well as in 3:11 and 12). When considering whether 3:6 appeals to Abraham or to scripture, however, such an argument begs the question: the different introductory formulas could just as easily signal that the citations function in different ways.

At the same time, the citation's single difference from Paul's likely Septuagintal text effectively fronts the name of Abraham, placing it in a position of emphasis directly following the *καθώς*.²⁶ It is, of course, possible that Paul faithfully transcribes a *Vorlage* that read Ἀβραὰμ ἐπίστευσεν or, in accordance with the MT, simply ἐπίστευσεν, although the explicit citation of the same verse in Rom 4:3 demonstrates at least his later awareness of the textual form in which Ἀβραὰμ appears after the verb. Even if the position of Ἀβραὰμ does not represent a rhetorically motivated change, however, Paul still uses a textual form that focuses attention on Abraham's example. That is to say, once we recognize the need to distinguish between an argument from Abraham and an argument from scripture, the wording and syntax of 3:6 clearly favor the former type of argument.

A consideration of the resulting arguments points to the same conclusion. In this regard, I suggest that the divergent interpretations of οἱ ἐκ πίστεως in 3:7 prove decisive. As noted above, arguments based on Abraham's example understand the phrase to designate those who imitate Abraham's faith; arguments based on scriptural authority instead understand the phrase to designate those who benefit from someone else's exercise of πίστις. How, then, should we understand the designation?

²⁶ So also Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 214; Dietrich-Alex Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums: Untersuchungen zur Verwendung und zum Verständnis der Schrift bei Paulus* (BHT 69; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1986), 106; Martyn, *Galatians*, 297.

Although Paul uses similar constructions elsewhere,²⁷ the phrase οἱ ἐκ πίστεως occurs only twice in the Pauline corpus: in Gal 3:7 and 3:9. According to Zerwick, the article + ἐκ + genitive construction denotes members of a group characterized by the genitive (cf. τοὺς ἐκ περιτομῆς, Gal 2:12), hence the common rendering of this phrase as “those characterized by faith” or “those of faith.”²⁸ This default definition points in favor of an argument from Abraham’s example. As Richard Hays points out, however, Paul could have expressed this sentiment simply by using a verbal form—either οἱ πιστεύοντες or ὅσοι πιστεύουσιν—as he does in 3:22 (τοῖς πιστεύουσιν) and elsewhere (e.g., Rom 1:16; 3:22; 4:11; 4:24; 10:4; 1 Cor 1:21; 14:22; 1 Thess 1:7; 2:10, 13).²⁹ This observation then raises the possibility that Paul uses the unusual form here to differentiate the one who exhibits the πίστις from those who benefit.

For instance, in an exception that effectively proves the rule, George Howard proposes an Abrahamic-based argument that nevertheless identifies ἐκ πίστεως in 3:7 as a reference to God’s faithfulness. Howard achieves this result by arguing that Paul’s citation of Gen 15:6 emphasizes God’s reckoning rather than Abraham’s believing. That

²⁷ E.g., δικαιοῦντα τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ (Rom 3:26); εἰ . . . οἱ ἐκ νόμου κληρονόμοι (Rom 4:14); οὐ τῷ ἐκ τοῦ νόμου μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ τῷ ἐκ πίστεως Ἀβραάμ (Rom 4:16); φοβούμενος τοὺς ἐκ περιτομῆς (Gal 2:12); cf. οἱ ἐκ τῆς περιτομῆς (Titus 1:10).

²⁸ Maximilian Zerwick, *Biblical Greek: Illustrated by Examples* (trans. Joseph Smith; Scripta Pontificii Instituti Biblici 114; Rome: 1963), 45, §134. Cf. Bruce, *Galatians*, 153; B. Hudson McLean, *The Cursed Christ: Mediterranean Expulsion Rituals and Pauline Soteriology* (JSNTSup 126; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 197, esp. n. 41.

²⁹ Hays, *Faith*, 171.

is to say, Howard's Paul does not appeal to Abraham as an example of one who believes; rather, he appeals to Abraham as an example of one whom God justifies based on grace. Those who similarly receive justification based solely on God's faithfulness (οἱ ἐκ πίστεως) to fulfill his promise to bless the gentiles in Abraham (cf. 3:8)—i.e., based solely on grace—then constitute the “sons of Abraham” in 3:7.

I will ultimately affirm Howard's basic insight that 3:6-7 does not employ Abraham's example to differentiate faith from works as a means of justification. His particular manner of supporting this position, however, is untenable. Even granting the emphasis on God's gracious reckoning in 3:6, that reckoning still comes in response to Abraham's faith. Significantly, it does not result from God's faithfulness. The lexical connection of Ἀβραὰμ ἐπίστευσεν in 3:6 with οἱ ἐκ πίστεως in 3:7 would therefore suggest that human faith forms the common basis of justification. The text provides no reason to suspect that οἱ ἐκ πίστεως refers instead to the divine side of the interaction with the unmentioned concept of grace establishing the connection to 3:6. Howard dismisses the lexical connection as mere “literary flavor,”³⁰ but such “literary flavor” would be exceedingly misleading. At the very least, Paul would presumably have recognized the need to clarify that the πίστις involved in 3:7 belongs to God, had he intended this line of argument.

³⁰ Howard, *Crisis*, 57.

A similar problem plagues Lloyd Gaston's proposal that οἱ ἐκ πίστεως interprets the preceding reference to God's δικαιοσύνη in 3:6. In contrast to Howard, Gaston does not try to associate this reading with an argument from Abraham's example: he contends that the phrase designates those who benefit from God's faithfulness in fulfilling his promise to act righteously on Abraham's behalf.³¹ Nevertheless, the lexical connection with Ἀβραὰμ ἐπίστευσεν in 3:6 once again undermines this analysis. As the text stands, only Abraham has exercised πίστις in the immediate context. Justifying a switch to divine πίστις in 3:7 is therefore difficult, especially since Paul could have conveyed Gaston's proposed argument less ambiguously by characterizing the group in 3:7 as οἱ ἐκ δικαιοσύνης, i.e., as those who benefit from God's promised act of righteousness.

Pointing to the promise in Gen 15:4 that "one who will come out *from you*" (ὃς ἐξελεύσεται ἐκ σου) would be Abraham's heir, Caroline Johnson Hodge suggests that οἱ ἐκ πίστεως instead reflects a wordplay involving genealogical convention: "those who descend from [Abraham's] faithfulness."³² This interpretation at least makes sense of the πιστεύω / πίστις connection in 3:6-7 since Abraham exercises the πίστις in each case. Nevertheless, a lexical connection with 3:8, where God's justification of the gentiles occurs ἐκ πίστεως, creates a problem. The repetition of ἐκ πίστεως suggests that each

³¹ Gaston, *Paul*, 58.

³² Caroline Johnson Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs: A Study of Kinship and Ethnicity in the Letters of Paul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 80-85. Noting that the gentiles' connection to the promise in Gen 15:4 comes only through Christ, she suggests that the phrase has his faithfulness in view as well.

instance should have a similar meaning, but the latter instance clearly does not reflect genealogical convention. Johnson Hodge accordingly proposes that the occurrence in 3:8 signifies “on the basis of Christ’s faithfulness,” with οἱ ἐκ πίστεως in 3:9 then returning to the idea of Abrahamic descent.³³ This non-genealogical use of same phrase in the immediate context makes it improbable that Paul would expect the Galatians to recognize such a subtle wordplay without further indications. The required inconsistency in reading ἐκ πίστεως also argues against this interpretation.

Finally, Hays himself suggests that the unusual formulation οἱ ἐκ πίστεως derives from Hab 2:4, a citation of which appears in Gal 3:11: Ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται.³⁴ Supporting this conclusion, Douglas Campbell notes that all 21 instances of ἐκ πίστεως in the Pauline corpus occur in Galatians and Romans, i.e., in the two letters in which Paul also cites Hab 2:4.³⁵ Because they understand ὁ δίκαιος in the Habakkuk citation as a reference to the Righteous Messiah, Hays and Campbell then both interpret οἱ ἐκ πίστεως as a reference to those who benefit from Christ’s faithfulness.³⁶ Unlike the genealogical explanation of ἐκ πίστεως, this reading allows for a consistent

³³ Ibid., 85-86.

³⁴ Hays, *Faith*, 171.

³⁵ Douglas A. Campbell, “Romans 1:17 -- A *Cruz Interpretum* for the Πιστις Χριστου Debate,” *JBL* 113 (1994): 265-85, 268. Cf. Campbell, *Deliverance*, 377, 858-59. The 21 instances are found in Rom 1:17 (2x); 3:26, 30; 4:16 (2x); 5:1; 9:30, 32; 10:6; 14:23 (2x); Gal 2:16; 3:7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 22, 24; 5:5.

³⁶ Hays, *Faith*, 172; Campbell, *Deliverance*, 858-65. Curiously, Hays adopts a very different interpretation in his later commentary: “those whose identity is derived from faith.” See Hays, “Galatians,” 255-56, following Martyn, *Galatians*, 299.

interpretation of the phrase throughout 3:6-9. Unlike in the theocentric explanations considered above, the identification of οἱ ἐκ πίστεως as an allusion provides a potential justification for breaking the apparent parallel between Abraham and οἱ ἐκ πίστεως as those who trust in God.

I find the evidence for οἱ ἐκ πίστεως as an allusion to Hab 2:4 fairly compelling, the suggestion that the phrase therefore refers to Christ's faithfulness, much less so. The defining of Abrahamic sonship solely in terms of Christ effects the dissolution of traditional Israel, a problematical implication that I will discuss further in §2.2.2. I also remain unconvinced by the christological interpretation of Hab 2:4, as §2.4.1 will detail. Sticking to the immediate context, however, the customary significance of article + ἐκ + genitive constructions and the ostensibly apt paralleling of Ἀβραὰμ ἐπίστευσεν in 3:6 with the οἱ ἐκ πίστεως sons of Abraham in 3:7 render it unlikely that Paul would require the Galatians to recognize ἐκ πίστεως as an allusion to (the christological reading of) Hab 2:4 well before he cites the verse. Even granting the possibility that Paul had previously relayed this interpretation of Hab 2:4 to the Galatians, a primary motivation for identifying οἱ ἐκ πίστεως as an allusion lies in the apparent infrequency with which he uses the phrase. In other words, the designation does not seem to represent a typical Pauline formulation that the Galatians would immediately recognize. At the same time, the designation also does not seem so distinctive or awkward in its present context that a reader would necessarily intuit its likely status as an allusion.

The default understanding of οἱ ἐκ πίστεως and the lexical connections with Ἀβραὰμ ἐπίστευσεν in 3:6 and with God's justifying the gentiles ἐκ πίστεως in 3:8 thus create difficulties for interpretations of οἱ ἐκ πίστεως that seek to differentiate the expression of πίστις from the ones who benefit. If οἱ ἐκ πίστεως designates those who imitate Abraham's faith, however, then why does Paul use this unusual form? The nominalization of an adverbial phrase in the οἱ ἐκ πίστεως construction requires the presence of an implicit verb or verbal phrase. Interpreters often supply "life" as the omitted element for which faith forms the basis, either in the sense of having life ("those who have life based on faith"³⁷) or of living ("those who live out of faith"³⁸). The parallel with Abraham's justifying faith in 3:6, however, suggests that οἱ ἐκ πίστεως instead signifies "those [who are justified] on the basis of faith."³⁹ In other words, Paul seems to use οἱ ἐκ πίστεως rather than οἱ πιστεύοντες or ὅσοι πιστεύουσιν because the former formulation enables the parallel to extend beyond simple belief to encompass Abraham's justification as well.

³⁷ E.g., Ellicott, *Galatians*, 69. Longenecker, *Galatians*, 114, prefers the translation "those who rely on faith" on the grounds that human faith represents only a subjective response to the work of Christ that forms the objective basis for human redemption.

³⁸ E.g., Witherington, *Grace*, 226.

³⁹ So, e.g., Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 5.3.12; William M. Ramsay, *A Historical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* (2d ed.; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1900), 345. Cf. John Calvin, "Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians," in *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I & II Thess., I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon* (Calvin's Commentaries 21; Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005), 11-188, 87.

The surrounding context, which consistently links ἐκ πίστεως with δικαίω and its cognates, further confirms this interpretation. The connection occurs in the foundational citation of Hab 2:4 (ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως), a verse that I will argue Paul understands as describing those who receive life on the basis of their justification by faith (see §2.4.1). This reading of οἱ ἐκ πίστεως therefore anticipates and accords with Hab 2:4 without requiring recognition of the allusion. Similarly, the claim that “God justifies the gentiles on the basis of faith” (ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοῖ τὰ ἔθνη ὁ θεός, 3:8) separates the instance of οἱ ἐκ πίστεως in 3:7 from its only other Pauline occurrence in the inference of Gal 3:9. Both Pauline instances of this expression (3:7, 9) thus not only follow but also draw inferences from (ἄρα, 3:7 / ὥστε, 3:9) references to justification by faith (3:6, 8). The only instance of ἐκ πίστεως in Galatians prior to 3:7 (δικαιωθῶμεν ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ, 2:16) also links the phrase explicitly to justification (cf. 3:24; 5:5).⁴⁰ In fact, in the few cases where Galatians does not overtly relate ἐκ πίστεως to justification—3:22 connects ἐκ πίστεως with the promise; 3:2 and 5 connect the related ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως with God’s supplying the Spirit and working miracles—it seems reasonable to suggest that the phrase functions as a shorthand for “[on the basis of justification] by faith.”

⁴⁰ Romans explicitly connects ἐκ πίστεως with righteousness/justification in 1:17 (where God’s righteousness is revealed by faith); 3:26, 30; 5:1; 9:30-32; and 10:6.

EXCURSUS: Douglas Campbell and the nature of “justification by faith”

At this point, it will be helpful to clarify my understanding of justification by faith by explaining briefly how my proposed interpretation of οἱ ἐκ πίστεως relates to Douglas Campbell’s recent broadside against the viability of justification by faith as a soteriological framework.⁴¹ Identifying Rom 1-4 as the basis for traditional “Justification theory,” Campbell defines this model as one in which rational individuals discern from the cosmos, conscience, and—in the case of Jews—the law both the existence and the ethical demands of a righteous God. Such individuals subsequently despair over their inability to fulfill such onerous works, receiving with gratitude the good news that through faith alone they can appropriate Christ’s satisfaction of their moral debts.⁴² The focus on justification by πίστις—understood here in the sense of “belief”⁴³—thus derives specifically from the need for an easier means of justification than the works that fail in the model’s first phase.

Campbell identifies 56 intrinsic, systematic, empirical, and exegetical difficulties with this traditional model,⁴⁴ leading him ultimately to conclude that

⁴¹ See Campbell, *Deliverance*, 1-466.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 11-35, esp. 28-29.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 33-34.

⁴⁴ For summary, see *Ibid.*, 397-410.

Paul never endorses this prospective, contractual, and individualistic Justification model but instead argues consistently out of a retrospective, unconditional, and participatory model. The most significant of these difficulties stem from the Justification model's prospective nature in which fallen humans somehow reason from their moral plight to God's solution in Christ. I find this particular critique compelling and accordingly want to note how my understanding of justification by faith differs from the model that Campbell describes. Indeed, my understanding cannot presuppose the traditional Justification model since, as will become apparent, I understand 3:6-7 to highlight the faith-based nature of righteousness in traditional *Jewish* thought. Significantly, then, in this instance, πίστις does not stand in contrast to works of law, nor does it denote a purely mental "belief."⁴⁵

As Campbell notes, however, simply dismissing the prospective Justification model does not solve the problem: the derivative nature of justification by faith in the traditional framework requires that proponents of faith-based justification also provide a retrospective explanation for the focus on πίστις (as opposed to, e.g., love).⁴⁶ In this regard, I suggest that Paul derives his understanding of justification by faith not from a despair over the necessity of

⁴⁵ On the semantic range of πίστις, see *Ibid.*, 384-86.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 27. Campbell thus criticizes scholars who dismiss the first phase of Justification theory—e.g., by rightly questioning the theory's portrayal of Judaism as a legalistic monolith—but who nevertheless continue to promote justification by faith. See pp. 427-28 (against Watson), 436 (against Sanders), and 454 (against Dunn).

exacting works but from Christ's accursed death on the cross (cf. 3:13). That is to say, this chapter will ultimately argue that the accursed nature of Christ's death under the law eliminates works of law as a possible basis for the justification that results in his resurrection (see §2.5.1). Paul then emphasizes Christ's "trust" (πίστις) in God as the basis for this justification since 1) it has a scriptural basis; 2) Jews must similarly "trust" that God will bless them even though they die to the law to unite with Christ (cf. 2:19-20); and 3) πίστις thus emphasizes the law-free nature of the justification that comes to both Jews and gentiles.⁴⁷ This understanding of justification by faith thus satisfies the "retrospective" criterion that Campbell rightly contends must characterize Paul's theologizing.⁴⁸

Returning to the case for an argument from Abraham, it remains only to specify how such an argument could lead deductively to the conclusion about Abrahamic sonship in 3:7. A deductive argument requires the presence of an implied premise, ideally one that everyone involved in the discussion would both recognize and acknowledge as correct. The principle that children exhibit the key attributes of their parents fits these

⁴⁷ Campbell explains Paul's privileging of πίστις-terminology by appealing to the scriptural precedents that enable a wordplay associating Christ's "fidelity" with the believer's participatory "faith" (Ibid., 618-19).

⁴⁸ My reading also aligns with Campbell's call for a participatory reading of Paul's justification language. It does not, however, endorse Campbell's case for an unconditional soteriological model, i.e., my reading remains contractual. If salvation requires no human response, then statements such as Gal 5:4—"you have been severed from Christ, whichever of you are being justified by law"—seem incomprehensible. The punitive, non-universal tendencies of Paul's gospel also become hard to reconcile with a good and just God in an unconditional reading. Campbell acknowledges these tendencies in Paul (e.g., Ibid., 93-94) and can only suggest that they perhaps conflict with the true implications of the gospel.

criteria. Combined with the claim that Abraham was justified by faith (3:6), it produces the conclusion that Abraham’s sons must similarly be justified by faith (3:7).⁴⁹ Furthermore, as Johnson Hodge notes, the principle that “descendants are manifestations—both in physical makeup and in character traits—of their ancestors” was a “normative assumption” of ancient Mediterranean cultures.⁵⁰ Since Paul also seems to be reminding his readers of something they already know—I will argue below for an indicative γινώσκετε in 3:7—it seems reasonable to expect that the Galatians would be able to follow the argument without the explicit citing of this “normative assumption.”⁵¹

⁴⁹ Significantly, this principle does not lead to the conclusion that all those justified by faith are sons of Abraham, a common but problematical reading of 3:7 (e.g., Williams, “Justification,” 95) that I will address in §2.2.2-3. Mayordomo, *Argumentiert*, 155, claims that 3:6 and 3:7 only form a logical argument if they are read as two independent premises that lead to an implied *conclusion*, namely, that all believers are justified by God. Even aside from the admittedly rare use (“die seltene Bedeutung,” 165) of ἄρα as a mere rhetorical accent that this reading requires, Paul would surely not have left such a crucial conclusion unstated. Significantly, Mayordomo’s analysis must presume the connection of believers with Abraham’s sons in the “premise” of 3:7, a connection he attributes simply to the function of examples (“Beispiels”) in enthymemes (154 n. 309). He describes Carl Ludwig Bauer’s 1773 analysis of Pauline logic that appeals to the same reasoning given above (“*fili enim imitantur patres*”) as unnecessarily complicated (154 n. 309).

⁵⁰ Johnson Hodge, *Sons*, 19-42, esp. 42. See, e.g., Philo, who affirms that “kinship [τὸ συγγενὲς] is measured not by blood alone . . . but by similarity of actions and by the eager pursuit of [such actions] [πράξεων ὁμοιότητι καὶ θήρᾳ τῶν ἀπ’αὐτῶν]” (*Virt.* 195). Johnson Hodge also points to such instances as Homer, *Iliad* 6.145-211, 215; *4 Macc.* 13:18-20; and Demosthenes 60.4. Of course, several NT passages also presuppose this principle: see Matt 3:8-9 / Luke 3:8; Matt 5:44-45 / Luke 6:35; Matt 23:29-32; John 8:39-44.

⁵¹ G. Walter Hansen, *Abraham in Galatians: Epistolary and Rhetorical Contexts* (Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 29; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 112, argues that the implied premise is “as God dealt with Abraham, so he will deal with all men.” Cf. Burton, *Galatians*, 155; Brendan Byrne, *Sons of God, Seed of Abraham: A Study of the Idea of the Sonship of God of All Christians in Paul against the Jewish Background* (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1979), 149. This premise, however, would lead to the conclusion that God justifies everyone who believes. While we might expect Paul to draw this conclusion given the concerns of the letter, it is not the conclusion that he actually draws in 3:7. In an overly complicated analysis, Marc Debanné “solves” this problem by essentially arguing that the conclusion of Hansen’s enthymeme combines with an implied syllogism’s conclusion that “Anyone who receives righteousness is Abraham’s son” to form a third syllogism that results in the conclusion of 3:7. Marc J. Debanné, “Analysis of Enthymemes in Galatians,” Appendix D2 to *Enthymemes in the Letters of*

Understood in this way, the argument appeals to the authority of Abraham's example; while the scriptural nature of the claim in 3:6 increases the authority of the claim itself for those who recognize it as a citation, neither the logic nor the force of the argument actually depends upon this recognition.

This deductive proposal for Paul's logic in 3:6-7 requires that the initial καθώς be read as a simple comparative ("Just as Abraham"). It thus differs from more inductive models that read the initial καθώς as an *exemplum* reference: "Take Abraham, for example" (JB; cf. NIV). The problem with an *exemplum* reference—indeed, with any analysis of 3:6 as an inductive argument—is that it essentially reduces Abraham to the status of an example when, as Howard notes, Abraham serves as much more than just an example in the argument: "[Paul's] emphasis on the sons of Abraham (vss. 7, 29) and the blessing of Abraham (vs. 14) suggests that Abraham, rather than being merely an example of justification by faith, is part of a salvific faith-process which works for the salvation of the Gentiles."⁵² Although I will take issue with Howard's focus on the gentiles at this point in Paul's argument, his basic point is sound: the importance of Abrahamic descent in Paul's argument throughout Gal 3-4 implies that Abraham plays a more integral role in securing the blessing for Christian believers than simply serving as a convenient example of justification by faith. Reading the καθώς as a simple comparative

Paul (LNTS 303; London: T&T Clark International, 2006), 8-9. Cited 14 March 2010. Online: <http://ntgateway.com/debanne/gal.pdf>.

⁵² Howard, *Crisis*, 55.

(“just as”) avoids this problem by appealing to Abraham’s example not in and of itself but within the context of establishing Abrahamic descent.

The καθώς in 3:6 therefore seems to initiate a deductive argument that appeals to Abraham’s example in order to show in 3:7 that his sons must similarly be justified by faith. The use of καθώς rather than καθὼς γέγραπται, the highlighting of Abraham in 3:6, and the surrounding lexical connections to οἱ ἐκ πίστεως all suggest that a forward-looking καθώς would initiate an argument from Abraham’s example rather an argument from scripture. At the same time, the deductive appeal to his example in the context of establishing Abrahamic descent respects, in a way that an inductive appeal would not, the indications throughout Gal 3-4 that Abraham serves as more than just an example.

As for the possibility of a backward-looking καθώς, such a reading would at best form an indirect syntactical connection problematically based on a single lexical link (πίστις, 3:5 / πιστεύω, 3:6) with the implied answer to the question in 3:5. The natural pairing of a forward-looking καθώς in 3:6 with the inferential ἄρα in 3:7, in contrast, establishes a direct syntactical correlation of the believing Abraham (Ἀβραὰμ ἐπίστευσεν) in the former verse with οἱ ἐκ πίστεως who are sons of Abraham (υἱοὶ ... Ἀβραὰμ) in the latter. The οἱ ἐκ πίστεως construction in 3:7 even enables the implication of the third major component in 3:6, namely, justification. The proposed interpretation thus offers a sound deductive argument that best accounts for the syntactical and lexical indications.

Significantly, this result severs any necessary connection between 3:5 and 3:6. Could the καθώς simultaneously look back to the Galatians' reception of the Spirit in 3:1-5, as many scholars suggest? This bridging scenario seems highly improbable. In the first place, the difficulties with a backward-looking καθώς still remain. A bridging scenario would also require the καθώς to function in two different ways, specifying an inductive example with regard to 3:1-5 but the premise in a deductive argument with regard to 3:7. Trying to hold these different functions together is both counterintuitive and unnecessary. As I will argue below, however, the most damning problem arises in the required assumption that the sons of Abraham in 3:7 include the gentile Galatians.

2.2.2 Problems with 3:6-7 as a christological argument for gentile sonship

The previous section noted that scholars have identified two basic ways of reading the argument that results from a forward-looking καθώς in 3:6. In the most common interpretation, Abraham's faith becomes the model that determines an Abrahamic sonship based on likeness to Abraham; in the alternative, Abraham's faith secures the divine act of righteousness that results in an Abrahamic sonship characterized by ancestry. As noted in §2.2.1.2, the interpretation of Abrahamic sonship as based solely on Abraham's example runs counter to the subsequent discussions of Abrahamic descent in terms of incorporation, while the interpretation of this sonship as based solely on incorporation into Christ runs counter to the emphasis on Abraham's example in 3:6-7.

I therefore suggested that 3:6-7 instead constitutes a deductive argument from Abraham's example implicitly invoking the principle that children exhibit the attributes of their parents. Significantly, this implied premise presupposes rather than establishes the parent-child relationship. In accordance with the lexico-syntactical evidence, it therefore enables 3:6-7 to focus on Abraham's example as a decisive criterion of sonship without contradicting the letter's subsequent understanding of Abrahamic descent in terms of ancestry. By logical design, then, this interpretation requires that 3:6-7 address only *Jewish* claims to Abrahamic sonship.

Advocates of both example- and incorporation-based interpretations, in contrast, typically stand united in assuming that 3:6-7 redefines Abrahamic sonship christologically so that it might include uncircumcised gentiles. The former achieve this effect by interpreting the πίστις in οἱ ἐκ πίστεως as "faith [in Christ]," the latter, by interpreting οἱ ἐκ πίστεως as a reference to the divine/Abrahamic/christological faithfulness that enables the gentiles' incorporation into Christ as Abraham's single seed (cf. 3:16, 29). Nothing in the text of 3:6-7, however, necessitates a christological understanding of the argument: unlike in 3:22 (ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ; cf. 2:16, 20), Paul does not actually limit the πίστις in 3:7 (or 3:9) with a reference to Christ. Interpreters must therefore import any specifically Christian nuance to οἱ ἐκ πίστεως, an awkward observation for gentile-inclusive interpretations given Christ's central importance to their arguments.

The problems with this consensus reading do not stop with the indications of divergent understandings of Abrahamic sonship and the lack of explicit support in 3:6-7. In fact, the assumption that οἱ ἐκ πίστεως includes Christian gentiles leads to fundamental theological and contextual difficulties in Paul's thought, especially for the traditional example-based interpretations. The remainder of this section accordingly seeks to identify and explain these additional problems with gentile-inclusive analyses. Section 2.2.3 will then discuss the positive case for an argument concerning Jewish sonship in more detail.

For the customary interpretation that understands Gal 3:6-7 to redefine Abrahamic sonship based on Abraham's example of faith, the utterly surprising nature of this conclusion provides the first sign of trouble. According to this view, Gen 15:6 portrays Abraham's justification by faith; it says nothing about the identity of his sons. The citation thus lends itself much more readily to a claim about justification than about sonship (cf. Rom 4:9-13). That Paul would not draw this more straightforward inference here in Galatians is all the more astonishing given the letter's overarching preoccupation with the question of whether justification comes through faith or law (cf. 2:16, 17, 21; 3:8, 11, 21, 24; 5:4, 5). Furthermore, for 3:6-7 to redefine Abrahamic sonship would effectively require that Paul either ignores (if οἱ ἐκ πίστεως designates "those who have faith") or assumes (if οἱ ἐκ πίστεως designates "those who [are justified] by faith") the connection of faith and righteousness in the Genesis citation. The appropriateness of Gen 15:6 for addressing justification by faith renders the former scenario unlikely; the disputed nature of justification by faith elsewhere in the letter does the same for the latter.

The literary context of 3:6-7 not only leads a reader to expect an inference regarding justification by faith, it also completely fails to prepare a reader for an inference regarding Abrahamic sonship. Although the motif of Abrahamic descent does continue to play a major role in the logic of Galatians once it has been introduced, nothing in 1:1-3:5 has anticipated the theme's sudden appearance here in 3:6-7. Only one explanation can possibly account for Paul's drawing a conclusion about this previously unmentioned theme at the expense of the simpler—and seemingly more relevant—inference about justification by faith: in this reading, Abrahamic sonship must represent the true point of dispute in Galatia. That is to say, this reading must assume that Paul has no need to explain the introduction of Abrahamic sonship into the argument because the agitators have already established its importance for the Galatians, presumably arguing that these gentile converts required circumcision in order to become true sons of Abraham.⁵³

Somewhat ironically, many scholars find additional confirmation that the agitators have introduced Abraham into the discussion in the several theological and contextual problems that this standard interpretation of Paul's argument creates. After all, if Paul were explicating the gospel using his own terms, he would presumably have offered a more consistent and persuasive argument. The fact that his logic has apparent holes—so the argument goes—suggests that he has hurriedly responded to an opposing position without considering all aspects of the issue or thinking through all the implications of his

⁵³ As a preeminent example of this majority view, see Martyn, *Galatians*, 299, 302-6. This interpretation, however, goes back at least as far as Chrysostom's *Galatas commentarius* (PG 61.650-651).

claims. These “holes,” however, are fairly blatant and significant. They do not constitute the kind of minor logical omissions and subtle contradictions that a person might be expected to overlook.

I begin with the issue that Klaus Berger identifies as “das theologische Kernproblem” of Gal 3: essentially, how Abrahamic descent can be open to everyone who is ἐκ πίστεως (3:7) while at the same time being limited to Christ as Abraham’s only seed (3:16).⁵⁴ Scholars who seek to resolve the difficulty typically point to Paul’s assertion in 3:29 that those “of Christ” (οἱ Χριστοῦ) are Abraham’s seed, a conclusion purportedly anticipated by the ἐν σοί in 3:8 (cf. 3:14a).⁵⁵ While such appeals might resolve the numerical problem by showing how the singular seed could become a plurality, this resolution comes at the cost of introducing another discrepancy that ultimately proves irreconcilable.

The problem arises in that Gal 3:7 and 3:29 present different criteria for Abrahamic descent: faith and incorporation into Christ, respectively.⁵⁶ The two criteria are not inherently opposed, but if 3:6-7 redefines Abrahamic sonship based solely on

⁵⁴ Klaus Berger, “Abraham in den paulinischen Hauptbriefen,” *Münchener theologische Zeitschrift* 17 (1966): 47-89, 47.

⁵⁵ E.g., Terence L. Donaldson, *Paul and the Gentiles: Remapping the Apostle’s Convictional World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 118-19.

⁵⁶ Rather than truly reconciling the two conceptions of Abrahamic descent, Donaldson instead seeks to determine which conception is more “fundamental” to Paul’s thought (incorporation) and which more rhetorically-conditioned (faith). He then argues that an underlying narrative enables the subordination of the latter to the former (Ibid., 119-22), an argument that does not really address the objections that I will identify in the main text above. In contrast, J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 50-51, simply allows the discrepancy in these “contingent” expressions to stand unresolved. For more detailed analysis of 3:29, see §3.4.2.1.

faith, then mere compatibility is not enough: οἱ ἐκ πίστεως and οἱ Χριστοῦ must be equivalent expressions. Otherwise, incorporation into Christ would become superfluous for those who were already sons of Abraham by virtue of their being ἐκ πίστεως. Even before we consider whether this equivalence can be shown, the discrepancy itself raises the question as to why Paul would obscure Christ's role in 3:6-7 in order to forge a direct connection between believers and Abraham. Why not simply introduce the all-important concept of Christ as the seed in 3:6-7?

Rhetorical questions aside, the suggestion that 3:7 establishes faith as the sole criterion for Abrahamic sonship means that the differing criteria for Abrahamic descent in 3:7 and 3:29 point to two different conceptions of Abrahamic descent. In order to incorporate gentiles, the term "son of Abraham" in 3:7 must be based solely on a similarity in action/belief rather than any genealogical connection.⁵⁷ In Gal 3:29, on the other hand, a share in Abrahamic descent comes by virtue of one's incorporation into Christ, who according to 3:16 is Abraham's sole promised heir, the heir whom God promises will come from the patriarch's own body in Gen 15:4.

Based on the model of descent implied by the common interpretation of 3:7, both Christ and believers would become sons by imitating Abraham's faith, a scenario that renders union with Christ superfluous and undermines the claim in 3:16 that Christ constitutes Abraham's only seed. If, on the other hand, believers require incorporation into Christ to become sons (3:29), then the critical aspect of the sonship-enabling faith in

⁵⁷ Cf. Hansen, *Abraham*, 113: "the word 'son' is used in the Semitic sense to connote spiritual kinship."

3:7 must be in some way christological, a point that makes it difficult to establish Christ's sonship in 3:16 on the same basis. Furthermore, as noted before, the ubiquitous attempts to "find" Christ in 3:7 either as the implied object of the believers' faith ("on the basis of faith [in Christ]") or as the implied one whose faithfulness is in view ("on the basis of [Christ's] faithfulness") effectively undermine the parallel with Abraham—who neither believed in Jesus⁵⁸ nor was justified on the basis of someone else's faithfulness (at least not according to the Gen 15:6 citation)—that in this reading forms the basis for sonship in 3:6-7. These two models of Abrahamic descent thus prove to be mutually contradictory.⁵⁹ Accordingly, if 3:6-7 includes gentiles as Abrahamic sons on grounds consistent with an argument for descent based on incorporation, then, as the main alternative interpretation acknowledges, 3:6-7 cannot appeal to Abraham's example.

The view that Gal 3:6-7 identifies gentiles as Abraham's sons based solely on their faith also goes against the Genesis context of Paul's cited text (Gen 15:6). In the first place, Abraham's frustration at his lack of a biological heir forms the starting point for the whole discussion in Gen 15; it would be exceedingly ironic if Paul were to use

⁵⁸ Contra Hendrikus Boers, *Theology out of the Ghetto: A New Testament Exegetical Study concerning Religious Exclusiveness* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971), 79, who interprets Abraham's faith in 3:6 as christological because Christ eventually becomes the promised seed for which Abraham believes. Even granting this awkward suggestion, Abraham's faith would still not be "christological" in the same sense as the Galatians' faith.

⁵⁹ In Appendix 2 to the second edition of *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, Hays retracts his earlier conclusion that Gal 3 "depicts Abraham not as an exemplary paradigm for faith but as a representative figure in and through whom others are blessed" (177) on the grounds that this conclusion likely represents an "overly precise and rationalistic distinction . . . [that] posits a dichotomy where [Hays now suspects] Paul saw none" (290). I completely agree that Abraham appears as both paradigm and progenitor in Gal 3, but to suggest that Paul therefore saw no distinction between the two functions goes too far to the other extreme.

Abraham's subsequent belief in God's promise of incalculable physical descendants (Gen 15:2-3) essentially to disinherit those very biological descendants in favor of "adopted" children.⁶⁰ More importantly, as Hans Hübner emphasizes, such a redefinition of Abrahamic sonship ignores God's command in Gen 17:9-14 for all males of Abraham's household (whether biological or not) to be circumcised.⁶¹ On what grounds could Paul justify his blatant disregard of this command? Even if he did disregard it, we would at least expect him to comment on it, especially given the prominent role scholars often assign to Gen 17 in their reconstructions of the agitators' position.⁶²

This last observation then raises a problem that has rarely been given its due weight: the utter unpersuasiveness of Paul's purported argument. As mentioned above, the sudden introduction of Abrahamic sonship as a topic, the polemical nature of its first appearance, and the (in this view) radical redefinition of the term practically necessitate that Paul's argument respond to the position of the agitators, yet for Paul simply to assert that οἱ ἐκ πίστεως are sons of Abraham without addressing the biblical command for all of Abraham's sons to be circumcised (or the problematical implications for Israel that I

⁶⁰ Contra Hansen, *Galatians*, 87, who combines Gen 15:6 with Gal 3:8 to argue that Abraham's faith in God's promise for innumerable descendants is effectively his faith in the blessing of the gentiles.

⁶¹ Hans Hübner, *Law in Paul's Thought* (trans. James C. G. Greig; Studies of the New Testament and Its World; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1984), 16-17, 52-53. Cf. Donaldson, *Paul*, 124-25; Stanley, *Arguing*, 117 n. 9.

⁶² E.g., Martyn, *Galatians*, 291; E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1983), 18; Hansen, *Abraham*, 113. Hays, "Galatians," 255, argues that Paul appeals to Gen 15:6 in part because it comes "prior to [Abraham's] circumcision" (emphasis original), thereby giving him "crucial hermeneutical leverage" over the agitators' "almost certain[]" appeals to Gen 17. If Hays is right, then we must ask why Paul chose not to make use of this leverage until he wrote Rom 4:9-12.

will discuss below) would hardly constitute a compelling argument. Even worse, the agitators could fully endorse Paul's position and use it to their advantage: yes, Abraham was justified by faith, but he was then subsequently circumcised, just as you Galatians should also be. Paul could hardly have made a worse argument against a subsequent circumcision.

Although it overrides the indications that Abraham functions as an example, the alternative christological interpretation of 3:6-7 in which God credits Abraham with a future act of righteousness on his behalf largely avoids the difficulties above by anticipating Paul's subsequent incorporation-based argument. It cannot, however, escape one of the most significant problems that results from a christological interpretation of Abrahamic sonship in 3:6-7. Regardless of whether Abraham serves as paradigmatic figure or progenitor, redefining Abrahamic sonship solely in terms of Christ would effectively eliminate Israel's status as a national entity or people group.

As its name indicates, Israel consists of those descended from Abraham through Isaac and Jacob/Israel. By restricting Abrahamic sonship to Christ-based models, Paul would therefore be stripping the patriarchs' physical descendants of any legitimacy or theological significance. Günther Klein shows the full force of this implication. Connecting 3:7 with Paul's later implication that faith enters the world with Christ (3:23, 25), Klein concludes "dass es ausserhalb der christlichen Gemeinde keine Abrahamssohnschaft gibt und es ante Christum eine solche überhaupt niemals gegeben

hat.”⁶³ As this conclusion points out, the perceived dissolution of Israel would affect the nation’s past as well as its present, thereby transforming its history from *Heilsgeschichte* into a deceived *Unheilsgeschichte*.

This dissolution of Israel would be theologically troubling on its own; the fact that Paul elsewhere continues to recognize and attribute a theological significance to Israel exacerbates the problem by introducing the additional issue of Pauline consistency. As I will argue below, one need look no farther than Gal 3:13-14 for evidence that Paul’s theology retains a place for Israel. His treatment of Abraham in Romans, however, provides the clearest illustration. Indeed, Romans shows how easily Paul could have incorporated gentiles into Abraham’s family without disbanding Israel. Romans 4:9-12, for instance, uses Gen 15:6 to unite two distinct types of Abrahamic descendants, the circumcised (Jews) and the uncircumcised (gentiles), through their shared theocentric faith (cf. Rom 4:24).⁶⁴ Paul could have drawn a similar inference in Gal 3:7 simply by concluding that “you [i.e., the gentile Galatians] who are ἐκ πίστεως are sons of

⁶³ Günter Klein, *Rekonstruktion und Interpretation: Gesammelte Aufsätze zum Neuen Testament* (BEvT 50; München: Chr. Kaiser, 1969), 203, cf. 208. Cf. Bruce W. Longenecker, “Sharing in Their Spiritual Blessings? The Stories of Israel in Galatians and Romans,” in *Narrative Dynamics in Paul: A Critical Assessment* (ed. Bruce W. Longenecker; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 58-84, 70 n. 22.

⁶⁴ For the perceived conflict that Romans portrays a clearly theocentric faith linking believers directly to Abraham whereas Galatians portrays a christocentric faith linking believers to Abraham through Christ, see Donaldson, *Paul*, 122-23. On perceived differences in the use of Abraham between Romans and Galatians more generally, see Jeffrey S. Siker, *Disinheriting the Jews: Abraham in Early Christian Controversy* (Louisville: Westminster / John Knox, 1991), 73-74; Beker, *Paul*, 95-104; Hübner, *Law*, 51-57; Berger, “Abraham,” 87-88.

Abraham” or that “the ones who are ἐκ πίστεως, these are *also* sons of Abraham.”⁶⁵ Nevertheless, according to scholarly consensus, Gal 3:6-7 draws a very different conclusion. As Bruce Longenecker summarizes, whereas in Romans Paul organically incorporates the gentiles into Israel, in Galatians “[n]o effort is made to recognize Abraham as the patriarch of ethnic Israel, and various attempts are made to avoid any such impressions.”⁶⁶

Scholars do try to avoid the logical implications of this interpretation of Gal 3:7. Berger, for instance, argues that we should not push *ad hoc* statements such as 3:7 for implications beyond their stated purpose:

V. 3, 7 hat eine zentrale Bedeutung im Kontext, aber nicht die von Klein angenommen: er ist nicht gegen leibliche Abrahamssohnschaft gerichtet (Konsequenzen in dieser Richtung, die man aus dem Satz ziehen könnte, liegen nicht auf der Linie des Zusammenhangs), sondern behandelt die Voraussetzung zur Bindung der Verheißung an den Glauben.⁶⁷

In other words, we should focus only on what Paul affirms and not press the negative implications. Such a position effectively admits the larger incoherence of Paul’s argument. Based on a critical survey of the six main factors to which scholars commonly appeal in their attempts to explain these differences between Romans and Galatians—1) a

⁶⁵ Paul could have opted for either of these alternatives with only slight modifications to the existing text: ἡμεῖς οἱ ἐκ πίστεως υἱοὶ ἐστε Ἀβραάμ οἱ οἱ ἐκ πίστεως, οὗτοι καὶ υἱοὶ εἰσιν Ἀβραάμ. For this latter option, compare Rom 4:9.

⁶⁶ Longenecker, “Sharing,” 70.

⁶⁷ Berger, “Abraham,” 48.

common narrative substructure, 2) the different rhetorical situations, 3) aesthetic qualities of the arguments, 4) Paul's emotional state, 5) differences in genre, and 6) developments in Paul's thought— Longenecker comes to a similar conclusion: this reading of 3:7 cannot be reconciled with Romans, and the divergent attitudes on this crucial issue threaten to undermine any larger constructs of Pauline coherence.⁶⁸

Gentile-inclusive interpretations of Abrahamic sonship in 3:6-7 thus give rise to substantial difficulties. As noted previously and demonstrated here in greater detail, the traditional interpretation in which the gentiles' faith in Christ makes them Abrahamic sons based on Abraham's example is fundamentally incompatible with the later portrayal of Abrahamic descent based on incorporation into Christ. This interpretation also has trouble accounting for the focus on Abrahamic sonship in 3:7, goes against the Genesis context of Paul's citation, and results in an argument that has virtually no foreseeable chance of persuading the Galatians. Additionally, all christological redefinitions of Abrahamic sonship effectively dissolve Israel as a theologically significant entity, not only in the present but also with regard to the past. This development, problematical in its own right, then creates larger issues of Pauline coherence as well.

These theological and contextual problems thus reinforce the syntactical and lexical evidence considered in §2.2.1 in pointing to an argument that focuses on the basis of Jewish sonship without seeking to include Christian gentiles. The following section

⁶⁸ Longenecker, "Sharing," 80.

will elaborate on this proposal, explaining the logic in greater detail, demonstrating how it resolves the identified problems, and addressing potential criticisms.

2.2.3 Putting it all together: The case for Jewish sonship in 3:6-7

The analysis thus far has suggested that, rather than redefining Abrahamic sonship christologically so as to include gentiles, 3:6-7 instead highlights an essential component—i.e., justification by faith—of Jewish claims to Abrahamic sonship. This final section of §2.2 seeks to solidify this claim by demonstrating how this interpretation of the argument satisfies the lexico-syntactical evidence considered in §2.2.1 and resolves the problems associated with gentile-inclusive interpretations in §2.2.2. It then concludes by addressing four potential objections to this reading: 1) that the emphatic form of 3:7 suggests a redefining of Abrahamic sonship; 2) that the gentile context established by 3:5 and 3:8-9 requires a focus on gentiles in 3:6-7; 3) that the subsequent inclusion of gentiles in Abraham’s seed in 3:29 requires their similar inclusion in 3:7; and 4) that the lack of attestation for this reading in the history of interpretation undermines its viability.

To review briefly, §2.2.1 proposed that the argument in 3:6-7 builds on the “normative assumption” in the ancient world that children exhibit the attributes of their parents. Given this implicit principle, Abraham’s justification by faith in 3:6 then leads deductively to the conclusion in 3:7 that the sons of Abraham must be similarly justified by faith. In accordance with the syntactical (καθὼς Ἀβραάμ . . . ἄρα . . . υἱοὶ . . . Ἀβραάμ) and lexical (Ἀβραὰμ ἐπίστευσεν . . . εἰς δικαιοσύνην / οἱ [δίκαιοι] ἐκ

πίστεως) indications, this interpretation grounds the argument in Abraham's example. By limiting the argument to Abraham's genealogical descendants, however, it also remains consistent with the letter's later portrayals of Abrahamic descent in terms of ancestry (3:16, 29). This construal thus remains exegetically coherent at the two points where the basic alternative ways of understanding Paul's argument falter.

The strength of this Jewish reading appears in other areas as well. For instance, in an argument focused on Jewish claims, the conclusion in 3:7 emphasizes justification by faith rather than the Abrahamic sonship that a gentile-inclusive appeal to Abraham's example would emphasize. It therefore constitutes exactly the kind of conclusion that the letter's overall concern with justification would lead us to expect Paul to draw from Abraham's example in Gen 15:6. Furthermore, since this emphasis on justification by faith fits well within the larger epistolary context, Paul's introduction of Abraham no longer must depend on the assumption that Abrahamic sonship forms the critical issue in Galatia. Regardless of whether or not the agitators had appealed to Abraham, Paul invokes the patriarch's example because it accords with his gospel, a point that will become even clearer as the analysis of Paul's Abrahamic argument progresses.

This reading of 3:7 also avoids all of the larger contextual and theological problems associated with a gentile-inclusive reading. With regard to Christ's role, the text does not mention him here because Jewish claims of Abrahamic sonship do not depend on Christ.⁶⁹ To be sure, Paul will introduce a christological twist to this claim in 3:14b

⁶⁹ A Jewish-based argument could conceivably seek to distinguish Christian Jewish claims of sonship from the claims of non-Christian Jews, but 3:6-7 has no explicit references to Christ that would

that effectively transforms the paradigm from a justification of Jewish sonship over against claims of other biological descendants to a justification of Jewish-Christian sonship over against the claims of other Jews. At this point, however, Paul is still establishing the bases for his argument, building it up from first principles with which even his opponents could agree.

With regard to Israel, this interpretation clearly preserves the nation as a theologically distinct entity. Indeed, the statement affirms Israel's special status as Abrahamic sons by virtue of their shared faith, thereby creating a stronger parallel with Abraham's theocentric faith in 3:6 than Christian interpretations allow. Pauline inconsistency on this point, especially with Romans, thus ceases to be an issue. Restricting the application to Jews also correlates with the emphasis on biological heirs in Gen 15. As for the conflict with the command in Gen 17 for Abraham to circumcise all of his sons, it disappears as well, both because faith need not be the only qualifying criterion for sonship and because faith need not exclude an act such as circumcision. That is to say, in this view, 3:6-7 portrays faith as an essential but not necessarily sufficient condition of sonship. The argument will, of course, ultimately differentiate faith and law, but it does not do so here. The claim presents nothing with which the agitators might take issue,

suggest such an understanding. Since, as I will argue in the main text, a contrast between Jews and other genealogical descendants of Abraham fits well in the larger argument of 3:6-14, we therefore have no good reason for treating 3:6-7 as distinguishing between Christian and non-Christian Jews.

yielding a potential persuasiveness that the traditional interpretations simply cannot match.

Nevertheless, despite these substantial interpretive advantages, I know of no other interpreter who has considered even the possibility that the argument in 3:6-7 focuses on Jewish claims to Abrahamic sonship. To understand this rather stunning lack of attestation, we first need to examine the three textual features that typically undergird gentile-inclusive interpretations of 3:6-7: 1) the emphatic form of the conclusion in 3:7, 2) the focus on gentiles in the surrounding context, and 3) the letter's subsequent treatment of Abraham's seed. I will discuss each of these aspects in turn before returning to the issue of attestation at the end of this section.

First, the emphatic form of the claim in 3:7—"the ones [justified] by faith, *these* are sons of Abraham" (οἱ ἐκ πίστεως, οὗτοι υἱοὶ εἰσιν Ἀβραάμ)—usually suggests to later interpreters that the argument redefines Abrahamic sonship based on the sole criterion of being ἐκ πίστεως. This reading, however, must presuppose that the definition of Abrahamic sonship is already at issue. If Paul introduces Abrahamic sonship as a known entity, then the statement serves instead to highlight an essential characteristic of that sonship. The roughly parallel claim in 6:12 provides a good example of this latter sense: "As many as desire to make a good showing in flesh, *these* compel you to be circumcised" (ὅσοι θέλουσιν εὐπροσωπῆσαι ἐν σαρκί, οὗτοι ἀναγκάζουσιν ὑμᾶς περιτέμνεσθαι). Because the Galatians obviously knew who was promoting circumcision in their midst, absolutely no one suggests that 6:12 seeks to redefine this

group. Rather, the verse highlights a crucial characteristic of those who were compelling the Galatians, namely, that they desire to make a good showing in the flesh.

The many problems that a redefinition of Abrahamic sonship in 3:7 would create for Paul's argument and theology (see §2.2.2) suggest that we should abandon this reading given an equally viable alternative. Indeed, with little to no evidence requiring that Abrahamic sonship was at issue in Galatia—apart, that is, from the interpretation of 3:7 as redefining this sonship—we have no reason to suspect that the Galatians would understand Abrahamic sonship as a concept whose definition was even up for debate. A. E. Harvey's observation that Jews did not even extend the designation "sons of Abraham" to circumcised proselytes would, if correct, provide further evidence for the fixity of Abrahamic sonship as indicating physical descent from Abraham in the first century C.E. (cf., e.g., Luke 19:9; *Tg. Isa.* 46:11).⁷⁰ The Galatians would therefore likely assume the stability of the phrase in the same way that they would assume the stability of the ones compelling them towards circumcision in 6:12.

Accordingly, rather than signifying that everyone who is justified by faith becomes a son of Abraham, Paul's inference in 3:7 seems intended instead to establish that every true son of Abraham must be justified by faith, a claim that every good Jew could affirm. After all, it was the Jews' covenantal bond with "the God of Abraham,

⁷⁰ Harvey, "Opposition," 327. Harvey bases this conclusion on later rabbinic traditions (e.g., *Bik.* 1:4) and the implications in Philo that Jews did not allow proselytes to integrate fully (e.g., *Spec.* 1.51-52) (327 nn. 15-16). As Harvey notes, his observation undermines the suggestion that the agitators had introduced the issue of Abrahamic sonship in Galatia. It would also make a redefinition of sonship in 3:7 easier to refute.

Isaac, and Jacob” and their expression of that faith in the observance of his holy law that justified them and differentiated them from the other potential Abrahamic heirs. The emphatic οὗτοι then serves to exclude anyone who might have a claim to Abrahamic sonship apart from faith, such as his descendants outside of the Isaac-Jacob/Israel line (cf. Rom 9:6-13).

The phrasing of 3:7 points in this direction as well. As Brendan Byrne notes, Paul’s formulation emphasizes υἱοί by separating it from Ἀβραάμ and placing it before the verb;⁷¹ the verse identifies οἱ ἐκ πίστεως not as “sons of Abraham” but as “sons of Abraham.” This emphasis well suits a context where Paul wants to highlight “sonship” over against other ways of being related to Abraham (such as mere physical descent). The inference thus serves to remind Paul’s readers—hence, an indicative γινώσκετε in 3:7—of the importance of faith in the Jews’ claim to be Abraham’s (sole) “sons.”⁷²

Second, the linking of 3:6-7 with the clearly gentile-specific discussions in 3:5 and/or 3:8-9 usually leads interpreters to assume that 3:6-7 concerns gentiles as well. This contextual evidence actually proves to be fairly weak. I have already argued in §2.2.1 that 3:6 begins a new argument distinct from 3:1-5. While this observation does not preclude

⁷¹ Byrne, *Sons*, 149. NA²⁷ notes several manuscripts that transpose υἱοί εἰσιν: ⚡² A C D F G 0278 33 1739 1881 M latt; Ir^{lat}. Evidence for the accepted text appears in P⁴⁶ ⚡* B Ψ 81 326 1241^s 2464 pc.

⁷² Cf. Nancy Calvert-Koyzis, *Paul, Monotheism and the People of God: The Significance of Abraham Traditions for Early Judaism and Christianity* (JSNTSup 273; London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 96: “From the standpoint of the tradition of Abraham as the man of faith in the true God, Paul’s scriptural proof (3.6-7) for the descendants of Abraham being those who have faith in the same God would ring true.” Calvert-Koyzis nevertheless sees Paul as differing from this tradition by differentiating between faith and works.

3:6-7 from continuing to discuss gentiles, it also in no way requires it. The discussion of gentiles in 3:8-9, in contrast, has closer ties to 3:6-7 as the connecting particle δέ in 3:8 and the repeated οἱ ἐκ πίστεως in 3:9 indicate. Most scholars accordingly conclude that the discussion of God’s justifying and blessing the gentiles in 3:8-9 somehow draws out the key implications for the gentiles of Paul’s argument in 3:6-7. The discussion of 3:8-10 in §2.3 will argue that this interpretation cannot be sustained and that these later verses actually make a very different argument. To highlight just one potential problem, Gal 3:8-9 never mentions Abrahamic *sonship*, focusing instead on the Abrahamic *blessing*. Leaving the more extended discussion for later, I simply note here that if, as argued above, 3:7 does not redefine Abrahamic sonship, then the references to “sons of Abraham” in 3:6-7 and “gentiles” in 3:8-9 necessarily distinguish two parallel but different groups that the larger argument serves to unite on the grounds that they are both οἱ ἐκ πίστεως, i.e., those [justified] by faith.⁷³

Third, Gal 3:29 clearly incorporates gentiles into Abraham’s seed (σπέρμα), a result that interpreters then typically read back into 3:7 based on the assumption that υἱοί and σπέρμα function as roughly synonymous terms of Abrahamic descent. Even assuming this synonymy, however, 3:29 does not redefine Abrahamic sonship: the gentiles’ identity as Abrahamic seed depends on their incorporation into Christ, who himself qualifies as a traditional son of Abraham. In other words, the identification of

⁷³ The identity of the particular group in view, whether sons of Abraham in 3:7 or gentiles in 3:9, accordingly limits the scope of the article in the two instances of οἱ ἐκ πίστεως, i.e., the οἱ does not effectively signify “everyone.”

gentiles as seed in Gal 3:29 does not depend on a redefinition of Abrahamic sonship; rather, the verse shows why the gentiles qualify as sons under the traditional definition. Synonymy of Abrahamic sons and seed would necessitate a change in the customary understanding of sonship, but the discrepancy would arise not with the inclusion of gentiles in 3:29 but with the identification of Christ as Abraham’s sole “seed” in 3:16. In other words, any redefinition of Abrahamic sonship would need to justify the limiting of this sonship to Christ, not the inclusion of gentiles as sons. Synonymy between υἱοί and σπέρμα would therefore logically require a redefinition of Abrahamic sonship in 3:7 that was based on understanding Christ as the result Abraham’s or God’s faithfulness, the two least likely—and least advocated—readings of οἱ ἐκ πίστεως.

Not surprisingly, then, I suggest that Paul’s argument does indeed distinguish between Abraham’s “sons” and his promised “seed.” Chapter 3 of this dissertation will ground this distinction in God’s adoption of the patriarch: as the examination of 3:15-4:11 will show, this adoption entails that the promised “seed” must be a son of God as well as a (traditionally defined) “son” of Abraham. Although the justification of this distinction must therefore wait until Chapter 3, I can point to another factor in 3:7 that suggests it, namely, the rarity of υἱοὶ Ἀβραάμ in Paul.

The phrase υἱοὶ Ἀβραάμ appears nowhere else in the extant Pauline corpus. Elsewhere Paul always refers to Abraham’s descendants as his σπέρμα (Gal 3:16, 29; Rom 4:11-13, 16), even when referring specifically to Jews (Rom 9:7, 11:1; 2 Cor 11:22). We must accordingly ask why Paul opts for the phrase “sons of Abraham” in this one

instance. The unusual designation could indicate that Gal 3:7 uses the language of the agitators.⁷⁴ Against this possibility, he never mentions this designation again, reverting to “seed” language (3:29) and even calling the Galatians “sons of God” (3:26) at a point in his argument that seems tailor-made to reference their *Abrahamic* sonship.⁷⁵ A second—and, I suggest, more likely—possibility is that Paul uses υἱοὶ Ἀβραάμ in 3:7 because he wants to refer to the Jewish people in regard to their connection with Abraham, but he cannot use his customary σπέρμα language because the nature of the argument in Galatians requires that he reserve σπέρμα for Christ and those who are in him. That is to say, within the context of Galatians and its one-seed argument (3:16), σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ can refer only to Christ(ians). Thus, when Paul wants to speak of the Jews, he differentiates them from those in Christ by referring to them as “sons of Abraham.”

Accordingly, neither the emphatic form of the conclusion in 3:7, nor the surrounding gentile contexts of 3:5 and 3:8-9, nor the inclusion of gentiles in Abraham’s seed in 3:29 requires a gentile-inclusive redefinition of Abrahamic sonship in 3:6-7. The evidence, in fact, calls for a stronger conclusion: none of these features even *suggests* a gentile-inclusive interpretation of 3:7. Admittedly, if an interpreter starts with the assumption that 3:6-7 redefines Abrahamic sonship, then these features can be read in a way that supports this redefinition—albeit not without introducing the host of interpretive

⁷⁴ So, e.g., Martyn, *Galatians*, 299. Martyn tries to have it both ways, however, arguing that Paul’s subsequent use of σπέρμα in 3:29 must also reflect “the Galatians’ fascination with the Teachers’ references to the *sperma* of Abraham” since Paul would otherwise presumably have continued to use “sons” as in 3:7 (377).

⁷⁵ See §3.2.4.

problems discussed above—thereby seeming to reinforce the legitimacy of the initial assumption. If, however, an interpreter starts with the assumption that Abrahamic sonship in 3:7 retains its customary definition of physical descent from Abraham—and why would it not?—then none of these features would call that initial assumption into question.

These observations then offer potential insight as to why no known interpreters, whether ancient or modern, seem to have even considered the possibility that *υἱοὶ Ἀβραάμ* in 3:7 refers to Jews.⁷⁶ The earliest extant allusions to / interpretations of this passage appear in Justin's *Dialogus cum Tryphone* 119 (ca. 147-161), Irenaeus's *Adversus haereses* 4.21.1 and 5.32.2 (ca. 182-188), and Tertullian's *Adversus Marcionem* 5.3 (ca. 207). The earliest surviving full commentary on Galatians comes from Chrysostom at the end of the fourth century. By the time of these writers, the gentile church was ascending (if not ascendant) and anti-Semitism had begun its insidious intrusion into the church's theology. The inclusion of gentile Christians as children and heirs of Abraham had also been well established, based in no small part on the argument of Galatians itself. In such a climate, it hardly seems surprising that these late second- and early third-century readers would understand *οἱ ἐκ πίστεως* in 3:7 as a generic description of all Christians, an interpretation that exegetes have followed ever since.

⁷⁶ For summary of patristic interpretations of this passage, see especially Martin Meiser, *Galater* (Novum Testamentum Patristicum 9; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 129: "Als Söhne Abrahams werden generell die Christen gegenüber den Juden benannt."

In other words, later Christians' more developed understanding of Abrahamic descent as being somehow inclusive of uncircumcised gentiles is precisely what makes it seem reasonable that the definition of this sonship would be open to debate in 3:7. As noted above, once interpreters assume that 3:7 seeks to redefine Abrahamic sonship, they can then read the text in such a way that it seems to confirm this initial assumption, problematical though the resulting interpretation may be. In the first century C.E., however, the title "sons of Abraham" still clearly designated Jews, a fact implicitly acknowledged by the many reconstructions arguing that Galatians addresses a dispute over the gentile Christians' status as Abrahamic sons. I simply contend that the Galatians would have had little reason to question this customary understanding of υἱοὶ Ἀβραάμ. The preceding analysis shows that nothing in the letter itself requires or even promotes such questioning; while the controversy in Galatia could have produced it, the problematical nature of the resulting argument makes this scenario unlikely without further evidence to support it. This assessment then suggests that the lack of attestation for this reading results at least in part from a significant lacuna in the otherwise extensive history of interpretation, namely, our lack of sources from the first century itself.

I accordingly conclude that Gal 3:6-7 constitutes a distinct argument highlighting the importance of faith-based justification for Jewish claims of Abrahamic sonship. This interpretation builds on the lexico-syntactical evidence suggesting an argument from Abraham's example and accords well with the letter's later portrayal of Abrahamic descent in terms of genealogy / incorporation. It also resolves the many other theological and contextual issues that arise if, as traditionally assumed, the verses instead seek to

establish a christological, gentile-inclusive understanding of Abrahamic sonship. Upon closer inspection, potential objections to this reading based on the emphatic form of 3:7, the focus on gentiles in 3:5 and 3:8-9, and/or the inclusion of gentiles in Abraham’s seed all appear to beg the question instead. Even the lack of attestation in the history of interpretation has a plausible explanation. To complete the case for this interpretation of 3:6-7, however, I still need to show how it functions in the larger context of 3:6-14. Towards this end, I now turn to the analysis of 3:8-10.

2.3 Galatians 3:8-10: God justifies the gentiles by faith apart from law

Gal 3:8-10

^{8a}προϊδοῦσα δὲ ἡ γραφὴ ὅτι ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοῖ τὰ ἔθνη ὁ θεὸς
^bπροεηγγελίσαστο τῷ Ἀβραάμ ὅτι Ἐνευλογηθήσονται ἐν σοὶ πάντα τὰ
ἔθνη. ⁹ὥστε οἱ ἐκ πίστεως εὐλογοῦνται σὺν τῷ πιστῷ Ἀβραάμ. ^{10a}ὅσοι γὰρ
ἐξ ἔργων νόμου εἰσὶν ὑπὸ κατάραν εἰσὶν· γέγραπται ^bγὰρ ὅτι
Ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὃς οὐκ ἐμμένει πᾶσιν τοῖς γεγραμμένοις ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ
τοῦ νόμου τοῦ ποιῆσαι αὐτά.

^{8a}*And Scripture, having foreseen that God justifies the gentiles on the basis of faith, ^bpreached the gospel beforehand to Abraham: “All the nations will be blessed with you.” ⁹Therefore, the ones [who are justified] on the basis of faith are blessed with the faithful Abraham, ^{10a}for as many as are [justified] on the basis of works of law are under a curse. ^bFor it is written “Cursed [is] everyone who does not abide by all that is written in the book of the law, to do them.”*

Galatians 3:8 finally makes one of the letter’s core theological principles explicit: God justifies the gentiles on the basis of πίστις.⁷⁷ Indeed, it is Paul’s fear that the Galatians are abandoning this principle that seems to have prompted the writing of this epistle. Curiously, however, this fundamental tenet receives no special emphasis here but appears tucked away in a subordinate clause. Moreover, although the claim in 3:8a clearly represents Paul’s interpretation of the ensuing citation, the citation itself says nothing about justification or πίστις, speaking instead about the blessing of Abraham. In fact, the only element that Paul’s interpretation has in common with his citation is a reference to τὰ ἔθνη, the nations/gentiles. Adding to the curiosity, the argument’s conclusion (ὥστε) in 3:9 mentions neither the gentiles nor justification but draws an inference connecting οἱ ἐκ πίστεως to Abraham’s blessing.

How does the scriptural promise to Abraham that the gentiles will be blessed ἐν σοί (3:8b) presume that God justifies the gentiles based on πίστις (3:8a) and lead to the conclusion that οἱ ἐκ πίστεως are blessed with the faithful Abraham (3:9)? Scholars typically solve both of these problems with a single exegetical move: they assume that the argument simply equates πίστις-based justification with the Abrahamic blessing.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ I use the untranslated πίστις to indicate that the argument does not depend on whether the term refers to the gentiles themselves, to Christ, to Abraham, or to God. For ἐκ πίστεως in 3:8 as a reference to Christ’s faithfulness, see Johnson Hodge, *Sons*, 86; to Abraham or God’s faithfulness, see Hays, *Faith*, 176. Curiously, both of these scholars thus ascribe a different primary significance to ἐκ πίστεως in 3:8 than they ascribe to οἱ ἐκ πίστεως—Abraham’s faithfulness, Johnson Hodge / Christ’s faithfulness, Hays—in 3:7, 9.

⁷⁸ E.g., Williams, “Justification,” 95-96; Betz, *Galatians*, 142; Hansen, *Galatians*, 91.

This assumption enables the citation to prove Paul’s claim about the gentiles in 3:8a while at the same time transforming the conclusion about blessing in 3:9 into a more expected claim about justification. Since blessing has no inherent connection to justification more broadly or to πίστις-based justification more specifically, Abraham must then provide the crucial link uniting the two concepts. Thus, whether as example or as progenitor, Abraham becomes the key to showing that God justifies the gentiles on the basis of πίστις.

This perceived focus on Abraham in 3:8-9 usually has the indirect effect of severing 3:10 from its preceding context since, despite the γάρ at the beginning of 3:10, this latter verse shifts the argument from those blessed ἐν [Ἀβραάμ] to those cursed under the law. Of course, the exact nature of the argument in 3:10 has largely perplexed scholars ever since pioneers of the New Perspective first began questioning the reality of a legalistic Judaism that demanded perfection. Nevertheless, whatever the basis for 3:10 might be, scholars do largely agree that it is not Abraham, hence the paragraph break that almost always occurs after 3:9.⁷⁹

At first glance, this identification of 3:8-9 as part of a continuing (or additional) “argument from Abraham” seems to accord well with the surrounding context. The many apparent parallels between 3:6-7 and 3:8-9—both cite scriptures that refer to Abraham,

⁷⁹ For two scholars who (in different ways) do relate the argument in 3:10 to Abraham and therefore identify 3:8-10 as a unit, see Kjell Arne Morland, *The Rhetoric of Curse in Galatians: Paul Confronts Another Gospel* (Emory Studies in Early Christianity; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 103; Jeffrey R. Wisdom, *Blessing for the Nations and the Curse of the Law: Paul’s Citation of Genesis and Deuteronomy in Gal 3.8-10* (WUNT 2 / 133; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001). I will discuss their views below.

both identify people whom God justifies on the basis of πίστις, and both conclude by drawing implications for the relation of οἱ ἐκ πίστεως to Abraham—seem to offer support both for the close connection of 3:8-9 with 3:6-7 and for the Abrahamic focus in 3:8-9. I suggest, however, that 3:10 perplexes interpreters precisely because they have not properly understood Paul’s argument in 3:8-9. In fact, 3:10 does not have a monopoly on the difficulties that this purported argument from Abraham creates. Although they often go unnoted, unsustainable assumptions and illogical arguments fill the scholarship on 3:8-9, beginning with the problematical assumption that Paul equates justification and blessing. I will accordingly argue below that 3:8-10 forms an argument from scripture—i.e., not from Abraham—that makes sense only when read as a unit. Before making this positive argument, however, I will first detail the problems that arise in the standard interpretations of these three verses.

2.3.1 Problems with 3:8-9 as an argument from Abraham

Each of the verses in 3:8-10 presents a different exegetical challenge. Interpretations of verse 8 must explain how the scriptural promise to Abraham that the gentiles will be blessed ἐν σοί (3:8b) presumes that God justifies the gentiles based on πίστις (3:8a). Interpretations of verse 9 must explain how (and why) Paul reaches the conclusion that this verse draws. Finally, interpretations of verse 10 must explain why as many as are ἐξ ἔργων νόμου are under a curse. As the following analysis seeks to show,

interpreting 3:8-9 as a discrete argument from Abraham fails to provide tenable answers to any of these questions.

2.3.1.1 Problems deriving the πίστις-based justification of the gentiles from Abraham in 3:8

Galatians 3:8 raises the critical exegetical question of how the scriptural promise that the gentiles will be blessed ἐν [Ἀβραάμ] (3:8b) presumes (and thus proves) that God justifies the gentiles on the basis of πίστις (3:8a). Paul's interpretation in 3:8a clearly focuses on the τὰ ἔθνη in the ensuing citation: we know that God justifies the *gentiles* based on πίστις because the citation explicitly mentions *gentiles*. We can thus focus the question more precisely: why does the blessing in Abraham necessarily imply the πίστις-based justification of its gentile recipients? Logically, the implication might result from the full "blessing ἐν [Ἀβραάμ]," but it could also conceivably follow from either of the two elements considered individually, i.e., from being in Abraham alone or from the blessing alone. I will consider each of these possibilities in turn.

By far, most interpreters assume that Paul simply equates justification ἐκ πίστεως in 3:8a with the Abrahamic blessing in 3:8b.⁸⁰ This assumption then produces the following syllogism:

⁸⁰ Charles H. Cosgrove, *The Cross and the Spirit: A Study in the Argument and Theology of Galatians* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1988), 50-51, represents a rare dissenting voice: "The tendency among interpreters to equate the themes of sonship, blessing, and promise with 'justification by

[A. The blessing ἐν Ἀβραάμ is justification ἐκ πίστεως]

B. Gentiles are blessed ἐν Ἀβραάμ (3:8b)

Therefore, C. Gentiles are justified ἐκ πίστεως (3:8a)⁸¹

The blessing itself could consist either of justification ἐκ πίστεως or, in a slightly different construal, of justification alone, with ἐν Ἀβραάμ then necessitating the πίστις-based nature of this justification.⁸² Either way, since blessing is not inherently synonymous with any form of justification, Abraham must provide the crucial link uniting the two concepts.

The implicit nature of the major premise in this construal creates a substantial problem. As Betz notes, ancient Judaism understood the Abrahamic blessing to the gentiles in a variety of ways: as the maintenance of creation, as grace, as monotheism, as

faith' belies Paul's careful use of this terminology. . . . He never equates the blessing (promise or inheritance) with justification." See, too, Friedrich Sieffert, *Der Brief an die Galater* (9th, rev. ed.; KEK 7; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1899), 175-76.

⁸¹ Cf. Mayordomo, *Argumentiert*, 156. He also proposes an alternative syllogism: A. All those who are blessed (in Abraham) are justified by God; B. All gentiles are blessed (in Abraham) by God; Therefore, C. the (believing) gentiles are justified by God. As the parentheses indicate, however, this alternative syllogism cannot account for the identification of πίστις as the basis for the gentiles' justification.

⁸² In a potentially significant difference between the two construals, relating the blessing to justification alone allows for the possibility that justification forms the prerequisite for rather than the content of the blessing. Making the case that a blessing would require a particular kind of justification seems more difficult.

penitence, as proselytism, as scientific knowledge, even as cultural achievements.⁸³ In light of this diversity, Paul could certainly have come to a different understanding of the blessing, but he would then also need to *argue* for such an understanding if he hoped to persuade the Galatians. If the case for the πίστις-based justification of gentiles in 3:8 *assumes* the identification of the Abrahamic blessing with justification or justification ἐκ πίστεως, then it begs the question. Refuting it would require only that the agitators deny this novel and unsupported identification.

A focus on Abraham as the crucial link between blessing and justification also seems misplaced given the likely source of Paul’s citation and the difficulty of discerning a contextually coherent argument from Abraham. Beginning with the citation, three OT texts—Gen 12:3, 18:18, and 22:18—serve as potential sources for Gal 3:8b:

Gal 3:8b	ἐνευλογηθήσονται	ἐν σοὶ	πάντα τὰ ἔθνη
Gen 12:3	ἐνευλογηθήσονται	ἐν σοὶ	πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς
Gen 18:18	ἐνευλογηθήσονται	ἐν αὐτῷ	πάντα τὰ ἔθνη τῆς γῆς
Gen 22:18	ἐνευλογηθήσονται	ἐν τῷ σπέρματί σου	πάντα τὰ ἔθνη [τῆς γῆς] ⁸⁴

⁸³ Betz, *Galatians*, 142

⁸⁴ Max Wilcox, “‘Upon the Tree’ -- Deut 21:22-23 in the New Testament,” *JBL* 96 (1977): 85-99, 96 n. 46, notes that the omission of τῆς γῆς has better LXX manuscript support than its inclusion, an observation that perhaps further supports my eventual conclusion that Gen 22:18 forms the primary citation in Gal 3:8.

In light of Abraham's importance to Paul's purported argument, most scholars conclude that Gal 3:8b conflates Gen 12:3 and 18:18, the two texts that associate this blessing with Abraham as opposed to his seed. As E. P. Sanders notes, the argumentative necessity for the underlying text to include τὰ ἔθνη then requires that Gen 18:18 be Paul's primary source; otherwise, the argument would beg the question.⁸⁵ Furthermore, only Gen 18:18 incorporates all three elements of Paul's citation: blessing, Abraham, and the nations/gentiles. These observations would solve the problem were it not for Paul's explicitly drawing attention to the fact that scripture proclaimed this promise *to Abraham* (προεσηγγερίσαστο τῷ Ἀβραάμ, Gal 3:8b), a criterion that effectively eliminates Gen 18:18 from consideration.⁸⁶

In fact, the post-*Aqedah* reiteration and confirmation of God's promises in Gen 22:18 best matches the context in Galatians. Unlike Gen 12:3, 22:18 contains the crucial reference to τὰ ἔθνη that links the citation to Paul's interpretation in Gal 3:8a; unlike Gen 18:18, it is actually proclaimed to Abraham. Of course, also unlike the other two options, Gen 22:18 focuses on Abraham's seed rather than on Abraham himself. Even Paul's ἐν σοί, however, has some justification in this OT verse: Gen 22:18 goes on to specify that

⁸⁵ So Sanders, *Paul, the Law*, 21. Although Malina and Pilch, *Social-Science*, 203-5, identify the citation as Gen 18:18 in their discussion of 3:8-9 (203), they state in their discussion of 3:13-14 that Paul uses the language of τὰ ἔθνη to refer to fellow (diaspora) Israelites throughout the passage because of *his citation of Gen 12:3* (205). This confusion exposes a major weakness in their argument: had Paul truly been referring to diaspora Israelites, the actual πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαί of Gen 12:3 would have conveyed this sense much better!

⁸⁶ Scott W. Hahn, "Covenant, Oath, and the Aqedah: Διοθήκη in Galatians 3:15-18," *CBQ* 67 (2005): 79-100, 92 n. 64. Cf. Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale, 1989), 106, 108, who also identifies the citation as a conflation of Gen 12:3 and 22:18.

the Lord will bless the nations because of Abraham's *obedience*, a sentiment that Paul seems to reflect in his subsequent inference that those ἐκ πίστεως are blessed "with the *faithful* Abraham" (σὺν τῷ πιστῷ Ἀβραάμ, Gal 3:9).

The surrounding context in Galatians thus points to Gen 22:18 as Paul's primary text. This conclusion accordingly indicates that—assuming the ἐν σοί does not reflect a variant *Vorlage*—Paul has imported the reference to Abraham. While the primary linking of Abraham with this blessing to the gentiles in Gen 12:3 and 18:18 affirms the contextual integrity of this substitution, it nevertheless creates an awkward situation if the imported reference to Abraham forms the linchpin of Paul's argument. The citation in 3:8b therefore argues against a proof based on Abraham.

Trying to discern a contextually coherent explanation for an Abrahamic connection between blessing and πίστις-based justification also proves difficult. The phrase ἐν σοί could ground this connection in Abraham in one of two ways: it could base the gentiles' justification ἐκ πίστεως on Abraham's example or on his status as genealogical forebear. Neither option produces a very compelling argument.

Advocates for an example-based interpretation typically contend that Paul is countering an argument of the agitators that gentiles must be circumcised to inherit the blessing "in Abraham." In other words, Paul challenges the agitators' position by interpreting ἐν σοί not, as the agitators would, in a genealogical/locative sense ("in you") but as an appeal to Abraham's defining example ("by virtue of your establishment of the

principle of justification by faith”).⁸⁷ This appeal to the agitators’ position has the advantage of explaining Paul’s otherwise curious focus on blessing rather than justification in 3:9. For further support, adherents of this view point to the parallel σὺν τῷ πιστῷ Ἀβραάμ (interpreted here as “with the *believing* Abraham”) in 3:9 and the similar appeal in 3:6. It would strengthen the argument even more if Paul regards Abraham as a gentile in Gen 15:6, but the failure to make such a crucial (and potentially controversial!) point explicit—in contrast to Rom 4:9-12—argues against this line of thought in 3:8.⁸⁸

Despite these seeming strengths, this proposed scenario makes little sense in the context of Galatians. In the first place, it acknowledges that, under the influence of the agitators, the Galatians will understand ἐν σοί in a locative/genealogical sense; Paul’s failure to clarify his alternative interpretation thus renders it questionable whether his audience would even understand this argument, let alone find it a persuasive rebuttal. Furthermore, 3:29 does effectively incorporate the gentile Galatian believers into Christ, the sole seed of Abraham. The only possible reason for Paul to deny the necessity of incorporation into Abraham—as opposed to arguing that the Galatians are already “in

⁸⁷ E.g., Fung, *Galatians*, 139-40; Burton, *Galatians*, 161. Depending on exactly how one defines the blessing, Abraham serves as the defining example of one who receives the blessing of justification by faith or, alternatively, as the one who establishes that the blessing of justification comes by faith. This distinction has no significance for the analysis above.

⁸⁸ So Burton, *Galatians*, 161. Burton does, however, suggest that Paul could have in view the context of Gen 12:3 in which Abraham finds “divine acceptance” (i.e., justification) by responding to God’s call in faith (cf. Heb 11:8). Against this contextual reading, I have already argued that Gal 3:8 refers primarily to Gen 22:18, not Gen 12:3. Furthermore, the citation of Gen 15:6 in Gal 3:6 has just established an event subsequent to Gen 12:3 as the basis for Abraham’s justification.

Abraham” through Christ—would therefore be if the blessing comes before the believers’ incorporation into Christ.⁸⁹ Since Paul regards the Galatians as already “in Christ” (3:29), however, even in this case an attempt to interpret ἐν σοί as an appeal to Abraham’s example would require that Paul had abandoned a more straightforward argument from the gentiles’ incorporation into Christ (cf. ἐν τῷ σπέρματί σου in Gen 22:18) in order to import a more problematical and obscure argument from Abraham.

In truth, 3:8 seems unlikely to ground the gentiles’ πίστις-based justification in Abraham’s example under any scenario. As noted above, proponents of an example-based argument render σὺν τῷ πιστῷ Ἀβραάμ in 3:9 as “with the *believing* Abraham,” but πιστός customarily means “faithful” or “trustworthy,” not “believing.” LSJ does list “believing” as a second, significantly less frequent meaning of πιστός.⁹⁰ Nevertheless, the more common primary meaning—a meaning that accords well with Abraham’s faithfulness in the context of Gen 22:18—undermines the proposed parallel with Abraham’s faith-based justification in Gal 3:6.⁹¹ Had Paul intended to reference

⁸⁹ I will suggest that Paul does indeed distinguish between Christ’s bringing the Abrahamic blessing of the Spirit “into the gentiles” (εἰς τὰ ἔθνη) based on their faith (3:14a; cf. 3:1-5) and the gentiles’ subsequent incorporation “into Christ” (εἰς Χριστόν) through the act of baptism (3:26-29). See especially the discussion in §3.4.2.1.

⁹⁰ LSJ, “πιστός,” 1408, meaning B.

⁹¹ Cf. Dunn, *Galatians*, 167: “[The use of πιστῷ] could easily have been understood as a concession to the more traditional view he was in process of contesting — that the promised blessing was conditional on Abraham’s faithfulness when tested in the offering of Isaac . . . But for some reason he saw no danger in speaking of Abraham’s faithfulness.” Paul saw “no danger” because he was, in fact, referring to Abraham’s faithfulness in the *Aqedah*.

Abraham's justification as an example, he could easily have avoided any potential confusion by using the participle πιστεύοντι instead.

Interpretations grounding the gentiles' πίστις-based justification in an incorporative/genealogical understanding of ἐν σοί fare little better. These readings characteristically view Abrahamic sonship (i.e., "in Abraham") as the middle term linking faith (3:7) with blessing/justification (3:8b). Thus, Williams, e.g., essentially proposes the following logical chain.⁹²

[A. All gentiles who are blessed in Abraham are justified in Abraham]

[B. All who are justified in Abraham are justified as sons of Abraham]

C. All sons of Abraham are justified ἐκ πίστεως (3:7)

Therefore, D. All gentiles who are blessed in Abraham are justified ἐκ πίστεως

This unnecessarily complicated chain, however, effectively renders the reference to blessing in 3:8b irrelevant: the citation proves its point simply by asserting that gentiles will be "in Abraham." In other words, an incorporative appeal actually produces a much simpler logical chain than the one Williams proposes:

⁹² Williams, *Galatians*, 88. Alternatively, the B-line could read "All who are justified in Abraham are justified as Abraham was," with the C-line then referring to 3:6: "Abraham was justified by faith." If, as Williams suggests, ἐκ πίστεως in 3:8 refers to the gentiles' own faith, then this argument from Abraham becomes interchangeable with the argument from sonship identified in the main text above. The appeal to Abraham's example inherent in this alternative construal of the syllogism, however, runs into the aforementioned problem with Paul's subsequent description of Abraham as πιστός in 3:9. To avoid this problem, an incorporative understanding would therefore seem to require the sonship-focused syllogism, with ἐκ πίστεως referring to the faithfulness of Abraham, Christ, or God.

A. All the gentiles who are in Abraham (3:8b) are sons of Abraham

B. All sons of Abraham are justified ἐκ πίστεως (3:7)

Therefore, C. All the gentiles who are in Abraham are justified ἐκ πίστεως (3:8a)

Arguing against this incorporative understanding, the two possible sources for 3:8b that are actually proclaimed to Abraham (Gen 12:3 and 22:18) lack the crucial connection between Abraham and the gentiles. Furthermore, since Abraham's seed is the one into whom the gentiles are actually incorporated (cf. 3:29), an incorporative appeal makes it hard to account for the substitution of ἐν σοί for ἐν τῷ σπέρματί σου in Gen 22:18. The blessing theme's reappearance in the inference of 3:9 and in 3:14a potentially challenges its irrelevance in this construal as well.

Finally, neither an appeal to Abraham's example nor, especially, an appeal to his status as genealogical forebear can explain why Paul glosses the ἐν in his citation simply as σὺν ("with") in 3:9.⁹³ To be sure, these interpretations of 3:8 can both make sense of the generic "with Abraham," but therein lies a problem. If Paul's argument hinges on the role of Abraham, then we would expect him to indicate the direction of his argument more clearly. That is to say, why does 3:9 not refer definitively to Abraham's example or

⁹³ Cf. Dunn, *Galatians*, 165, who argues that the switch to σὺν . . . Ἀβραάμ suggests that Paul does not intend to emphasize the ἐν σοί construction at this point in his argument.

to the gentiles' status in Christ if one of those points constitutes the likely-contested basis of the argument? We should prefer an explanation of Paul's argument that can better account for, or at least marginalize, this ambiguous phrase.

In short, the surrounding context—particularly the inference in 3:9—argues against the suggestion that Paul's inference of the gentiles' πίστις-based justification in 3:8 depends on either an exemplary or an incorporative appeal to Abraham. The apparent importing of Abraham (ἐν σοί) into the citation of Gen 22:18 points to this conclusion as well. It points to this conclusion in the case of an exemplary appeal because an argument based on Abraham would then beg the question; in the case of incorporative appeal, because the reference to Abraham replaces a reference to the seed (ἐν τῷ σπέρματί σου) into whom the gentiles are actually incorporated. These indications of a non-Abrahamic argument then undermine the common assumption that 3:8 implicitly equates—based on Abraham—the blessing ἐν Ἀβραάμ with justification ἐκ πίστεως, an equation whose novelty in the ancient world further erodes its plausibility.

Given the problematical nature of these construals that focus on Abraham's role, we should consider the possibility that Paul's assertion of the gentiles' πίστις-based justification instead derives solely from the fact that the gentiles are blessed. Burton identifies two potential bases for such a scenario: the πίστις-based nature of the gentiles' justification in 3:8a could stem from the practical reality of gentiles' having received the

Spirit ἐξ ἄκοῆς πίστεως (cf. 3:5), or it could stem from the gentiles' nature as those not under law.⁹⁴ It will be helpful at this point to discuss the problems with the former option.

EXCURSUS: Problems with 3:8-9 as an argument from experience

Interpreters typically construe an experience-based explanation of the gentiles' πίστις-based justification in 3:8a as follows. The Galatians' reception of the Spirit ἐξ ἄκοῆς πίστεως provides a visible sign that they have received the Abrahamic blessing to the gentiles. This visible sign then also indicates the associated but unobservable reality that the Galatians have been justified ἐκ πίστεως, either as part of the Abrahamic blessing or as its prerequisite. Hence, God's promise to bless the gentiles ἐν Ἀβραάμ (3:8b) proves through its fulfillment that God justifies the gentiles ἐκ πίστεως (3:8a), a result then projected back into the Abrahamic story and identified as the initial motivation for the promise.⁹⁵

Burton considers this construal to provide the most compelling explanation of Paul's reasoning.⁹⁶ Nothing in 3:8, however, explicitly suggests an

⁹⁴ Burton, *Galatians*, 161.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 161-62. Cf. Hansen, *Galatians*, 89-90; Witherington, *Grace*, 228-29.

⁹⁶ Burton, *Galatians*, 161.

appeal to the Galatians' experience. At the very least, then, the thoroughly implicit nature of this argument would render it unlikely to persuade those who were not already convinced of Paul's position. In fact, the inference in 3:8a that God justifies *the gentiles* ἐκ πίστεως even argues against this implicit appeal because an experience-based argument would obviate the need for this generic inference. That is to say, Paul presumably makes a case for the gentiles' πίστις-based justification because of its implications for the gentile Galatians. If the argument instead derives from the Galatians' experience, then generalizing the principle to encompass all gentiles would serve no discernable purpose. Paul could instead directly infer that God justifies "you"—i.e., the Galatians—ἐκ πίστεως.

The Abrahamic nature of the blessing presents a problem for this reading as well. Although Paul does seem to identify the Spirit with the Abrahamic blessing (cf. 3:14), 3:8 itself does not provide any clear grounds for interpreting the Galatians' reception of the Spirit as the blessing that comes specifically ἐν Ἀβραάμ. If anything, 3:14 suggests that Christ would form the middle term connecting the Spirit to the Abrahamic blessing, but an implicit reference to Christ in 3:8 seems unlikely given the replacement of ἐν τῷ σπέρματί σου in Gen 22:18 with ἐν σοί in Gal 3:8b.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ In the process of arguing for the Spirit's close connection with justification, Williams, "Justification," 95-96, effectively offers a possible alternative basis for associating the Spirit with the

This lack of a connection between the blessing ἐν Ἀβραάμ and the Galatians’ reception of the Spirit could also point in a different direction: Paul could derive the gentiles’ πίστις-based justification directly from the Galatians’ experience. In this reading, the Galatians’ reception of a blessing—regardless of whether or not it is the Abrahamic blessing in particular—entails their prior justification, which, since it clearly did not come from works of law, must instead be based on πίστις. This suggestion then radically changes the nature of the claim in 3:8. Viewed in this way, 3:8a no longer functions as an inference from 3:8b but instead becomes an independently-established principle that Paul applies to the Abrahamic promise: since A. God justifies the gentiles ἐκ πίστεως (3:8a) and B. The gentiles will be blessed in Abraham (3:8b), therefore C. οἱ ἐκ πίστεως are blessed with Abraham (3:9).⁹⁸

This alternative construal produces a clear logical argument in 3:8-9, a strength that, as §2.3.1.2 will show, more traditional interpretations focused on

Abrahamic blessing. He suggests that the ἐν σοί in 3:8b identifies the gentiles as Abraham’s children and thus, based on the subsequent description of Isaac as one born “according to Spirit” (4:29), alludes to their reception of the Spirit. This allusion, however, seems too subtle to constitute the primary basis for Paul’s claim in 3:8. Furthermore, in this view, the Spirit essentially becomes a prerequisite for the blessing by qualifying the gentiles as Abraham’s children (ἐν Ἀβραάμ) rather than the blessing itself, an implication that Williams does not acknowledge. Finally, Chapter 3 of this dissertation will argue that the gentiles become sons of God—not Abraham—through the Spirit (cf. 4:6); they then become sons of Abraham through their (subsequent) baptism into Christ (3:29). As for the reference to Isaac as one born according to the Spirit, §4.3.4.1 will suggest that this designation focuses primarily on *Jewish* Christians.

⁹⁸ Cf., e.g., Cosgrove, *Cross*, 50: “The idea that God justifies the Gentiles by faith [3:8a] serves here as a piece of common ground in an argument whose interest lies elsewhere.”

Abraham cannot claim. It assumes, however, that everyone involved in the discussion would acknowledge the gentiles' πίστις-based justification, a premise that I find hard to accept. The contrasting of ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως with ἐξ ἔργων νόμου in 3:2-5, for example, suggests that the basis for the Galatians' continuing justification is in dispute, hence Paul's appeal to the indisputable basis—i.e., ἀκοῆ πίστεως—of their initial justification. The syntactical connection of 3:8a to 3:8b also indicates that the promise to bless the nations proceeds from scripture's foreknowledge of the gentiles' πίστις-based justification. The syntax therefore undermines the treatment of these clauses as two independent premises while at the same time establishing a rather novel causal relationship between them that goes unexplained in this interpretation.

Identifying the purpose of an argument focused on establishing the πίστις-based justification of those who receive the Abrahamic blessing proves difficult as well. Even if the argument responds to a position of the agitators, Paul's apparent equating in 3:14 of the Abrahamic blessing with the Spirit that the Galatians have already received ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως (cf. 3:5) suggests that an argument explaining this connection would be more relevant than a defense of the blessing's basis. Finally, as with all interpretations that take 3:9 as the end of an argumentative section, this reading fails to enable a cogent explanation of the argument in 3:10 (see §2.3.1.3).

These problems that arise when trying to relate 3:8a to 3:8b based on Abraham or on the Galatians' reception of the Spirit suggest that we should turn to the second of Burton's blessing-focused proposals: the justification presupposed by the blessing of gentiles must be ἐκ πίστεως because the gentiles are not under law. Although Burton finds this option unlikely given the agitators' ability to counter this reading on the grounds that Gen 17 requires the circumcision of those (males) ἐν Ἀβραάμ,⁹⁹ I contend that it does indeed reflect Paul's reasoning. Moreover, I propose that Gal 3:9-10 provides an explicit defense of this position that effectively undermines the force of Burton's proposed objection. I will explain this interpretation more fully after illustrating the further difficulties that result when interpreters do not understand 3:9 and 3:10 in this way.

2.3.1.2 Problems determining the function of the conclusion in 3:9

Galatians 3:9 claims that οἱ ἐκ πίστεως are blessed with the faithful Abraham. The opening ὥστε indicates that this claim in 3:9 serves as an inference derived from the preceding verse or verses. Scholars disagree on the precise scope of this argument, i.e., whether the ὥστε looks back to 3:6-8, 3:7-8, or simply 3:8. Nevertheless, they do widely agree that 3:9 concludes Paul's argument from Abraham since the ensuing verse (3:10)

⁹⁹ Burton, *Galatians*, 161.

instead appeals to a Deuteronomic citation to make a point about those who are ἐξ ἔργων νόμου. Thus, despite the γάρ that links 3:9 and 3:10, most interpreters insert a paragraph break after 3:9,¹⁰⁰ an insertion that, I suggest, proves problematical. A consideration of the function of 3:9 shows why.

As in 3:7, the inference in 3:9 could highlight a crucial characteristic of those already known to receive the Abrahamic blessing, or it could broaden the definition of who receives that blessing. Since 3:8 establishes that “all the nations” are blessed in Abraham, the former option would highlight justification ἐκ πίστεως as a crucial characteristic of the gentiles who are blessed in Abraham: “Therefore, the gentiles who are justified ἐκ πίστεως are the gentiles who are blessed with Abraham.” The latter, in contrast, would expand the scope of the Abrahamic blessing to include all who are οἱ ἐκ πίστεως: “Therefore, all who are ἐκ πίστεως are blessed with Abraham.” In this latter case, the conclusion could either redefine a group previously understood to receive Abraham’s blessing so as to account for the inclusion of gentiles or, if the argument does not presuppose the prior existence of such a group, broaden the blessing’s beneficiaries inductively based on the gentiles’ reception.

Both of these broadening interpretations essentially draw a conclusion about the Abrahamic blessing based on the gentiles’ status as οἱ ἐκ πίστεως. Not only does this focus on the blessing appear odd in a letter that seems largely intended to correct a

¹⁰⁰ See, e.g., NA²⁷.

misconception about the gentiles' righteous status—i.e., we would instead expect the gentiles' reception of the blessing to produce a conclusion about their justification—but it also results in a circular argument since 3:8 seems to derive the gentiles' status as those justified ἐκ πίστεως (3:8a) from their promised reception of the Abrahamic blessing (3:8b). A different problem arises if 3:9 concludes the argument—i.e., if 3:10 begins a new thought—by highlighting the πίστις-based justification of the gentiles who receive the Abrahamic blessing: in this reading, 3:9 essentially summarizes 3:8, which leaves unaddressed the problem of why reception of the Abrahamic blessing would entail that God justifies the gentiles ἐκ πίστεως (see §2.3.1.1).

I will suggest that extending this portion of the argument to 3:10 effectively enables 3:9-10 to argue for the gentiles' justification ἐκ πίστεως based on their reception of the blessing in 3:8, a line of reasoning that fits well with the letter's larger concerns. At this point, however, my argument focuses on showing the inadequacies of current interpretations of 3:9. Not surprisingly given the preceding analysis of the verse's function, current interpretations struggle to find a coherent and/or contextually-relevant argument that concludes in 3:9.

A few scholars, e.g., seek to derive 3:9 from the combination of cited Abrahamic texts in 3:6 and 3:8b. Although they construct their proposed syllogisms with varying degrees of logical sophistication and accuracy, the basic premises can be presented most simply as follows:

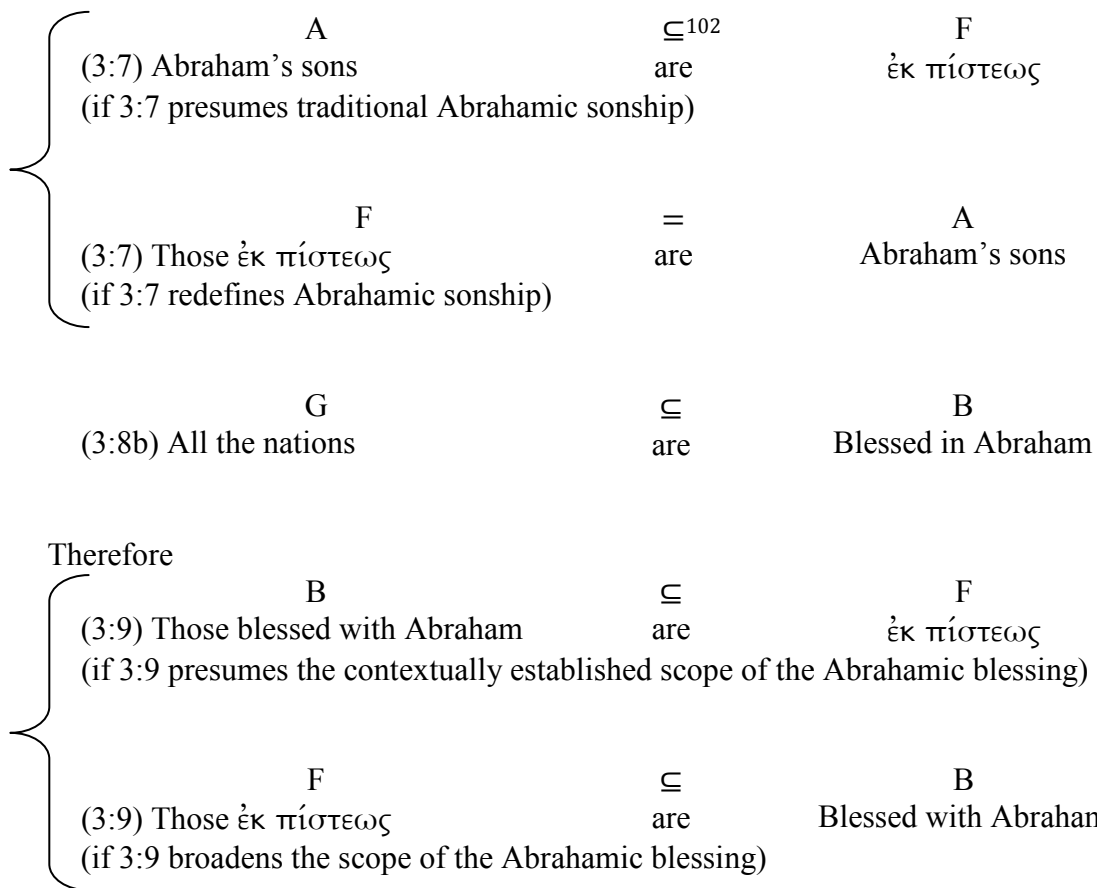
A. The blessing in Abraham is justification by faith (3:6)

B. All the nations/gentiles are blessed in Abraham (3:8b)

These premises lead to the conclusion that the gentiles are justified by faith. The preceding discussion of 3:8 (§2.3.1.1) has already highlighted the difficulties inherent in the equating of blessing and justification that appears in the major premise. Here I simply point out that 3:9 does not, in fact, draw the expected conclusion that “gentiles are justified by faith”; rather, it proclaims that “οἱ ἐκ πίστεως are blessed with Abraham.”¹⁰¹ To reach the conclusion in 3:9 from these premises, Paul would have to assume that the Abrahamic blessing constitutes the only means of justification by faith. This extension of the claim in 3:6, however, would then effectively render 3:8b irrelevant to the argument, thereby undermining this construal.

Accordingly, several scholars look instead to the identical phrase in 3:7 to explain the οἱ ἐκ πίστεως, again essentially arguing that a syllogistic logic unites 3:7-9. Unfortunately, the premises do not align to form a syllogism:

¹⁰¹ Hübner, *Law*, 17, derives his proposed conclusion from the syllogism, meaning that it differs from Paul’s conclusion in 3:9. Fung, *Galatians*, 140, arrives at the conclusion in 3:9, but that conclusion does not proceed logically from the proposed premises. Dunn, *Galatians*, 166, also arrives at Paul’s conclusion, but how the two citations lead him to this result remains a mystery: “The link provided by the first scripture (promise, seed, faith), when added to the link provided by the second (promise, blessing, Gentiles), pointed clearly[!] to the conclusion that the blessing of Abraham came to the faith of Abraham, and thus to those who shared that faith.”



As indicated above, the significance of 3:7 differs depending on whether the verse treats Abrahamic sonship in its customary sense designating Jews (as I have argued that it does) or redefines it based solely on πίστις. The polemical οὔτοι in 3:7 would then suggest that such a redefinition entail both that everyone ἐκ πίστεως is a son of Abraham and that all sons of Abraham are ἐκ πίστεως, hence the equal sign in the layout above. A

¹⁰² \subseteq is the mathematical symbol for “is the subset of or equal to.” As a logical proposition, the statement $A \subseteq B$ encodes “All in A are in B.” In other words, according to the reading of 3:7 that presumes traditional sonship, the set consisting of Abrahamic sons is at least a subset of (if people who are ἐκ πίστεως and not sons of Abraham exist) and at most equal to (if no such people exist) the set consisting of those who are ἐκ πίστεως.

similar dilemma arises in 3:9, although the lack of a polemical οὔτοι in this latter verse suggests that the broadening interpretation would understand being οἱ ἐκ πίστεως as only a sufficient, not a necessary, criterion. In other words, the expansive reading of 3:9 need not preclude the possibility that other criteria could enable those who are not ἐκ πίστεως to share in the Abrahamic blessing. We can then limit the resulting interpretive options: since either interpretation of 3:7 includes Jews or Jewish Christians, any interpretation of 3:9 that draws its οἱ ἐκ πίστεως language from 3:7 must interpret the latter verse as broadening the scope of the Abrahamic blessing. Unfortunately, the claims $A \subseteq F / F = A$ and $G \subseteq B$ have no elements in common. They therefore do not combine to yield the conclusion $F \subseteq B$.¹⁰³

Linking 3:9 to 3:7 would thus require the presence of an implied premise. The simplest such construction would result from the assumption that “All sons of Abraham

¹⁰³ George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 149, nevertheless seems to describe Paul’s argument in this way. Needless to say, he concludes that the “whole labored argument” of 3:6-18 rests more on Paul’s personal authority than on logic. Cf., too, Martyn, *Galatians*, 302; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 222. Matera, *Galatians*, 123, constructs the following logical chain by inserting references to gentiles where Paul has none: A. “The Gentiles[!] are Abraham’s descendants [i.e., ‘in him’] because they are *hoi ek pisteōs*” (3:7); B. “God promised Abraham that all the Gentiles would be *blessed* in him” (3:8); C. “Therefore, the Gentiles[!] are *blessed* with Abraham because they are *hoi ek pisteōs*” (3:9). The lack of a causal connection in B renders this chain invalid; B would need to establish either that all who are in Abraham are blessed or that gentiles are blessed *because* they are in Abraham. The concluding emphasis on the gentiles’ membership in “the community of faith” as the assurance of their share in the Abrahamic blessing also seems misplaced: the citation in 3:8 alone establishes their share—as this reading requires—and even if Paul wanted to elaborate, the key point would be that the gentiles are “in Abraham,” not why they are in Abraham. Morland, *Rhetoric*, 199, similarly constructs an invalid syllogism: A. “In thee (= Abraham) shall all the nations be blessed (3:8b)”; B. “Those who are men of faith are in Abraham (=3:7)”; therefore, C. “Those who are of faith are blessed (3:9a; cf. 3:8a[]).” As Mayordomo, *Argumentiert*, 157, points out, Morland creates a middle term (“in Abraham”) only by phrasing his major premise so that it misrepresents its true subject. The premise of 3:8b should read “All the nations are blessed in Abraham”; Morland’s syllogism instead requires the premise “All in Abraham are blessed.”

are blessed in Abraham” ($A \subseteq B$).¹⁰⁴ While this premise would combine with a redefinition of Abrahamic sonship in 3:7 ($F = A$) to produce the conclusion in 3:9, it would produce this result only by rendering the intervening reference to the gentiles—indeed, all of 3:8—completely irrelevant. Such a scenario seems implausible given the repetition of the previously unmentioned blessing theme in 3:8b and 3:9. Furthermore, this reading focuses the whole argument of 3:6-9 on establishing who receives the Abrahamic blessing. It therefore cannot account for the expressed logic of 3:8, according to which Paul introduces the concept of Abrahamic blessing to establish that God justifies the gentiles ἐκ πίστεως. Indeed, since the citation expressly establishes the gentiles’ participation in Abraham’s blessing, their justification ἐκ πίστεως serves no purpose in this construal.

A logical chain involving both 3:7 and 3:8 seems equally implausible. Such a chain would have to combine a redefinition of sonship in 3:7 ($F = A$) with the implied premise that “All sons of Abraham are gentiles” ($A \subseteq G$).¹⁰⁵ Even overlooking the awkwardness of an argument that must assume the gentile status of all Abraham’s sons in order to prove that Abraham’s sons are blessed with him, such a radical premise would

¹⁰⁴ Cf., e.g., Ellicott, *Galatians*, 71, who effectively identifies the relevant premises as A. Abraham and his children will be blessed; B. οἱ ἐκ πίστεως are Abraham’s children (3:7).

¹⁰⁵ R. Dean Anderson, Jr., *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul* (rev. ed.; CBET 18; Leuven: Peeters, 1999), 160, suggests the converse as the missing premise: the nations in 3:8b are Abraham’s promised sons. For this claim to complete a valid syllogism, however, it would have to be exclusive—i.e., the nations in 3:8b are Abraham’s *only* sons, ($G = A$)—thereby producing essentially the same result as the premise identified in the main text above. As Anderson himself notes of his reading, “Too much is left unstated . . . Paul’s argument [in 3:2-14] is no logical demonstration” (160-61).

surely need to be stated clearly and defended vigorously in order for the argument to be comprehensible, let alone persuasive.

Galatians 3:9 therefore seems likely to derive its inference from 3:8 considered apart from 3:6-7.¹⁰⁶ Having already discussed the problems with 3:9 as a conclusion derived from 3:8a and 3:8b considered as independent premises,¹⁰⁷ we have two remaining possibilities: 3:9 could either summarize (if οἱ ἐκ πίστεως in 3:9 comprises only gentiles) or build on (if οἱ ἐκ πίστεως comprises both Jews and gentiles) the claim concerning the gentiles' justification ἐκ πίστεως in 3:8. Although by far the most common, the latter interpretation of οἱ ἐκ πίστεως has little to support it.

In the first place, without a logical connection to the instance in 3:7, οἱ ἐκ πίστεως in 3:9 could include both Jews and gentiles only as the result of a rather dubious inductive argument. Moving from the observation in 3:8 that the gentiles who receive the Abrahamic blessing are justified ἐκ πίστεως to the purported conclusion in 3:9 that everyone justified ἐκ πίστεως receives the Abrahamic blessing would require two steps: 1) the claim in 3:8 would need to imply the converse principle that the gentiles' justification ἐκ πίστεως entails their receipt of the Abrahamic blessing and 2) this derived principle would then have to be broadened inductively to apply not only to

¹⁰⁶ So, e.g., Debanné, "Enthymemes in Galatians," 9; Hansen, *Galatians*, 90; Betz, *Galatians*, 142-43; Daniel P. Fuller, *Gospel and Law: Contrast or Continuum? The Hermeneutics of Dispensationalism and Covenant Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 100.

¹⁰⁷ See the Excursus in §2.3.1.1.

gentiles but to all οἱ ἐκ πίστεως. A critical problem therefore arises in that a proposition does not logically imply its converse.¹⁰⁸ Of course, Paul's basis for claiming that the Abrahamic blessing entails justification ἐκ πίστεως for gentiles could nevertheless indicate the truth of the converse, but if he simply assumes this basis, then the argument would beg the question. For example, if 3:8 understands the blessing ἐν [Ἀβραάμ] to signify justification by faith in accordance with Abraham's example, then, by definition, everyone justified by faith would indeed be blessed with Abraham as 3:9 suggests. In this scenario, however, 3:9 essentially constitutes a presupposition of, rather than an inference from, the argument in 3:8.

The other main ways of understanding the argument in 3:8 (see §2.3.1.1) do not even produce the necessary converse principle. For instance, if ἐν [Ἀβραάμ] in 3:8 points to an incorporative argument, then the converse of 3:8 would be only that the gentiles' πίστις-based justification requires their incorporation into Abraham. While the grounding of justification ἐκ πίστεως in the faithfulness of Abraham, Christ, or God might sufficiently limit the application of such justification so that this converse principle would be true, moving from this principle to the broader claim in 3:9 that *all* who are justified ἐκ πίστεως are not only in Abraham but are also *blessed* with Abraham would

¹⁰⁸ "If it is raining then the ground is wet" does not imply that "If the ground is wet then it is raining."

require the additional assumption that everyone in Abraham is blessed with Abraham.¹⁰⁹ Combined with this reading's necessary initial assumption that "in Abraham" functions as a synonym for "son of Abraham," this analysis would effectively make 3:8 irrelevant: the required assumptions could logically derive 3:9 straight from 3:7. Finally, if, as I will argue, the key to establishing the gentiles' πίστις-based justification in 3:8 lies simply in their receiving a blessing *as gentiles*, then the converse of 3:8 would imply only that gentiles justified ἐκ πίστεως receive a blessing, not that they necessarily receive the *Abrahamic* blessing. The conclusion in 3:9 would therefore have to presume any linkage with the Abrahamic blessing, thereby begging the question yet again.

Second, discerning the motive for a movement from the gentiles in 3:8 to a more broadly conceived οἱ ἐκ πίστεως in 3:9 proves difficult. This scenario would effectively mean that Paul here targets *Jews*, arguing on the basis of the gentiles' blessing ἐν [Ἀβραάμ] that the Jews must therefore also be οἱ ἐκ πίστεως to receive the Abrahamic blessing.¹¹⁰ The Jews' status, however, is not at issue in Galatians; the gentiles' status is. Paul therefore seems unlikely to make an argument about the Jews or Jewish Christians

¹⁰⁹ The citation in 3:8 would establish that *gentiles* receive the Abrahamic blessing, but it would not establish that their justification ἐκ πίστεως necessarily entails this blessing, as would be required to broaden the citation inductively into the claim of 3:9.

¹¹⁰ Acknowledged, e.g., by Debanné, "Enthymemes in Galatians," 9, who argues for the following syllogism: A. "All people are justified by God (and blessed in Abraham) in the same way" (implied); B. "The Gentiles are justified by God (and blessed in Abraham) through faith [and not law]" (3:8); therefore, C. "All people are justified by God (and blessed in Abraham) through faith [and not law]" (3:9). In addition to exhibiting the problematical equating of justification and blessing in Abraham that I have already discussed, this construal also depends on a questionable implied premise in the A-line. After all, if Paul truly worked with the assumption that God justifies everyone on the same basis, then he could have ended the argument with Abraham's example in 3:6.

based on the gentile Christians' likely-disputed status as οἱ ἐκ πίστεως (cf. 3:8a). Indeed, although I will ultimately argue that 3:6-14 as a whole makes a similar point regarding the Jews—i.e., that even the Jews rely on faith rather than works of law for their justification—I will contend that Paul makes this argument because of its *implications* for the gentiles' status, not based on that status.

In contrast to the unmotivated and logically incoherent argument that results from 3:8-9 if οἱ ἐκ πίστεως in 3:9 comprises both Jews and gentiles, a logically coherent summary of the argument in 3:8 results if οἱ ἐκ πίστεως in 3:9 instead consists solely of gentiles.¹¹¹ In making this claim, I do not intend to suggest that Paul thinks only gentiles could qualify as those justified ἐκ πίστεως.¹¹² Rather, I suggest that the context limits the scope of the οἱ to the previously mentioned gentiles in the same way that the context of 3:7 limits the scope of the earlier instance of οἱ ἐκ πίστεως to the “sons of Abraham.”

¹¹¹ For the view that 3:9 concerns only gentiles, see Hans-Joachim Eckstein, *Verheißung und Gesetz: Eine exegetische Untersuchung zu Galater 2,15-4,7* (WUNT 86; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1996), 119-20. For the suggestion that πάντα τὰ ἔθνη in Gal 3:8b includes Israel since Israel was not yet a nation when the promise was given to Abraham, see Malina and Pilch, *Social-Science*, 204; Dieter Lührmann, *Galatians* (trans. O. C. Dean, Jr.; Continental Commentaries; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 60. Although τὰ ἔθνη did initially include Abraham's descendants, Paul argues in 3:19, 21-22 that the law came specifically to set the Jews apart as a distinct people so that they would not be able to receive this Abrahamic blessing apart from their incorporation into Christ. See §3.4.1. Accordingly, everywhere in Galatians, τὰ ἔθνη refers—in a typically Jewish way—to gentiles in distinction from Israelites.

¹¹² So Mayordomo, *Argumentiert*, 157, who notes that connecting 3:8 to 3:9 would logically require the implied premise “Alle Glaubenden sind Nichtjuden.” Finding this implied premise absurd, he instead proposes to derive 3:9 from his problematical implied conclusion to 3:6-7 (“Alle Glaubensmenschen sind Gerechtfertigte”) and the implied premise that “Alle Gerechtfertigten sind Empfänger des Abrahamssegens.”

Thus, with 3:8 having established that God justifies the gentiles ἐκ πίστεως, 3:9 substitutes οἱ ἐκ πίστεως for the gentiles in its paraphrase of the preceding citation.

Understood in this way, 3:9 highlights the key implication of the citation in 3:8: it is the gentiles who are justified ἐκ πίστεως who share in the Abrahamic blessing. As a final conclusion to the argument, however, this summary proves unsatisfying in two ways. First, because it essentially restates the argument in 3:8, it leaves the logic behind the presumably controversial—and crucial—implication in 3:8a unexpressed, making it easy for the agitators to challenge or deny the gentiles’ πίστις-based justification. Second, the focus on the Abrahamic blessing in 3:9 remains curious. Why does Paul not simply conclude that God justifies the gentiles by faith (cf. 3:8a) if their righteous status constitutes the critical issue? As I have noted, interpreters typically explain the focus on blessing in 3:9 either as rebutting the agitators’ purported emphasis on the need for circumcision to receive the blessing “in Abraham”¹¹³ and/or as setting up the contrasting discussion of cursing in 3:10.¹¹⁴ The former seems unlikely: it admits that the agitators and, thus, the Galatians do not understand “the blessing in Abraham” to imply the gentiles’ πίστις-based justification. Paul’s failure to specify his reasoning in 3:8 thus becomes inexplicable. As for the latter possibility, the blessing and cursing themes in 3:9-10 do seem intrinsically related. The reappearance of the Abrahamic blessing in 3:14a, however, suggests that this theme has more than a strictly formal significance.

¹¹³ Burton, *Galatians*, 162.

¹¹⁴ Betz, *Galatians*, 142.

I contend that extending the argument into 3:10 solves all of these problems by enabling 3:9-10 to supply the otherwise missing rationale for the gentiles' πίστις-based justification in 3:8. That is to say, I suggest not only that this unified reading of 3:8-10 establishes the gentiles' πίστις-based justification in 3:8 but that it also accounts both for the shift from gentiles in 3:8 to οἱ ἐκ πίστεως in 3:9 and for the focus on blessing in 3:9. Before explaining this proposal in greater detail, however, I first need to examine one final strand of negative evidence, namely, the interpretive problems that result when interpreters regard 3:10 as initiating a new phase in the argument. It is to this set of problems that I now turn.

2.3.1.3 Problems understanding why ὅσοι ἔξ ἔργων νόμου are under a curse in 3:10

Interpreters have long puzzled over the logical relationship between Paul's assertion in Gal 3:10a and its cited Deuteronomic basis in 3:10b. The former—"as many as are [righteous] on the basis of works of law are under a curse"—seemingly condemns those who *observe* the law, while the latter—"Cursed [is] everyone who does not abide by all that is written in the book of the law, to do them"—seemingly condemns those who *fail to observe* the law. Giving Paul the benefit of the doubt both as a thinker and as an exegete precludes (at least initially) the suggestion that he loses his train of thought in so short a space. How, then, does he understand the two statements to cohere? A compelling explanation should result in 1) a logical argument that 2) fits the historical context, 3)

accounts for the γάρ linking 3:10 to 3:9, and 4) explains Paul’s choice of Deut 27:26 as a justifying citation. In their search for such a solution, interpreters have essentially identified four¹¹⁵ main ways of construing the logic in 3:10.¹¹⁶

Gordon Fee explains Paul’s logic by identifying Torah observance itself as the curse under which ὅσοι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου live. In other words, those under the law are “cursed” in that they must live by obeying everything written in the book of the law, a requirement that, as 3:11-12 shows, “exclud[es] the other (essential) option” of living by faith.¹¹⁷ The brilliance of this reading lies in the distinction that it makes between ὑπὸ κατάραν as a reference to Torah observance and ἐπικατάρατος as a reference to the unrelated penalty for Torah disobedience, but therein lies its principle difficulty as well. The presence of the same root in both Paul’s claim and his supporting citation suggests some sort of correlation between the two curses. This purportedly misleading suggestion of a correlation then becomes even more problematical given the radical nature of the proposed view of Torah. Indeed, the idea of God’s commandments—which Paul

¹¹⁵ This number excludes the illogical proposal of Martyn, *Galatians*, 311, that Paul’s “exegesis” in 3:10a describes the status of Jews (those who obey) while the citation of Deut 27:26 describes the status of gentiles (those who do not obey). This proposal runs roughshod over the γάρ between the two clauses and leaves Paul asserting the very point he would need to prove. Naturally, Martyn attributes the odd logic of this “argument” to the fact that Paul wants to co-opt the Teachers’ use of Deut 27:26.

¹¹⁶ For helpful critiques of the various positions, see Thomas R. Schreiner, “Is Perfect Obedience to the Law Possible?: A Re-Examination of Galatians 3:10,” *JETS* 27 (1984): 151-60; Stanley, “Curse,” 482-86; James M. Scott, “‘For as Many as Are of Works of the Law Are Under a Curse’ (Galatians 3.10),” in *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel* (eds. Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders; JSNTSup 83; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 187-221, 188-94; A. Andrew Das, *Paul, the Law, and the Covenant* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2001), 145-70.

¹¹⁷ Gordon D. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994), 391. Cf. Fee, *Galatians*, 117-18.

elsewhere describes as “holy and just and good” (Rom 7:12)—as a curse runs so contrary to typical Jewish thought that it would surely need careful and clear articulation lest the agitators convince the Galatians to dismiss it out of hand. Paul’s apparent obliviousness to this need for care suggests that his argument proceeds in a different direction.

A second type of analysis argues for a terminological proof in 3:10. E. P. Sanders provides the fullest defense of this position. He contends that Paul’s argument throughout 3:1-14 depends on keyword linkages rather than on the overall semantic content of his proof-texts.¹¹⁸ With regard to the claim in 3:10a that those ἐξ ἔργων νόμου are cursed, Sanders suggests that it likely derives not from Deut 27:26, nor from some fundamental conviction about the law, but simply from the opposite (and primary) claim in 3:9 that those of faith are blessed. Paul then “proves” that the law brings a curse terminologically by citing Deut 27:26, the only LXX verse that contains both νόμος and ἐπικατάρατος. That the law brings a curse under different conditions in Deut 27:26 than in Gal 3:10a thus becomes irrelevant in light of the larger parallel that in both cases the law does, indeed, bring a curse.¹¹⁹

While this proposal rightly emphasizes νόμος and κατάρα / ἐπικατάρατος as the two terms shared by 3:10a and 3:10b, four considerations argue against it. First, Paul’s citation does not match any known LXX manuscript, substituting πᾶσιν τοῖς

¹¹⁸ For example, Sanders suggests that Paul “proves” God’s faith-based justification of the gentiles by citing scriptures that link those three keywords: gentiles, justification/righteousness, faith (Sanders, *Paul, the Law*, 21).

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 20-23. His argument focuses on denying that Paul thought it was impossible to do all the law.

γεγραμμένοις ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τοῦ νόμου (cf. Deut 28:58, 29:19b, 30:10) for the typical πᾶσιν τοῖς λόγοις τοῦ νόμου τούτου. The likelihood that this difference reflects an intentional broadening of the verse’s scope and not just an otherwise unknown *Vorlage*¹²⁰ suggests that the citation’s significance extends beyond its keywords. Second, although Sanders rightly identifies Deut 27:26 as the only verse that unites νόμος and ἐπικατάρατος, other LXX verses do connect νόμος and κατάρα,¹²¹ at least one of which—2 Esd 20:30¹²²—would seem to be more conducive to Paul’s point as Sanders understands it. Granted, the argumentative context might have required a citation from the Torah. Even in that case, however, Paul still had an option that would not have undermined his purported point: according to Deut 29:26 [Eng 29:27], future generations will explain the land’s devastation as the Lord’s having responded to Israel’s unfaithfulness by bringing “every *curse* that is written in the book of this *law*” (πάσας τὰς κατάρας τὰς γεγραμμένας ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τοῦ νόμου τούτου).¹²³ Third, as

¹²⁰ For an intentional broadening, see, e.g., Martin Noth, “‘For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse’,” in *The Laws in the Pentateuch and Other Studies* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1966), 118-31, 119; Morland, *Rhetoric*, 208. Cf. Koch, *Schrift*, 163-65, who argues that Paul has shaped the citation to emphasize the law’s written character. As Koch points out, citations of the Church Fathers provide the earliest manuscript evidence for a possible alternate *Vorlage* (165).

¹²¹ Deut 29:26 [Eng 29:27]; Josh 9:2 [MT/Eng 8:34]; 2 Esd 20:30 [MT Neh 10:30 / Eng Neh 10:29]; Dan 9:11 [both OG and Theod.]. νόμος also occurs with ἀραί in the sense of “curses” in Deut 29:19 and 20 [Eng 29:20 and 21].

¹²² 2 Esdr 20:30: “[all who turned from the people of the land to the law of God] cursed themselves (κατηράσαντο αὐτούς) and entered into a curse (εἰσήλθοσαν ἐν ἀρᾷ) and an oath to walk in the law of God (τοῦ πορεύεσθαι ἐν νόμῳ τοῦ θεοῦ) which was given by the hand of Moses, servant of God, and to keep and to do all the commandments (πάσας τὰς ἐντολάς) of our Lord and his decrees.”

Christopher Stanley points out, the curse in 3:10 cannot be a mere terminological fiction since it was real enough to require Christ's death in order to free those trapped under its domain (3:13).¹²⁴ Finally, a more general consideration, the agitators could easily refute any strictly terminological argument simply by asserting the straightforward meaning of the verse, making such an argument unlikely to persuade.

Whereas Sanders looks back to 3:10a to identify the key terms in Paul's citation, Heinrich Schlier looks forward to what he regards as the parallel argument contrasting faith and law obedience in 3:11-12. Accordingly, for Schlier, Paul's argument emphasizes the ποιῆσαι in Deut 27:26: the citation serves solely to link the curse to the works-based nature of the law. Paul thus pronounces a curse on all who *do* the law.¹²⁵ While this interpretation accords well with both the claim in 3:10a and the underlying assumption of Deut 27 that the law can be fulfilled, it goes against the expressed wording of Deut 27:26, which curses disobedience (οὐκ ἐμμένει), not obedience. As with Sanders's suggestion, the changes to the Septuagintal text and the ease with which the

¹²³ The underlying Hebrew of Deut 29:26 admittedly says only "every curse written in this book" (את־כל־הקללה הכתובה בספר הזה), i.e., it does not contain the lexical connection of curse and law.

¹²⁴ Stanley, "Curse," 485.

¹²⁵ Schlier, *Galater*, 132-33. Cf. Karl Kertelge, "Rechtfertigung" bei Paulus: Studien zur Struktur und zum Bedeutungsgehalt des paulinischen Rechtfertigungsbegriffs (NTAbh, n. F. 3; Münster: Aschendorff, 1967), 209; Hans-Jürgen van der Minde, *Schrift und Tradition bei Paulus* (Paderborner theologische Studien 3; München: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1976), 131. For a similarly pessimistic view of "doing" the law, see Rudolph Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (trans. Kendrick Grobel; 2 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951-1955), 1:262-64.

agitators could counter this reading make it unlikely that Paul's argument depends on such a blatant disregard of the actual meaning of his proof-text.

Daniel Boyarin also focuses on the τοῦ ποιῆσαι αὐτά but argues that the logic is midrashic rather than terminological. For Boyarin, Paul imbues the otherwise superfluous expression with meaning by making it modify the entire preceding phrase: "Cursed is everyone who [precisely] by *doing* it does not uphold all that is written in the book of the law." Read in this way, the verse condemns those who merely perform ("do") the letter of the law rather than "fulfilling" all that it truly entails (cf. 5:14).¹²⁶ Even if the gentile Galatians were able to follow this peculiarly Jewish logic, however, the agitators would again be able to refute Paul's interpretation easily and turn it to their advantage.

A final type of construal—the most common and most diverse—understands 3:10 to depend on syllogistic logic. In this scenario, 3:10b constitutes a major premise that, when combined with a (probably implicit) minor premise, leads to the conclusion in 3:10a. Identifying and interpreting this minor premise thus becomes the key to understanding Paul's argument.

The distinction between ὑπὸ κατάρων in the conclusion (3:10a) and ἐπικατάρατος in the major premise (3:10b) opens two possibilities for the minor premise. On the one hand, Stanley points to this distinction for evidence that ὑπὸ

¹²⁶ Daniel Boyarin, *A Radical Jew* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 139-40.

κατάραν in 3:10a describes only a *threatened* curse, not an *active* one.¹²⁷ The phrase thus becomes synonymous with ὑπὸ νόμον. As Mayordomo notes, this observation then leads to the following syllogism:¹²⁸

A. Law-transgressors are cursed (3:10b).

B. Those ἐξ ἔργων νόμου *could* transgress the law.

Therefore, C. Those ἐξ ἔργων νόμου *could* be cursed (= under a curse, 3:10a).

Since basically *any* curse text from the law could have proved this point, Paul's choice of Deut 27:26 must then indicate a desire to emphasize the comprehensive effort required to avoid actualizing the curse.¹²⁹

Although I will similarly argue that 3:10 describes a hypothetical curse, the lack of evidence that anyone in antiquity understood ὑπὸ κατάραν (or similar phrases) as a

¹²⁷ Stanley, "Curse," 495-500. Cf. Wakefield, *Where to Live*, 179-80; Williams, *Galatians*, 90; Normand Bonneau, "The Logic of Paul's Argument on the Curse of the Law in Galatians 3:10-14," *NovT* 39 (1997): 60-80, 73. Joseph P. Braswell, "'The Blessing of Abraham' Versus 'The Curse of the Law': Another Look at Gal 3:10-13," *WTJ* 53 (1991): 73-91, 76, comes to a similar conclusion by analyzing the argument as an enthymeme with the implied premise that "ἐξ ἔργων νόμου (Jewish people) are under law." So, too, Norman H. Young, "Who's Cursed: And Why? (Galatians 3:10-14)," *JBL* 117 (1998): 79-92, 87, who argues that 3:10a requires the unexpressed condition "if they abandon any of that covenant's laws."

¹²⁸ Mayordomo, *Argumentiert*, 160.

¹²⁹ Stanley, "Curse," 500-501. Cf. Tolmie, *Persuading*, 119. Wakefield, *Where to Live*, 180 n. 155, critiques Stanley for emphasizing the difficulty of doing all the law, arguing that Paul only wants to show that "the law pronounces a curse; curse is therefore integral to law" (180). Wakefield, however, can then not explain why Paul cites the curse text of Deut 27:26 in particular. His reading thus differs from the terminological explanations of 3:10 considered above only in that the rest of the verse becomes irrelevant rather than contradictory.

reference to a merely threatened curse seriously weakens this particular construal.¹³⁰ Even assuming that ὑπὸ κατάραν could refer to the threat of a curse, however, the resultant possibility of receiving blessing under the law undermines the connection to 3:9. That is to say, if those ἐξ ἔργων νόμου could potentially be blessed, then 3:10 becomes irrelevant to establishing or explaining the claim in 3:9 that those ἐκ πίστεως are blessed with Abraham. The γάρ in 3:10a would then have to function adverbially as a prefatory introduction to a new topic.¹³¹ As I will argue in my analysis of this passage, the sharp antithesis established between the blessed οἱ ἐκ πίστεως in 3:9 and the “under a curse” ὅσοι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου in 3:10 makes it more likely that the γάρ retains in its normal causal/explanatory force.

¹³⁰ TLG lists no uses of ὑπὸ κατάραν prior to Galatians. Morland, *Rhetoric*, 201-3, can identify only three similar phrases in the extant Jewish literature—*I En.* 98:4 (only extant in Ethiopic); Josephus *Ant.* 4.123 (ἀραῖς ἐνδῆσαι), and 18.287 (τῆς ἀρᾶς ὑποτίθεσθαι)—but they all refer to the actualization of a curse. For early interpreters who clearly read ὑπὸ κατάραν in the sense of “accursed,” see Justin Martyr, *Dial.*, 95.1.1-8; Origen, *Adnot. Deut.* 17.36.14-17; Eusebius, *Comm. Ps.* 23.812.12-18; cf. Hippolytus, *Ben. Is. Jac.* 18.1-2. Wakefield, *Where to Live*, 179-80, provides a potentially stronger grounding for this interpretation of ὑπὸ κατάραν by tying it to a larger geographical metaphor in which, as Wakefield understands it, Paul contrasts law and faith as two exclusive realms in which a person could live. For a critique of this larger geographical metaphor, see the analysis of 3:11-12 below.

¹³¹ For discussion of this use, see BDAG, γάρ, 189.2. Regardless of this possibility, Stanley, “Curse,” 497, is too free in his analysis: “The opening γάρ tells the reader to expect a link to what has gone before, *setting the reader to considering what sort of relationship is intended* as the content of the present verse unfolds” (emphasis added). γάρ is not an overly ambiguous conjunction: it almost always carries a causal or explanatory force in argumentative discourse. Stanley’s reading of the citation “shatters completely the reader’s initial expectation that v. 10 would speak of a presently realized curse” (500) because it “shatters completely” an expectation that the initial γάρ helps to establish.

If, on the other hand, ὑπὸ κατάραν functions as a synonym for ἐπικατάρατος, then logic dictates the following implied minor premise:¹³²

NA (3:10b) Everyone who does not abide by all that is written in the book of the law	⊆ is	C Cursed
(L) (As many as are ἐξ ἔργων νόμου)	(⊆) (are)	(NA) (Those who do not abide by all the law)
Therefore		
L (3:10a) As many as are ἐξ ἔργων νόμου	⊆ are	C Under a curse

Galatians 3:10 accordingly presupposes that as many as are ἐξ ἔργων νόμου fail to do all that is written in the book of the law. This conclusion then raises an obvious question: on what basis can Paul confidently imply that those who are ἐξ ἔργων νόμου will fail to do all the law?

For a few scholars, Paul does not leave this minor premise unstated. Rather, he effectively makes it explicit with his claim in 3:11a that “no one is justified by law,” a claim that he then defends in 3:11b-12.¹³³ For 3:11a to supply the necessary premise, however, the law’s failure to justify must presume that everyone under the law will transgress it. While this connection might seem reasonable, Paul actually provides a very

¹³² Mayordomo, *Argumentiert*, 159; James D. G. Dunn, “Works of the Law and the Curse of the Law (Galatians 3,10-14),” *NTS* 31 (1985): 523-42, 533.

¹³³ Michael Bachmann, “Zur Argumentation von Galater 3.10–12,” *NTS* 53 (2007): 524-44, 539. Cf. Cosgrove, *Cross*, 54; Koch, *Schrift*, 264-68.

different ground for his claim: 3:11b-12 argues for the lack of justification under the law, not on the grounds that no one does all the law (3:10b), but on the grounds that the law is not ἐκ πίστεως (3:12). This “solution” therefore proves little better than the terminological arguments considered above.

If 3:11-12 does not complete the argument, then the minor premise must be implied. The historically predominant approach to 3:10 justifies this implied premise anthropologically: Paul could imply that those who are ἐξ ἔργων νόμου will fail to do all the law because *no one* can do all the law.¹³⁴ For some interpreters, this conclusion does not represent a logical necessity so much as an empirical observation: even if doing all the law remains theoretically possible, the practical reality is that no one actually does do all the law.¹³⁵ Frank Thielman, for instance, suggests that Paul derives this common understanding of humanity’s plight from Israel’s history of failing to live up to all that the

¹³⁴ Seyoon Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective: Second Thoughts on the Origin of Paul’s Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 141-42; Das, *Paul*, 145-70; Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory*, 158; Bruce W. Longenecker, *The Triumph of Abraham’s God: The Transformation of Identity in Galatians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 139-41; Eckstein, *Verheißung*, 131-33; Hansen, *Galatians*, 93; Joachim Rohde, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Galater* (THKNT 9; Berlin: Evangelische, 1989), 141; Heikki Räisänen, *Paul and the Law* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1983; repr., Minneapolis: Fortress, 1986), 94-96; Thomas R. Schreiner, “Paul and Perfect Obedience to the Law: An Evaluation of the View of E. P. Sanders,” *WTJ* 47 (1985): 245-78; Hübner, *Law*, 18-19; Oepke, *Galater*, 105; H. J. Schoeps, *Paul: The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History* (trans. Harold Knight; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961). Pre-modern interpreters who advocate this reading include Calvin, “Galatians,” 89; Martin Luther, *Commentary on Galatians: Modern-English Edition* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1988), 164; Chrysostom, *Galatas commentarius* (PG 61.652); Eusebius, *Comm. Ps.* 23.812.12-18; Origen, *Adnot. Deut.* 17.36.14-17.

¹³⁵ For defense of this type of rhetorical (rather than logical) syllogism, see Morland, *Rhetoric*, 204.

law demands.¹³⁶ Regardless of whether this principle represents a fundamental maxim or an inductive probability, the implication remains clear: since sin prevents anyone from attaining the perfect obedience that the law requires, those under the law (ὅσοι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου) will naturally fall under its curse. This solution accounts for Paul's choice of the Septuagintal form of Deut 27:26 (which, against the MT, includes πᾶσιν) and can appeal to Gal 5:3, 14 and 6:13 for evidence that Paul's emphasis falls on the totality of the required law observance.

Nevertheless, opponents of this view rightly counter that this interpretation makes little sense in its historical context. As the rise of the New Perspective has made clear, first-century Jews did not understand Deut 27:26 to require perfect obedience.¹³⁷ Furthermore, the law's provision of atonement through the sacrificial system shows that the law itself does not anticipate perfection.¹³⁸ For Paul's argument to rest on an implied premise of such novel character would render it both unpersuasive and easily refuted.

¹³⁶ Frank Thielman, *From Plight to Solution: A Jewish Framework for Understanding Paul's View of the Law in Galatians and Romans* (NovTSup 61; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989), 68-69, 72; Frank Thielman, *Paul & the Law: A Contextual Approach* (Downer's Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1994), 126-27, 276 n. 30.

¹³⁷ E.g., E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1977), 419-28; Howard, *Crisis*, 53; Gaston, *Paul*, 65. Even some of the scholars who advocate the "perfect obedience" reading acknowledge its incongruence with Jewish theology, a discrepancy then attributable either to Paul's "fundamental misapprehension" of the relationship between law and covenant (Schoeps, *Paul*, 213-18) or to the view that Paul's "Christian convictions" required a reworking of his previous Jewish framework (Longenecker, *Triumph*, 139-40).

¹³⁸ The suggestion of William J. Dumbrell, "Abraham and the Abrahamic Covenant in Galatians 3:1-14," in *The Gospel to the Nations: Perspectives on Paul's mission: In Honor of Peter T. O'Brien* (eds. Peter Bolt and Mark Thompson; Downer's Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2000), 19-32, 23, that Jesus ends the Mosaic covenant and therefore removes any possibility of atonement under the law collapses because he can provide no reason why the annulment of the law would cover only the beneficial aspects of the covenant.

Accordingly, scholars have increasingly sought to find alternative explanations for Paul's implied premise.

If the fault does not lie with humanity, then the problem could be nomological: Paul could affirm that those ἐξ ἔργων νόμου fail to do all the law because the very nature of the law prevents it from being obeyed. Betz simply asserts a nomological reading based on Paul's claim in 3:19-25: God gave the "Jewish Torah"—an "inferior entity" that Betz rather arbitrarily distinguishes from God's true, fulfillable Torah—to provoke/create sin and transgression.¹³⁹ More commonly, scholars tie this interpretation to the change from the LXX's "this law" (τοῦ νόμου τούτου) to Paul's "the book of the law" (τῷ βιβλίῳ τοῦ νόμου). Kjell Morland, for instance, argues that this change effectively expands the scope of the prescribed material from Deuteronomy to the entire Pentateuch, with "everything written" (πᾶσιν τοῖς γεγραμμένοις) then serving to include the narrative and promissory portions alongside the more strictly nomistic passages. As Gal 3:8-9 establishes, this expansion includes the necessity of sharing Abraham's faith. According to Morland, however, "faith" and "law" function as irreconcilable communal identity markers for Paul; one's identity cannot be both ἐκ πίστεως and ἐξ ἔργων νόμου.¹⁴⁰ When expanded in this way, the law thus contains an

¹³⁹ Betz, *Galatians*, 146.

¹⁴⁰ For Morland, Paul makes this "unexpected" distinction in 2:16 and then spends the rest of Gal 2 and, especially, Gal 3 trying to make it persuasive (Morland, *Rhetoric*, 188).

inherent contradiction that makes it unfulfillable and brings everyone who identifies with it under a curse.¹⁴¹

Unfortunately, this nomological reading raises numerous problems: the necessary deconstruction of scripture's authority, the rather sinister portrayal of God and his law, and the assumed incompatibility of law and faith, to name the most significant. Paul would also surely have needed to make his reasoning more explicit for his readers just to follow—let alone accept—this argument. Even then, the agitators could refute it simply by advocating a more traditional reading of Deut 27:26. Hence, the nomological interpretation also fails to explain Paul's logic.

With the broader generalities proving unsatisfactory, scholars must assume that the necessity of Paul's implied premise arises from the way in which he defines ὅσοι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου, defines fulfilling all the law, or both. It is at this point that Stanley's warning about attending to the persuasive function of Paul's words becomes particularly important.¹⁴² The explanations that follow all arise out of a desire to demonstrate the conceptual coherence of Paul's argument. Indeed, the ability to demonstrate such a coherence often functions as an indication of the correctness of a given interpretation. Significantly, however, Paul considered the point that “as many as are ἐξ ἔργων νόμου fail to do all that is written in the book of the law” to be so readily apparent to his

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 208-9. So, too, Braswell, “Blessing,” 79; David John Lull, *The Spirit in Galatia: Paul's Interpretation of Pneuma as Divine Power* (SBLDS 49; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1980; repr., Eugene, Ore.: Wipf and Stock, 2006), 124.

¹⁴² Stanley, “Curse,” 491. See §1.1.

audience that he did not even need to state it. Thus, proposals for any limitation of ὅσοι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου or redefinition of fulfilling all the law need to explain not only how the suggested changes make coherent conceptual sense within Paul's likely worldview but also why that particular reading would have been intuitively obvious to the Galatian readers. Our great chronological and cultural distance from the historical situation can make these judgments difficult, but I suggest an important rule of thumb: in such a fiercely polemical letter, the more complicated the implied logic, the less likely a proposed solution has truly captured Paul's thought.

Two explanations accept the traditional understanding of fulfilling all the law but seek to devise a more plausible implied premise by modifying the referent of ὅσοι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου.¹⁴³ One notes that the mission to the gentiles necessarily involves transgressing (in the sense of “not remaining within,” οὐκ ἐμμένει) the boundaries of the law (cf. 2:11-14; 6:15-16). Accordingly, the curse of Deut 27:26 must fall on Jewish Christians who acknowledge the gentile mission. Since, however, Christ has redeemed the Jews from the curse of the law (3:13), proponents of this explanation typically regard Paul's argument as exposing the faulty logic inherent in the agitators' attempt to unite faith and law observance.¹⁴⁴ The indicative mood of εἰσὶν presents a potential problem

¹⁴³ Michael Cranford, “The Possibility of Perfect Obedience: Paul and an Implied Premise in Galatians 3:10 and 5:3,” *NovT* 36 (1994): 242-58, 249, simply asserts that ὅσοι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου identifies those who do not obey all the law, a conclusion derived primarily from his desire to avoid the implication of a need for perfect obedience.

¹⁴⁴ Timothy G. Gombis, “The ‘Transgressor’ and the ‘Curse of the Law’: The Logic of Paul's Argument in Galatians 2-3,” *NTS* 53 (2007): 81-93, 92; Bonneau, “Logic,” 73-74.

for this scenario since Paul does not actually consider these Jewish Christians to be under a curse,¹⁴⁵ although a desire for rhetorical effect could possibly account for the verbal choice. This interpretation also cannot explain why, if coming under the law really has no effect, Paul so adamantly exhorts the gentiles not to submit to it, even claiming that such submission would effectively sever them from Christ (5:4). Finally, the limiting of ὅσοι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου to Jewish Christians ultimately seems rather arbitrary; nothing in the text explicitly points to this conclusion.

Lloyd Gaston suggests that ὅσοι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου εἰσὶν refers instead to unredeemed gentiles as those who suffer the consequences of the law without recourse to the covenantal grace that Israel enjoys.¹⁴⁶ That Paul would use “works of law” in an absolute sense as a shorthand designation for gentiles who were never under the law, however, seems unfathomable.¹⁴⁷ Significantly, Gaston himself finds this reading of the law’s work hard to substantiate apart from Romans, and he ultimately concludes that it represents a peculiarly Pauline perspective.¹⁴⁸ In other words, the agitators, at least, would be unlikely even to understand this argument. Moreover, if the law’s curse lies on

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Gombis, “Transgressor,” 93: “Paul is not here claiming that this is actually something that can be done. It is impossible to incur the curse of the Law, since Christ has already absorbed its curse in his death, evacuating its power to curse.”

¹⁴⁶ Gaston, *Paul*, 74, 104-6.

¹⁴⁷ I will ultimately argue that the phrase does refer to gentiles alone—a conclusion grounded in the verse’s integral connection to the discussion of the gentiles in 3:8-9 (cf. γάρ, ὅσοι in 3:10)—but that it does so in order to highlight the problematical nature of the association: gentiles who seek a righteous based on the law (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου) while remaining gentiles can by definition find only a curse since they fail to Judaize fully. See §2.3.2.

¹⁴⁸ Gaston, *Paul*, 104, 106.

gentiles alone, then the urgency with which Paul seeks to dissuade his gentile converts from entering the realm of grace that is Israel's law again becomes inexplicable.

The remaining explanations of Paul's logic all seek to modify what Paul means by failing to do all the law, a modification that often has corresponding implications for the identity of ὅσοι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου. Daniel Fuller, for instance, appeals to the original Deuteronomic context, arguing that Deut 27:26 curses only those who fail to “confirm” or “uphold” (לֹא-יִקְיִם) the law. In other words, the verse does not have minor indiscretions in view but a basic stance towards the law. He then suggests that “works of the law” must signify instances of law observance (such as legalistic attempts to earn God's approval) that incur the curse of Deut 27:26 by effectively undermining the law's very foundations.¹⁴⁹ The LXX text that Paul cites makes this interpretation harder to sustain (οὐκ ἐμμένει, “not remain within”). Furthermore, the citation emphasizes that the way one does “remain within” the law is precisely by “doing” all that is written (τοῦ ποιῆσαι αὐτά). One must therefore import any condemnation of legalism into the argument, a step that neither the literary context of Galatians nor the historical context of first-century Judaism warrants.

Appealing to the wider covenantal context of Deut 27-32,¹⁵⁰ James Scott and N. T. Wright both suggest that Paul's citation of Deut 27:26 has the nation's collective

¹⁴⁹ Fuller, *Gospel*, 92-103, esp. 93-95.

¹⁵⁰ Scott, “For as Many,” 194-95, justifies the appeal to this broader context by noting that Paul's citation appears to conflate Deut 27:26 with 29:19b [Eng 29:20b] or 28:58. For a more extensive defense of

failure to uphold the law in mind, a reality to which Israel’s history attests.¹⁵¹ Galatians 3:10a then describes the historical reality that all who embrace Israel’s way of life (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου) find themselves living under the continuing national curse of exile.¹⁵² Constructed in this way, the argument rests entirely on the implied premise that Israel currently stands under a curse. Scholars have rightly questioned how widespread this sentiment would have been in first-century Judaism.¹⁵³ Regardless of the premise’s plausibility, however, it essentially renders Deut 27:26 irrelevant: in this reading, Deut 27:26 provides *the reason for* Israel’s curse, but the argument depends only on *the present reality of* that curse. A text such as Deut 29:26-27 [Eng 29:27-28] that proleptically describes Israel’s continuing national curse of exile (cf. Dan 9:11) would therefore seem more to the point. Deuteronomy 27:26, in contrast, could at most serve to point a reader to Israel’s curse, but it actually fails to accomplish even this task. While the broader Deuteronomic context does largely concern national implications, both the verse that Paul cites and its immediate OT context (Deut 27:15-26) emphasize *individual* responsibility: “Cursed is everyone (πᾶς; MT: “anyone,” אִשֶׁר) who does not abide.” The

this implication of the conflated citation, see Guy Waters, *The End of Deuteronomy in the Epistles of Paul* (WUNT 2 / 221; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 80-86.

¹⁵¹ Scott, “For as Many,” 213-17; N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 137-56. As noted above, Thielman, *From Plight*, 68-69, 72; Thielman, *Paul*, 126-27, 276 n. 30, argues that Paul took the additional step of inferring from Israel’s curse that the law actually was unfulfillable.

¹⁵² Wright, *Climax*, 147-48.

¹⁵³ E.g., Wisdom, *Blessing*, 157-58; Longenecker, *Triumph*, 137-38.

citation pronounces a curse on individuals, not the nation; it condemns those who fail to do the law, not those who pursue a fallen Israel's way of life. Accordingly, even if we assume the Galatians' familiarity both with the idea of Israel's continuing curse of exile and with the broader context of Deut 27-32, the agitators could still easily rebut this proposed argument simply by pointing to the actual wording of the cited text.

Francis Watson similarly argues that 3:10 reflects a curse on all Israel. Watson, however, grounds this position hermeneutically rather than empirically: he claims that Paul reaches this conclusion primarily through a consecutive reading of the Pentateuchal books in which Deuteronomy portrays the certainty of the law's curse as having already overtaken and canceled its earlier promise of life in Lev 18:5.¹⁵⁴ In other words, Paul's understanding of the curse "derives . . . from the deuteronomic interpretation of Israel's history."¹⁵⁵ The phrase ὅσοι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου then likely refers particularly to those who, in accordance with Deut 30:1-10, return to the law in the hope that God will end the curse and bring the promised blessing in its place. Paul, in contrast, concludes that the law's thoroughgoing association with the curse in Deut 28-29 renders it a lost cause; faith alone enables the transition from curse to blessing (cf. Gal 3:11-12).¹⁵⁶ Watson thus

¹⁵⁴ Francis Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* (London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 428-30. See, e.g., the denunciation in Deut 28:45.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 433. Cf. Noth, "For all," 118-31, who similarly argues that Paul's inference in 3:10a accurately reflects the perspective of the seventh century B.C.E. Deuteronomist for whom the curse would already have been a reality and not just a possibility. Although Noth's conclusion derives from modern reconstructions of Israel's (textual) history and can therefore offer no insight into *Paul's* logic, Watson argues that a careful reading of Deuteronomy would have led Paul to discern the Deuteronomist's stance even without this historical reconstruction.

¹⁵⁶ Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 433-34.

essentially supports the traditional explanation of 3:10—i.e., that no individual can fulfill all the law—by arguing that the national curse on Israel “foreseen” in Deuteronomy already presumes this fact.¹⁵⁷

The conflation of national and individual law observance in this reading constitutes a major problem. According to Watson, the national curse on Israel provides the unexpressed premise that makes 3:10 comprehensible. Israel’s corporate failure to obey the law, however, does not necessarily imply the corresponding individual failure of all Israelites. Paul could, of course, have drawn this implication, but it is an implication for which he would need to argue. Even if the agitators accepted the reality of the national curse—hardly a certainty—their call for law obedience, presumably in accordance with Deut 30:1-10, would clearly show that they did not equate this national failure with the impossibility of sufficient individual success in obeying the law. Watson effectively proposes that 3:11-12 refute this understanding of the national curse, but these verses cannot refute this understanding since the agitators would have no reason to suspect that 3:11-12 targets their view of the national curse. In other words, since, from the agitators’ perspective, the unexpressed premise of a national curse would still not lead to a cogent argument in 3:10, the agitators would have no reason to assume that 3:10-12 discusses the implications of the national curse. Indeed, all three of Paul’s citations in 3:10-12 relate to the blessing and cursing of *individuals*, a curious feature given the proposed importance of the *national* curse to the argument. Paul’s failure to cite a verse

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 428 n. 27.

in 3:10b that explicitly refers to Israel's curse of exile would therefore cause Watson's proposed argument to misfire.¹⁵⁸

Finally, several interpreters attempt to provide a christological explanation for Paul's syllogistic logic.¹⁵⁹ Preeminent in this regard is James Dunn, who suggests that "works of law" signifies especially those works that differentiate the Jewish people from other people groups, namely, circumcision, food laws, and Sabbath. The phrase ὅσοι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου εἰσὶν then designates those who, in defiance of the gospel, maintain these nationalistic social boundaries by continuing to obey those distinguishing portions of the law. In other words, Dunn essentially argues that Jesus has ushered in a new salvation-historical era that requires abandoning at least part of the law in favor of faith.¹⁶⁰ Not only do such proposals overlook the comprehensive nature of the obedience required by Paul's citation ("all [πᾶσιν] the things written in the book of the law"), but they also

¹⁵⁸ For a more comprehensive critique of Watson's larger project, see Campbell, *Deliverance*, 421-31.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Ragnar Bring, *Commentary on Galatians* (trans. Eric Wahlstrom; Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1961), 115-24, who provides a christological twist to the standard anthropological explanation. For Bring, Paul here condemns neither the law nor law observance *per se* but rather the futile seeking of righteousness through law observance apart from the law's (only) perfect fulfillment in Christ.

¹⁶⁰ Dunn, "Works," 536; Dunn, *Galatians*, 172-73. He admits the agitators would have found this position unpersuasive (*Galatians*, 173). So, too, Don Garlington, "Role Reversal and Paul's Use of Scripture," *JSNT* 65 (1997): 85-121, 120: "in their very keeping of the law, the opponents have not kept it, because they have not 'upheld' it in its eschatological design, that is, to point Israel to Jesus of Nazareth as the one who has done away with the barriers of separation between nations." Cf. R. G. Hamerton-Kelly, "Sacred Violence and the Curse of the Law (Galatians 3:13): The Death of Christ as a Sacrificial Travesty," *NTS* 36 (1990): 98-118, 116, who similarly argues that zealous adherence to the Mosaic law results in sacrificial violence and exclusion that undercut the law's fundamental principle of mutual love. For Hamerton-Kelly, however, Christ's death does not initiate a change in the law so much as it enables a more mature appraisal of the Mosaic law's inherently distorted and ungodly nature.

result in the incoherent position that a Jew could only avoid the curse on those who fail to do all the law by acknowledging that doing all of the law is unnecessary.¹⁶¹

Jeffrey Wisdom offers a variation of Dunn's sociological analysis that addresses both of these problems. Wisdom argues that, for Paul, the agitators' attempt to impose the obsolete Mosaic legal code¹⁶² on the Galatians divides the community and impedes the Abrahamic gospel to bless the gentiles (cf. 3:8). Their preaching of this "other gospel" (cf. 1:8) therefore brings them under the Deuteronomic curse on apostasy that the passages requiring adherence to all the law (Deut 28:58, 61; 29:19, 20, 26; 30:10; cf. 9:10; 31:26) typically have in view.¹⁶³ By pronouncing this curse, then, Paul hopes to exclude the agitators and their contaminating influence from the community.¹⁶⁴ Wisdom thus answers the first criticism above by arguing that the πᾶσιν functions primarily as part of a "signpost" to the broader Deuteronomic context; he addresses the second by

¹⁶¹ If God's people no longer need to observe certain commands of the law, then the curse on those who do not obey *all* the law in Deut 27:26 must be a part of the law that Jesus has made obsolete. If Jesus has made Deut 27:26 obsolete, however, then it can no longer curse those ἐξ ἔργων νόμου. For more comprehensive critique of Dunn's larger framework, see Campbell, *Deliverance*, 447-55.

¹⁶² Wisdom, *Blessing*, 147-52.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 175-82. Cf. Garlington, "Role Reversal," 109. Grounding the charge of apostasy in Jer 11 and Paul's purported self-understanding as a prophet, Sigurd Grindheim, "Apostate Turned Prophet: Paul's Prophetic Self-Understanding and Prophetic Hermeneutic with Special Reference to Galatians 3.10-12," *NTS* 53 (2007): 545-65, 564, equates "want[ing] to be under the Sinai covenant" with a "failure to believe in Jesus" and, thus, disloyalty to God.

¹⁶⁴ Wisdom, *Blessing*, 168.

limiting those ἐξ ἔργων νόμου to the agitators on the grounds that Paul regarded circumcision itself as adiaphorous (Gal 5:4; 6:15).¹⁶⁵

Wisdom's analysis exemplifies the kind of well-constructed, historically sensitive, and theologically coherent explanation of Paul's thought that Stanley critiques as nevertheless losing sight of the apostle's need to persuade. In a letter where the very gospel itself hangs in the balance, for what possible reason would Paul *construct* a citation whose true meaning becomes apparent only when one recognizes that its composite nature points to an otherwise unmentioned explanation for the curse (apostasy) that not only differs from the explanation provided by the surface meaning of the constructed citation but actually contradicts it since, in this case, remaining faithful to God requires that one, in fact, *not* do all that is written in the book of the law. Such complexity requires intentionality—it cannot be explained away as Paul's simply taking a step for granted or his overestimating the biblical literacy of his audience—and serves no purpose. I find it highly doubtful that Paul would have based the success of his argument (and his gospel!) on the gentile Galatians' ability to intuit—in the presence of the agitators, no less—such a train of thought.

Of course, scholars resort to these complex suggestions because of the lack of compelling simpler alternatives. The question thus remains: how does Paul's argument hold together?

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 177, 164.

2.3.2 Resolving the problems: 3:8-10 as an argument from the integrity of scripture for the gentiles' justification by faith

The preceding sections have identified several problems that arise from treating 3:8-9 as an argument from Abraham. First, an appeal to Abraham seems unlikely to explain why the gentiles' reception of the Abrahamic blessing implies their justification ἐκ πίστεως in 3:8. Paul's importing of the crucial reference to Abraham (ἐν σοί) into his citation of Gen 22:18 and his concluding reference to being blessed with "the *faithful* Abraham" (τῷ πιστῷ Ἀβραάμ) undermine an exemplary appeal; the replacing of the reference to Abraham's seed in Gen 22:18 and the glossing of the citation's ἐν σοί as merely "with . . . Abraham" (σὺν . . . Ἀβραάμ) undermine an incorporative appeal. Second, the inference in 3:9 that would conclude an Abrahamic argument could either broaden the recipients of the Abrahamic blessing based on the gentiles' promised reception in 3:8b or highlight justification ἐκ πίστεως as a crucial characteristic of the gentiles who receive this blessing. The former option has trouble justifying and motivating both the focus on the Abrahamic blessing in 3:9 and the movement from gentiles in 3:8 to οἱ ἐκ πίστεως in 3:9. The latter option also struggles to account for the focus on blessing and leaves the gentiles' πίστις-based justification unexplained as long as 3:9 concludes the argument. Finally, the internal logic of 3:10 implies that ὅσοι . . . ἐξ ἔργων νόμου do not actually do all the law, but no coherent reason can be given for this

assumption within the first-century Jewish framework of covenantal nomism as long as ὅσοι . . . ἐξ ἔργων νόμου includes everyone who seeks to obey the law.

Resolving these problems in 3:8-10 requires re-envisioning the whole argument, including its overall basis and purpose. Towards this end, the preceding analysis has also identified several elements likely to appear in a more robust construal of the argument: the nature of justification as a prerequisite for the blessing in 3:8, a focus on the blessing and the gentiles' status as those not under law as keys to the relationship between 3:8a and 3:8b, the function of 3:9 as highlighting a crucial characteristic of the blessed gentiles, and the role of 3:10 in providing the otherwise missing explanation for the movement from the premise in 3:8b to the conclusion in 3:9. This section seeks to integrate these various insights into a cohesive whole.

The presumed relationship between justification and blessing in 3:8 provides a helpful starting point. Since we have no potential basis apart from Abraham for identifying the blessing *as* justification, the problematical nature of an Abraham-based argument suggests that justification instead serves as a prerequisite for the blessing, i.e., this blessing comes only to the righteous.¹⁶⁶ Not only does this construal of the relationship between blessing and justification avoid making the argument dependant on Abraham, but it also has better independent attestation. Unlike the equating of blessing and justification, the claim that God reserves his blessing for the righteous pervades the OT and—always allowing for grace—underlies Israel's covenantal relationship with

¹⁶⁶ So also Sieffert, *Galater*, 175: “die Rechtfertigung als Vorbedingung der Segnung gedacht ist.”

Yahweh: if they do what is right, they will be blessed (e.g., Exod 15:26, Deut 6:18; 1 Kgs 11:38; Ps 5:12[MT/LXX 13]; Prov 3:33, 10:6-7, 20:7; cf. Luke 14:14). Paul's argument therefore seems much more likely to presume this common understanding of the relationship.

This biblical outlook, however, does not make blessing dependent on a particular kind of righteousness. In and of itself, then, the suggestion that the blessing presumes the recipients' justification cannot account for Paul's insistence in 3:8a on the *πίστις*-based nature of the gentiles' justification. The argument therefore needs to establish why this particular blessing requires justification *ἐκ πίστεως*. The conclusion in 3:9 that it is οἱ *ἐκ πίστεως* who share this blessing with Abraham—and, thus, not ὅσοι . . . *ἐξ ἔργων νόμου* (3:10)—suggests that Paul does indeed focus on the basis for the gentiles' justification. In other words, he is not arguing that justification *ἐκ πίστεως* applies *to gentiles*, but that God justifies the gentiles *ἐκ πίστεως*.

Before considering how Paul reaches this conclusion, I first want to note that this interpretation enables the argument to address directly what seems to constitute a crucial point of contention with the agitators, namely, the basis for the gentiles' justification. This analysis therefore resolves the problem of the perceived emphasis on blessing throughout 3:8-9: Paul appeals to Abraham's blessing to make a point about the *πίστις*-based nature of the gentiles' justification instead of assuming their justification *ἐκ πίστεως* to make a point about Abraham's blessing. Accordingly, it also accounts for the subsidiary nature of the reference to justification *ἐκ πίστεως* in 3:8a by transforming the

participial clause into an anticipation of the main conclusion. That is to say, the reference in 3:8a tells the readers where Paul is heading. Finally, since this interpretation establishes rather than presumes justification ἐκ πίστεως, the need to read 3:8-9 as an illustration of 3:6-7—a problematical reading given the (slightly) adversative conjunction δέ in 3:8 and the lack of logical connection between 3:7 and 3:9—disappears.

So on what basis does Paul infer from his Genesis citation that God justifies the gentiles ἐκ πίστεως? I suggest that the argument depends on scripture,¹⁶⁷ a claim that requires elaboration. After all, many scholars identify the typical Abrahamic-based interpretations as “arguments from scripture” simply because Paul cites an OT text, an act that in and of itself involves at least a tacit appeal to scripture’s authority. The same reasoning lies behind the common identification of 3:6-7 as an argument from scripture. Since the appeal to scripture’s authority does not form the basis of the argument in 3:6-7—scripture’s authority functions only as an implicit support—I labeled that passage instead as an argument from Abraham’s example. Here in 3:8, however, scripture seems to have a different role.

That the scriptural appeals in 3:6 and 3:8 function differently should not be surprising: whereas 3:6-7 lacks any explicit references to a written text, 3:8 explicitly invokes “scripture” (ἡ γραφή). In fact, the nature of the scriptural invocation in 3:8

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Fuller, *Gospel*, 100-103, who finds the faith-based justification of the gentiles in Paul’s Genesis citation by way of the (implied) *Shema*: since God is God of both Jews and gentiles, he must justify on a basis that is equally available to everyone and not tied to cultural distinctives such as circumcision. Hence, he justifies by faith. This proposed argument, however, has no need for the Genesis citation, and its appeal to unity could just as easily support an argument for law observance since the gentiles’ faith-based justification is not already a given.

provides an important clue to the sacred text's role in the argument. Rather than simply saying "it is written," Paul personifies scripture and has it proclaim the gospel to Abraham. Scholars rightly note that scripture clearly stands (and speaks) for God in this construction.¹⁶⁸ in Gen 22:18, the angel of the Lord speaks to Abraham, while in Gen 12:3 and 18:18, the Lord himself speaks. Nevertheless, this observation does not explain *why* Paul has scripture speak for God here, why, that is, he highlights the role of scripture. If he simply wanted to establish an argument from authority or to present Abraham as the prototypical hearer of the gospel, a reference either to God's proclamation ("God preached the gospel beforehand") or to the written text ("it is written") could have established the point without the awkwardness.

I therefore propose that Paul invokes scripture in 3:8 to establish an argument primarily based not on Abraham's scriptural example, nor even on the authority of scripture, but on the integrity—i.e., the unity and consistency—of scripture. In other words, by portraying scripture as the entity that made the proclamation to Abraham, Paul can then bring that proclamation into conversation with scripture's other "sayings," regardless of whether or not they relate directly to this promise. If this analysis is correct, then Paul does not argue in 3:8-10 based on the surety of scripture's promise to Abraham (although he certainly presumes this factor) but based on the uniformity of scripture's witness. That is to say, he argues that upholding the unity of scripture requires taking his

¹⁶⁸ E.g., Witherington, *Grace*, 227.

position on the justification of gentiles. It is in this way that 3:8-10 functions as an argument from scripture.

This understanding of the argument then enables the scriptural principle in 3:10 to provide the otherwise missing link between the premise in 3:8 and the inference in 3:9. Interpreted in this way, the argument of 3:8-10 proceeds as follows. (I will further explain and justify this summary below.) Scripture promises Abraham that all the nations/gentiles will be blessed in him (3:8). This blessing must come to those gentiles who are righteous on the basis of faith (3:9). Why? Because those gentiles whose righteousness is based on works of law are necessarily under a scriptural curse (3:10a) since they cannot keep the whole law while remaining gentiles (3:10b).¹⁶⁹ In other words, since God promises to bless gentiles, and gentiles are by definition those who do not keep the Jewish law (cf. 2:14), then the righteousness that forms the basis for their blessing cannot be a law-based righteousness.¹⁷⁰ (Paul's emphasis on the gospel's being pre-preached to Abraham [i.e., before the law] probably contributes to establishing the gentiles' law-free status as well.)

Galatians 3:9-10 thus answers Burton's projected rebuttal that Gen 17 leads to the expectation that gentiles receive the blessing by entering Abraham's line through circumcision and law observance. Gentiles who entered Abraham's line in this way would no longer be gentiles; they would be proselytes to Judaism. In fact, the argument

¹⁶⁹ Keeping the whole law (5:3) essentially means living as a Jew (2:14) and not as a gentile.

¹⁷⁰ Similarly Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 137; John Bligh, *Galatians: A Discussion of St. Paul's Epistle* (Householder Commentaries 1; London: St. Paul, 1969), 252-53. Bligh even notes that 3:10 addresses the potential objection that gentiles must become law observant in order to share in Abraham's lineage.

in 3:8-10 suggests that gentiles need not enter Abraham's line at all to receive this blessing, hence the absence of any reference to Christ. This point will become significant for my analysis of the Abrahamic seed in Chapter 3.

Three additional aspects of this reading deserve comment: the marginalizing of Abraham, the focus on gentiles, and the resulting relationship of 3:8-10 to 3:6-7. First, this construal of Paul's argument hinges entirely on the connection of gentiles and blessing in the Genesis citation; the reference to Abraham does not play an essential role.¹⁷¹ This interpretation thus accords with my earlier conclusion that Gen 22:18 forms the most likely source for Paul's citation: it emphasizes the presence of τὰ ἔθνη in the citation (required by the identical reference in 3:8a) without making the argument dependent on an element (Abraham) imported into the citation. As for why Paul would have imported the contextually-justified reference to Abraham if it plays no role, I suggest that he desires 1) to avoid introducing Christ into the argument prematurely and 2) to provide a common ground—Abraham—for both the Jews' (3:6-7) and the gentiles' (3:8-10) status as οἱ ἐκ πίστεως offer sufficient motive (cf. Rom 4:11-12). This parallel then indicates that οἱ ἐκ πίστεως signifies "those [justified] by faith" in 3:9 just as it does in 3:7.

What is the link between Abraham and the gentiles' justification by faith? In this analysis, Abraham functions neither as an authoritative example nor as a genealogical forebear. He instead serves as the one who secures the gentiles' blessing, a conclusion

¹⁷¹ The content of blessing becomes equally irrelevant, at least at this stage of Paul's argument.

indicated by Paul’s description of him as “faithful” (πιστῶ) in 3:9: while his trusting faith results in his own justification (3:6; cf. Gen 15:6), it is his faithfulness that enables the blessing to come to others (3:8-9; cf. Gen 22:18). This observation then also explains why Paul interprets the ἐν σοί in his citation simply as σὺν τῷ πιστῷ Ἀβραάμ. The gentiles are not blessed “in Abraham” or “by virtue of Abraham’s example” but simply “with Abraham.” That is to say, they share in the same blessing that he receives.¹⁷² Abraham thus points to the gentiles’ justification by faith because he secures a blessing for them that requires their justification *as gentiles*. According to Paul, God must base this justification on faith since gentiles by definition cannot attain righteousness under the Jewish law.

Second, just as the analysis in §2.2 indicated that 3:6-7 concerns only Jews, so this analysis of 3:8-10 requires that these verses concern only gentiles. Scholars resist this conclusion for two main reasons: 1) the connection with οἱ ἐκ πίστεως in 3:7 and 2) the assumption that the gentiles in view would be sharing in the Jews’ naturally inherited blessing. Both of these objections derive their purported strength primarily from the misreading of 3:6-7 as redefining Abrahamic sonship on the basis of πίστις, a misreading that then transforms 3:8-9 into a proof of the gentiles’ inclusion in this redefined sonship. As I hope to show, without this mistaken interpretation of 3:6-7, these potential objections lose their traction.

¹⁷² As the next chapter will make clear, this blessing is adoption as a son of God, a status signified by the gentiles’ reception of the Spirit.

With regard to the first objection, I have already shown that the two instances of οἱ ἐκ πίστεως cannot be logically derived from one another.¹⁷³ It therefore seems reasonable to suggest that, rather than making similar claims about the same group in 3:6-7 and 3:8-9, Paul instead uses the identical phrase to unite his conclusions about Jews (3:7) and gentiles (3:9). In each case, the text provides clear contextual indications that limit the phrase’s scope: 3:7 explicitly relates the designation to “the sons of Abraham”—i.e., the Jews—while the argument in 3:8-9 expressly relates it to “the gentiles” who receive the Abrahamic blessing. Neither argument can expand the scope of οἱ ἐκ πίστεως without introducing substantial logical and contextual difficulties. As Stanley notes, “The argument of [3:8-9] is rather that God has opened up a *different* route of ‘blessing’ for the Gentiles, through his promises to Abraham to ‘bless the nations [=Gentiles]’ through him.”¹⁷⁴

If the logical development of 3:8-9 points to the need for οἱ ἐκ πίστεως in 3:9 to refer exclusively to gentiles, how much more so does the argument in 3:10. The internal logic of 3:10 implies that ὅσοι . . . ἐξ ἔργων νόμου do not actually do all the law. As long as ὅσοι . . . ἐξ ἔργων νόμου includes everyone who seeks to obey the law, however, no coherent reason can be given for this assumption within the first-century Jewish framework of covenantal nomism. At the same time, the common assumptions 1) that οἱ ἐκ πίστεως in 3:9 includes both Jews and gentiles and/or 2) that 3:10 begins a

¹⁷³ See §2.3.1.2.

¹⁷⁴ Stanley, “Curse,” 493.

new phase of the argument make any attempt to limit the scope of ὅσοι . . . ἐξ ἔργων νόμου seem arbitrary and artificial. Restricting the οἱ ἐκ πίστεως in 3:9 to gentiles effectively solves this problem since the initial γάρ in 3:10—when read in its customary explanatory sense—ties the ὅσοι to the same pool of potential members. (Significantly, Paul does not say πάντες ἐξ ἔργων νόμου.) This reading thus restricts the application of ὅσοι . . . ἐξ ἔργων νόμου to gentiles as well, thereby limiting the scope of 3:10 to those who, by definition, cannot obey all the law. Viewed in this light, Paul’s supporting citation in 3:10b becomes logically apt, with 3:10 then supplying the missing step in moving from the premise in 3:8 to the conclusion in 3:9.

I should emphasize that this restricting of 3:9-10 to a discussion of gentiles proceeds naturally from the scope and structure of the argument established in 3:8; I am not imposing this meaning simply to make sense of the text, although my reading does have this effect. The potential criticism that, in other contexts, ὅσοι . . . ἐξ ἔργων νόμου and related phrases never refer to gentiles therefore has little relevance. Indeed, the oxymoronic pairing makes Paul’s point: *gentiles* who are justified by successfully doing *all* that is written in the book of the law cannot exist.

The second main objection—namely, the assumption that the gentiles in view would be sharing in the Jews’ naturally inherited blessing—similarly finds little to support it. Nothing in 3:8 demands this assumption. The verse, after all, specifies only the gentiles as recipients of the blessing. An incorporative reading of the ἐν σοί could admittedly support the assumption, but Paul specifically discourages that reading of the

phrase by glossing it as σύν . . . Ἀβραάμ in 3:9. Furthermore, although τὰ ἔθνη would have initially included Abraham's descendants along with the other nations,¹⁷⁵ I will argue that Paul subsequently portrays the law as coming expressly to set the Jews apart as a distinct people so that they would not be able to receive this Abrahamic blessing to the gentiles without incorporation into Christ.¹⁷⁶ If this suggestion proves correct, then the idea that the Jews share in the Abrahamic blessing by virtue of their descent not only does not derive from Paul, but it also contradicts a fundamental tenet of his larger Abrahamic argument.

Finally, this interpretation of 3:8-10 explains the adversative-yet-connective δέ conjunction in 3:8.¹⁷⁷ On the one hand, 3:6-7 and 3:8-10 have many parallel elements. On the other hand, 3:6-7 and 3:8-10 utilize those parallel elements very differently. Both cite scripture, but 3:6-7 cites it as part of an argument from Abraham's example whereas 3:8-10 cites it as part of an argument from the consistency of scripture. Both appeal to Abraham, but 3:6-7 appeals to his trusting example in justification whereas 3:8-10 refers to his faithfulness that enables others to share in his blessing. Both draw conclusions about οἱ ἐκ πίστεως, but the phrase refers to Jews in 3:6-7 and to gentiles in 3:8-10. In

¹⁷⁵ Noted by Malina and Pilch, *Social-Science*, 204; Lührmann, *Galatians*, 60.

¹⁷⁶ See §3.4.1.

¹⁷⁷ As Dunn, *Galatians*, 163, notes, the use of δέ (rather than γάρ) in 3:8 identifies the verse as "conjoint with"—not as explanatory or elaborative of—3:6-7. The δέ thus rules against the suggestion that 3:8-9 "proves" 3:6-7, a suggestion found, e.g., in Betz, *Galatians*, 142-43. At the same time, Ellicott, *Galatians*, 70, rightly observes that "The exact force of δέ . . . is never *simply* connective . . . and never loses *all* shades of its true oppositive character."

short, the parallels unite the otherwise diverse arguments through which Paul argues that the justification of both Jews and gentiles rests on faith.

This last comment then highlights one further disjunctive parallel: both passages discuss justification by faith. Because 3:6-7 refers to Jews, faith in that context would naturally be assumed to include law observance as one of its expressions. At the very least, nothing in 3:6-7 rules out that interpretation. In Gal 3:8-10, however, Paul clearly identifies the faith that justifies gentiles as a faith that has nothing to do with law observance (cf. 3:10). Galatians 3:8-10 therefore does more than simply show that the gentiles are justified by faith. It introduces a division between faith and law as means of justification. Accordingly, as the next step in his argument, 3:11-12 seeks to show that this faith-law distinction actually applies to Jews as well.

2.4 Galatians 3:11-12: Jewish justification also ultimately rests on faith, not law observance

Gal 3:11-12

^{11a}ὅτι δὲ ἐν νόμῳ οὐδεὶς δικαιοῦται παρὰ τῷ θεῷ δῆλον, ^bὅτι ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται. ^{12a}ὁ δὲ νόμος οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ πίστεως, ^bἀλλ' ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὰ ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς.

^{11a}And that no one is justified by law before God is apparent ^bbecause “The one who is righteous shall receive life on the basis of faith” [Hab 2:4]. ^{12a}And the law is not “on the basis of faith,” ^bbut “the one doing them shall receive life by [doing] them” [Lev 18:5].

The previous section argued that, according to 3:8-10, God must justify the gentiles by faith because the promised blessing of Abraham cannot come to the gentiles *as* gentiles if that blessing depends on a law-based righteousness; the law would bring them under a curse instead. Since scholars typically understand 3:11-12 as a continuation of or as an alternative formulation for the argument in 3:10,¹⁷⁸ it remains to show how these additional verses fit with this proposed interpretation. Although the details differ, analyses of 3:11-12 usually assume that these verses contrast Christian faith and Jewish law observance as means of justification, an interpretive assumption that once again creates more problems than it solves. The inherent suggestions that 3:11 applies Hab 2:4 to faith in/of Christ and that 3:12 establishes the exclusive independence of faith and law prove particularly troublesome. I will argue, in contrast, that, following the discussion of gentiles in 3:8-10, these verses shift the focus back to the Jews, essentially making the point that the Jews are also justified based on their faith in God and not on their law obedience. Indeed, I hope to show that this interpretation produces a logically and historically coherent reading of the passage.

¹⁷⁸ Williams, *Galatians*, 90, represents a recent exception, rightly regarding 3:11 as independent of v. 10.

2.4.1 Galatians 3:11 as a reference to Jewish—not Christian—justifying faith

Galatians 3:11-12 essentially seeks to prove its opening premise that no one is justified before God by law.¹⁷⁹ As the emphatic fronting of ἐν νόμῳ in 3:11a and the subsequent appeal to Hab 2:4 attest, the argument focuses on the true means of justification—by faith, not by law¹⁸⁰—and not, as in 3:10, the accursed consequences of unrighteousness under the law. The initial premise also distinguishes itself from the preceding argument by broadening the scope from ὅσοι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου in 3:10 to οὐδεὶς in 3:11a. This progression suggests that, having shown in 3:8-10 that the law cannot justify gentiles, 3:11-12 now goes on to show that the law does not actually justify anyone, i.e., not even the Jews.

¹⁷⁹ Based on a fairly exhaustive study of the TLG database, Wakefield, *Where to Live*, 162-67, argues that the “relatively scarce” (165) ὅτι . . . δῆλον ὅτι construction should be read as “because no one is justified by law, it is evident that . . .” instead of the more common rendering “that no one is justified by law is evident because . . .” So, too, Kim, *Paul*, 129; Witherington, *Grace*, 234; Hays, “Galatians,” 259; Thielman, *Paul*, 127-28. As Wakefield admits, however, δῆλον can appear with a preceding ὅτι. Given this grammatical permissibility, four factors help establish the traditional reading as correct. First, a citation of Hab 2:4 follows the second ὅτι; the authoritative nature of scripture makes it more likely that Paul uses scripture to prove another claim than that he wants to establish the scripture’s veracity. Second, the law’s failure to justify anyone does not necessarily entail either that the righteous will live by faith or that those righteous on the basis of faith will live. Third, as Campbell, *Deliverance*, 1154-55 n. 82, notes, Wakefield’s interpretation renders 3:12 irrelevant since, in this reading, 3:11 must already presuppose the law/faith distinction that 3:12 seeks to establish. Finally, my interpretation of 3:8-10 suggests that, far from identifying an assumed point of common ground, the premise that “no one is justified by law” constitutes the principle that Paul’s argument next needs to prove.

¹⁸⁰ The juxtaposition of ἐν νόμῳ (3:11a) and ἐν αὐτοῖς (3:12b) with ἐκ πίστεως (3:11b) suggests that the ἐν is instrumental (“by law”) in both cases and not—as claimed by Williams, *Galatians*, 90; Dunn, *Galatians*, 174-75; Wakefield, *Where to Live*, 175—locative (“in law”). The plural αὐτοῖς would also make for an awkward abstract entity.

Paul begins his proof of this premise by citing Hab 2:4: Ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται. Since the premise in 3:11a is all-encompassing—*no one* (οὐδείς) is justified by law—the proof would need to exhibit a similarly universal scope. This stipulation then makes it difficult to limit the scope of ὁ δίκαιος in the citation of Hab 2:4 either by having ἐκ πίστεως modify it¹⁸¹ or by identifying it as a messianic title signifying “the Righteous One.”¹⁸² To preclude the possibility of God’s justifying anyone on a different basis, the former would require the implied premise that God justifies everyone on the same basis. Such a premise, however, would render the argument in 3:11-12 superfluous since 3:8-10 has already shown that God justifies the gentiles by faith. Likewise, appeals to ὁ δίκαιος as a messianic title would establish the necessary universal scope only if Paul expects his readers to assume either an Adamic status for the Messiah (cf. Rom 5:12-21) or an implied greater-to-lesser argument (i.e., “if the law does not even justify the Messiah, how much less would it justify anyone else”).¹⁸³ Either way, Paul would have left the reasoning that establishes his argument unstated. The ability to make sense of 3:11 without having to posit the implied presence of such crucial steps (see below) combined with the use of the same construction—i.e., a definite article + a singular

¹⁸¹ Contra, e.g., RSV, NEB, Fung, *Galatians*, 143-45; Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 484. On this point in general, see H. C. C. Cavallin, “‘The Righteous Shall Live by Faith’: A Decisive Argument for the Traditional Interpretation,” *ST* 32 (1978): 33-43; D. Moody Smith, Jr., “Ο ΔΕ ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΕΚ ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ ΖΗΣΕΤΑΙ,” in *Studies in the History and Text of the New Testament* (eds. Boyd L. Daniels and M. Jack Suggs; SD 29; Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1967), 13-25.

¹⁸² Contra, e.g., Richard B. Hays, *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel’s Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 119-42, esp. 140-42; Hays, *Faith*, 134-38.

¹⁸³ For the greater-to-lesser argument, see Hays, *Faith*, 178.

noun—to indicate generic class nouns in 3:20 (ὁ μεσίτης) and 4:1 (ὁ κληρονόμος) accordingly suggest that ὁ δίκαιος in 3:11b constitutes an unmodified, generic class noun signifying “everyone who is righteous.”¹⁸⁴

If ἐκ πίστεως does not limit ὁ δίκαιος, then it must modify ζήσεται, a reading that the contrasting parallel with the ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς in the ensuing citation of Lev 18:5 practically requires.¹⁸⁵ Nevertheless, the scholars who link ἐκ πίστεως to ὁ δίκαιος are not entirely wrong. Since Hab 2:4 admits the possibility that the righteous exist, Paul’s argument must prove that their righteousness does not stem from law observance. It must prove, that is, that the righteous receive their status based on faith. This observation then makes it difficult for ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται to refer simply to the manner or sphere in which the righteous live:¹⁸⁶ such a construal could at best only imply that faith provides the basis for their justification. A better reading therefore understands ζήσεται as a reference to the life that the righteous receive as a result of their righteous status.¹⁸⁷ This interpretation of ζήσεται as a direct result of δικαιοῦται effectively enables the citation to address the premise in 3:11a directly: no one is justified by law

¹⁸⁴ So, e.g., Dunn, *Galatians*, 175; Williams, *Galatians*, 91; Mayordomo, *Argumentiert*, 161.

¹⁸⁵ Smith, “ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ,” 19.

¹⁸⁶ Wakefield, *Where to Live*, 174-77.

¹⁸⁷ For the similar reading of 3:21, see §3.4.1.

because scripture declares that the righteous will receive life based on [their justification by] faith.¹⁸⁸

In its original context in Habakkuk, however, the cited phrase does not make such a universal claim. Instead, it refers to the righteous Jews of a particular time and place, namely, those Judeans in the prophet's day who were going to have to persevere through a period of national judgment at the hands of the Chaldeans. Since Paul provides no basis for universalizing the principle, he must regard Hab 2:4 as a particular instantiation of God's standard practice in justifying humans. This understanding of the phrase also helps explain why Paul does not explicitly identify it as a citation in Gal 3:11: it is the general principle of justification that is important, not the particular instance in Habakkuk. Indeed, although recognizing the scriptural basis of the citation lends it greater authority, the argument makes sense even without this recognition. It makes sense, that is, as long as it meets two conditions.

First, for the argument to be convincing, the agitators would similarly have to acknowledge that Hab 2:4 articulates God's standard principle of justification. In other words, the portrayal of justification in Hab 2:4 must form the point of general agreement from which Paul then proceeds to argue. Such an assumption seems reasonable. The verse accords well with the covenantal nomism of the day, and those concerned with law observance would be inherently likely to embrace and affirm a scriptural principle. Moreover, other Jewish texts—both earlier (1QpHab VIII, 1-3) and later (*b. Mak.* 24a)—

¹⁸⁸ So also Cavallin, "Righteous," 40, who notes that "the connection between life and righteousness is, of course, very old in Israelite thinking [e.g., Deut 30:6, 15-20; Prov 4:13; 21:21]."

specifically identify Hab 2:4 as articulating God’s sole criterion for justification. Of course, Jewish interpretations typically understand the אמונה / πίστεως in the verse to denote “faithfulness” (including law observance) rather than “faith.” It is this interpretation of the verse that Paul will challenge in 3:12 (see below).

Second, for Paul to challenge the common understanding of Hab 2:4 successfully, his analysis of the verse must agree with its context in Habakkuk; the particular instantiation must actually be an instantiation of the desired principle. Otherwise, those familiar with the original context could refute Paul’s argument simply by noting that the verse does not mean what he claims it to mean. In the small details, the analysis of the citation’s meaning above conforms to its sense in Habakkuk: the suggestions that ἐκ πίστεως modifies ζήσεται and that ζήσεται refers to the life the righteous will receive agree with the sense of both the LXX manuscripts and the MT.¹⁸⁹ In fact, the only potential problem arises in Paul’s interpretation of πίστις as “faith” rather than “faithfulness.” This one issue, however, constitutes the heart of his whole argument.

A cursory glance at the evidence does not bode well for this interpretation. According to the MT, the righteous will live באמונתו, which translates as “by his steadfastness/faithfulness” or possibly “by its [i.e., Habakkuk’s vision’s] faithfulness,” but not “by his faith.” Similarly, most LXX manuscripts read ἐκ πίστεώς μου, a phrase

¹⁸⁹ Life in Hab 2:4 seems to be survival rather than resurrection, but the principle of receiving life as the result of righteousness remains the same.

that must mean “by my [i.e., God’s] faithfulness.”¹⁹⁰ Whether it reflects an alternate *Vorlage* or an intentional change, only the omission of the μου in Paul’s citation enables him to interpret ἐκ πίστεως as “on the basis of faith.” Nevertheless, a closer inspection shows that his interpretation does remain true to the meaning of Hab 2:4 in its original context.

Theodicy forms the overriding theme of Habakkuk.¹⁹¹ The book begins with the prophet’s complaint asking God how long he will allow wickedness to go unchecked (Hab 1:1-4). In response, God announces a surprising turn of events “that you will not believe (לֹא תֵאֱמִינֶה) when it is told” (1:5): he is raising up the impetuous Chaldeans to execute judgment (1:5-11). Habakkuk then laments that this solution seems to privilege the wicked even more than the original problem (1:12-17/2:1). At this point, God gives Habakkuk a vision of the outcome designed to sustain the righteous during the time of national judgment (2:2-4): the greedy Chaldeans will eventually come under judgment too (2:5-20). The final chapter then praises God for his mysterious yet faithful ways (3:1-19).

¹⁹⁰ The switch from “his” in the MT to “my” in the LXX likely results from the common ה / י confusion. For analysis of the diverse textual traditions of this verse, see Rikki E. Watts, “‘For I Am Not Ashamed of the Gospel’: Romans 1:16-17 and Habakkuk 2:4,” in *Romans and the People of God: Essays in Honor of Gordon D. Fee on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday* (eds. Sven K. Soderlund and N. T. Wright; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 3-25, 4-16; Dietrich-Alex Koch, “Der Text von Hab 2 4b in der Septuaginta und im Neuen Testament,” *ZNW* 76 (1985): 68-85.

¹⁹¹ On the analysis of Hab 2:4 in its original context, see Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 127-63; Watts, “Not Ashamed,” 4-16.

In this context, the statement that “a righteous one will live by his [LXX: my] faithfulness” (2:4b) essentially means that the righteous will live by their faith in the vision that God has shown the prophet. In this context, in other words, being faithful primarily means trusting God in a situation where he seems to have abandoned his people, trusting him in a situation that seems to call his holy and just character into question. Those who remain faithful to him, trusting in the unlikely outcome he has promised, will survive the judgment and live. The context thus defines faithfulness here in terms of faith/trust.¹⁹² Paul’s interpretation of ἐκ πίστεως as “on the basis of faith”—an interpretation that enables 3:12 to distinguish the basis for righteousness in Hab 2:4 from a faithfulness that includes law observance—is thus wholly appropriate.

The interpretation is appropriate, that is, assuming that Paul’s use of faith refers to a trust in God. Significantly, this requirement creates difficulties for any interpretation of Paul’s argument that sees an implicit reference to Christ in the phrase ἐκ πίστεως. Aside from the fact that Christ does not appear in Gal 3:6-14 until v. 13, Habakkuk says nothing about faith in (or the faith of) a coming Messiah.¹⁹³ Furthermore, given the all-encompassing scope of the claims in 3:11, a reference to faith in Christ would effectively imply that no one could have been righteous before the time of Christ, a claim that

¹⁹² So Jan Christian Cornelis van Dorssen, *De derivata van de stam יָמַן in het Hebreeuwsch van het Oude Testament (with a Summary in English)* (Amsterdam: Drukkerij Holland N.V., 1951), 129. Cf. James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 173 n. 1, 201; Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 161.

¹⁹³ A potential messianic reading arises in the LXX primarily because the strict translation of the masculine Hebrew pronoun as αὐτόν in 2:3b keeps the Greek pronoun from agreeing with the feminine ὄρασις whose Hebrew equivalent forms the antecedent in the MT. See Hays, *Faith*, 135.

contradicts the many references to the righteous in the OT, including Hab 2:4 and the righteous Abraham already mentioned in Gal 3:6. Once again, then, Paul’s citation seems intended to emphasize the true basis of the Jews’ justification. Far from seeking to contrast Christian and Jewish means of justification, it instead establishes their mutual grounding in faith.

2.4.2 Galatians 3:12 as an argument for faith’s primacy over—not independence from—law

This distinction in purpose becomes even clearer when we consider the conclusion of the argument in 3:12. Having cited Hab 2:4 as embodying a principle of justification on which all the parties can presumably agree, Paul must now argue that the πίστις in this verse does not include law observance. Galatians 3:12 accordingly opens with the requisite contrast between law and faith: ὁ δὲ νόμος οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ πίστεως.¹⁹⁴ The statement does not end there, however, but continues with a citation of Lev 18:5: ἀλλ’ Ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὰ ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς. To understand the claim, we must understand how its two halves hold together.

The ἀλλά provides a good place to begin. As the use of this conjunction shows, the citation of Lev 18:5 does not seek to prove the statement in 3:12a (in which case we

¹⁹⁴ On the necessity for 3:12 to complete the proof in 3:11, see Mayordomo, *Argumentiert*, 161; Vouga, *Galater*, 75. Contra Cosgrove, *Cross*, 58-60, who finds 3:12 extraneous and “confus[ing]” since his assumed definition of faith in 3:11 as “eschatological Christ-faith” (58) necessarily excludes this faith from serving as the basis for the law.

would have expected a ὅτι or a γάρ) so much as it provides a contrast that authoritatively completes it.¹⁹⁵ The fact that Paul can advance this overall claim about the law as an authoritative statement that does not require an explicit proof perhaps suggests that he expects the basic contention of the verse to find general acceptance without being overly controversial. While the point is admittedly subtle and should not be forced to carry too much interpretive weight, it does bear keeping in mind.

Of much greater significance is the question of what the ἀλλά seeks to contrast. While we would expect the ἀλλά syntactically to coordinate Lev 18:5 with another complete clause, Paul could hardly intend the citation to stand in contrast to all of 3:12a.¹⁹⁶ The resultant meaning of such a construction—that even though the law is not ἐκ πίστεως, those who do it can nevertheless receive life—would essentially undermine his whole argument. The citation must therefore stand in opposition to some subset of the preceding clause.

One common way of resolving this syntactical issue suggests that the ἀλλά contrasts Lev 18:5 with the word πίστεως in 3:12a. Read in this way, the verse argues that the law does not have its ground (ἐκ) in believing (πίστεως) but in doing (Lev 18:5,

¹⁹⁵ Gaston, *Paul*, 74.

¹⁹⁶ Contra Gaston, who awkwardly argues that 3:12a speaks of law outside the covenant while the citation in 3:12b favorably describes law under the covenant (Ibid.). Bring, *Galatians*, 129-30, argues for a similarly awkward division whereby 3:12 contrasts the law understood as a means to righteousness (3:12a) with the law as fulfilled by Christ (“the one who does them,” 3:12b).

esp. ποιήσας).¹⁹⁷ The difficulty with this reading lies in the fundamental opposition that it anachronistically creates between law obedience and faith. In the covenantal nomism that characterized first-century Judaism, Jews typically understood their law obedience as the necessary expression / outworking of their faith. Indeed, the agitators could simply argue that since scripture affirms both faith (Hab 2:4) and doing the law (Lev 18:5) as means to life, it must regard the two as complementary.¹⁹⁸ Furthermore, Paul himself exhorts the believing Galatians to fulfill the whole law by embodying the command from Lev 19:18 to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Gal 5:13-14; cf. 6:2) and to refrain from “practicing” (πράσσοντες) the immoral behavior that will keep them from inheriting the kingdom of God (5:19-21), demonstrating that even he views “believing” and “doing” as intrinsically linked. If Paul’s commands—some of which he quotes directly from the

¹⁹⁷ Cf. NIV (“the law is not based on faith”); NRSV (“the law does not rest on faith”). Joel Willitts, “Context Matters: Paul’s Use of Leviticus 18:5 in Galatians 3:12,” *TynBul* 54 (2003): 105-22, 119, argues that faith and Lev 18:5 here signify different historical eras so that the verse contrasts, not believing and doing, but the new age of “*realized* covenant potential” and the old age of “*unrealized* covenant potential” (italics original). Had this been Paul’s meaning, he could certainly have found a clearer way of expressing it. The suggestion of Howard, *Crisis*, 63-64, that the law is not ἐκ πίστεως because, unlike the promise, it relies on human fulfillment rather than *God’s faithfulness* (i.e., πίστις) sets up a false dichotomy: God would still have to be faithful to enact the blessings he promised through his law.

¹⁹⁸ At the very least, Paul would need to explain why, if they are oppositional, the Habakkuk citation takes precedence. Suggestions for the basis of Habakkuk’s priority include the eschatological context of Hab 2:4 (Kjell Arne Morland, “Expansion and Conflict: The Rhetoric of Hebrew Bible Citations in Galatians 3,” in *Recruitment, Conquest, and Conflict: Strategies in Judaism, Early Christianity, and the Greco-Roman World* (eds. Peder Borgen, et al.; Emory Studies in Early Christianity 6; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 251-71, 259), the correspondence to Abraham’s example in Gen 15:6 (Schoeps, *Paul*, 177-78), Habakkuk’s later dating after the curse had taken effect (Wright, *Climax*, 148-49), and simply the witness of the gospel (Martyn, *Galatians*, 332; Williams, *Galatians*, 92). Paul, however, does not explicitly mention any of these suggestions.

Torah—can be grounded in faith, then there is no reason why the commands of Torah could not be as well.¹⁹⁹

The unpersuasive and ultimately inconsistent argument that results if 3:12 concerns the ground of the law not only suggests that we must find an alternate construction to explain the ἀλλά, it also makes the pairing of ὁ νόμος and ἐκ πίστεως in 3:12a rather awkward. As Burton points out, “It would have been formally more exact to have used ὁ νόμος and ἡ πίστις or ἐξ ἔργων νόμου and ἐκ πίστεως.”²⁰⁰ A single solution solves both of these syntactical difficulties: ἐκ πίστεως serves as a shorthand reference to the Hab 2:4 passage cited in the previous verse. In other words, the incongruous syntactical parallel of ὁ νόμος and ἐκ πίστεως signals the presence of a citation in much the same way that the unbalanced ἀλλά contrast and the shift from the initial singular ὁ νόμος in 3:12a to the portrayal of the law as a plurality (αὐτά, αὐτοῖς) in 3:12b signal the presence of the Lev 18:5 citation.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁹ Cf., too, Paul’s positive statements about the connections between Torah and faith in Romans (e.g., Rom 3:31). The suggestion that Paul claims only that the law does not have its ground in specifically Christian faith does not solve the problem: the statement contrasts believing and doing, not the objects / types of faith.

²⁰⁰ Burton, *Galatians*, 167.

²⁰¹ Cf. Hays, *Faith*, 132-33; Schlier, *Galater*, 134. For syntactical irregularities as an indicator of citation, see Christopher D. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature* (SNTSMS 74; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 37; Koch, *Schrift*, 23.

The nature of ἐκ πίστεως as a citation then establishes a suitable contrast for the Lev 18:5 citation, namely, Hab 2:4. The parallel structure of the two verses suggests that Paul desires a reader to contrast them:

Hab 2:4	Ὁ δίκαιος	ἐκ πίστεως	ζήσεται
Lev 18:5	Ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὰ	ζήσεται	ἐν αὐτοῖς

The verb ζήσεται links the citations; as in Hab 2:4, Lev 18:5 also uses ζήσεται in the sense of a reward for the righteous. The phrasing of 3:12 then suggests that Paul intends to highlight the disjunction between believing and doing the law. Connecting ἐκ πίστεως with Hab 2:4, however, removes the absolute nature of the contrast, limiting it instead to the basis for the justification that brings life. As a result, 3:12 speaks more directly to Paul's original premise that the law justifies no one. He essentially argues that the law justifies no one before God because the law justifies based on obedience (“doing the law”) rather than faith.

Of course, this formulation then raises the question of why no one can be justified by doing the law as Lev 18:5 promises.²⁰² Whatever the reason, it is again worth noting that Paul considers it obvious enough that he need not explain it. The suggestion that these verses serve to establish an exclusive contrast between Christian faith and Jewish

²⁰² Contra Fuller, *Gospel*, 98, 103, absolutely nothing in the context supports his suggestion that ὁ νόμος in 3:12 signifies a legalistic, “Jewish *mis*interpretation of the law” (103).

law observance allows four possible explanations: Paul could view Lev 18:5 as irrelevant, wrong, canceled/superseded, or unachievable. Considering each of these options in turn will show that none of them produces a coherent argument.

Paul could hold Lev 18:5 to be irrelevant to justification. After all, the verse never identifies those who do the law as righteous, nor does it claim that the law justifies. Paul's explicit identification of Lev 18:5 as describing "the righteousness that comes from law" in Rom 10:5 precludes the suggestion that he here presents "being righteous" and "doing the law" as two separate ways to life. Nevertheless, some scholars do sever Lev 18:5 from the question of justification by interpreting the citation not as a promise of righteousness and life for the one who does the law but as a statement of the manner or realm in which the one doing the law lives. Wakefield, for instance, argues that 3:12 simply states that "the one *having done* these things *will continue to live* this way" (italics original).²⁰³ Read in this way, 3:12 serves only to distinguish the age/realm of law from the age/realm of faith; the conclusion that no one can achieve righteousness within the realm of law must come from somewhere else. Although this interpretation manages to preserve the validity of Lev 18:5, it does so only by offering an awkward interpretation of the citation that conflicts with the original context where ζήσεται clearly refers to the life given to the righteous.²⁰⁴

²⁰³ Wakefield, *Where to Live*, 175. Cf. Dunn, *Galatians*, 175; Lührmann, *Galatians*, 61.

²⁰⁴ Wakefield, *Where to Live*, 171, argues that because the life in Lev 18:5 is not eschatological, it must concern daily living, a reading that essentially makes the LXX phrase (if not Paul's application of it) tautological. As Wakefield himself notes, however, "the life that is promised is long life in the land" (171), a promise that according to Lev 18:26-29, Israel will lose if they commit the forbidden abominations (171

The suggestion that Paul regards Lev 18:5 as a false promise proves just as problematical. According to this view, the problem is nomological in nature: the gospel leads Paul to conclude that the law could never give life even to those who faithfully obey it (cf. Gal 3:21), an assessment often grounded in the law's requirement of "doing" (ὁ ποιήσας αὐτά) rather than "believing."²⁰⁵ If Lev 18:5 is untrue, however, then the law might indeed be ἐκ πίστεως: Paul would have produced no reliable evidence to the contrary. Such a conclusion would accordingly negate the validity of the contrast with Hab 2:4 and, thus, Paul's argument. Moreover, the resulting challenge to the general trustworthiness of scripture would undercut the force and authority of all Paul's scriptural appeals.

A third option argues that the principle of faith in Hab 2:4 replaces the principle of law in Lev 18:5 that Israel annuls through their breaking of the covenant.²⁰⁶ In other words, this position must hold that the law not only failed to justify anyone under it, but

n. 125). Life in Lev 18:5, then, is something that Israel receives, not something they do. So, too, Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 320-23. For the common tendency in ancient Judaism to read the promise in Lev 18:5 eschatologically, see Simon J. Gathercole, "Torah, Life, and Salvation: Leviticus 18:5 in Early Judaism and the New Testament," in *From Prophecy to Testament: The Function of the Old Testament in the New* (ed. Craig A. Evans; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2004), 126-45.

²⁰⁵ E.g., Hays, *Faith*, 178; Eckstein, *Verheißung*, 148-50; Beker, *Paul*, 54; Schlier, *Galater*, 134. Martyn, *Galatians*, 328-34, reaches this conclusion by arguing that 3:11-12 represents a "Textual Contradiction" that neither follows the standard form of such contradictions nor holds to the form's fundamental assumption that scripture cannot contradict itself. Cf. Schoeps, *Paul*, 177-78, who suggests that the earlier(!) citation of Gen 15:6 resolves the contradiction in favor of faith.

²⁰⁶ E.g., Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 335, 428-29, 516; Morland, *Rhetoric*, 225; Wright, *Climax*, 148-51; Cosgrove, *Cross*, 55-57; Bruce, *Galatians*, 163. Willitts, "Context," 121, grounds this suggestion in the observation that Ezek 20 and Neh 9:29 both cite Lev 18:5 in the context of Israel's failure to obey the law and achieve the promised life (cf. CD III, 16).

that it also no longer presents a potentially viable option. (If the law remains a viable option, then this position becomes a variant of the fourth option, namely, that righteousness is unachievable under the law.) Attempts to tie this shift to Christ's ushering in a new age (cf. 3:25, where Paul seems to equate the coming of "faith" with the coming of Christ) run into the problem that God already institutes this "new" paradigm in the days of Habakkuk, several centuries before Christ. Furthermore, if in the time from Moses to Habakkuk (or to Christ) the law provided the only hope of justification, then no one in that time period could have been considered righteous since—Paul's main point—the law justifies no one.²⁰⁷

One option remains: that righteousness before God has always been and will always be unachievable under the law because no one can actually do the commandments sufficiently so as to receive justification and life.²⁰⁸ As with the similar explanation of 3:10, critics of this view can point to Paul's personal claim of blamelessness under the law (Phil 3:6) and emphasize that the law does not require perfect obedience; if it did, it

²⁰⁷ Paul's subsequent statement in 5:3 that the one being circumcised obligates himself to do the whole law might suggest that the law still functions as part of a possible path—i.e., the traditional Jewish path—to righteousness and life. If so, then it provides another indication that faith has not replaced law.

²⁰⁸ E.g., Longenecker, *Galatians*, 118-21; Hübner, *Law*, 38-41. Cf. J. S. Vos, "Die Hermeneutische Antinomie bei Paulus (Galater 3.11-12; Römer 10.5-10)," *NTS* 38 (1992): 254-70, 265-67, who argues that Paul resolves the scriptural contradiction in 3:11-12 according to the Hellenistic rhetorical model of *legum contrarium*, i.e., by asking questions in 3:15-22 that ultimately prove the chronological priority of promise and the Lawgiver's original intent for the law to lead to life only indirectly through its exposing of sin. This "solution," however, still renders Lev 18:5 a rather misleading promise, and Paul gives few indications that he regards the subsequent discussion in Gal 3:15-22 as primarily resolving a tension established in 3:11-12.

would not have made allowances for repentance, forgiveness, and atonement.²⁰⁹ Not even the ultra-law-observant community at Qumran claimed perfect obedience:

As for me, if I stumble, the mercies of God shall be my salvation always; and if I fall in the sin of the flesh, in the justice of God, which endures eternally, shall my judgment be; . . . he will judge me in the justice of his truth, and in his plentiful goodness always atone for all my sins; in his justice he will cleanse me from the uncleanness of the human being and from the sins of the sons of man, so that I can give God thanks for his justice and The Highest for his majesty. (1QS XI, 11-12, 14-15)²¹⁰

For Paul to assert that the law cannot justify anyone because no one does it perfectly would therefore be to argue against a construct of the law to which no Jew (himself included) would ascribe. His argument would be unpersuasive and irrelevant.

If, as most advocates and opponents of this position assume, Gal 3:12 seeks to contrast Christian faith with Jewish law observance as means to justification, then this critique of the suggestion that no one can sufficiently fulfill the law is both valid and damning. If, however, 3:12 seeks to establish that the Jews' own justification ultimately rests on faith and not on law observance, then this potential objection actually proves the point: the law's built-in provisions for grace and forgiveness demonstrate that God does not justify the Jews based on their law observance—which no one can do perfectly—but

²⁰⁹ See §2.3.1.3.

²¹⁰ Translation from Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1997-1998), 1:97-99.

based on faith and grace. Indeed, Lev 18:5 presumably has this sense in its original context; no Jew would have understood the verse as mandating perfect obedience.

The contrast between believing and doing in 3:11-12 admittedly goes against this original sense of Lev 18:5 by absolutizing the prescribed “doing” of the law, but I suggest that Paul applies the verse in this polemical way to emphasize its original sense. He absolutizes it, that is, in order to draw attention to its implied elements. Not only does this rhetorical move make the point clear to anyone who might not be familiar with the original contextual sense, but it also forces any agitators who would challenge his reading to argue either that Lev 18:5 envisions a role for faith and grace—thereby proving Paul’s point—or, if they accept the contrast, that they were earning their righteous status before God. The coherence that this interpretation achieves with the context of covenantal nomism then explains why Paul feels no need to explain or prove the point: not even the agitators would dare to claim that their righteousness was earned.

Understood in this way, Paul’s logic regards Lev 18:5 as unachievable only in the sense that no one can achieve life by doing the law perfectly. It therefore allows for the fulfillment of Lev 18:5—thereby upholding the integrity of scripture and protecting God against claims of offering false hope and promises—as long as that promise is situated in its original context of covenantal faith and grace.²¹¹ This fulfillment remains possible because, although the passage distinguishes faith from law observance to establish the

²¹¹ The law could serve to provide knowledge of and expose sin (cf. 3:19; Rom 3:20) since God had already established a means (faith) of compensating for the inevitable lack in achievement. For more on the role and purpose of the law, see Chapter 3.

former as the true basis of justification, it does not thereby sever or impugn the typical Jewish connection between faith and law observance: the claim in 3:12a that “the law is not ‘based on faith’” signifies not that law stands in absolute opposition to faith but that, as the contrast between the citations in 3:11b and 3:12b shows, the law does not justify based on faith. In other words, the law may not justify because no one fully obeys it, but law observance—at least at this point in Paul’s argument—continues as an important expression of the faith that does. This distinction between faith and law, which was suggested by the establishment of a similar distinction for gentiles in 3:8-10, would thus remain a largely academic matter were it not for Christ. As Paul will now argue in 3:13, however, Christ’s action on the cross turns this academic primacy of faith into a ground for dispensing with the law.

2.5 Galatians 3:13-14: The christological twist

Gal 3:13-14

¹³Χριστὸς ἡμᾶς ἐξηγόρασεν ἐκ τῆς κατάρας τοῦ νόμου γενόμενος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν κατάρα, ὅτι γέγραπται, Ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὁ κρεμάμενος ἐπὶ ξύλου, ^{14a}ἵνα εἰς τὰ ἔθνη ἡ εὐλογία τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ γένηται ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ^{14b}ἵνα τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος λάβωμεν διὰ τῆς πίστεως.

¹³*Christ purchased us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for our sakes—because it is written “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree” [Deut 21:23]—^{14a}so that to the gentiles the blessing of Abraham might come in Christ Jesus, ^bso that the promise of the Spirit we might receive through that faith.*

The preceding analysis of Gal 3:6-12 has characterized the ubiquitous attempts to import Christ into the passage's statements about faith as both unwarranted and untenable within the logic of Paul's argument. Nevertheless, Jesus does play an important role in Paul's understanding of Abrahamic descent. With the opening asyndeton distinguishing these concluding verses from the rest of 3:6-14 and signaling the entrance of a new element, Christ finally makes his appearance in 3:13-14. These verses essentially show how he relates to each of Paul's earlier arguments in 3:6-12, providing a christological twist to each of the preceding claims. In fact, the three components of this concluding section—vv. 13, 14a, and 14b—seem to correspond to the three sections of the larger argument—vv. 6-7, 8-10, and 11-12—so as to form a chiasm.²¹²

The suggestion that Gal 3:13-14 forms part of a chiasm is not new. Hans-Joachim Eckstein, for instance, suggests the following chiastic structure based on the traditional tripartite breakdown of 3:1-14:²¹³

²¹² For general methodological issues concerning the identification and analysis of intermediate-length chiasms in the letters of Paul, see Ian H. Thomson, *Chiasmus in the Pauline Letters* (JSNTSup 111; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995).

²¹³ Eckstein, *Verheißung*, 150-51. Cf. Sanders, *Paul, the Law*, 22; Tolmie, *Persuading*, 123. Wakefield, *Where to Live*, 136, suggests that the passage reflects a chiastic structure based on the keywords of the cited scriptures:

- A. Faith (Gen 15:6 in Gal 3:6)
- B. Blessing (Gen 12:3 in Gal 3:8)
- C. Curse (Deut 27:26 in Gal 3:10b)
- D. Life (Hab 2:4 in Gal 3:11)
- D'. Life (Lev 18:5 in Gal 3:12)
- C'. Curse (Deut 21:23 in Gal 3:13)
- [B'. Blessing (allusion to Gen 12:3 in Gal 3:14a)]
- [A'. Faith (Gal 3:14b)]

Wakefield's proposal rightly limits the chiasm to 3:6-14, but it suffers from two major difficulties. First, the A' and B' lines do not actually contain cited scripture, thereby breaking the proposed basis of the structure.

- A. 3:1-5 Galatians receive Spirit by faith
- B. 3:6-9 Faith as key to the gentiles' participation in the Abrahamic blessing
- C. 3:10-12 Those under the law are under a curse
- C'. 3:13 Christ frees us from the curse of the law
- B'. 3:14a So that the Abrahamic blessing might come in Christ to gentiles
- A'. 3:14b So that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith

The lexical and thematic connections that form the basis for this chiasm are clear and, in many ways, compelling: receiving the Spirit by faith in the A-A' frame, the gentiles' reception of the Abrahamic blessing in the B-B' frame, and the curse of the law in the C-C' frame. Nevertheless, the tripartite division of 3:1-12 that forms the backbone of this model is problematical, as this chapter has sought to show. For instance, Eckstein's chiasm omits any reference to Paul's discussion of Abrahamic sonship in 3:6-7, merging that topic into the distinct discussion of the Abrahamic blessing that comes to the gentiles in 3:8-10.

Eckstein's pairing of 3:14b with the Galatians' reception of the Spirit in 3:1-5 also requires that the first-person plural reference in 3:14b ("we might receive," λάβωμεν) includes gentile Christians. This observation highlights a larger exegetical difficulty

Second, as the lack of references to Paul's larger argument suggests, this structure at times seems to go against the flow of Paul's thought, as, e.g., when it parallels Hab 2:4 and Lev 18:5 without noting that Paul introduces the latter only to make the subsidiary point that the law is not ἐκ πίστεως. Cf. the similar chiasms (but different reasoning) in Cosgrove, *Cross*, 48-49; Campbell, *Deliverance*, 856-57.

within 3:13-14 as a whole, namely, the interpretation of Paul's first-person references. In addition to the instance in 3:14b, Paul uses first-person plural references in 3:13, where they refer to those whom Christ frees from the curse of the law. The difficulty arises because the instances in 3:13 seem most naturally to refer to Jews (i.e., those under the law), whereas many interpreters want to understand the instance in 3:14b as a reference to all Christians.

Scholars often resolve this perceived difficulty by arguing either 1) that Paul includes the gentiles with those under law in 3:13 or 2) that the antecedent for Paul's "we" changes from Jews in 3:13 to all Christians in 3:14.²¹⁴ Neither of these options seem plausible. With regard to the former, the gentiles were never under the Torah (that is what makes them gentiles); when Paul does want to unite Jews and gentiles as enslaved groups, he does so by bringing the Jews under the στοιχεῖα, not the gentiles under the law (4:3, 8-10).²¹⁵ With regard to the latter option, an awkward, implicit mid-sentence change in the first-person antecedent seems unnecessary since the statement does not

²¹⁴ For the view that Paul includes gentiles as those under law in 3:13, see N. H. Young, "Pronominal Shifts in Paul's Argument to the Galatians," in *Ancient History in a Modern University, Vol. 2: Early Christianity, Late Antiquity and Beyond* (eds. T. W. Hillard, et al.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 205-15; Martyn, *Galatians*, 334-36. For the view that Paul changes his first-person antecedent mid-sentence, see T. L. Donaldson, "The 'Curse of the Law' and the Inclusion of the Gentiles: Galatians 3.13-14," *NTS* 32 (1986): 94-112, 95-100; D. W. B. Robinson, "The Distinction between Jewish and Gentile Believers in Galatians," *ABR* 13 (1965): 29-48. The suggestion of Gaston, *Paul*, 29, that the first-person references refer exclusively to *gentiles* throughout 3:13-14 cannot be maintained. Paul simply was not a gentile.

²¹⁵ So Donaldson, *Paul*, 182, arguing against Bo Reicke, "The Law and This World according to Paul: Some Thoughts concerning Gal 4 1-11," *JBL* 70 (1951): 259-76. Howard, *Crisis*, 59-62, points to the first πᾶς in 3:10b ("Cursed is everyone [πᾶς] who does not abide") for evidence that Paul includes the gentiles as those cursed by—and thus "suppressed under" (61)—the law. Against this view, both the citation's original context and common sense suggest that the law only condemns those who fall under its domain.

become incoherent if it refers only to Jewish reception of the Spirit, nor does it thereby exclude gentile reception. Moreover, Paul otherwise consistently identifies “the gentiles” in 3:6-14 as a distinct group, never self-identifying with them in this passage (including in 3:14a).

Given these difficulties, I suggest that all of the first-person plural references in 3:13-14 continue the programmatic distinction made in 2:16 (“we are Jews by nature and not gentile sinners”) and refer exclusively to Jews.²¹⁶ Significantly, the Jew-gentile-Jew structure of the clauses in 3:13-14 then matches the Jew-gentile-Jew focus that I have outlined for the major sections in 3:6-12, strengthening the claim for my proposed chiasm:

²¹⁶ Cf. Wright, *Climax*, 154. Le Cornu and Shulam, *Galatians*, 206, also read 3:14b as referring only to Jews, but they understand the clause to refer to a future reception of the Spirit by Jews in the eschaton.

- A. 3:6-7 Jews require faith to be true sons of Abraham
- B. 3:8-10 Gentiles must be justified by faith to receive Abraham's blessing
- C. 3:11-12 Jews are also justified by faith, not law observance
- C'. 3:13 Christ purchases the Jews from (the curse of) the law
- B'. 3:14a So that to the gentiles Abraham's blessing might come in Christ
- A'. 3:14b So that the Jews might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith

In this analysis, the C' section provides the rationale for the division between faith and law observance in the C verses. The two consecutive ἵνα clauses in 3:14 (B' and A', respectively) then show how the resulting freedom from the curse of the law enables Abraham's blessing to flow in Christ to the gentiles (cf. B, 3:8-10) and the Jews to receive the Spirit that makes them Abraham's true sons through faith (cf. A, 3:6-7). I will discuss each of these twists below.

2.5.1 The C-C' twist (3:11-12, 3:13): Freeing the Jews from (the curse of) the law

Paul begins his explanation of Christ's role with an economic metaphor: "Christ purchased [ἐξήγορασεν] us from the curse of the law." Since Christ's death here results in "our" (ἡμᾶς) freedom from an enslaving power (ἐκ τῆς κατάρας τοῦ νόμου), scholars

typically interpret this act in terms of redemption.²¹⁷ Paul, however, does not use the language of redemption (λυτρόω) or even of freedom (ἐλευθερώω). Why does he use the language of purchase (ἐξαγοράζω)? The use of ἐλευθερώω would have removed the metaphor from the economic realm and emphasized the resultant state of freedom (cf. 5:1). While λυτρόω is an economic metaphor, its use would have focused attention on the covering of a debt (cf. Rom 3:24; Eph 1:7), a concept that, I will argue below, has no place in the thought of 3:13. The use of ἐξαγοράζω as a metaphor, in contrast, focuses attention on the price that is paid and/or on the resulting state of slavery/obligation. Hence, Paul's two uses of the root outside of Gal 3:13 and 4:5 serve to remind his readers that they have been "bought with a price" (τιμῆς ἠγοράσθητε, 1 Cor 7:23; cf. 1 Cor 6:20) and should therefore act accordingly. Appeals to the Revolutionary War heroes whose blood "purchased" or "paid for" America's freedom from the tyranny of England provide a modern (if somewhat derivative) parallel.

This understanding of Christ's act in terms of an economic model helps determine the intended nuance of the subsequent clause: γενόμενος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν κατάρα. The participle could be either temporal ("after having become a curse for us") or a participle of means ("by becoming a curse for us"). In the former, the aorist would retain its usual temporal force to indicate that Christ effects this purchase subsequently to his becoming a

²¹⁷ Although Greek lexicons (e.g., LSJ, BDAG) typically list "redeem" as a secondary meaning of ἐξαγοράζω, the uses in Galatians provide the primary evidence for this meaning. See S. Lyonnet, "L'emploi paulinien de ἐξαγοράζειν au sens de 'redimere' est-il attesté dans la littérature greque?," *Bib* 42 (1961): 85-89, and McLean, *Cursed*, 127-31, who concludes that the verb "simply means 'to buy' without specifying the intent of the author, whether it be 'buying to own', or 'buying to set free'" (130).

curse, i.e., presumably through the resurrection.²¹⁸ This interpretation falters because of the economic basis of the metaphor: in what sense can Christ's (passive) resurrection be regarded as a payment? The latter reading, in contrast, allows the metaphor to retain its economic nature: the price of freedom is Christ himself. Furthermore, since an aorist participle often loses its temporal force when paired with an aorist verb (in this case, ἐξηγόρασεν),²¹⁹ this reading raises no grammatical objection. It thus fits the context better and is rightly the preferred interpretation.

Of course, modern readers would like to know exactly *how* Christ's becoming a curse effects freedom from the curse of the law. Rather than clarifying this connection, however, Paul instead cites Deut 21:23 to establish what he must have regarded as the more significant and/or controversial claim, namely, that Jesus did, in fact, become a curse. He apparently assumes the relevance of Christ's cursing to "our" freedom to be self-evident, suggesting that he employs a rather straightforward logic which he trusts his readers could easily deduce if they were not familiar with it already. Nevertheless, before we investigate the nature of that logic, we must first seek to understand the significance of the curse itself, i.e., the portion of the argument that Paul highlights through his citation.²²⁰

²¹⁸ So David Brondos, "The Cross and the Curse: Galatians 3.13 and Paul's Doctrine of Redemption," *JSNT* 81 (2001): 3-32, 22.

²¹⁹ BDF §339.

²²⁰ The argument of Brondos, "Cross," 30, that the significance of Jesus' death lies only in that it occurs while he is seeking the redemption of others (which God then chooses to honor by resurrecting him and giving him the authority to effect redemption) fails to explain why Paul takes such pains to explain that Jesus becomes a curse.

The citation of Deut 21:23 in Gal 3:13 differs from typical LXX texts in two main ways. First, it omits ὑπὸ θεοῦ, thereby eliminating the explicit reference to Jesus' being cursed "by God." For many scholars, this omission points to the supposedly Pauline principle that God could not have cursed Jesus. Absolutizing this conclusion must then result either in dividing the law from the curse so as to reduce the curse to mere appearance / human opinion (cf. Isa 53:4)²²¹ or else in dividing the law from God so that Paul here differentiates between "the cursing law" and "the blessing God" (cf. 3:19).²²² The former option fails because the law itself pronounces the curse; the Deuteronomy passage does not prophesy how people will respond to a hanged person. As for the latter, Paul never seems to endorse such an unnatural divide between God and his holy law (cf. Rom 7:12), and anyone familiar with the source of the citation (or simply with the divine nature of the Jewish law) would naturally assume that God stood behind the law's curse. Thus, even if Paul deliberately omitted ὑπὸ θεοῦ to downplay God's role in the cursing, it cannot support a more rigid distinction between God and his law (cf. 2 Cor 5:21).²²³

In a more significant development, Paul's citation also substitutes ἐπικατάρατος for the LXX's κεκατηραμένος. Given the resulting parallel with the ἐπικατάρατος in Gal 3:10, the change most likely reflects a Pauline modification intended to connect the

²²¹ E.g., Bligh, *Galatians*, 270.

²²² Martyn, *Galatians*, 320-21, 326. Cf. Burton, *Galatians*, 172; Hamerton-Kelly, "Sacred," 116; Koch, *Schrift*, 125.

²²³ Interpretations of this sort range from the suggestion of Oepke, *Galater*, 108, that Paul distinguishes between God's personal involvement and his holy law's mechanistic, automatic judgment to the suggestion of Meyer, "Galatians," 116, that Paul simply omits an obvious element.

two Deuteronomic curses that he has cited.²²⁴ by hanging on a tree (Deut 21:23), Jesus falls under the same curse as those who fail to observe all the law (Deut 27:26).²²⁵ Moreover, Paul offers no counter to the Deuteronomic condemnation. In other words, far from extolling Jesus' sinlessness (cf. 2 Cor 5:21) or alluding to the sacrificial nature of his sufferings (cf. Rom 3:25), Paul here establishes only Christ's condemnation under the law. He suggests neither that the law wrongly condemns an "innocent" Christ,²²⁶ nor that only legalistic minds could imagine Christ's actually being accursed on the basis of this verse.²²⁷ Jesus suffers the same curse as all other lawbreakers.

This resulting equivalence in curses then has important implications for understanding Paul's logic in this passage. It leads most scholars to conclude that the verse describes a substitutionary atonement in which Christ somehow takes "our" place

²²⁴ So, e.g., Koch, *Schrift*, 166.

²²⁵ Contra Brondos, "Cross," 22, who suggests that the lack of an article before *κατάρα* differentiates Jesus' curse from the curse that falls on those who disobey in 3:10.

²²⁶ So, e.g., Albert Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* (trans. William Montgomery; London: A & C Black, 1931; repr., Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1998), 72, 211-12; Beker, *Paul*, 185-86, 261. In this view, Christ frees us from the law's curse by bringing about the condemnation of the law. I fail to see how the law could condemn an "innocent" man since the law itself determines guilt or innocence, being the embodiment of God's "holy, righteous, and good" judgments (cf. Rom 7:12). It is also difficult to reconcile this view with Paul's later statement that through faith we "establish" (*ἱστανόμεν*) the law (Rom 3:31).

²²⁷ So Burton, *Galatians*, 168. In this view, Christ frees us from "a false conception of God's attitude" (168) by exposing the lie that God judges people based on a legalistic adherence to the law. Besides having no basis in the passage, this interpretation undermines the truthfulness of the law and scripture. Cf. Hamerton-Kelly, "Sacred," who somewhat similarly argues that Christ frees us from violent religious zealotry by allowing himself to become "a victim of the sacrificial delusion" (117), thereby exposing the "unnecessary and undesirable" nature of a Mosaic law that distorts God's fundamental principle of mutual love (116).

(however the pronoun is understood) under a curse that “we” should rightfully suffer.²²⁸ Stephen Finlan helpfully notes that many such explanations conflate a sacrificial understanding of Jesus’ death (in which Jesus atones through penal substitution) with an understanding of Jesus as a scapegoat (in which case Jesus atones by carrying away the curse). He then argues that Gal 3:13 must have the Levitical scapegoat in mind since only in the case of the scapegoat does a transference of sins/curses actually take place (and because penal substitution is a concept foreign to the Hebrew sacrificial system).²²⁹ In making this distinction, Finlan rightly pinpoints the crucial element for any form of substitutionary atonement: transference. It is precisely this element that Paul’s argument lacks.

To be sure, Gal 3:13 does speak of Christ’s becoming a curse “for us” (ὕπὲρ ἡμῶν), but this phrase need only mean “for our benefit”; unlike ἀντὶ ἡμῶν, it does not require that Paul means “in our place.”²³⁰ The real problem for this interpretation, though, comes in the supporting citation of Deut 21:23, which explicitly curses anyone hanged on a tree.²³¹ As noted above, this citation establishes Christ’s condemnation under the law by

²²⁸ E.g., Longenecker, *Galatians*, 121; Fung, *Galatians*, 150; Bruce, *Galatians*, 166; Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 139.

²²⁹ Stephen Finlan, *The Background and Content of Paul’s Cultic Atonement Metaphors* (Society of Biblical Literature Academia Biblica 19; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 102-3. Cf. McLean, *Cursed*, 51-52; Daniel R. Schwartz, “Two Pauline Allusions to the Redemptive Mechanism of the Crucifixion,” *JBL* 102 (1983): 259-68.

²³⁰ Cf. David A. Brondos, *Paul on the Cross: Reconstructing the Apostle’s Story of Redemption* (Fortress: Minneapolis, 2006), 108; Burton, *Galatians*, 172; Meyer, “Galatians,” 116-17.

²³¹ In its OT context (both MT and LXX), Deut 21:23 refers to the post-mortem hanging of capital criminals. As Terence L. Donaldson, “Zealot and Convert: The Origin of Paul’s Christ Torah Antithesis,”

virtue of his being hanged on a tree. By implication, then, Christ does not bear “our” curse, he bears his own curse, just like every other person hanged on a tree. Paul’s claim in 3:11 that the law justifies “no one”—significantly, not “no one but Christ”—helps confirm this analysis. If, however, Christ stands accursed according to the law, then he has not taken on the curse of others (scapegoat explanation), nor is he in a position to serve as a righteous substitute for those similarly cursed by the law (penal substitution). Galatians 3:13 simply cannot be describing a substitutionary atonement.²³²

An alternative interpretation argues that the verse instead portrays a representative atonement: the cursed death and subsequent resurrection of Christ, “our” representative, effectively exhausts the curse on “us.” N.T. Wright, for instance, argues that, as Israel’s Messiah King, Christ here “exhausts” the curse that rests on national Israel, thereby

CBQ 51 (1989): 655-82, 677, notes, Jesus was convicted of a capital crime, so his situation differs only in that the “hanging” represents his method of execution. Nevertheless, other Jewish interpretive traditions also connect this curse to those who were crucified (Peshitta; 11QT^a LXIV 6-13; cf. 4QpNah 3-4 I, 7-8), and it is this connection—not the implication of a capital offense—that provides the basis for Paul’s argument. The Septuagintal version, which may reflect a different *Vorlage* than the MT, facilitates this move: whereas the MT refers only to “one who is hanged” [תלוי], the LXX refers to “everyone [πᾶς; cf. *Targum Neofiti*] who is hanged on a tree [ἐπὶ ξύλου; cf. Peshitta; 11QT^a LXIV 6-13; 4QpNah 3-4 I, 7-8].” The πᾶς emphasizes the general nature of the statement suggested by the anarthrous תלוי, while the ἐπὶ ξύλου—which simply repeats a phrase found earlier in the verse in both the MT and LXX—makes the verse particularly applicable to crucifixion. On this complex textual history, see Wilcox, “Upon the Tree,” 86-90. In the other major difference between the versions, the LXX reads “cursed by God” (κακατηραμέννος ὑπὸ θεοῦ; cf. Paul’s ἐπικατάρατος) against the MT’s “curse of God” (קללת אלהים). The LXX thus reflects a subjective genitive reading of the Hebrew phrase (cf. *Targum Neofiti*; 11QT^a LXIV 6-13) in which the hanging brings about the curse, an “interpretation” that makes good sense of the MT. See Moshe J. Bernstein, “כי קללת אלהים תלויה” (Deut 21:23): A Study in Early Jewish Exegesis,” *JQR* 74 (1983): 21-45.

²³² The lack of transference also undermines the attempt of Basil S. Davis, *Christ as Devotio: The Argument of Galatians 3:1-14* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2002), to ground a substitutionary atonement in the Roman concept of *devotio*.

enabling the restoration phase of Deuteronomy's covenantal sin-judgment-restoration paradigm to begin. As he explains,

That which, in the scheme of Deuteronomy, Israel needed if she incurred the curse of the law, is provided in Christ: the pattern of exile and restoration is acted out in his death and resurrection. He *is* Israel, going down to death under the curse of the law, and going through that curse to the new covenant life beyond.²³³

This interpretation, however, cannot explain why the curse must be “exhausted” in the first place. After all, the remedy for initiating restoration in Deuteronomy is always a return to God (30:1-3), not an extreme instance or pattern of the curse. It is also worth asking what “exhausting Israel's curse” really means in this context since the supposed liberation is both 1) limited to those Jews who recognize Christ as Messiah and 2) largely still to come. If Christ has exhausted the curse, why does it still linger (cf. 3:10)?

These atonement explanations all share a common assumption: that until Christ, “we” all suffered under the curse of the law. Given that gentiles could not incur the curse of a law to which they were never subjected and that Jews already had means of atonement (repentance, restitution, and sacrifice) included in the law itself, this assumption seems problematical. Interpreters typically ground it in the citation's connection with 3:10, which claims that as many as are righteous by works of the law are under a curse. I argued above, however, that 3:10 does not refer to an existing curse on the Jewish people but to the curse that would fall on gentiles who try to remain gentiles

²³³ Wright, *Climax*, 151-52. Dunn, *Galatians*, 177, who understands the first-person plural as inclusive of all humanity, grounds the representational aspect of his atonement theory in Paul's Adam Christology, which does not appear explicitly in Galatians, let alone in this passage.

while taking on the yoke of the law. If 3:10 does not describe an existing curse, then we have no reason to think that Paul regarded all Jews—let alone all humanity!—as condemned under the curse of the law. If the Jews were not condemned under the law’s curse, then the redemption from the law’s curse in 3:13 must refer to something other than atonement. I accordingly suggest that it refers instead to a freedom from the *potential* of falling under the law’s curse.²³⁴

How, then, does Jesus’ becoming accursed effect this freedom?²³⁵ As a Jew under the law (cf. 4:4), Jesus becomes accursed by being hanged on a tree. The righteousness that his subsequent resurrection—i.e., his reception of the blessing of life—must presume can therefore not be based on law;²³⁶ it must have some other basis. For reasons that will become apparent below, Paul has, in accordance with the scriptures, focused on faith (πίστις) as the alternative basis for righteousness in 3:6-12. In Jesus’ case, this justifying faith manifests in his giving himself over to cursing and death while trusting that God

²³⁴ Stanley, “Curse,” 506 n. 68; Bligh, *Galatians*, 265.

²³⁵ Susan Margaret Elliott, “The Rhetorical Strategy of Paul’s Letter to the Galatians in Its Anatolian Cultic Context: Circumcision and the Castration of the *Galli* of the Mother of the Gods” (Ph.D. diss. Loyola University, 1997), 643-47, suggests that, in the context of the Anatolian divine judicial system, Christ’s cursed status could have enabled him to serve as “a ‘counter-curse’ powerful enough to cancel the curse of the law” (645), a function parallel to that played by Attis in the Anatolian society. The difficulty with this suggestion is that Paul gives no indication that his argument depends on such a cultural parallel. To the contrary, his argument in 3:6-14 repeatedly appeals to the *Jewish* scriptures, exhibiting a density of scriptural citation rarely matched in the Pauline epistles. Furthermore, the agitators could easily deny any implicit syncretizing of Jewish scripture with the Anatolian religious culture as unwarranted. Paul’s grounding of his argument in Jewish scripture with no explicit appeal to the Anatolian context thus suggests that we should seek an explanation of his logic that is consistent with the argument’s ostensible Jewish framework.

²³⁶ For the letter’s assumption that righteousness forms a prerequisite for blessing/life, see, e.g., the analysis of 3:8-10 in §2.3.2.

will nevertheless bless him and faithfully fulfill the promise to him as Abraham's seed (cf. 3:15-18). Significantly, then, Paul's carefully constructed argument absolves God of any injustice or inconsistency in this blessing of a cursed man: God justifies Jesus on the same basis—faith—as he justifies Abraham (3:6-7), the gentiles (3:8-10), and even the Jews (3:11-12).

Jesus' faith does differ, however, from the typical Jewish faith in one crucial particular: his faith ultimately finds expression not in obedience to the law but in becoming accursed by the law. Indeed, I will suggest in chapter 3 that Paul's much debated πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ constructions (Gal 2:16 [2x], 20; 3:22; Rom 3:22, 26; Phil 3:9; cf. Eph 3:12) refer neither to "faith in Christ," nor to the "faithfulness of Christ," but to this trust in God's faithfulness to bless him despite his becoming accursed under the law.²³⁷ Jesus thus severs the connection between law and faith; therein lies the christological twist on the distinction between faith and law posited in 3:11-12. Distinguishable elements are separable elements; the law's secondary nature robs it of any inherent necessity. With Jesus, the primacy of faith becomes the sufficiency of faith apart from works of law.

Christ thus frees the Jews from the curse of the law by opening a path to righteousness and life that does not tie justifying faith to law observance. In other words, through participation in him, Christ essentially frees the Jews from the law itself—not just its curse—an observation that explains why the parallel statement in 4:5 that Jesus

²³⁷ See §3.4.1.

was born under law so that “he might purchase those under law” (τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον ἐξαγοράση) makes no mention of a curse.²³⁸ Accordingly, this freedom from the law’s curse results from a change of dominion—those who believe into Christ are no longer under law (cf. 3:25)—and not from an inherent “inoculation” against the law’s curse.²³⁹

Indeed, Paul’s description of Jesus in 3:13a as “a curse” (κατάρρα)²⁴⁰ rather than as “accursed” (ἐπικατάρατος)—a characterization that would have matched his citation in Gal 3:13b—suggests that the Jews must themselves brave the curse in order to experience this freedom.²⁴¹ Because he was hanged on a tree, Jesus remains accursed according to the Jewish law; his subsequent blessing in the resurrection signifies, not his changed status under law, but his freedom from the law’s dominion. Jews who unite with Christ, who become one with him, therefore bring a curse upon themselves.²⁴² Like Jesus,

²³⁸ Cf. M. D. Hooker, “Interchange in Christ,” *JTS* 22 (1971): 349-61, 358, who, although she applies it in a different way, describes the freeing mechanism in 3:13 as “interchange”: “Christ became what we are, in order that we might become what he is.”

²³⁹ Cf. Wakefield, *Where to Live*, 182.

²⁴⁰ In accordance with the MT’s קללת. Hooker, “Interchange,” 350, notes that, according to the remainder of Deut 21:23, the hanged one “is regarded as himself a curse; it is because he is a source of infection to the land that his body must be removed before sunset.” As Bernstein, “Study,” 26-28, shows, rabbinic interpretations of Deut 21:23 that instead identify the curse as the capital transgression for which the transgressor is hanged (usually blasphemy) have trouble relating the phrase to the rest of the verse. Most scholars read the curse in Galatians simply as an instance of metonymy whose significance remains obscure. See, e.g., Williams, *Galatians*, 93.

²⁴¹ Cf. Blich, *Galatians*, 270-71: “every Jew who . . . is united with Christ in his death, undergoes with Christ the curse of the law.” He goes on to claim, however, that “the pain and the shame of [the curse] are borne by Christ.” As Brondos, *Paul*, 108-9, notes, substitutionary models can make no sense of Paul’s repeated calls for believers to participate in Christ’s suffering and death.

²⁴² As the ensuing sections and, especially, Chapter 3 will make clear, Jews do not unite with Christ so that they can receive atonement but so that they can receive a share in the blessing that comes to the gentiles.

they too must have faith in God's promise. They must trust that God will bless them in spite of their becoming accursed under the law. They must trust that if, being "co-crucified with Christ" (cf. Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι, 2:19), they die to the law, they will also live with Christ (Gal 2:19-20; cf. Rom 8:17), having been freed from the law. In short, they must share the faith of Christ.²⁴³

This observation then explains Paul's focus on faith as the basis of righteousness. Because the expression of this justifying faith involves the Jews' dying to the law, it effectively emphasizes the law-free nature of their justification in Christ. The law-free nature of the Christian Jews' justification then undermines any potential motivation for Christian gentiles to come under law.

This reading of the logic in 3:13 thus offers a christological twist to the distinction between faith and law in 3:11-12. It accounts for the focus on Christ's becoming accursed, the identification of Christ as a curse, and the parallel with 4:5. Perhaps most importantly, however, this reading also makes sense of the two connected ἵνα clauses in 3:14, as the following analysis will show.

²⁴³ Similarly Sam K. Williams, "Again *Pistis Christou*," *CBQ* 49 (1987): 431-47, 443: "To adopt this [*pistis*] stance is to trust and obey Him who raised Jesus from the dead, to believe *like* Christ, and thereby to stand *with* Christ in that domain, that power field, created through his death and resurrection. To do so is to become the beneficiary of Christ-faith [*pistis Christou*]" (italics original).

2.5.2 The B-B´ twist (3:8-10, 3:14a): So to the gentiles the blessing might come in Christ

The ἵνα conjunction that opens this clause raises the immediate question of why the freedom achieved in 3:13 must precede the gentiles' reception of Abraham's blessing. For scholars who regard the first-person plural pronouns in 3:13 as referring to both Jewish and gentile believers, the connection is fairly straightforward: Christ removes the curse on the gentiles, thereby enabling the blessing to flow to them. As I argued above, however, the first-person pronouns in 3:13 indicate a freedom directed to Jews. It therefore becomes necessary to explain the freeing of the Jews from the law as an intermediate step that enables the gentiles to receive Abraham's blessing.

Interpreters have proposed several different explanations for this intermediate step: the need for 1) Jewish missionaries to proclaim the gospel to the gentiles,²⁴⁴ 2) Christ to abolish the dividing wall of Torah (cf. Eph 2:13-18),²⁴⁵ 3) Christ to free the Jews from a false understanding of Torah,²⁴⁶ 4) a restored Israel to trigger the eschatological pilgrimage of the gentiles,²⁴⁷ and 5) the gentiles to be incorporated as

²⁴⁴ E.g., Bligh, *Galatians*, 272.

²⁴⁵ Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 140; Lagrange, *Galates*, 73-74; Robinson, "Distinction," 38-39.

²⁴⁶ For the view that Christ frees the Jews from a legalistic understanding, see Burton, *Galatians*, 168-71; from a xenophobic zealot interpretation that esteems sacred violence, see Hamerton-Kelly, "Sacred," 110-11; from a nationalistic understanding of Torah, see Dunn, "Works," 536-37, although Dunn supplements this view with the claim that Christ also tears down the covenantal barrier that distinguishes blessing from curse in accordance with Eph 2:13-16.

²⁴⁷ For Christ himself as restored Israel, see Wright, *Climax*, 150-51; Hays, "Galatians," 261. For Jewish Christians as the restored Israel, see Donaldson, "Curse," 99-107. Donaldson has since changed his

proselytes into a restored Israel.²⁴⁸ The gentiles serve merely as an afterthought in this last proposal, while the suggestion that Christ frees the Jews from nothing more than a misunderstanding seems incommensurate with the high price of Jesus' cursed death on a cross. The remaining proposals each draw on Paul's statements elsewhere or on purported parallels to Jewish thought, but none has an explicit grounding in Gal 3:13-14. That is to say, the purpose clause in 3:14a mentions nothing about missionaries or eschatological pilgrimage; while 3:13 does refer to the law, it presents it as a source of cursing rather than as a source of division.

What does 3:14a mention? The fronted εἰς τὰ ἔθνη in 3:14a clearly emphasizes that Christ's action in 3:13 enables Abraham's blessing to come "into the gentiles."²⁴⁹ The clause, however, also limits the coming of this blessing by the prepositional phrase in the final position: ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, "in Christ Jesus." This final phrase is at least as significant because it provides the christological twist to Paul's argument in 3:8-10, i.e., to the corresponding passage in my suggested chiasm. In that earlier passage, Paul concludes from a conflation of Gen 12:3 and 22:18 (Ἐνευλογηθήσονται ἐν σοὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, Gal 3:8) that the gentiles will be blessed "with the faithful Abraham" (σὺν τῷ

mind, largely because Rom 11 anticipates a *future* restoration while attributing the gentile mission to Israel's *stumbling*. See Donaldson, *Paul*, 191-97.

²⁴⁸ Donaldson, *Paul*, 245.

²⁴⁹ I understand the εἰς to have its usual locative force of "into" based on the parallel in 4:6, where God sends forth the Spirit of his son "into our hearts" (εἰς τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν). For the Spirit as the Abrahamic blessing, see §2.5.3.

πιστῶ Ἀβραάμ, 3:9). Here, however, he further specifies that this blessing comes “in Christ Jesus” (ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ), a move that effectively associates “Christ Jesus” with the “your seed” of Gen 22:18 (ἐνευλογηθήσονται ἐν τῷ σπέρματί σου πάντα τὰ ἔθνη).²⁵⁰ The critical question to ask when trying to discern the logical connection between Gal 3:13 and 3:14a is therefore not “Why must Christ free the Jews from the curse of the law in order for the blessing of Abraham to come into the gentiles?” but “Why must Christ free the Jews in order for the blessing of Abraham to come 1) in Christ Jesus 2) into the gentiles?”

Paul’s argument in 3:8-10 provides the answer to this latter question. According to the analysis above, 3:8-10 argues that God must justify the gentiles by faith because they could not remain gentiles and be under the law without incurring the law’s curse. By implication, then, gentiles cannot come under the law to receive the blessing of Abraham. Christ therefore has to “purchase” the Jews from the curse of the law in order for him—a Jew born under the law (4:4)—to become the vehicle that brings the Abrahamic blessing “into the gentiles.” Otherwise, his union with gentiles would create an untenable mix in which the resulting entity was partly under law (Christ) and partly not under law (the gentile). Since the law cannot cover part of a person, gentiles who became one with Christ would bring themselves under the law, a situation that would effectively require

²⁵⁰ Paul makes this identification explicit in 3:16. See the discussion of this verse in the next chapter for more on the significance of the *Aqedah* allusions. My understanding of the Spirit as the blessing that comes to the gentile believers before their baptism into Christ (cf. 3:1-5) suggests that 3:14 portrays the blessing coming in Christ Jesus as opposed to its coming to the gentiles who are in Christ Jesus. In other words, my interpretation of Galatians suggests that Paul does not read ἐν τῷ σπέρματί σου in Gen 22:18 as an incorporative phrase (cf. Gal 3:8-9).

their becoming Jews or their becoming accursed.²⁵¹ Either way, Christ would no longer be bringing a *blessing* into the *gentiles*, hence the need to free the Jews from the law's curse. Significantly, Christ does not abolish Torah so as to let gentiles enter "into" Israel's blessing in this scenario; rather, he creates a path "out" from under Torah for himself (and any Jews who choose to follow).

Just as the freeing of the Jews is for the benefit of the gentiles, so the blessing of the gentiles in turn benefits the Jews. It is this additional benefit to the Jews that Paul addresses in 3:14b.

2.5.3 The A-A' twist (3:6-7, 3:14b): So the Jews might receive the promised Spirit of sonship

Paul concludes this discussion of Christ's significance with a second ἵνα-clause. After the brief treatment of the gentiles in 3:14a, this clause returns to the first-person references that characterized 3:13. Identifying the intended referents of the first-person verb thus constitutes a crucial exegetical issue whose resolution helps determine whether this clause stands in parallel to or in succession with the immediately preceding ἵνα-clause. As mentioned above, even among scholars who understand 3:13 to be directed toward Jews, many argue that Paul broadens his first-person reference here in 3:14b to

²⁵¹ Cf. Stanley, "Curse," 506: "God in the death of Jesus Christ has opened up a way of escape for the *Gentiles* from the 'negative potentiality' associated with Torah observance" (*italics original*). For gentiles, however, the curse was not just a potentiality but an assured result as long as they remained gentiles.

include both Jewish and gentile believers, largely because of the parallel with 3:2. This parallel with 3:2 is indeed significant for understanding 3:14b, but not, I suggest, because it indicates that this clause includes gentiles. I hope to show that the parallel serves instead to link the Jewish Christians' reception of the Spirit through faith (3:14b) with the gentile Galatians' reception of the Spirit through the hearing of faith (3:2).

Given the parallel with 3:2 (τὸ πνεῦμα ἐλάβετε), τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν²⁵² τοῦ πνεύματος λάβωμεν most likely constitutes an epexegetic genitive construction with πνεύματος specifying the content of the promise, i.e., receiving “the promised Spirit.”²⁵³ This conclusion then raises the question of when the Spirit was promised and, perhaps more importantly, to whom. Although several commentators appeal to passages in Joel, Isaiah, and Ezekiel for this promise of the Spirit,²⁵⁴ Paul does not cite any of these

²⁵² The presence of εὐλογία instead of ἐπαγγελίαν in several significant (largely Western) textual witnesses (P⁴⁶, D*, F^{gr}, G, 88*, 489, it^{d, g}, Marcion, Ambrosiaster, Ephraem, Vigilius) likely results from scribes' conforming a heretofore unseen word (ἐπαγγελίαν) to a similar word that appeared in the preceding clause (εὐλογία). See Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (2d ed.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), 525.

²⁵³ For a helpful discussion of alternative interpretations—specifically, τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος as signifying 1) what the Spirit promised; 2) the promise for a future giving of the Spirit; or 3) the Spirit as the promise / guarantee of future blessing—that reaches the same conclusion, see Sam K. Williams, “Promise in Galatians: A Reading of Paul's Reading of Scripture,” *JBL* 107 (1988): 709-20, 711-12.

²⁵⁴ E.g., Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 235; Dunn, *Galatians*, 180; Hays, “Galatians,” 261; Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, “The Letter to the Galatians,” in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary* (eds. Raymond E. Brown, et al.; Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1968), 2:236-46, 2:242. Rodrigo José Morales, “The Spirit and the Restoration of Israel: New Exodus and New Creation Motifs in Galatians” (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 2007), examines passages in the OT prophets and in the intertestamental literature that associate the giving of the Spirit with the eschatological restoration of Israel to argue that Paul's linkage of promise, blessing, and Spirit represents a (largely unconscious) reflection of this larger Jewish milieu. My analysis above, however, has shown no reason to suspect that Paul has the restoration—or even redemption—of Israel in view, thereby undermining the proposed thematic connection of Paul's argument to this theological construct pieced together from various texts. Furthermore, since Paul does not actually argue

prophetic texts. Instead, Galatians consistently links the theme of promise to Abraham (3:16-19, 21-22, 29; 4:23, 28). This “promise of the Spirit” in 3:14b should therefore be understood as a promise given to Abraham.²⁵⁵ Of course, God never explicitly promises Abraham “the Spirit” in Genesis; his promises to the patriarch all concern seed/offspring, land, and the blessing of the gentiles. Which of these promises does Paul identify as the promise of the Spirit?

The abrupt introduction of the “promise” theme without further explanation suggests that Paul has already alluded to this pledge in the preceding discussion of Abraham (3:6-10), an observation that eliminates the Genesis promises that concern the land. Of the two remaining options, God’s promise to provide Abraham with a seed, to provide him, that is, with an heir from his own body, presents an intriguing possibility.²⁵⁶ In favor of this reading, it is Abraham’s trust in this particular promise that God credits to him as righteousness (Gen 15:6) and that, according to Gal 3:6-7, establishes faith as a defining characteristic of Abraham’s sons. As for how the promise for seed could become a promise of the Spirit, I will argue in Chapter 3 that 3:15-4:11—a passage whose

for this connection—indeed, he does not mention it—the agitators could easily refute the supposedly underlying logic, assuming, that is, that the gentile Galatians had even perceived it in the first place. Tellingly, Morales notes that his analysis tries “to make sense of Paul’s argument irrespective of how his audience would have received it” (Morales, “Spirit,” 14 n. 25).

²⁵⁵ So Williams, “Promise,” 711; Sze-kar Wan, “Abraham and the Promise of the Spirit: Galatians and the Hellenistic-Jewish Mysticism of Philo,” in *SBL Seminar Papers, 1995* (SBLSP 34; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1995), 6-22.

²⁵⁶ So Williams, “Promise,” 714.

emphasis on God's "promise(s)" (ἐπαγγελία, 3:16, 17, 18[2x], 21, 22, 29; ἐπαγγέλλομαι, 3:19) 3:14b proleptically introduces—portrays the Abrahamic διαθήκη as God's testamentary adoption of the patriarch. By implication, then, Abraham's promised seed must be both a son of Abraham and a son of God. The Spirit effects the adoption into God's family and transforms a person into a son of God (cf. 4:5-6). Accordingly, God's διαθήκη with Abraham and his descendants through Isaac and Jacob could serve as a promise of their eventual adoption into God's family and, thus, as a promise of the Spirit.

Nevertheless, three factors argue against this reading. In the first place, Gal 3:6-7 does not actually mention the promise for seed, making it likely that at least some of the Galatians would miss the connection. Furthermore, when Paul turns to the discussion of God's promises in 3:15-4:11, he portrays the promises as spoken to Abraham and *to his seed* (3:16), an odd characterization if Paul has the promise *for seed* in view. Finally, as I will argue especially in Chapter 3, Paul's larger argument seems to distinguish between the Abrahamic διαθήκη and the promise; although the two concepts are related, Paul does not appear to conflate them.

For these reasons, I suggest that the promise in 3:14b refers instead to the one promise that Paul has explicitly mentioned, namely God's promise to bless the gentiles (cf. Gal 3:8).²⁵⁷ Significantly, God makes this promise both to Abraham (cf. Gen 12:3; 18:18) and to his seed (Gen 22:18), so it also accords well with the claim in Gal 3:16.

²⁵⁷ So, e.g., Bruce, *Galatians*, 168.

This interpretation does, however, create two seemingly curious corollaries. First, I suggested in §2.5 that Paul’s first-person plural references in 3:13-14 all refer exclusively to Jews. Viewed in this way, 3:14b claims that Christ enables the Jews (λάβωμεν) to receive a blessing specifically promised to the gentiles. Second, this interpretation identifies the Spirit as the promised Abrahamic blessing. Each of these corollaries requires further justification and explanation.

I begin by considering the relationship of the two ἵνα clauses in 3:14a and 14b. Although 3:14b could stand parallel to 3:14a²⁵⁸—either in apposition to 3:14a or as an additional independent effect of Christ’s action in 3:13—discerning the logic behind such a construal proves difficult. Why would Jewish reception of the Spirit through faith (3:14b) require a prior freeing from the curse of the law (3:13)? Contrary to the usual interpretation of 3:10, I have argued that there was no active curse of the law preventing the outpouring of God’s Spirit on his people. Paul has also already established the Jews as a people whose justification ultimately rests on faith (3:11-12), so the answer cannot lie in a switch from justification by law to justification by faith. The direct connection of 3:14b with 3:13 would therefore make sense only if the reception of the Spirit would somehow result in the Jews’ transgressing the law and incurring the curse, but I can see no reason why the mere reception of the Spirit would entail such a transgression.

²⁵⁸ This reading remains the majority opinion. See, e.g., Hays, “Galatians,” 262; Vouga, *Galater*, 77; Witherington, *Grace*, 239; Williams, *Galatians*, 94; Martyn, *Galatians*, 321; Eckstein, *Verheißung*, 150; Dunn, *Galatians*, 179; Matera, *Galatians*, 120; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 123; Rohde, *Galater*, 145; Fung, *Galatians*, 151; Bruce, *Galatians*, 167; Burton, *Galatians*, 176; Oepke, *Galater*, 109; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 234-35; Hans Lietzmann, *An die Galater* (4th ed.; HNT 10; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1971), 19; Schlier, *Galater*, 140; Lagrange, *Galates*, 73.

Reading the two ἵνα clauses in 3:14a and 3:14b as consecutive rather than parallel²⁵⁹ enables the blessing of the gentiles in 3:14a to provide the necessary intermediate step between the Jewish Christians' freedom from the law and their reception of the Spirit. The parallel passage in Gal 4:6—which exhibits a comparable mid-sentence shift to first person—similarly suggests that Paul has such a sequence in mind: “because you [i.e., gentile Christians] are sons [of God], God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our [i.e., the Jewish Christians'] hearts.”²⁶⁰ Simply noting the recurring pattern, however, does not explain the logic behind it, a logic that at first glance seems rather faulty. After all, according to Acts, the Spirit falls first on the Jews (Acts 2:1-4) and only subsequently on the gentiles (Acts 10:44-47), a basic sequence that surely corresponds to the historical reality. It thus remains to show how the Jewish Christians' reception of the Spirit could depend on the gentiles' reception of Abraham's blessing.

The answer to this perceived difficulty, I submit, is deceptively simple: the Jewish Christians' reception of the Spirit depends upon the blessing of the gentiles because *Jews receive the Spirit by effectively becoming gentile recipients of Abraham's blessing*. That is to say, whenever Jews “die” to the law (cf. 2:19) and embrace the hanged Christ—a move that would permanently incur the curse of the law without the freedom won in 3:13—they effectively become gentiles, thereby qualifying them to share in Abraham's

²⁵⁹ So also Le Cornu and Shulam, *Galatians*, 209; Stanley, “Curse,” 494 n. 45; Betz, *Galatians*, 152; Bligh, *Galatians*, 273; Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 140. Explanations include a chronological movement from the time of the gentiles to the eschatological restoration of Israel (Le Cornu, Bligh), a move from blessing/justification to the rewards of justification (Stanley), a move from theological doctrine to experiential reality (Betz), and “moral dependence” (Lightfoot).

²⁶⁰ On 4:6, see §3.4.2.2.

blessing (3:14a).²⁶¹ In fact, §3.4.1 will argue that Gal 3:19, 21-22 portrays the Jewish law as coming at least in part to distinguish Abraham’s descendants from the other nations so that they would not be able to receive this blessing apart from their incorporation into Christ.²⁶²

The dependence of 3:14b on 3:14a is therefore logical rather than chronological: even though Jews received the blessing before any gentiles, the blessing had to be available to gentiles in order for those Jews to receive it *as gentiles*. Paul’s earlier linkage of his own death to the law with his being co-crucified with Christ (2:19-20) and his subsequent appeal for the gentile readers who are considering circumcision to “become as I [am] for I also [became] as you” (4:12) provide supporting evidence for this line of thought. Understood in this way, Paul’s concluding reference to the reception of the Spirit through faith shows not that the gentiles’ faith-based reception of the Spirit in 3:2

²⁶¹ Cf. Braswell, “Blessing,” 88: “The Jews could not be blessed while trapped inside the sphere of particularistic law, since the blessing was directed to all the nations.” Braswell’s formulation, however, envisions a blessing that must flow through Israel to *all* the nations; I suggest that Paul instead envisions a blessing that comes to all the *nations* in contrast to the distinct Israel. Contra, e.g., Eckstein, *Verheißung*, 119-20 (on 3:8-9): “Paulus hebt in Gal 3,8f. folglich auch nicht darauf ab, daß die Judenchristen sich allererst als »Heiden« erkennen müßten, um Anspruch auf den in Gen 12,1-3 u. ö. verheißenen Segen zu haben, so daß auch die Ἰουδαῖοι nur als ἔθνη am Segen Abrahams teilhätten. . . . Mit seinen Gegnern setzt Paulus als selbstverständlich voraus, daß die Segenzusagen an Abraham implizit auch seinem Samen, d.h., seinen Nachkommen, gelten.”

²⁶² As Chapter 3 will explain, the reason for this excluding of Israel from the nations and, thus, from the promise lies in the nature of the promised Abrahamic seed as both a son of Abraham and a son of God. Without this exclusion, Jews—who are already sons of Abraham—could become sons of God apart from incorporation into Christ simply through receiving the promised blessing of the Spirit. Gentiles who receive the blessing of the Spirit still require incorporation into Christ to establish their tie to Abraham.

qualifies them as Abraham's sons, but that the Jewish Christians have received the Spirit on the same basis as—indeed, even *as*—the gentiles.²⁶³

Of course, this reading shares the common scholarly assumption that the Spirit constitutes the Abrahamic blessing. The connection of 3:14a and 3:14b largely requires this equation, a conclusion reached as well by many of the interpreters who read 3:14b as an explanatory parallel to 3:14a.²⁶⁴ Having noted that Paul's argument seems to require that the Spirit function as Abraham's blessing, however, it is still worth asking as to the basis on which Paul makes this connection.

According to Richard Hays, the basis for this connection—which “has no discernible warrant in the text [of the Genesis narrative]”—“lies exclusively in the experience of the Christian community, now correlated *ex hypothesi* with the promise to Abraham.”²⁶⁵ This reading essentially makes the gentiles the middle term linking Spirit and blessing: Scripture promises to bless the gentiles in Abraham, and the gentiles have

²⁶³ Similarly Wright, *Climax*, 154, although he sees 3:2 and 14b as describing covenant (re-)entry. The conclusion that 3:6-14 and 3:1-5 do not argue the same point undermines the contention of Hays, *Echoes*, 108, that Paul begins with an argument from experience in 3:1-5 because he gives “hermeneutical priority” to the experience of the Spirit rather than to the biblical text.

²⁶⁴ E.g., Dunn, *Galatians*, 179-80.

²⁶⁵ Hays, *Echoes*, 110. Cf. Lagrange, *Galates*, 74; Betz, *Galatians*, 152-53. For a fuller discussion of the problem (with a somewhat different resolution), see Hays, *Faith*, 181-83, where he suggests that the messianic seed text in Isa 44:3 and, predominantly, Christ himself as Abraham's seed form the middle term(s). As Wan, “Abraham,” 6-10, notes, the promises of the Spirit in Isa 44 have no direct connection to Abraham, and Christ cannot link the Abrahamic blessing to the Spirit until Paul identifies him as Abraham's seed in 3:16. Wan bases his own suggestion that Hellenistic (and particularly Philonic) Judaism provides a possible connection by pointing to parallels, not in content, but in the similar way that Philo identifies the Abrahamic promise with Wisdom and then uses that identification to appropriate Abraham as a model for later gentile converts (19). My argument that 3:6-7 concerns Jews rather than gentile converts further erodes this already tenuous connection. The suggestion of Bligh, *Galatians*, 273, that Paul interprets the promise for land as the promise of a kingdom, which the Spirit then fulfills as evidence of Christ's royal power similarly requires too many tenuous connections.

received [the blessing of] the Spirit [in Abraham through Christ]. As Hays acknowledges (“*ex hypothesi*”), however, this formulation begs the question. While the gentiles’ experience of the Spirit might prove the truthfulness of Scripture, it cannot establish a link between blessing and the Spirit since it is this link that Hays’s reading must assume.

I accordingly suggest a different middle-term: the concept of “life.” The connection of God’s Spirit with life forms a common Pauline theme (Rom 8:2, 6, 11; 1 Cor 15:45; 2 Cor 3:6; Gal 6:8; cf. John 6:63) and fits well within the context of Judaism (cf., e.g., Gen 2:7). Paul’s later identification of Isaac—and, thus, the readers—as one born “through a promise” (δι’ ἐπαγγελίας, Gal 4:23) and “according to the Spirit” (κατὰ πνεῦμα, 4:29) indicates that the promised Spirit signifies new life in Galatians as well, in this case being (re-)born (or adopted, 4:5-6) as a child of promise (cf. 3:2, 4:28).²⁶⁶ It also testifies to Paul’s understanding of the Spirit’s activity in Abraham’s life. The quintessential Deuteronomic definition of blessing as life (Deut 30:19) then provides the other half of the equation. Paul effectively invokes this definition when he contrasts the Abrahamic blessing with the Deuteronomic curse in Gal 3:9-10 (cf. 3:13), thereby establishing an implicit *gezerah shawah* that equates this blessing with its Deuteronomic

²⁶⁶ Cf. Williams, “Promise,” 716, who argues that the promise for innumerable descendants directly implies the promise of the Spirit since the Spirit functions as “the *means* by which the sons of Abraham would be created out of people [Jews and gentiles] who had been enslaved.” This way of formulating Paul’s logic, however, raises the question of why simply having the Spirit would make someone a son of *Abraham*, especially since Paul subsequently relates that status (for the gentiles at least) specifically to their being in Christ (3:29).

counterpart.²⁶⁷ He can thus identify the Spirit with Abraham's blessing because the Spirit supplies the life inherent in the concept of blessing.

This understanding of the Abrahamic blessing as life and, thus, as the Spirit also makes sense within the context of Gen 22. In Gen 22:17, God immediately follows (and interprets?) his promise to bless Abraham with a promise to multiply his seed, a promise of life. The ensuing verse then connects the blessing of the nations/gentiles with this seed (ἐν τῷ σπέρματί σου, Gen 22:18). Since, as Chapter 3 will argue, Paul portrays Gen 22 as the ratification of Abraham's divine adoption, the promised offspring must not only be sons of Abraham, they must all be sons of God as well, a status that requires their reception of the Spirit (cf. Gal 4:5-6). Those who receive the blessing of the Spirit thus receive the same blessing that Abraham receives in Gen 22, namely, adoption as a son of God. Hence, they are blessed "with the faithful Abraham" (σὺν τῷ πιστῷ Ἀβραάμ, Gal 3:9). Accordingly, viewed through the lens of divine adoption, Gen 22:17-18 provides a basis for connecting the blessing of Abraham and the blessing of the nations/gentiles with life and (implicitly) the giving of the Spirit, even if the verses themselves do not actually equate the four elements.

Finally, the identification of the Abrahamic blessing with life also reflects the fundamental pattern of the *Aqedah* story. Abraham secures blessing for himself and the nations by offering up (and receiving back) the life of his promised son. The parallels to

²⁶⁷ The attempt of Wilcox, "Upon the Tree," 96-97, to justify the connection of the Abrahamic and Deuteronomic contexts by arguing that the Abrahamic promise for land links the uncited portion of Deut 21:23 with a citation of Gen 12:3 in Gal 3:8 is unnecessary and relies on a promise for land that plays no role in Gal 3:6-14.

Jesus' death and resurrection have long been noted.²⁶⁸ My reading of Gal 3:14b, however, suggests that Paul also parallels Jewish Christians with Isaac in a christological twist on the sonship claims of 3:6-7.

Galatians 3:6-7 establishes that true sons of Abraham must exhibit a righteousness based on faith. Here in 3:14b, that faith becomes a willingness to die to the law by embracing the crucified Christ and trusting solely in God's promise. It is through *this* faith (διὰ τῆς πίστεως; cf. 3:6-7, 8, 9, 11, 12), a hearing of faith that does not find expression in works of law (cf. 3:5), a faith parallel to Jesus' own trust in God on the cross, that proves the Jews to be sons worthy of their forefather Abraham's example and enables them to receive the Spirit that transforms them into children of promise (cf. 4:28-29) as well as children of the flesh. Indeed, it is this ability to face death knowing that the promise of God will see them through to life (cf. Gen 22:5) that distinguishes the promised sons from the merely physical descendants and enables them to be blessed "with Abraham" and the nations (Gal 3:9; cf. Gen 22:17-18). Ironically, then, Jews receive the blessings of the Deuteronomic covenant ("life") by transgressing its requirements unto death; they become fully the promised sons of Abraham only by surrendering their status as sons of Abraham.

²⁶⁸ See, e.g., Hahn, "Covenant," 93; Wilcox, "Upon the Tree," 97. Nils Alstrup Dahl, "The Atonement--An Adequate Reward for the Akedah? (Ro 8 : 32)," in *Neotestamentica et Semitica: Studies in Honor of Matthew Black* (eds. E. Earle Ellis and Max Wilcox; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1969), 15-29, 23, argues that Gal 3:13-14 understands the ram—not Isaac—as the type of Christ.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that 3:6-14 constitutes a tightly composed, four-step argument regarding the Jews' Abrahamic sonship. The first step (3:6-7) reminds Paul's readers that biological descent alone does not suffice to establish Abrahamic sonship; his true sons must also share their forefather's faith in God and the righteousness that accompanies its expression. The second step (3:8-10) then advances the argument by demonstrating from the integrity of scripture that God also justifies the gentiles on the basis of faith. Because they are justified as gentiles, however, this justifying faith must be a faith that by definition does not find expression in law observance. In truth, the Jews' justification also ultimately rests on faith—no one actually earns their righteousness through law observance—a point made in the third step (3:11-12).

Having carefully constructed his argument, building each step on shared premises and previous conclusions so as to win general agreement, Paul then provides a christological twist in the argument's climax (3:13-14) that throws all of these seemingly tame propositions into an entirely new and unexpected light. By embracing the crucified Christ, Jews take on his curse under the law, meaning that they, like Jesus before them, must die to the law and rely completely on their faith in God's promise for their righteousness (3:11-12, 13). Jews who thus abandon the law in faith effectively become gentiles in Christ, which qualifies them to share in the Abrahamic blessing to the gentiles (3:8-10, 14a). Receiving this blessing of the Spirit through their act of faith then demonstrates their full Abrahamic sonship: being born of the Spirit proves that they

constitute the promised biological heirs, while the supreme act of faith that makes their reception of the Spirit possible qualifies them as sons worthy of their forefather's example (3:6-7, 14b). Accordingly, in an ironic christological twist befitting the gospel, Jews become full sons of Abraham only by abandoning their status as sons of Abraham.

The alternating focus on Jews (3:6-7, 11-13, 14b) and gentiles (3:8-10, 14a) in the structure of the argument thus mimics the interdependence of Jew and gentile that the argument's content describes: the gentiles receive the blessing as a result of God's faithfulness to his promises to the Jewish patriarch, while the Jews receive the blessing because of the grace shown to the gentiles. The argument then supports Paul's larger goal of dissuading the gentile Galatian converts from undergoing circumcision by showing that it is only by abandoning the law that Jewish Christians were able to receive the blessing of the Spirit in the first place. If Jewish Christians have essentially surrendered their Jewish status in order to become like the gentiles (cf. 4:12) and receive the gentiles' blessing (cf. 3:2), then what possible gain could the gentiles receive from reversing that process to become effective Jews (cf. 2:14)?

I have suggested throughout that Paul's audience would probably have had little trouble following this argument. If that is indeed the case, then why have nearly two millennia of subsequent interpreters missed this apparently "obvious" reading? The preceding pages have mentioned several factors, but three in particular deserve special mention.

First, as noted in §2.2.3, the seemingly universal reading of 3:6-7 as a redefinition of Abrahamic sonship truly becomes a viable option only when readers approach the text

with the pre-understanding that Paul does, in fact, redefine this sonship. While we can easily understand why interpreters in the second century and later would approach the text in this way, we have no reason to suspect that the Galatians would have shared this presupposition. They would accordingly have most likely heard 3:6-7 as highlighting an essential characteristic of those already recognized as Abraham's sons. Furthermore, although some features of Paul's argument can be read in ways that seem to support a redefinition in these verses—albeit not without introducing significant problems—none of these features actually require this reading. That is to say, a reader who limits the scope of 3:6-7 to Jews can still make (arguably better) intuitive sense of Paul's larger argument. The argument that emerges, however, differs considerably from construals that begin with a redefinition of Abrahamic sonship. A misunderstanding of these opening verses therefore makes it highly unlikely that an interpreter would be able to follow the rest of Paul's intended argument.

Second, interpreters routinely assume that Paul's generic references to faith in this passage all have a christological focus. The significance of this assumption goes beyond the logical problems that it creates for a coherent argument. If Paul routinely taught his gentile converts to put their faith in Jesus or spoke of faith primarily in reference to Christ, then it becomes more likely that his audience would have had the same difficulties understanding the argument that have plagued later interpreters. If, on the other hand, Paul's thought and teaching retained the traditional Jewish understanding of a faith typically directed towards God, then the theocentric interpretation of faith that the

passage requires becomes the default reading. In this regard, the reading offered here fully affirms the assessment of Sam Williams:

we do not find the expression *pistis en Christō* in Paul’s letters because Paul was not accustomed to thinking of Christ as the “object” of faith. Whether one stresses faith as a response to the gospel (see *akoē pisteōs* at Gal 3:3,5), faith as confession (Rom 10:9-10), faith as trust (Romans 4), or faith as obedience (see *hypakoē pisteōs* at Rom 1:5), the person of Christ is not faith’s object. *God* is. (italics original)²⁶⁹

As Williams further points out, the one phrase often thought to signify an exception in Galatians—ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν in 2:16—should probably be read not as “we believed in Christ” but, parallel to the phrase εἰς Χριστὸν ἐβαπτίσθητε in 3:27, as “we believed into Christ.” In other words, it functions as transfer terminology.²⁷⁰

The third problem has to do with the question of Israel. Unfortunately, it did not take long for the church to develop a strong anti-Jewish stance. Seeing Christ as the solution to the universal human problems of sin and condemnation, this theological preference for the (largely gentile) church made it easy to overlook or downplay the statements in Paul suggesting a continuing inherent value in Judaism, a trend whose reversal only gained serious momentum with the advent of the New Perspective in the last half of the twentieth century. In their desire to affirm Judaism, however, adherents of the New Perspective have, I suggest, consistently reversed the nature of the underlying

²⁶⁹ Williams, “*Pistis*,” 434.

²⁷⁰ On the potential significance of the shift from first person in 2:16 to second person in 3:27, see §3.4.2.1.

theological problem in Gal 3:6-14: despite the fact that Paul only ever speaks of Abraham's blessing as directed to gentiles (3:8-9), these interpreters typically assume that 3:6-14 seeks to incorporate the nations into Israel so that gentiles can share in the Jews' blessing. Although their being led astray by the agitators shows that their understanding was far from perfect, the original readers' familiarity with the ancient context and with Paul's thought would presumably give them a better chance of understanding his discussion of Israel's relationship to the church.

Of course, Paul's argument in 3:6-14 still raises several questions. Why does Jesus triumph over the curse when other sons of Abraham do not? If the law is secondary, why was it given in the first place? Finally, if 3:6-14 portrays Jews alone as sons of Abraham, then what relationship—if any—do gentile Christians have with Abraham? It is to these questions that Paul turns in 3:15-4:11, the subject of Chapter 3.

3. “One [seed], who is Christ”: Abrahamic inheritance, the law, and the dual sonship of the Abrahamic seed in 3:15-4:11

3.1 Introduction

As detailed in the previous chapter, Gal 3:6-14 serves primarily to identify the truest sons of Abraham as those Jews who follow their forefather’s example of faith by dying to the law and uniting with Christ so that they might share in the gentiles’ blessing. Galatians 3:15-4:11 now argues against the continuing relevance of the law by shifting the point of inquiry from Abraham’s true *sons* (υἱοί, 3:7; cf. 3:14b) to his true *heirs* (κληρονόμοι, 3:29; cf. 3:18; 4:1, 7), whom Paul identifies as Abraham’s “seed” (σπέρμα, 3:16, 19, 29). Sons and heirs are, of course, closely related; Paul even invokes the principle “if a son, then also an heir” in 4:7. Nevertheless, he does not base his understanding of Abrahamic heirship on his preceding analysis of sonship but instead derives his conclusions in this section of the letter from an altogether different line of argument.

Whereas 3:6-14 argues primarily from Abraham’s definitive example and from scripture,¹ 3:15-4:11 argues primarily from a series of socio-legal parallels drawn largely from the realm of contemporary family and inheritance practices. Thus, in Gal 3:15-20

¹ See Chapter 2.

Paul applies the principle that no one sets aside or supplements a ratified διαθήκη to God's διαθήκη with Abraham. In 3:24-25 he invokes the image of a παιδαγωγός as a metaphor for understanding the role of the law. Finally, he grounds the argument of 4:1-5 in the principle that a minor heir (ὁ κληρονόμος νήπιός ἐστιν) remains under the supervision of guardians and stewards until the time set by the father. This latter section also refers to the institution of adoption (υἰοθεσία, 4:5), a metaphor that elucidates Paul's earlier reference to the "sons of God" (υἱοὶ θεοῦ) in 3:26.

Despite the different types of argument, the aforementioned principle "if a son, then also an heir" (4:7) suggests that we should see a correspondence between the analysis of Abrahamic sonship in 3:6-14 and the analysis of Abrahamic heirship in 3:15-4:11. I hope to validate this expectation in this chapter: the Jews who prove themselves worthy sons of their forefather by uniting with Christ in faith (3:6-14) do, in fact, become Abraham's full heirs (along with gentiles in Christ) by virtue of their resulting status as constituents of the sole Abrahamic seed (3:15-4:11). The same patterns of Jew-gentile interdependence, universal dependence on Christ, and Christian freedom from the law also emerge.

How, then, does Paul understand Abrahamic heirship? He grounds his understanding in Gal 3:16 with a seemingly straightforward scriptural observation that any first century Jew would have affirmed: "To Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed" (τῷ . . . Ἀβραάμ ἐρρέθησαν αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι καὶ τῷ σπέρματι αὐτοῦ). Although David Daube notes a potentially early rabbinic tradition that regards Abraham's

σπέρμα as a specific individual—*Seder Olam Rabbah* 3 reconciles the 400 years of sojourning for Abraham’s “seed” prophesied in Gen 15:13 with the actual 430 years of sojourning claimed in Ex 12:40-41 by arguing that the latter span begins with the covenant in Gen 15, the former, with the subsequent birth of the seed, i.e., Isaac (cf. Gen 21:12)²—most Jews would presumably have understood the mention of Abraham’s seed (σπέρματι) in its typical sense as a collective singular reference to all of the patriarch’s descendants through Isaac (and Jacob). Paul, however, interprets the σπέρματι quite differently: “It does not say ‘And to seeds,’ as concerning many, but as concerning one: ‘And to your seed,’ who is Christ” (οὐ λέγει, Καὶ τοῖς σπέρμασιν, ὡς ἐπὶ πολλῶν, ἀλλ’ ὡς ἐφ’ ἑνός, Καὶ τῷ σπέρματί σου, ὅς ἐστιν Χριστός).

Richard Longenecker claims that Gal 3:16 “points out that [the seed] is singular and then argues that the singular has reference to Christ.”³ That is to say, Longenecker suggests that the verse seeks primarily to identify Abraham’s singular seed with Christ rather than with the nation of Israel (if the agitators understood σπέρματι as a collective singular) or with Isaac (if the agitators understood σπέρματι as a specific singular).⁴ Indeed, interpretations of 3:16 typically highlight the identification of the seed with

² David Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* (Jordan Lectures in Comparative Religion 2; London: Athlone, 1956), 438-44. On the possible Jewish background of Paul’s argument in 3:16, see, too, Max Wilcox, “The Promise of the ‘Seed’ in the New Testament and the Targumim,” *JSNT* 5 (1979): 2-20.

³ Longenecker, *Galatians*, 131.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 132.

Christ as the focal point of the argument. Nikolaus Walter and Mark Nanos even press this perceived argument for information about the agitators, suggesting that 3:16 makes little sense unless it engages non-Christian Jews who, presumably unlike their Christian counterparts, would insist on Isaac's status as Abrahamic seed.⁵

Nevertheless, this broader characterization of the argument in 3:16 as anti-Isaac or anti-Israel polemic has a major problem: while the verse does clearly identify Christ as Abraham's seed, it does not—contrary to Longenecker's analysis—*argue* for this identification. Rather, it argues that σπέρματι concerns “one” and then asserts the singular seed's identification with Christ, almost as an afterthought. An anti-Isaac/Israel reading thus focuses on the claim in 3:16 that has no explicit support. Moreover, this reading cannot account for the verse's actual emphasis on the seed's singular nature: although this singular nature might help associate the seed with a discrete individual instead of collective Israel, it provides no leverage for establishing Christ instead of Isaac as the seed. Raising further doubts, Gal 4:23 refers to Isaac as Abraham's son born “through a promise” (δι' ἐπαγγελίας; cf. 4:28), suggesting that Paul does not intend to rob Isaac of his rightful status as Abraham's promised son. At the very least, this later characterization would seem somewhat at odds with an anti-Isaac/Israel polemic in 3:16.

This chapter accordingly argues that, rather than introducing an anti-Isaac or anti-Israel polemic, the reference to Abraham's seed in Gal 3:16 instead serves to make a point about the law, namely, that the law's being given to a *plurality* of Israelites

⁵ Walter, “Paulus,” 354; Nanos, *Irony*, 154-55.

invalidates it as a criterion for receiving the inheritance promised to the *single* seed (cf. 3:19-20). As §3.3 will show, the emphasis on the singular nature of Abraham's seed in 3:16 thus fits into the larger argument against the law in 3:15-20. Paul, however, also identifies a positive role for the law with respect to the Abrahamic seed. Indeed, I contend that 3:21-4:11 establishes the very purpose of the law as enabling Jews to become Abrahamic seed in Christ, a purpose suggesting, significantly, that the Jews' incorporation into Christ the seed both fulfills and ends the law. Section 3.4 will discuss this part of Paul's argument.

Of course, this proposed argument in 3:21-4:11 presupposes the earlier identification of the sole Abrahamic seed with Christ in 3:16. To understand both this subsequent argument and Paul's view of the seed more generally, we therefore need to discern the basis for this identification. The lack of an explicit argument in 3:16 indicates that Paul sees the association as needing no further defense or explanation, a scenario hard to imagine if, as Walter and Nanos propose, 3:16 engages non-Christian Jews in a debate over the seed's identity. At the same time, the need for Paul to argue for the seed's singular nature suggests that at least some members of his audience either do not share or are in danger of compromising this fundamental view of Christ as the sole seed. The argument therefore seems *a priori* unlikely to depend solely on the audience's preinclination to identify Christ with the Abrahamic seed. After all, while Christian agitators would presumably acknowledge Christ's status as Abrahamic seed based on his descent from Isaac, this understanding would provide no support for the claim that Christ constitutes the only seed. We thus have good reason to suspect that the surrounding

context provides a sufficiently clear indication of the basis for Paul's identification of Christ as the sole Abrahamic seed.

The analysis of 3:15-4:11 accordingly begins in §3.2 by considering the possible contextual basis for Christ's identification as the seed. In short, I will suggest that the opening comment about διαθήκῃ in 3:15 provides the key to Paul's understanding of the Abrahamic seed by invoking the Hellenistic practice of testamentary adoption. Viewed in this way, God's διαθήκη with Abraham implies his testamentary adoption of the patriarch. This adoption, in turn, implies that the promised seed of Abraham who shares the divine inheritance must be both a son of Abraham and a son of God, a double requirement fulfilled only by Christ and, subsequently, by the union of the Jewish sons of Abraham and the gentile sons of God in him.

As the rest of the chapter then demonstrates, this explanation of the Abrahamic seed accounts for Paul's emphasis on the singular nature of the seed in 3:16, reconciles this singular nature with the claim in 3:29 that all who are "of Christ" are Abrahamic seed, and justifies Paul's identification of Christ as the seed in a way that accords with the later descriptions of Isaac as the promised son in 4:23 and 28. It also clarifies the relationship between Abraham's singular seed (3:16), his plural sons (3:7), and the divine sons of God whose initial introduction in 3:26 (cf. 4:5-7) would otherwise be quite surprising. By establishing these points, I hope to show that this interpretation of the Abrahamic seed enables a consistent, coherent, and potentially persuasive understanding of Paul's argument in 3:15-4:11.

3.2 “One [seed], who is Christ”: Testamentary adoption and the identification of Christ as Abraham’s seed in 3:15-4:11

No step in Paul’s argument would seem to be more important to his cause than his identification of Abraham’s one seed with Christ rather than with the seemingly contextually more appropriate Isaac, yet Paul provides no explicit defense of this claim. On what grounds does he make this identification? More pointedly, since we might understand a believer’s willingness to ascribe accolades and titles to the Lord, on what grounds does Paul disqualify Isaac from occupying the position of Abraham’s sole seed? This bypassing of Isaac requires comment, especially since Paul subsequently refers to Isaac as Abraham’s son “[born] through a promise” ([γεγέννηται] δι’ ἐπαγγελίας, 4:23; cf. κατὰ Ἰσαὰκ ἐπαγγελίας τέκνα, 4:28). An ideal explanation would not only allow this latter claim to stand, it would also be both readily apparent to the gentile readers and robust enough to withstand any superficial attempts to undermine the argument simply by re-instituting Isaac’s normally attributed status.

Interpreters have suggested a handful of different explanations for the identification of Christ as Abraham’s seed, none of which fully meet these criteria. Proposals that Paul discerns an additional spiritual meaning in the text⁶ or that Christ represents the “summation” of all Israel⁷ essentially accept that Genesis identifies Isaac

⁶ E.g., Ellicott, *Galatians*, 77; Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 142; Lagrange, *Galates*, 77-79.

⁷ Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 142.

as Abraham's seed, a position that respects the seed's OT context at the expense of Paul's emphasis on its singular nature.⁸ Other interpretations argue that the Christ-event has caused Paul to understand the Genesis promise as directed to Christ. While mere personal conviction⁹ or divine decree¹⁰ could ground this understanding, a simple appeal to the biblical text would easily refute such an argument.

Scholars have therefore increasingly argued that Paul's conclusion presupposes the Jewish exegetical practice of *gezerah shawah*, a type of argument by lexical analogy. In this view, Paul interprets the Abrahamic σπέρμα in terms of the singular Davidic σπέρμα promised in 2 Sam 7:12-14 (cf. Ps [LXX] 88:5, 30, 37 [Eng 89:4, 29, 36]), a passage with recognized messianic connotations in Paul's day (cf. 4QFlor 1 I, 10-11).¹¹ The recognition of Jesus as the Christ then becomes the key step in identifying him as the Davidic seed and, accordingly, the Abrahamic seed. In this interpretation, however, Paul rests a crucial point in his argument on the Galatians' ability not only to discern the presence of this Jewish exegetical method with absolutely no indication of the

⁸ Some advocates of these positions interpret Paul's ὡς ἐπὶ πολλῶν ἀλλ' ὡς ἐφ' ἑνός claim differently. For analysis, see the introduction to §3.3.

⁹ E.g., Fung, *Galatians*, 155-56.

¹⁰ Calvin, "Galatians," 94-95, who claims that the seed must both be a descendant of Abraham and be appointed as seed by God.

¹¹ Martyn, *Galatians*, 340 n. 161; Williams, *Galatians*, 95; Dunn, *Galatians*, 184; Hays, *Echoes*, 85; Donald Juel, *Messianic Exegesis: Christological Interpretation of the Old Testament in Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 84-87; Nils Alstrup Dahl, "Promise and Fulfillment," in *Studies in Paul: Theology for the Early Christian Mission* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977), 121-36, 130; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 239-40. Wilcox, "Seed," 5-6, suggests that the connection was already present in the Targumim.

intervening steps but also to accept it as a valid form of argument in the face of potential rebuttals by the agitators. I suggest that we can do better.

Finally, a few interpreters propose that Paul identifies Christ as Abraham's seed based on Christ's fulfilling some role expected—perhaps only in retrospect—of the seed, either that he completes the aborted sacrifice of Isaac “on the wood” (ἐπάνω τῶν ξύλων, Gen 22:9 / ἐπὶ ξύλου, Gal 3:13) as a typological fulfillment¹² or else that he fulfills the promise that the gentiles will be blessed in Abraham's seed (Gen 22:18; cf. Gal 3:8).¹³ These proposals at least have the advantage of finding support in the surrounding context of Galatians, and elements of these two explanations will ultimately appear in my own suggested resolution. Nevertheless, they still fall short—as do all of the other proposals above—in that these explanations are neither self-evident nor clear implications of the Genesis text. Even if perceptive readers noticed the connections with Gen 22, the agitators could still argue that Isaac's aborted sacrifice leaves no expectation of or need for a further fulfillment and that the blessing of the gentiles in Christ comes as a direct result of his membership in Isaac's seed. We thus arrive at an impasse: Paul's argument does not allow the seemingly straightforward reading of Isaac as the promised seed, but any attempt to read Christ as the seed in Genesis founders on the agitators' ability to refute the claim with relative ease.

¹² Wilcox, “Upon the Tree,” 97-98; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 240.

¹³ Becker, “Galater,” 53; Schoeps, *Paul*, 180-81; John Brown, *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians* (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1853), 144.

I suggest that the Hellenistic concept of testamentary adoption enables us to break this impasse. More specifically, I suggest that Gal 3:15-18 portrays God's διαθήκη with Abraham as his testamentary adoption of the patriarch. The promised seed who inherits must accordingly be not only a son of Abraham but also a son of God. Jesus' divine sonship (cf. 1:16; 2:20; 4:4) thus uniquely enables him to fulfill these two requirements, hence his status as the one true seed.

Since it provides a way of linking three crucial elements of Paul's argument in Gal 3:15-4:11—διαθήκη (3:15, 17), inheritance (3:18, 29; 4:1, 7), and adoption (4:5; cf. 3:26)—testamentary adoption would seem to be a rather obvious lens through which to view this passage. Nevertheless, despite this promising congruence of key concepts and a scholarly fascination with the legal background of Paul's argument, most scholars never explore testamentary adoption as a potential background.¹⁴ They omit this possibility primarily because it has not seemed to be a truly viable option in Jewish, Roman, or Greek law, i.e., in the three legal backgrounds most often suggested for Paul's argument. Jewish law simply had no concept of testamentary adoption. Greek and Roman cultures, in contrast, both knew a form of the practice, but each form presents a challenge for identifying it as the background for Gal 3:15-4:11.

In the Roman Empire, testamentary adoption seems to have been more of a *condicio nominis ferendi* whereby a testamentary heir was obliged to take the testator's

¹⁴ Ramsay, *Galatians*, 351, is a prominent exception. See, too, Greer M. Taylor, "The Function of ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ in Galatians," *JBL* 85 (1966): 58-76, 66-67, 70, 75, who argues for testamentary adoption from a proposed Roman background.

name in order to inherit (cf. Justinian, *Dig.* 36.1.65[Eng 63].10, citing Gaius). This taking of the name, however, did not involve an actual change in an heir's familial status—i.e., the heir's filiation and tribe would not change—so it was not a true adoption.¹⁵ Some classicists dispute this conclusion for the period of the (late) Republic, based largely on the Senate's recognition of Octavian's testamentary "adoption" by Julius Caesar as a real *adrogatio* adoption (see Appian, *B.C.* 3.94).¹⁶ Nevertheless, even in the late republic, women who could not otherwise adopt could practice testamentary adoption (e.g., Cicero, *Att.* 7.8.3), and the fact that no Roman jurist ever discusses the procedure or its legal ramifications argues against the legal reality of adoptions performed by testament.¹⁷ As for Octavian, we should probably attribute the Senate's ratification of his presumed adoptive status more to the young consul's political force and cunning than to strict

¹⁵ For a concise discussion of Roman naming procedures as they relate to (testamentary) adoption, see Olli Salomies, "Names and Adoptions in Ancient Rome: The Possibility of Using Personal Names for the Study of Adoption in Rome," in *Adoption et fosterage* (ed. Mireille Corbier; Paris: De Boccard, 1999), 141-56, 142-46.

¹⁶ So Theodor Mommsen, "Zur Lebensgeschichte des jüngeren Plinius," in *Gesammelte Schriften IV: Historische Schriften I* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1906), 366-468, 397-404. Proponents of this view also point to the testamentary adoptions of Cicero's friend Atticus and of a certain Metellus Scipio as probable real adoptions based on the subsequent appearance of the adoptive fathers in their filiations (Cicero, *Att.* 3.20 and Dio 40.51.3 / Cicero, *Fam.* 8.8.5, respectively). See, e.g., Olli Salomies, *Adoptive and Polyonymous Nomenclature in the Roman Empire* (Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum 97; Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1992), 7-10. Cf., too, Marcel-Henri Prévost, *Les Adoptions politiques à Rome sous la République et le Principat* (Publications de l'Institut de droit romain de l'Université de Paris 5; Paris: Recueil Sirey, 1949), 29-34; Fritz Schulz, *Classical Roman Law* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1951), 145.

¹⁷ Mommsen, "Lebensgeschichte," 398 n. 1, explains the silence of the later jurists on the grounds that they focus on the then-current, non-adoptive form of the practice without regard to its origin or historical development. As for the adoptive women, Salomies, "Names," 146, suggests that the late Republic represented a time of transition wherein adoptive and non-adoptive versions of testamentary adoption overlapped.

legality.¹⁸ Even if Roman testaments could perform legal adoptions, however, the *adrogatio* procedure for adopting *sui iuris* individuals would still have required the passage of a *lex curiata* in Rome to finalize the adoption, making testamentary adoption an unlikely practice to have spread to the (eastern) provinces.¹⁹

In contrast, the legal speeches of the fourth century B.C.E. Attic orators make it clear that Athens, at least, did practice true testamentary adoption. A Hellenistic background thus becomes the most likely option if Gal 3:15-4:11 does invoke such a practice. The problem here stems from the great chronological and geographical distance that separates the Attic orators from Paul's readers: until relatively recently, classical scholars tended to agree that testamentary adoption did not survive even in Athens past the fourth century B.C.E., let alone extend into first century C.E. Greco-Roman Galatia. If correct, this analysis would reduce the Greek practice to a point of antiquarian interest in the first century C.E., hardly the type of legal background that Paul could simply presume. Fortunately, the recent work of Lene Rubinstein and others has seriously undermined this earlier consensus, making it possible to show that the Galatians likely were familiar with the practice of testamentary adoption after all.

¹⁸ See Walter Schmitthenner, *Oktavian und das Testament Cäsars: Eine Untersuchung zu Politischen Anfängen des Augustus* (Zetemata 4; München: C. H. Beck, 1952), 39-64. Other scholars arguing that testamentary adoption never involved legal adoption include: Jane F. Gardner, *Family and Familia in Roman Law and Life* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 128-29; Edward Champlin, *Final Judgments: Duty and Emotion in Roman Wills 200 B.C.—A.D. 250* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 144-46; Ronald Syme, "Clues to Testamentary Adoption," in *Roman Papers IV* (ed. Anthony R. Birley; Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), 159-73, 159; repr. from *Epigrafia e ordine senatorio I* (Tituli 4; Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1982).

¹⁹ On the geographical implications of *adrogatio* adoptions, see Gardner, *Family*, 130. She points out that this geographical restriction had been removed by the time of Diocletian at end of the third century C.E.

This section accordingly begins by seeking to establish the historical viability of Hellenistic testamentary adoption as a potential background for Paul's argument in §3.2.1. It then returns to Galatians in §3.2.2, arguing that this proposed Hellenistic background does indeed make the best sense of Paul's διαθήκη and υιοθεσία language. Finally, having established testamentary adoption as the overarching socio-legal background that unites 3:15-4:11, I will show in §3.2.3 how the application of this concept to God's διαθήκη with Abraham leads to the identification of Christ—and not Isaac—as Abraham's seed.

3.2.1 The historical viability of Greek testamentary adoption as a potential background for Gal 3:15-4:11

The legal speeches of the fourth century B.C.E. Athenian orators provide our best information about the Greek practice of testamentary adoption. Based largely on these speeches, modern scholars typically identify three forms of adoption practiced in ancient Athens: 1) *inter vivos* adoption, in which an heir was adopted during the lifetime of an adopter; 2) testamentary adoption, in which an heir was named and adopted through a will (διαθήκη); and 3) posthumous adoption, in which an intestate heir could decide to enroll in the οἶκος of the deceased. While these divisions provide a helpful rubric, the Athenians themselves never differentiated adoption in this way. As Lene Rubinstein observes, the Athenians viewed all adoptions as composing “a single category”; the only significant difference between *inter vivos* and testamentary/posthumous adoptions was

procedural rather than qualitative. That is to say, adoptions that did not occur during the lifetime of an adopter required the additional step of having the courts recognize the potential adoptee's right to inherit.²⁰

While the legal basis for posthumous adoption remains obscure, the other forms of adoption both rely on a law attributed to the sixth century B.C.E. Athenian *archon* Solon. Solon decreed that any man who had not himself been adopted²¹ and who was bereft of legitimate sons could dispose of his property in whatever way he desired (τὰ ἑαυτοῦ διαθέσθαι εἶναι ὅπως ἂν ἐθέλη), just as long as he was not deprived of his right mind by insanity, old age, drugs, disease, women, or compulsion.²² In modern societies, where adoptions serve primarily to meet the needs and welfare of a child adoptee, this law would seem to have little relevance for adoption. Adoptions in the ancient world, however, served primarily to provide an otherwise childless—or, at least, sonless—adopter with an (often adult) heir to care for him in his old age (e.g., Isaeus 2.10) and, more importantly for testamentary adoption, continue the οἶκος and the associated household cults that honored and cared for the family's dead (e.g., Isaeus

²⁰ Lene Rubinstein, "Adoption in Classical Athens," in *Adoption et fosterage* (ed. Mireille Corbier; Paris: De Boccard, 1999), 45-62, 47-49. She argues that the typical threefold division of adoption results from interpreting Greek law through the lens of Roman law.

²¹ The law specifically excepts those who had been adopted prior to Solon's becoming *archon* (ὅσοι μὴ ἐπεποιήντο . . . ὅτε Σόλων εἰσήει τὴν ἀρχήν), a stipulation that the orators could then generalize to apply to all adoptees (e.g., Demosthenes 44.67-68). This stipulation also shows that the Athenian institution of adoption did not originate with Solon.

²² Cited in Demosthenes 46.14.

7.32).²³ The fourth century B.C.E. orator Isaeus accordingly refers to this Solonic law as “the law concerning adoption” (τὸν νόμον τὸν περὶ τῆς ποιήσεως, 2.26; cf. 2.24) and appeals to it as the sole ground for both *inter vivos* (2.13) and testamentary (6.7-9) adoptions.²⁴

Isaeus records seven clear instances of adoption by διαθήκη: Isaeus 3; 4; 5; 6; 9; 11.8; 11.41-42. We thus have ample evidence for testamentary adoption in fourth century B.C.E. Athens, none of which suggests an institution in decline. Why, then, the common conclusion that testamentary adoption did not survive past the fourth century? We admittedly have no further references to any testamentary adoptions in Athens after the time of the orators, but such silence must be interpreted. When viewed in the light of evolutionary scenarios that posit the increasing secularization and, in some cases, individualization of the Athenian οἶκος, this silence suggests demise. It suggests demise because these proposed societal changes undermine the principal motivation for testamentary adoption, namely, the preservation of the household and its cults. Apart from Enlightenment ideals of progress, however, little evidence has emerged to support

²³ While intestate heirs would be required to observe certain funerary rites during the initial mourning period, only a (natural or adopted) son would have on-going cultic commemoration duties. See Lene Rubinstein, *Adoption in IV. Century Athens* (Opuscula Graecolatina 34; Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum, 1993), 68-76.

²⁴ For other appeals to Solon’s law, see, e.g., Isaeus 3.68, 4.16, 6.9; Demosthenes 44.68, 46.14.

such changes. In particular, they prove especially difficult to reconcile with the apparently widespread use of testamentary adoption in fourth century Athens.²⁵

How do scholars justify a proposed decline in testamentary adoptions when the practice appears to be thriving? They usually resolve this discrepancy by pointing to an additional acknowledged motivation for such adoptions, namely, circumventing the order of intestate succession (e.g., Demosthenes 44.63). This thwarting of intestate heirs relates to the transfer of property; it has nothing to do with adoption *per se*. It therefore enables scholars to suggest that fourth century Athenians continued to adopt simply because they had no other way to bequeath their estate to a universal heir. Interpreted in this light, the orators' repeated references to the preservation of the οἶκος and the maintenance of the household cults become pious posturing with little relevance to actual practice. Furthermore, the clear bestowal of legacies apart from adoption in the early Hellenistic will of Epicurus—who died around 270 B.C.E.—then demonstrates that Hellenistic διαθήκται soon abandoned this vestige of a former era.

Thus, Louis Gernet, for instance, argues that Solon's sixth century B.C.E. law originally sought to expand the pool of potential candidates for *inter vivos* adoption. The law accordingly describes the transaction using διαθέσθαι, an appropriate term for a

²⁵ Cf., too, the primarily archaeological analysis of ancient Athenian funerary practices in S. C. Humphreys, "Family Tombs and Tomb Cult in Ancient Athens: Tradition or Traditionalism?," *JHS* 100 (1980): 96-126, 104, 112-13, 122-23, suggesting that private familial tombs and their associated cults actually increased in the late fifth / fourth centuries B.C.E.

contract between two people.²⁶ The subsequent development of testamentary adoption in the fifth century B.C.E. lost this grounding in a bilateral contract but nevertheless retained the Solonic language of διαθήκη.²⁷ This development then enabled fourth century B.C.E. Athenians facing new economic developments and an increasingly secular society to re-interpret the contractual wording of Solon's law as instead authorizing the "disposition" of one's patrimony to an adopted heir. In other words, the transference of goods came to predominate over the law's original primary function of preserving a family line through the adoption of an heir.²⁸ Adoption therefore became little more than a necessary vehicle for bequeathing one's estate to a universal heir, a vestige of a past age that Hellenistic testaments soon abandoned altogether.²⁹ The application of Solon's law thus progressed,

²⁶ Louis Gernet, "La loi de Solon sur le « testament »,» in *Droit et société dans la Grèce ancienne* (Publications de l'Institut de droit romain de l'Université de Paris 13; Paris: Sirey, 1964), 121-49, 122-23.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 146-47. Evolutionary models often understand Solon's law to have given rise, whether by original design or later extension, to the very concept of a will (διαθήκη; cf. διαθέσθαι), a conclusion that effectively identifies the first Greek testaments as instruments of adoption. See, e.g., the discussion in A. R. W. Harrison, *The Law of Athens* (2 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1968-71; repr., Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett, 1998), 1:82-84, 150. For the contrary view that (non-adoptive) testaments existed before Solon's law, see Robin Lane Fox, "Aspects of Inheritance in the Greek World," in *Crux: Essays in Greek History Presented to G. E. M. de Ste. Croix on His 75th Birthday* (eds. P. A. Cartledge and F. D. Harvey; London: Duckworth, 1985), 208-32, 224. Cf. Frederick Owen Norton, *A Lexicographical and Historical Study of ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ from the Earliest Times to the End of the Classical Period* (Historical and Linguistic Studies in Literature related to the New Testament, Second Series: Linguistic and Exegetical Studies 1.6; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1908), 52-53, who suggests that Solon's law sought to legalize the existing practice of adoption by διαθήκη.

²⁸ Gernet, "La loi," 145, 147-48. Gernet argues that testamentary adoption essentially became a more comprehensive form of *donatio mortis causa*, a limited practice whereby citizens could bequeath their own acquisitions but not the inherited patrimony that was reserved for their descendants. He also associates this shift in testamentary understanding with a shift from a multi-generational, collective view of the οἶκος to a more individualistic view in which the household begins anew with every generation (149).

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 149.

according to Gernet, from *inter vivos* adoptions to testamentary adoptions to adoptive testaments to non-adoptive testaments.

This suggestion that fourth century Athenians adopted by διαθήκῃ only to circumvent the normal succession order—a suggestion that the testamentary adoption of intestate heirs (e.g., Isaeus 3, 6) calls into question³⁰—requires that διαθήκη served as a functional synonym for εἰσποίησις (“adoption”) in the classical age.³¹ To be sure, the orators’ speeches do reveal a close association between the two terms. In Isaeus’s speech concerning the estate of Aristarchus, for example, the speaker appeals to the jury’s awareness that adopted children (τῶν εἰσποίητων) could only (ἄλλως δὲ οὐκ ἔξεστιν) enter a family through wills (κατὰ διαθήκας), which “bequeath possessions and make sons” (διδόντων τὰ ἑαυτῶν καὶ ὑεῖς ποιουμένων) (10.9).³² Exhibiting the customary rhetorical excess of an orator, the statement as it stands does not even allow for *inter vivos* adoptions, a type of adoption that was not a possibility in the Aristarchus case.³³ Or

³⁰ Noted by Rubinstein, *IV. Century Athens*, 78-80.

³¹ E.g., Gernet, “La loi,” 122; Ludovic Beauchet, *Histoire du droit privé de la république Athénienne* (4 vols.; Paris: Chevalier-Marescq, 1897), 2:21, 3:428, 693.

³² Gernet, “La loi,” 147, notes that the orators often distinguish these two functions—adopting and bequeathing—“non pas sans doute en deux moments, mais en deux éléments.” Norton, *ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ*, 70, however, notes several passages where the orators seem to distinguish between adopting and making a will (e.g., πῶς οἴσθα Φιλοκτῆμον’ ὅτι οὔτε διέθετο οὔτε ὑὸν Χαίρεστρατον ἐποίησατο, Isaeus 6.53; cf. Isaeus 9.1, 7; Demosthenes 44.65). Unless these passages distinguish testamentary adoption from *inter vivos* adoption, they suggest that διαθήκῃ could serve purposes other than adoption.

³³ The speech essentially argues against the legitimacy of a non-intestate heir’s posthumous adoption. Athenians did seem to recognize the posthumous adoption of an intestate heir, although the argument presented in the Aristarchus case would invalidate the posthumous adoption of even an intestate heir.

again, the introductory hypothesis to the speech concerning the estate of Meneclēs (Isaeus 2) claims that the oration does not argue the case of the blood relations (ὑπὲρ συγγενείας) but the case of the adopted son (ὑπὲρ διαθήκης) (2.hypothesis). The ensuing speech clearly argues that the adoption in question was *inter vivos*—twenty-three years before the adopter’s death (2.15)!—and not testamentary (2.14, 44), so the person writing the introduction could simply have made a mistake. Nevertheless, even the likelihood of a mistake testifies to the close connection between διαθήκη and adoption for the hypothesizer.

Despite these indications of a close connection, however, the evidence ultimately does not allow for the functional equivalence of διαθήκη and εἰσποίησις. As Rubinstein observes, the orators also mention at least four διαθήκαι—the wills of Conon (Lysias 19.39-40), Diodotus (Lysias 32.5-6), Pasion (Demosthenes 36; 45-46), and Demosthenes the Elder (Demosthenes 27.13-16; 28.6, 15)—that clearly do not involve adoption because each testator had legitimate living sons.³⁴ Other classical scholars have, of course, also noticed these non-adoptive wills, but they tend to minimize their significance in one of three problematical ways.

One such approach arises directly out of the arguments of the Greek orators themselves: in a speech of Demosthenes, Apollodorus challenges the validity of Pasion’s will—one of the four in Rubinstein’s list—in part on the grounds that Solon’s law allows

³⁴ Rubinstein, *IV. Century Athens*, 81-86. So, too, Norton, *ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ*, 69-70.

only *sonless* men (ἄν μὴ παῖδες ὧσι γνήσιοι ἄρρενες) to make wills (Demosthenes 46.15; cf. 46.25). A similar argument appears in at least two of Isaeus' speeches as well (Isaeus 6.28; 10.9). One could accordingly argue that these four non-adoptive wills do not break the proposed connection between testaments and adoption because they do not meet the requisite legal standards, i.e., they are not legitimate διαθήκαι. This argument fails to convince, however, since at least three of the testaments in Rubinstein's list were apparently unchallenged, legal wills. Indeed, the guardians appointed in the wills of Diodotus and Demosthenes the Elder were even prosecuted for not living up to their testamentary obligations!³⁵ How can we resolve this seemingly contradictory evidence in the primary sources?

As Rubinstein argues, while Solon's law could be interpreted as allowing only a sonless man to make a legal will, it could also be interpreted as establishing the right for a sonless man to make a will *freely* (ὅπως ἄν ἐθέλη), that is, without consideration for the rules of intestate succession. In this latter interpretation, the law does not address the case of men with sons, raising the possibility that the will of such a father could be considered legal as long as it dealt fairly with his son(s).³⁶ Given these two interpretive possibilities, Rubinstein notes that the practice of Athenian law makes it functionally impossible to establish either option as authoritative: since the Athenian court had no concept of precedent and did not provide its jurists with any legal training, an orator/litigant was free

³⁵ Rubinstein, *IV. Century Athens*, 83.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 84. Cf. Norton, *ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ*, 54, 66.

to encourage the jury to interpret an ambiguous law in the way best suited to his case, and a court's interpretation of a law could vary from day to day.³⁷ Nevertheless, the established legality of at least three of these testaments³⁸ suggests that Athenian society viewed the making of such wills as an acceptable practice.

A second method of marginalizing these non-adoptive wills seeks to differentiate them from later Hellenistic testaments by arguing that they do not bequeath legacies so much as provide for a testator's continuing financial obligations, for instance, by establishing dowries for unmarried daughters (e.g., Demosthenes 27.44-45) and/or stipends for guardians of minor heirs (e.g., Demosthenes 27.4-5). The bequeathing of property apart from adoption would then still represent a Hellenistic innovation.³⁹ Even if correct in its analysis of these four wills,⁴⁰ this position overlooks the significance of the orators' referring to all four of these non-adoptive wills as διαθήκαι. If a διαθήκη need not imply adoption, then we can no longer simply assume that testaments adopt heirs.

³⁷ Rubinstein, "Classical Athens," 46-47. Cf. Rubinstein, *IV. Century Athens*, 84. For more general discussion, see S. C. Todd, *The Shape of Athenian Law* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 49-63, esp. 60-61.

³⁸ Even in the fourth case, Apollodorus had accepted the terms of Pasion's will for roughly twenty years before challenging it in attempt to win more money. See Demosthenes 36.

³⁹ G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, review of A. R. W. Harrison, *The Law of Athens: The Family and Property*, *The Classical Review, New Series* 20 (1970): 387-90, 390; Douglas M. MacDowell, *The Law in Classical Athens* (Aspects of Greek and Roman Life; Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1978), 101; Lane Fox, "Aspects," 225. See, too, Wesley E. Thompson, "Athenian Attitudes Toward Wills," *Prudentia* 13 (1981): 13-25, 16-18, although he allows that fourth century B.C.E. Athenians may have bequeathed property apart from adoption in a few cases (22).

⁴⁰ Conon's will leaving less than half the property to his son is the hardest to justify, but since Conon was an ex-pat living in Cyprus, it is also the easiest to dismiss. Gernet, "La loi," 144-45, explains Conon's bequests as coming from property acquired during his own lifetime instead of from his inherited πατρῷα that he would have been required to pass to his son.

Rubinstein accordingly goes on to identify five wills of *sonless* Athenians where the assumption of adoption seems particularly problematical: the wills of Dionysodoros (Lysias 13.41); Polyeuctos (Demosthenes 41.10); Mneson (Isaeus 7.6); Callias (Plutarch, *Alcibiades*, 8.4); and Plato (Diogenes Laertius 3.41-43).⁴¹ More neutral cases such as the five testamentary cases in Isaeus where scholars usually assume adoption is in view even though the text does not mention it (Isaeus 1; 4.8; 7.9; 10; 11.89 / Demosthenes 43.4) also come into question. The bequeathing of property apart from adoption seems especially probable in Isaeus 1, where the speaker identifies multiple beneficiaries of the testament (e.g., 1.2, 35) and refers to their share as a δωρεά (“bequest,” 1.18) rather than a κληῖρον (“inheritance”).⁴²

Finally, a few scholars acknowledge the reality of non-adoptive wills in the fourth century B.C.E. but interpret their existence as evidence that the traditional adoptive testament was already starting to break down.⁴³ In other words, the orators provide evidence for a limited time of transition in which the two types of διαθήκη overlapped. If, however, testaments in the fourth century B.C.E. could circumvent intestate succession by bequeathing property apart from adoption, then the portrayal of testamentary adoption as an essentially vestigial practice cannot be sustained. Every instance of testamentary

⁴¹ Rubinstein, *IV. Century Athens*, 85-86. She notes that Bruck similarly identifies the wills of Mneson and Plato as possible exceptions that proved the normal adoption rule (85 n. 57).

⁴² Norton, *ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ*, 70. Cf. Thompson, “Attitudes,” 22 n. 29.

⁴³ E.g., Norton, *ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ*, 44-55; David Asheri, “Laws of Inheritance, Distribution of Land and Political Constitutions in Ancient Greece,” *Historia* 12 (1963): 1-21, 8-12.

adoption becomes the result of a conscious choice that highlights the continuing significance of adoption in Athenian society.⁴⁴ With this undermining of the evolutionary model, the lack of Hellenistic references to the practice becomes the only evidence left supporting the proposed demise of testamentary adoption. This argument from silence, however, is not a particularly strong one.

As the Copenhagen Epigraphy Group notes, after the positive/neutral references to adoption in Menander's three comedies *Dyskolos*, *Samia*, and *Adelphoi B* at the close of the fourth century (321-305 B.C.E.), the extant sources make no further mention of *any* type of adoption in Athens until references start appearing in stone inscriptions of the second century B.C.E.⁴⁵ These inscribed references—which first appear at a time when citizenship requirements for foreigners were being eased and which therefore likely reflect a desire among the adopted elite to emphasize their true Athenian descent (with its incumbent privileges)—continue into the second century C.E. after peaking in the first century C.E.⁴⁶ Considering the dearth of sources for the interim period and the absence of any positive evidence to the contrary, the Epigraphy Group rightly concludes that adoption likely continued in Athens throughout the Hellenistic and Roman periods, as it

⁴⁴ Rubinstein, *IV. Century Athens*, 10-15, identifies the lack of data outside the fourth century B.C.E. as a problem for *any* evolutionary model, let alone one in which both types of testament peacefully co-exist in the one period from which almost all of the evidence comes. The need to project both forward and backward creates too many opportunities for scholars to shape the data. For instance, she notes that evolutionary analyses often assume that Solon's law represents an innovation rather than the legitimization of a current practice, but we have no sixth century B.C.E. evidence to support such an assumption.

⁴⁵ Lene Rubinstein et al., "Adoption in Hellenistic and Roman Athens," *Classica et Mediaevalia* 42 (1991): 139-51, 141.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 146-48.

did elsewhere.⁴⁷ They also find “no apparent reason to believe that it had changed drastically from the institution which is described in the forensic speeches of the Attic orators.”⁴⁸ It therefore seems probable that testamentary adoption survived to Paul’s day.

Bridging this chronological gap from the Attic orators to Paul also enables us to address the remaining geographical gap. Recent classical scholarship has largely debunked the older construct of Greek law as a monolith, raising the question of how widespread the practice of testamentary adoption actually was.⁴⁹ For his part, Isaeus suggests that Solon’s law, at least, did spread beyond Athens: in a case involving *inter vivos* adoption, he claims that “to all other men, both to Greeks and to barbarians, this law, the one concerning adoption, appears good, and because of this *all borrow it* (χρῶνται πάντες αὐτῷ)” (2.24). Although the orator clearly speaks here in hyperbole, the claim surely has some grounding in a wider acceptance of Solon’s law and, accordingly, in all likelihood, a wider acceptance of testamentary adoption. Indeed, we know of at least one other πόλις where testamentary adoption was practiced in the fourth

⁴⁷ Ibid., 148: “the traditional view of the decline of the institution in Hellenistic and Roman periods is unfounded.” Contra Molly Broadbent, *Studies in Greek Genealogy* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968), 218, who concludes, “[Adoption] does not seem to be used in Hellenistic Athens (though frequent in Hellenistic times elsewhere).”

⁴⁸ Rubinstein et al., “Hellenistic and Roman Athens,” 142. Contra Astrid Wentzel, “Studien über die Adoption in Griechenland,” *Hermes* 65 (1930): 167-76, who argues that the emergence in Greece (particularly in Rhodes, but also in Athens) of new adoptive formulae in inscriptions of this time period likely reflects a Roman understanding of adoption.

⁴⁹ Rubinstein, *IV. Century Athens*, 6, illustrates the problem from the other side, cautioning against any appeals to the practice of adoption in other πόλεις for the purpose of filling the gaps in our knowledge about the Athenian version.

century B.C.E.: *Aiginetikos* (Isokrates 19) concerns a case of testamentary adoption in Aigina.⁵⁰

Athens, however, remains the key πόλις for tracing the institution of testamentary adoption to Paul's audience in Galatia. Attic culture, after all, constituted the primary basis for the Hellenism exported by Alexander the Great and his Seleucid successors throughout the southern interiors and coastal areas of the Anatolian peninsula.⁵¹ Galatia did become a Roman province in 25 B.C.E., but the Romans typically allowed subjected territories to retain their local customs and laws especially with regard to family and inheritance matters.⁵² In the Greek East, this policy meant that the Romans largely supported the Hellenistic culture already entrenched in the southern reaches of the

⁵⁰ On the other hand, the laws concerning adoption and inheritance in the Dorian areas of Sparta and Gortyn exhibit significant differences from the laws in Athens. The inscribed fifth century B.C.E. Law Code of Gortyn, for instance, makes no allowance for testaments, entitles an adopted son to inherit only half the amount of a naturally-born son, and allows an adoptive father to annul a previously instituted adoption (X-XI). For the situation in Sparta, see, e.g., Sima Avramovič, "The Rhetra of Epitadeus and Testament in Spartan Law," in *Symposion 2001: Vorträge zur griechischen und hellenistischen Rechtsgeschichte* (Wien: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2005), 175-86.

⁵¹ See, e.g., William Scott Ferguson, "Athens and Hellenism," *The American Historical Review* 16 (1910): 1-10; A. H. M. Jones, *The Greek City from Alexander to Justinian* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1940), 3, 7. Alexander the Great was also tutored by the Athenian-trained Aristotle.

⁵² H. F. Jolowicz and Barry Nicholas, *Historical Introduction to the Study of Roman Law* (3d ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 470-71. They also follow Ludwig Mitteis in suggesting that, in the area of family law, Greek law in the provinces often influenced the development of Roman law: "It is usually the law of the family which is most resistant to change from outside, and it is in this area that eastern influence appears most clearly, and leads to the introduction into imperial law of a number of institutions of clearly Greek origin" (471). The *constitutio Antoniniana* extended Roman citizenship to the provinces in 212 C.E., thereby making Roman law applicable throughout the provinces. This *constitutio* seems to have left local legal systems in place as well, however. See, e.g., Olivier Hekster, *Rome and its Empire, AD 193-284* (Debates and Documents in Ancient History; Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 52-53, 123.

Anatolian peninsula and even encouraged its spread as a way of unifying the otherwise diverse peoples of provincial Galatia.⁵³

Derek Moore-Crispin accordingly reports that the inscriptional evidence from Greco-Roman Phrygia reveals only Greek systems of inheritance for sons.⁵⁴ With regard to adoption in particular, W. M. Calder notes two inscriptions from Galatia—one third century C.E., the other fourth century C.E.—implying the marriage of an adopted son to his adoptive sister, a common Greek practice that the Romans would have regarded as incestuous and, thus, as abhorrent.⁵⁵ Finally, in arguing for the continuing influence of Greek law in the Roman East, Ludwig Mitteis notes that a law (L. §37) cited in a fifth century C.E. Syrian-Roman lawbook even specifies the circumstances under which a man with no agnatic descendants might make a testament adopting his daughter's sons as his own.⁵⁶ This apparent vestige of testamentary adoption effectively forms a connection

⁵³ William M. Ramsay, "Studies in the Roman Province Galatia," *JRS* 12 (1922): 147-86, 154, notes that the Romans sought to unify Galatia in four ways: 1) administratively, 2) religiously (with patriotic imperialism), 3) linguistically (by encouraging Greek), and 4) "socially by pressing on the province the Greek education and custom and civilization."

⁵⁴ Derek R. Moore-Crispin, "The Sources and Meaning of ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ and Related Terminology in Galatians III.15 - IV.7" (Ph.D. diss., University of London, 1975), 28, building on the earlier work of J. Fraser, "Inheritance by Adoption and Marriage in Phrygia, as Shown in the Epitaphs of Trophimos and His Relatives," in *Studies in the History and Art of the Eastern Provinces of the Roman Empire Written for the Quartercentenary of the University by Seven of Its Graduates* (ed. William M. Ramsay; Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1906), 137-53, 149. In addition to Fraser's evidence, Moore-Crispin notes that inscriptional evidence from Iconium implies that *patria potestas* ended once a son reached the age of majority, a Greek practice that differed from the lifelong *potestas* enjoyed by fathers in Rome.

⁵⁵ W. M. Calder, "Adoption and Inheritance in Galatia," *JTS* 31 (1930): 372-74, 373. Although he notes the correspondence to Greek law, Calder allows that the practice could simply represent "old Anatolian custom."

⁵⁶ Ludwig Mitteis, *Reichsrecht und Volksrecht in den östlichen Provinzen des römischen Kaiserreichs. Mit Beiträgen zur Kenntniss des griechischen Rechts und der spätrömischen Rechtsentwicklung* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1891), 339-42. Karl Georg Bruns and Eduard Sachau, *Syrisch-*

with the more robust practice in fourth century B.C.E. Athens, a connection that stretches right through first century Greco-Roman Galatia.⁵⁷

As a native of Tarsus in Cilicia (Acts 9:11; 21:39), Paul would surely have been familiar with the Hellenistic practices (including adoption) that prevailed in southern Asia Minor, as well as with the Jewish practices of his faith and (probably) the Roman practices of his citizenship. As for the Galatians, the scholarly uncertainty over their general location—whether Paul was writing to the eponymous Gauls in the north of the province or to strictly provincial Galatians living in the south—complicates the issue since only the areas encompassed by the South Galatian hypothesis had been thoroughly Hellenized by Paul’s day.⁵⁸ Indeed, Ramsay notes that it was not until the fourth century C.E. that Roman efforts to Hellenize northern Galatia truly began to triumph over the indigenous Celtic tribal system that had continued to prevail.⁵⁹ He is therefore likely

römisches Rechtsbuch aus dem fünften Jahrhundert (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1880; repr., Aalen: Scientia, 1961) identify four versions of the lawbook: a Syriac version in London (L), a Syriac version in Paris (P), an Arabic version (Ar.), and an Armenian version (Arm.). Curiously, only the London version refers to adoption: “wenn er (in diesem Fall) ein Testament machen will und jene als die Söhne seines Hauses erben lassen will, so steht es in seinem Belieben” (translated by Bruns and Sachau). The parallel passage in P. 17 comes closest (“damit er die Söhne seines Hauses erben lassen”), whereas the wording of Ar. 19 (“er thue, wie er wünscht”) and Arm. 13 (“er . . . den Kindern der Töchter die Erbschaft gibt”) need not imply adoption at all.

⁵⁷ Noted by Ramsay, *Galatians*, 341.

⁵⁸ Stephen Mitchell, *Anatolia: Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor* (2 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 1:85-86.

⁵⁹ Ramsay, “Studies,” 150. Greek culture started to dominate in the major cities of northern Galatia (Ancyra, Pessinus, and Tavium) as early as the mid-second century C.E. (Ramsay, *Galatians*, 142), but even this date is still well after Paul’s day.

correct when he argues that detection of a Hellenistic argument in Galatians demands a south Galatian destination for the letter.⁶⁰

It is worth noting, however, that if Greek culture failed to make significant early in-roads in the north, specifically Roman culture fared little better outside of the administrative arena.⁶¹ In a non-Celtic reading of the argument, Paul would therefore be appealing to a socio-legal framework that was foreign—even if known—to the north Galatians. Furthermore, Paul not only writes in Greek, he also identifies the “Greek” (Ἕλληνας) as the counterpart to the Jew in 3:28, a pairing that, as Dunn notes, reflects “the all-pervasiveness of Hellenistic culture in the Mediterranean world.”⁶² Of course, these observations are also true of Paul’s letter to Rome (cf. Rom 1:16; 2:9-10; 10:12), so they

⁶⁰ E.g., Ramsay, *Galatians*, 180. Of course, the point assumes that Paul’s argument correctly targets his audience’s background and culture. For other arguments in favor of the South Galatia hypothesis, see, e.g., Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2.3-4; Bruce, *Galatians*, 3-18. Arguments for the North Galatia hypothesis typically highlight Paul’s characterization of his audience as Γαλάται in 3:1 (a term ethnically designating the Celts in the North from whom the province gets its name), the travelogue references to “Phrygia and the Galatian countryside” in Acts 16:6 and 18:23, the claim in 4:13 that Paul first evangelized the recipients only because of an illness, and an apparent lack of Jews among the letter’s addressees. See, e.g., Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 6-9; Martyn, *Galatians*, 15-17; Watson, *Judaism*, 108-12. As Bruce notes, none of these points prove particularly decisive: Γαλάται would be the most appropriate term for the diverse inhabitants of southern provincial Galatia (16); the regions specified in Acts 16:6 and 18:23 are admittedly ambiguous but make the most sense geographically as references to southern Galatia (10-13); and we lack definitive corroborative evidence for an illness prompting the evangelization of either region (14). As for the proposed lack of Jewish congregants, the claim in 3:28 that “there is neither Jew nor Greek . . . but all of you are one” suggests the possibility of Jewish audience members, with the rhetorical urgency of persuading gentiles then potentially accounting for the lack of additional mentions.

⁶¹ Ramsay, *Galatians*, 144-45. Describing the situation before the mid-second century C.E., he notes that “Under all these foreign [i.e., Phrygian, Greek, and Roman] elements, however, there lay a substratum of true Celtic tribal character in the family, the society, and the town centre” (145). The Romans initially supported the Celtic tribal system as a counterbalance to the Hellenism in the south (134). For a more thorough analysis of the impact of Roman rule in Anatolia, see Mitchell, *Anatolia*, vol. 1: *The Celts in Anatolia and the Impact of Roman Rule*.

⁶² Dunn, *Galatians*, 205. Cf. Johnson Hodge, *Sons*, 59.

hardly prove a Hellenistic background. They do, however, suggest a presumed familiarity with Hellenistic culture among Paul's audience.

In summary, then, the term διαθήκη in fourth century B.C.E. Athens often, though not always, signified inheritance through adoption. Although older classical scholars frequently proclaimed the demise of this adoptive practice in Hellenistic Athens, recent re-evaluations of the evidence suggest that it continued into the common era. The spread of Hellenism into Asia Minor under Alexander the Great and his Seleucid successors then likely introduced this practice into the area that became the Roman province of Galatia. This Hellenistic culture quickly became entrenched in the south, surviving and then spreading after the area's transition into the Roman Empire. Accordingly, both Paul and his Galatian readers would likely have been familiar with the Greek practice of testamentary adoption, making it a viable background for Paul's use of the word διαθήκη. Of course, a διαθήκη did not have to signify adoption in first century Galatia; as in ancient Athens, context must provide the key. It therefore remains to show that testamentary adoption is not just a viable background but *the* background that enables us to make sense of Paul's argument.

3.2.2 Paul's διαθήκη: A Greek testament rather than a Jewish covenant

The word διαθήκη appears three times in Galatians: in 3:15, in 3:17, and then again in 4:24. Secular usage of the term in Paul's day almost always signified a "last will

and testament.”⁶³ In contrast, the LXX and, consequently, much of the related Jewish literature customarily use διαθήκη to translate / refer to the Hebrew concept of ברית, or “covenant.” The abundance of Greek legal terminology surrounding the occurrence in 3:15 (κεκυρωμένην, ἀθετεῖ, ἐπιδιατάσσεται) typically directs interpreters toward the Hellenistic sense of “will”; the reference to God’s Genesis διαθήκη with Abraham in 3:17 points toward the Septuagintal meaning of “covenant.” How, then, should we understand διαθήκη in this passage?

The first clue to Paul’s meaning lies in his opening claim to speak κατὰ ἄνθρωπον in 3:15. The phrase has been variously interpreted to signify that the following argument 1) serves as an *ad hominem* attack, 2) uses διαθήκη in its customary Greek sense of “testament,” 3) has acknowledged difficulties, and/or 4) appeals to human practices as the basis for understanding God’s practice. As Cosgrove has shown, κατὰ ἄνθρωπον in Greek writings consistently identifies “the lesser part in a stated or implied comparison,” i.e., it signifies “‘merely’ human” (cf. Rom 3:5, 7:22; 1 Cor 3:3, 9:8, 15:32; Gal 1:11).⁶⁴ This conclusion effectively eliminates the first two options above.⁶⁵ The

⁶³ Johannes Behm, “διαθήκη,” *TDNT* 2:124-34, 124-26; Norton, *ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ*, 30-38. Cf. Hans Kreller, *Erbrechtliche Untersuchungen auf Grund der gräko-ägyptischen Papyrusurkunden* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1919; repr., Aalen: Scientia, 1970), 296.

⁶⁴ Charles H. Cosgrove, “Arguing Like a Mere Human Being: Galatians 3. 15-18 in Rhetorical Perspective,” *NTS* 34 (1988): 536-49, 542-46. Looking to rabbinic parallels, Carl Johan Bjerkelund, “Nach menschlicher Weise rede ich: Funktion und Sinn des paulinischen Ausdrucks,” *ST* 26 (1972): 63-100, 90-92, 99-100, argues that κατὰ ἄνθρωπον λέγω functions as a technical term indicating the non-scriptural basis of an argument. While I find Cosgrove’s Greek parallels a more likely background, Bjerkelund’s proposal leads to the same understanding of Paul’s argument that I reach above.

remaining two possibilities then represent diametrically opposed ways of viewing the relationship between the two διαθήκαι in 3:15 and 3:17.

With regard to the third option, κατὰ ἄνθρωπον could serve to acknowledge the ensuing argument's problematical nature, a nature that most scholars attribute to Paul's viewing the two διαθήκαι in 3:15 and 3:17 as fundamentally different even while treating them superficially (and somewhat dubiously) as the same.⁶⁶ This reading makes little sense since Paul would essentially be undermining his own argument.⁶⁷ Why, after all, would testamentary procedures and regulations pertain to God's διαθήκη if that διαθήκη is not actually a testament but a covenant? Furthermore, the context clearly supports the fourth option above: Paul prefaces his discussion of a ratified διαθήκη in 3:15 with the phrase "even though [it is] human" (ὅμως ἀνθρώπου),⁶⁸ thereby

⁶⁵ For κατὰ ἄνθρωπον as signaling an *ad hominem* attack, see, e.g., Longenecker, *Galatians*, 127. For the phrase as pointing to the use of διαθήκη as "testament," see, e.g., Ramsay, *Galatians*, 350.

⁶⁶ E.g., Hays, "Galatians," 263; Dunn, *Galatians*, 181; Moore-Crispin, "ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ," 10-13. Cosgrove, "Arguing," 546, in contrast, suggests that Paul's claim to speak κατὰ ἄνθρωπον indicates that he has adopted a perspective with which he does not agree for the sake of refuting it. For the problems with Cosgrove's proposal, see §3.3.2.

⁶⁷ Cf. Witherington, *Grace*, 241: "It would have been rhetorically inept to suggest an argument was lame, and then offer it!"

⁶⁸ As Burton, *Galatians*, 178-79, notes, although ὅμως usually appears before the second element in a contrast, it can on occasion also appear before the first (cf. 1 Cor 14:7). In Gal 3:15, the context suggests that it contrasts ἀνθρώπου with the claim about a ratified διαθήκη rather than contrasting κατὰ ἄνθρωπον λέγω with the whole claim. The latter interpretation would not unduly affect the emphasis on ἀνθρώπου suggested above, however, nor would the suggestion that ὅμως should instead be read as the comparative ὁμῶς (BDF §450.2).

emphasizing the human source of the resulting principle. Accordingly, his claim to speak *κατὰ ἄνθρωπον* most likely signifies his ensuing appeal to “merely human” standards (3:15) as the basis for a lesser-to-greater argument (*a minori ad maius / qal vahomer*) about God’s dealings with humanity (3:17).⁶⁹

This lesser-to-greater type of comparison would seem to require the basic equivalence of the *διαθήκαι* in 3:15 and 3:17, a conclusion that the close proximity of the two instances and the application of *κυρόω* terminology to each (*κεκυρωμένην*, 3:15; *προκεκυρωμένην / ἄκυροϊ*, 3:17) further support.⁷⁰ Having established this basic equivalence of meaning, we must accordingly ask whether the testamentary sense of 3:15 dominates the seemingly covenantal use in 3:17 or vice versa.⁷¹ The relative positions of the two instances favor a testamentary reading since the more “testamentary” instance in 3:15 would dictate meaning prospectively. Four other factors, however, also affect the decision: typical usage patterns, wider contextual considerations, the claim of inviolability in 3:15, and the appeal to Abraham’s *διαθήκη* in 3:16-17.

I begin with typical usage patterns. Scott Hahn argues for a thoroughly covenantal reading based in part on his claim that all other instances of the term in Paul, the LXX, the NT (with the possible exception of Heb 9:16-17), and the Apostolic Fathers mean

⁶⁹ So, e.g., Hahn, “Covenant,” 87-88; Witherington, *Grace*, 241.

⁷⁰ Contra the NRSV, which translates *διαθήκη* as “will” in 3:15 but as “covenant” in 3:17.

⁷¹ As Moore-Crispin, “ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ,” 9-10, notes, attempts to unite the two instances by attributing to each a more neutral sense such as “disposition” (e.g., Fung, *Galatians*, 154) require a usage of *διαθήκη* that has almost no support in the literary and non-literary sources.

“covenant.”⁷² Nevertheless, even granting the accuracy of this claim—a concession that the conclusions of this dissertation will call into question⁷³—the terminology that Paul uses in conjunction with διαθήκη in this particular case points overwhelmingly to a testamentary reading.

The legal terminology in 3:15 provides a good place to start. Hahn seeks to discount its testamentary value by arguing, on the one hand, that κυρώω, ἀθετέω, and διατάσσω are not exclusively legal terms and, on the other hand, that even if Paul does apply these terms legally, such terminology would be just as appropriate for discussing a legal covenant as it would be for discussing a legal will.⁷⁴ Even heeding these caveats about legal terminology, however, the rare term ἐπιδιατάσσομαι—a *hapax* in extant Greek documents that predate the NT⁷⁵—still points toward a testamentary reading. In the context of Galatians where the word has to mean “supplement,” the deponent compound verb makes sense only if it builds on the similarly deponent secondary

⁷² Hahn, “Covenant,” 81. Other scholars who argue for a covenantal reading include John J. Hughes, “Hebrews 9:15ff and Galatians 3:15ff: A Study in Covenant Practice and Procedure,” *NovT* 21 (1979): 27-96, 66-91; Burton, *Galatians*, 496-505.

⁷³ This dissertation’s ultimate conclusion that Paul’s gospel presumes a testamentary understanding of διαθήκη suggests that, at the very least, interpreters can no longer assume a default covenantal reading of διαθήκη in Jewish and Christian works. For further discussion, see §5.2.

⁷⁴ Hahn, “Covenant,” 86-87.

⁷⁵ Of the 26 other instances of ἐπιδιατάσσομαι in TLG, 10 are citations of Gal 3:15 and all occur in later Christian writers, with the anonymous second century C.E. *Ad Avircium Marcellum contra Cataphrygas* (cited in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16) containing the only other pre-fourth century occurrence. LSJ lists Gal 3:15 as the only instance (630).

meaning of διατάσσομαι as “make testamentary dispositions,”⁷⁶ a meaning especially prevalent in southern Anatolia.⁷⁷ Furthermore, the related terms ἐπιδιαθήκη (“additional will, codicil”⁷⁸) and ἐπιδιατίθεμαι (“make a later will”⁷⁹) suggest ἐπί as indicating “additional” in such compounds.⁸⁰ Hence, LSJ defines ἐπιδιατάσσομαι as “make additions to a will.”⁸¹ Hahn objects to this definition as question-begging,⁸² but it arises as the natural implication of the word’s lexical components. With no other known instances of the word to counter this etymological implication, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that Paul opts for—perhaps even coins—this particular word instead of a more conventional term for “supplement” (such as προστίθημι, which appears in Gal 3:19) because of its testamentary connections.

The suggestion in 3:18 that this διαθήκη determines who receives “the inheritance” (ἡ κληρονομία) provides an even stronger indication of a testamentary

⁷⁶ LSJ, “διατασσω,” 414, meaning II.

⁷⁷ Moore-Crispin, “ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ,” 79.

⁷⁸ LSJ, “ἐπιδιαθήκη,” 630. Cf. Josephus, *A.J.* 17.226; *B.J.* 2.20, 31, 35.

⁷⁹ LSJ, “ἐπιδιατίθεμαι,” 630, meaning II. Cf. Papyri Erzherzog Rainer 723.

⁸⁰ Moore-Crispin, “ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ,” 78-79.

⁸¹ LSJ, “ἐπιδιατίθημι,” 630, meaning II.

⁸² Hahn, “Covenant,” 87 n. 44. He directs his objection specifically at the similar definition in BAGD (“to add a codicil to a will”), arguing instead for Louw and Nida’s more neutral definition “to add to.”

reading.⁸³ Last wills and testaments serve primarily to determine who inherits from a testator; covenants, in contrast, have nothing to do with inheritance. Of course, since the LXX often refers to the land promised to the patriarchs as Israel's "inheritance" (e.g., Deut 12:9-10), the linking of the inheritance in 3:18 with the Abrahamic διαθήκη in 3:17 could indicate that ἡ κληρονομία is simply another Septuagintalism. Such a reliance on the LXX, however, could not explain Paul's subsequent focus on identifying the legitimate "heirs" (κληρονόμοι, 3:29; κληρονόμος, 4:7) of this inheritance, the heirs, that is, of Abraham (3:23-29) and of God (4:1-7). Galatians 4:1-2 even appeals to the standard (human) procedures for handling a minor heir as an explanatory parallel for God's actions (cf. κατὰ ἄνθρωπον in 3:15). The need to establish the Galatians as true heirs and the further references to inheritance procedures thus show that Paul conceives of ἡ κληρονομία in 3:18 as an actual inheritance and not just as a way of referring generally to the Abrahamic promises, a conclusion that in turn suggests an understanding of διαθήκη as "testament."

The wider context of 3:15-4:11 also supports a testamentary interpretation of διαθήκη. Hahn points to the Jewish (i.e., Abrahamic) context of the arguments that both precede (3:6-14) and follow (3:17-18) the claim in 3:15, suggesting that a sudden appeal to Greco-Roman law would constitute a jarring anomaly.⁸⁴ Galatians 3:15, however,

⁸³ So, e.g., Ramsay, *Galatians*, 350.

⁸⁴ Hahn, "Covenant," 81.

begins a section (3:15-4:11) characterized throughout by appeals to a Hellenistic (or at least Greco-Roman) socio-legal background: a παιδαγωγός in 3:24; the child-heir under guardians in 4:1-2; υἰοθεσία in 4:5. These appeals suggest that διαθήκη should be similarly understood in its Hellenistic sense.

The indication of a testamentary reading, however, goes beyond a simple similarity in socio-legal background. As Moore-Crispin notes, Paul's appeal in 4:1-2 presupposes a testamentary context. A father's appointment of ἐπίτροποι and οἰκονόμοι for a minor heir and his establishing the duration of their appointment (τῆς προθεσμίας τοῦ πατρός) would all have been specified in a will.⁸⁵ Of course, the reference to adoption (υἰοθεσία) in 4:5 also fits well with a context of testamentary adoption.⁸⁶ (Section 3.2.4 will identify further contextual considerations suggesting that Paul has testamentary adoption in particular in view.)

Relative position, typical usage patterns, and wider contextual considerations thus strongly suggest a testamentary reading. Nevertheless, the inviolability that Paul attributes to the διαθήκη in 3:15 has always seemed to favor a covenantal reading. The problem is that ancient testators could always amend, annul, or otherwise change their

⁸⁵ Moore-Crispin, "ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ," 15-16, 108-13.

⁸⁶ I will address the potential objection that the Abrahamic διαθήκη cannot refer to testamentary adoption because Christ—the sole seed and heir—is not adopted in §3.2.4 below.

wills; Paul’s claim that “no one sets aside or supplements” a confirmed διαθήκη (3:15) would therefore not seem to be true if διαθήκη signifies a testament.⁸⁷

Scholars have basically devised three main approaches to account for this apparent discrepancy. One approach argues for a testamentary meaning of διαθήκη by claiming that Paul’s premise in 3:15 simply assumes the exclusion of the testator. In other words, Paul actually means that “no one [except the testator]” can modify a ratified διαθήκη.⁸⁸ Such explanations fail to give Paul’s use of οὐδείς its due and create problems for the interpretation of 3:19-20, where God (the presumed testator) “adds” the law through angels (διαταγείς δι’ ἀγγέλων).⁸⁹ A second approach argues for the accuracy of Paul’s premise by trying to identify other legal agreements—such as the Roman *fidei commissum*⁹⁰ or the Jewish *בריא מתנת*⁹¹—that fit his description of inviolability. This approach founders because none of these alternative agreements were actually known as διαθήκη.⁹² Hahn therefore champions a third approach that identifies

⁸⁷ The suggestion of Schlier, *Galater*, 144, that οὐδείς refers to the testator himself thus cannot be correct.

⁸⁸ E.g., Hays, “Galatians,” 263; Martyn, *Galatians*, 156; Oepke, *Galater*, 112; Theodor Zahn, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Galater* (3d ed.; KNT 9; Leipzig: Deichert, 1922), 167. Cf. Phil 2:20.

⁸⁹ Accordingly, proponents of this reading usually argue that 3:19-20 differentiates God from the law (e.g., Martyn, *Galatians*, 338, 357), a problematical argument at best (see §3.3.3).

⁹⁰ Taylor, “Function,” 58-76.

⁹¹ E. Bammel, “Gottes ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ (Gal. III. 15-17) und das jüdische Rechtsdenken,” *NTS* 6 (1959-1960): 313-19.

⁹² Noted by Hahn, “Covenant,” 82; Witherington, *Grace*, 242-43.

the διαθήκη in 3:15 with the Jewish “covenant.” As he notes, this interpretation succeeds at the two points where the other interpretations fail: it identifies the διαθήκη with a legal agreement that was both 1) known by the name of διαθήκη and 2) inviolable even by its author.⁹³

Given the strong contextual indications that we should read διαθήκη in its testamentary sense, we must ask whether this sense truly leads to an inaccurate claim in 3:15. To be sure, ancient testators could amend, replace, or annul their wills at any time.⁹⁴ In fact, this revocability provided testamentary adoption with its primary advantage over the practically-irrevocable *inter vivos* adoption.⁹⁵ Childless Greek men could write wills

⁹³ Hahn, “Covenant,” 83.

⁹⁴ All the evidence argues against the claim of Ramsay, *Galatians*, 351, that no one—not even the testator—could revoke a registered Greek will. To reach this conclusion, he has to conflate the concepts of *inter vivos* adoptions (which arguably were irrevocable; see the next footnote) and testamentary adoptions: “the adoption was the Will-making” (351). Furthermore, classical Greece did not require, as Ramsay proposes (355), that testaments be registered in a “Record Office” in order to be considered valid; such registrations in Ptolemaic Egypt reflect “Egyptian succession duty” and should not be understood as indicating a wider Hellenistic practice. See William Wyse, *ΙΣΑΙΟΣ: The Speeches of Isaeus with Critical and Explanatory Notes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1904), 194; cf. Norton, *ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ*, 62. Finally, Ramsay accepts the possibility of a testator’s making supplemental wills (352), so his proposal still undercuts Paul’s claim that no one supplements (ἐπιδικιάσεται) a ratified διαθήκη.

⁹⁵ Athenian law required that an adopted son inherit equally with any sons subsequently born (Isaeus 6.63), suggesting that, unlike in the Law Code of Gortyn (XI), an Athenian father could not annul a previously enacted adoption. Demosthenes, however, reports a situation in which a certain Polyuctus, after quarrelling with his adopted son-in-law Leocrates, reclaimed his daughter and married her to another man. Leocrates then won a settlement in court, after which both parties released the other from further obligation (41.3-5). The account suggests the annulment of an adoption but provides few details. Even if it does constitute a valid annulment, it would seem to be the exception that proves the rule. Indeed, we even have evidence suggesting that an adopted son stood in a stronger position than a naturally born son in this regard. See the end of §3.2.3.

before going to war or traveling abroad as a kind of insurance policy.⁹⁶ If they died while abroad, they had provided for the continuance of their οἶκος; if they returned safely, they could simply tear up the will and begin a family.

Testators could adjust their wills, however, only until they died, an event that obviously ended their ability to make changes.⁹⁷ The key question, then, is at what point a διαθήκη becomes “ratified” or “confirmed” (κεκυρωμένην). Rightly noting that κεκυρωμένην “describes the legal acceptance or validation which must be given to a proposed transaction for it to be put into effect,” Moore-Crispin argues that the term can therefore refer neither to the execution of a will nor to the death of a testator that makes a will executable.⁹⁸ Appealing to the purportedly parallel phrase ἡ διαθήκη κυρία with which Greco-Egyptian testators often concluded and validated their wills (e.g., P. Oxy. 491.12), he argues that Paul’s κεκυρωμένην instead “must have reference to a legal validation, effective from the time that the will is drawn up, which ensures that it is executable at the testator’s decease.”⁹⁹ A testator, however, could still amend or annul a

⁹⁶ For a διαθήκη made before going to war, see Isaeus 9.15. For a διαθήκη made before travelling, see Isaeus 11.8. For a διαθήκη made before war and then (apparently) revoked upon a safe return, see Isaeus 8.9, 14-15.

⁹⁷ Cf. Claudine Leduc, “L’adoption dans la cité des Athéniens, VI^e siècle-IV^e siècle av. J.-C.,” *Pallas* 48 (1998): 175-202, 178: “L’adoption testamentaire’ . . . est susceptible de repentirs *jusqu’à la mort du testateur*” (emphasis added).

⁹⁸ Moore-Crispin, “ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ,” 67. For execution of the will as its validation, see Burton, *Galatians*, 179. For the death of the testator, see Zahn, *Galater*, 167; Augustine (cited in Eric Plumer, *Augustine’s Commentary on Galatians: Introduction, Text, Translation, and Notes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 162-63 [29.2]).

⁹⁹ Moore-Crispin, “ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ,” 68-69.

will “validated” in this way, leading Moore-Crispin to the problematical conclusion that Paul’s οὐδεὶς in 3:15 must exclude a will’s testator.¹⁰⁰ Accordingly, for Paul’s claim in 3:15 to be accurate, the “confirmation” must refer to a legal act that occurs after a testator’s death.

We unfortunately do not know the specific testamentary procedures operative in first-century Galatia, but classical Athenian inheritance law once again provides a potentially illuminating parallel/antecedent. In ancient Athens, legitimate sons—whether biological or adopted *inter vivos*—had the right to take possession of their inherited patrimony (ἐμβάτευσις) immediately upon their father’s death without any legal formalities. If, however, an estate had no legitimate surviving male heirs, then any potential heirs—whether through testament or intestacy—had to have their claim ratified by the courts through an ἐπιδικασία (or, if there were multiple opposing claimants, a διαδικασία) before they could take possession of their inheritance.¹⁰¹ The ratification of a will thus occurred *after* a testator’s death, just as Paul’s argument requires.

Could this decision be “set aside” or “supplemented”? Inheritance cases in Athens were notoriously open-ended, with the results capable of being challenged (by the opening of a new ἐπιδικασία) until five years after the death of the disputed heir (Demosthenes 43.16; cf. Isaeus 3.58). David Cohen accordingly remarks that “Inheritance cases, particularly where there were no surviving adult male children,

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 72.

¹⁰¹ See Harrison, *Law*, 1:156-62; Rubinstein, *IV. Century Athens*, 40.

operated like a contest open to all in which no result was final because participants were always able to challenge prior results when they felt the moment opportune.”¹⁰² As the speaker in Isaeus’s speech concerning the estate of Nikostratus notes, however, the court’s ratification of a will would tend to undermine many such challenges: whereas a relative could always dispute a kinship-based inheritance by arguing for a closer / more legitimate tie to the deceased, the awarding of an inheritance based on a will eliminated the relevance of kinship ties for future challenges (4.25).¹⁰³

With regard to both the validation and the immutability of a διαθήκη, the parallels to Greek practice become even stronger if Paul has testamentary adoption in view. Indeed, it is the very revocability of a testament that requires some sort of post-mortem validation when adoption is in view. As Frederick Norton notes,

This “testamentary adoption” was not identical with adoption *inter vivos*, because the εἰσποίησις was not legally complete. . . . until the public ceremonies were gone through with after [the testator’s] death. . . . It was not a complete legal contract like adoption *inter vivos* but rather like an instrument drawn up and signed by one party and waiting for the signature of the other. The heir did not become legally a party to it until he had publicly signified his agreement by having himself enrolled in the phratry and the deme.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² David Cohen, *Law, Violence, and Community in Classical Athens* (Key Themes in Ancient History; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 163.

¹⁰³ Of course, claimants could still produce alternate wills, as Dicaeogenes III did after enjoying only a third of his adoptive father’s estate for twelve years (Isaeus 5.7).

¹⁰⁴ Norton, *ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ*, 53.

Officials in Galatia surely had some similar legal mechanism in place for finalizing an adoption. Furthermore, once a testamentary heir had been ratified by the initial ἐπιδικασία and completed the adoption enrollment process, he could then—like any other legitimate son—block subsequent attempts to open a new ἐπιδικασία simply by making a solemn declaration (διαμαρτυρία) that the estate had a surviving male heir. Intestate heirs could not make such a claim, hence the possibility of multiple court hearings in inheritance cases.¹⁰⁵ In fact, the only way for other claimants to challenge an heir adopted by testament once a ruling had been made in the adoptive heir’s favor was to prosecute the heir and his witnesses for bearing false testimony (δίκη ψευδομαρτυρίων).¹⁰⁶ In other words, the only way to set aside a ratified will was to prove that it had been a fraud in the first place,¹⁰⁷ a scenario surely not applicable to God’s διαθήκη with Abraham.

The assumption that Paul understands διαθήκη in 3:15 not just as an instrument of inheritance but also as an instrument of adoption thus helps resolve the chief objection

¹⁰⁵ Rubinstein, *IV. Century Athens*, 45-55, esp. 54.

¹⁰⁶ On δίκη ψευδομαρτυρίων, see Harrison, *Law*, 1:156-57. On the general Athenian view of court decisions, cf. Todd, *Shape*, 145: “In principle, the verdict of the court was final and there could be no appeal. It was an axiom of democratic political theory that this should be so: the verdict of the court was the opinion of the *polis*, and to acknowledge the possibility of higher authority was to repudiate democracy. In practice, however, there were several ways of reopening the case.” The δίκη ψευδομαρτυρίων represents one of those ways.

¹⁰⁷ An adoptee’s ability to return his family of origin after providing the adoptive household with a legitimate son represents a possible exception to this argument that an Athenian adoption could not be “set aside” (cf. Isaeus 6.44; Demosthenes 44.21, 44, 46). The presence of an heir in the adoptive household, however, stands as a testimony to the continuing validity of the adoption even if the original adoptee chooses to relinquish his attained status.

to a Hellenistic reading, namely, that ratified Greek testaments were not, as Paul claims, inviolable. The identification of adoption as the primary aim of a διαθήκη also helps resolve another potential objection: that a testament comes into effect only with the testator's death, but God (the "testator" in 3:17) does not die.¹⁰⁸ Whereas inheriting might require the death of a testator, being adopted does not; the ratification of a testamentary adoption before the testator's death simply makes the adoption *inter vivos*. Furthermore, under Greek law, a father could allow his heirs to start taking ownership of their inheritance even before his death, a possibility that the absolute concept of *patria potestas* did not allow in Roman society. The removal of these objections thus enables us to follow the otherwise overwhelming contextual evidence pointing to the use of διαθήκη in the sense of "testament."

In fact, the appeal to the Abrahamic διαθήκη in 3:16-18 stands as the only remaining evidence potentially pointing to a Hebrew understanding of διαθήκη as "covenant." I will accordingly discuss the implications of this analysis for Paul's use of Abraham in §3.2.5. First, however, I need to show the compatibility of his adoption language in 4:5 with this Hellenistic background.

¹⁰⁸ Noted, e.g., by Hays, "Galatians," 263.

3.2.3 The Greek background of Paul's adoption (υιοθεσία) language

In Gal 4:5, Paul claims that God sent his son “so that we might receive the adoption” (ἵνα τὴν υιοθεσίαν ἀπολάβωμεν). The claim raises many questions; at this point I want to focus solely on the metaphor's cultural background. As James Scott has shown through a comprehensive lexical study, the term υιοθεσία clearly functions as a Hellenistic term for adoption.¹⁰⁹ Scott draws the natural implication from this conclusion with regard to the term's meaning: υιοθεσία never has the general sense of “sonship” that biblical scholars often attribute to it in Galatians.¹¹⁰ He does not, however, draw any implications from his conclusion with regard to the term's background, arguing instead that “the Hellenistic *meaning* of the term must be distinguished from a Hellenistic *background* of the term.”¹¹¹ What, then, is the appropriate background?

Scott argues for a Jewish background to Paul's adoption language. Many scholars dismiss this possibility outright on the grounds that 1) Jewish texts never explicitly refer to υιοθεσία (or other terms for adoption) and 2) the Jewish practice of levirate marriage already fulfilled one of the primary purposes that adoption served in the ancient world,

¹⁰⁹ James M. Scott, *Adoption as Sons of God: An Exegetical Investigation into the Background of ΥΙΟΘΕΣΙΑ in the Pauline Corpus* (WUNT 2 / 48; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1992), 2-57.

¹¹⁰ For υιοθεσία as “sonship,” see, e.g., Brown, *Galatians*, 191-92; Byrne, *Sons*, 80, 183-85; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 172. Cf. NIV: “full rights of sons.”

¹¹¹ Scott, *Adoption*, 267.

namely, raising up heirs for an otherwise desolate household.¹¹² Scott counters these critiques by arguing that Jewish tradition does know of adoption (e.g., Moses' adoption by the household of Pharaoh) even if it does not employ the technical terms elsewhere associated with the practice.¹¹³ He then suggests that Paul calls upon this Jewish understanding in Galatians, paralleling God's adoption of Israel in the Exodus (Gal 4:1-2) with his adoption of believers through Christ (4:3-7) as type and antitype.¹¹⁴ Scott finds the basis for this typology in the Davidic promise of 2 Sam 7:12-14, which, according to Scott, Jewish tradition applies to the eschatological adoption of God's people with their Messiah as the promised Davidic seed.¹¹⁵

That Paul would expect his readers to follow such an elusive, allusive argument seems inherently implausible in a letter clearly intended for persuasion. Despite Scott's aforementioned desire to separate the Hellenistic meaning of υἰοθεσία from its Hellenistic background, absolutely nothing in the context of Galatians invites a reader to make this proposed shift to a Jewish background. None of the Jewish traditions Scott invokes have lexical ties to υἰοθεσία that might suggest them as a background, nor does

¹¹² E.g., Francis Lyall, "Roman Law in the Writings of Paul: Adoption," *JBL* 88 (1969): 458-66, 459-61; James D. Hester, *Paul's Concept of Inheritance: A Contribution to the Understanding of Heilsgeschichte* (SJTOP 14; Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1968), 58-59.

¹¹³ Scott, *Adoption*, 61-117. Cf. William H. Rossell, "New Testament Adoption: Graeco-Roman or Semitic?," *JBL* 71 (1952): 233-34, who argues, based on similarities with slave adoptions at Nuzu, that Abraham must have adopted his slave Eliezer and that Paul therefore likely has this Jewish background in mind. Rossell fails to explain, however, why we should expect Paul to have read Gen 15 in light of ancient Mesopotamian Nuzu practices.

¹¹⁴ Scott, *Adoption*, 149.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 179.

Galatians have any explicit references to 2 Sam 7:14, to King David, or to David's promised seed. Furthermore, Gal 4:1-2 can only be taken as a reference to the Exodus with great difficulty: such an interpretation requires the awkward reading of ἐστίν as a historical present in each verse and must assume that readers would understand the terms ἐπιτρόπους (the common Hellenistic designation for the guardian of an orphan) and οἰκονόμους in 4:2 as generic references to the two types of enslaving Egyptian state officials mentioned in Exodus, even though we have no evidence that these two terms ever designated those Egyptian officials.¹¹⁶ Perhaps most troubling, Paul would be alluding to the Exodus as the key paradigm of freedom in an argument otherwise trying to downplay the importance of the central Exodus event, namely, the giving of the law at Sinai.¹¹⁷ Surely Paul would not make his argument depend on the gentile Galatians' ability to discern such subtle nuancing in Jewish allusions.

Eliminating Judaism as a potential background essentially leaves Greece/Hellenism and Rome as viable sources for Paul's adoption metaphor. As James Walters notes, Greek and Roman adoptions shared much in the way of "motives, values,

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 146 (for the historical present), 143-45 (for the Egyptian officials). With regard to the officials, Scott argues that since a decisive traditional designation for these two types of Egyptian taskmasters had not yet emerged, Paul would have been free to designate them by these two titles. Scott's observation, however, cuts both ways: Paul would have needed to be even more explicit in linking these terms to the Egyptian taskmasters since he could not rely on an established cultural linkage.

¹¹⁷ The same critique applies to Sylvia C. Keesmaat, *Paul and His Story: (Re)Interpreting the Exodus Tradition* (JSNTSup 181; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 167-73, who, accepting Scott's analysis of an Exodus theme in Gal 4:1-7, makes the case for an even larger Exodus background in Galatians by appealing to an intertextual "interpretive matrix" whereby the discussion of key Exodus-related themes (sonship, slavery, inheritance, creation, revelation, and so on) invoke this event as background. This "matrix" approach also suffers from a lack of controls: it is hard to imagine many Jewish themes for which we could not find some link to the foundational Exodus event.

and underlying assumptions.”¹¹⁸ In particular, adoptions in both ancient Greece and Rome served primarily to provide an otherwise childless—or at least sonless—adopter with an (often adult) heir who could ensure the continuance of his family household and cults. It is thus possible to refer generally to Greco-Roman adoption. Nevertheless, the two cultural systems also exhibit certain procedural and even substantive differences that render it potentially important to determine whether Paul’s metaphor specifically invokes one framework or the other.

Trevor Burke’s recent monograph on Pauline adoption metaphors identifies the three main arguments for a Roman background: 1) adoption language occurs only in the Pauline letters to churches in areas of Roman rule (Galatians, Romans, Ephesians); 2) Paul was himself a Roman citizen (Acts 22:27-28) and would therefore have been familiar with Roman customs; and 3) the frequent adoptions in the Roman imperial line would have made the practice widely known throughout the empire.¹¹⁹ These observations help make a case for Paul’s likely familiarity with Roman adoptive practices, and it is possible that Paul’s adoption language in Rom 8:15, for instance, invokes this framework.¹²⁰ The Galatians, however, did not live in Rome. They lived in

¹¹⁸ James C. Walters, “Paul, Adoption, and Inheritance,” in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook* (ed. J. Paul Sampley; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2003), 42-76, 55.

¹¹⁹ Trevor J. Burke, *Adopted into God’s Family: Exploring a Pauline Metaphor* (NSBT 22; Downer’s Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2006), 61-63. Other scholars opting for a Roman background include: Hansen, *Galatians*, 119; Dunn, *Galatians*, 217; Bruce, *Galatians*, 197-98; Lyall, “Adoption,” 465-66; Hester, *Inheritance*, 59-61.

¹²⁰ See, however, Kreller, *Erbrechtliche Untersuchungen*, 179 n. 5, who suggests that the principle of *Noterbrecht* in Romans 8:17 (εἰ δὲ τέκνα, καὶ κληρονόμοι) presumes a Hellenistic viewpoint. For the Hellenistic nature of *Noterbrecht*, see below.

the Greek East, a fact that complicates a simplistic application of these arguments from the broader external context.

The critical problem with moving from the Galatians' status under Roman rule to their familiarity with Roman adoption lies in the Romans' aforementioned tendency to allow local family and inheritance laws to prevail in the provinces. As previously noted, the Romans not only allowed Hellenistic culture to remain in Galatia, they eventually even sought to broaden its influence as a unifying factor. Thus, while a Roman background for υἱοθεσία might be possible, the external evidence hardly favors it. In the less-Hellenized northern Galatia, Celtic familial customs largely prevailed. If, as seems likely, the addressees lived instead in southern Galatia, then the external evidence definitely favors a Greek background.¹²¹

Turning to the internal evidence,¹²² a few scholars have suggested that Paul's portrayal of this adoption in terms of a purchase (ἐξαγοράζω) and/or a "receiving back"

¹²¹ See the end of §3.2.1 above.

¹²² Burke, *Adopted*, 59-60, 71, dismisses the possible relevance of a Greek background based largely on the purportedly "richer" theological implications of the Roman form (cf. Lyall, "Adoption," 466), noting especially that Greek adoption, in distinction to Roman, allowed an adoptee to retain a legal relationship to the birth mother and focused primarily on property transference. The analysis of fourth century B.C.E. διαθήκαι above (§3.2.1) has hopefully debunked the latter claim. As for the former, while Burke rightly notes that Greek adoption left the legal relationship with the birth mother intact (Isaeus 7.25), Roman adoption hardly exhibits the "absolute nature" that he claims: according to the *Institutiones* of Gaius (ca. 160 C.E.), Roman adoptees retained their cognate ties to their original family (3.31) and would even become an *emancipatus* of the birth father if emancipated by the adoptive father (2.137). See Harrison, *Law*, 1:93-94, and W. W. Buckland, *A Text-Book of Roman Law from Augustus to Justinian* (2d ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950), 121-24, 370-71, for the maintenance of these ties in Greek and Roman adoption respectively. Regardless of these inaccuracies, potential theological fecundity does not constitute a valid criterion in distinguishing between possible legal backgrounds.

(the prefixed form ἀπολαμβάνω) reflect the Roman procedure of *adoptio*,¹²³ the type of adoption that transferred a dependent (*alieni iuris*) person from one *patria potestas* to another.¹²⁴ Grounded in older traditions, *adoptio* required the legal fiction that the potential adoptee be “sold” (either to the adoptive father or to a third party) and emancipated three times in order to destroy the original father’s *patria potestas*, after which the adoptive father could stake his claim and “receive back” (if he had been party to the threefold sale) the adoptee.¹²⁵ Nevertheless, the similarities with Paul’s description are superficial at best. The adoptive father never made the final purchase—in some cases he even made the sale—and Paul’s use of ἀπολαμβάνω refers to “our” reception of adoption (τὴν υἱοθεσίαν ἀπολάβωμεν), not to God’s reception of “us.”¹²⁶ The further suggestion that God’s taking the initiative in 4:4-5 best reflects the total authority of a

¹²³ For the purported relevance of ἐξαγοράζω, see Hester, *Inheritance*, 59-61; Dunn, *Galatians*, 217. For ἀπολαμβάνω, see Burke, *Adopted*, 88-89. Dunn, *Galatians*, 218, relates ἀπολαμβάνω to the “recovery” of the divine sonship originally lost through Adam. So, too, Augustine (Plumer, *Augustine’s Commentary on Galatians*, 178-79 [30.7]). Nothing else in the text, however, supports the idea that humanity had previously enjoyed divine sonship. If ἀπολαμβάνω has a significance here beyond simple “receiving,” it probably refers, as Chrysostom (*Galatas commentarius*, PG 61.657) notes, to the reception of something owed (ὀφειλομένην), in this case, the promised adoption (cf. Col 3:24). For this use, see LSJ, “ἀπολαμβάνω,” 205, meaning 2.

¹²⁴ Romans also practiced a form of adoption called *adrogatio*, which consisted of an independent (*sui iuris*) person’s submitting himself (and, thus, his household) to the authority of another *patria potestas*. Because the effective abolition of a household in *adrogatio* required investigation and approval by Roman officials, its practice was restricted to Rome, making it unlikely to serve as the background for Paul’s argument (see the introduction to §3.2 above). On the two types of Roman adoption, see Buckland, *Roman Law*, 121-28.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 121-22.

¹²⁶ For the inapplicability of the “sale” language, see Moore-Crispin, “ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ,” 188-89.

Roman *paterfamilias*¹²⁷ has even less merit since Greek fathers would also initiate the adoptive process.

The reference to adoption in 4:5 itself thus offers little basis for distinguishing between Greek and Roman backgrounds. Accordingly, we must look to the broader literary context. As will become apparent, the preceding appeal in 4:1-2 and the concluding inference in 4:7 both suggest a background in Greek legal traditions.

The first passage, Gal 4:1-2, appeals to the legal situation of a minor heir under guardians and stewards (ὕπὸ ἐπιτρόπους καὶ οἰκονόμους) until the time set by the father (ἄχρι τῆς προθεσμίας τοῦ πατρός). Ἐπιτρόπος typically signifies the guardian of a minor, and a Greek father would often appoint multiple ἐπίτροποι in a testament (e.g., Demosthenes 27.4-6, 36.8). Paul's addition of the term οἰκονόμος, however, presents a challenge for advocates of a Greek background. The term does not have any technical relationship to minors or heirs, and the few times it appears with ἐπίτροπος in the extant sources, both terms usually refer to government officials.¹²⁸

Anton Halmel accordingly raises the possibility that Paul's distinction between ἐπίτροποι and οἰκονόμοι reflects the twofold division of guardianship in Roman law between tutors, who managed the estate of an independent (*sui iuris*) individual under the age of puberty (eventually set at fourteen for boys), and curators, who oversaw a *sui iuris*

¹²⁷ Burke, *Adopted*, 88.

¹²⁸ For the pairing of ἐπίτροπος and οἰκονόμος, see Scott, *Adoption*, 136-40. He identifies three instances where they refer to government officials and one instance where they probably refer to "household supervisors."

minor's affairs from puberty to the age of twenty-five.¹²⁹ (Greek society did not make such distinctions in minority/guardianship.) At first glance, the correspondence seems to work fairly well. The previously mentioned fifth century C.E. Syrian-Roman lawbook consistently refers to the tutor position with the Greek term ἐπίτροπος.¹³⁰ Furthermore, although the lawbook employs a Latin-based title for the second office, the curator role's origin as a type of financial consultant for minors has potential resonance with the economic responsibilities of a typical Greek οἰκονόμος ("steward").

Nevertheless, Moore-Crispin identifies three problems with this proposed connection. As he points out, a minor Roman heir typically had one tutor and one curator; Paul envisions multiples of each.¹³¹ The plurals could admittedly be categorical instead of quantitative,¹³² but a second objection proves harder to dismiss: the singular "time set by the father" (προθεσμίας τοῦ πατρός) seems to imply that the heir emerges from his doubly-subordinate position at a single time and not, as in the Roman practice, in

¹²⁹ So Anton Halmel, *Über römisches Recht im Galaterbrief: Eine Untersuchung zur Geschichte des Paulinismus* (Essen: G. D. Bädeker, 1895), 27. Many other scholars mention these offices as potential parallels without fully endorsing them as Paul's ἐπίτροποι and οἰκονόμοι. See, e.g., Bruce, *Galatians*, 192.

¹³⁰ E.g., Bruns and Sachau, *Rechtsbuch*, L. §5 parr.

¹³¹ Derek R. Moore-Crispin, "Galatians 4:1-9: The Use and Abuse of Parallels," *EvQ* 60 (1989): 203-23, 207. On the legal challenges created by multiple tutors, see Richard P. Saller, *Patriarchy, Property and Death in the Roman Family* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 186-87.

¹³² Cf. Burton, *Galatians*, 214, who suggests the plurals are qualitative. Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 267, explains the plurals instead by suggesting that they anticipate either the plural subject ("we") or the plural στοιχεῖα in the parallel half of the analogy (4:3). This explanation—which the Galatian readers would likely find awkward if they were not accustomed to the idea multiple guardians—is unnecessary for a Greek context.

stages.¹³³ Third, an οἰκονόμος was usually a slave, making it an unlikely term to signify a Roman curator, who was always a free man.¹³⁴

These objections are substantial, but an even larger difficulty looms: the understanding of a curator as someone who oversees the entirety of a person's post-pubescent minority seems to represent a fairly late development in Roman law, an innovation attributed to the reign of Marcus Aurelius in the mid-second century C.E.:

As regards guardians [*curatoribus*], indeed, [Marcus Aurelius] decided that all youths might have them appointed without being obliged to show cause therefor, whereas previously they were appointed under the Plaetorian Law. (Capitolinus, *Vita Marci* 10.12 [Magie, LCL]; cf. Gaius, *Institutiones*, 1.197).

Before Marcus Aurelius, a curator functioned in a very different capacity. Roman law stipulated that a praetor could annul any transaction (*restitutio in integrum*) that he judged to have disadvantaged a minor (i.e., someone under twenty-five) through either fraud or the youngster's naïveté (cf. Justinian, *Digest* 4.4). Although intended to protect minors, this law made businessmen understandably wary of concluding financial deals with anyone under twenty-five. A minor could therefore ask the praetor to appoint a curator to advise him as a safeguard for the transacting partner. Such curators served in a purely advisory role and were always appointed by a praetor at the request of a minor for

¹³³ Moore-Crispin, "Use," 207.

¹³⁴ Moore-Crispin, "ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ," 122 n. 4. The Syrian-Roman lawbook even declares that a man who appoints his slave as a curator over his children does not need to free the slave explicitly since the appointment as curator already implies the slave's freedom. See Bruns and Sachau, *Rechtbuch*, L. §34 parr.

the limited duration of a specific transaction. Accordingly, even if the role of curator had expanded by Paul's day to the point where a father might appoint one in his testament, there would still be no reason for him to specify the duration of a curator's tenure.¹³⁵

Given these difficulties with the purported Roman parallels and the lack of distinction between guardians in Greek society, how, then, should we understand Paul's reference to ἐπίτροποι and οἰκονόμοι? Ramsay solves the problem by appealing to an intermediate legal system—"old Seleucid law"—in which ἐπίτροπος and οἰκονόμος paralleled the Roman offices of tutor and curator, with Roman influence eventually leading to the substitution of the title "curator" for οἰκονόμος.¹³⁶ Unfortunately, we have no other evidence for such a practice in "old Seleucid law," and Paul's singular comment cannot bear the sole evidentiary weight. Burton takes an alternative approach, arguing based on the purportedly parallel description of Aristaichmos as a "guardian and caretaker" (ἐπίτροπος καὶ κηδεμών) in Demosthenes 38.12 that the two terms refer to different roles of a single individual.¹³⁷ The plurals make this reading rather awkward, as does the differing social status—οἰκονόμοι were usually slaves, ἐπίτροποι, free—of the two positions.¹³⁸

¹³⁵ On the development of the *cura minoris*, see Saller, *Patriarchy*, 188-89; Andrew Borkowski and Paul du Plessis, *Textbook on Roman Law* (3d ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 149-50; Buckland, *Roman Law*, 169-72. The Plaetorian law was in place by the early second century B.C.E.

¹³⁶ Ramsay, *Galatians*, 392-93.

¹³⁷ Burton, *Galatians*, 213.

¹³⁸ Moore-Crispin, "ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ," 120. Cf. Moore-Crispin, "Use," 208.

Moore-Crispin thus offers what is probably the best solution: the οἰκονόμοι refer to those who would administer an estate's/heir's financial affairs in subordination to the ἐπίτροποι. As for why Paul would bother to mention this second level of subjection, Moore-Crispin notes that οἰκονόμος appears especially frequently in inscriptions from Asia Minor, a prominence that perhaps explains its inclusion here.¹³⁹ Betz, in contrast, suggests that, since οἰκονόμοι often presided over other slaves, Paul includes them to reinforce his slavery theme.¹⁴⁰ The twofold division could also be intended to create a structural parallel with Christ's twofold incarnational subjugation to his human mother (γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός) and to the law (γενόμενον ὑπὸ νόμον) in 4:5. Regardless, Moore-Crispin's explanation interprets οἰκονόμος in accordance with its typical Greek usage and enables a minor heir to emerge from his twofold subjection at a single time.¹⁴¹ It ultimately provides little help, however, in distinguishing between a Roman and a Greek background.

For many scholars, the indication that a father could specify the age at which his heir would emerge from under these guardians—a practice presumably motivated by the

¹³⁹ Moore-Crispin, “ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ,” 118. Cf. Louis Robert, *Études anatoliennes: Recherches sur les inscriptions grecques de l'Asie Mineure* (Études orientales publiées par l'Institut Français d'Archéologie de Stamboul 5; Paris: De Boccard, 1937; repr., Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1970), 241: “Les inscriptions de l'époque impériale, en Macédoine, et surtout en Asie Mineure, mentionnent très fréquemment des intendants, πραγματευταί et οἰκονόμοι.”

¹⁴⁰ Betz, *Galatians*, 204.

¹⁴¹ Moore-Crispin, “ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ,” 122-26. Other scholars have suggested that the ἐπίτροπος governs the person while the οἰκονόμος governs the estate/property, with the two terms together serving to indicate the comprehensive nature of the minor's subjection. See, e.g., Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 166.

father's desire to ensure responsible management of the inherited estate—resolves this issue of socio-legal context, pointing to a Greek background since Roman law clearly establishes fourteen as the age at which an *impubes* would emerge from his tutor's control and receive his inheritance.¹⁴² Apart from Paul's letter, we have no direct evidence for this practice in Asia Minor, but it does appear in several papyri from Hellenistic Egypt (P. Ryl. 153; P. Oxy. 487, 491, 495).¹⁴³ For example, in P. Oxy. 491.9-10 (126 C.E.), a testator extends the guardianship over his sons until they reach twenty years old, up from the normal fourteen:

[ἐὰν δὲ] τελευτήσω οὐδέπω πεπληροκότων τῶν αὐτῶν Ὁρου καὶ Εὐδαίμον[ος] ἔτη εἴκοσι εἶναι τούτων ἑκατέρου ἄ[χρι πλ]ηρώσει ἔτη εἴκοσι ἐπίτροπον τὸν τε ἀδελφὸν α[ὐ]τῶν Θῶν[ι]ν καὶ τὸ[ν κατὰ μητέρ]α πάππον Ἄρπαῆσιν τὸν καὶ Ὁρ[ο]ν Θώνιος.¹⁴⁴

If I die while Horus and Eudaimon have not yet fulfilled their twenty years, both their brother Thonis and their maternal grandfather Harpaesis (who is also Horus, son of Thonis) will be a guardian of each of these until he fulfills twenty years.

Noting that Greco-Egyptian society maintained a different age of majority (fourteen) than Roman society (twenty-five) and that Roman evidence from Egypt contains no evidence

¹⁴² Becker, "Galater," 61; Witherington, *Grace*, 282-83; Oepke, *Galater*, 127-28; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 267; Schlier, *Galater*, 188-90; Byrne, *Sons*, 175 n. 142.

¹⁴³ Moore-Crispin, "ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ," 129-31; cf. Moore-Crispin, "Use," 209. Georg Bertram, "νήπιος," *TDNT* 4:912-23, 918, also views P. Oxy. 491 as an instance of a προθεσμία τοῦ πατρός, as does Bruce, *Galatians*, 192.

¹⁴⁴ Text from <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text.jsp?doc=P.Oxy.+491>. Cited 13 March 2010.

for the extending of guardianship, Raphael Taubenschlag argues that this practice reflects local rather than Roman law.¹⁴⁵ To suspect that a similar practice prevailed in Hellenistic Asia Minor seems reasonable given Paul's claim.

Nevertheless, we cannot completely rule out the possibility that Roman law also allowed for extended guardianships in Paul's day.¹⁴⁶ While the Proculian school of jurists recognized fourteen as the age of male puberty in the middle of the first century C.E., the Sabinian school traditionally determined male puberty by physical exam; Javolenus Priscus (a late first century C.E. Sabinian) required a youth to meet the conditions of both age and bodily development (Ulpian, *Rules*, 11.28; cf. Gaius, *Inst.* 1.196).¹⁴⁷ Cuq therefore argues that a father probably had some leeway in determining the age of puberty and the resulting end of guardianship,¹⁴⁸ a suggestion that finds support in a law attributed to the early third century C.E. jurist Ulpian allowing a father

¹⁴⁵ Raphael Taubenschlag, *The Law of Greco-Roman Egypt in Light of the Papyri 332 B.C. - 640 A.D.* (New York: Herald Square, 1944), 125-26. He notes a first century C.E. example as well (Fuad 25) and cites Gal 4:1-2 as a parallel (126 n. 52).

¹⁴⁶ Scholars assuming a Roman background for these guardians include Halmel, *Recht*, 26-28; Lagrange, *Galates*, 97-98; Williams, *Galatians*, 107; Dunn, *Galatians*, 210-12; Bruce, *Galatians*, 192; Linda L. Belleville, "'Under Law': Structural Analysis and the Pauline Concept of Law in 3:21-4:11," *JSNT* 26 (1986): 53-78, 61.

¹⁴⁷ Justinian's *Codex* suggests that fourteen did not become the empire-wide official age until the time of Justinian in the sixth century C.E. (5.60.3).

¹⁴⁸ Personal correspondence cited in Lagrange, *Galates*, 97-98. Cuq also notes the case in Justinian, *Dig.* 36.1.48[46 Eng] discussed above.

freedom to specify the duration of guardianship in a testament (Justinian, *Dig.* 26.2.8.2; cf. *Inst.* 1.14.3).¹⁴⁹

Furthermore, the Roman practice of *fidei commissum* enabled a testator to entrust his estate to a third party who would then be obligated to pass the property to the intended heir once that heir had reached an age designated by the testator.¹⁵⁰ Javolenus, at least, regarded this practice as essentially equivalent to the extension of guardianship: when presented with the case of a testator's son who had died before reaching the specified age of sixteen, he argued that the original testator's estate should pass to the son's next of kin rather than remain with the fiduciary heir since, rather than specifying an uncertain date for the trust's execution, the *fidei commissum* effectively entrusted the son to the guardianship [*tutelam*] of the fiduciary heir (Justinian, *Dig.* 36.1.48[46 Eng]).

Of course, the very need for Javolenus to make this ruling argues against a common understanding of a fiduciary heir as a guardian. Taubenschlag has also proposed that the many instances of extending guardianship through *fidei commissa* in Q. Cervidius Scaevola's *Digesta* (mid-to-late second century C.E.) all reflect the local Greek law of the provinces.¹⁵¹ Even if Taubenschlag's proposal is wrong, it still raises the

¹⁴⁹ Justinian, *Dig.* 26.2.8.2: Tutorem autem et a certo tempore dare et usque *ad certum tempus* licet. Cf. Justinian, *Inst.* 1.14.3: *Ad certum tempus* vel ex certo tempore vel sub condicione vel ante heredis institutionem posse dari tutorem non dubitatur. See Halmel, *Recht*, 28.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Saller, *Patriarchy*, 176-77.

¹⁵¹ Raphael Taubenschlag, "Le droit local dans les *Digesta* et *Responsa* de Cervidius Scaevola," *BIAP* (1919-1920): 45-55, 49. His case for the Greek background of the guardianship extensions rests primarily on his assumption that Rome did not provide for such extensions. Nevertheless, he also notes that many of Scaevola's cases explicitly arise in the Greek East—including at least one from Asia Minor (Justinian, *Dig.* 32.35.1)—and that at least one case appoints a woman as fiduciary heir / guardian

distinct possibility that any such provision in first century C.E. Roman law represents a Hellenistic import. We can therefore conclude that, while Paul's argument could conceivably presume a Roman socio-legal background, his language fits much better with what we know of Hellenistic society.

Moving to the concluding inference in 4:7, the claim "if a son, also an heir" (εἰ δὲ υἱός, καὶ κληρονόμος) also suggests a Greek background. Both Greek and Roman law acknowledged a son's "natural and necessary right to inherit" (*Noterbrecht*) through their respective rules of intestate succession, and Paul's claim could allude casually to this basic Greco-Roman right. The policy of free testamentary disposition in Roman law, however, made circumventing this principle rather easy: a Roman father could exclude his children from the inheritance simply by expressly disinheriting them and naming another heir in his testament.¹⁵² Although Greek law did have a process for disowning a son (ἀποκήρυξις),¹⁵³ it required that any remaining sons in a household inherit the

(Justinian, *Dig.* 33.1.21.2) (46, 48). In Scaevola's cases, guardianship extends until an heir reaches anywhere from fifteen (Justinian, *Dig.* 36.1.80.12) to twenty-five years of age (Justinian, *Dig.* 33.1.21.2).

¹⁵² Borkowski and Plessis, *Roman Law*, 235-37; Buckland, *Roman Law*, 321-24. Beginning in the late Republic, a disinherited heir could initiate a *querela* arguing that the testament disregarded the testator's duty, a claim that often required showing that the disinheritance likely proceeded from a misunderstanding on the testator's part. See Borkowski and Plessis, *Roman Law*, 237-40.

¹⁵³ See Harrison, *Law*, 1:75-77. We do not know much about the process, in part because we have no known examples from classical Athens. Harrison identifies misconduct and questionable paternity as potential grounds for ἀποκήρυξις but admits that we have no evidence of any legal restrictions on a father's ability to initiate this procedure.

πατρῴα.¹⁵⁴ The Greeks even protected this right while a father still lived. Whereas a Roman father had complete *potestas* over his entire family and possessions, a Greek father would often need to consult with his heir(s) before disposing of landed property, deciding who would be buried in the family tomb, or even manumitting slaves.¹⁵⁵ This protection of the right to inherit also extended to—and, in some cases, even increased for¹⁵⁶—adopted children, leading most men to delay adoption while the possibility remained of having their own children. Accordingly, to the extent that Paul invokes a strict legal principle, “if a son, also an heir” accords better with a Hellenistic environment than with a Roman environment where being a son provided no guarantee of receiving an inheritance.

In summary, although we cannot definitively eliminate the possibility of a Roman background for Paul’s adoption language based on the evidence examined thus far, the Roman tendency to allow local family and inheritance laws to remain intact in the (eastern) provinces, the father’s ability to specify the age at which his heir emerges from guardianship in 4:2, and the invocation of the principle of *Noterbrecht* in 4:7 all suggest a

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 1:125, 130-32, 233.

¹⁵⁵ On this power of κατοχή, see Moore-Crispin, “ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ,” 152-63, and the evidence cited there.

¹⁵⁶ In a second century C.E. Syrian work by Lucian of Samosata, a son whose father had disinherited him, re-instated him, and then disinherited him again argues that his second dismissal should not be allowed to stand since his re-instatement made him the equivalent of an adopted son—i.e., a son by choice—and an adopted son could not be disinherited (*Abdicatus* 12). The fifth century C.E. Syrian-Roman lawbook also forbids the renouncing of an adoption while allowing the renouncing of a son “with reason” (Bruns and Sachau, *Rechtsbuch*, L. §58). See Mitteis, *Reichsrecht*, 213-15. Moore-Crispin, “Use,” 216, also identifies two fourth century C.E. Hellenistic adoption papyri (P. Oxy. 1206 and P. Lips. 28) indicating that an adopter could not repudiate an adoptee.

Hellenistic socio-legal background. At the very least, nothing in Paul's discussion argues against such a background. This analysis thus leaves open the possibility that Paul has the practice of testamentary adoption in view, the demonstration of which would clearly indicate the Hellenistic nature of Paul's adoption language. The following section seeks to undertake such a demonstration.

3.2.4 Greek testamentary adoption as the overarching background for Gal 3:15-4:11

Despite making a compelling case for the Hellenistic background of Paul's overall argument and adoption language, Moore-Crispin nevertheless denies that the passage has testamentary adoption in view. He grounds this conclusion in the then-prevailing consensus regarding the practice's early demise, but he also argues that, even if testamentary adoption had been a viable option for Paul, the argument of 3:15-4:7 would preclude its being in view. The identification of Christ both as God's true son (4:5) and as the "heir to the promise of the διαθήκη" (3:16) forms the difficulty: as Moore-Crispin rightly notes, adoption as a son of God can apply only to the rest of humanity.¹⁵⁷

I will respond directly to this critique below. First, however, it will be helpful to solidify the overall case for testamentary adoption. I noted earlier in this chapter that testamentary adoption helps to explain the inviolability that Paul attributes to a ratified

¹⁵⁷ Moore-Crispin, "ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ," 189-90 n. 4. Cf. Burton, *Galatians*, 502.

διαθήκη in 3:15.¹⁵⁸ Testamentary adoption also helps to resolve another pressing issue: the introduction of the “sons of God” in 3:26.

A strong case for testamentary adoption arises from its ability to account for the otherwise awkward introduction of divine sonship in 3:26. As proof for his statement in 3:25 that Jewish Christians are no longer under the law, Paul claims in 3:26 that “all of you are sons of God through faith [who are] in Christ Jesus.” Mußner rightly notes the surprising nature of this characterization: “Überraschenderweise redet Paulus nicht bloß von „Söhnen“, sondern von „Söhnen Gottes“. Man würde mit Rücksicht auf 3, 7 und im Vorausblick auf V 29 („ihr seid Abrahams Same“) auch hier „Söhne Abrahams“ erwarten.”¹⁵⁹ Not only has Paul focused on Abrahamic descent since 3:6 with nary a mention of divine sonship before 3:26,¹⁶⁰ but the logic of the larger argument in 3:23-26 also requires showing that Abraham’s descendants—not God’s—now include law-free gentiles. That is to say, it is the gentiles’ status as Abrahamic seed (3:29) that conclusively shows law observance to be irrelevant to such status. The logical and rhetorical emphasis in 3:26 therefore falls on the final three words of the claim: all of Paul’s Galatian readers are “in Christ Jesus” (ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ).¹⁶¹ That the ensuing discussion of “putting on Christ” in 3:27-29 seeks to prove exactly this aspect of the

¹⁵⁸ See §3.2.2.

¹⁵⁹ Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 261. See, too, Byrne, *Sons*, 165-66.

¹⁶⁰ References to Jesus as God’s Son do appear in 1:16 and 2:20.

¹⁶¹ Contra Tolmie, *Persuading*, 143, who claims that “in terms of content, the emphasis falls on the notion ‘sonship of God by faith.’”

claim and that Paul drops “sons of God” from the parallel concluding statement in 3:28 (“all of you are one in Christ Jesus”) help confirm this analysis.¹⁶²

Why does Paul introduce the term “sons of God” in 3:26 if it serves no point in the immediate argument of 3:23-29? Martyn suggests that Paul includes it as part of his citation of a baptismal formula.¹⁶³ Even if the phrase originates in a standard formula, however, the further development of the theme in 4:1-7—where the Son of God comes to enable the adoption of others into God’s family—indicates that it serves an integral role in Paul’s argument. Martyn accordingly suggests that Paul highlights his readers’ status as “sons of God” in order to downgrade the significance of Abrahamic descent,¹⁶⁴ but the identification of the readers as Abrahamic seed in 3:29 would seem to make such downgrading unnecessary.

A second proposal identifies “sons of God” as an indication of full/mature sonship that stands in contrast to a minor’s position under a παιδαγωγός.¹⁶⁵ The “of God” thus becomes extraneous. As Meyer notes, however, “of God” already defines this sonship; “therefore *to supply* the defining idea is quite unwarrantable.”¹⁶⁶ In other words, the

¹⁶² πάντες γὰρ υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἐστε διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, 3:26 / πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἷς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, 3:28

¹⁶³ Martyn, *Galatians*, 375.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 374-75.

¹⁶⁵ E.g., Tolmie, *Persuading*, 142; Fung, *Galatians*, 170-71; Lagrange, *Galates*, 91.

¹⁶⁶ Meyer, “Galatians,” 155.

significance of this sonship lies not in the unmentioned stage of development that it purportedly represents but in the one to whom it expressly relates the Galatians.

The final major explanation argues that Paul effectively equates Abrahamic and divine sonship as designations for Israel, a conclusion often attributed to Brendan Byrne. Grounding his analysis in an extensive review of the “sonship of God” in intertestamental Jewish literature, Byrne concludes that “sons of God”—which serves as a “standard epithet” whose significance Paul simply assumes in 3:26—here likely signifies “the members of the righteous Israel, destined to inherit the eschatological blessing.”¹⁶⁷ In contrast to Paul, however, the gentile Galatians seem unlikely to be familiar with the Jewish literature establishing the exclusivity of Israel’s claim to divine sonship. Furthermore, the distinguishing of God’s “son” from Israel in 4:4 and the ensuing need for even the Jewish sons of Abraham (“we”) to receive divine “adoption” (υἰοθεσία) in 4:5-6 suggest that Paul understands divine sonship here simply as expressing a particular kind of relationship to God. Byrne’s conclusion also still fails to explain the unnecessary and potentially confusing switch from Abrahamic to divine sonship. In fact, the whole parallel argument in 4:1-7 establishing the readers’ divine sonship—not Abrahamic, as in 3:23-29—calls this interpretation into question: if “sons of God” were truly equivalent to “Abrahamic seed,” then 4:1-7 would be largely redundant.

¹⁶⁷ Byrne, *Sons*, 173. His summary of the theme in intertestamental literature appears on pp. 62-63. Cf. Hays, “Galatians,” 271; Witherington, *Grace*, 269-70; Hansen, *Galatians*, 111; Dunn, *Galatians*, 202; Matera, *Galatians*, 144-45; Betz, *Galatians*, 185-86.

The reference to the “sons of God” in 3:26 therefore makes much more sense if, rather than introducing a new or synonymous element into the argument, it articulates a distinct concept that Paul has already implicitly introduced, can consequently assume in 3:26, and can then develop in 4:1-7. The depiction of God’s διαθήκη with Abraham in 3:15-18 as his testamentary adoption of the patriarch provides just such an introduction. It also, incidentally, accounts for the article before υἰοθεσίαν in 4:5. As Byrne notes, the article

shows that Paul is referring to something mentioned before—or at least something presumed to be already present in his readers’ consciousness. . . . Υἰοθεσία seems to be something presupposed all along—something that has been running under the surface of the argument hitherto, only now making an appearance but, in fact, requiring no explanation.¹⁶⁸

Byrne relates the article somewhat loosely to “the sonship of Christ”;¹⁶⁹ it functions more intuitively as a pointer back to the adoption already introduced with the reference to Abraham’s διαθήκη.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ Byrne, *Sons*, 183.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid. Cf. Burton, *Galatians*, 220, who suggests that the article points back to a mature son’s time of release from under guardians in 4:1-2, a transition that has nothing to do with adoption.

¹⁷⁰ Of the four other instances of υἰοθεσία in the Pauline literature (Rom 8:15, 23; 9:4; Eph 1:5), the only occurrence appearing with the article is in Rom 9:4, where it initiates a list of Israelite privileges, all of which are similarly articular. The anarthrous nature of the other references—especially in the similar phrases of Rom 8:15 (“you received a spirit of adoption,” ἐλάβετε πνεῦμα υἰοθεσίας) and 8:23 (“awaiting adoption,” υἰοθεσίαν ἀπεκδεχόμενοι)—and the previous inference of adoption in Galatians thus make it likely that the article in Gal 4:5 is anaphoric and not, e.g., simply Paul’s typical way of rendering this abstract noun.

Finally, I want to mention briefly one additional contextual indication that Paul has testamentary adoption in mind. The letter's other reference to διαθήκῃ occurs in the allegory of 4:21-5:1. In this allegory, Paul identifies the Jerusalem above as "our mother" based on the portrayal of Jerusalem in Isa 54:1 as a barren woman who despite not bearing any children or experiencing any labor pains nevertheless has numerous children. As §4.2.2 will argue, adoption explains this seeming paradox and thus seems to ground Paul's identification of the heavenly Jerusalem with the adoptive Abrahamic διαθήκη rather than with the non-adoptive Sinaitic διαθήκη.

Given these indications that Paul's argument depends on the institution of testamentary adoption, how can we account for Moore-Crispin's correct observation that Christ, the sole seed and heir, cannot be adopted? In response, I note that Paul carefully refrains from applying the διαθήκη language to Abraham's seed. Indeed, the connection between the διαθήκη principle in 3:15 and its application in 3:16 would have been clearer if the latter verse had explicitly referred to the Abrahamic διαθήκη. Galatians 3:16 instead refers to "the promises" (αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι) that were spoken to Abraham and his seed. In fact, an explicit reference to the Abrahamic διαθήκη occurs only in 3:17-18, a section of the argument in which the seed plays no part (cf. τῷ δὲ Ἀβραάμ δι' ἐπαγγελίας κεχάρισται ὁ θεός, 3:18). The argument accordingly seems to presume that God makes his διαθήκη with Abraham, not with his seed. To be sure, the διαθήκη has promissory implications for Abraham's seed, but these implications accrue to the

seed by virtue of true descent, in the same way that a son born to an adopted heir would be an heir of the adopting house by birth.

I accordingly suggest that Jesus' status as a natural—i.e., non-adopted—son of God is what differentiates him from Abraham's other sons and identifies him as the sole seed. The next section, §3.2.5, will explain this suggestion in greater detail and show how Paul grounds it in the biblical texts. Here I simply note that this ability to make sense of Christ's status as the sole Abrahamic seed in 3:16 provides the ultimate indication that testamentary adoption forms the presumed background of 3:15-4:11.

3.2.5 Testamentary adoption and the identification of Christ as Abraham's sole seed

How does understanding God's διαθήκη with Abraham as his testamentary adoption of the patriarch lead to the conclusion that Christ constitutes Abraham's sole seed? In short, it suggests that Abraham shares in the divine inheritance by virtue of his adoption as a son of God. The Abrahamic seed to whom God also promises a share in this divine inheritance must then be both a son of Abraham and a son of God. Christ's acknowledged status as both the Son of God (e.g., 4:4) and a son of Abraham (i.e., a Jew) thus uniquely identifies him as the promised seed.

While audience members unfamiliar with the Abraham story might accept Paul's reasoning in this simplified form, the agitators, at least, would likely protest that the biblical accounts to which Paul appeals name Isaac—not some unidentified future

figure—as Abraham’s promised seed. Indeed, Paul himself will subsequently refer to Isaac as Abraham’s son born through a promise (4:23; cf. 4:28). We must therefore investigate how Paul interprets the biblical account of Abraham.

Galatians 3:16 begins with a seemingly straightforward scriptural observation: “To Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed” (τῷ . . . Ἀβραὰμ ἐρρέθησαν αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι καὶ τῷ σπέρματι αὐτοῦ). Paul then follows this observation with an exegetical comment: “It does not say ‘And to seeds,’ as concerning many, but as concerning one: ‘And to your seed,’ who is Christ” (οὐ λέγει, Καὶ τοῖς σπέρμασιν, ὡς ἐπὶ πολλῶν, ἀλλ’ ὡς ἐφ’ ἑνός, Καὶ τῷ σπέρματί σου, ὅς ἐστιν Χριστός). The unstated subject of λέγει is probably scripture—God would be the other possibility—but to what passage in particular does Paul refer?

The phrase καὶ τῷ σπέρματί σου appears nine times in the LXX, only two of which are spoken to Abraham: Gen 13:15 and 17:8.¹⁷¹ Both instances reflect **לְאִבְרָהָם** in the MT and refer to God’s promise to give the land of Canaan to Abraham and his seed. Of the two, however, God’s expressed intention in Gen 17:7 to establish a **בְּרִית** with Abraham and his seed better fits the context established by the **בְּרִית** discussion in Gal 3:15 and suggests Gen 17:8 as Paul’s source.¹⁷² Indeed, Gen 17 contains many themes

¹⁷¹ The other seven instances occur in Gen 24:7; 26:3; 28:4, 13; 35:12; 48:4; and Num 18:19.

¹⁷² So, e.g., Hays, “Galatians,” 264; Martyn, *Galatians*, 339; Betz, *Galatians*, 156. On the basis of rabbinic arguments that relate the 430-year sojourn of Exod 12:40 to the Abrahamic covenant in Gen 15, Daube, *New Testament*, 438-39, argues that Paul’s subsequent reference to the 430 year gap between the Abrahamic covenant and the giving of the law (Gal 3:17) identifies Gen 15:18—τῷ σπέρματί σου—as his

with potential relevance for the situation in Galatia: the requirement of circumcision for all males in Abraham's household (17:9-12), the promise that Sarah will bear a son (17:15-16), and a differentiation between Ishmael and Isaac as Abraham's promised son (17:18-21; cf. Gal 4:21-5:1). If the agitators did ground their case in scripture, their appeals likely came from this chapter, as would their rebuttals. It therefore makes sense for Paul to address the promise in Gen 17.

Despite this evidence, a few scholars suggest Gen 22:18—*καὶ ἐνευλογηθήσονται ἐν τῷ σπέρματί σου πάντα τὰ ἔθνη τῆς γῆς*—as Paul's source.¹⁷³

C. John Collins identifies three main reasons for this conclusion. First, he notes that the promises of land in Gen 13:15 and 17:8 play no role in Paul's argument. Second, neither 13:15 nor 17:8 refers to God's promise to bless the nations through Abraham, i.e., the promise that Paul has already cited explicitly in Gal 3:8. Third, the immediately preceding promise in the MT of Gen 22:17 that Abraham's seed will inherit the gate of "his" (singular) enemies (the LXX omits the pronoun) suggests that a singular seed is in view, thereby supporting Paul's assessment in Gal 3:16.¹⁷⁴ These three arguments do not

source. The lack of a *καί* in Gen 15:18 and the irrelevance of the exact number of years for Paul's argument in Gal 3:17 render this explanation untenable.

¹⁷³ E.g., C. John Collins, "Galatians 3:16: What Kind of Exegete Was Paul?," *TynBul* 54 (2003): 75-86, 82-86; Becker, "Galater," 53; Schoeps, *Paul*, 180-81; Brown, *Galatians*, 144.

¹⁷⁴ Collins, "Exegete," 82-86. Collins builds on the work of T. Desmond Alexander, "Further Observations on the Term 'Seed' in Genesis," *TynBul* 48 (1997): 363-67, who also notes the non-consecutive verbal form that distinguishes the final clause of 22:17 from the portrayal of a collective seed earlier in the verse and an apparent allusion in Ps 72:17 as evidence for a singular seed. Cf. Brown, *Galatians*, 144. For the number of an accompanying pronoun as differentiating between singular and

succeed in establishing Gen 22:18 as Paul's source: the grammatical specificity of the argument and the repeated *καί* in Paul's citation indicate that he is quoting exactly and not, as Collins claims, simply making an "allusion."¹⁷⁵ The latter two points do, however, suggest that Gen 22 plays an important role in Paul's argument. To see why, we must consider the state of God's *διαθήκη* with Abraham in Gen 17.

In fact, it is the state of Abraham's *διαθήκη* in Gen 17 that enables Paul to overcome the passage's clear portrayal of Abraham's seed as 1) a plurality 2) who will share in Abraham's *διαθήκη* with God (e.g., 17:7). Genesis 17 begins with a command for Abraham to walk blamelessly before God, after which—and, thus, seemingly, in consequence of which—God promises that he will establish (*θήσομαι*) his *διαθήκη* with the patriarch (Gen 17:1-2). As this opening dynamic suggests, while God does speak many promises to Abraham and his seed in Gen 17, these promises nevertheless remain conditional.¹⁷⁶ To be sure, God's *διαθήκη* is with Abraham (17:4), but the *διαθήκη* is still capable of being set aside or revoked. Its maintenance requires obedience.

The requirement of circumcision offers the clearest example: the male who remains uncircumcised has "broken" (*δισκεδάσεν*) the *διαθήκη* and is accordingly cut

collective readings, see Jack Collins, "A Syntactical Note (Genesis 3:15): Is the Woman's Seed Singular or Plural?," *TynBul* 48 (1997): 139-48, 142-44.

¹⁷⁵ Collins, "Exegete," 83.

¹⁷⁶ Cf., e.g., Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 263.

off from his people (17:14). Significantly, circumcision itself cannot represent the act of ratification since, although he might agree to it, an adoptee did not “ratify” his own adoption, a truth reflected in Paul’s claim that this διαθήκη was ratified “by God” (ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, 3:17).¹⁷⁷ Nor can the conditionality be considered a built-in part of the ratified διαθήκη: although a testator might require that a potential adoptee meet certain conditions in order to receive the adoption, once an adoption was finalized it could not be revoked. The διαθήκη in Gen 17 therefore does not exhibit the irrevocability that Paul ascribes to a ratified διαθήκη in Gal 3:15. Abraham’s position resembles that of a testamentary heir while the testator still lives much more closely than that of a son adopted *inter vivos*.

In Gal 3:17, however, Paul claims that God did indeed ratify the διαθήκη with Abraham (προκεκυρωμένην ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ) well before the giving of the law. When does this ratification occur if not in Gen 17? The obvious answer is in Gen 22 when, as a result of Abraham’s obedience in the *Aqedah*, God swears by himself that he will bring to pass all that he has promised to Abraham and his seed (Gen 22:16-17). Hebrews 6:13-18 ascribes a similar significance to God’s oath:

For, having promised Abraham, God swore by himself since he had no one greater by whom to swear, saying “Surely I will greatly bless you and will greatly multiply you” [Gen 22:17]. And thus, having been patient, he obtained (ἐπέτυχεν) the promise. For men swear by one who is greater, and that oath, as

¹⁷⁷ A testator would normally not ratify his testamentary adoption either, but in this case, there is no higher authority.

confirmation (βεβαίωσιν), is the end of every argument. Accordingly God, desiring even more to show the unchangeableness (τὸ ἀμετάθετον) of his will to the heirs of the promise, confirmed (ἔμεσίτευσεν) [the promise] by oath so that through two unchangeable (ἀμεταθέτων) things in which God is unable to lie, we who have fled for safety might have strong encouragement to lay hold of the hope set before us.

According to Hebrews, Abraham obtains the promise only with God's oath, which confirms the promise and makes it unchangeable. This passage thus makes essentially the same point that I suggest underlies Paul's argument in Gal 3:15-4:11, namely, that the conditional promises of Gen 17 become unconditional and irrevocable for both Abraham and his seed in Gen 22. That Hebrews expresses this idea through markedly different vocabulary suggests an independence of thought that perhaps indicates a more widespread acceptance of this idea in early Christianity. Regardless, Paul has already primed his biblically-aware readers to think in terms of Gen 22 through his citations/allusions in Gal 3:8 and 13.

The act of obedience that wins this divine assurance is Abraham's offering up of his son Isaac—his beloved son (Gen 22:2, 12) and only heir (cf. 21:12)—to God. This act takes on new significance when viewed through the lens of God's testamentary adoption of the patriarch. One of the most important functions of an adopted heir was to continue his adoptive line, to provide his adoptive household with a naturally-born son. Hence, Solon's decree prohibits adopted men from themselves adopting. In fact, it was even possible in ancient Athens for an adopted person to return to his family of origin once he had produced such an heir for his adoptive household (Isaeus 6.44; Demosthenes 44.21,

44, 46).¹⁷⁸ The decisive test of Abraham's worthiness is therefore, fittingly, his willingness to surrender his own heir to his adoptive father. Abraham clearly passes: he does not withhold his son from God (Gen 22:12, 16).

Of course, God stops Abraham before he finishes the offering, providing a substitute ram instead. In light of the adoptive *διοθήκη* with Abraham, this halting of the offering of Isaac suggests that God refrains from taking Isaac as his heir through Abraham; like the head of any Greek *οἶκος*, he prefers to have a son born naturally into his household as his heir through the adopted Abraham (cf. the inability of adopted sons to adopt in Solon's law). If, however, Isaac does not become the promised seed, then the need for a seed remains. The passage accordingly seems to contain the implicit promise that, as he provided the ram, so God himself will provide the son who will become the divine Abrahamic heir (cf. Gen 22:8). Indeed, the whole passage emphasizes God as "The One who Provides": Abraham names the place "The Lord will provide," and the episode gives rise to the apparently common saying "On the mount of the Lord it will be provided" (Gen 22:14).¹⁷⁹ As Gal 4:4 then indicates, God follows through on this obligation by sending his own son to be born as a son of Abraham, a son who ultimately is offered up "on the wood" (*ἐπὶ ξύλου*, Gal 3:13; cf. *ἐπάνω τῶν ξύλων*, Gen 22:9).

¹⁷⁸ See Harrison, *Law*, 1:94.

¹⁷⁹ The key verb in Gen 22:8 and 14 is actually *ראה* / *ὁράω*, or "see." As R. W. L. Moberly, *The Bible, Theology, and Faith: A Study of Abraham and Jesus* (Cambridge Studies in Christian Doctrine; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 107-8, notes, the instance in 22:8—"God *ראה* / *ὄψεται* for himself the sheep"—practically requires that we understand the verb in the sense, "see about / see to," hence the usual rendering as "provide." This sense then carries over into 22:14, where the name and saying recapitulate a key theological emphasis of the narrative.

Jon Levenson thus rightly notes that Paul does not establish an Isaac-Christ typology here so much as a significantly more radical substitution of Christ for Isaac: “Paul argues that the ‘descendant’ who is the heir of the promise to Abraham *is not and never was* Isaac or the Jewish people collectively. . . . Paul’s Jesus does not *manifest* Isaac. He *supersedes* him” (emphasis original).¹⁸⁰ Even this shift, however, has warrant in the Genesis texts. For example, rather than identifying Isaac as Abraham’s promised “seed,” Gen 21:12 instead states that the promised seed shall be named “*in* Isaac” (ἐν Ἰσαακ; cf. בִּיצְחָק). Or again, after the *Aqedah*, rather than explicitly referring to Isaac or even using the “son” language that appears earlier in the sentence, the angel of the Lord makes promises in Gen 22:17-18 about “your seed” (τὸ σπέρμα σου), a bit of an oddity given Isaac’s presence. Admittedly, the text could switch to “seed” language because σπέρμα serves as a collective noun, but, as noted above, the switch to the singular pronoun in the Hebrew of Gen 22:17—“your seed shall inherit the gate of *his* enemies (אֵיבָיו)” —suggests that the MT, at least, has a single seed in view. (Known LXX manuscripts omit the pronoun, but Paul may have been familiar either with a Greek text that included it or with the Hebrew tradition itself.)

In other words, by invoking a *ratified* διαθήκη, Paul moves the discussion of promised inheritance from Gen 17 to Gen 22. For readers naturally inclined to understand διαθήκη as a reference to testamentary adoption, the *Aqedah* account in Gen 22 portrays

¹⁸⁰ Jon D. Levenson, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 213.

Isaac as one passed over by God. He remains the son of Abraham whose birth is promised in Gen 17, hence, born “through a promise” in Gal 4:23. He also, along with his descendants, inherits from his father a share in the διαθήκη that assures his eventual adoption as a son of God (Gen 17:21; cf. Gal 4:1-5, 24-27). Nevertheless, Isaac does not qualify as a naturally-begotten son of God—he is born before the ratification of the Abrahamic διαθήκη, after all¹⁸¹—and, thus, he does not qualify as the promised seed who inherits. (As §3.3 and §3.4 will explain, this distinction between Abraham’s single divine seed and his descendants who share in the adoptive διαθήκη creates a tension that God resolves through the law.) The role of the seed accordingly falls to Christ, the one Abrahamic descendant who does not depend upon an adoptive διαθήκη to become a son of God. Notably, Gen 22:16-18 simply declares the promises to the seed; it does not tie them to the Abrahamic διαθήκη.

In effect, then, Paul counters any appeals to Gen 17 by implying that this passage must be read in light of the subsequent events in Gen 22, a movement indicated by his importing of the singular seed from the latter passage into his citation of the former. Again, biblically-illiterate members of Paul’s audience would not need to grasp these details to identify Christ as the seed based on his status as both a son of God and a son of Abraham. The agitators, for their part, would also have a difficult time offering

¹⁸¹ Although Genesis records the births of Abraham’s sons with Keturah (Gen 25:1-2) after the ratification of his adoption in Gen 22, they nevertheless do not qualify as sons of God, presumably because God had already specified that the legitimate seed/heir would come through Abraham’s wife Sarah (Gen 17:15-19)—as Christ ultimately does—rather than through Abraham’s concubines (cf. Gen 25:5).

superficial rebuttals to this understanding of Abraham's seed in a Greek-speaking context where appeals to the biblical text would continually run into the term διαθήκη and its connotations of testamentary adoption. This explanation for Paul's identification of Christ as Abraham's seed thus meets the three criteria for plausibility identified at the beginning of §3.2: it accords with portrayal of Isaac as a child of promise in Gal 4:23-28, it would be readily apparent to a Greek-speaking gentile audience, and it would be difficult for the agitators to rebut.

Significantly, the Hellenistic origins of this explanation can also account for its apparent lack of attestation in the history of interpretation. Early western interpreters such as Tertullian were more familiar with Roman law, which did not provide for true testamentary adoptions.¹⁸² That subsequent interpreters from the East such as John Chrysostom at the end of the fourth century seem similarly unaware that διαθήκη could designate an adoptive testament should come as no surprise given the apparent demise of the practice in the centuries after Paul. (The bestowal of Roman citizenship on all free inhabitants of the Empire—thereby making Roman law applicable throughout the provinces—through the issuing of the *constitutio Antoniniana* in 212 C.E. probably hastened this demise, even though the *constitutio* seems to have left local legal systems in place as well.¹⁸³) By the time interpreters again became aware of testamentary adoption as an interpretive possibility, assumptions about the practice's early demise in Greece

¹⁸² Marcion, of course, simply “erased” 3:16 with its emphasis on Abrahamic descent. See Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 5.4.

¹⁸³ On the *constitutio Antoniniana*, e.g., Hekster, *Rome*, 52-53, 123.

conspired with a by-then well-established interpretive tradition to make the possibility seem moot. Indeed, only the relatively recent re-evaluation of the evidence for Hellenistic testamentary adoption has enabled the reading offered above.

One early Hellenistic interpreter, however, seems to offer support for the interpretation of the Abrahamic διαθήκη as an adoptive testament: Irenaeus of Lyon, a disciple of Polycarp originally hailing from Smyrna in Asia Minor. The one passage where Irenaeus clearly cites Gal 3:16 intriguingly defines the Abrahamic seed in terms of divine adoption: “[Abraham’s] seed is the Church, which receives the adoption to God through the Lord” (*Adversus haereses* 5.32.2; ca. 182-188).¹⁸⁴ Furthermore, Irenaeus elsewhere identifies Abraham’s adoption with his inheritance as co-objects of God’s promise: “God, who introduces, through Jesus Christ, Abraham to the kingdom of heaven, and his seed, that is, the Church, upon which also is conferred *the adoption and the inheritance promised to Abraham*” (*Adv. haer.* 4.8.1).¹⁸⁵ An adoptive διαθήκη would seem to provide the clearest indication in the Abrahamic narrative of a promise for divine adoption. Finally, in *Epideixis tou apostolikou kērygmatos* 8, Irenaeus explicitly connects adoption with the διαθήκη, claiming that “To them that believe [God] is as Father, for in

¹⁸⁴ *ANF* 1:561. Irenaeus cites Luke 3:8 (a reference to God’s raising up children for Abraham from the stones) and Gal 4:28 to support this characterization of the seed before he cites Gal 3:16, which he advances specifically to show that believers receive Christ. A citation of Gal 3:6-9 then concludes the discussion of the seed’s identity, while the adoption language itself echoes Gal 4:5. Accordingly, although Irenaeus does not emphasize 3:15-16 as its basis, his characterization of the seed does seem to rely heavily on the larger Abrahamic argument in Galatians.

¹⁸⁵ *ANF* 1:471.

the end of times He opened up the covenant[*sic*] of adoption.”¹⁸⁶ It therefore seems likely that Irenaeus understood the Abrahamic διαθήκη to function as an adoptive testament in Galatians.¹⁸⁷

3.3 “Not . . . as concerning many but as concerning one”: The singular seed and the elimination of the law as a basis for the promised inheritance in Gal 3:15-20

Whereas Gal 3:16 merely asserts the Abrahamic seed’s identification with Christ, it actually argues for that seed’s singular nature. This argument could either affirm the unified nature of Abraham’s collective seed or insist on the seed’s numerical singularity. Which of these options seems correct?

Noting the purportedly collective understanding of Abraham’s seed in 3:29 (“if you are of Christ, you are Abrahamic seed”) and the grammatical arbitrariness of denying that σπέρμα could function as a collective noun, a few scholars contend that 3:16 presumes a collective understanding of the seed. Thus, Richard Longenecker, for instance, interprets Paul’s argument as a rather pedantic observation that the Genesis text

¹⁸⁶ Armitage Robinson, *St. Irenaeus: The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching: Translated from the Armenian with Introduction and Notes* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1920), 76.

¹⁸⁷ Even if Irenaeus does interpret the Abrahamic διαθήκη as an adoptive testament in Galatians, his understanding of that adoption differs from the understanding for which I have argued. For instance, he seems to hold that everyone who receives Christ thereby receives both the promised divine adoption and Abrahamic sonship. He accordingly does not distinguish between the sons and the seed of Abraham, both of whom he identifies with the church (e.g., *Adv. haer.* 5.32.2).

uses a (collective) singular form instead of a plural form of the word σπέρμα. Such interpretations then emphasize the unity (“corporate solidarity”) of Abraham’s (collective) seed.¹⁸⁸ This solidarity, however, has no relevance to the surrounding discussion of the law’s relationship to the διαθήκη in 3:15-20. It also forms the uncontested basis of the Jewish interpretations of Abraham’s seed, making it difficult to understand why Paul would have to argue for this point. Indeed, Longenecker can account for Paul’s argument with only the weak suggestion that it represents “a possible swipe at the targumic plural [‘and to your sons’]”¹⁸⁹—a targumic plural with which the gentile Galatians seem unlikely to have been familiar, no less. This lack of contextual relevance and argumentative purpose makes it improbable that 3:16 presumes a collective understanding of the seed.

Interpretations in which the verse insists on the seed’s numerical singularity, however, typically fare little better. According to N. T. Wright, for example, Paul understands σπέρματι in the sense of “family.” Wright then interprets the argument for a singular “family” as a contrast with “the plurality of families which would result if the Torah were to be regarded the way Paul’s opponents apparently regarded it.”¹⁹⁰ Unfortunately, this interpretation has a fundamental flaw: requiring gentiles to adopt the Torah would *not* result in a plurality of families. It would instead result in a single,

¹⁸⁸ Longenecker, *Galatians*, 132. Cf. Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 142-43.

¹⁸⁹ Longenecker, *Galatians*, 131.

¹⁹⁰ Wright, *Climax*, 163.

Torah-observant family. If anything, bringing Jew and gentile together in their differences creates a greater plurality than forcing all members “to live like Jews” (Ἰουδαίξειν, 2:14). Wright’s proposal therefore seems better suited for an argument addressing whether Torah or Christ defines Abraham’s family than for Paul’s actual argument addressing whether Abraham’s σπέρμα is a singular or plural entity.

More traditional interpretations of the numerical singularity contend that the argument denies the traditional Jewish understanding of Abraham’s σπέρμα as a collective reference to all Israel, thereby enabling the subsequent exclusive identification of the seed with Christ.¹⁹¹ Such an argument, however, would make little sense. Scholarly appeals to Jewish exegetical practices notwithstanding,¹⁹² the common use of σπέρμα as a collective noun renders it unlikely that the Galatians would find Paul’s interpretation persuasive based strictly on grammar. Indeed, most scholars admit that Paul’s prior identification of the seed with Christ grounds his insistence on the seed’s singular

¹⁹¹ E.g., Hansen, *Galatians*, 98; Matera, *Galatians*, 131; Betz, *Galatians*, 157; Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), 132-34. A growing number of scholars try to integrate 3:16 with 3:29 by suggesting that 3:16 focuses on the numerically singular nature of the seed without actually addressing whether or not this singular seed also has a collective dimension. Thus, e.g., Fung, *Galatians*, 155-56, suggests that 3:16 argues merely that σπέρμα “can [and indeed does] refer to a single person.” Cf. Bruce, *Galatians*, 172. The argument in 3:16, however, denies the possibility of a plural referent for σπέρμα; it establishes the actuality—not the possibility—of a singular referent. An alternative approach therefore contends that, in typical rabbinic fashion, the argument simply highlights a particular feature—in this case, singularity—of a word in the biblical text. In other words, the observation that the text does not say σπέρμασιν does not deny any plurality to the seed so much as it highlights the singular form of σπέρματι. See, e.g., Dunn, *Galatians*, 183-85; Hays, “Galatians,” 264; Witherington, *Grace*, 244-45. This possible-yet-somewhat-awkward reading of Paul’s insistence that σπέρματι does not “concern many” (ἐπὶ πολλῶν) nevertheless still falls prey to the problems mentioned in the main text above.

¹⁹² E.g., Dunn, *Galatians*, 183-85; Hays, “Galatians,” 264; Williams, *Galatians*, 95.

nature.¹⁹³ As an argument supporting this identification, Gal 3:16 would therefore beg the question. More importantly, the seed's singular nature would not preclude its identification with Isaac.¹⁹⁴ The crucial question in establishing Christ as the seed would accordingly seem to be "Isaac or Christ?," not "plural or singular?" This construal of 3:16 thus has Paul advancing a foreseeably tendentious argument that both begs the question and leaves the core issue unaddressed, a rather unsatisfying interpretation.

The way forward, I suggest, lies in reversing the traditionally perceived direction of Paul's argument. That is to say, I suggest that 3:16 does not establish the seed's singularity to support the otherwise asserted identification of the seed as Christ; rather, in accordance with the verse's argumentative emphasis, the seed's asserted identification as Christ reinforces the argument for its singularity. Significantly, the possibility of an adoptive διαθήκη is what enables this reading. In a passage discussing the Abrahamic διαθήκη, identifying Christ—i.e., the son of God who is also a son of Abraham—as the singular Abrahamic seed would suggest the διαθήκη's adoptive nature, thereby providing an implicit rationale for the seed's singular nature (see §3.2.5). Without this possibility, the passage supplies no explicit or obviously implicit justification for the christological identification, hence the traditional desire to find such support in the argument for a singular seed.

¹⁹³ E.g., Martyn, *Galatians*, 340; Hansen, *Galatians*, 98; Cole, *Galatians*, 146-47.

¹⁹⁴ For the Jewish understanding of Abraham's σπέρμα as a singular reference to Isaac, see *Seder Olam Rabbah* 3, discussed in Daube, *New Testament*, 438-44.

If 3:16 does not establish the seed’s singularity to support the seed’s identification with Christ, then why does Paul establish it? In this regard, the letter’s two other explicit references to Abraham’s seed—one in 3:19 and one in 3:29—prove instructive. Both instances appear in close proximity to references to the number one (εἷς). In the former instance, Paul portrays the law as an interim measure instituted by a mediator “until the seed to whom it was promised might come” (ἄχρις οὗ ἔλθῃ τὸ σπέρμα ᾧ ἐπήγγελται), a claim immediately followed by the curious observation in 3:20 that “a mediator is not of one, and God is one” (ὁ δὲ μεσίτης ἑνὸς οὐκ ἔστιν, ὁ δὲ θεὸς εἷς ἔστιν). The latter instance identifies Paul’s readers as “Abrahamic seed” (τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ σπέρμα, 3:29) because they are all “one in Christ Jesus” (εἷς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, 3:28).

Section 3.4 will discuss the identification of multiple believers as the single Abrahamic seed in 3:28-29. Here I focus instead on 3:19-20, arguing that Paul invokes the singular nature of Abraham’s seed to help establish that the law (which was given to *many* descendants) cannot be the basis for the inheritance (which was promised to *one* seed). Before addressing 3:19-20, however, I will first consider the argument of 3:15-20 as a whole and 3:17-18 in particular to show how Paul develops this line of thought.

3.3.1 The structural unity of Gal 3:15-20

Most scholars understand the repeated theme of God's διαθήκη with Abraham to unite 3:15-18 as a (sub)unit. One somewhat common proposal even links 3:15-18 to the preceding verses as the conclusion of Paul's Abrahamic argument, with 3:19-25 then standing as the opening subunit of a new section that extends to 4:7.¹⁹⁵ Against this particular proposal, the tight chiastic structure of 3:6-14,¹⁹⁶ the opening vocative ἀδελφοί in 3:15, and a shift in argumentative appeal from (primarily) scripture in 3:6-14 to (primarily) secular socio-legal parallels in 3:15-4:7 all suggest that 3:15 begins a new phase of the argument.

To be sure, a common thread does run through 3:15-18; the identification of these verses as a unit stands on valid exegetical observations. Galatians 3:15 establishes the general legal principle that no one sets aside or supplements a ratified διαθήκη. Galatians 3:16 supplies the specific case of God's promises to Abraham and his singular seed Christ. Galatians 3:17-18 then draws an implication from the application of the general principle in 3:15 to the specific case in 3:16.

The identification of these verses as a unit therefore does not falter because of what it takes into account. It falters because of what it overlooks. Of the two actions—

¹⁹⁵ Scholars grouping 3:15-18 with 3:1-14 include Witherington, *Grace*, 251; Longenecker, *Galatians*, vii; Rohde, *Galater*, vii. For 3:6-18 as the operative larger unit, see Oepke, *Galater*, 7; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, viii.

¹⁹⁶ See §2.5.

setting aside (ἀθετεῖ) and supplementing (ἐπιδιατάσσεται)—that no one performs on a ratified διαθήκη according to 3:15, 3:17-18 envisions only the possibility of invalidation (ἀκυροῖ, καταργέω); it does not explicitly address the possibility of supplementation.¹⁹⁷ Similarly, of the two recipients of the promises in 3:16, 3:17-18 mentions only Abraham; his singular seed does not appear. Treating 3:15-18 as a unit thus creates two “extraneous” elements in 3:15-16: the additional claim that no one supplements a ratified διαθήκη (3:15) and the emphasis on the promise’s also being spoken to a single seed, who is Christ (3:16).¹⁹⁸ Of course, Paul’s might simply argue a bit loosely at this point, but two related factors indicate a more carefully constructed argument.

First, as mentioned in §3.2.2, ἐπιδιατάσσομαι—the would-be extraneous word in 3:15—appears nowhere else in the extant Greek sources apart from a few later Christian writers. It is therefore possible that Paul himself coined the term for this part of his argument. Even if the word does not originate with Paul, however, its rarity still suggests that its inclusion has an intended purpose. That is to say, ἐπιδιατάσσομαι was not common enough for ἀθετεῖ ἢ ἐπιδιατάσσεται to be a stock phrase that Paul might have written without thinking about the actual meaning of both components.

¹⁹⁷ Moore-Crispin, “ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ,” 77, notes that cognates of ἀθετέω (3:15) and ἀκυρόω (3:17) often appear together as a stock phrase (εἰς ἀθέτησιν και ἀκύρωσιν) in legal documents (e.g., *BGU* 44.16, 281.18-19).

¹⁹⁸ Cf. Tolmie, *Persuading*, 129, who suggests that the irrelevant discussion of Jesus Christ as the seed in 3:16 disrupts the flow of—and thus weakens—Paul’s argument. See, too, Williams, *Galatians*, 95. Burton, *Galatians*, 509, even proposes that οὐ λέγει . . . Χριστός represents “a primitive corruption, and due to an early editor rather than to Paul.”

Second, lexical connections tie the two supposed extraneous elements in 3:15-16 both to each other and to the argument in 3:19-20. Lexically, ἐπιδιατάσσομαι constitutes a compound verb consisting of the preposition ἐπί and the verb διατάσσομαι. Richard Hays has noted the connection with the “ordaining” (διαταγείς) of the law through angels in 3:19.¹⁹⁹ The ἐπί, however, also resurfaces, not in 3:19 but in 3:16: “[not] as concerning [ἐπί] many but as concerning [ἐφ’] one.” Although ἐπί does occasionally occur with the sense of “concerning” in classical Greek, this sense of ἐπί occurs nowhere else in the NT.²⁰⁰ I propose that Paul indicates “concerning” with ἐπί rather than with the more common περί (e.g., Rom 15:14) in order to link this point about the singular seed with the preceding ἐπιδιατάσσομαι. In addition to these ties with 3:15, a common lexical theme also unites 3:16 and 3:19-20, namely, oneness (ἐφ’ ἑνός, 3:16 / ἑνός, εἷς, 3:20).²⁰¹ These connections then indicate a way in which someone could try to “supplement” (as ἐπιδιατάσσεται must be understood) a ratified διαθήκη without annulling it: not by adding *conditions* but by adding *heirs*.

¹⁹⁹ Hays, “Galatians,” 264.

²⁰⁰ BDAG lists Gal 3:16 as the only NT instance where ἐπί “introduce[s] the object which is to be discussed or acted upon” (365, meaning 8). Cf. Jer [LXX] 35:8. This use of ἐπί appears as the last entry with a genitive in LSJ (621, meaning A.III.4).

²⁰¹ Noted also by Wright, *Climax*, 169.

This analysis suggests the following structure for 3:15-20.²⁰² As mentioned above, Gal 3:15-16 connects the general legal principle that no one sets aside or supplements a ratified διαθήκη to the specific case of God’s promises to Abraham and his singular seed Christ. The subsequent verses then use this principle to establish that the law can therefore neither 1) invalidate the promise inherent in the earlier Abrahamic διαθήκη (3:17-18) nor 2) supplement the promise made to the single seed by adding heirs (3:19-20). In addition to accounting for all of the components mentioned in 3:15-16, this explanation also makes sense of the switch from the plural “promises” in 3:16 to the singular “promise” in 3:17-18 (τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν, 3:17 / ἕξ ἐπαγγελίας, 3:18; cf. ἐπήγγελται, 3:19): Paul uses the plural αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι in 3:16 because he distinguishes between the promise made to Abraham and the promise made to the seed.²⁰³ He then returns to the plural in 3:21 (τῶν ἐπαγγελιῶν) when he takes a broader view of the promises as possible targets for the law.

Not surprisingly given the preceding discussion, the proposed reading of 3:19-20 differs quite significantly from most assessments of the passage. I hope to show that this interpretation both explains Paul’s earlier emphasis on the singular seed in 3:16 and

²⁰² See the similar structural analysis of 3:15-20 in Matera, *Galatians*, 129-30. Cf., too, Pierre Bonnard, “L’épître de Saint Paul aux Galates,” in *L’épître de Saint Paul aux Galates / L’épître de Saint Paul aux Éphésiens* (CNT 9; Neuchatel: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1953), 5-132, 70. Neither of these scholars relates 3:19-20 to the problem of supplementing a ratified διαθήκη in 3:15, however.

²⁰³ Schlier, *Galater*, 145, relates the plural ἐπαγγελίαι to the three promises named in the covenant of Gen 17: that Abraham and his seed will 1) be fruitful, 2) possess the land, and 3) have God as their God. Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 142, attributes the plural to the many times God made the promise. Longenecker, *Galatians*, 130-31, argues that the singular and plural both designate God’s covenant without distinction.

enables us to make sense of the otherwise puzzling claim about the mediator in 3:20. Before turning to the analysis of 3:19-20, however, I first need to consider the argument in 3:17-18. The seemingly straightforward description of its function above conceals a divergence from more traditional interpretations at least as significant as the shift proposed for 3:19-20. In short, I disagree with readings in which 3:17-18 argues that the Abrahamic inheritance cannot be based on law. I suggest that the argument instead presumes this stance to make a much more radical claim: namely, that the law can accordingly not serve as a basis for blessing and life.

3.3.2 The law's inability to cancel the promise inherent in the earlier Abrahamic διαθήκη in 3:17-18

Gal 3:17-18

¹⁷τοῦτο δὲ λέγω· διαθήκην προκεκυρωμένην ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ μετὰ τετρακόσια καὶ τριάκοντα ἔτη γεγωνὸς νόμος οὐκ ἄκυροί, εἰς τὸ καταργῆσαι τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν. ¹⁸εἰ γὰρ ἐκ νόμου ἢ κληρονομία, οὐκέτι ἐξ ἐπαγγελίας· τῷ δὲ Ἀβραάμ δι' ἐπαγγελίας κεχάρισται ὁ θεός.

¹⁷*And I say this: the law that comes 430 years later does not invalidate a διαθήκη previously validated by God so as to cancel the promise.* ¹⁸*For if the inheritance is based on law, [it is] no longer based on a promise, but God has granted [it] to Abraham through a promise.*

Galatians 3:17-18 clearly notes that the law's subsequent arrival prevents it from invalidating the earlier Abrahamic διαθήκη. Most scholars, however, assume that Paul uses this point to argue that the Abrahamic inheritance therefore cannot be based on law.

Viewed in this way, 3:17-18 essentially addresses the basis on which Christians receive a share in the Abrahamic inheritance. Abraham becomes a definitive example whose reception of the inheritance through a promise secures, by virtue of a validated διαθήκη's unchangeable nature (3:15), a promise-based inheritance for all Abrahamic heirs. Since the law would instead grant the inheritance based on obedience, it accordingly cannot serve as the basis for the Abrahamic inheritance. The main points of exegetical disagreement then focus on whether or not Paul's failure to attribute the law's origins explicitly to God suggests an additional point of criticism.²⁰⁴

The intuitive sense that this argument seems to make masks, I suggest, several points at which the interpretation actually fits the text rather awkwardly. First, since no one involved in the discussion would argue that the law *does* invalidate the Abrahamic διαθήκη, this reading has trouble explaining the argumentative thrust in 3:17. The claim could admittedly arise as an inference from 3:15-16, although neither the opening τοῦτο δὲ λέγω in 3:17 nor the supporting claim (γάρ) in 3:18 suggests that it does. Even in this case, however, the relevant inference would seem to be that the law does not *change* or *supplement* the Abrahamic διαθήκη. After all, no one would assume that the subsequent coming of the law had retroactively nullified Abraham's own share in the inheritance.

²⁰⁴ Witherington, *Grace*, 245-46, e.g., finds only a temporal argument in 3:17-18. For the suggestion that Paul's failure to attribute the law's origin explicitly to God foreshadows the purported argument in 3:19-20, namely, that the law's mediated nature makes it inferior to the promise, see Hays, "Galatians," 264-65; Matera, *Galatians*, 131-32. Martyn, *Galatians*, 342, even argues that the adding of a codicil "by someone other than the testator" constitutes the key issue in 3:17-18. My alternative reading of 3:19-20 robs this omission in 3:17-18 of its proposed significance; Paul has no need to attribute the law's origin explicitly to God because everyone would already assume this connection.

Second, accounting for the role of 3:18 proves difficult in this interpretation. In essence, the verse puts forward two premises:

- A. Law-based inheritance is incompatible with promise-based inheritance
- B. Abraham's inheritance is promised-based

Taken together, these premises demonstrate only the incompatibility of law-based inheritance with Abraham's inheritance through the *διαθήκη*. Exactly how this conclusion relates to 3:17 remains unclear. The *γάρ* in 3:18 suggests that Paul intends this verse to support 3:17, but it cannot prove the preceding claim without begging the question. Alternatively, it could combine with the premise in 3:17 to reject a law-based inheritance for those who inherit through the Abrahamic *διαθήκη*, but Paul does not draw this conclusion, nor does this reading make good sense of the *γάρ*.

Third, this interpretation relates the promise to the inheritance generally, making it practically synonymous with the *διαθήκη*. Admittedly, many scholars already conclude that Paul uses *διαθήκη* and *ἐπαγγελία* roughly synonymously based on the parallels in 3:15-16.²⁰⁵ Nevertheless, as Cosgrove notes, this interchangeability renders the final phrase of 3:17—"so as to cancel the promise" (*εἰς τὸ καταργῆσαι τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν*)—redundant. While this redundancy could result simply from rhetorical

²⁰⁵ E.g., Matera, *Galatians*, 131.

overkill, an explanation that could better account for this final phrase would be preferable. Cosgrove accordingly contends that the phrase limits the extent to which the law actually *does* invalidate the διαθήκη: i.e., the law does not invalidate the διαθήκη to the extent of cancelling the promise since such a cancellation would, by the principle cited in 3:15, be illegal.²⁰⁶ In other words, he suggests that Paul’s argument presumes the implied minor premise that “the law represents [God’s] attempt to nullify or amend the Abrahamic covenant,” a supposed implication of the agitators’ position that Paul here adopts in order to refute.²⁰⁷ That Paul would expect his audience both to intuit such a radical implied premise and to recognize it as an implication of the agitators’ position, however, seems implausible. The redundancy thus remains.

Fourth, and perhaps most significantly, God does not actually grant Abraham an inheritance based solely on a promise. As Jews in the first century C.E. widely recognized, it is Abraham’s faithfulness in offering up his son in the *Aqedah* that leads to God’s validating the διαθήκη in Gen 22.²⁰⁸ Indeed, Paul himself invokes this tradition in Gal 3:8-9 when he cites God’s post-*Aqedah* promise to bless the nations (Gen 22:18) as the basis for the gentiles’ being blessed “with the *faithful* Abraham” (σὺν τῷ πιστῷ Ἀβραάμ).²⁰⁹ Furthermore, I argued in §2.5.3 that “the promise of the Spirit” (τὴν

²⁰⁶ Cosgrove, “Arguing,” 541.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 536-37.

²⁰⁸ See Sir 44:20-21; 1 Macc 2:52; Wis 10:5-6; Jub 17:15-16; Jas 2:21-24. On the development of this tradition, see Levenson, *Death*, 175-80.

²⁰⁹ See §2.3.2.

ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος) in 3:14b looks back to this promised blessing of the gentiles, a blessing that, according to 3:14a, finds fulfillment in Christ. This proleptic introduction of the promise theme that becomes so dominant in 3:15-29²¹⁰ thus identifies the promises to Abraham and to his seed (cf. 3:16) preeminently with the blessing of the nations through the giving of the Spirit that results from Abraham's faithfulness.

The resulting association of the promised inheritance in 3:18 with the blessing of the nations in 3:8 and 14 actually enables a very different understanding of 3:17-18. Two points in particular about this association prove important. First, the inheritance promised to Abraham and his seed itself consists at least partially in a promise of blessing—i.e., a promise of the Spirit, a promise of life—for the nations as well. In fact, we might even say that the blessed gentiles compose Abraham's inheritance. Second, as I have noted before, “all the nations” (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, 3:8) due to receive the promised Spirit would originally have included Abraham's descendants through Sarah.

Viewed against this background, Paul's argument in 3:17-18 suddenly makes much more sense. By the principle in 3:15, the law that comes 430 years after God's validation of the Abrahamic διαθήκη does not invalidate that earlier agreement.²¹¹ It therefore does not cancel the διαθήκη's inherent promise to bless all the nations, including Israel (3:17). In other words, a Jewish failure to observe the law has no power

²¹⁰ ἐπαγγελία appears in 3:16, 17, 18[2x], 21, 22, 29; ἐπαγγέλλομαι, in 3:19. The only other instances of the ἐπαγγελ- root in Galatians appear in 3:14; 4:23, 28.

²¹¹ The 430 years presumably comes from Exod 12:40-41.

to keep Israel from receiving the Abrahamic blessing. Paul then proves (γάρ) this point in 3:18 by showing faithful law observance to be equally inconsequential with regard to the blessing. If Abraham's inheritance—i.e., the blessing of the nations with the Spirit and life—depends, in Israel's case, on the Jews' subsequent law observance, then it would no longer depend on a promise, but God has already granted this inheritance to Abraham through a promise.²¹² Accordingly, any Jewish reception of the blessing would result from God's promise to Abraham and not from their own faithfulness in observing the law. Paul thus portrays law observance as utterly irrelevant to receiving the Abrahamic blessing of the Spirit: one cannot earn the blessing through observing the law, nor can one lose it through failing to observe the law.

Read in this way, the passage does not consider whether individuals secure their own share in the inheritance through observing the law or trusting in a promise. Rather, it considers whether the subsequent actions of a third party can invalidate or otherwise affect an already secured inheritance. Significantly, this shift in perspective then enables us to account for all four of the noted problems with the traditional interpretation. For example, the role that Abraham's faithfulness plays in securing the διαθήκη / inheritance creates no difficulties for the proposed interpretation since Abraham no longer functions as the definitive example who establishes a promissory basis for inheritance. Abraham stands instead as the one whose inheritance secures a blessing for others. The promise

²¹² The perfect tense of κειχάρισται emphasizes the current implications of this earlier promise.

thus serves, not as the basis for Abraham's inheritance, but as the means through which he receives it (cf. δι' ἐπαγγελίας, 3:18).

This construal also makes better sense of the various structural and argumentative enigmas that plague the traditional interpretation. The treatment of Abraham's personal inheritance, for instance, justifies the initial concern in 3:17 with invalidating—rather than supplementing—the Abrahamic διαθήκη. Taking the article in τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν as an anaphoric pointer to the aforementioned promise of the Spirit in 3:14b then resolves the apparent redundancy in the final phrase of 3:17: εἰς τὸ καταργῆσαι τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν focuses the claim on a specific implication of invalidating the διαθήκη, namely, cancelling the promise to bless the nations. The way in which 3:18 supports 3:17 becomes clear as well. The law cannot invalidate the promise (3:17) because it ultimately has no ability whatsoever to affect the promise (3:18), whether for good or for ill.

Finally, having made my case for this reading on more decisive grounds, I note three minor features of the argument that seem to fit more smoothly into this interpretation. First, 3:17-18 never mentions the Abrahamic seed, a bit of an oddity in the traditional reading that effectively understands the passage to establish the basis for the (collective) seed's inheritance. My construal, in contrast, has no need to introduce the seed into the argument. Second, Paul claims that a law-based inheritance would “no longer” (οὐκέτι) be based on promise. The shift in practice that “no longer” indicates accords better with a discussion of Abraham's continuing personal inheritance than with a discussion of the basis on which individuals currently inherit (in which case, a simple

“not” would seem sufficient). Third, the passage leads to the question in 3:19, “Why, then, the law?” The standard reading of 3:17-18 in which the passage concludes that the law provides no access to the Abrahamic inheritance could certainly give rise to this question, a possibility often enhanced by the perception among interpreters that these verses portray the law in a rather pernicious light. The interpretation that I have proposed, however, differentiates the law from an Abrahamic promise identified as the sole source of blessing, Spirit, and life. It therefore fundamentally undercuts the traditional Jewish understanding of the law as providing a path to those very things. With no need for pernicious overtones, this interpretation thus presses the question of the law’s purpose upon the readers with a force that the more typical reading simply cannot match.

3.3.3 The singular seed in Gal 3:16 and the plurality of Israelites who receive the law in Gal 3:19-20

Gal 3:19-20

^{19a}Τί οὖν ὁ νόμος; τῶν παραβάσεων χάριν προσετέθη, ἄχρις οὗ ἔλθῃ τὸ σπέρμα ᾧ ἐπήγγελται, ^bδιαταγείς δι’ ἀγγέλων ἐν χειρὶ μεσίτου. ^{20a}ὁ δὲ μεσίτης ἑνὸς οὐκ ἔστιν, ὁ δὲ θεὸς εἷς ἔστιν.

^{19a}*Why, then, the law? For the sake of transgressions it was added until the seed to whom it was promised should come, ^bhaving been ordained through angels by [the] hand of a mediator. ^{20a}But a mediator is not of one, ^band God is one.*

Having established in 3:17-18 that blessing and life come through the Abrahamic promise and not through the law, Paul opens 3:19 with the obvious follow-up question: why, then, the law? He develops the significance of his immediate answer—“it was

added for the sake of transgressions”—in 3:21-4:11, and I will delay my discussion of this response until the consideration of those verses in §3.4 below. In the meantime, he digresses from the question of purpose to characterize the law further as having been “ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator.” As mentioned above, the first half of this phrase—“ordained through angels” (διαταγείς δι’ ἀγγέλων) echoes the ἐπιδιατάσσεται in 3:15. The second half—“by the hand of a mediator” (ἐν χειρὶ μεσίτου)—leads to one of the most disputed arguments in Paul: “but a mediator is not of one, and God is one” (ὁ δὲ μεσίτης ἑνὸς οὐκ ἔστιν, ὁ δὲ θεὸς εἷς ἔστιν).

In his thorough review of the history of interpretation of 3:19-20, Terrance Callan provides three helpful principles for whittling down the reportedly hundreds of different interpretations to the truly viable options.²¹³ First, given the apparent context of the giving of the law at Sinai, the mediator in 3:19 (ἐν χειρὶ μεσίτου) must refer to Moses. Second, with no indication of a change in referent, ὁ μεσίτης in 3:20a must accordingly also refer to Moses, whether as a particular reference to “that mediator” or as a general reference to the class of mediators to which Moses belongs. These first two principles, which enjoy widespread acceptance today, rule out the predominant interpretations from the second century through the sixteenth century that understood one or both instances of μεσίτης as referring to Christ (cf. 1 Tim 2:5).

²¹³ Terrance Callan, Jr., “The Law and the Mediator: Ga. 3:19b-20” (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1976), 4-5.

Callan’s third principle argues that since ἐνός οὐκ ἔστιν in 3:20a and εἷς ἔστιν in 3:20b form an antithesis, the references to “oneness” in each half of the verse should be interpreted equivalently.²¹⁴ This criterion effectively eliminates the many interpretations that seek to attach a substantive (Abraham, seed, people, family, nation, etc.) to the genitive ἐνός in 3:20a. To take but one example, N. T. Wright suggests that ἐνός refers back to the “one family” of Abraham’s true σπέρμα (3:16), giving 3:20a the sense, “Moses is not the mediator through whom this promised ‘one seed’ is brought into existence.”²¹⁵ Although I will also connect the argument in 3:20 back to the single Abrahamic seed in 3:16, Wright’s particular construal cannot adequately account for 3:20b. He seeks to relate the εἷς in 3:20b to the ἐνός of 3:20a by arguing that the claim “God is one” effectively implies that God “desires one family.”²¹⁶ Unfortunately, the latter claim does not follow from the former.²¹⁷ Furthermore, according to Wright’s logic,

²¹⁴ Contra Michael Bachmann, *Antijudaismus im Galaterbrief?: Exegetische Studien zu einem polemischen Schreiben und zur Theologie des Apostels Paulus* (NTOA 40; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1999), 103-6, who argues that the difference in inflected form, the position of ἐνός before the negation, and the need to supplement ἐνός mentally with ἀλλὰ πολλῶν while adding nothing to εἷς all suggest that the ἐνός and εἷς could function differently.

²¹⁵ Wright, *Climax*, 169. To account for the lack of an article before ἐνός, Wright suggests that the clause be read with ὁ as its full subject and μεσίτης ἐνός as the predicate, anarthrous in accordance with Hebrew idiom: “he [ὁ] is not (the) mediator of (the) single family [μεσίτης ἐνός]” (Wright, *Climax*, 170). This unintuitive grammatical construction ignores the parallelism with ὁ θεός in 3:20b: ὁ δὲ μεσίτης ἐνός οὐκ ἔστιν (3:20a) / ὁ δὲ θεός εἷς ἔστιν (3:20b).

²¹⁶ Wright, *Climax*, 170.

²¹⁷ Wright cites Rom 3:29-30 as a more explicit instance of the point made in Gal 3:20 (Ibid., 171), but even these verses in Romans portray God as a god of both the Jew and the gentile, of both the circumcised and the uncircumcised, thereby drawing distinctions within God’s “family” (cf. Abraham’s example in Rom 4:11-12).

3:20b actually supplies the basis for the claim in 3:20a: “God, being himself one, desires a single family, but the Mosaic law was given to one race only and *therefore* cannot put this plan into operation” (emphasis added).²¹⁸ In other words, Wright claims that we know the Mosaic law does not establish the one Abrahamic “seed” (3:20a) because the law’s limited nature cannot fulfill God’s desire for a single family (3:20b). A γάρ in 3:20b would accordingly support this reading better than the δέ that appears. More importantly, the proposed logic is faulty: there is no *a priori* reason why the Mosaic Torah could not be at least one of the factors uniting the single family of God’s people.

This third principle of interpreting ἐνός and εἷς equivalently becomes especially important for Callan once he turns to his own analysis of 3:20. Like many scholars, Callan understands the claim that “God is one” as an affirmation of God’s universality and simplicity (cf. Rom 3:29-30).²¹⁹ He therefore rejects the common interpretation of ἐνός as a subjective genitive (i.e., “ὁ μεσίτης is not [a mediator] of one”) on the grounds that such an interpretation would restrict the significance of the ἐνός / εἷς contrast to mere numerical value. Instead, he argues for ἐνός as a qualitative genitive (i.e., “ὁ μεσίτης is not one”), thereby establishing a parallel with his understanding of εἷς in 3:20b.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 172. Cf., too: “Paul has used the first article of the Jewish creed (monotheism) to modify, drastically, the second (election)” (170-71).

²¹⁹ Callan, “Law,” 195-203. Cf. Wright, *Climax*, 170-71. Whereas most scholars assume that Paul’s claim derives from the *Shema* in Deut 6:4, Paul’s use of “God” instead of “the Lord” suggests to Callan that it derives instead from Greek monotheism. Cf. Betz, *Galatians*, 172 n. 87.

Callan's minority position fails to persuade. In the first place, the use of a qualitative genitive does not fit the construction well: had Paul intended to contrast the "oneness" of Moses and God, he could have expressed it more directly by using the same nominative case in 3:20a that he uses in 3:20b—namely, εἷς—instead of a rare (in Koine Greek, at least) qualitative genitive. The awkward sense that this reading yields only adds to the improbability. What does it mean, after all, to say that Moses, unlike God, is not "one," is not "simple"? After considering divine/human and body/soul dualities, Callan ultimately suggests that Moses' "complexity" refers to his role as a mediator of two parties, particularly the way in which he must combine divine inspiration and human language in giving the law.²²⁰ Such "complexity," however, would hardly constitute a valid critique of Moses or the law since neither the divine promise (which also finds expression in human language) nor Jesus (who, at the very least, was divinely inspired) avoids such "complexity."

We should accordingly read the ἐνός in 3:20a as a subjective genitive; by reverse implication, the εἷς in 3:20b then likely appeals simply to God's status as a single entity rather than to his universality or simplicity. By itself, the claim that a mediator is not "of one" could signify either the mediation of at least two parties or the representation of a group. Since the promise also involves two parties, it is hard to see what Paul would hope to gain by establishing the former option. The difficulty that such a reading has making sense of the contrasting claim in 3:20b that God is one helps confirm that the argument

²²⁰ Callan, "Law," 218-19.

does not, in fact, rest on the involvement of two parties.²²¹ In contrast, the straightforward implication of the two premises in 3:20—i.e., that ὁ μεσίτης is not “of” the one God—fits well logically with the idea of mediatorial representation of a group. Thus, although the shift in case from ἐνός to εἰς indicates that Paul does not directly contrast the mediator with God, the logic suggests that he does sharply distinguish the mediator from God. To what end does Paul make this distinction? There are two main possibilities.

Many scholars view Paul’s argument as an attempt to separate God from the giving of the law. According to this interpretation, Paul disparages the law by arguing that, in giving the law to Israel, Moses did not represent the one God but the plurality of angels mentioned in 3:19.²²² Several factors render this reading untenable, not the least of which would be the utter implausibility of an argument trying to divorce God from his holy law and angels; the agitators would have no problem refuting it. Indeed, even 3:19 identifies the angels only as intermediaries, stating that the law was ordained “through” them (δι’ ἀγγέλων).²²³ The defense of the law’s place in God’s plan that immediately

²²¹ A few scholars try to resolve the difficulty by suggesting that Paul here contrasts the bilateral/reciprocal nature of the mediated law with the unilateral nature of the promise (see *Ibid.*, 15, 22, 24), but the claims in 3:20 imply nothing about the types of agreement in view. The suggestion of Betz, *Galatians*, 171-73, that Paul argues for the inferiority of the law on the grounds that the plurality of relationships inherent in the definition of a “mediator” does not conform to the oneness of God creates a superficial contrast that makes little sense.

²²² E.g., Martyn, *Galatians*, 365-70; Hübner, *Law*, 27; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 248-49.

²²³ Noting that διὰ with a genitive could designate either an intermediate or an ultimate source when limiting a passive verb (cf. BDF §223.2), Martyn, *Galatians*, 356-57, 364-70, argues that context requires the preposition to identify the ultimate source in 3:19: διαταγείς δι’ ἀγγέλων, “ordained by angels.” Similarly, Hübner, *Law*, 26-27. For Paul to expect his readers to derive such a novel position from an ambiguous preposition whose primary meaning supports the more traditional understanding, however,

follows in 3:21-22, not to mention Paul's favorable view of the law elsewhere (e.g., Rom 7:12), also makes it unlikely that 3:20 seeks to deny or somehow limit the divine origin of the law.

I suggest that Paul's argument instead seeks to differentiate the law from the promise to Abraham's single seed. In this view, he differentiates the mediator from God—indeed from the whole divine side of the transaction—in order to identify Moses as a representative of the plurality of Israelites who received the law (cf. Exod 20:19; Deut 5:27-31).²²⁴ He then allows the Galatians to draw the clear implication:²²⁵ if the law was given to a *plurality* of Israelites, then it cannot be related to the inheritance promised to Abraham and his *single* seed.²²⁶ That is to say, the law cannot be related to the Abrahamic διαθήκη because, if it were, it would effectively have supplemented (cf.

makes little sense. Accordingly, had Paul intended to designate the angels as the ultimate source of the law, we would have expected him to use the unambiguous ὑπό, as he does in Gal 1:11 (εὐαγγελισθὲν ὑπ' ἐμοῦ), 3:17 (προκεκυρωμένην ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ), and 4:9 (γνωσθέντες ὑπὸ θεοῦ). So, e.g., Witherington, *Grace*, 257; Berger, "Abraham," 56.

²²⁴ As Zahn, *Galater*, 177, notes, God has the angels to speak for him, so Moses must represent the people. For other interpreters who understand 3:20 as effectively identifying Moses as the representative of Israel, see the literature cited in Callan, "Law," 10, 22 n. 40, 25.

²²⁵ The argument in 3:20 must have an implied point since 3:20b is not a conclusion. So Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 249; Martyn, *Galatians*, 365-66.

²²⁶ Lütgert, *Gesetz*, 63, draws this inference from 3:20a alone. See, too, the helpful graphical portrayal in Bachmann, *Antijudaismus*, 119, which shows 3:20a as the reverse formulation of the "one seed" argument in 3:16. Cf. Matera, *Galatians*, 129-30, who identifies this contrast but interprets it as pointing to the mediated (and thus inferior) nature of the law.

ἐπιδικιάσεται, 3:15) the original promise by increasing the number of beneficiaries.²²⁷

Paul thus differentiates the law from the promise here, not on the grounds that it is mediated, but on the grounds that it is given to a plurality.

A potential objection to this reading lies in the proposed validity of the premise that a μεσίτης is not “of one”: as Callan observes, the presence of a mediator need not imply representation of a group.²²⁸ This problem with 3:20a as a general principle disappears if, as a few scholars argue, the articular ὁ μεσίτης in 3:20a does not signify a mediator generally but instead refers back to the specific mediator mentioned at the end of 3:19, i.e., Moses. Galatians 3:20a would therefore assert that Moses represents a plurality. This shift, however, would undermine my proposed construal of the argument since 3:20 could then not establish Moses’ representation of the Israelites without assuming it in 3:20a, an assumption that would render my explanation for the role of 3:20b redundant.²²⁹ Accordingly, a specific reference to Moses in 3:20a would instead likely invoke the tradition that Moses acted on behalf of angels, a tradition to which 3:19

²²⁷ The Jews’ inheriting of a share in the Abrahamic διαθήκη (see §3.2.5) does not supplement the διαθήκη by adding beneficiaries since the Jews ultimately receive the inheritance only by becoming part of the unified “one” in Christ (see §3.4). Of note, the faith necessary for this union then qualifies them as the faithful Abraham’s true sons and heirs (cf. Gal 3:7).

²²⁸ Callan, “Law,” 25.

²²⁹ Bachmann’s identification of 3:20a as a specific reference to Moses’ representation of the Israelites avoids this particular problem because he understands 3:20b to make the additional point that the same God stands behind both the law and the promise. Not only does this reading interpret the ἐνός and the εἷς differently, but it also problematically presumes that the anarthrous ἐνός refers exclusively to the one Abrahamic seed. See Bachmann, *Antijudaismus*, 100-109.

(διαταγείς δι' ἀγγέλων) alludes (cf. Acts 7:38, 53; Josephus, *A.J.* 15.136).²³⁰ The latter half of 3:20 would then twist the significance of this claim by pointing out that the represented plurality of angels did not, in fact, stand on the divine side. I have already noted the problematical nature of such a conclusion.

Other difficulties also bedevil the interpretation of ὁ μεσίτης as a specific reference to Moses. For instance, the present tense of ἔστιν in 3:20a suggests a general statement rather than a historic reference. Wright tries to defend the reading of ὁ μεσίτης as an anaphoric reference on the grounds that a plural would be more appropriate for a general statement,²³¹ but the use of the singular ὁ κληρονόμος to signify “an heir” as part of a general statement in 4:1 provides a perfect parallel to a generic use of ὁ μεσίτης here.²³² Furthermore, had Paul intended a specific reference to Moses, he could have simply named him: since the argument focuses on the plurality of beings involved rather than on the mediated nature of the law, Paul gains nothing by referring to Moses in the abstract as a mediator. A general statement about mediators thus better accounts for Paul’s use of the abstract μεσίτης.

²³⁰ Gaston, *Paul*, 35-44, suggests that the so-called “tradition” of angelic involvement in the giving of the law constitutes a wholly modern construct resulting “from a Billerbeck mentality, which, because of a statement in the New Testament, combs the entire mass of pseudepigraphic, Hellenistic, and Rabbinic material looking for so-called parallels read outside their own context” (37). He interprets Gal 3:19 instead as signifying that the angels administered God’s law among the nations (43).

²³¹ Wright, *Climax*, 169.

²³² Scott, *Adoption*, 128, argues for an anaphoric article in Gal 4:1, but the switch from the plural κληρονόμοι in 3:29 to the singular ὁ κληρονόμος makes this unlikely, as does Scott’s larger interpretive framework. For discussion of this framework, see §3.2.3 above.

What, then, can we say about the problematical nature of 3:20a as a general premise? I have two observations. First, since the presence of a mediator truly implies only the involvement of two or more parties—an implication that seems unlikely to constitute Paul’s point given that it cannot distinguish the law from the promise—every interpretation that regards 3:20a as a general statement must face the issue of its validity. The problem is therefore not unique to my proposal. Second, having acknowledged the absence of absolute logical rigor, it is important to note that the specifics of the giving of the law do bear out the validity of the larger point. The problem, then, does not negate Paul’s larger point that the law was given through Moses to all Israel. Even if the agitators objected to the logic of the formulation, they would still have to address the biblical portrayal of Moses as the representative through whom God makes his covenant with all of the people (e.g., Exod 19:3-8).

In conclusion, then, this reading of 3:20 meets all three of Callan’s criteria: it understands ἐν χειρὶ μεσίτου as a reference to Moses, it understands ὁ μεσίτης in 3:20a as a general reference to the class of mediators to which Moses belongs, and it interprets the ἐνός and the εἷς in 3:20 equivalently. This reading also accounts for the shift from the genitive ἐνός in 3:20a to the nominative εἷς in 3:20b and makes sense of the lexical connection with Abraham’s “one” seed in 3:16. Finally, it has the advantage of assuming the natural alignment of God with his angels (and law): the plurality of angels represent the one God, while the one mediator represents the plurality of Israelites. Galatians 3:19-20 thus serves neither to disparage the law nor to distance it from God. Instead, the verses serve to deny that the law could function as a basis for the promised inheritance.

3.4 “Until the seed should come”: The united Abrahamic seed as the fulfillment and end of the law in Gal 3:19a and 3:21-4:11

Having denied that the law could play any role in leading to blessing and life that come through the Abrahamic promises, it remains for Paul to explain the role that the law actually does play and, in so doing, to explain its current obsolescence for those in Christ. As noted in the previous section, he begins this explanation in 3:19 with the brief comment that “for the sake of transgressions [the law] was added until the seed to whom it was promised should come” (τῶν παραβάσεων χάριν προσετέθη ἄχρις οὗ ἔλθῃ τὸ σπέρμα ᾧ ἐπήγγελλται). Paul thus ties the end of the law to the coming of Abraham’s seed, a point that, I suggest, interpreters have not adequately appreciated.

Instead, scholars all too quickly assume that Paul associates the end of the law with Abraham’s seed because, as 3:16 indicates, Christ is Abraham’s seed. Donald Juel grounds this christological focus by identifying 3:19a as a “paraphrase” of the blessing in Gen 49:10, which prophesies a continuous line of rulers from Judah “until Shiloh comes” (עד כִּי־יבֹא שִׁלֹה) / “until the things reserved for him should come” (ἕως ἃν ἔλθῃ τὰ ἀποκείμενα αὐτῷ).²³³ Juel points out that 4QPB and the targums understand this phrase messianically—an interpretive tradition with which the Galatians would again likely be unfamiliar—but neither context nor lexical connections support the proposal of this extremely weak echo. The typical interpretation of εἰς Χριστόν in 3:24 as indicating that

²³³ Juel, *Messianic*, 86.

the law functions as a παιδαγωγός for the Jews “until Christ” could perhaps justify this christological focus, but I will argue below that a temporal reading of εἰς Χριστόν misreads the argument in 3:24.

Nevertheless, the chief problem with this christological reading of the seed in 3:19 lies in identifying the basis on which Paul understands the Christ to bring an end to the law. Appeals to a purportedly widespread Jewish belief that the Mosaic Torah would cease to apply in the messianic age have little evidence to support them²³⁴ and, as Räsänen notes, cannot overcome Paul’s absolute silence regarding such a belief when it would have proved so helpful to his cause.²³⁵ Dunn’s proposal that Christ’s death makes the sacrificial system of the law obsolete by achieving a permanent atonement cannot explain why this death would invalidate purportedly “ceremonial” aspects of law such as circumcision, especially if the law’s relevance as a guide in “moral” areas remains.²³⁶ Making this argument even less likely, with the exception of a possible allusion in 1:4— “[Jesus Christ,] who gave himself for [ὑπέρ] our sins in order that he might deliver us from the present evil age”—atonement for sin has played no part in the argument of Galatians.²³⁷

²³⁴ See Peter Schäfer, “Die Torah der messianischen Zeit,” *ZNW* 65 (1974): 27-42.

²³⁵ Räsänen, *Paul*, 236-40. Bruce, *Galatians*, 83-84, 176, argues for the incompatibility of Messiah and Torah in Paul’s logic but grounds it primarily in Paul’s Damascus Road revelation.

²³⁶ Dunn, *Galatians*, 190.

²³⁷ On the non-sacrificial understanding of 3:13, see §2.5.1.

Given the difficulty of finding any reason in the text, many interpreters choose to focus more on the existence of a termination point for the law than on the reason for this termination point, an interpretive strategy that effectively reduces Paul's claim to mere assertion.²³⁸ That Christ brings the law to an end, however, would seem to be one of the key points on which Paul and the agitators disagree. It is a point, in other words, that he needs to establish, not assume or assert.

I suggest that scholars have such a difficult time identifying a compelling argument for the end of the law because they assume Christ's seedship to be largely irrelevant to the issue, a stance that effectively reverses Paul's logic. Galatians 3:19, after all, ties the end of the law not to the coming of the Christ but to the coming of Abraham's seed. The law therefore does not end with the arrival of the Christ, who also happens to be Abraham's seed. Rather, the law ends with the arrival of Abraham's seed, who also happens to be the Christ. This proposed importance of the Abrahamic seed finds confirmation in Gal 3:21-22 when Paul identifies the giving of the (Abrahamic) promises as the purpose (ἵνα) of a transgression-oriented law. To understand Paul's logic, then, we must seek to understand the relationship between the law and Abraham's seed, particularly why the seed's arrival would bring about the end of the law.

This tie between the law and the seed suggests that the law's purpose somehow relates to the Abrahamic διαθήκη. Indeed, the preceding discussion of 3:15-20 has

²³⁸ E.g., Williams, *Galatians*, 97; Hansen, *Galatians*, 102; Matera, *Galatians*, 133; Fung, *Galatians*, 160; Burton, *Galatians*, 189; Meyer, "Galatians," 130.

revealed a problem that this inviolable διαθήκη creates. On the one hand, the promise to bless all the nations (3:8; cf. Gen 22:18) originally includes Abraham's descendants through Sarah. On the other hand, only two individuals receive this promise to bless the nations: Abraham and his single seed. The problem arises in that the promised blessing comes to the nations in the form of the Spirit (3:14). As will become apparent, reception of the Spirit transforms ("adopts") a person into a son of God (cf. Gal 4:5-6; Rom 8:15). Jews who receive the Spirit would therefore qualify as Abrahamic seed by virtue of their being both sons of Abraham and sons of God. God thus faces a dilemma: the fulfillment of the promise inherent in the inviolable Abrahamic διαθήκη would result in the supplementing of the διαθήκη through the addition of heirs.

This section, §3.4, argues that, according to 3:19a and 3:21-4:11, God resolves this problem by "adding" the law. The law distinguishes Israel from the nations, thereby excluding them from the scope of the promise. The law does not, however, thereby serve to keep the promise from the Jews, a task that would effectively modify Abraham's promised inheritance (cf. 3:17-18). Instead, it serves to compel Abraham's Jewish sons into the patriarch's single seed—i.e., into Christ—where they then receive the promised blessing. In this way, the law enables God to remain faithful to both requirements of the Abrahamic διαθήκη, extending the διαθήκη's promised blessing to Abraham's physical descendants without supplementing the number of heirs. Hence, the law works to support the promises (cf. 3:21).

The law achieves its desired effect through a two-pronged approach. On the one hand, it compels the Jews to rely on faith for their righteousness by exposing their

sinfulness. On the other hand, it separates them out from the nations, thereby forcing them into Christ if they want to receive the Abrahamic blessing to the gentiles and become part of the Abrahmic seed who inherits. (Of course, this step of faith effectively qualifies them as Abraham's true sons [cf. 3:7] and, accordingly, his heirs.) The law thus fulfills its purpose in each case, not when it is kept, but when it is transgressed, hence Paul's claim that it was added "for the sake of transgressions" (τῶν παραβάσεων χάριν, 3:19). Furthermore, since entering into this union in Christ necessarily involves dying to the law, it marks both the fulfillment and the end of the law (cf. Rom 10:4).

This understanding of the law must have constituted a key point of difference between Paul and the agitators, who likely held to the traditional Jewish view of the law as a source of life. Thus, although the explanation in Gal 3:19a expresses this view of the law *in nuce*, Paul could hardly hope to make such a crucial point in this abbreviated form. Galatians 3:21-4:11 accordingly supports and expounds upon this initial claim. As I will argue below, Gal 3:21-22 establishes this transgression-oriented understanding of the law in opposition to the more common view that the law serves to give life. Galatians 3:23-4:11 then argues based on the union of Jew and gentile as Abraham's seed that the law has no relevance for those in Christ.

The identification of Paul's readers as Abrahamic seed, however, raises another potential issue, namely, how this admitted plurality in seed membership corresponds to the earlier insistence on the singular nature of Abraham's seed. After all, Paul has just divorced the law from the promise in part on the grounds that the law was given through a mediator to the plurality of Israelites and, thus, not to the single seed (3:19-20). The

following analysis will therefore also seek to show how Christ’s mediation differs from the mediation of Moses, i.e., how the plurality of people identified as Abrahamic seed in 3:29 remains consistent with the singularity of his seed in 3:16. As I have already suggested, the answer involves Paul’s claim that his readers are all “one” (εἷς) in Christ (3:28; cf. 3:16, 19-20).

3.4.1 “It was added for the sake of transgressions”: The twofold role of the law in promoting both faith and Christ according to Gal 3:19, 21-22

Gal 3:19a, 21-22

^{19a}Τί οὖν ὁ νόμος; τῶν παραβάσεων χάριν προσετέθη, ἄχρις οὗ ἔλθῃ τὸ σπέρμα ᾧ ἐπήγγελται . . . ²¹Ὁ οὖν νόμος κατὰ τῶν ἐπαγγελιῶν [τοῦ θεοῦ]; μὴ γένοιτο· εἰ γὰρ ἐδόθη νόμος ὁ δυνάμενος ζωοποιῆσαι, ὄντως ἐκ νόμου ἂν ἦν ἡ δικαιοσύνη. ²²ἀλλὰ συνέκλεισεν ἡ γραφή τὰ πάντα ὑπὸ ἁμαρτίαν ἵνα ἡ ἐπαγγελία ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δοθῇ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν.

^{19a}*Why, then, the law? For the sake of transgressions it was added until the seed to whom it was promised should come . . . ²¹Is the law then against the promises [of God]? By no means! For if a law that was able to make alive had been given, then righteousness would be on the basis of law. ²²But the scripture has enclosed everything under sin so that the promise might be given on the basis of Jesus Christ’s faith to those who believe.*

If the law does not qualify a person to receive the blessings and life that come through the Abrahamic promises, then why was it given? Paul begins to answer this question in 3:19 by claiming that the law was “added” (προσετέθη) for the sake of transgressions. This “adding” of the law establishes the law’s secondary nature and, by

the principle articulated in 3:15, its inability to set aside or supplement the earlier Abrahamic διαθήκη. Most scholars accordingly see this claim as establishing the law's inferiority to the promise or even as denying the divine nature of the law.²³⁹ I suggest, however, that Paul has a much more positive understanding of the law in view. In short, as the following analysis will show, the need for the law arises as a direct result of the ratified Abrahamic διαθήκη's unchangeable nature.

Paul states in 3:19 that the law was added τῶν παραβάσεων χάριν, or “for the sake of transgressions.” The improper preposition χάριν can be either telic or causal.²⁴⁰ Unlike ἁμαρτία, however, a παράβασις by definition constitutes the violation of a pre-existing law or standard; as Paul points out in Rom 4:15, where there is no law, neither is there transgression (οὐ . . . οὐκ ἔστιν νόμος, οὐδὲ παράβασις; cf. Rom 5:13-14). Indeed, although Paul uses παράβασις and its cognates rather infrequently,²⁴¹ all of the other instances presume this specific nuance. Causal explanations of the χάριν in which the law comes to restrain or remedy transgressions²⁴² therefore reverse the intrinsic (and

²³⁹ For inferiority, see, e.g., Burton, *Galatians*, 188; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 138. For the denial of the law's divine nature, see, e.g., Martyn, *Galatians*, 354; Hübner, *Law*, 26-29.

²⁴⁰ BDAG “χάριν,” 1078-79.

²⁴¹ παράβασις appears only in Rom 2:23, 4:15, 5:14; Gal 3:19; cf. 1 Tim 2:14. The cognate παραβάτης appears in Rom 2:25, 27; Gal 2:18.

²⁴² For the law as restraining transgressions, see David John Lull, “‘The Law was our Pedagogue’: A Study in Galatians 3:19-25,” *JBL* 105 (1986): 481-98, 487; Chrysostom, *Galatas commentarius* (PG 61.654); and many of the church fathers. For (provisional) atonement through the sacrificial system as the motivating factor, see Dunn, *Galatians*, 189-90. For an alternative causal interpretation, see Jerome, *Commentariorum in epistulam ad Galatas*, 2.3.19-20 (PL 26:391C [440]), who argues that the law comes in response to the “transgressions about to be forbidden” [*transgressiones prohibitura*], i.e., Israel's

normal Pauline) relationship between law and transgression, suggesting that χάρις instead identifies “transgressions” as the purpose of the law. Several commentators interpret this purpose more sinisterly as provoking transgressions (cf. Rom 7:5),²⁴³ but the brevity of Paul’s answer and, as I will show, the surrounding context provide no reason for seeing in this answer anything more than the law’s basic role of defining the standards that make transgressions possible (cf. Rom 3:20, 7:7).²⁴⁴

Grounding the purpose of the law in its establishing of transgressions essentially identifies the law as a servant of condemnation and death (cf. 2 Cor 3:7, 9). After all, defining transgressions only introduces penalties, curses, and death; avoiding such missteps would at best maintain the pre-law status quo. Paul accordingly asks the pressing question in 3:21: does the law that brings about condemnation and death work against the promises that seek to bring life? He responds to this suggestion of divine schizophrenia with an emphatic negative (μὴ γένοιτο), a position that he then supports (γάρ) with a twofold argument.²⁴⁵ On the one hand, he shows the inadequacy of the

worshipping of the golden calf and murmuring against God. In this view, the article before παραβάσεων points back to these presumably well-known transgressions.

²⁴³ E.g., Martyn, *Galatians*, 354-55; Bruce, *Galatians*, 175; Betz, *Galatians*, 165; Schlier, *Galater*, 152; Meyer, “Galatians,” 128.

²⁴⁴ So, e.g., Witherington, *Grace*, 255-56; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 246; Calvin, “Galatians,” 100; Matera, *Galatians*, 128, 132. We could also describe this purpose as “producing transgressions” in the sense that the law makes them possible. Cf. Burton, *Galatians*, 188.

²⁴⁵ Contra Tolmie, *Persuading*, 137, who contends that the γάρ in 3:21 does not have its usual causal force but instead serves to introduce a new idea. Accordingly, Tolmie suggests that instead of

alternative, traditional position that God gave the law to bring life. On the other hand, he makes the case that, far from working against the promises, a transgression-oriented law actually works to support them.

At first glance, the traditional Jewish view that the law provides the path to life²⁴⁶ would seem to be more in line with God's promises of life²⁴⁷ than Paul's claim that the law's purpose lies in establishing transgressions. Paul, however, undercuts such a simplistic comparison of end results by highlighting a troubling implication of the traditional view: "if a law had been given that was able to make alive (ζωοποιῆσαι), then righteousness would be based on law" (3:21). The second-class conditional construction assumes the protasis to be false, an initial assumption that Paul will effectively establish in 3:22.

Scholars debate whether this "making alive" serves as the result or the cause of the righteousness in the apodosis, but both logical necessity and Paul's rebuttal (ἀλλά) in 3:22 require that righteousness be the middle term between law and life.²⁴⁸ If righteousness forms the basis for the giving of life—a common first-century

actually answering the question raised at the beginning of 3:21, Paul redirects the audience's attention to his main point: the inferiority of the law.

²⁴⁶ See, e.g., Lev 18:5; Prov 6:23; Sir 17:11; Bar 3:9; 4:1; *Pss. Sol.* 14:2.

²⁴⁷ The contrast of promise and law in 3:21-22 suggests that the promise in 3:22 has the same goal of "making alive" as Paul hypothetically attributes to the law in 3:21. Of course, "making alive" well describes the blessing that Paul associates with reception of the Spirit (cf. 3:8, 14).

²⁴⁸ So also Ellicott, *Galatians*, 84; Meyer, "Galatians," 150.

understanding that we have already encountered in the analysis of 3:8—then the protasis logically implies the apodosis: a law could give a person life only by bestowing righteousness. The same cannot be said if righteousness instead depends on life: a law’s ability to give a person life would not necessitate that righteousness therefore be based on that law. Similarly, Paul’s refutation that “the scripture shuts up everything under sin” (3:22a)²⁴⁹ implies that no one attains righteousness on the basis of law observance since everyone under the law will ultimately transgress it, but this implication has ramifications for the law’s ability to give life only if righteousness constitutes the middle term.

Paul thus constructs a form of *modus tollens* argument²⁵⁰ in 3:21-22 whereby he disproves the initial assumption (the law can give life) by refuting its necessary implication (righteousness comes through law observance). He leaves this negative result at the level of implication, pressing ahead in 3:22b with his positive case for a unity of purpose between a transgression-oriented law and the promises. Nevertheless, it is worth considering the further implications of this refutation before moving to the positive argument.

If law observance determines righteousness, then the inevitable transgressions of the law would disqualify a person from receiving life through the promise, a possibility

²⁴⁹ The switch from νόμος in 3:21 to γραφή in 3:22 could serve to extend the basis for Paul’s claim to non-legal or non-Torah passages, to extend the scope of Paul’s claim to include those not under the law (i.e., the gentiles; cf. τὰ πάντα), or both. The singular ἡ γραφή could also indicate the Paul has a specific text in mind (see Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 147-48), e.g., Ps 14[LXX 13]:1-3 (cited in Rom 3:10-12), but the absence of a clear scriptural reference to this effect in the immediate context suggests a broader understanding. At any rate, the argument does not require the audience’s familiarity with a specific text, only their acknowledgment of the general truth.

²⁵⁰ *Modus tollens*: $p \rightarrow q$, not q , therefore not p .

disallowed earlier in 3:17-18. By highlighting the law-based righteousness that a life-imparting view of the law requires, Paul therefore effectively implies that it is this traditional view of the law—not his transgression-oriented view—that creates a conflict with the promises. Ironically, then, following the law as the path to life can result only in death and the negation of the promise. The law simply cannot have been given for the purpose of establishing righteousness or, consequently, life. Furthermore, as was also the case with Paul’s argument in 3:11-12, the agitators could refute this logic only by making the implausible (and unscriptural) claim that they followed the law perfectly.²⁵¹

If the law does not seek to establish righteousness, then we are left with Paul’s conclusion that the law exists to define transgressions. How does a transgression-oriented law actually support the promises? Paul provides the answer in 3:22. Given the context of explaining the law’s relationship to the promise (3:21), we should understand the claim that scripture has shut up everything under sin with respect to its implications for the law, namely, that the law will condemn everyone under it. The ensuing purpose clause—“so that the promise might be given on the basis of Jesus Christ’s faith to those who believe” (ἵνα ἡ ἐπαγγελία ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δοθῇ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν)—then establishes the relationship between a transgression-oriented, condemnatory law and the giving of the promise. Before examining this relationship, I should note once again that, although the πάντα in 3:22 unites all humanity under sin, the wider context of addressing

²⁵¹ Paul’s subsequent warnings that those who receive circumcision must “do the whole law” (ὅλον τὸν νόμον ποιῆσαι, 5:3) and that even the circumcised do not keep the law (6:13) therefore seem likely to reflect the implications of Paul’s own argument rather than the claims of the agitators.

the law's relationship to the promise suggests that this purpose clause draws the implications of that universal sinfulness for those under the law, i.e., the Jews.²⁵² This conclusion does not deny that gentiles also receive the blessing through faith; they do. Rather, as the following analysis will confirm, this conclusion simply indicates that 3:22 does not have gentiles in view.

Galatians 3:22 characterizes the giving of the promise in two ways: the law enables the promise to be given 1) "on the basis of Jesus Christ's faith" (ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) 2) "to those who believe" (τοῖς πιστεύουσιν). Although both aspects involve the exercise of πίστις, I suggest that they nevertheless point to distinct functions of the law. Starting with the latter phrase, most interpreters rightly understand this verse to highlight the law's role in revealing sinfulness.²⁵³ It exposes the Jews' sinful nature in large part so that they will rely on faith for their righteousness rather than on works, hence "to those who believe" (τοῖς πιστεύουσιν; cf. Rom 4:1-13; 7:7-10). Paul will explore Christ's interaction with this aspect of the law's role in 3:23-29.

How does ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ further define this giving? Recent discussions of this phrase have focused on the interpretation of the genitive. Scholars who read Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ here as an objective genitive ("on the basis of faith in Jesus

²⁵² Contra Longenecker, *Galatians*, 145, who suggests that 3:22 "portrays 'everyone without distinction' (τὰ πάντα used of people) as under the law's curse." Although Gal 3:22 does portray everyone as being under sin, it provides no grounds for expanding the scope of the law to include everyone.

²⁵³ E.g., Hays, "Galatians," 269; Hansen, *Galatians*, 106; Matera, *Galatians*, 138; Bruce, *Galatians*, 180; Burton, *Galatians*, 197.

Christ”) make the subsequent τοῖς πιστεύουσιν redundant. Advocates of a subjective reading pointing to Christ’s “faithfulness,” in contrast, must awkwardly attribute different meanings to the nominal (πίστεως, “faithfulness”) and verbal (πιστεύουσιν, “have faith”) forms of the πίστις root within a span of only six words.²⁵⁴ Reading the phrase instead as a reference to Jesus’ faith in allowing himself to become cursed by the law (see the discussion of 3:13) avoids both of these problems.²⁵⁵

Regardless of their understanding of the genitive, interpretations of ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ typically share a more fundamental problem: they assume that Paul here portrays the law as pointing the Jews (at least) to their need for a savior.²⁵⁶ The σώζω / σωτήρ root, however, never appears in Galatians, nor is it clear why an awareness of one’s sinfulness should automatically lead to the realization of the need for a savior. Why would simply trusting in God’s promise and the atoning sacrifices prescribed by the law not suffice? Furthermore, the idea of believing “in” Jesus as savior—a concept scholars

²⁵⁴ See R. Barry Matlock, “Detheologizing the ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ Debate: Cautionary Remarks from a Lexical Semantic Perspective,” *NovT* 42 (2000): 1-23, 4, 10, esp., 10 n. 28.

²⁵⁵ Jesus’ acceptance of a cursed death involves faithfulness, of course, but the expression ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ points to his trust in God’s ultimate vindication. For general discussion of the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate, see the essays by Dunn (“Once More, ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ,” advocating “faith in Christ”) and Hays (“ΠΙΣΤΙΣ and Pauline Christology: What Is at Stake?” advocating “faith[fulness] of Christ”) included in Hays, *Faith*, 249-97. The argument of Thomas Aquinas that Jesus could not have had faith because he “had the full vision of the very being of God” (*Summa Theologiae*, 3a.7.3, cited in Hays, *Faith*, xlvii n. 66) essentially denies Jesus’ full humanity and goes against scriptural indications that Jesus was not omniscient (e.g., Matt 24:36). It also unjustifiably focuses on “faith” as belief rather than as trust (for this general point, see Campbell, *Deliverance*, 79-80, 384-86). Regardless, I suggest that such a perspective would not have crossed Paul’s mind.

²⁵⁶ E.g., Ellicott, *Galatians*, 80: “The office of the law was to . . . make man feel his need of a Savior.”

often associate with τοῖς πιστεύουσιν even if not with ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ²⁵⁷—usually entails a sacrificial understanding of his death, the benefits of which a person must appropriate through faith. Such sacrificial language is, once again, absent from Galatians with the possible exception of 1:4.²⁵⁸ Even more problematical, the suggestion that the law points people to their need for a savior can explain neither why the Jewish Christians would no longer be under the law nor why the gentile Galatians must not come under the law. Why, that is, would the appearance of a savior render the law anathema? If anything, a “savior”-type argument would seem to play into the agitators’ hands: believers have been “saved” so that they might now fulfill the righteous law.

I accordingly suggest that the phrase ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ instead points to a second function of the law, a function tied directly to the dual sonship of the Abrahamic seed. In short, the law forces the Jews to unite with gentiles in Christ in order to receive the blessing of the Spirit / adoption as sons of God that qualifies them as Abraham’s seed. If no law differentiated Israel from the gentiles, then the Jews would be able to receive the Spirit on the basis of their faith in God once the blessing came to (the rest of) the nations. After all, Abraham’s descendants were numbered among the generic “nations” included in the blessing until the law set them apart from τὰ ἔθνη as a distinct people. After receiving the Spirit that makes them sons of God, however, Jews would

²⁵⁷ E.g., Hays, *Faith*, 276.

²⁵⁸ For the lack of sacrificial language in Gal 3:13, see §2.5.1.

then qualify as Abrahamic seed whereas (other) gentiles would not. Such an arrangement would unjustly prefer the Jews, not to mention that it would create multiple seeds of Abraham, thereby supplementing the original promise. By establishing the boundaries of the law, God thus ensured that the sons of Abraham could not participate in the blessing without transgressing the law and incurring its curse. Overcoming this curse and becoming Abraham's seed then requires the Jews' integration into the single seed Christ, who himself overcomes the curse through his faith. Hence, the promise comes ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Paul will further develop the implications of Christ's coming with respect to this role of the law in 4:1-11.

The law thus serves a twofold purpose with respect to the promise. On the one hand, it exposes the sinfulness of those under it, thereby forcing them to rely on their faith for righteousness. Mere faith, however, cannot suffice for Jews to receive the promise since the law sets them apart from the other nations, from the gentiles to whom the Abrahamic blessing comes. Accordingly, on the other hand, the law forces the Jews to go through Jesus Christ as Abraham's single seed in order to escape from its curse and receive the promised blessing of life. The law therefore compels the Jews to embrace both faith and Christ in a way that they would otherwise not have to do in order to receive the promised inheritance.

Before turning to the further development of these ideas in 3:23-4:11,²⁵⁹ I should first note that the scholarly literature commonly identifies these two purposes of the law, albeit in problematical ways. Traditional analyses recognize the law's role in exposing sinfulness but can relate the resultant need for faith specifically to Christ only by constructing an artificial law-works / faith-Christ dichotomy that overlooks the promises and grace already inherent in the law. Recognizing this problem, proponents of the New Perspective such as Wright and Dunn typically argue for a more sociological analysis of the law that emphasizes its role in separating the Jews from the nations. Because they assume that the gentiles share in *Israel's* blessing, however, this view creates a paradox in which God disbands—by removing the law that distinguished Israel—the very entity that he is supposedly blessing. My suggested reading combines these two insights so as to resolve their various issues: the law points to the necessity of faith for righteousness so that Jews might have the confidence to transgress the law through union with Christ, thereby joining the gentiles in receiving the Abrahamic blessing of the Spirit that qualifies them as sons of God and, thus, as true Abrahamic seed.

²⁵⁹ Galatians 3:21-22 serves as a transitional passage, developing the abbreviated characterization in 3:19 of the law's having been added "for the sake of transgressions" while also programmatically setting the agenda for 3:23-4:11.

3.4.2 “All of you are one in Christ Jesus . . . You are Abraham’s seed”: The dual nature of Abraham’s single seed and the end of the law in Gal 3:23-4:11

Galatians 3:23-29 and 4:1-7 present remarkably similar scenarios. In both passages, Paul invokes a familial analogy to portray the Jews (“we”) as minors under guardians (ὕπὸ παιδαγωγόν, 3:25 / ὕπὸ ἐπιτρόπους . . . καὶ οἰκονόμους, 4:2) until Christ releases them into their maturity. Both passages highlight Christ’s bringing an end to a submissive/servile state (οὐκέτι ὕπὸ παιδαγωγόν, 3:25 / οὐκέτι . . . δοῦλος, 4:7). Both passages close by drawing a conclusion about the gentiles’ (“you”) status as heirs (κατ’ ἐπαγγελίαν κληρονόμοι, 3:29 / κληρονόμος διὰ θεοῦ, 4:7).

Nevertheless, the two scenarios also exhibit significant differences, even with respect to these points of similarity. In 3:23-25, the guardian παιδαγωγός corresponds to the law; in 4:1-3, the ἐπίτροποι and οἰκονόμοι correspond to τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου. In 3:23-29, faith provides the key to emerging from under the παιδαγωγός; in 4:1-7, minors emerge from under their guardians simply at the time set by the father. In 3:25, Paul concludes that the *Jewish* Christians (“we”) are no longer (οὐκέτι) under a παιδαγωγός; in 4:7, he concludes that the *gentile* Christian (“you”) is no longer (οὐκέτι) a slave to the στοιχεῖα. In 3:27, the believers are incorporated into Christ; in 4:6, the Spirit of God’s son is sent into the believers. In 3:29, the gentiles’ status as heirs derives from their in-Christ status as Abraham’s seed; in 4:7, the gentile’s status as heir derives from his Spirit-bestowed status as God’s son.

Too often interpreters collapse the differences into the similarities, with the result that they find the passages to make essentially the same point. Thus, Dunn, for instance, concludes that “In effect iv.1-7 constitutes a recapitulation of . . . iii.23-29.”²⁶⁰ Brendan Byrne, however, rightly notes that an “examination of 4:1-7 will be satisfactory only if it can adequately explain why Paul doubles back in this way.”²⁶¹ Byrne ultimately concludes that 4:1-7 covers the same ground as 3:25-29, providing the evidence for what the earlier passage simply asserts.²⁶² In contrast, I suggest that the differences in detail instead point to a larger difference in overall argument.

To be sure, both passages describe Christ’s work of freeing the Jews from the law. As I hope to show, however, the first passage focuses on their need for personal faith, hence “to those who believe” (τοῖς πιστεύουσιν) in 3:22. The second then reflects their need for integration into Christ, hence “on the basis of Jesus Christ’s faith” (ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) in 3:22. Furthermore, I contend that whereas the former passage argues that the Jewish Christians are no longer under law (3:25) based on the gentile Christians’ status as in-Christ heirs of Abraham (3:26-29), the latter passage argues that the gentile Christians are no longer enslaved under the στοιχεῖα (4:7; cf. 4:8-9) based on the Jewish Christians’ status as Spirit-filled adopted sons of God (4:5-6). These two mutually compatible perspectives on Christ’s work reflect the intertwined nature of Jew and gentile

²⁶⁰ Dunn, *Galatians*, 210.

²⁶¹ Byrne, *Sons*, 174.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 186.

in Christ that results from the dual sonship and singular nature of the Abrahamic seed. Taken together, they also refute any possible motivation a gentile might have for taking up the law.

3.4.2.1 “We are no longer under [law]”: Implications for Jews of gentiles’ becoming sons of Abraham in Christ (Gal 3:23-29)

Galatians 3:23-29 expounds the law’s role in bringing the promise “to those who believe” (τοῖς πιστεύουσιν, 3:22). It accordingly focuses on the law’s ability to promote “faith” (πίστις), a keyword that occurs five times in the passage. Four of these occurrences appear in the first three verses (3:23-25), where, as I will show, Paul portrays the law as a παιδαγωγός seeking to inculcate faith in its charges. At the same time, he brackets this portrayal with references to the arrival of “this faith” (πρὸ τοῦ δὲ ἔλθεῖν τὴν πίστιν, 3:23; ἐλθούσης δὲ τῆς πίστεως, 3:25) that establish a clear terminus for this function of the law.²⁶³ The final four verses (3:26-29) then justify this proposed temporal boundary with an argument grounded in the dual sonship of Abraham’s seed. The passage thus serves to identify the end of the law, in terms of both its goal and its termination.

²⁶³ The δέ in 3:23 introduces a chronological contrast to the time of fulfillment envisioned in 3:22. Contra Dunn, *Galatians*, 197; Lull, “Pedagogue,” 487, it does not serve to contrast a confinement under sin (3:22) with a confinement under law (3:23), nor does it suggest that the law mitigates the confinement under sin. See below.

Gal 3:23-25

²³Πρὸ τοῦ δὲ ἔλθειν τὴν πίστιν ὑπὸ νόμον ἐφρουρούμεθα συγκλειόμενοι εἰς τὴν μέλλουσαν πίστιν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι. ²⁴ὥστε ὁ νόμος παιδαγωγὸς ἡμῶν γέγονεν εἰς Χριστόν, ἵνα ἐκ πίστεως δικαιωθῶμεν. ²⁵ἐλθούσης δὲ τῆς πίστεως οὐκέτι ὑπὸ παιδαγωγόν ἐσμεν.

²³*But before this faith came, we were watched over under the law, being compelled into the faith that was about to be revealed. ²⁴Thus, the law became our παιδαγωγός, [compelling us] into Christ so that we might be justified on the basis of faith. ²⁵But this faith having come, no longer are we under a παιδαγωγός.*

What exactly is this faith that brings the law to an end with its coming? The articular πίστις in the opening phrase of 3:23 cannot indicate “faith” generally since Paul has already acknowledged that Abraham exercised faith well before the giving of the law (3:6).²⁶⁴ A reference to faith in general would also imply that the law ceases to have authority over anyone who has faith, in which case the Jews would have no need for Christ to free them from the law and its curse (3:13, 4:5). No, this faith must be a faith that, although qualitatively similar to the faith of Abraham, becomes possible only with the arrival of Christ. Patristic commentators accordingly preferred to interpret the phrase as a reference to “the faith” in the sense of “that which is believed,”²⁶⁵ but Paul rarely if

²⁶⁴ Contra Betz, *Galatians*, 176: “Before Christ’s coming, faith existed only exceptionally in Abraham and in Scripture as a promise. It became a general possibility for mankind only when God sent his son and the Spirit of his son.”

²⁶⁵ So also Longenecker, *Galatians*, 145-46, cf. 41-42.

ever uses πίστις in a doctrinal sense.²⁶⁶ Most modern scholars therefore rightly conclude that the article functions anaphorically referring back to the πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ mentioned in 3:22, hence, “but before the arrival of this faith” (πρὸ τοῦ δὲ ἔλθεῖν τὴν πίστιν).²⁶⁷ Of course, the significance of this conclusion depends on the meaning of πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. I argued above that the phrase most likely refers to Jesus’ own faith that God would bless him despite his becoming accursed under the law, a position that the following analysis of 3:23-25 will support.

Galatians 3:23 describes the role of the law in the time “before this faith came,” claiming that “we were watched over under law” (ὑπὸ νόμον ἐφρουρούμεθα). Mußner rightly notes that ὑπὸ νόμον (“under law”)—in contrast to ὑπὸ νόμου (“by law”)—refrains from expressly identifying the law as the active agent of the verb ἐφρουρούμεθα.²⁶⁸ Nevertheless, the parallel with scripture’s enclosing activity in 3:22 and the interpretation of the law as a παιδαγωγός in 3:24-25 (cf. ὑπὸ παιδαγωγόν, 3:25) suggest that, by signifying the realm of the law’s dominion, ὑπὸ νόμον effectively identifies the law as the implied subject. The use of the first-person verb and the

²⁶⁶ So, e.g., Burton, *Galatians*, 198. A possible exception occurs in Gal 1:23—Ὁ διώκων ἡμᾶς ποτε νῦν εὐαγγελίζεται τὴν πίστιν ἢ ποτε ἐπόρθει—although Burton argues that even this instance probably refers to subjective belief rather than objective doctrine (64). For the suggestion that 1:23 refers to the preaching of Christ as “the faithful one,” see Campbell, *Deliverance*, 892-94.

²⁶⁷ E.g., Hays, “Galatians,” 270; Williams, *Galatians*, 101; Hansen, *Galatians*, 107; Matera, *Galatians*, 136; Fung, *Galatians*, 168; Bruce, *Galatians*, 181; Burton, *Galatians*, 198.

²⁶⁸ Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 255. He identifies God as the active agent. Cf. Vouga, *Galater*, 87-88, who argues that the agent should either remain unspecified or else be identified with those who advocate the law as a path to righteousness and life.

reference to being “under the law’s dominion” then indicate that Paul has Jews in mind.²⁶⁹ We cannot determine exactly how he portrays their position, however, from this first half of 3:23 alone: only context can determine whether φρουρέω (“watch over”) takes on a positive, negative, or neutral nuance. In this case, the explanation of this verb must fit with the brief statement in 3:19 that the law was added “for the sake of transgressions,” and it must lead to the conclusion (ὥστε) in 3:24 that the law functioned during this time as a παιδαγωγός. More importantly, it must make sense of the immediately following phrase: συγκλειόμενοι εἰς τὴν μέλλουσαν πίστιν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι.

Scholars typically assume that the present participle συγκλειόμενοι in 3:23 describes an “enclosing” under either sin or law. The former option assumes that ὑπὸ ἁμαρτίαν carries over from 3:22, where scripture “encloses” everything under sin (συνέκλεισεν . . . ὑπὸ ἁμαρτίαν). The latter option links the participle to the ὑπὸ νόμον earlier in the verse, either directly (“we were guarded, being shut up under law”) or—more likely given the intervening ἐφρουρούμεθα—indirectly by specifying the action of which the “guarding” consists (“we were guarded under law, being shut up [i.e., under law]”). Either way, these interpretations portray the law primarily as a fence

²⁶⁹ So also Hays, “Galatians,” 269; Witherington, *Grace*, 267; Dunn, *Galatians*, 198; Matera, *Galatians*, 136; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 145; Betz, *Galatians*, 176; Lagrange, *Galates*, 89. For scholars who understand the first-person verb as inclusive of both Jews and gentiles, see Tolmie, *Persuading*, 141; Martyn, *Galatians*, 362; Williams, *Galatians*, 103; Fung, *Galatians*, 167; Bruce, *Galatians*, 182; Schlier, *Galater*, 166; Bonnard, “Galates,” 75.

around its charges, with scholars differing on whether this fence performs the function of a jailor guarding against escape or that of a protector guarding its charges from harm. Combining these different scenarios yields four main possibilities, all of which are problematical.

Two readings portray the law as a protective guardian. David Lull, for instance, understands συγκαλειόμενοι as a causal/concessive participle that assumes ὑπὸ ἁμαρτίαν from 3:22. In this view, the law somehow guards those within its sphere from experiencing the full effects of sin: “because/although we had been enclosed [under sin], we were guarded under law.”²⁷⁰ A similar result emerges from those who understand συγκαλειόμενοι as an exegetical participle identifying the constituent action.²⁷¹ While the view of the law as a protective fence in these proposals accords well with general Jewish thought, it does not correspond well to Paul’s comment in 3:19 that the law was added “for the sake of transgressions”: since “transgressions” (παραβάσεις) were not possible before the law defined them, the law could hardly be for the purpose of restraining them (see §3.4.1). Furthermore, the gentiles—who had neither the restricting regulations nor the atoning benefits of the law—survived their confinement under sin to

²⁷⁰ Lull, “Pedagogue,” 487. Causal and concessive participles usually precede the main verb, however. This reading also requires the relatively rare use of a present participle with the force of an imperfect. A suggestion involving more common grammatical constructions would be preferable.

²⁷¹ Hays, “Galatians,” 269; Williams, *Galatians*, 103; Dunn, *Galatians*, 197; Matera, *Galatians*, 136; Belleville, “Under Law,” 60; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 145, 148.

share in Christ's blessing, so it remains unclear what benefit Israel would have gained through an additional protective confinement.²⁷²

Several scholars accordingly see the law functioning more as a jailor. Advocates of this view who understand συγκλειόμενοι in 3:23 to describe an enclosing “under law” envision the law as the near equivalent of sin in imprisoning humanity.²⁷³ Alternatively, συγκλειόμενοι could express the purpose / result of the guarding as keeping people enclosed “under sin.”²⁷⁴ The utter superfluousness of the law constitutes a primary difficulty for both of these readings. After all, no one can escape from under sin even apart from the law. The law as a measure that keeps the Jews imprisoned accordingly becomes redundant.

Views of the law as a protector thus have trouble explaining *how* the law serves that function while views of the law as a jailor have trouble explaining *why* the law serves that function. Both of these options, however, also share a larger problem, namely, accounting for the εἰς τὴν μέλλουσαν πίστιν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι that immediately

²⁷² Contrast the excessive claim of Williams, *Galatians*, 103: “transgressions would have destroyed the people of Israel had it not been for the restraining role of the law—the Law of Moses—which instructed, rebuked, and punished.” On the other end of the spectrum, Matera, *Galatians*, 140, observes more accurately that “[The law] could tell the Jews that they were transgressing God’s commandments”—a function that Matera labels an “advantage”—“but it did not enable them to follow those commandments.” I fail to see how this “advantage” translates into “protecting the Jew from Sin” (136).

²⁷³ Cf. Martyn, *Galatians*, 362: “Like Sin, Law was the universal prison warden”; Fung, *Galatians*, 168 n. 3: “the near-equation of sin and law”; Bruce, *Galatians*, 181: the shift from sin as jailor to law is “a distinction without much of a difference.” Paul’s silence about the possible conflation of the law with sin (contrast Rom 7:7) suggests that his argument runs in a different direction.

²⁷⁴ Rohde, *Galater*, 161; Betz, *Galatians*, 176; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 255-56; Schlier, *Galater*, 166-67; Bonnard, “Galates,” 75; Lagrange, *Galates*, 89; Meyer, “Galatians,” 152-53.

follows συγκλειόμενοι. Most interpreters render the εἰς with a telic or, more commonly, a temporal sense. In fact, the temporal reading (cf. “until faith should be revealed,” NIV) has become almost axiomatic among recent commentators.²⁷⁵ Nevertheless, despite the reading’s popularity, several factors argue against it.

The focus on faith’s arrival as the key chronological marker throughout 3:23-25—“before this faith came” (πρὸ τοῦ . . . ἔλθεῖν τὴν πίστιν) in 3:23, “this faith having come” (ἐλθούσης . . . τῆς πίστεως) and “no longer” (οὐκέτι) in 3:25—might initially appear to support a temporal reading of the εἰς, yet this chronological focus cuts both ways. As Burton notes, the opening clause “before this faith came” already implies the coming of this faith as a terminal point, thereby rendering a temporal εἰς redundant.²⁷⁶ Burton also critiques this reading on the grounds that a temporal εἰς usually has a time word as its object,²⁷⁷ an objection that highlights the difficulty of transforming τὴν μέλλουσαν πίστιν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι (lit., “the faith about to be revealed”) into a suitable temporal construction. Paul’s use of an infinitival phrase proves especially

²⁷⁵ Hays, “Galatians,” 269; Martyn, *Galatians*, 362; Williams, *Galatians*, 101; Hansen, *Galatians*, 106; Dunn, *Galatians*, 198; Matera, *Galatians*, 136; Rohde, *Galater*, 161; Fung, *Galatians*, 167; Bruce, *Galatians*, 181; Betz, *Galatians*, 175; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 256; Schlier, *Galater*, 167; Bonnard, “Galates,” 76; Witherington, *Grace*, 249, 262.

²⁷⁶ Burton, *Galatians*, 199. Cf. Meyer, “Galatians,” 153; Ellicott, *Galatians*, 86-87. The problem runs in the other direction for the seemingly parallel εἰς Χριστόν in 3:24: a temporal reading would already presume the apparently controversial claim that the supervision of the law-παιδαγωγός ends with the coming of faith, a claim that Paul must spend several verses defending after he introduces it explicitly—seemingly for the first time—in 3:25.

²⁷⁷ Burton, *Galatians*, 199. See, e.g., εἰς ἡμέραν Χριστοῦ, Phil 1:10; εἰς ἐκείνην τὴν ἡμέραν, 2 Tim 1:12. Although εἰς τὴν παρουσίαν τοῦ κυρίου in 1 Thes 4:15 does not have a time word as an object, it at least specifies an event, something τὴν μέλλουσαν πίστιν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι does not do.

difficult to explain. Furthermore, a temporal reading leads to a lack of clarity in the argument by reducing the role of the law in 3:23 simply to guarding / enclosing. Since φρουρέω, συγκλείω, and the parallel image of the παιδαγωγός in 3:24 could all have positive/protective or negative/punitive connotations in the ancient world, the lack of guidance as to the significance of these terms threatens to make Paul's meaning ambiguous, not only to modern scholars but likely to his original audience as well.²⁷⁸

A telic reading of the εἰς that sees “the [obtaining of] the faith that was about to be revealed” as the purpose of the law's confinement avoids these problems, but it raises others.²⁷⁹ In the first place, a telic εἰς would require that a reader supply the verbal element missing from the prepositional phrase, making this construction a fairly cryptic and abbreviated way of making a controversial point; even Burton admits in arguing for this interpretation that it contains elements “not certainly expressed by” the phrase.²⁸⁰ It also reduces Paul's statement to the level of assertion, leaving unexplained how the law's confining action leads to faith. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Paul's audience seems unlikely to have read the εἰς in this way.

²⁷⁸ Cf. Betz, *Galatians*, 175: “in spite of his explanations, the Apostle leaves things rather ambiguous.”

²⁷⁹ For a telic εἰς, see Burton, *Galatians*, 199; Meyer, “Galatians,” 153.

²⁸⁰ Burton, *Galatians*, 199.

The Galatians would instead likely have read συγκλειόμενοι εἰς τὴν μέλλουσαν πίστιν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι as an instance of the common συγκλείω + εἰς construction.²⁸¹ In such constructions, the prepositional phrase almost always has its typical locative force signifying the space into which an entity is being enclosed. This “space” could, of course, be a physical location,²⁸² but it could also refer more metaphorically to any state, condition, or requirement that a person was forced to accept without recourse. Thus, for instance, the Psalms in the LXX speak of not being “delivered . . . into the hands of an enemy” (οὐ συνέκλεισάς με εἰς χεῖρας ἐχθροῦ, 30:9), of cattle being “consigned unto death” (εἰς θάνατον συνέκλεισεν, 77:50), and of people being “given over to the sword” (συνέκλεισεν εἰς ῥομφαίαν, 77:62). Moving to examples from the secular realm, the historian Polybius describes the Romans as “imposing hostages and tribute” (συγκλείσαντες εἰς ὄμηρα καὶ φόρους) on Philip (*Historiae* 21.11.9; cf. 15.20.7) and Philip himself as being “confined to the jurisdiction established by treaty” (συγκλεισθέντος εἰς τὴν κατὰ τὸ σύμβολον δικαιοδοσίαν, *Hist.* 23.1.2). Even Paul uses the construction with this sense in Rom 11:32—his only use of συγκλείω outside of Gal 3:22-23—when he states that “God consigned all people to disobedience”

²⁸¹ Meyer, “Galatians,” 153, attributes this view also to Hoffman and Raphael. Meyer himself rejects this meaning on the grounds that it requires a different use of συγκλείω than in 3:22, a use that connotes being forced against one’s will. In and of itself, however, συγκλείω implies nothing about its objects’ desires; it speaks rather to their limited options.

²⁸² E.g., Amos 1:6; 1 Macc 5:5; Josephus, *C. Ap.* 1.152; *B.J.* 1.65; 2.641; 3.538; 6.248; *A.J.* 7.129; Polybius, *Hist.* 3.117.11; 14.6.7; 38.2.8; Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica* 11.15.3; 14.12.7; 17.25.6.

(συνέκλεισεν . . . ὁ θεὸς τοὺς πάντας εἰς ἀπειθείαν) so that he might show mercy to all.

Read in this way, 3:23 portrays the law as driving the Jews “toward” or “into” the faith that was about to be revealed, a possibility that precludes the understanding of συγκλειόμενοι as an “enclosing” under law or sin. Not only does this reading make the best grammatical sense of the construction, it also suggests how a law given for the purpose of establishing transgressions (3:19) could work to support God’s promises (3:21), namely, by revealing the people’s sinfulness and forcing them to rely on faith rather than on their own righteousness. Indeed, 3:24 goes on to infer from this function of the law that the law has become the Jews’ παιδαγωγός “so that we might be justified on the basis of faith” (ἵνα ἐκ πίστεως δικαιωθῶμεν). Scripture’s enclosing (συνέκλεισεν, 3:22) of everyone under sin thus enables the law to compel (συγκλειόμενοι, 3:23) the Jews towards/into the coming faith, a faith that requires transgressing the law through Christ.

Paul’s use of συγκλείω in 3:23 accordingly does not highlight the purportedly troublesome restrictions imposed by the law but the direction and goal to which the law points; the law does not function as a jailor or protector so much as a shepherd or, appropriately, a παιδαγωγός. In the Greco-Roman world, a παιδαγωγός was typically a household slave or freedman entrusted with the oversight of the household’s children from the time of their emergence from a nanny (six or seven years old) up to late adolescence (sixteen to twenty years old). He would accompany the child(ren)

everywhere, providing physical (and moral) protection as well as basic instruction. The primary task of a παιδαγωγός, however, was to oversee the moral and social development of his charges.²⁸³ The standard interpretations of Gal 3:23-24 discussed above emphasize the restrictions imposed by a παιδαγωγός and the temporary nature of the role—legitimate parallels to be sure²⁸⁴—but why these factors would imply (ὥστε, 3:24) that the law functions as a παιδαγωγός in particular and not some other entity that watches over its charges for a limited time remains unclear. In contrast, the presentation of the law as an entity seeking to instill the proper attitude of faith in its charges through the defining (and punishing) of transgressions fits well with the role of moral development specifically associated with a παιδαγωγός in the ancient world.

Paul further qualifies this identification of the law as a παιδαγωγός as being εἰς Χριστόν. Noting that a Greco-Roman παιδαγωγός was often responsible for taking his charges to school, Theodoret interpreted εἰς Χριστόν as a locative phrase indicative of the law's taking its charges "to Christ" their teacher.²⁸⁵ Few today find this reading compelling: the context says nothing about Christ as a teacher, taking minors to school was a relatively minor duty of a παιδαγωγός, and the phrases πρὸς Χριστόν ("to

²⁸³ On the role of a παιδαγωγός, see Norman H. Young, "Paidagogos: The Social Setting of a Pauline Metaphor," *NovT* 29 (1987): 150-76, 151-69.

²⁸⁴ On these parallels, see *Ibid.*, 170-75.

²⁸⁵ Theodoret, *Commentarius in omnes b. Pauli epistolas* (ed C. Marriott; Oxford: J. H. Parker, 1852), 1:349.

Christ”) or εἰς Χριστοῦ (“to [the school] of Christ”) would have expressed this idea more clearly.²⁸⁶ Scholars have also interpreted the phrase in a pregnant (“to bring forth Christ”) or telic (“pointing to Christ”) sense.²⁸⁷ By far, however, most recent interpreters read εἰς Χριστόν as a temporal reference (“until Christ”), usually appealing to the parallel phrase εἰς τὴν μέλλουσαν πίστιν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι in 3:23 for support.²⁸⁸ I have argued, however, that the εἰς in 3:23 has its customary locative sense. The parallel with 3:23 therefore suggests that the εἰς in 3:24 functions similarly, with the sense of συγκλείω being implied from the earlier instance. That is to say, the εἰς likely has a locative force in 3:24 as well, not in the sense of taking charges “to Christ” but, as in the parallel with 3:23, in the sense of compelling the Jews “into Christ.” Accordingly, when proving in 3:26-29 that the Jews are no longer under the law-παιδαγωγός, Paul focuses on the fact that the Jewish and gentile believers are all “in Christ Jesus” (ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, 3:26, 28; cf. εἰς Χριστόν ἐβαπτίσθητε, 3:27).

How does the law compel the Jews into Christ? Significantly, the answer cannot be that the law compels by revealing the Jews’ need for atonement: the law itself already had a sacrificial system to cover any sins they might commit. Rather, as suggested above, the law compels them into Christ by separating the Jews from the gentiles. It therefore

²⁸⁶ So Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 149; Burton, *Galatians*, 200.

²⁸⁷ For the pregnant sense, see Burton, *Galatians*, 200. For the telic sense, see Meyer, “Galatians,” 154.

²⁸⁸ E.g., Betz, *Galatians*, 178; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 148-49.

forces them to unite with Christ to escape the law's curse and share in the Abrahamic blessing promised to the gentiles. The law's promotion of faith through the revelation of transgressions, then, does not serve to convince them of a need for an atoning savior. To the contrary, the knowledge that their justification rests on faith rather than law observance provides them with the confidence they need to die to the law and enter into Christ.

The law thus compels the Jews "into Christ" in both a physical and a qualitative sense. It pushes the Jews to unite with Christ (the physical sense), but the very act of entering into this union requires that they also become like Christ in their expression of faith (the qualitative sense). In accordance with its focus on the law's role of promoting faith, this passage emphasizes the latter aspect as the parallel of εἰς Χριστόν with εἰς τὴν μέλλουσαν πίστιν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι in 3:23 shows: the "faith about to be revealed" is this "faith of Christ." Similarly, Paul can identify the law as a παιδαγωγός because of its primary role of inculcating a Christ-like faith in its charges.

Finally, this analysis explains the chronological emphasis in the passage. Before Jesus completes his task of freeing those under law (3:13, 4:5), a Jew could not transgress the law and abandon its atoning mechanisms without receiving the transgression's due penalty. Accordingly, although qualitatively the same as Abraham's faith in God, the "faith of Christ" that enables the Jews to die to the law with relative impunity becomes a possibility only after his death and resurrection, hence the emphasis in 3:23-25 on the "arrival" of this faith. Furthermore, this faith finds its ultimate expression in a person's dying to the law. We can therefore understand Paul's claim in 3:25 that, faith having

come, Christian Jews (“we”) are no longer under the παιδαγωγός of the law. (That Paul has specifically Christian Jews in mind becomes apparent from the way his subsequent proof in 3:26-29 focuses on the status of Jews and gentiles *in Christ*.)

Gal 3:26-29

²⁶Πάντες γὰρ υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἐστε διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. ²⁷ὅσοι γὰρ εἰς Χριστὸν ἐβαπτίσθητε, Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε. ^{28a}οὐκ ἔνι Ἰουδαῖος οὐδὲ Ἕλληνας, οὐκ ἔνι δοῦλος οὐδὲ ἐλεύθερος, οὐκ ἔνι ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ. ^bπάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἷς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. ²⁹εἰ δὲ ὑμεῖς Χριστοῦ, ἄρα τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ σπέρμα ἐστέ, κατ’ ἐπαγγελίαν κληρονόμοι.

²⁶*For all of you are sons of God through faith [who are] in Christ Jesus. ²⁷For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ^{28a}There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is not male and female, ^bfor all of you are one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you are of Christ, then you are Abrahamic seed, heirs according to promise.*

Paul supports his claim that Christian Jews are no longer under a παιδαγωγός in 3:26-29 (cf. γάρ, 3:26) with a two-part argument grounded in the dual sonship of the Abrahamic seed. Each part reflects a different aspect of this dual nature: the first (3:26-27) discusses divine sonship while the second (3:28-29) considers the ensuing Abrahamic implications. Each part also proceeds by moving from a general statement embracing “all [i.e., both Jew and gentile] of you” (3:26, 3:28b) to a proof (3:27) or inference (3:29) focused on gentile Christians in particular. In short, I suggest that the argument points to the gentiles’ status as sons of God in Christ (3:26-27) and their resulting inclusion in Abraham’s seed (3:28-29) as evidence that “there is neither Jew nor Greek” in Christ

(3:28a). I will address the ways in which this conclusion supports the initial claim of the law's obsolescence at the end of my analysis.

The proof (γὰρ) begins with the statement in 3:26 that “all of you are sons of God through faith [who are] in Christ Jesus” (πάντες . . . υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἐστε διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ). Dunn argues that the switch to the second-person verb ἐστε serves to contrast “all you gentiles” with “we Jews” in 3:25.²⁸⁹ Although switches from first to second person in Gal 3-4 do typically emphasize the predominantly gentile nature of Paul's audience, the addition of the inclusive qualifier πάντες (“all”) suggests that he here broadens the scope of the second person to include both Jews and gentiles (cf. 3:28).²⁹⁰ Supporting the claim that “there is no more Jew and gentile in Christ” (3:28a), the parallel phrase “for all of you are one in Christ Jesus” (πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἷς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ) in 3:28b similarly points to this inclusive reading and makes it unlikely that Paul has introduced the πάντες in either case as a merely rhetorical flourish. Nevertheless, I affirm Dunn's emphasis on the gentiles in the sense that the ensuing argument shows their inclusion as sons of God in Christ to be the key focus in 3:26.

Since Paul hardly ever (if at all) uses the phrase πίστις ἐν to designate “faith in” someone or something,²⁹¹ most scholars agree that Gal 3:26 does not attribute the

²⁸⁹ Dunn, *Galatians*, 201. Cf. Witherington, *Grace*, 269; Betz, *Galatians*, 185.

²⁹⁰ At the very least, the agitators seem to be Jewish (see §1.2).

²⁹¹ The only possible examples of a πίστις ἐν construction denoting “faith in” in the undisputed Pauline letters occur in Rom 3:25 (ὄν προέθετο ὁ θεὸς ἱλαστήριον διὰ πίστεως ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι) and here in Gal 3:26, both of which are usually understood as coordinate. Among the disputed Pauline

readers' divine sonship to "faith in Christ Jesus" (διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ) but rather characterizes their divine status in two ways: they are all sons of God "through faith" (διὰ τῆς πίστεως) and "in Christ Jesus" (ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ).²⁹² Of the two, their status "in Christ Jesus" seems to form the crux of Paul's argument: ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ occupies the clause's emphatic final position, and it is this aspect of the claim that Paul seeks to establish (γάρ) through the reference to being "baptized into Christ" in 3:27. Furthermore, the potential point of controversy appears to be the inclusion of the *gentile* sons of God with those "in Christ." Many interpreters come to this conclusion on the basis of the subsequent argument in 3:28-29. Even within 3:26-27, however, two factors potentially point to a focus on gentiles in 3:27.

First, Paul switches from πάντες ("all") in 3:26 to ὅσοι ("as many as") in 3:27. While the ὅσοι could simply function as a rhetorical equivalent for πάντες (e.g., Rom 6:3), it could also serve to distinguish a group of Paul's audience from among the "all of you" in 3:26. Interpreters rarely acknowledge this possibility because it would imply that

letters, see Col 1:4 (τὴν πίστιν ὑμῶν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ); Eph 1:15 (πίστιν ἐν τῷ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ); 1 Tim 1:14 (μετὰ πίστεως καὶ ἀγάπης τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ); 3:13 (ἐν πίστει τῇ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ); 2 Tim 1:13 (ἐν πίστει καὶ ἀγάπῃ τῇ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ); 3:15 (διὰ πίστεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ). Schlier, *Galater*, 171, argues that even these instances from the disputed Pauline letters speak of Christ as the basis ("Fundament")—not the object—of faith.

²⁹² See, e.g., R. Barry Matlock, "ΠΙΣΤΙΣ in Galatians 3.26: Neglected Evidence for 'Faith in Christ'?", *NTS* 49 (2003): 433-39, 436-37. Contra, e.g., Lagrange, *Galates*, 92; Sieffert, *Galater*, 226-27.

not all of the “sons of God in Christ Jesus” in 3:26 were “baptized into Christ.”²⁹³ After all, how could someone be a son of God in Christ if they were not, in fact, baptized into Christ? In truth, scholars already acknowledge a presumably sizable group of believers whose status “in Christ” stands beyond question yet who were never baptized into Christ, namely, those Jewish disciples—including the Twelve—who had already received John’s baptism of repentance.²⁹⁴ Paul could accordingly use ὄσοι to account for the possibility that some of these Jewish believers had made their way to Galatia.²⁹⁵ If the ὄσοι serves this purpose, then the inherent recognition that at least some Jewish believers had never been baptized into Christ would imply that 3:27 serves primarily to establish that the gentile “sons of God” in Paul’s audience have indeed “put on Christ.”²⁹⁶

²⁹³ Dunn, *Galatians*, 202, acknowledges the division inherent in ὄσοι but attributes it to Paul’s allowing for the possibility of visitors. This suggestion seems unlikely given that the corresponding πάντες in 3:26 makes no such allowances.

²⁹⁴ Acts 19:1-7 records the only known instance where those who received John’s baptism were re-baptized into the name of Christ.

²⁹⁵ The many references to the Christian baptism of Jews elsewhere in the NT (e.g., Acts 2:38, 9:18) make it less likely that the ὄσοι reflects a more general Pauline practice of not baptizing Jews into Christ. Indeed, if the Crispus whom Paul claims to have baptized in 1 Cor 1:14 is the same Crispus who led the synagogue according to Acts 18:8, then we first-hand evidence for Paul’s baptism of Jews.

²⁹⁶ The existence of Jews who have apparently united with Christ apart from baptism perhaps also suggests that the rite of baptism does not serve to unite Jews with Christ in the same way that it does for gentiles. The complexity of the issue precludes a thorough study of Paul’s understanding of baptism here. Instead, I will only note that such a suggestion should not be surprising based on the evidence in Galatians. After all, Paul has just argued in 3:24 that the law compels the Jews “into Christ” (εἰς Χριστόν; cf. 3:27), a union that, given the emphasis in 3:23-24 on the law’s role of promoting faith, seems to occur through faith (cf. the parallel εἰς τὴν μέλλουσαν πίστιν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι in 3:23). He has also already made this point explicitly in 2:15-16 when, after distinguishing himself and Peter as “Jews by nature and not sinners from among the gentiles,” Paul claims that “we *believed into* Christ Jesus” (ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν). (So also Williams, “*Pistis*,” 443.) Appropriately, then, gentiles who receive the Spirit that makes them sons of God through faith alone (cf. 3:1-5) would require integration into Christ through the physical act of baptism in order to become sons of Abraham. Jews who become sons of Abraham through

Second, the nature of the Abrahamic seed's dual sonship suggests that 3:26-27 focuses on proving the gentiles' status in Christ. As Paul claims in 3:26, both Jews and gentiles—"all of you"—become sons of God through faith, and both end up in Christ. Only Jews, however, require integration into Christ to attain their status as sons of God: they require this union to escape the curse of the law and receive the Spirit of sonship that comes to the gentiles as the Abrahamic blessing. Gentiles, in contrast, receive this blessing simply through "the hearing of faith" (3:2-5). It is therefore his inclusion of the gentile sons of God in Christ Jesus that requires explanation and presumably proves his previous point that Christian Jews are no longer under the pedagogue of the law (3:25). To understand exactly how the gentiles' inclusion makes this point, we must press on to the second step in Paul's argument, 3:28-29.

Galatians 3:28 opens with a series of negated parallels: "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is not male and female."²⁹⁷ Given the

biological descent and the physical act of circumcision would require integration into Christ through faith in order to become sons of God. This analysis would also explain the paralleling of baptism with the physical act of circumcision in Col 2:11-12.

²⁹⁷ Given the common abbreviation of ἔνεστι / ἔνεισι as ἐνι (see LSJ, "ἐνεῖμι," 562), it seems unlikely that ἐνι in 3:28a functions as a poetic / stronger form of the preposition ἐν with a shifted accent (normally, ἐνί). See Meyer, "Galatians," 157. As Burton, *Galatians*, 207, notes in arguing for the prepositional form, however, this form would still require a reader to supply εἰμί and would thus effectively yield the same sense as an instance of ἐνεῖμι, which always incorporates the sense of its prefix ἐν in some way. (Bruce, *Galatians*, 186, provides no evidence for his claim that ἐνι here functions instead as "an emphatic equivalent of ἐστίν.") The word could therefore signify either "to be in" (BAGD, "ἐνεῖμι," 334, meaning 1 / LSJ, meaning I) or "to be within the limits of realization," i.e., "to be possible" (BAGD, meaning 2 / LSJ, meaning II). In the former case, 3:28a would deny a fact ("there is no"); in the latter, the very possibility ("there can be no"). Since 3:28b accounts for the prefixed form by limiting the applicability of the claims in 3:28a to those "in Christ Jesus" (ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ), I see no compelling reason to push

rhythmic structure, the existence of similar baptismal passages in other Pauline letters (1 Cor 12:13; Col 3:11), and the apparent contextual relevance of only the Jew/Greek pairing, many interpreters propose that Paul here cites and/or modifies part of a traditional baptismal liturgy.²⁹⁸ Even if 3:28 does cite a baptismal liturgy, however, the fact that—among other situational differences—neither 1 Cor 12:13 nor Col 3:11 mentions the male/female pairing suggests that Paul has included the three antithetical pairs in Gal 3:28 because all three relate to the argument in Galatians.

Troy Martin accordingly makes the intriguing suggestion that all three pairs derive from the circumcision covenant in Gen 17:9-14:

The covenant of circumcision distinguishes between Jew and Greek, slave and free [i.e., with regard to foreigners living amongst Abraham's descendants], male and female. In these antithetical pairs, those described by the first member of the pair have an obligation to be circumcised in a Jewish community while those described by the second member do not.²⁹⁹

beyond a straightforward statement of fact. So most interpreters, e.g., Burton, *Galatians*, 207; Martyn, *Galatians*, 376 n. 252; Meyer, "Galatians," 157. Contra Douglas A. Campbell, *The Quest for Paul's Gospel: A Suggested Strategy* (London: T&T Clark International, 2005), 97; Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 150.

²⁹⁸ E.g., Wayne A. Meeks, "The Image of the Androgyne: Some Uses of a Symbol in Earliest Christianity," *HR* 13 (1974): 165-208, 180-82; Martyn, *Galatians*, 378-83; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 156-57; Betz, *Galatians*, 181-85. Dunn, *Galatians*, 201, rightly cautions that the parallels could simply indicate a Pauline theme.

²⁹⁹ Troy W. Martin, "The Covenant of Circumcision (Genesis 17:9-14) and the Situational Antitheses in Galatians 3:28," *JBL* 122 (2003): 111-25, 121. For the slave/free pairing as contrasting the situation of foreigners enslaved to Abraham's descendants with the situation of free foreigners living amongst them according to Gen 17, see pp. 117-18.

Understood in this way, the pairs essentially make the point that there is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, a conclusion that Paul’s summary statements in 5:6 and 6:15 support.³⁰⁰ This explanation also accounts for the otherwise unusual ordering that links Jews/slaves/males and Greeks/free/females.³⁰¹ Furthermore, whereas the circumcision requirement represents a rather peripheral distinction in the second two pairs, it plays an integral role in defining the distinction between Jew and Greek—“Greek” (Ἕλληνας) likely acknowledges the self-identification of the Galatians, while “gentile” (ἔθνος) would presuppose a Jewish view (cf. 2:15)³⁰²—hence the widely-perceived relevance of this first pair. This observation, however, also raises an important question: why does Paul even bother to include the second two pairs?

Martin answers this question by suggesting that Paul’s argument concerns the initial requirements for entering the people of God: in contrast to circumcision—a requirement that discriminates between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female—baptism represents an option open to all. Although this explanation would account for the inclusion of all three pairs, it does not fit well with Paul’s argument since Paul associates the state of affairs in 3:28a with the believers’ post-baptismal status in

³⁰⁰ Cf. ἐν γὰρ Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ οὔτε περιτομή τι ἰσχύει οὔτε ἀκροβυστία (5:6) / οὔτε γὰρ περιτομή τί ἐστίν οὔτε ἀκροβυστία (6:15).

³⁰¹ Martin, “Covenant,” 121 n. 34. Contra Gerhard Dautzenberg, “‘Da ist nicht männlich und weiblich’: Zur Interpretation von Gal 3,28,” *Kairos* n.s. 24 (1982): 181-206, 183, who argues for a—as he admits—somewhat awkward chiasmic explanation linking Jew/free/male and Greek/slave/female.

³⁰² The Jew/Greek contrast appears to be a fairly standard formula for Paul, also appearing in Rom 1:16; 2:9-10; 3:9; 10:12; 1 Cor 1:22, 24; 10:32; 12:13; and Col 3:11. A Jew/gentile contrast appears only in Rom 3:29; 9:24; 1 Cor 1:23; Gal 2:14-15; 1 Thess 2:14-16. Cf. Johnson Hodge, *Sons*, 59.

Christ (3:28b), not with their pre-baptismal qualifications for entering into the people of God. In other words, Paul does not argue that baptism represents a more inclusive entrance ritual than circumcision, but that baptism has brought the Galatians into a state that transcends the circumcision/uncircumcision distinction.

This latter observation then suggests a better resolution: Paul includes the three pairs in order to locate the circumcision/uncircumcision distinction firmly and wholly within the realm of fallen humanity. A second biblical allusion in 3:28 supports this analysis. The third pair breaks from the “neither . . . nor” (οὐκ . . . οὐδέ) pattern of the first two, stating instead that “there is not male *and* female” (οὐκ ἔνι ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ). Most scholars view this shift as signaling an allusion to the creation of Adam and Eve in Gen 1:27: “male and female he made them” (ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ ἐποίησεν αὐτούς).³⁰³ This reference to the original creation then highlights the essential unity of the human race that lies behind the various subdivisions identified in Gal 3:28a. By implicitly showing that the institution of circumcision in Gen 17:9-14 builds upon and contributes to these subdivisions, Paul effectively indicates that circumcision as a distinguishing factor must presume the underlying Adamic unity of humanity, a unity that scripture has enclosed entirely under sin (Gal 3:22). Because it must presuppose this unity, however,

³⁰³ See, e.g., Hays, “Galatians,” 273; Martyn, *Galatians*, 376-77. In addition to Gen 1:27 and its restatement in Gen 5:2, ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ also appears six times in reference to the pairing of animals for inclusion in Noah’s ark (Gen 6:19, 20; 7:2, 3, 9, 16). Martin, “Covenant,” 118-19, 121, suggests that, rather than signaling an allusion, the different syntax in the third pair simply reflects the fact that, in contrast to Greeks and free men, females could not choose to be circumcised. While this suggestion is possible, the need for it arises out of a false dichotomy: Martin presumes that “male and female” must relate *either* to the circumcision covenant *or* to creation (118). I suggest that it does both.

neither circumcision nor the law of which it is a part could ever enable the Jews to transcend their fallen human nature; circumcision can differentiate, but it cannot transform. As a result, although being a Jew, or free, or male might entail advantages in this created world, none of these designations—or their counterparts—could ever provide the only benefit that ultimately matters, namely, life (3:21). Indeed, only Christ, who enters humanity from the outside (cf. “God sent forth his son,” 4:4) and who, as 3:28a indicates and the discussion of 4:1-7 below will argue, ultimately transcends humanity’s various subdivisions, can offer freedom from the Adamic curse.³⁰⁴

The claim with which Paul closes his letter in 6:15 perfectly summarizes the implications of these allusions in 3:28 to Gen 17:9-14 and Gen 1:27: “For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation” (οὔτε γὰρ περιτομή τί ἐστίν οὔτε ἀκροβυστία, ἀλλὰ καινὴ κτίσις). While this summary lends credence to the above analysis, we must still ask whether the Galatians would likely have heard these allusions. The detection of the three antithetical pairs as an allusion to the circumcision/uncircumcision distinctions in Gen 17:9-14 seems especially difficult to assume.³⁰⁵ Paul could probably have expected the Galatians to have interpreted the Jew/Greek pair with respect to circumcision, and they might even have intuited a similar significance for the male/female pair. Nevertheless, for Paul to have assumed that the

³⁰⁴ The need for there to be “no male and female” in Christ thus arises not from any inherent problem in the original differentiation of the sexes but from the need to transcend the fallen nature of both. As will become apparent, it represents the redemption of the sexes rather than their reversal or annulment.

³⁰⁵ Martin, “Covenant,” 120, argues that the agitators would have made these categories clear in response to questions from the Galatians as to what, exactly, the circumcision requirement would entail.

Galatians would recognize the slave/free pair as alluding to the status of foreigners living among Abraham's descendants—an assumption that would practically require 1) Paul's awareness of 2) the agitators' grounding of their appeal in a detailed analysis of Gen 17—seems much less likely.

In line with this analysis, I suggest that, although these allusions add depth to the argument for those who recognize them, they do not constitute the primary way in which Paul makes his case. If the Galatians did not perceive the allusions to Gen 17:9-14, then how would they have understood the antithetical pairs in 3:28? As Wayne Meeks notes, the opposition of such social roles seems to have been a “rhetorical commonplace.”³⁰⁶ Ancient writers attribute to Thales, Socrates, and Plato expressions of thanksgiving for being born a human and not a beast, a man and not a woman, a Greek and not a barbarian. Similarly, morning prayers variously attributed to second century C.E. rabbis Judah b. Elai and Meir thank God for not being born a gentile, a female, or a brute.³⁰⁷ None of these texts seems to provide direct background for Paul's claim. Rather, they help establish a cultural milieu in which the Galatians would have been likely to understand the three antithetical pairs as signifying, in the words of Dunn, the “most profound and obvious differences in the ancient world.”³⁰⁸

³⁰⁶ Meeks, “Androgyne,” 167.

³⁰⁷ For Thales and Socrates, see Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae philosophorum* 1.33. For Plato, see Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones* 3.19; cf. Plutarch, *Marius* 46.1. For R. Judah b. Elai, see *t. Ber.* 7:18 and *y. Ber.* 13b. For R. Meir, see *b. Menah.* 43b, although R. Judah also appears in several mss. of *b. Menah.* 43b.

³⁰⁸ Dunn, *Galatians*, 206.

I will argue in §3.4.2.2 that this understanding of 3:28 enables Paul to portray these antithetical pairs as “the elements composing the world” (τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου, 4:3), enslaving divisions that Christ ultimately enables the believers to transcend. The surface text thus makes a very similar argument to the one indicated by Paul’s allusions. Furthermore, understood in this way, the latter two pairs also play a significant—albeit often overlooked—role in Paul’s argument. Their true importance, however, does not emerge until the discussion of the στοιχεῖα in 4:1-7. I will accordingly focus on the Jew/Greek contrast in the remainder of my analysis of 3:28-29 and then return to the significance of the latter pairs at the appropriate point in the analysis of 4:1-7 below.

The asyndeton in 3:28a suggests that this claim summarizes the significance of Paul’s argument in 3:26-27. In other words, he seems to prove that Christian Jews are no longer under law (3:25) by showing that they stand in the same position as the not-under-law gentiles. Galatians 3:26-27 has established this standing with regard to their mutual status as sons of God. Jews, however, could still potentially argue for the law’s—and circumcision’s—importance to their Abrahamic sonship. Accordingly, to complete the argument, Paul has to show in 3:28b-29 that the gentiles’ status in Christ suffices to make them sons—and thus seed—of Abraham.

Paul grounds (γάρ) his statement that there is neither Jew nor Greek in the claim that “all of you are one [εἷς] in Christ Jesus” (3:28b).³⁰⁹ As Burton notes, the εἷς could function either “distributively and qualitatively” or “inclusively and numerically.”³¹⁰ These two functions, however, lead to respective arguments that fundamentally differ with regard to emphasis and the manner of supporting 3:28a. In the former case, “oneness” would signify the *sameness* of individual Jews and gentiles in Christ. This option would accordingly support 3:28a by emphasizing the negation of differences inherent to human particularity—whether absolutely,³¹¹ from a particular perspective,³¹² or with respect to a particular aspect³¹³—that results from an individual’s relationship to Christ. In the latter case, “oneness” would signify the corporate *union* of Jew and gentile in Christ. This option would accordingly support 3:28a by emphasizing the status of Jews and gentiles as part of the corporate entity that is Christ.

³⁰⁹ The suggestion of Longenecker, *Galatians*, 158, that the γάρ in 3:28b refers back to 3:26 overlooks the more straightforward connection to 3:28a and essentially leaves the asyndetic 3:28a without any connections to the surrounding argument.

³¹⁰ Burton, *Galatians*, 207-8.

³¹¹ Grounding Paul’s argument in “a general Hellenistic longing for the univocal and the universal” Boyarin, *Radical*, 24-25, reads 3:28 as the actual “erasure” of differences in the spirit-body of Christ. Cf. Meeks, “Androgyne,” 165-208.

³¹² E.g., Burton, *Galatians*, 207, suggests that a distributive view of 3:28b would reflect the way that God views those in Christ, i.e., God shows no partiality or preference.

³¹³ Focusing on the parallel of “one” in 3:28b with “sons of God” in 3:27, Campbell, *Quest*, 99, argues that 3:28 points simply to “the uniform [i.e., one and the same] but personal and pluralized condition of ‘sonship.’”

The differing ways that εἶς functions in these arguments prevent us from simply combining these two meanings. Admittedly, some interpreters understand 3:28b to derive the Christians' sameness from their incorporation into the one Christ. This combined sense, however, does not proceed from the εἶς alone: such an interpretation effectively treats the εἶς as distributive while inferring—whether explicitly or not—the incorporated unity from the designation “in Christ.”³¹⁴ In contrast, an inclusive/numerical reading of the εἶς would have no reason to negate the various distinctions of human particularity.³¹⁵

How, then, should we interpret the εἶς? Three factors suggest that we should prefer the inclusive, numerical reading. First, 1 Cor 12:13-14 employs a similar set of binary oppositions to portray Jews, gentiles, slaves and free as distinct members of a single body, a fairly common image in the Pauline literature.³¹⁶ As Campbell notes, this parallel hardly proves decisive since Gal 3:28 lacks any explicit references to Christ's body.³¹⁷ It does, however, establish a clear instance of the model that results from reading the binary oppositions in 3:28a with an inclusive εἶς in 3:28b. Against the more extreme

³¹⁴ E.g., Hays, “Galatians,” 272-73.

³¹⁵ Contra, e.g., Martyn, *Galatians*, 377, who suggests that “[Paul] had later, therefore, to think very seriously about the tension between the affirmation of *real unity in Christ* and the *disconcerting continuation of distinguishing marks* of the old creation” (emphasis added). Or again, Fung, *Galatians*, 175-76, argues forcefully for an emphasis on numerical unity, yet he explains 3:28a as the “cover[ing] up” of “distinctions which obtained before.” These interpretations both slide, perhaps unconsciously, from the distinct concept of numerical “unity” with regard to Abraham's seed to an understanding of qualitative “unity” with regard to the relationship between Jew and gentile.

³¹⁶ Cf. Rom 12:4-5; 1 Cor 6:15-17; 10:17; 12:12-20; Col 3:15; Eph 4:4-16.

³¹⁷ Campbell, *Quest*, 99.

versions of a distributive reading, it also shows that Paul does not associate incorporation into Christ with the negation of all particularity.

Second, a distributive reading would essentially undercut the vehemence of Paul's argument that the gentile Galatians not take up the law. True, Judaizing gentiles would be attributing significance to something that truly has no significance in Christ, but such an error would hardly seem worthy of characterization as "falling from grace" and being "severed from Christ" (5:4). What would differentiate this type of error, e.g., from the countenanced error of those "weak" Christians who refuse to eat certain foods despite the fact that what they eat has no effect on their standing before God (1 Cor 8:8; cf. Rom 14:2-3)? While we might attribute this difficulty to Paul's overstating his case here in Galatians, we should prefer an interpretation that appropriately matches the severity of his concern. In other words, Paul's emphatic insistence that gentiles not become Jews suggests an argument in which human distinctions retain a primary significance.

Finally and most importantly, an inclusive, numerical reading of εἷς does something that a distributive, qualitative reading cannot do, namely, explain how the identification of a plurality of believers with Abraham's seed in 3:29 coheres with Paul's earlier insistence on the singular nature of that seed in 3:16. In short, he can associate the plurality of Galatian Christians with the singular Abrahamic seed because they are all "one" in Christ, i.e., a single entity.³¹⁸ This reading thus enables a coherent interpretation

³¹⁸ So, e.g., Betz, *Galatians*, 200-201.

of Paul's seed argument. It also accords with the consistent linking of a numerical εἷς with Abraham's seed in this passage (3:16, 19-20).

The evidence thus points strongly toward the inclusive, numerical reading of the εἷς.³¹⁹ Viewed in this way, 3:28 focuses attention on the whole (Christ) rather than on the constituent parts (Jew/gentile, slave/free, male/female). It does not, however, thereby seek to homogenize the various parts.³²⁰ Indeed, far from negating their differences, Paul's underlying framework validates and celebrates them by situating them in their proper context as parts of the nature of Christ. Thus, James Dunn, e.g., argues that

[in light of 1 Cor 12:13-14,] the character of the 'oneness' becomes clearer: not as a levelling and abolishing of all racial, social or gender differences, but as an integration of just such differences into common participation 'in Christ', wherein they enhance (rather than detract from) the unity of the body, and enrich the mutual interdependence and service of its members.³²¹

In other words, "there is no Jew and gentile" not because Christ eliminates such particularities but because he transcends them, placing them within a larger whole. Just as male and female unite to form "one flesh," so, too, Jews and Greeks unite in Christ to

³¹⁹ So, e.g., Matera, *Galatians*, 143; Fung, *Galatians*, 176; Bruce, *Galatians*, 190.

³²⁰ This interpretation of the εἷς thus has no problem with the observation that distinctions between Jew and gentile, between slave and free, and between male and female continue to exist even in the church. Other explanations for this disjunction between social reality and the claim in Gal 3:28a argue, e.g., that 3:28a asserts 1) only the basis for God's acceptance (e.g., Burton, *Galatians*, 206); 2) only that those in Christ all share one and the same divine sonship (Campbell, *Quest*, 99); 3) a not-yet-fully-realized eschatological ideal (e.g., Hays, "Galatians," 272-73; Meeks, "Androgyne," 207-8); or 4) a radical position from which Paul later retreats (Betz, *Galatians*, 200).

³²¹ Dunn, *Galatians*, 208. Cf. Martin, "Covenant," 121, who similarly understands unity in Christ although he does not connect this understanding to the antithetical pairs in 3:28a.

form one body (Gen 2:24; cf. the slightly different application of this principle in Eph 5:30-32).

Galatians 3:29 then draws the pertinent implication of this oneness for the current situation: the gentile Galatians who are “of Christ” share in the Jews’ Abrahamic sonship and thus qualify as Abrahamic seed. Several aspects of this interpretation require explanation. For instance, Gal 3:29 nowhere mentions gentiles. Nevertheless, the resumption of Paul’s unmodified second-person pronoun ὑμεῖς—which at the very least includes gentiles—suggests that the statement focuses on gentiles. The concluding description of the Galatians as heirs “according to promise” (κατ’ ἐπαγγελίαν) also likely refers to their gentile-specific status as Abraham’s “children of promise” (ἐπαγγελίας τέκνα, 4:28), a designation that I will explore in Chapter 4. Furthermore, the very act of arguing for a link to Abraham—the τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ σπέρμα construction emphasizes the Abrahamic nature of the seed rather than the type of relationship (seed) to Abraham³²²—indicates a gentile focus: while Jews who are “of Christ” would also qualify as Abraham’s seed, it is the gentiles’ connection to Abraham that demands explanation.

³²² Burton, *Galatians*, 209, notes that the anarthrous σπέρμα could serve either to indicate that the Galatians are included in—as opposed to constitute—Abraham’s seed or it could simply ascribe seed status to them. The analysis above favors the former option.

Paul explains this connection on the grounds that the gentiles (“you”) are “of Christ” (Χριστοῦ).³²³ The switch to the genitive Χριστοῦ after the repeated emphasis in the preceding verses on being “in Christ Jesus” (ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, 3:26, 28; cf. εἰς Χριστὸν, 3:27) requires comment. Scholars typically interpret the genitive as possessive or attributive, i.e., as in some way indicating those who “belong to Christ.”³²⁴ The interpretation of εἰς in 3:28b as inclusive and numerical, however, suggests that Χριστοῦ instead functions instead as a common partitive genitive. In other words, I suggest that the Galatians’ “of Christ” status rests not just on their being “in Christ Jesus” but on their being a constitutive part of this “one [entity] in Christ Jesus” that they form with the Jewish believers (cf. “all of you,” 3:28b).

This analysis then leads to Burton’s critical question as to whether or not the Galatians’ status as Abrahamic seed in 3:29 derives from Christ’s status as the single seed.³²⁵ Most scholars assume that it does: distributive readings of the εἰς already emphasize a believer’s individual connection with Christ, and even inclusive readings can argue that the gentiles become Abrahamic seed because they are “in” the single seed.³²⁶ This expansion would make sense if Jesus’ status as the seed resulted from some

³²³ The first class conditional structure assumes the truth of the protasis. The δέ suggests that it represents a further implication of the preceding claim that they are all one in Christ Jesus.

³²⁴ See, e.g., Hays, “Galatians,” 273; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 158; Burton, *Galatians*, 209.

³²⁵ Burton, *Galatians*, 210.

³²⁶ E.g., Hays, “Galatians,” 273; Martyn, *Galatians*, 377; Matera, *Galatians*, 147; Fung, *Galatians*, 176; Bruce, *Galatians*, 190-91.

intrinsic necessity or arbitrary divine election. I have argued, however, that Paul provides a rationale for his identification of Christ as the single seed, namely, that Jesus is both son of God and son of Abraham. This rationale then raises the possibility that the Galatians qualify as seed for the same reason. In this latter scenario, it is not union with Christ *per se* that would make the Galatians Abrahamic seed but rather their newfound status in Christ as sons of both God and Abraham. Discerning which scenario correctly reflects Paul's view has important implications for our understanding of Abraham's seed and, thus, the overall argument.

In deciding between these two options, I suggest that the εἷς in 3:29 proves determinative. As discussed above, Paul grounds the Galatians' status as Abrahamic seed in the fact that they are "of Christ" (Χριστοῦ), that is to say, that "all of you"—i.e., Jew and gentile together—form a single entity (εἷς) in Christ Jesus. Significantly, he does not claim that his readers are "united with" this one or that they are simply "located within" this one. Instead, he identifies the readers as themselves constitutive of this "one" (πάντες . . . ὑμεῖς εἷς ἐστέ), a term that the argument relates to Abraham's seed in both of its other instances (3:16, 20). In other words, Paul suggests that their corporate union in—not with—Christ, i.e., the union of the Jewish sons of Abraham and the gentile sons of God, qualifies them together as Abraham's seed.

This understanding of the "oneness" of Abraham's seed accordingly points to the same interdependence of Jews and gentiles in Christ that emerged in the analysis of 3:13-14 (see §2.5). Jews and gentiles do not form a loose confederation of individuals connected by a common relationship to Christ. Rather, as Paul says in Rom 12:5, "we

who are many are one body in Christ *and each members of one another* [τὸ δὲ καθ' εἷς ἀλλήλων μέλη].” Gentiles share in the physical Abrahamic sonship of their Jewish counterparts in Christ. (This interpretation of the argument thus requires the retaining human particularity in Christ.) Similarly, as Paul will claim in 4:6, the Spirit of divine adoption flows into the Jewish Christians’ (“our”) hearts because the gentiles (“you”) are sons of God.³²⁷ The physical sons of Abraham and the spiritual sons of God must unite to become the Abrahamic seed. Each needs the other to be complete.

I should also note that this argument suggests a distinction between Christ’s being in believers and believers’ being in Christ. Paul relates the former to the reception of the Spirit that transforms believers into individual sons of God through *faith*, hence, the “blessing in Christ” that comes “*into* the gentiles” (εἰς τὰ ἔθνη) in 3:14a (cf. 3:1-5) and the “Spirit of [God’s] son” that comes “*into* our hearts” (εἰς τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν) in 4:6. The latter he relates to the Galatians’ incorporation into the Abrahamic seed through *baptism* in 3:27-29. (Significantly, this distinction also indicates that adoption as sons of God does not result from baptism but from the reception of the Spirit through faith alone.³²⁸) Thus, while there are potentially many sons of God with Christ in them, there is

³²⁷ See §3.4.2.2 below. This analysis implies that Jews and gentiles require integration into Christ for different reasons. Jews require it in order to escape the curse that enables them to receive the blessing of the Spirit as gentiles; gentiles require it in order to share in the Jews’ physical descent from Abraham.

³²⁸ Contra, e.g., Betz, *Galatians*, 209; Johnson Hodge, *Sons*, 76. Betz even notes that Paul’s argument in Galatians strictly distinguishes between baptism and reception of the Spirit, never referring to one when discussing the other. He cannot explain this disjunction, suggesting only that the concept of “sonship” functions as “some kind of link[!] between baptism and the gift of the Spirit.” My explanation above accounts for the disjunction as well as eliminating the tension between the purported need for

only one seed of Abraham composed of believers in Christ. One could therefore conceivably be a gentile son of God through the indwelling Spirit and yet not be a part of the Abrahamic seed, just as one could be a physical son of Abraham and yet not be part of the Abrahamic seed.

The proposed “oneness” of Jew and gentile in Christ, which maintains the integrity of Paul’s argument in 3:16, resolves two other outstanding issues as well. First, it explains the identification of Abraham’s single seed with a plurality of believers in a way that distinguishes Christ from Moses. Christ simply does not mediate the promises to many individual recipients in the same way that Moses mediates the law in 3:19-20. Instead, believers who enter into Christ become an integral part of the single entity to whom the promise was made.

Second, this understanding of Abraham’s seed explains the vehemence of Paul’s rhetoric. If Jew and gentile together constitute the seed in such a way that human particularity still matters, then defections have significant implications for the larger body of Christ. As Paul says in 1 Cor 12:19, “if everything was one part, where would the body be?” Jews cannot be the seed of Abraham without gentiles and vice versa since each represents a vital part of the seed’s nature. Incidentally, it is presumably this understanding of unity in Christ and not the (mistaken) belief in an imminent parousia that grounds Paul’s exhortation in 1 Cor 7:18-20 for the Corinthians to remain as they

baptism and Paul’s implied claim in 3:1-5 that the Galatians received the Spirit “based on hearing with faith” (ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως).

were when they were called. The body of Christ needs the diversity of its members. (Paul shows more flexibility with regard to maintaining the slave/free distinction in 1 Cor 7:21-23, encouraging slaves who can obtain their freedom to do so, presumably because the members of Christ's body necessarily become both slaves to Christ and people freed from the στοιχεῖα [cf. 1 Cor 7:22].)

The way that the inclusion of gentiles in Abraham's seed supports Paul's initial claim that Jewish Christians are no longer under law illustrates this point well. As most interpreters note, the fact that, in Christ, gentiles who are not under law now share the same status as Jews belies any insistence on the law's necessity. The significance of their inclusion goes beyond a simple inductive appeal, however: it also supplies a rationale for the law's end. Paul has argued in 3:23-24 that the purpose of the law was to promote faith among the Jews, to remind them that they must rely on their faith in God for righteousness rather than on their own works. The inclusion of gentiles in Abraham's seed renders this function of the law obsolete. Jews in Christ now have a new reminder of the sufficiency and necessity of faith, namely, their gentile brothers and sisters who have been incorporated into the seed based purely on faith and mercy (cf. Rom 11:30-31; 15:8-9). The urgency with which Paul insists that gentiles not Judaize thus reflects a concern for the Jews as well as the gentiles in Christ. At the same time, it also reflects a concern for those still outside the body since the fullest expression of Christ on earth can occur only when those who reflect the different aspects of his nature unite together under his name and authority.

In summary, then, Gal 3:26-29 supports Paul's claim in 3:25 that Jewish Christians are no longer under law by arguing that, by virtue of their corporate union in Christ, the gentile Christians share in their Jewish counterparts' nature as physical sons of Abraham even as the Jewish Christians share in the gentiles' blessing that makes them sons of God. This corporate entity thus qualifies as Abraham's seed, a conclusion that coheres with Paul's earlier argument for a singular seed in 3:16. The gentiles' inclusion in this seed then demonstrates the irrelevance of law observance to such status and, in fact, renders the law obsolete by serving as a constant reminder of the ultimate priority of faith.

3.4.2.2 "You are no longer slaves": Implications for gentiles of Jews' becoming sons of God in Christ (Gal 4:1-11)

Galatians 4:1-11 essentially flips the argument of Gal 3:23-29, both structurally and thematically. The latter passage begins in 3:23-25 with a discussion of the Jews' relationship to the law. Paul then follows this discussion in 3:26-29 by establishing the gentiles' status in Christ and their resulting connection to Abraham in order to prove the Jewish Christians' freedom from the law. Galatians 4:1-7 now reverses that argument, establishing the Jews' status as sons of God in Christ in order to prove the gentile Christians' divine sonship and freedom from their slavery to the στοιχεῖα. This section then concludes in 4:8-11 by explicitly identifying the implications of this argument for the gentile Galatians' relationship to the law.

Gal 4:1-5

¹Λέγω δέ, ἐφ' ὅσον χρόνον ὁ κληρονόμος νήπιός ἐστιν, οὐδὲν διαφέρει δούλου κύριος πάντων ὧν, ²ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ ἐπιτρόπους ἐστὶν καὶ οἰκονόμους ἄχρι τῆς προθεσμίας τοῦ πατρὸς. ³οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς, ὅτε ἦμεν νήπιοι, ὑπὸ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου ἡμεθα δεδουλωμένοι. ⁴ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου, ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός, γενόμενον ὑπὸ νόμον, ⁵ἵνα τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον ἐξαγοράσῃ, ἵνα τὴν υἰοθεσίαν ἀπολάβωμεν.

¹But I say, as long as an heir is a child, he is no different from a slave—despite being lord of all—²but he is under guardians and stewards until the time set by the father. ³So also we, when we were children, we were enslaved under the elements of the world. ⁴But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth his son, coming from a woman, coming under law, ⁵so that he might purchase those under law, so that we might receive the adoption.

The passage opens in 4:1-5 by presenting the situation of a minor heir awaiting his inheritance as an illuminating parallel for understanding the situation of the Jews prior to Christ's arrival. Paul establishes four main points of comparison:

4:1-2	ἐφ' ὅσον χρόνον ὁ κληρονόμος νήπιός ἐστιν	οὐδὲν διαφέρει δούλου κύριος πάντων ὧν	ὑπὸ ἐπιτρόπους ἐστὶν καὶ οἰκονόμους	ἄχρι τῆς προθεσμίας τοῦ πατρὸς
4:3-5	ὅτε ἦμεν νήπιοι	ἡμεθα δεδουλωμένοι	ὑπὸ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου	ὅτε ἦλθεν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου

The general principle in 4:1-2 seems to envision a scenario in which a deceased father has—presumably through a διαθήκη—entrusted his young son to the care of guardians until the age when, in the father's pre-death estimation, the son would be mature enough

to take ownership of his inheritance.³²⁹ Interpreters typically identify two main tensions between this scenario and its application in 4:3-5.³³⁰ First, a deceased father makes a rather awkward parallel for the living God in 4:3-5. Second, the scenario in 4:1-2 clearly focuses on the situation of a minor *heir* whose emergence from under his guardians at “the time set by the father” presumably corresponds to the reception of his inheritance. At the corresponding “fullness of time,” however, “we” receive adoption as sons of God (4:5). The parallels thus suggest that adoption constitutes “our” inheritance. Given 1) that the “father” language and need for guardians in 4:1-2 presume the heir’s status as a son, 2) that Paul subsequently argues from sonship to heirship in 4:7, and 3) that there would be no reason to delay until the age of majority the adoption of someone who was already an heir, it seems unlikely that 4:3-5 envisions an heir who is not also a son. If “we” were not sons of God before the fullness of time, however, then how do “we” inherit?

The simplest solution to both problems—namely, that God is not the father from whom “we” inherit in 4:1-5—hardly merits a mention from most interpreters, probably because the father’s time-setting role in 4:2 seems to create a direct parallel with God’s taking the initiative in 4:4. Instead, interpreters usually address the first problem either by arguing that 4:1-2 does not presume the father’s death or by dismissing the problem (whether implicitly or explicitly) on the grounds that an analogy need not correspond at

³²⁹ So, e.g., Oepke, *Galater*, 127.

³³⁰ On these problems, see Scott, *Adoption*, 122-26, and the literature cited there.

every point.³³¹ Against the former suggestion, the language of heirs and guardians most naturally indicates a situation where the father has died; only the subsequent parallel of the father with God could prompt the conclusion that 4:1-2 depicts the heir of a still-living father. The general principle in 4:1-2 would therefore be misleading at best if Paul intended to portray a scenario in which the father still lives, a misdirection that would serve no real purpose in the argument and that would have been easy to anticipate and avoid. The latter suggestion, in contrast, does offer a potentially viable solution, although I will ultimately argue for a more comprehensive resolution.

The second difficulty proves much harder to resolve. Some scholars try to preserve the analogy by arguing that υἱοθεσία means “full sonship”—i.e., in contrast to the status of a minor son—instead of “adoption”³³² or that the divine framework of the application—in contrast to the human framework of the illustration—requires the additional step of adoption.³³³ The former option falters because υἱοθεσία elsewhere always means “adoption,”³³⁴ whereas the latter simply fails to address the key problem that the need for adoption destroys the parallel with the son/heir in the illustration. Other explanations try to justify the breakdown of Paul’s analogy. Thus, Mußner,

³³¹ For a still-living father, see, e.g., Meyer, “Galatians,” 165; Brown, *Galatians*, 185. Burton, *Galatians*, 214, suggests that the father is alive but traveling and, thus, absent. For an incomplete analogy, see, e.g., Ellicott, *Galatians*, 91, who simply dismisses the issue as irrelevant to Paul’s point about minority.

³³² See, e.g., Brown, *Galatians*, 191-92; Byrne, *Sons*, 80, 183-85; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 172. Cf. NIV: “full rights of sons.”

³³³ Meyer, “Galatians,” 173.

³³⁴ See Scott, *Adoption*, 2-57, 267.

acknowledging that “we” are not yet sons and heirs in 4:3-5, argues that the analogy serves primarily to highlight the time of slavery.³³⁵ Or again, Matera suggests that the reception of adoption in 4:5b breaks from the analogy because it shifts the focus from Jews in 4:3-5a to gentiles.³³⁶ The focus on an heir in 4:1-2 and the integral importance of inheritance throughout 3:15-4:11 (cf. esp. 3:29, 4:7), however, make it inconceivable that Paul would not expect his readers to understand the “so also we” in 4:3 as indicating that “we” were heirs as well as *νήπιοι*; at the time set by the father, the same “we” should therefore receive (cf. *ἀπολάβωμεν*, 4:5b) not only a release from slavery (cf. 4:5a) but also an inheritance.

As mentioned above, a better resolution to both problems results if God is not the father from whom “we” inherit in 4:3-5, a possibility that arises if, as he has throughout 3:15-4:11, Paul has two distinct sonships in view, Abrahamic and divine. Since “we” were not sons (or heirs) of God before the fullness of time, “we” must be the sons and heirs of Abraham (cf. 3:29), a reading that necessarily restricts Paul’s first-person plural references to Jews.³³⁷ Adoption as sons of God then becomes part of the Jews’

³³⁵ Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 268. Cf. Tolmie, *Persuading*, 146-48; Martyn, *Galatians*, 391; Williams, *Galatians*, 108; Byrne, *Sons*, 176.

³³⁶ Matera, *Galatians*, 156. Cf. Hays, “Galatians,” 284.

³³⁷ Cf. Cornely (cited in Lagrange, *Galates*, 98), who similarly argues that 4:3 has Jews in view on the grounds that the Jews have a right to inherit through Abraham even before conversion whereas gentiles do not. Scholars who also understand the “we” as referring to Jews include Witherington, *Grace*, 284; Matera, *Galatians*, 149; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 164; Donaldson, “Curse,” 95-98; Bruce, *Galatians*, 193. Most interpreters, however, see the “we” as inclusive of Jews and gentiles. See, e.g., Young, “Pronominal Shifts,” 214-15; Hays, “Galatians,” 282; Becker, “Galater,” 62; Martyn, *Galatians*, 336; Williams, *Galatians*, 107-10; Dunn, *Galatians*, 212; Rohde, *Galater*, 168; Fung, *Galatians*, 181; Burton, *Galatians*, 215; Byrne, *Sons*, 177; Oepke, *Galater*, 128-29; Betz, *Galatians*, 204; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 268; Schlier,

inheritance from Abraham,³³⁸ the deceased father of the Jews who parallels the deceased father in 4:1-2.

This interpretation also makes sense of the slavery parallel. Paul states that a minor heir is no different from a slave even though he is lord of all (4:1). The principle thus distinguishes two groups, true slaves and temporarily-enslaved son-heirs. When applying the analogy, Paul claims that “we” were similarly enslaved by the στοιχεῖα (4:3). Since “we” are heirs, the parallel suggests that “we” should be distinguished from true slaves. Furthermore, Paul’s conclusion in 4:7 that his gentile readers are “no longer” (οὐκέτι) slaves but (now) sons suggests that they formerly were true slaves, a condition to which 4:9 attests. The components all fall into place if Paul’s “we” comprises Jews: even though they were heirs of the world according to the promise to Abraham (cf. Rom 4:13), before Christ—i.e., during the time of their minority—they were no different from the στοιχεῖα-enslaved gentiles.³³⁹

Of course, the final aspect of the analogy does point to God as father: Paul claims that the heir emerges “at the time set by the father,” and it is clearly God—not

Galater, 193; Bonnard, “Galates,” 84; Lagrange, *Galates*, 98-99; Meyer, “Galatians,” 166; Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 166-67. Augustine argues that it refers to gentiles alone (Plumer, *Augustine’s Commentary on Galatians*, 176-77 [29.4]), as does Johnson Hodge, *Sons*, 71.

³³⁸ Adoption cannot constitute all of their inheritance because the gentiles would then have nothing to gain by becoming sons of Abraham. Cf. Rom 4:13, where Paul speaks of the Abrahamic seed’s inheriting the world.

³³⁹ For more on the στοιχεῖα, see below.

Abraham—who initiates the timing of events in 4:3-5. In other words, the one clear reference to a father figure in 4:1-2 clearly parallels God’s role in 4:3-5 while Abraham goes unmentioned. This connection between the father in 4:1-2 and God in 4:4-5 requires an explanation, especially since Paul could have simply referred to the minor’s reaching the age of majority without mentioning the father’s role.³⁴⁰ At the same time, however, other aspects of the passage seem to call this correlation of the paradigmatic father and God into question.

For instance, in addition to the previously mentioned tensions inherent in identifying God with the father, the lack of any lexical correspondence at this point in the analogy (“until the time set by the father,” ἄχρι τῆς προθεσμίας τοῦ πατρός / “when the fullness of time came, God sent” ὅτε . . . ἦλθεν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς) differentiates this parallel from the parallels discussed above, seemingly suggesting that Paul does not mean to apply this component of his general principle too strictly to “our” situation as heirs in 4:3. Further weakening the connection, Paul does not even refer to God explicitly as father until 4:6, establishing his fatherhood in 4:4-5 only indirectly through the designation of Jesus as his “son.” More importantly, while 4:4-5 clearly implies Jesus’ status as God’s son, “we” do not become God’s sons until the adoption in 4:5-6, making it difficult for God to function as “our” father in 4:3.

³⁴⁰ Although we do know of fathers who explicitly set the age of their children’s majority (see §3.2.3), the relative scarcity of known examples suggests that many fathers would simply have abided by the established legal age of majority.

Once again, the suggestion that Paul has two sonships in view helps to resolve these apparent tensions in the text. I accordingly propose that the connection of the father's time-setting role in 4:2 with God's action in 4:4-5 signals a second level on which the analogy applies. God is a time-setting father in 4:4-5, but he is such a father with respect to Jesus, not to "us." Just like the heir in 4:1-2, just like the Jews in 4:3, so Jesus—the true lord of all (cf. 4:1)—also endures a time of minority enslavement (i.e., the incarnation) before receiving his inheritance.

Before I argue in greater detail for this application of the minor heir principle to Jesus, I want to note two broader exegetical issues in 4:4-5 that this suggestion helps resolve. First, it makes sense of the otherwise superfluous reference to God's sending of his son. The application of the general principle to "our" situation in 4:3 implies that "we" receive adoption as "our" inheritance at the fullness of time. In 4:6, however, Paul relates this adoption to God's sending of the *Spirit* of his son,³⁴¹ a (presumably) post-resurrection event that fulfills the purpose for which, according to 4:5b, the son himself was sent. Thus, although the sending of the son ultimately makes the reception of "our" inheritance possible, it does not directly correspond to any element in the analogy of 4:1-2 with "our" situation in 4:3. Paul could therefore have jumped straight to God's sending of the Spirit; instead, he portrays "the fullness of time" as a punctiliar moment that extends from the initial sending of Jesus (4:4) all the way through the post-resurrection sending of the Spirit (4:6). Viewing 4:4-5 as a second application of the principle in 4:1-2

³⁴¹ See below for discussion of the relationship of adoption to the sending of Spirit.

explains not only why Paul begins with the sending of the son but also why he describes it in greater detail than the seemingly more relevant sending of the Spirit.

Second, this proposal helps explain why Paul refers to the incarnation and only to the incarnation—with no mention of the crucifixion or resurrection—when discussing Jesus’ role in enabling “our” adoption. Finding such an appeal to incarnation to be contextually unexpected and largely irrelevant, many interpreters argue that 4:4-6 must represent pre-existing material such as a church creed or sending formula that Paul has integrated rather poorly into his argument.³⁴² Nevertheless, even if the passage does incorporate pre-existing material—and the perceived irrelevance, along with the rhythmic structure, constitutes the primary evidence for this purported origin—the material still appears as part of Paul’s argument, leaving scholars to debate whether or not his direct connection of incarnation with adoption assumes the crucifixion as well.

Betz, for instance, denies that the passage assumes crucifixion. He suggests that Paul focuses on incarnation because in 4:4-5 it is Jesus’ life under the law—not his becoming a curse on the cross as in 3:13—that frees those under law and enables adoption. As Betz goes on to note, this explanation places Paul’s statements in 3:13-14 and 4:4-5 in irreconcilable tension, with the former appealing to Christ’s death as the key redemptive event while the latter appeals to his life.³⁴³ Such tension makes this explanation unlikely, not to mention that it remains a mystery exactly how simply living

³⁴² So, e.g., Betz, *Galatians*, 205; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 166-67.

³⁴³ Betz, *Galatians*, 207-8, esp. 207 n. 51.

under the law—in accordance with the portrayal of Christ as one condemned by the law in 3:13, the text nowhere implies that Christ perfectly fulfills the law—would free those in a similar situation.

Richard Hays counters Betz’s analysis by arguing that Paul’s formulation in 4:4-5 invokes the underlying narrative of the gospel, a narrative that necessarily includes Christ’s death and resurrection.³⁴⁴ The connections between 3:13-14 and 4:4-5—the passages appear in the same section of the letter (3:15-4:11), both have consecutive ἵνα clauses, and both use the verb ἐξαγοράζω to describe Jesus’ “purchasing” of those under law—do suggest that Paul intends the latter to be read in light of the former. That is to say, having already established in 3:13-14 the means by which Christ “purchases” those under the law, Paul can simply assume this background knowledge in the parallel passage of 4:4-5. This conclusion, however, still does not account for the exclusive focus in 4:4-5 on Jesus’ becoming incarnate, especially if it is his death that truly constitutes the key event.

Reading 4:4-5 as a second application of the minor heir principle in 4:1-2 allows an interpretation that remains consistent with 3:13-14 while also explaining the focus on Jesus’ becoming (γενόμενον) incarnate: the phrases γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός and γενόμενον ὑπὸ νόμον in 4:4 do not point to Christ’s incarnation *qua* incarnation so much as they highlight the subjection to the στοιχεῖα that accompanies his incarnation. The son of God thus becomes “no different” (οὐδὲν διαφέρει, 4:1) from the Jewish sons

³⁴⁴ Hays, *Faith*, 106-11.

of Abraham—who were themselves “no different” from the gentiles—in being enslaved to the στοιχεῖα, a state in which he remains until entering his inheritance as Abraham’s divine seed at the time set by his father.

As for the nature of these enslaving στοιχεῖα, the much-debated term basically signifies “constituent elements.”³⁴⁵ In Paul’s day it could refer to letters of the alphabet, to foundational principles, or, most commonly by far, to the elements that the ancients understood as composing the physical world: fire, water, air, earth, and (sometimes) ether.³⁴⁶ The predominance of this latter meaning becomes almost absolute in instances where τοῦ κόσμου (or an equivalent expression) modifies στοιχεῖα.³⁴⁷ Viewed in isolation, then, τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου in 4:3 would naturally seem to refer to these four or five elements, but the context of Paul’s argument raises difficulties for this interpretation. In particular, accounts of Paul’s reasoning must explain the relationship of these στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου to the law since it is the Jews’ position “under law” (ὑπὸ νόμον, 4:5; cf. ὑπὸ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου, 4:3) that presumably allows Paul to

³⁴⁵ See LSJ, “στοιχεῖον,” 1647, meaning II; BDAG, “στοιχεῖον,” 946.

³⁴⁶ Josef Blinzler, “Lexikalisches zu dem Terminus τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου bei Paulus,” in *Studiorum paulinorum congressus internationalis catholicus 1961* (AnBib 17-18; Rome: Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 1963), 2.429-43, 439-40. His survey of pre- and post-Pauline Jewish/Christian writings (extending up to Clement of Alexandria) finds over 78% (137/175) of the instances of στοιχεῖα refer to the four (or five) elements. Cf. Burton, *Galatians*, 510-18; Eduard Schweizer, “Slaves of the Elements and Worshipers of Angels: Gal 4:3, 9 and Col 2:8, 18, 20,” *JBL* 107 (1988): 455-68, 455-64; Gerhard Delling, “στοιχεῖω, συστοιχεῖω, στοιχεῖον,” *TDNT* 7:670-87; Belleville, “Under Law,” 64-69.

³⁴⁷ Dietrich Rusam, “Neue Belege zu den στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου (Gal 4,3.9; Kol 2,8.20),” *ZNW* 83 (1992): 119-25; Blinzler, “Lexikalisches,” 440-41. See, e.g., Philo, *Aet.* 109.3-4; *Her.* 134.5, 140.3; *Sib. Or.* 2.206-7, 3.80, 8.337-340. Rusam, “Neue Belege,” 121, 124, finds only one exception, a reference in Sextus Empiricus’s *Pyrr. hyp.* (second/third century C.E.) to the Pythagoreans’ belief that numbers constituted στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου (3.152).

identify them (cf. ἡμεῖς, 4:3) as those enslaved to τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου in 4:3. The term also appears—without τοῦ κόσμου—in 4:9-10, where Paul presents the Galatians’ calendrical observances as a desire to be enslaved to the στοιχεῖα “again” (πάλιν), a claim that connects the στοιχεῖα to the “things that by nature are not gods” (τοῖς φύσει μὴ οὐσιν θεοῖς) that formerly enslaved the Galatians according to 4:8.

A few scholars nevertheless emphasize the contemporary lexical evidence, arguing that τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου must refer in the first instance to the four elements composing the physical world. For instance, in an argument based largely on the connection of στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου with ascetic practices and the worship of angels in Col 2:8, 18-20, Eduard Schweizer suggests that the phrase presumes the Pythagorean concept of “the imprisonment of the soul in the ceaseless rotation of the four elements”; the law then becomes a set of purifying (and thus freeing) regulations equivalent to the Galatians’ former ascetic practices.³⁴⁸ Alternatively, Martinus de Boer argues that the four elements metonymically signify the Galatians’ former religious beliefs, beliefs that Paul correlates with the Jewish law on the basis that both involve calendrical observances.³⁴⁹ Both of these explanations suffer because they require a rather superficial and artificial connection between the Jewish law and the στοιχεῖα, i.e., a connection that the agitators could easily dispute. For Gerhard Delling, in contrast, the physical elements

³⁴⁸ Schweizer, “Slaves,” 466.

³⁴⁹ Martinus C. de Boer, “The Meaning of the Phrase τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου in Galatians,” *NTS* 53 (2007): 204-24, 220-22.

indicated by τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου serve as a metaphor for everything on which humanity's existence rested before Christ, pre-Christian religion in particular.³⁵⁰ Such a metaphor, however, would be poorly chosen: pre-Christian religion does not “compose” human existence in the same way that the elements compose the world, nor does Paul seem likely to have identified such religion as a true basis for human existence.

Other interpreters effectively emphasize the connection of the στοιχεῖα to the enslaving “non-gods” in 4:8-9, arguing that τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου refers to demonic or astral spirits.³⁵¹ Although this interpretation can appeal to the parallel “guardians and overseers” in 4:2 to support the personal nature of the στοιχεῖα and can try to implicate the law through its having been given “through angels” (δι’ ἀγγέλων) according to 3:19, we have no instances of στοιχεῖα referring to personal spirits or heavenly bodies until the late second century C.E. The contemporary lexical evidence thus renders this possibility highly unlikely.

A final major interpretation takes its cue from the connection of the στοιχεῖα to the Jewish law. In this view, τὰ στοιχεῖα signifies “elementary principles” (cf. Heb 5:12), a reading that seems to accord well with the law's role as a παιδαγωγός in 3:24-

³⁵⁰ Dellling, *TDNT*, 7:685. Followed by Fung, *Galatians*, 189-91.

³⁵¹ E.g., Reicke, “Law,” ; Schlier, *Galater*, 191-92; Betz, *Galatians*, 204-5; Bruce, *Galatians*, 202-4.

25 and the restrictive nature of the parallel guardians in 4:2.³⁵² It works less well as a parallel to the non-gods in 4:8-9. More importantly, this interpretation has trouble accounting for the modifying phrase τοῦ κόσμου in 4:3: in what sense are these elementary principles—and the law in particular—“of the world”? Recognizing this difficulty, Burton argues that the genitive must indicate possession rather than source, hence, “the rudimentary religious teachings possessed by the [human] race.”³⁵³ The genitive becomes largely superfluous in this reading, however—after all, who else would possess these elementary principles?—making it an awkward addition given the near constant propensity for τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου to signify the four or five basic elements of the universe.

How, then, should we understand τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου? Martyn points the way forward when he observes that Paul essentially defines κόσμος in 6:14-15 as the paired opposition of the circumcised and the uncircumcised. Noting that the ancients often described the composition of the world in terms of paired oppositions, Martyn then connects the στοιχεῖα to the list of opposites that believers transcend in Christ according to 3:28: Jew and gentile, slave and free, male and female. Focusing on the Law / Not-Law division suggested by 6:14-15, he concludes that Paul associates τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ

³⁵² For the interpretation of στοιχεῖα as elementary principles, see, e.g., Witherington, *Grace*, 284-86; Matera, *Galatians*, 149-50; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 165-66; Belleville, “Under Law,” 67-69; Burton, *Galatians*, 518; Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 167.

³⁵³ Burton, *Galatians*, 518. Cf. Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 167, who interprets τοῦ κόσμου as indicating that these principles pertain to the material and not the spiritual realm. This reading again seems to add little to the argument since believers still remain bound to observe principles that pertain on earth.

κόσμου with “the elements of religious distinction,”³⁵⁴ a conclusion that largely ignores the male/female and slave/free distinctions in 3:28.³⁵⁵ I therefore suggest that Paul instead conceives of τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου as the basic elements/divisions that compose humanity.³⁵⁶

Although this suggestion attributes a different meaning to τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου than the usually attested reference to the four or five elements composing the universe, it does invoke the basic sense of στοιχεῖον as a “constituent element” while also accounting for the addition of τοῦ κόσμου. Furthermore, the context seems to demand this meaning. I have already mentioned the paired oppositions in 3:28. This interpretation also offers an explanation for the association of both the Jewish law and pagan religion with the στοιχεῖα that does not require the problematical equating of the three. That is to say, subjection to the Jewish law results in a subjection to the στοιχεῖα, not because the law is itself a στοιχεῖον, but because the law makes its adherents Jews, i.e., it divides them from the rest of humanity. Following the same logic, the Galatians’

³⁵⁴ Martyn, *Galatians*, 402-6. Acknowledging the usual meaning of τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου as a reference to the four or five elements composing the cosmos, Martyn further suggests that his proposed meaning would likely only emerge after repeated readings and reflection. It remains unclear, however, exactly how a reference to the four elements would have made sense in an initial reading.

³⁵⁵ The suggestion of Martin, “Covenant,” 121, that the antithetical pairs in 3:28a allude to distinctions in circumcision requirements according to Gen 17:9-14 could account for the slave/free and male/female pairings as part of Martyn’s proposed religious distinctions. I argued above (see §3.4.2.1), however, that even if Paul did make this allusion, he did not expect the Galatians necessarily to perceive it, suggesting that he has an additional reason for including these pairs.

³⁵⁶ For τοῦ κόσμου as indicating “the world of humanity,” see Burton, *Galatians*, 514, 518. Cf. Rom 3:6, 5:12, 11:12.

former enslavement to the non-gods in 4:8 would represent an enslavement to the στοιχεῖα because their religious practices and beliefs differentiated them from other people-groups, an argument that seems to presuppose the close association—seen preeminently in Israel—between a people’s gods and its national/ethnic identity in the ancient world.³⁵⁷

This understanding of τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου also makes it easier to understand how Jesus’ coming ἐκ γυναικός and ὑπὸ νόμον effectively subjects him to the στοιχεῖα. By entering the ranks of humanity through the incarnation, Jesus becomes subject to the restrictions of particularity characterized by the three pairs of distinctions in 3:28. With respect to the Jew-gentile distinction, coming under law (ὑπὸ νόμον) clearly establishes him as a Jew. With respect to the male-female distinction, he is born ἐκ γυναικός, a phrase whose significance I will discuss further below. Finally, these two designations indicate that, with respect to the slave-free distinction, he becomes a slave to the στοιχεῖα.

In each case, however, Jesus ultimately transcends these distinctions, effectively uniting—to use a linguistic metaphor—the marked (Jew, slave, female) and the unmarked (gentile, free, male). Thus, from a woman he emerges as a man. As a Jew cursed under law in the crucifixion, he emerges in the resurrection as one not under law

³⁵⁷ Cf. Johnson Hodge, *Sons*, 49: “Ancient ethnic groups, including the *Ioudaioi*, were affiliated with and defined by a particular god or gods. Loyalty to a deity or deities, often manifested in specific worship practices, signaled membership in particular ethnic groups.” As an example, she cites Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who points to similar sacrificial procedures to establish a group’s Greek identity (*Antiquitates Romanae* 1.21.1-2).

and thus, effectively, a gentile. From his status as a slave of the στοιχεῖα, he accordingly emerges in the resurrection as one free from the limitations of such restrictions. In short, Jesus becomes the embodiment and summation of the entire κόσμος. Hence Paul claims that in Christ, there is no more Jew and gentile, no more slave and free, no more male and female (3:28): as Paul's Abrahamic argument has maintained throughout, integration into Christ supplies whatever we lack in our human particularity.

This analysis of the στοιχεῖα makes much more sense if γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός serves as a pointer to the virgin birth (such that the male Jesus comes solely from a female) and not, as most modern commentators understand it, as a more general pointer to the incarnation.³⁵⁸ While the idiom “born from a woman” can signify “human” (cf. ἐν γεννητοῖς γυναικῶν, Matt 11:11; אשה ילד / γεννητὸς γυναικός, Job 14:1; 15:14; 25:4), such an interpretation has little relevance in the context of Galatians. Indeed, scholarly puzzlement at Paul's inclusion of the phrase γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός provides some of the impetus for the suggestion that 4:4-5 cites a pre-existing formulation.³⁵⁹ Nor is an incarnational reading simply irrelevant: as I hope to show, elements of Paul's discussion actually argue against it.

Lightfoot rightly notes that 4:4-5 forms a chiasm: God sent his son

³⁵⁸ See the history of interpretation in Emile de Roover, “La maternité virginal de Marie dans l'interprétation de Gal 4,4,” in *Studiorum paulinorum congressus internationalis catholicus 1961* (AnBib 17-18; Rome: Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 1963), 2.17-37, who notes that almost all nineteenth and twentieth century scholars who understand Gal 4:4 as a reference to the virgin birth are Catholic, the Protestant Zahn being the most prominent exception (34-35).

³⁵⁹ So, e.g., Betz, *Galatians*, 205; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 166-67.

- A. γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός
- B. γενόμενον ὑπὸ νόμον
- B'. ἵνα τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον ἐξαγοράσῃ
- A'. ἵνα τὴν υἰοθεσίαν ἀπολάβωμεν

Coming “under law” clearly corresponds to purchasing those “under law”; being born “from a woman” evokes the familial ties inherent in “receiving adoption.”³⁶⁰ As in 3:13-14, the two ἵνα clauses should be read consecutively rather than in parallel, so that “our” receiving adoption depends on the prior purchasing of “those under law.”³⁶¹ Nevertheless, the chiasmic structure suggests that the particular aspects of Christ’s coming identified in A and B in some way enable the corresponding purposes cited in A’ and B’.³⁶² With respect to the B-B’ frame, I argued above that 3:13-14 explains the connection: Jesus had to come under law so that he could be cursed by the law and, through his subsequent vindication, thereby provide Jews who united with him the ability

³⁶⁰ Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 168. So, too, Ellicott, *Galatians*, 94, and Augustine (Plumer, *Augustine’s Commentary on Galatians*, 178-79 [30.8-11]). Byrne, *Sons*, 179-80; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 166; and Witherington, *Grace*, 287, also argue for a chiasm, but they transform the outer frame so as to correlate the adoption as sons with God’s sending of his son, thereby awkwardly omitting the phrase γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός from consideration. (Longenecker and Witherington both erroneously attribute this latter view to Lightfoot.)

³⁶¹ So also Rohde, *Galater*, 172; Fung, *Galatians*, 182; Bruce, *Galatians*, 197; Betz, *Galatians*, 208. For the clauses as parallel, see Longenecker, *Galatians*, 172; Byrne, *Sons*, 183; Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 168. For the second ἵνα-clause as an explanation/expansion of the first, see Martyn, *Galatians*, 390; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 270-71; Schlier, *Galater*, 197.

³⁶² So also Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 168.

to escape its dominion.³⁶³ With respect to the A-A' frame, we must ask how being “born from a woman” enables adoption, whether through incarnation or through the virgin birth.

An incarnational reading of γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός has difficulty explaining how Jesus’ becoming human enables adoption; it remains unclear what obstacle to adoption the incarnation would remove. Interpreters who address this issue usually refer to the need for a human representative to atone for human sin. Morna Hooker, e.g., invokes the language of “interchange,” claiming that Christ had to become like us so that, after his representative suffering, we could become like him.³⁶⁴ The problem with this approach is that Galatians—and 3:15-4:11 in particular—never points to sin as a main factor preventing humanity from becoming children of God. Instead, receiving the Spirit of adoption seems to depend wholly on the unconditional promises made to Abraham and his seed. The main inhibiting factor, in other words, is not sin but the delay in the appearance of the seed (cf. Gal 3:19, 25-26; 4:2).

Reading γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός as an allusion to the virgin birth, on the other hand, provides an explanation of adoption that accords well with the passage’s emphasis on Abraham’s divine seed.³⁶⁵ In short, Jesus had to be born of a virgin so that he did not

³⁶³ On 3:13-14, see §2.5.3.

³⁶⁴ Hooker, “Interchange,” 358. Cf. Dunn, *Galatians*, 217.

³⁶⁵ Scholars debate whether Paul knew of the virgin birth tradition since he never expressly mentions it. Nevertheless, an allusion to the virgin birth here in Gal 4:5b has a potential parallel—albeit similarly disputed—in 1 Cor 11:11-12, where Paul claims that men and women are interdependent “in the Lord” (ἐν κυρίῳ) since just as “the woman is from the man” (ἡ γυνὴ ἐκ τοῦ ἀνδρός) so also “the man is

surrender his divine sonship. That is to say, if a human father had sired him, then God would no longer be his father. Only through the virgin birth could he remain the son of God while taking on human form. Only through the virgin birth could he be both the son of God (his father), a son of Abraham (through his mother), and, thus, Abraham’s divine seed to whom the promises come. The virgin birth therefore enables adoption by allowing Jesus to retain his divine sonship so that “we” might attain that status through union in him.

A consideration of the first-person plural subject in 4:5b (ἀπολάβωμεν) points to the same conclusion. Since an incarnational interpretation of γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός emphasizes Jesus’ taking on the humanity common to everyone, it would suggest a wider purpose and, thus, a more inclusive subject. Many scholars—even several who associate the earlier first-person references exclusively with Jews—accordingly identify the “we” in 4:5b as at least including (and possibly consisting entirely of) gentiles.³⁶⁶ In favor of this view, 4:6 clearly affirms that gentiles receive adoption, and the distinction between “those under law” in the B-B’ frame and the first-person references in the A’ line has

through the woman” (ὁ ἀνὴρ διὰ τῆς γυναικός). If the latter part of this claim refers simply to the normal birth process, then why does Paul qualify the resulting interdependence as being “in the Lord”?

³⁶⁶ For interpreters who see the first-person ἀπολάβωμεν as comprising both Jews and gentiles, see Young, “Pronominal Shifts,” 214-15; Williams, *Galatians*, 110-11; Dunn, *Galatians*, 217; Matera, *Galatians*, 150; Fung, *Galatians*, 183; Donaldson, “Curse,” 98; Bruce, *Galatians*, 196; Lagrange, *Galates*, 103; Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 169. Several scholars even argue that τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον in 4:5a comprises both Jews and gentiles: Rohde, *Galater*, 172; Burton, *Galatians*, 219; Byrne, *Sons*, 182; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 270; Schlier, *Galater*, 197. Interpreters who understand the first-person reference as consisting entirely of gentiles include Gaston, *Paul*, 77; Hays, *Faith*, 101.

suggested to many interpreters a corresponding distinction in referent. After all, if “we” in 4:5b comprises only Jews, why does Paul not use the first person in B-B’ as well?

Despite these indications, the first-person subject in 4:5b likely comprises Jews alone, as it has throughout the argument and, more tellingly, earlier in the sentence (4:3).³⁶⁷ Viewed in this light, Paul characterizes the Jews as “those under law” in the B-B’ frame because their status under law is precisely the point at issue. (The characterization also forms the structural key in identifying the chiasm.) As for the adoption of gentiles in the ensuing verse, I will argue below that 4:6 draws out the implication of the gentiles’ adoption based on the adoption of the Jews in 4:5b. We can thus account for the factors that purportedly pointed to a more inclusive “we” without resorting to the awkward mid-sentence shift in first-person references that results if Paul’s “we” includes gentiles. Since this restriction of the referents in 4:5b to Jews runs against the tenor of an incarnational reading of *γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός*, it supports understanding the phrase as an allusion to the virgin birth.

The common thread running throughout the various aspects of this analysis of 4:1-5 has been the importance of distinguishing between Abrahamic and divine sonship. This distinction enables us to make sense of the Jews’ status as enslaved minor heirs (i.e., of Abraham) in 4:3 before they receive (divine) adoption in 4:5b. The sons of Abraham,

³⁶⁷ So Longenecker, *Galatians*, 172; Witherington, *Grace*, 289. Gaston, *Paul*, 77, and Johnson Hodge, *Sons*, 71, argue that 4:5b cannot refer to Jews since Paul lists *υἰοθεσία* as one of the Jews’ privileges in Rom 9:4. Romans 9:4 need not imply, however, that the Jews had already received their adoption. Rather, they inherit the promise of divine adoption through the Abrahamic *διαθήκη*; Gal 4:4-6 then describes the initial (cf. Rom 8:23) fulfillment of that promise.

however, are not the only heirs subject to a time of minority enslavement: the otherwise superfluous discussion in 4:4-5 shows that the son of God endures a similar time of enslavement, becoming subject to the στοιχῆα through his incarnation as a son of Abraham “under the law” (4:4c). Jesus can assume this Abrahamic sonship without surrendering his divine sonship because no human father usurps God’s place; Jesus is born only “from a woman” (4:4b). He thus unites divine and Abrahamic sonship in human form, a dual status that qualifies him as Abraham’s promised seed. As this seed, his cursed death and subsequent resurrection (cf. 3:13-14) then enable the sons of Abraham who unite with him to escape the dominion of the law (4:5a) and receive adoption as God’s sons (4:5b), a part of their inheritance from their forefather Abraham.

Armed with this analysis of 4:1-5, we now come to 4:6-7:

Gal 4:6-7

⁶Ὅτι δέ ἐστε υἱοί, ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν, κρᾶζον, Ἀββὰ ὁ πατήρ. ⁷ὥστε οὐκέτι εἶ δοῦλος ἀλλὰ υἱός· εἰ δὲ υἱός, καὶ κληρονόμος διὰ θεοῦ.

^{6a}And because you are sons, ^bGod sent forth the Spirit of his son into our hearts, crying, “Abba Father.” ⁷Thus, you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, also an heir through God.

Understanding these verses requires that we explain the shift from second person (“because *you* are sons,” ὅτι ἐστε υἱοί) to first person (“into *our* hearts,” εἰς τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν) in 4:5. Most scholars agree that, regardless of whom Paul indicates with his earlier first-person references, the instance in 4:6 clearly includes gentiles; the preceding second-person reference serves simply to emphasize the application to Paul’s

readers.³⁶⁸ This gentile-inclusive interpretation, however, creates an unsolvable logistical problem: if the subject of ἐστε in 4:6a and the referent of ἡμῶν in 4:6b overlap, then sonship must *precede* the reception of the Spirit, but it is presumably the reception of the Spirit that makes one a son of God (cf. Rom 8:15).

Attempts to resolve this paradox typically seek either to differentiate adoption from reception of the Spirit or else to eliminate the two-step process required by a causal ὅτι. The latter approach postulates a nominal ὅτι in 4:5—“And *that* you are sons [is evident because]”—an interpretation that leaves too much unstated, especially compared to the more straightforward causal reading. Had Paul intended this nominal sense, we would have expected a more explicit construction as in 3:11 (ὅτι . . . δῆλον ὅτι).³⁶⁹ With regard to the former approach, Paul’s characterization of the Spirit in 4:6—“the Spirit of [God’s] *son*” (τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ), “crying ‘*Abba, Father*’” (κρᾶζον, Αββα ὁ πατήρ)—renders a distinction between reception of the Spirit and adoption untenable. He even refers to this “Abba Father”-crying Spirit as “a spirit of adoption” (πνεῦμα υἱοθεσίας) in Rom 8:15. The reception of the Spirit accordingly *is* the adoption unto sonship; “our” reception of the Spirit in 4:6 should be understood as an elaboration of the

³⁶⁸ Malina and Pilch, *Social-Science*, 208—with their awkward argument that Galatians addresses Hellenistic Israelites throughout—represents a rare exception. After admitting that external textual evidence favors the reading ἡμῶν (P⁴⁶, **Σ**, A, B, C, D*, G, P, 1739, and Marcion [according to Tertullian] among others all support it), Witherington, *Grace*, 289, avoids the question by arguing for ὑμεῖς on the shaky ground that “your” fits Paul’s argument better.

³⁶⁹ Proponents of a nominal ὅτι (a minority position) include Lietzmann, *Galater*, 27; Ellicott, *Galatians*, 95; Lagrange, *Galates*, 103-4; Zahn, *Galater*, 204-5. Cf. Dunn, *Galatians*, 219.

process by which “we” receive adoption in 4:5.³⁷⁰ Given this stalemate, a third type of proposal suggests that a believer’s simultaneous reception of the Spirit and sonship means that Paul can describe their relative dependence in either order. Since 4:6 therefore cannot portray a chronological relationship, we should instead focus on Paul’s purported purpose, namely, establishing the Galatians’ status as sons of God through an appeal to their experience of the Spirit (cf. 3:1-5).³⁷¹ This suggestion makes no logical sense: reception of the Spirit and sonship cannot both require the other as a prerequisite.

A true resolution of the seeming paradox emerges only if the first- and second-person referents in 4:6 do not overlap. If these referents are distinct, designating—as they have throughout this argument—Jews and gentiles respectively, then the logical problem of the relationship between adoption and the reception of the Spirit disappears. In its place, we have a scenario in which Jewish reception of the Spirit depends on the gentiles’ prior status as sons. Although scholars almost always regard this scenario as the more problematical option,³⁷² it essentially repeats the logic of 3:13-14, where the consecutive ἵνα clauses indicated that the Jewish reception of the Spirit (3:14b) depended on the blessing of Abraham coming to the gentiles (3:14a).³⁷³ Accordingly, 4:6 seems to

³⁷⁰ Contra, e.g., Hays, “Galatians,” 285; Vouga, *Galater*, 102; Fung, *Galatians*, 184; Burton, *Galatians*, 221; Schlier, *Galater*, 197; Meyer, “Galatians,” 174; Calvin, “Galatians,” 120. These scholars often distinguish between the objective basis of sonship in Christ’s prior work and the subjective experience (or testimony) of it in the reception of the Spirit, but nothing in Galatians suggests that Paul has such philosophical distinctions in mind.

³⁷¹ So, e.g., Longenecker, *Galatians*, 173; Witherington, *Grace*, 290. Cf. Matera, *Galatians*, 151.

³⁷² See, e.g., Williams, *Galatians*, 110-11.

³⁷³ See §2.5.

presume the same explanation: it is because gentiles receive the Spirit of adoption as Abraham's blessing that the Jews in Christ can also receive that Spirit. Once again, the Jews receive the spirit of divine sonship only by effectively becoming gentiles.

In this interpretation, 4:6 does not prove the gentiles' divine sonship by appealing to *their* experience of the Spirit but by pointing to *the Jews'* reception of the Spirit. The fact that Jews have become sons of God shows that the gentiles must be sons of God. This reading then also offers a plausible explanation of the shift to second-person singular (εἶ) in 4:7. The appeal to a statement in the present tense ("you *are* sons," εἰστε υἱοί) as the basis for a past action ("God *sent forth*," ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεός) suggests that the second-person plural reference in 4:6 refers to the general state of gentiles, a group to which Paul's Galatian readers belong. In other words, Paul does not ground the outpouring of the Spirit among the Jews on the sonship of the Galatians in particular but rather on the general possibility of gentile sonship that Christ makes available; it is the availability of sonship to the gentiles that enables Jews-who-effectively-become-gentiles-in-Christ also to receive the Spirit.³⁷⁴ In 4:7, then, Paul specifically applies this general truth to the gentile Galatians. To indicate the shift, he switches to the more personal singular verb.

One final point deserves mention. Paul draws a parallel between God's sending forth of his son (ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, 4:4) and his sending forth of the

³⁷⁴ Once again, the argument does not require that individual gentiles were actually the first to receive the Spirit, which they almost assuredly were not historically. See §2.5.3.

Spirit of his son (ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, 4:6). I suggest that the similar language portrays a twofold sending of God’s son corresponding to his dual sonship. He is sent in the flesh and in the Spirit. The first sending reflects his status as a physical son of Abraham, the second, his status as a spiritual son of God. He comes in the first instance into the midst of Israel to free the physical sons of Abraham from the law, in the second, into the hearts of believers to create the sons of God who thereby become Abraham’s spiritual children of promise (4:28; see Chapter 4).

I conclude this section with a brief summary of the role that 4:8-11 plays in the argument. Having established the gentile Galatians as sons of God—a status described here in terms of “knowing / being known by God” (γνόντες θεόν / γνωσθέντες ὑπὸ θεοῦ, 4:9)—Paul now makes the ramifications for the Galatians explicit. He portrays their observing “days and months and seasons and years” (ἡμέρας . . . καὶ μῆνας καὶ καιροὺς καὶ ἐνιαυτούς, 4:10) as essentially a return to slavery under the “weak and poor στοιχεῖα” (4:9) from which Christ has already freed them (cf. 4:7).

Most scholars regard these calendrical observances as references to the obligations specified in the Mosaic law.³⁷⁵ In contrast to the clearly Jewish list in Col 2:16—“a festival, new moon, or sabbaths (ἑορτῆς ἢ νεομηνίας ἢ σαββάτων)—however, the time-keeping scheme of days, months, seasons and years actually corresponds better to pagan time-keeping practices. Troy Martin accordingly suggests

³⁷⁵ E.g., Dunn, *Galatians*, 227-29; Burton, *Galatians*, 232-34.

that the Galatians, having been convinced of the necessity for Christian circumcision by the agitators, have returned to their pagan ways rather than submit to the knife.³⁷⁶ In this scenario, it is the Galatians' *forsaking* of Christ and not their *supplementing* of Christ that drives Paul's concern throughout the letter. Nevertheless, I find it hard to reconcile Martin's reading with Paul's characterization of his audience in 4:21 as those "desiring to be under law" (οἱ ὑπὸ νόμον θέλοντες εἶναι).³⁷⁷ It therefore seems more likely that Paul has simply generalized the law's obligations in order to connect them with the Galatians' former pagan practices.³⁷⁸ Regardless, Gal 4:8-11 clearly establishes the enslavement that results from the Galatians' association of gentile circumcision and law observance with the gospel of Christ.

3.5 Conclusion

In 3:15-4:11, Paul argues that the law has no relevance for believers in Christ by appealing to the concept of Abraham's singular seed, whom he identifies as Christ in 3:16. This identification raises three main issues: the basis on which Paul identifies Christ rather than Isaac as Abraham's seed, his reason for establishing the singular nature of this

³⁷⁶ Troy Martin, "Pagan and Judeo-Christian Time-Keeping Schemes in Gal 4.10 and Col 2.16," *NTS* 42 (1996): 105-19, 111-19.

³⁷⁷ For the problems with Martin's explanation of 4:21—he argues that it addresses the agitators instead of the Galatians—see §4.3.1.

³⁷⁸ So, e.g., Martyn, *Galatians*, 414-18—who relates the list to fourth day of creation (Gen 1:14)—and Boer, "Meaning," 217.

seed, and the consistency of his subsequent argument identifying the singular seed with the plurality of Galatian believers in 3:29. Although these issues have often led interpreters to find Paul's argument arbitrary and unpersuasive, this chapter has argued that the understanding of God's διαθήκη with Abraham as his testamentary adoption of the patriarch renders Paul's argument both consistent and reasonable.

With regard to the identification of Christ as Abraham's seed, §3.2 argued that Paul understands the Abrahamic διαθήκη as akin to a Hellenistic adoptive testament. God's adoption of the patriarch then implies that the promised seed must be both a son of Abraham and a son of God. Although Abraham offers his son Isaac to God in the *Aqedah* of Gen 22, the passage suggests that God refrains from taking Isaac as his Abrahamic heir, promising to provide a naturally-born son himself. He fulfills this promise by sending his own son to become a son of Abraham (4:4). Jesus thus qualifies as the promised seed and Abrahamic heir because he is both a son of Abraham and a son of God.

As noted in §3.3, this understanding of the Abrahamic διαθήκη as an adoptive testament enables Paul's identification of Christ as Abraham's seed in 3:16 to support the verse's earlier argument for the seed's singular nature, thereby avoiding the many problems that arise when interpreters reverse that relationship. If, however, Paul does not appeal to the seed's singular nature to establish its christological identity, then why does he make that argument in 3:16? He argues for the singular nature of the Abrahamic seed, I suggested, because it has two crucial implications with regard to the role of the law, one negative and one positive.

Taking the negative implication first, since God could not supplement the ratified Abrahamic διαθήκη by adding heirs (3:15), the singular nature of the Abrahamic seed proves that the law—which was given to a plurality of Israelites—cannot qualify a person to receive the inheritance promised to the Abrahamic seed (3:19-20). The positive implication then also arises from the unchangeable nature of the Abrahamic διαθήκη. God promises to bless the nations with the Spirit as an inheritance for Abraham and his singular seed. Reception of the Spirit, however, effectively adopts the recipient as a son of God. By effectively making all of Abraham’s physical descendants through Isaac and Israel sons of God, the fulfillment of this promise would therefore increase the number of Abrahamic seed, a situation the ratified διαθήκη does not allow. God therefore adds the law to distinguish Abraham’s sons from the gentiles, thereby excepting them from the promised blessing.

God, however, also cannot annul his previously ratified promise to Abraham to bless all the nations, including Israel. The law can ultimately therefore neither prevent nor enable Israel’s reception of the Spirit and life (3:17-18). What the law does do is compel Abraham’s physical descendants into Christ, the one seed, to receive their adoption as sons of God. As §3.4 described, it accomplishes this task through a two-pronged approach. On the one hand, it reminds the Jews that their justification ultimately rests on their faith in God and not on their works of law. On the other hand, it forces Jews to transgress and incur a curse if they want to receive the promised blessing as gentiles; only Christ has the power to turn aside this curse. Accordingly, to become Abraham’s true seed and heirs, Jews must die to the law and embrace Christ, trusting that they will

thereby receive God's blessing. This ultimate step of faith then proves them to be true sons of their forefather (3:7).

The law thus finds both its purpose and its end in the singular Abrahamic seed (3:19, 21-22); it should therefore have no appeal for gentiles in Christ. Their reception of the Spirit through faith qualifies them as sons of God; their incorporation into Christ through baptism unites them with the Jewish sons of Abraham to form the one seed and heir of Abraham. The gentiles' status as Abrahamic seed accordingly proves that not even the Jews in Christ remain under the law (3:23-29). Similarly, the Jews' reception of the Spirit that comes to the gentiles proves that the gentiles themselves are no longer slaves but sons and heirs of God (4:1-11). Submitting to the law would therefore gain them nothing—and lose them everything.

This single entity of Jews and gentiles in Christ—a union of the sons of Abraham and the sons of God—qualifies as Abraham's sole seed and heir of the promises. Jews thus become dependent on gentiles, gentiles become dependent on Jews, and everyone becomes dependent on Christ. There could perhaps be no better summary of this argument than the impassioned yet terse appeal with which Paul begins the next section of his letter: “Become as I, because I also as you” (Γίνεσθε ὡς ἐγώ, ὅτι καὶ γὼ ὡς ὑμεῖς, 4:12). Become, that is, a law-free son of Abraham like I am, because I also have become a Spirit-filled son of God like you.

The Abrahamic seed does not just unify the sons of Abraham and the sons of God, it also unifies Abraham's physical children (the Jews) and his spiritual children of promise (the gentiles). As I argued in Chapter 2, Galatians 3:6-14 focuses on the Jews'

status as physical sons of Abraham. After a brief interlude in 4:12-20, Paul returns one final time to the theme of Abrahamic descent in 4:21-5:1. Appropriately, this final segment of Paul's Abrahamic argument focuses on the gentiles as Abraham's "children of promise," the subject of Chapter 4.

4. “You are children of promise”: The gentile children according to Isaac and the Jewish children of the free woman in Galatians 4:21-5:1

4.1 Introduction

After a brief interlude in which Paul appeals to the circumstances of his initial visit to the Galatians (4:12-20), he returns to the subject of Abrahamic descent one final time in Gal 4:21-5:1.¹ Focusing this time on Abraham’s two sons and their mothers,² Paul discerns a slave/free antinomy in the mothers’ statuses (4:22) and a flesh/promise antinomy in the differing natures of the sons’ births (4:23). The passage then develops an

¹ The separation from the rest of the Abrahamic argument in 3:6-4:11 has led some scholars to characterize this passage as an afterthought and, thus, as displaced from its proper place in the argument (Burton, *Galatians*, 251; Oepke, *Galater*, 147; Ulrich Luz, “Der alte und neue Bund bei Paulus und im Hebräerbrief,” *EvT* 27 (1967): 318-36, 319; cf. Schlier, *Galater*, 216). Hansen, *Abraham*, 144-45, in contrast, accounts for the separation on the grounds that 4:21-31 rhetorically belongs in the appeal section of the letter, an explanation that falters if, as I will argue in §4.3.4.2, the passage does not primarily exhort the Galatians to “cast out” the agitators. Betz, *Galatians*, 239-40, suggests that Paul employs the rhetorical strategy of saving his strongest argument for the end of the *probatio* section, but Betz’s argument for why Paul would have considered this argument his most compelling—the indirect and incomplete nature of allegory engages the audience—fails to convince. Offering a tidy thematic division that I will challenge at several points, Charles H. Cosgrove, “The Law Has Given Sarah No Children (Gal. 4:21-30),” *NovT* 29 (1987): 219-35, 235, argues that Abraham’s two wives enable Paul to conclude his preceding discussion of the law by focusing on Hagar (4:22-27) and then, by switching the focus to Sarah, introduce the theme of freedom (4:28-30) that forms the basis for the following exhortations. For Martin, “Apostasy,” 456, this passage stands apart from the earlier Abrahamic discussion because it directly addresses the agitators instead of the Galatians, an intriguing possibility that my analysis in this chapter will ultimately not support. Finally, building on the work of Beverly Gaventa, J. Louis Martyn, “The Covenants of Hagar and Sarah,” in *Faith and History: Essays in Honor of Paul W. Meyer* (eds. John T. Carroll, et al.; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 160-92, 170-71, helpfully contends that the birth language in 4:19 sets up the subsequent argument. I similarly suggest that 4:12-20 prepares the way for the discussion of the gentiles’ “birth” as children of promise in 4:21-5:1 by reminding the Galatians of their own conversion.

² Abraham’s sons by Keturah (Gen 25:1-4) have no relevance for this argument.

understanding of Abrahamic descent based on these two antinomies, exploring the slave/free dichotomy in 4:24-27, 30 and the flesh/promise dichotomy in 4:28-29 before delivering a concluding inference and derived exhortation in 4:31-5:1.³

Scholars debate exactly how Paul applies these antinomies—whether allegorically, typologically, or as a mixture of the two—and to whom he applies them. Nevertheless, most interpreters agree that the passage asserts a figurative interpretation of Abraham’s family that stands in considerable tension with a straightforward reading of the underlying Genesis account. Scholars accordingly often find the argument unconvincing, noting—among other things—the questionable nature of Paul’s proposed associations, the purportedly confused conflation of the free/slave antinomy with the flesh/promise antinomy, and the generally dubious value of allegory as a persuasive argument. They then typically account for the perceived “hermeneutical miracle”⁴ in Paul’s argument by identifying the passage as a forced response to the agitators’ position. Thus, C. K. Barrett, e.g., argues that this discussion of Abraham’s family “stands in the epistle because [Paul’s] opponents had used it and he could not escape it.”⁵

³ For defense of 5:1 as the passage’s endpoint, see §4.3.5.

⁴ Hays, *Echoes*, 112.

⁵ Barrett, “Allegory,” 162. In favor of this interpretation, he also notes that γέγραπται in 4:22 introduces a *summary* of Gen 16-18, 21 wherein Paul uses anaphoric articles (τῆς παιδίσκης, τῆς ἐλευθέρου) and a lack of specific names (161). As Tolmie, *Persuading*, 166-67, observes, however, these factors truly signify only that Paul expects the Galatians to have a general familiarity with the Abrahamic story, not that the agitators have necessarily introduced it. The force of Barrett’s argument therefore rests on his contention that the “plain, surface meaning [of the Genesis account] supports not Paul but the Judaizers” (162). This chapter will call this contention into question.

Since Ishmael's circumcision would render his traditional identification with the gentiles⁶ irrelevant in an argument encouraging the gentiles to become sons of Abraham κατὰ Ἰσαάκ through circumcision / law observance, it remains unclear exactly why the agitators would have bothered to introduce Ishmael's story.⁷ Nevertheless, even—and perhaps especially—as a response to the agitators, Paul would need to present a cogent argument. Otherwise, the resulting demonstration of his inability to counter the agitators' reading could undermine the rest of his presentation.⁸ The unsupported brazenness that interpreters detect in 4:21-5:1 could therefore indicate our misunderstanding of the argument just as easily as it could signify Paul's attempt to explain an unfavorable text. Indeed, I suggest that the widespread perception of Paul's argument as problematical stems largely from two standard assumptions that the previous chapters of this dissertation have called into question.

⁶ Cf. *Jub.* 16:7-8; *Gen. Rab.* 45.8.

⁷ So Andrew C. Perriman, "The Rhetorical Strategy of Galatians 4:21-5:1," *EvQ* 65 (1993): 27-42, 33; Siker, *Disinheriting*, 45; Cosgrove, "Law," 223; Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 207 n. 51. Susan M. Elliott, "Choose Your Mother, Choose Your Master: Galatians 4:21-5:1 in the Shadow of the Anatolian Mother of the Gods," *JBL* 118 (1999): 661-83, 664-65, similarly questions the nature of 4:21-5:1 as a response to the agitators on the grounds 1) that the introductory question in 4:21 seems to point the audience to a potentially decisive passage whose full significance they may not yet have grasped, 2) that the passage nowhere refers to the agitators' purported arguments, and 3) that it does not use technical expressions—such as περὶ δέ with a genitive—indicating a response to a report or question. Cf. Angela Standhartinger, "«Zur Freiheit . . . befreit»? Hagar im Galaterbrief," *EvT* 62 (2002): 288-303, 289-92, who further notes that not only would the agitators have no reason to encourage the Galatians to become "children of Ishmael," but the lack of overly negative appraisals of Hagar and Ishmael in contemporary ancient Judaism also makes it unlikely that they would present such "descent" as a negative motivation for change.

⁸ Similarly Cosgrove, "Law," 221. Scholars sometimes suggest that the mere fact of Paul's response to the agitators would likely carry more weight with the Galatians than its actual content. See, e.g., Williams, *Galatians*, 126: "[T]he virtuosity he displayed as a 'scripture expert' would perhaps have had as great an effect as the actual persuasive power of his claims." We have little evidence, however, other than the perceived problematical nature of Paul's argument to support such claims.

First, scholars routinely assume that Paul understands the διαθήκαι in 4:24 as “covenants,” an assumption undermined by my analysis in Chapter 3 arguing that 3:15-4:11 uses διαθήκη in the sense of “testament.” Second, scholars routinely assume that the slave/free and flesh/promise antinomies both map onto the same opposing columns, with the result that Paul’s argument effectively divides Abrahamic descendants into two groups. In other words, regardless of whom scholars think the antinomies signify, they typically agree that the argument distinguishes Abraham’s enslaved, fleshly children from his free, promissory children. Challenging this assumption, I argued in Chapter 2 that Paul’s argument consistently distinguishes *three* groups of Abrahamic descendants: non-Christian Jews, Christian Jews, and Christian gentiles.

This chapter accordingly examines these two assumptions, arguing that 4:21-5:1 becomes much more comprehensible as an attempt to persuade once we apply these insights gleaned from the previous chapters. It begins by considering the identification of the two mothers as διαθήκαι in 4:24, suggesting that the passage contrasts two testaments—the adoptive Abrahamic testament and the non-adoptive Sinaitic testament—rather than two covenants. The remainder of the chapter then argues that Paul uses the slave/free typology to distinguish non-Christian Jews from Christian Jews and the flesh/promise typology to distinguish non-Christian Jews from Christian gentiles. The typology of the free children of promise then finds complete fulfillment only in the union of Jewish Christians (children of the free woman) and gentile Christians (children of promise) in Christ. Understood in this way, 4:21-5:1 presents a cogent argument that complements the previous discussions of Abrahamic descent in 3:6-14 and 3:15-4:11.

4.2 “These women are two διαθήκαι”: The contrast of non-adoptive (Sinaitic) and adoptive (Abrahamic) testaments—not covenants—in Gal 4:24-27

Paul begins his figurative explanation (γάρ) of Abraham’s familial situation by identifying the two mothers as διαθήκαι. The vast majority of interpreters render διαθήκαι here as “covenants,” a view that the ensuing identification of Hagar with the Sinaitic διαθήκη in 4:24-25 might at first seem to support.⁹ I argued in Chapter 3, however, that the instances of διαθήκη in 3:15 and 3:17 both signify Hellenistic testaments rather than Jewish covenants. The proposed importance of this reading for the entire argument in 3:15-4:11 then suggests that διαθήκαι carries this same significance in 4:24.¹⁰ In other words, 4:24-27 does not contrast two covenants but two testaments: the non-adoptive Sinaitic testament and the adoptive Abrahamic testament.

This proposed testamentary emphasis has an early advocate in Jerome, who similarly suggests that the passage contrasts the mere bestowal of a legacy with full

⁹ Betz, *Galatians*, 244, goes even further, identifying διαθήκη here as “a world order decreed by divine institution; it contains God’s definition of the basis and purpose of human life.”

¹⁰ Cf. Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 321 n. 26: “Paulus gebraucht den Term διαθήκη in Gal dreimal (3, 15.17; 4, 24), an keiner Stelle dabei in der Bedeutung von „Bund“, sondern von „Testament“, „Verordnung“.” Gijs Bouwman, “Die Hagar- und Sara-Perikope (Gal 4,21-31): Exemplarische Interpretation zum Schriftbeweis bei Paulus,” *ANRW* 2.25.4 (1987): 3135-55, 3145-46, similarly interprets the διαθήκαι as “testaments” based largely on his observation that תרבות never appears in the plural. He then attributes the unusual characterization of the Sinaitic διαθήκη as a testament to Paul’s co-opting the language of the agitators’ argument, which Bouwman suggests likely pointed to Gen 15:8 as establishing a testament bequeathing the Arabian lands—“from the river of Egypt to the great river”; contrast 17:8 which specifies Canaan as the land of inheritance—to Ishmael.

testamentary heirship.¹¹ Within the text, it finds initial support in the link that 4:30 draws between the statuses of these two mothers and the inheritance (or lack thereof) that their respective sons receive; as noted in §3.2.2, the concept of inheritance pertains much more closely to a testament than to a covenant. Several other considerations provide more substantial confirmation.

First, a covenantal reading naturally gives rise to the assumption that the Jewish law constitutes the enslaving force in 4:21-5:1. This reading, however, creates many of the exegetical difficulties that lead scholars to find this passage so problematical. As I hope to show below, these difficulties disappear if the passage instead understands the στοιχεῖα as the enslaving force, an understanding that in turn favors a testamentary interpretation of διαθήκη. Second and more decisively, the possibility that Paul has an adoptive testament in view explains how the citation of Isa 54:1 in Gal 4:27 can portray the Jerusalem above as a barren woman who suddenly finds herself with many offspring despite bearing no children (ἢ οὐ τίκτουσα) and suffering no birth pangs (ἢ οὐκ ὠδίνουσα): the city/woman gains her offspring through adoption. This interpretation then helps to resolve the many exegetical problems that trouble traditional interpretations

¹¹ Jerome, *Commentarii in epistulam Pauli Apostoli ad Galatas*, CCSL 77a.137.40-44: Et quomodo aliud sunt dona, aliud substantia, aliud legata, aliud haereditas (legimus enim filiis concubinarum Abrahae dona tradita, filio autem Sarae totius substantiae haereditatem relictam), ita aliud esse, ut diximus, benedictionem atque legata, aliud testamentum (“And just as gifts are one thing, the estate another, legacies one thing, the inheritance another [for we read to the sons of Abraham’s concubines gifts were bequeathed, but to the son of Sarah the inheritance of the whole estate was left], so to be, as we say, a blessing together with legacies is one thing, a testament another.”) Jerome, however, identifies the counterpart to the Sinaitic διαθήκη as Christ’s new διαθήκη rather than the Abrahamic διαθήκη. For the problematical nature of this identification, see §4.3.1. He also locates this distinction in Genesis whereas I derive my distinction from the nature of the two διαθήκαι alone since Genesis does not speak of two διαθήκαι.

of the Isaianic citation. Finally, a testamentary reading enables the women to function as types of Abrahamic descent, thereby eliminating the unpersuasive and problematical arbitrariness associated with more allegorical interpretations. This section will consider each of these three points in turn. I will consider a fourth point in favor of this interpretation—namely, its ability to make sense of the contrast Paul draws between the Sinaitic and Abrahamic διαθήκαι—in §4.3.

4.2.1 The Sinaitic διαθήκη: A non-adoptive testament failing to liberate its charges from the στοιχεῖα rather than a covenant enslaving them to the law

Having identified the “slave” and “free” mothers as two διαθήκαι in Gal 4:24b, Paul immediately focuses on the “one from Mount Sinai bearing children into slavery, ^dwhich is Hagar” (μία μὲν ἀπὸ ὄρους Σινᾶ, εἰς δουλείαν γεννῶσα, ^dἥτις ἐστὶν Ἄγαρ, 4:24c-d).¹² Although the reference to “bearing into slavery” could indicate that μία specifies “one” of the mothers,¹³ the fronting of the phrase “from Mount Sinai,” the

¹² Whether ἀπὸ ὄρους Σινᾶ modifies the μία διαθήκη or, as Steven Di Mattei, “Paul’s Allegory of the Two Covenants (Gal 4.21-31) in Light of First-Century Hellenistic Rhetoric and Jewish Hermeneutics,” *NTS* 52 (2006): 102-22, 110, suggests, γεννῶσα—“one [διαθήκη] bearing children from Mt. Sinai into servitude”—ultimately makes little difference to the argument since both effectively associate the διαθήκη with Sinai. Nevertheless, the focus on distinguishing the two διαθήκαι and the fronting of ἀπὸ ὄρους Σινᾶ immediately after μία establish the former as the preferable reading.

¹³ So, e.g., J. C. O’Neill, “‘For this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia’ (Galatians 4.25),” in *The Old Testament in the New Testament: Essays in Honor of J.L. North* (ed. Steve Moyise; JSNTSup 189; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 210-19, 212-13; Bruce, *Galatians*, 219. O’Neill’s reading that “Hagar bears unto slavery because she bears out of sight of Sinai [ἀπὸ ὄρους Σινᾶ]” (213) results in a

closer proximity of the immediately preceding διαθήκῃ, and—as I will argue below—the inability to identify an alternative basis for the Hagar-Sinai connection all suggests that it instead signifies “one” of the δύο διαθήκῃ. ¹⁴ The verse thus characterizes the Sinaitic διαθήκη as “bearing into slavery.” This characterization, however, raises the question of what, exactly, enslaves the children of the Sinaitic διαθήκη, a question whose answer helps determine whether 4:24 uses διαθήκη in a covenantal or a testamentary sense. To see why, we must first consider the different nuances inherent in these two readings.

A covenant binds its consenting parties into a relationship with mutual obligations, obligations that, once accepted, cannot be broken without incurring the covenant’s various stipulated curses. ¹⁵ A non-adoptive testament, in contrast, does not establish an on-going relationship—indeed, it does not even take effect until after a testator’s death—but rather specifies the beneficiaries who inherit a testator’s estate. Accordingly, whereas a covenantal understanding of the Sinaitic διαθήκη would

pairing of freedom with Sinai that he can sustain only through a convoluted series of conjectures and amended readings.

¹⁴ A common conclusion for which Perriman, “Rhetorical Strategy,” 35-36, presents a particularly thorough case. He notes that Paul’s preference for ἥτις over ἡ could support this position as well if it signifies “‘which, as such,’ pointing thus to the quality expressed in the antecedent clause” (35). His claim that the present tense of γεννώσα disallows Hagar as the subject, however, seems unwarranted: it could simply point to the general truth that, as a slave, Hagar “bears” into slavery.

¹⁵ On the nature of covenants, see George E. Mendenhall and Gary A. Herion, “Covenant,” *ABD* 1:1179-202, 1180-83. They identify the Abrahamic διαθήκη as a divine charter (1189-90), the Sinaitic διαθήκη as a true covenant (1183-88).

emphasize the relationship with God that Abrahamic descent makes possible, a testamentary understanding of the διαθήκη would emphasize the Abrahamic descent that God chooses to bless with an inheritance. These differing emphases then enable us to gauge how well a particular reading of διαθήκη fits into Paul’s actual argument. That 4:21-31 focuses on Abrahamic descent rather than on relationship to God, for instance, favors a testamentary view.

Because it affects the argument’s perceived logic, the nature of the Sinaitic enslavement provides a potentially more significant indication of how Paul understands the διαθήκη. Scholars typically assume that the διαθήκη enslaves its children to the law, a reading that arises naturally from a covenantal view in which “birth” signifies induction into Israel’s unique relationship to God. The characterization of this birth as being “into slavery” would accordingly emphasize the obligations—i.e., the law—necessarily incurred by the inductees. I suggest, however, that the Sinaitic διαθήκη gives birth into the same general human enslavement to the στοιχεῖα that 4:1-11 envisions, a reading that fits better with a testamentary view in which “birth” signifies descent from the human Abraham.

To be clear, neither understanding of διαθήκη necessarily implies a particular type of enslavement. Nevertheless, a covenantal interpretation would lead us to expect an enslavement to the law whereas a testamentary interpretation would suggest that the passage instead has an enslavement to the στοιχεῖα in view. This section will accordingly begin to build a case for the testamentary nature of the Sinaitic διαθήκη by

demonstrating that 4:24-27 presumes an enslavement to the στοιχεῖα rather than an enslavement to the law.

4.2.1.1 The enslavement associated with the Sinaitic διαθήκη

Several lines of evidence indicate that the slavery into which the Sinaitic διαθήκη gives birth represents an enslavement to the στοιχεῖα rather than an enslavement to the law. Starting with more general considerations, Paul's description of the law's commandments as "holy and righteous and good" in Rom 7:12 suggests that the negative portrayal of God's law as a slave master presiding over hapless charges would trouble him as much as it would the agitators.¹⁶ To be sure, interpreters often contend that Gal 3-4 (and 3:19 in particular) reveals a very different understanding of the law than Romans, an understanding that purportedly even calls the law's divine origin into question. The previous chapters of this dissertation have argued, however, that although Jesus' death and resurrection have caused Paul to shift his understanding of the law's ultimate function, he nevertheless maintains a high view of the law—a view consistent with his Jewish upbringing, with his later comments in Romans, and with his desire to present a persuasive argument in Galatians—even in Gal 3-4. The preceding arguments in

¹⁶ Romans 7 also associates the law with an enslaved state but makes it clear that sin—not the law—constitutes the enslaving power (Rom 7:12-14). Paul can, of course, refer to slavery to Christ/righteousness/obedience and so forth as a good thing (cf. Gal 1:10; Rom 6:16-18), but slavery clearly has negative connotations in Gal 4:21-31.

Galatians therefore do not prepare a reader for an overly negative portrayal of the law in 4:24-27.

In fact, the only negative type of slavery that the letter has mentioned thus far is the general human slavery to the στοιχεῖα in 4:1-11;¹⁷ when Paul does relate the Galatians' potential law observance to slavery in 4:9-11, he portrays it as a return to an enslavement under the στοιχεῖα (στοιχεῖα, οἷς πάλιν ἄνωθεν δουλεύειν θέλετε, 4:9). Galatians 5:1 similarly urges the gentile Galatians not to submit "again" (πάλιν) to a yoke of slavery by taking up the law, thereby invoking their previous enslavement to the στοιχεῖα as at least equivalent to, and possibly identical with, the slavery discussed in 4:21-31.¹⁸ The use of συστοιχεῖ in 4:25 would likely also remind the Galatians of the overarching theme of slavery to the στοιχεῖα.¹⁹

¹⁷ Significantly, although a παιδαγωγός usually was a slave, the portrayal of the law as a παιδαγωγός in 3:24-25 paints the law's charges as minors, not slaves. When Paul does speak of the Jews as enslaved in their minority in 4:3, he speaks of their enslavement under the στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου, not the law.

¹⁸ Bachmann, *Antijudaismus*, 144-46. Bachmann ultimately suggests that, although the current crisis over circumcision leads Paul to frame his argument using traditional Jewish symbols, in reality he attacks not Judaism but slavery (151). So, too, Robert L. Brawley, "Contextuality, Intertextuality, and the Hendiadic Relationship of Promise and Law in Galatians," *ZNW* 93 (2002): 99-119, 115: "the passage has the deliberative rhetorical force of admonishing Paul's gentile readers not to return to the στοιχεῖα." Indeed, if 5:1 envisions an enslavement to the law, then the "again" must signify 1) that Paul subsumes the law under the στοιχεῖα, 2) that the Galatians are former God-fearers who partially observed the law before, or 3) that 4:21-5:1 addresses the Jewish agitators rather than the gentile Galatians. (For the first two options, see Williams, *Galatians*, 132; for the third, see Martin, "Apostasy," 454-55.) The awkwardness disappears if the law enslaves one to the στοιχεῖα in the first place. On the yoke metaphor, see Karl Heinrich Rengstorff, "ζυγός, ἑτεροζυγέω," *TDNT* 2:896-901, 899.

¹⁹ Cf. Standhartinger, "Zur Freiheit," 294, 296-97.

Moving to 4:24-27 itself, these verses never mention νόμος, a curious omission if the law forms a primary target of Paul's argument.²⁰ Or again, Paul states only that the Sinaitic διαθήκη "[gives] birth into slavery" (εἰς δουλείαν γεννῶσα), not that it enslaves. The parallel with Hagar as a mother could admittedly account for the circumlocution, but even this parallel argues against the portrayal of an enslaving διαθήκη: in Greco-Roman society, the son of a slave woman becomes a slave not *to* his mother but *because* of his mother, i.e., because he inherits her enslaved status.²¹ The διαθήκη thus makes a better parallel with Hagar if it perpetuates Abraham's human enslavement to the στοιχεῖα. In other words, the connection to Hagar suggests that the Sinaitic διαθήκη's "giving birth into slavery" signifies a failure to liberate rather than a propensity to enslave.

This characterization of the Sinaitic διαθήκη as giving birth into slavery creates another problem for the view of the law as enslaving. Interpreters often assume that the

²⁰ In a slight wordplay, νόμος does occur twice in 4:21, designating the law proper in its first instance and the Pentateuch in its second. Although this opening invocation of νόμος does suggest that 4:21-5:1 somehow associates the law with slavery, it does not thereby require that the law function as the enslaving force in the allegory. Cf. Gal 4:8-11 (where coming under law enslaves one to the στοιχεῖα) and Rom 7 (where an enslaving sin twists the good law to its purposes).

²¹ As Ramsay, *Galatians*, 433-34, notes, Abraham's assumption that Ishmael would be his heir and the inclusion of Dan and Naphtali (born to Rachel's maid Bilhah, Gen 30:3-8) and Gad and Asher (born to Leah's maid Zilpah, 30:9-13) among the twelve patriarchs suggest that Jews traditionally regarded sons born to a man's slaves as (free) sons of the father. In both Greek and Roman law, however, such sons would inherit the slave status of their mother. Cf. Lührmann, *Galatians*, 90; Elliott, "Choose," 666 n. 19. As evidence for the principle in Greek law, Ramsay points to inscriptions from Edessa or Salonika enfranchising "my slave born of my maidservant" (434 n. 1). He also points to laws in the fifth century C.E. Syro-Roman lawbook treating the children of dowry slaves as property (L. §105 and 123, cited in Mitteis, *Reichsrecht*, 241).

characterization arises as an inference from the διαθήκη's association with Hagar.²² That the birthing-into-slavery characterization in 4:24c precedes the διαθήκη's association with Hagar in 4:24d makes this scenario unlikely. Even more troubling, the validity of this characterization as an inference depends entirely on the legitimacy of the underlying association between the Sinaitic διαθήκη and Hagar, an equally controversial association that, in this reading, Gal 4:25a—τὸ δὲ Ἄγαρ Σινᾶ ὄρος ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ Ἀραβίᾳ—must justify. Galatians 4:25a, however, hardly presents a clear and compelling case for identifying Hagar with Sinai.²³

Scholars focus on two aspects of 4:25a as potential keys to the Hagar-Sinai identification. Some point to the neuter article τό before the normally feminine Ἄγαρ as evidence that Paul here treats “Hagar” strictly as a word/name. The name then becomes the key to connecting the woman with “Mount Sinai in Arabia,” usually either through a reference to the Nabatean center of *el-heḡr* (Nabatean-Aramaic: 𐤆𐤇𐤂𐤓) in north-west Arabia (modern day Madain Saleh)²⁴ or—more commonly suggested—through a Semitic

²² Noted explicitly by, e.g., Barrett, “Allegory,” 164.

²³ So, e.g., Schlier, *Galater*, 220: “So muß m. E. der genau Sinn des Sätzchens V. 25a und damit der Grund und Anlaß, der es Paulus ermöglichte, Hagar mit der Diatheke vom Sinai zu verbinden, dunkel bleiben.” Many commentators reach a similarly pessimistic conclusion. Indeed, extensive textual variations in the opening conjunction—whether δέ or γάρ—and the inclusion/omission of Ἄγαρ testify to the difficulties that even relatively early interpreters had in understanding 4:25a.

²⁴ Hartmut Gese, “τὸ δὲ Ἄγαρ Σινᾶ ὄρος ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ Ἀραβίᾳ (Gal 4 25),” in *Das Ferne und nahe Wort: Festschrift Leonhard Rost zur Vollendung seines 70. Lebensjahres am 30. November 1966 gewidmet* (ed. Fritz Maass; BZAW 105; Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1967), 81-94, 91-94, followed by Lührmann, *Galatians*, 90. For a thorough refutation, see G. I. Davies, “Hagar, el-Heḡra and the Location of Mount Sinai: With an Additional Note on Reqem,” *VT* 22 (1972): 152-63, 152-60. Martin McNamara, “τὸ δὲ Ἄγαρ Σινᾶ ὄρος ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ Ἀραβίᾳ’ (Gal. 4:25): Paul and Petra,” *Mils* 2 (1978): 24-41, and Michael

wordplay linking “Hagar” (הגר) with the Arabic word for “rock” (*hadjar*), a name by which Paul could have heard the mountain called during his time in Arabia (cf. 1:17).²⁵ Neither of these proposals seems intrinsically probable: the Arabic *h* corresponds to the Hebrew פ rather than the ה,²⁶ not to mention that the Greek-speaking Galatians would be unlikely to perceive either of these unmentioned connections. Furthermore, given the explicit Hagar-Sinai identification in 4:24d, the neuter τό more likely identifies Ἀγὰρ

G. Steinhauser, “Gal 4,25a: Evidence of Targumic Tradition in Gal 4,21-31?,” *Bib* 70 (1989): 234-40, each ground the Hagar-Sinai connection in the larger complex of ideas associated with the Jewish targumic traditions that render the road to שׁוּר where the angel finds Hagar in Gen 16:7 as the road to הַגְרָא, although McNamara argues that the tradition therefore identifies Hagar with Reqem/Petra (i.e., שׁוּר) and not, as Gese interprets this evidence, with *el-heḡr* (35). McNamara accordingly also concludes that the Galatians “[probably did not] understand such a reference to Jewish tradition” (36). Cf. Di Mattei, “Allegory,” 111-12; Tolmie, *Persuading*, 173; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 211-12.

²⁵ So, e.g., Chrysostom, *Galatas commentarius* (PG 61.662.34-35); Luther, *Galatians*, 291-92; Becker, “Galater,” 72; King, “Paul,” 368; Betz, *Galatians*, 244-45; Meyer, “Galatians,” 203-4. In support of this reading, Ellicott, *Galatians*, 111, interprets ἐν τῇ Ἀραβίᾳ as “among the Arabians”; Oepke, *Galater*, 149, as “in der arabischen Sprache.” As Schlier, *Galater*, 220 notes, however, the proposed wordplay does not require such deviations from the straightforward understanding of ἐν τῇ Ἀραβίᾳ as “im Lande Arabien.” For extended critique of the wordplay, see Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 194-98. J. W. Doeve, *Jewish Hermeneutics in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts* (Theologische Bibliothek 24; Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1954), 109-10, connects Hagar with the Hebrew הַדְרָה instead. The complicated proposal of Gerhard Sellin, “Hagar und Sara. Religionsgeschichtliche Hintergründe der Schriftallegorese Gal 4,21-31,” in *Das Urchristentum in seiner literarischen Geschichte: Festschrift für Jürgen Becker zum 65. Geburtstag* (eds. Ulrich Mell and Ulrich B. Müller; BZNW 100; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1999), 59-84, 74-75, in which 4:25a potentially combines the etymological understanding of Hagar as a “Foreigner” (גַּר; cf. Philo, *Congr.* 20), the name of Moses’ son (גֵרְשָׁם) signifying Moses’ status as a “foreigner” (Exod 2:22), and a tradition identifying Moses’ time in Midian / at Mt. Horeb (i.e., Sinai) in Exod 2:15-4:20 as his being “in Arabia” (so Philo, *Mos.* 1.47) seems even less tenable.

²⁶ According to Betz, *Galatians*, 245, this lack of correspondence in the Hebrew, “not to mention the Greek, would not bother a man who is absorbed with ‘allegory’ and who would be guided even by the most superficial similarities.” The text hardly justifies this characterization of Paul.

Σινᾶ as a complex modifier of the neuter ὄρος: “this Hagar-Sinai mountain.”²⁷ As Andrew Perriman observes, this explanation of the article not only accounts for Paul’s otherwise curious placement of Σινᾶ before ὄρος,²⁸ it also effectively resolves the awkwardness of having Hagar identified both as the διαθήκη *from* Mount Sinai (4:24) and as Mount Sinai itself (4:25).²⁹

Given these difficulties with a lexical explanation, other scholars—often those who prefer the textual form in which 4:25 does not contain the word Ἀγάρ³⁰—point to the introduction of Arabia as the key to Paul’s identification of Hagar with Sinai. Explanations of this variety typically argue that the mountain’s location outside the

²⁷ So, e.g., Perriman, “Rhetorical Strategy,” 37-38. Cf. Tolmie, *Persuading*, 172; Dunn, *Galatians*, 251. As Perriman notes, the suggestion that the neuter article instead identifies Ἀγάρ as a quotation from the preceding verse (e.g., BDF §267.1) would indicate that “Mount Sinai” could take the place of Ἀγάρ in 4:24, a patently absurd reading (37). The use of feminine articles with the two Jerusalems—τῆ νῦν Ἱερουσαλήμ / ἡ . . . ἄνω Ἱερουσαλήμ—similarly undermines Lightfoot’s alternative proposal that the article identifies Ἀγάρ as an “object of thought or speech” and, thus, as an allegorical entity (Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 193).

²⁸ The Σινᾶ ὄρος ordering does not appear in Gal 4:24c, in the two other NT references (Acts 7:30, 38), or in any of the 17 LXX references to Mount Sinai: Exod 19:11, 16, 18, 20, 23; 24:16; 31:18; 34:2, 4, 32; Levi 7:38; 25:1; 26:46; 27:34; Num 3:1; 28:6; and 2 Esd 19:13. Perriman, “Rhetorical Strategy,” 37 n. 25, explains the one apparent exception to the seemingly “universal rule” that the name of the mountain comes second—“Ὀρ τὸ ὄρος (“Mt. Hor”) in, e.g., Num 20:22, 23—on the grounds that the underlying Hebrew (רֹהַר הַר) constitutes a “certain idiomatic oddity.” Defending the wordplay interpretation, Meyer, “Galatians,” 203, instead suggests that Paul inverts the normal order of Σινᾶ and ὄρος in order to juxtapose the mountain’s two names. Zahn, *Galater*, 235-36, suggests that the inverted order serves to contrast Sinai with another mountain, namely, Zion.

²⁹ Perriman, “Rhetorical Strategy,” 37-38.

³⁰ UBS⁴ lists the evidence for the inclusion of Ἀγάρ as: A B D Ψ 062 075 0150 6 33 81 104 256 263 365 424 436 459 1175 1319 1852 1881 1912 1962 2127 2200 2464 Byz [K L P] *Lect* it^d syr^{p, h, pal} cop^{bo} arm geo² slav Chrysostom Theodore^{lat} Cyril^{1/3}. The evidence for its omission appears as: P⁴⁶ Ⲭ C F G 1241 1739 1592 it^{ar, b, d, f, g, o, r} vg cop^{sa} eth geo¹ Origen^{lat} Epiphanius Cyril^{2/3} Hesychius^{lat}, Victorinus-Rome Ambrosiaster Jerome Pelagius Augustine. Finding the external evidence largely inconclusive, most recent scholars rightly opt for the inclusion of Ἀγάρ based on internal considerations.

promised land corresponds to Hagar's outsider status³¹ or that Jewish tradition places Hagar's descendants in that general area (cf. Gen 25:12-18; 1 Chr 5:10, 19-20; Ps 83:7 [6 Eng]; 1 Bar 3:23; Josephus, *AJ* 1.220).³² The preference for the omission of Ἀγάρ in 4:25a also enables a few scholars to argue that, by virtue either of its distance from the promised land or of its association with a slave's descendants, Sinai's Arabian location justifies the διαθήκη's slave-bearing nature in 4:24 rather than its identification with Hagar.³³ Since neither the giving of the law outside the promised land nor the settlement patterns of Hagar's progeny have anything to do with whether or not the Sinaitic διαθήκη gives birth to slaves, this latter variation attributes a rather serious (and obvious) non-sequitur to Paul. Regardless, as with the interpretations based on τὸ Ἀγάρ, all of these proposals require that the gentile Galatians complete the argument by supplying a somewhat obscure missing step.

³¹ Meyer, "Galatians," 204 n. 5, lists Wieseler, Lachmann, and Hofmann as proponents of this view. He then notes that Paul could have focused attention on the outsider status more clearly by replacing/supplementing the reference to Arabia with ἔξω (or μακρὸν ἀπὸ) τῆς γῆς Χαναάν.

³² So Theodoret, *Commentarius*, 354; Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 193; Lagrange, *Galates*, 125; Matera, *Galatians*, 170; Byrne, *Sons*, 187 n. 85. Focusing on Hagar as a symbol for Jewish proselytism, Peder Borgen, "Some Hebrew and Pagan Features in Philo's and Paul's Interpretation of Hagar and Ishmael," in *The New Testament and Hellenistic Judaism* (eds. Peder Borgen and Søren Giversen; Aarhus, Denmark: Aarhus University Press, 1995), 151-64, 159-60, suggests that 4:25a highlights not just the pagan "background" that Hagar and Sinai share, but also their both coming to be associated with the Jewish law. Although Borgen bases his conception of Hagar as the quintessential proselyte on Philo's portrayal of her as an Egyptian who chose to join herself to Abraham and his way of life (cf. *Abr.* 251), we have little evidence suggesting that this view was widespread enough for Paul's audience to make these implicit connections.

³³ For location outside the promised land, see Zahn, *Galater*, 236; Simon Légasse, *L'Épître de Paul aux Galates* (LDC 9; Paris: Cerf, 2000), 356-57. For the proximity of Hagar's bondslave descendants, see Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 194.

Finally, I should mention Cosgrove’s solution for justifying the Sinai-Hagar connection. Acknowledging 4:25a as a ground for the identification whose significance has become obscure, Cosgrove argues that 4:25b-c functions as a second ground. In this reading, 4:25b-c establishes the Torah’s connection to Hagar by pointing to the “spiritual slavery” of the preeminent Torah-based community, namely, present Jerusalem. That Paul simply asserts rather than proves the present Jerusalem’s enslavement need not trouble the argument, suggests Cosgrove, since the Galatians would surely readily acknowledge the city’s condition given the Jews’ rejection of Jesus and their law-based persecution of Christians (cf. 4:29).³⁴ This proposal might have more traction if Paul actually connected persecution with the enslaved state of the persecutors. As it is, Cosgrove’s portrayal of present Jerusalem’s enslavement as a type of spiritual blindness seems to presuppose an enslavement to sin—a theme in Rom 7:14-25 but not in Galatians—rather than an enslavement to either the law or the στοιχεῖα.

The incomplete and, in some cases, problematical nature of all these explanations suggests that 4:25a does not ground the Hagar-Sinai connection. Admittedly, the γάρ that connects 4:25 to 4:24 in many manuscripts would argue against this conclusion, but the γάρ seems unlikely to be original: the reading of P⁴⁶ tips the manuscript evidence in favor of δέ as the original conjunction,³⁵ and the (mistaken) assumption that 4:25a

³⁴ Cosgrove, “Law,” 229-30. For critique of the alternative suggestion that present Jerusalem’s enslavement derives from the city’s subordination to Rome, see §4.2.1.2.

³⁵ Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 527, grounds the Committee’s preference for δέ in its “superior attestation.” UBS⁴ lists the evidence for δέ as: P⁴⁶ A B D 256 365 436 1175 1319 1962 2127 2464 /598

provides the purportedly missing justification for the Hagar-Sinai association can readily explain a scribal switch to γάρ. Of course, δέ can also specify a causal connection,³⁶ but the context must demand this sense.

Fortunately, the need to ground the Hagar-Sinai connection in 4:25a arises only if the characterization of the Sinaitic διαθήκη as giving birth into slavery represents an *inference* from the διαθήκη's association with Hagar.³⁷ In truth, this characterization provides a perfectly sufficient *basis* for the διαθήκη's linkage with Hagar, the mother characterized solely as “the slave woman” (ἡ παιδίσκη, 4:22-23). Further supporting slavery as the underlying link, 4:25 explicitly identifies the present Jerusalem's enslaved state as Paul's reason for identifying it with the Hagar-Sinai mountain. Slavery thus forms the common factor—the so-called *tertium comparationis*—uniting the three.³⁸

This reading requires that the enslaved status of Sinai's children in 4:24c stand—as the order of the clauses suggests—as an independent premise. A reference to an enslaving law, however, fits poorly with this conclusion. That Paul would presume the

1599 vg^{mss} syr^{h-mg, pal} cop^{sa bo-pt} Hesychius^{lat}; Ambrosiaster. The evidence for γάρ appears as: ✠ Ψ C F G 062 075 0150 6 33 81 104 263 424 459 1241 1739 1852 1881 1912 2200 Byz [K L P] *Lect* it^{ar, b, d, f, g, o, r} vg syr^{p, h} cop^{bo-mss} arm eth geo slav Origen^{lat} Epiphanius Chrysostom Theodore^{lat} Cyril; Victorinus-Rome Jerome Pelagius Augustine. A second variant involving the inclusion/omission of the name Ἀγάρ further complicates the evidence.

³⁶ LSJ, “δέ,” 371, meaning II.3.

³⁷ For my understanding of the role that 4:25a does play in the argument, see §4.2.1.2.

³⁸ So, e.g., Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 323; Perriman, “Rhetorical Strategy,” 35-36, 39.

enslaving status of the law seems unlikely given the controversial nature of such a claim.³⁹ A few scholars accordingly adopt this understanding of the Hagar-Sinai connection on the grounds that 3:19-4:10 has already established the law's enslaving nature,⁴⁰ but my analysis of those verses in Chapter 3 argues otherwise. Galatians 4:1-3 has, however, already identified the Jews as sharing in humanity's enslavement to the στοιχεῖα. Combined with its less controversial nature that renders further justification unnecessary, an enslavement to the στοιχεῖα therefore supports the independence of Paul's claim in 4:24c in a way that an enslavement to the law simply cannot.

To summarize, the prior discussion of slavery to the στοιχεῖα in 4:1-11, the lack of νόμος-language in 4:24-27, the characterization of the Sinaitic διαθήκη as "giving birth into slavery" rather than as "enslaving," and the lack of explicit support for this characterization all suggest that Paul has an enslavement to the στοιχεῖα in view rather than an enslavement to the law. To unite these somewhat disconnected observations into

³⁹ Di Mattei, "Allegory," 110 n. 30, suggests that εἰς δουλείαν does not associate the law with "slavery" but with "servitude," "a notion certainly not contradictory to Judaism." This distinction seems questionable in light of the διαθήκη's connection with the slave woman Hagar and the enslaved present Jerusalem, not to mention the contrast of this group with the free Jerusalem above n 4:26-27.

⁴⁰ E.g., Witherington, *Grace*, 330; Ingo Broer, "'Vertreibe die Magd und ihren Sohn!': Gal 4,21-31 im Horizont der Debatte über Antijudaismus im Neuen Testament," in *Der bezwingende Vorsprung des Guten: Exegetische und theologische Werkstattberichte: FS Wolfgang Harnisch* (eds. Ulrich Schoenborn and Stephan Pfürntner; Theologie 1; Münster: Lit, 1994), 167-98, 182; Stephen Fowl, "Who Can Read Abraham's Story?: Allegory and Interpretive Power in Galatians," *JSNT* 55 (1994): 77-95, 87; Hansen, *Galatians*, 144-45; Lührmann, *Galatians*, 90. Scholars most commonly ground this position in the portrayal of the law as a παιδαγωγός in 3:24-25 and the apparent linking of the law with an enslavement under the στοιχεῖα in 4:3, 10-11. See, e.g., Dunn, *Galatians*, 250. It is not clear whether explanations that justify the Hagar-Sinai connection simply on the grounds that the two form a type/antitype relationship (e.g., Calvin, "Galatians," 139; Bonnard, "Galates," 97) simply assume the enslaving nature of the law or understand it as already established in the letter.

a compelling whole, however, I still need to show how such an understanding of the Sinaitic enslavement would function in the flow of Paul's argument. After all, if the argument's overall logic requires an enslavement to the law, then these intimations of an alternative understanding might indicate nothing more than potential weaknesses in Paul's reasoning. If, for instance, I cannot offer a plausible positive explanation for the function of 4:25a, then it becomes harder to establish the negative position that Paul does not intend the verse to ground the Hagar-Sinai connection. The following section accordingly seeks to place this understanding of the Sinaitic enslavement in the flow of Paul's larger argument.

4.2.1.2 Situating a Sinaitic enslavement to the στοιχεῖα in the flow of Paul's argument

How do the Sinaitic διαθήκη and its enslaved children fit into Paul's argument? The answer depends, of course, on what Paul is actually arguing and how he relates the enslavements associated with the Sinaitic διαθήκη and the present Jerusalem. Determining whether he uses Sinai to connect Hagar to the present Jerusalem,⁴¹ uses the present Jerusalem to connect Hagar to Sinai,⁴² uses slavery to connect Hagar to both

⁴¹ E.g., Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 323-24. Cf. Guy Wagner, "Les enfants d'Abraham ou les chemins de la promesse et de la liberté: Exégèse de Galates 4,21 à 31," *RHPR* 71 (1991): 285-95, 292.

⁴² Cosgrove, "Law," 229-30.

Sinai and the present Jerusalem independently,⁴³ or—the option for which I will argue below—uses Hagar/slavery to connect Sinai to the present Jerusalem⁴⁴ therefore constitutes a critical task since each of these scenarios interprets Paul’s assumptions and aims differently.

To discern between these four options, we need to understand the role that 4:25a—τὸ δὲ Ἄγαρ Σινᾶ ὄρος ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ Ἀραβίᾳ—plays in the argument. Following immediately after the identification of the Sinaitic διαθήκη with Hagar in 4:24, 4:25a locates this Hagar-Sinai mountain in Arabia. If, as argued in §4.2.1.1 above, Arabia does not ground Hagar’s association with the Sinaitic διαθήκη or the διαθήκη’s slave-bearing status, then what function does it serve in the argument? Interpreters have proposed several different possibilities.⁴⁵

Udo Borse’s suggestion that Paul needs the lexically feminine Ἀραβία in order to connect the lexically neuter Σινᾶ ὄρος with Hagar, the Sinaitic διαθήκη, and the present Ἱερουσαλήμ—all of which are lexically feminine and portrayed as child-bearing mothers—seems unlikely:⁴⁶ even granting the necessity of this gender agreement, Paul

⁴³ E.g., Longenecker, *Galatians*, 211-13.

⁴⁴ So also Martyn, *Galatians*, 438-39, although his understanding of the argument has only this superficial agreement with the understanding for which I will argue.

⁴⁵ An inability to find a compelling reason for 4:25a has led to the suggestions that it represents “a later gloss” (Burton, *Galatians*, 259-61); an “afterthought by Paul in case any of his audiences did not know where Mount Sinai was” (Dunn, *Galatians*, 251-52); or simply a reiteration of the (just made) Hagar-Sinai connection (Fung, *Galatians*, 208; Bruce, *Galatians*, 219; Willitts, “Context,” 202-3).

⁴⁶ Udo Borse, *Der Brief an die Galater* (RNT; Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1984), 171.

could have avoided it altogether simply by eliminating the, in this reading, unnecessary references to the mountain. R. A. Lipsius's proposal fares little better. Arguing that $\sigma\sigma\tau\omicron\iota\chi\epsilon\acute{\iota}$ in 4:25b makes sense only if it refers to a comparison based on the numerical values of individual letters ($\sigma\tau\omicron\iota\chi\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$), Lipsius suggests that 4:25a connects Hagar and Sinai to the present Jerusalem via Jewish *gematria* calculations.⁴⁷ This ingenious explanation, however, relies on purportedly underlying Hebrew expressions that the Greek-speaking Galatians would have little hope of reconstructing even if they could manage to discern the nature of the argument.

A more common suggestion regards the mention of Arabia simply as an ironic reminder that the Sinaitic $\delta\iota\alpha\theta\eta\kappa\eta$ itself hails from outside the Promised Land.⁴⁸ While such a reminder might work well as an aside, 4:25a appears instead as an independent clause parallel to—and sharing a subject with⁴⁹—the subsequent clause aligning this

⁴⁷ R. A. Lipsius, *Briefe an die Galater, Römer, Philipper* (2d rev. ed.; Hand-Commentar zum Neuen Testament 2.2; Freiburg: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1892), 55, notes that the phrases “this (i.e., present) Jerusalem” (יְרוּשָׁלַם הַזֵּאת), “the mother from Mount Sinai who gives birth into slavery” (אֵם הַיְלֵדָה לְעַבְדוּתָהּ), and “Hagar is a mountain in Arabia” (הַגֵּר הִיא הַר הַיְלֵדָה) all have a *gematria* value of 999. In contrast, “that (i.e., future) Jerusalem” (יְרוּשָׁלַם הַהִיא) and “Sarah our mother” (שָׂרָה אִמֵּנוּ) both total 607. Of course, the Greek phrases in 4:24-27 at best paraphrase rather than directly translate these expressions. As for the Greek expressions themselves, Lietzmann, *Galater*, 31-32, shows that the closest correspondence in *gematria* values that one could achieve would be with $\nu\acute{\iota}\nu$ Ἱερουσαλήμ (1364) and Ἄγαρ Σινᾶ (1365), but even these do not quite match. Lietzmann also observes that $\iota\sigma\acute{o}\psi\eta\phi\omicron\varsigma$ —not $\sigma\sigma\tau\omicron\iota\chi\acute{\epsilon}\omega$ —is the Greek word designating this type of argument.

⁴⁸ E.g., Calvin, “Galatians,” 139; Bonnard, “Galates,” 97; Witherington, *Grace*, 333. Cf. Martyn, *Galatians*, 438 n. 136.

⁴⁹ The suggestion of Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 181, that $\mu\acute{\iota}\alpha$ $\delta\iota\alpha\theta\eta\kappa\eta$ from 4:24c constitutes the subject of $\sigma\sigma\tau\omicron\iota\chi\epsilon\acute{\iota}$ in 4:25b depends on his problematical reading of the intervening material as parenthetical. A few scholars (e.g., Matera, *Galatians*, 169-70) argue for a switch in subjects from “Hagar” in 4:25a to “Mount Sinai” in 4:25b. Since Paul never identifies Mount Sinai (or the Sinaitic $\delta\iota\alpha\theta\eta\kappa\eta$) as itself being “in slavery,” the justification for 4:25b in 4:25c argues against such a switch. My suggested

Hagar-Sinai mountain with the present Jerusalem. As it stands, then, this kind of ironic jab would disrupt the flow of Paul’s case. We should accordingly prefer a reading that better reflects the claim’s integration into the argument.

Mußner points the way forward when he notes that the geographical reference to Arabia creates a contrast with the immediately ensuing discussion of Jerusalem. His further suggestion that 4:25a therefore seeks to acknowledge—and thereby diminish—a potential objection to the mountain’s linkage with the present Jerusalem nevertheless suffers from two fatal difficulties.⁵⁰ First, as Cosgrove observes, Paul himself creates this geographical “problem” by needlessly introducing Sinai into the argument in the first place: he could easily have avoided the whole issue simply by referring to ὁ νόμος or to the Mosaic διαθήκη.⁵¹ Second, neither non-Christian Jews, nor the agitators, nor the Galatians they have persuaded would dispute the connection of the Sinaitic διαθήκη with Jerusalem.⁵² Indeed, the agitators’ argument presumably depends on this connection.

reading of “this Hagar-Sinai mountain” as the subject of 4:25a also eliminates this change in subject as a possibility.

⁵⁰ Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 323-24. Cf. Hays, “Galatians,” 303; Williams, *Galatians*, 128; Ridderbos, *Galatians*, 177-78. O’Neill, “Hagar,” 215, argues for a contrast of the “desert” Arabia with the “city” of present Jerusalem, but his suggestion that Sinai therefore aligns with the Jerusalem above—cf. the “numerous children of the desert” (πολλὰ τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἐρήμου) in 4:27—cannot make sense of the rest of 4:24-27 without O’Neill’s substantial alterations to the text.

⁵¹ Cosgrove, “Law,” 227.

⁵² Cf. *Ibid.*, 229: “the connection between Jerusalem and the Torah goes without saying, a natural enough presupposition.”

Hagar therefore represents the controversial element in this threesome, but she does not create the tie to Arabia.

These two objections point to two seemingly odd features of Paul's argument for which any proposed interpretation must account. On the one hand, explanations need to address the introduction of Mount Sinai. Interpretations that view Mount Sinai as opposing a corresponding mountain—usually identified as Mt. Zion—aligned with Sarah⁵³ founder on the fact that Paul mentions no other mountain in 4:26-27, i.e., he never completes this proposed contrast. Susan Elliott accordingly appeals to the Galatians' pagan past to explain Sinai's presence, arguing that it enables Paul to present Hagar as an instantiation of the Mountain Mother of the Gods, an entity often associated with law.⁵⁴ Although Elliott draws a string of potentially illuminating parallels between this goddess worship and the portrayal of the Sinaitic διαθήκη / present Jerusalem in 4:24-25,⁵⁵ her proposal nevertheless suffers from its completely implicit nature: not once does Paul make an explicit connection to the goddess cult. While this observation does not eliminate Elliott's reading as a possibility, it does suggest that interpretations capable

⁵³ See, e.g., Zahn, *Galater*, 236; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 213-14. F. S. Malan, "The Strategy of Two Opposing Covenants: Galatians 4:21-5:1," *Neot* 26 (1992): 425-40, 432, suggests Golgotha as the counterpart to Sinai.

⁵⁴ Elliott, "Choose," 676-82.

⁵⁵ See especially the chart in *Ibid.*, 679.

of explaining Sinai's explicit function in the text—namely, associating its διαθήκη with Arabia—should receive preference.⁵⁶

On the other hand, given the natural alignment of the Sinaitic διαθήκη with the present Jerusalem, explanations of Paul's argument also need to account for his explicit defense of this connection in 4:25c: δουλεύει γὰρ μετὰ τῶν τέκνων αὐτῆς.⁵⁷ That is to say, of all the passage's potentially controversial claims—the Sinaitic διαθήκη gives birth into slavery (4:24c); the present Jerusalem is enslaved (4:25c); the Jerusalem above is free (4:26)—why does Paul choose to defend this seemingly straightforward association of Sinai and Jerusalem? Some interpreters simply deny that 4:25c connects these two entities.⁵⁸ Cosgrove, for instance, argues that Hagar must be the sole subject of

⁵⁶ In Elliott's reading, Arabia "becomes an incidental detail, rather than an explanatory one." See *Ibid.*, 678 n. 59. The implicit nature of the proposed argument would also render the—in this reading—ungrounded association of Hagar with Sinai rhetorically dangerous. That is to say, Elliott argues that Paul portrays the Mountain Mother as the slave Hagar in order to demean the goddess and reduce her appeal (681), but the agitators could simply argue instead that Mount Sinai rightly corresponds to Sarah, thereby turning any implicit connections between the law and an appealing goddess cult into a potential positive reason for accepting the Jewish law.

⁵⁷ As Martyn, *Galatians*, 439, notes, the contrast with the free ἄνω Ἰερουσαλήμ in 4:26 identifies νῦν Ἰερουσαλήμ as the subject of δουλεύει in 4:25c. Martyn's corresponding suggestion that "the word 'for' indicates that [Paul] intends to draw a conclusion from what precedes" and therefore makes Hagar and Sinai both redundant as potential subjects, however, misreads the force of the γὰρ, which here has its normal causative force.

⁵⁸ In an attempt to read Paul's reference to the present Jerusalem positively, Gaston, *Paul*, 91, proposes that συστοιχεῖ here means "is in the *opposite* column from" (emphasis added), a reading that even he rightly doubts is "philologically correct." Wagner, "Les enfants," 292, in contrast, suggests that Paul composes the verb συστοιχέω from σύν and στοιχέω so that it has the meaning "walk with." (For στοιχέω in the sense "walk, live by," see Gal 5:25, 6:16; Rom 4:12; Phil 3:16.) Galatians 4:25 then asserts that the pagan Hagar "walks with" the present Jerusalem in that both turn to Sinai for salvation, Hagar in her flight through the desert, Judaism through its reliance on the law. As in the earlier references to the στοιχεῖα (4:1-11), 4:25 thus equates Jewish legalism and pagan religions. While Wagner presents a credible lexical analysis of συστοιχέω, his explanation of the connection between Hagar and Jerusalem differs from the one Paul explicitly provides: 4:25c grounds the connection in their shared slavery, not in

συστοιχεῖ since reading Sinai as the subject would render the defense of the alignment in 4:25c “neither necessary nor convincing.”⁵⁹ Hagar does seem to constitute at least part of the subject of συστοιχεῖ: given that Paul never identifies the Sinaitic διαθήκη as itself enslaved, the claim in 4:25c that the present Jerusalem “is enslaved with her children” (δουλεύει γὰρ μετὰ τῶν τέκνων αὐτῆς) seems intended to connect the city with the slave woman Hagar.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, I have already argued in §4.2.1.1 that the τό in 4:25a most likely signifies “this Hagar-Sinai mountain” as the subject of that clause and, accordingly, of συστοιχεῖ in 4:25b.

We thus have the curious situation in which Paul connects the Sinaitic διαθήκη and the present Jerusalem *through Hagar*. Granted, 4:24 has just asserted the slave-bearing nature of the Sinaitic διαθήκη, so the slavery-based justification in 4:25c could conceivably align the present Jerusalem with Hagar-Sinai “[b]ecause [the present Jerusalem] is based on the Sinai covenant,” as Betz, e.g., claims that it does.⁶¹ Nothing in the text, however, suggests this causal relationship, nor can the presupposition of this

their both turning to Sinai. This interpretation also fits awkwardly with Paul’s identification of Hagar as the Sinai covenant.

⁵⁹ Cosgrove, “Law,” 229.

⁶⁰ The suggestion that 4:25c connects the present Jerusalem to the enslaved Hagar (and, through her, to Sinai) offers fairly strong internal evidence for the inclusion of Ἀγάρ: it offers evidence of Hagar’s role in an argument whose unconventional nature means that Christian scribes would have been unlikely to introduce it had the omission of Ἀγάρ been original.

⁶¹ Betz, *Galatians*, 246. So, too, Broer, “Vertreibe,” 186, who suggests that Paul does not specify this (necessary) connection because it would disrupt (stören) his allegory.

relationship explain why Paul would then explicitly argue for a less obvious connection through Hagar. In fact, it is exactly this kind of causal association that the agitators' position would have presumed and that Paul's argument seems designed to avoid. This latter observation, I suggest, then provides the key to understanding the function of 4:25a.

The preceding paragraphs have identified three elements for which explanations of Paul's argument must account: the introduction of Mount Sinai and its Arabian location, the geographical contrast of Arabia with Jerusalem, and the defense of the present Jerusalem's alignment with "this Hagar-Sinai mountain." All of these elements point to the conclusion that Paul wants to create some distance between two entities that everyone involved in the discussion would otherwise closely associate, namely, the law and Jerusalem. Hence, he complicates that normally straightforward relationship.⁶² Instead of referring to the διαθήκη as ὁ νόμος or the Mosaic διαθήκη, he identifies it by the mountain where it was given, thereby enabling him to associate it with Arabia in contrast to Jerusalem. Similarly, rather than allowing his readers simply to assume the usual connection between the διαθήκη and Jerusalem, he explicitly justifies the association by linking the two entities through Hagar.

Why would Paul introduce this distance between the διαθήκη and Jerusalem while simultaneously arguing for some sort of connection between the two? Interpretations in which 4:24-25 simply establishes a "Hagar" column that stands in opposition to a "Sarah" column elucidated in 4:26-27—interpretations already troubled

⁶² Similarly, Perriman, "Rhetorical Strategy," 38-39.

by the dearth of explicit corresponding elements on the Sarah side—have difficulty explaining this distance.⁶³ After all, if Paul’s argument involved nothing more than the assigning of an enslaved present Jerusalem to the Hagar-Sinai side of the ledger, then a closer tie between the present Jerusalem and Sinai could only strengthen his case. Betz’s proposed logic would have served Paul better, even if left implicit.

I therefore suggest that the free Jerusalem above holds the answer: Paul’s argument does not seek to link the Sinaitic διαθήκη with the present Jerusalem so much as it seeks to differentiate it from the Jerusalem above. In other words, in an atmosphere that naturally assumes the correlation of Sinai and Jerusalem, Paul’s argument serves to *limit* the Sinaitic linkage to the *present* Jerusalem; he distances Sinai from Jerusalem so that he can exclude the διαθήκη from the Jerusalem above. Read in this way, the γάρ clause that begins in 4:25 extends—contra the standard punctuating of the passage—through 4:26: “and this Hagar-Sinai mountain . . . aligns with the present Jerusalem, for [the present Jerusalem] is enslaved with her children whereas⁶⁴ the Jerusalem above is free” (τὸ δὲ Ἀγάρ Σινᾶ ὄρος . . . συστοιχεῖ δὲ τῇ νῦν Ἱερουσαλήμ, δουλεύει γὰρ μετὰ τῶν τέκνων αὐτῆς. ἡ δὲ ἄνω Ἱερουσαλήμ ἐλευθέρᾳ ἐστίν).

The argument in 4:24-26 thus proceeds as follows. Paul begins by identifying the Sinaitic διαθήκη with Hagar based on its inability to liberate its “children” from the enslaving στοιχεῖα (4:24). Galatians 4:25a then disrupts the normally assumed

⁶³ For further analysis of this two-column approach to Gal 4:21-5:1 and its problems, see §4.3.1.

⁶⁴ For a similarly functioning δέ, see Gal 4:23.

connection between the διαθήκη and Jerusalem by highlighting Sinai's Arabian location, thereby enabling Paul to establish his own link between the two in 4:25b-c based on Hagar and the concept of slavery.⁶⁵ This way of linking the διαθήκη to Jerusalem, however, effectively restricts its influence to the present Jerusalem since the Jerusalem above is free (4:26). The law thus has no relevance for citizens of the Jerusalem above. (As I will argue below, Gal 4:27 then proves the Jerusalem above to be "our" mother.)

Two further points deserve mention. First, as the asserted nature of Paul's claims about the Jerusalems attest, the argument presupposes the complementary natures of the two cities. Contrary to the scholarly consensus, then, the Jewish law seems unlikely to be the force enslaving the present Jerusalem: Paul could not assert that the Jerusalem above was free from the law without begging the question. What does enslave the present city? Although a few scholars suggest that Paul has Jerusalem's subjugation to the Romans in view,⁶⁶ A. T. Hanson rightly notes that the similar standing of the apparently "free"

⁶⁵ Martyn, *Galatians*, 438-39, similarly argues that 4:24-25 connects the present Jerusalem to the Sinaitic διαθήκη "via Hagar." The similarity with the reading proposed above, however, ends there. For Martyn, 4:25c represents "the *conclusion* that is to be drawn from the two preceding clauses" (emphasis added), a reading that treats the often causal γάρ as inferential instead. Paul would then be using Hagar's connection with both the Sinaitic διαθήκη and the present Jerusalem to establish the enslaved condition of the latter. This suggestion makes little sense. In the first place, treating 4:25 as a conclusion would mean that Paul offers no support for his surely controversial claim that Hagar aligns with the present Jerusalem. Second, even granting this alignment, the connection of Hagar-Sinai with the present Jerusalem would not imply the latter's enslavement. If anything, it would suggest that the present Jerusalem also gives birth into slavery, but Paul does not draw this "conclusion" in 4:25c. The problem is that a mutual alignment of Sinai and Jerusalem with Hagar can at most establish common ground; it cannot dictate the precise relationship of entities thus aligned. To reach 4:25c as a conclusion, one must therefore presume the grounding of the present Jerusalem in the enslaving Sinaitic διαθήκη, but presuming this relationship then renders Hagar irrelevant to the argument.

⁶⁶ So Standhartinger, "Zur Freiheit," 297. Meyer, "Galatians," 206, lists Pelagius, Ewald, and Castalio as subscribing to this view. Hays, "Galatians," 303, sees Israel's subjection to Rome as a possible secondary meaning.

Galatian believers (cf. 5:1) with respect to Rome makes this reading unlikely.⁶⁷ Moreover, this interpretation would require the adjective “present” (νῦν) to locate this enslavement in the historical plane, contrasting Jerusalem’s current subjugation with its presumably free past and/or future. Paul, however, explicitly contrasts the city not with its past or future incarnations but with “the Jerusalem above.” This shift from a temporal descriptor to a spatial one suggests that “present” characterizes the city more broadly as belonging to the current earthly age.

Combined with the distancing of Sinai from Jerusalem, the presumption of the complementary natures accordingly suggests that the στοιχεῖα enslave the present Jerusalem.⁶⁸ That Paul might expect his audience to accept such a contrast of the human condition in this earthly age with the human condition in the heavenly age to come in terms of “enslaved” and “free” without further defense seems reasonable, especially after the argument in 4:1-11. This suggestion also fits well with the contrast of an earthly “present” Jerusalem formed by Abraham’s (merely) human descendants and a heavenly Jerusalem “above” formed by those Abrahamic descendants who are also children of God.

⁶⁷ Anthony Tyrrell Hanson, *Studies in Paul’s Technique and Theology* (London: SPCK, 1974), 96.

⁶⁸ So, too, Légasse, *Galates*, 359; Dunn, *Galatians*, 252-54; Lührmann, *Galatians*, 90-91, although they all consider the law to be one of these enslaving στοιχεῖα. Le Cornu and Shulam, *Galatians*, 308, suggest that “flesh” enslaves the city. Although the concept of a fleshly enslavement has some affinity to my suggestion of a general human enslavement to the στοιχεῖα, Galatians nowhere speaks of an enslavement to the flesh.

Second, I should note that merely associating the Sinaitic διαθήκη with the enslaved present Jerusalem would not suffice to preclude its also functioning in the Jerusalem above. Indeed, the agitators would likely argue for a degree of continuity between the two Jerusalems, a continuity that could well include the law. In other words, the agitators could simply argue that Paul’s “Hagar” will one day become “Sarah,” with the Sinaitic διαθήκη continuing to preside over both. In that day—so the agitators could argue—the Sinaitic διαθήκη will no longer give birth to slaves. For Paul’s argument to work, then, he must find a way of sharply distinguishing the two Jerusalems that also clearly limits the reach of the Sinaitic διαθήκη to the present Jerusalem.

The next section will argue that the citation of Isa 54:1 achieves this effect by proving the Jerusalem above to be “our mother” only because of “our” participation in the Abrahamic διαθήκη. Here I simply observe that, since the argument produces conclusive implications for the Sinaitic διαθήκη only if the διαθήκη gives birth into the same enslavement that troubles the present Jerusalem—i.e., the same enslavement that the Jerusalem above ends—this analysis helps confirm my earlier suggestion that the στοιχεῖα and not the law enslave the διαθήκη’s children. This enslavement to the στοιχεῖα then emphasizes the Jews’ human descent from Abraham and thus favors a testamentary understanding of the Sinaitic διαθήκη.

4.2.2 The Abrahamic διαθήκη: An adoptive testament enabling entrance into the free Jerusalem above according to Isa 54:1

The truly decisive evidence for a testamentary reading of the διαθήκη in Gal 4:24-27 comes from the ability of the adoptive Abrahamic testament to make sense of the Isaianic citation in 4:24. In many ways, Paul's citation of Isa 54:1 appears to be one of his more straightforward scriptural appeals. The wording matches the wording in known LXX manuscripts and accurately reflects the sense of the MT. The citation also seems contextually appropriate: following the discussion of "the Jerusalem above" in 4:26, the introductory γάρ in Gal 4:27 suggests that Paul's use respects the verse's original Isaianic function as an address to a restored Jerusalem (cf. Isa 52:2, 9; 54:11-12). Nevertheless, scholars disagree on exactly how Paul intends the citation to function within his larger argument. We can group the main proposals into three, non-exclusive categories, each of which emphasizes a different aspect of the citation. None of the three presents a particularly satisfying reading.

A first type of proposal sees the citation as connecting the Jerusalem above with Sarah and, thus, with the Abrahamic context. These interpretations accordingly emphasize the opening description of Jerusalem as "a barren one who does not bear" (στεῖρα ἢ οὐ τίκτουσα), language that Genesis applies to Sarah (cf. ἦν Σαρά στεῖρα καὶ οὐκ ἔτεκνοποίηι, Gen 11:30; Σαρά . . . οὐκ ἔτικτεν, Gen 16:1) before she gives birth to Isaac and, through him, the entire nation of Israel. The linking term στεῖρα thus enables Isa 54:1 to speak of Sarah by *gezerah shewah*. Proponents of this view can also

point to the portrayal of Sarah as the mother of those who seek righteousness and the Lord in Isa 51:1-2—the only OT reference to her outside of Genesis—for evidence that Paul’s application of Isa 54:1 simply follows Isaiah’s lead.

Scholars offer different explanations for the function of this purported connection with Sarah.⁶⁹ Reading ἐλευθέρω in the main clause of 4:26 as a *double entendre* alluding to the Abrahamic “free woman” (ἡ ἐλευθέρω; cf. Gal 4:22, 23, 30, 31)—“But the Jerusalem above is (the) free(woman)” —Steven Di Mattei suggests that 4:27 confirms the allegorical identification of Sarah with the Jerusalem above.⁷⁰ For Di Mattei and Cosgrove, this association of Sarah with Jerusalem’s eschatological fruitfulness testifies to the barrenness of the law;⁷¹ for other scholars, the identification simply proves that Sarah is also “our mother.”⁷² Alternatively, if, possibly based on God’s promise that

⁶⁹ Bligh, *Galatians*, 404, proposes that Paul introduces Isa 54:1 “to show that he is not the first to treat Sarah and Agar allegorically.” He then further suggests that the citation also proves both halves of 4:26, although not in ways related to the Sarah allusions.

⁷⁰ Di Mattei, “Allegory,” 115.

⁷¹ Cosgrove, “Law,” 230 n. 41; Di Mattei, “Allegory,” 115. For Cosgrove, Paul uses the Sarah-Jerusalem connection to read the eschatological Jerusalem’s barrenness back into the Genesis account, such that Sarah herself has no children until the eschatological seed—i.e., Christ (Gal 3:16)—arrives. The citation thus shows that “*the law has given Sarah no children*” (231, emphasis original). Di Mattei corrects Cosgrove’s formulation by noting that the allegorical nature of Paul’s association does not allow a direct connection to the historical Sarah. Rather, Paul shows that “*a Sarah . . . has remained barren until Christ*” (emphasis added), i.e., he shows that “Torah allegorically prophesies the same eschatological events proclaimed by Isaiah” (118). Cf. Wagner, “Les enfants,” 293 n. 11: “une autre Sara, la Sara « eschatologique ».” Herein lies a problem, however. Whereas Cosgrove’s formulation wrongly historicizes Sarah, Di Mattei’s formulation wrongly allegorizes the promised seed. That is to say, while 4:21-5:1 does portray Sarah allegorically, 3:16 portrays Christ as the actual seed promised to Abraham and, accordingly, to Sarah. This line of analysis therefore requires that we mix the allegorical referent with the historical referent, a practice that Di Mattei elsewhere rightly criticizes (113).

⁷² Tolmie, *Persuading*, 173; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 215; Betz, *Galatians*, 249. Cf. Perriman, “Rhetorical Strategy,” 40, who suggests that the citation “mediates rhetorically, if not logically” between the motherhood of Jerusalem in 4:26 and the motherhood of Sarah in 4:28.

Sarah would be a mother of nations (Gen 17:16), Paul assumes Sarah's motherhood of the church (cf. "you are children of promise according to Isaac," 4:28), then the Sarah-Jerusalem connection in 4:27 could establish the claim in 4:26b that the Jerusalem above is "our mother."⁷³ Finally, for a few interpreters who understand the ἥτις ἐστὶν μήτηρ ἡμῶν as modifying ἐλευθέρω, the purported allusion to Sarah in Isa 54:1 serves to justify—through variously proposed means—her status as "our mother."⁷⁴

Nevertheless, regardless of the perceived application, the citation actually does a rather poor job of associating the Jerusalem above directly with Sarah. Sarah, for instance, does ultimately experience both the birth of a child and the accompanying labor pains, i.e., the two experiences that the Isaianic passage expressly denies to its addressee. The passage would therefore correspond to Sarah only before the birth of Isaac, yet the present tense of the participles in Isaiah—"you who do not bear" (ἡ οὐ τίκτουσα), "you who do not suffer labor pains" (ἡ οὐκ ὠδίνουσα)—suggests a continuing state. Furthermore, as Karen Jobes notes, the argument in 4:21-5:1 presumes the motherhood of both Sarah and Hagar; since Sarah functions here as the mother of Isaac, an implicit

⁷³ E.g., Dunn, *Galatians*, 255; Martinus C. de Boer, "Paul's Quotation of Isaiah 54.1 in Galatians 4.27," *NTS* 50 (2004): 370-89, 379.

⁷⁴ E.g., Becker, "Galater," 73, suggests that the citation proves Sarah's motherhood of the church as follows: since, from the prophet's perspective, the barren woman's—i.e., Sarah's—abundance of children still lies in the future, these children cannot refer to Sarah's physical descendants—i.e., earthly Israel—and must therefore designate the church which, as an eschatological entity, corresponds to the eschatological viewpoint of the prophet. Cf. Vouga, *Galater*, 118, who states only that, in accordance with 3:6-9, 4:27 applies the Isaianic promise for children to those who believe. According to Debanné, Frederik Wisse suggests that Paul employs the following syllogism: A. "All children of the promise have Sarah as their mother" (4:27); B. "We are children of the promise" (4:28); therefore, C. "Sarah is our mother" (4:26b). See Debanné, "Enthymemes in Galatians," 17. Troubling this syllogism, Gal 4:27 nowhere mentions a promise, nor does 4:28 claim that "we" are children of the promise.

appeal to her barrenness would be somewhat “confusing.”⁷⁵ The Isaianic text also reports that the children of this “desolate one” (τῆς ἐρήμου) will outnumber the children of “the one having a husband” (τῆς ἐχούσης τὸν ἄνδρα), a characterization that would seem to create a better correspondence between Jerusalem and Hagar than between Jerusalem and Sarah, the wife of Abraham who ultimately expels the unmarried Hagar into “the wilderness” (τὴν ἔρημον, Gen 21:14).⁷⁶

Isaiah 54:1 therefore cannot connect the Jerusalem above directly to Sarah without tremendous difficulties. Given Paul’s straightforward argumentation throughout this letter and his desire to persuade his Galatian audience, it seems unlikely that he would require his readers to overcome these obstacles in his cited text on the basis of an uncited reference to Sarah in Isa 51:2 or other unmentioned clues from the Isaianic context.⁷⁷ Finally, even if the Galatians did detect a connection to Sarah, the agitators

⁷⁵ Karen H. Jobes, “Jerusalem, Our Mother: Metalepsis and Intertextuality in Galatians 4:21-31,” *WTJ* 55 (1993): 299-320, 302. Cf. Stanley, *Arguing*, 135 n. 50, who notes that Paul’s argument itself provides no indication that Sarah was ever barren.

⁷⁶ Standhartinger, “Zur Freiheit,” 297-98, therefore suggests that, in accordance with Paul’s proclamation in Gal 3:28, the citation blurs (verwischen) the distinction between Sarah the “barren” free woman and Hagar the “desolate” slave, thereby continuing a trend in 4:26-27 that Standhartinger also detects in the dearth of explicit contrasts with 4:24-25 (i.e., no mention of Sarah or another διαθήκη) and in the inexact nature of the one contrast that does appear (*present* Jerusalem versus Jerusalem *above*). While I agree that Paul’s argument does not seek to create two oppositional columns, the suggestion that 4:27 implicitly invokes the adoptive Abrahamic διαθήκη accounts for the various phenomena Standhartinger notes better than a desire to blend Hagar and Sarah.

⁷⁷ Di Mattei, “Allegory,” 114-15, grounds the connection in the Palestinian triennial reading cycle in which Isa 54:1 serves as the *haftarah* for Gen 16:1. Cf. Mary C. Callaway, “The Mistress and the Maid: Midrashic Traditions behind Galatians 4:21-31,” *Radical Religion* 2 (1975): 94-101, 97. Barrett, “Allegory,” 164 n. 29, similarly notes that Isa 54:1 forms part of the *haftarah* for Gen 6:9-11:32 (cf. 11:30) in the Babylonian annual reading cycle. Even granting the existence of these particular reading cycles in the first century C.E.—an existence for which we have, as Di Mattei notes, no explicit evidence (114 n. 44)—we have no external indications that the gentile Galatian Christians would have used one of these cycles, let

could still turn that connection to their advantage simply by asserting the traditional understanding of Sarah.⁷⁸

In light of these problems, a second type of proposal suggests that the Isaianic passage serves primarily to relate the Jerusalem above, not to Sarah and the Abrahamic context, but to the Galatian context. These interpretations accordingly understand the citation to support the claim in 4:26b that the Jerusalem above is “our mother.” For Guy Wagner, the Isaianic implication that Jerusalem’s newfound fertility in Isa 54:1 stems from the work of a suffering servant (i.e., Christ) described in the immediately preceding passage (Isa 52:13-53:12) suffices to establish Paul’s claim.⁷⁹ Since neither Paul nor the citation actually makes this connection explicit, most modern interpreters focus instead on the prophecy of newfound fruitfulness itself.⁸⁰ The resulting explanations, however, vary in their suggested nuances and in the exegetical problems that they create.

alone be familiar enough with it to recognize the connection. Furthermore, the agitators could rebut such an argument simply by asserting a different reading tradition. Given these difficulties, we should prefer a reading that can account for the connection without having to appeal to an unmentioned *haftarah*-Torah correlation.

⁷⁸ So Philip F. Esler, *Galatians* (New Testament Readings; London: Routledge, 1998), 213; Stanley, *Arguing*, 131-32.

⁷⁹ Wagner, “Les enfants,” 293.

⁸⁰ According to Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 183, “the image of barrenness derives its force from the introduction of the Gentile element into the Christian Church.” Relating the prior period of barrenness to the gentiles’ formerly estranged relationship to God, however, would require an equating of the barren-now-fecund Jerusalem with either the gentiles generally (e.g., Bruce, *Galatians*, 222) or the gentile church (e.g., Chrysostom, *Galatas commentarius*, PG 61.662.59-61). The former creates the untenable identification of the Jerusalem above with the gentile nations. As Lagrange, *Galates*, 129, notes, the latter unjustifiably limits membership in the church to gentiles.

Bruce, for instance, interprets the fecundity strictly in terms of numbers: “Formerly the Gentiles were sterile, producing no fruit for God, but now their response to the gospel has made them more fruitful than the synagogue: the new Jerusalem has more children than ever the old Jerusalem had.”⁸¹ While such reasoning might work today, the possibility that Paul would try to ground an argument in the numerical superiority of Christians over Jews—or even law-free Christians over law-observant Christians—within a few decades of Jesus’ death seems unrealistic.⁸² Mußner accordingly argues that the mere assurance of fecundity suffices to prove that the numerous believers gathered around the Redeemer are children of the Jerusalem above, an argument in which Paul omits the crucial middle step identifying Isa 54:1 with the work a Redeemer.⁸³

⁸¹ Bruce, *Galatians*, 222. Cf. Broer, “Vertreibe,” 188: “der starken Ausbreitung des Christentums.” Interpreting the passage in terms of competing gentile missions, Martyn, *Galatians*, 442-43, supplements the barren-fecund contrast with the contrast in having or not having a husband, which he rather unjustifiably interprets in terms of having an earthly sponsor. As Martyn himself notes, this reading results in a “literally inconsistent” portrayal of the Jerusalem church (443). (The attempt of Boer, “Quotation,” 382, to avoid this inconsistency by identifying James as the assumed husband has no justification in the text.) Matera, *Galatians*, 176, suggests instead that Paul uses the citation to “prove” the numerical superiority of the Jerusalem above, but numerical superiority is not a point of contention in 4:26. It therefore remains unclear how such a proof would fit into Paul’s argument.

⁸² Bligh, *Galatians*, 406, resolves this problem by limiting the scope of Paul’s comments to the gentile-heavy Antioch community, a resolution requiring his untenable suggestion that 4:21-30 represents the climax of Paul’s speech to Peter at Antioch that Gal 2:14 begins recounting (390). In contrast, Witherington, *Grace*, 336, avoids the problem by identifying Paul himself as the barren-turned-fecund woman who gave birth to the Galatians. The citation would then function awkwardly as a self-exhortation by which Paul reminds himself that his converts in Galatia still outnumber the agitators’ converts. Arguing against this interpretation, the designation “our mother” in 4:26 identifies Paul as a son in this context, not as a mother. Furthermore, when Paul does apply mother imagery to himself in 4:19, he speaks of experiencing labor pains (ὠδίνω) whereas the citation explicitly addresses one who does not experience such pains (οὐκ ὠδίνουσα). Finally, the agitators would have no trouble rebutting such an arbitrary identification.

⁸³ Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 327-28, followed by Borse, *Galater*, 172-73; Rohde, *Galater*, 202. Cf. Lagrange, *Galates*, 129. Mußner grounds his association of Isa 54:1 with the work of a Redeemer in the connection that R. Levi (ca. 300 C.E.) makes between Isa 59:20 and Isa 54:1. One could also potentially

Conversely, Burton glosses this fruitfulness in terms of greater “glory,”⁸⁴ but the citation does not actually say anything about glory.

For Hays and Jobes, the larger Isaianic context provides the key. Noting that Isaiah elsewhere connects Jerusalem’s newfound fruitfulness with the conversion of gentiles (e.g., Isa 49:6, 51:4-5, 52:10, 54:2-3, 55:5), Hays suggests that Christianity’s embrace of gentiles proves the Jerusalem above to be the (gentile Galatian) Christians’ mother.⁸⁵ Jobes, in contrast, suggests that Isaiah’s conjoining of such themes as childbirth, Spirit, resurrection, and rejoicing in, e.g., Isa 26:17-19, help to identify Jesus’ resurrection as the miraculous birth promised to the barren one (cf. Isa [LXX] 1:26).⁸⁶ A chief difficulty with these two readings lies in the degree of scriptural familiarity and exegetical sophistication they must presuppose among the gentile Galatians.⁸⁷

appeal to the immediately preceding description of a suffering servant in 52:13-53:12 (cf. Wagner, “Les enfants,” 293-94). Nevertheless, even if Jews in Paul’s day commonly drew these connections—not a given by any means—we cannot assume that the gentile Galatians would comprehend such an argument.

⁸⁴ Burton, *Galatians*, 264.

⁸⁵ Hays, “Galatians,” 304. He also notes that the citation connects Jerusalem’s restoration to Sarah. Cf. Gaston, *Paul*, 90. So, too, Kamila Abrahamova Blessing, “The Background of the Barren Woman Motif in Galatians 4:27” (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1996), 317-20, who emphasizes the covenantal aspects of this reading.

⁸⁶ Jobes, “Jerusalem,” 314.

⁸⁷ Both Blessing, “Barren,” 325, and Jobes, “Jerusalem,” 318, note that the Galatians would be unlikely to perceive the allusions necessary for their respective readings. Blessing concludes that the Galatians would therefore likely read the citation simply as a proof-text, a problematical solution since, in this reading, the relevance of Isa 54:1 would remain obscure without the proposed intertextual connections. Jobes avoids this problem by suggesting instead that Paul intends the citation to evoke his earlier teachings on the subject.

Finally, a third type of explanation argues that the citation's distinguishing of two groups grounds the entire allegory. Focusing on the contrast between "the desolate one" and "the one having a husband," Luther, for instance, finds support for the passage's overriding law-gospel dichotomy by interpreting the "husband" allegorically as the law (cf. Rom 7:2).⁸⁸ Joel Willitts, in contrast, looks to the Isaianic context for the significance of these two designations, arguing that they distinguish an unfaithful, pre-judgment Jerusalem (i.e., "the one with a husband") and a post-judgment, redeemed Jerusalem (i.e., "the desolate one").⁸⁹ According to Willitts, Paul eschatologizes this basic paradigm such that the former becomes "the present Jerusalem," the latter, "the Jerusalem above." Aligning the two covenants of Gal 4:24 with these two eschatological instantiations of Jerusalem then enables Paul to characterize the Sinaitic covenant as enslaving and the new covenant as freeing, presumably, Willitts suggests, because the eschatological framework provided by Isa 54:1 effectively establishes the covenants' respective positions in salvation history.⁹⁰ As for Hagar and Sarah, Paul invokes them to provide a concrete image of this eschatological reality.⁹¹ Robert Brawley similarly emphasizes the

⁸⁸ Luther, *Galatians*, 297-98. Cf. Bonnard, "Galates," 99, who suggests that Isa 54:1 provides "un témoignage scripturaire . . . de plus en faveur du peuple de la promesse dans son opposition au peuple de la loi." Bligh, *Galatians*, 404, similarly identifies the husband with the law; in his view, Isa 54:1 then proves (among other things) the claim in 4:26a that the Jerusalem above is free (i.e., from law) by identifying it as "desolate." As for how the city produces children while being husbandless, Bligh appeals to the pattern of Jesus' virgin birth (405).

⁸⁹ Joel Willitts, "Isa 54,1 in Gal 4,24b-27: Reading Genesis in Light of Isaiah," *ZNW* 96 (2005): 188-210, 192-97.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 204-6.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 207. He also notes that Hagar-Sarah enables Paul to call for the expulsion of "Hagar" through his citation of Gen 21:10 in Gal 4:30.

broader Isaianic context but finds the citation's significance in its uniting of the two Jerusalems, i.e., in its portrayal of Jerusalem's transition from a state of slavery and captivity to a state of freedom and productivity. Viewed in this way, the citation expresses the hope that all who find themselves aligned with Hagar in slavery will ultimately share in Jerusalem's transition to alignment with Sarah and freedom.⁹²

The lack of explicit guidance from Paul as to the identities of the "one having a husband" and the "desolate one" trouble the first two of these interpretations. The agitators could easily dismiss an identification of the husband with the law as arbitrary. Willitts provides more justification for his view, but his explanation requires an extensive knowledge not only of the Isaianic context but also of the particular interpretive tradition in which "the one having a husband" in Isaiah signifies a pre-judgment Jerusalem. Although most interpreters of Galatians adopt a similar view, the glossing of the phrase as "inhabited Rome" in the presumably post-70 C.E. Isaiah Targum provides somewhat early evidence that at least some Jews interpreted Isa 54:1 as describing two separate entities rather than one city at different points in time.⁹³ Furthermore, in the context of Paul's figurative explanation, the only member who clearly has a husband is Sarah. Willitts's identification of "the *present* Jerusalem" with the pre-judgment Jerusalem in

⁹² Brawley, "Contextuality," 114-15. He argues that Isaiah shapes Paul's treatment of the Abraham story throughout Galatians.

⁹³ See Bruce D. Chilton, *The Isaiah Targum: Introduction, Translation, Apparatus and Notes* (ArBib 11; Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1987), 105. For discussion of Isa 54:1 as identifying two separate women, see Boer, "Quotation," 371—who identifies "the one having a husband" in Isaiah as Babylon—and Bligh, *Galatians*, 403.

“the old/former age”⁹⁴ also seems rather unintuitive since the Jerusalem in Paul’s day could historically qualify only as Isaiah’s desolate (in-judgment) or redeemed (post-judgment) Jerusalem. When we additionally consider the several lexico-syntactical idiosyncracies on which this proposal depends,⁹⁵ Willitts’s own assessment of his interpretation of 4:26—“with a mere surface reading [this] meaning is difficult to ascertain and not obvious to later[!] readers”⁹⁶—becomes an apt summary of the whole argument. Brawley’s more abstract interpretation similarly relies on an extensive knowledge of Isaiah—he suggests the relevant Isaianic context extends back as far as Isa 45:9-11⁹⁷—and faces the difficulty that 4:24-26 sets the various entities in stark opposition rather than identifying them as poles in a progression (see §4.2.1).

Two additional exegetical issues transcend these different interpretations. First, we must ask on what basis Paul applies the description of an apparently restored earthly Jerusalem in Isa 54:1 to “the Jerusalem above.” Most scholars assume that he simply reads the passage in accordance with common Jewish eschatological expectations,⁹⁸ but,

⁹⁴ Willitts, “Isa 54,1,” 204.

⁹⁵ For example, reading an inferential γάρ in 4:25c (Ibid., 199); identifying the antecedents of αὐτῆς in 4:25c and ἥτις in 4:26b as the initial διαθήκαι in 4:24b rather than as the respectively more proximate τῆ νῦν Ἱερουσαλήμ and ἡ ἄνω Ἱερουσαλήμ (205 n. 48); and understanding the δέ in 4:26 to contrast the Jerusalem above with the διαθήκη from Sinai in the μέν clause of 4:24 rather than with the immediately preceding present Jerusalem in 4:25 (205).

⁹⁶ Ibid., 205, referring specifically to his interpretation of 4:26.

⁹⁷ Brawley, “Contextuality,” 112 n. 51.

⁹⁸ See, e.g., Betz, *Galatians*, 246, who describes “the Jerusalem above” as a “famous Jewish concept.”

as Andrew Lincoln observes, “literary evidence for this concept [i.e., of a heavenly Jerusalem] in Jewish expectations is not as widespread as many commentators would have us suppose and is of a quite late date.”⁹⁹ Lincoln notes, for instance, that the eschatological hopes of the OT and intertestamental literature focus on the glorified renewal of the earthly Jerusalem without mentioning a heavenly counterpart.¹⁰⁰ In fact, the only pre-Pauline reference to a heavenly Jerusalem in this literature appears in a portion of the so-called Animal Apocalypse (*1 En.* 90:28-36) in which Enoch sees the old “house”—here signifying Jerusalem—dismantled and a completely new “house” brought about to replace it.¹⁰¹ With regard to the Qumran scrolls, Adela Collins identifies three main conceptions of a new Jerusalem: 1) the portrayal of the community itself as a new Jerusalem; 2) the idealized norms for a renewed earthly Jerusalem found primarily in the *Temple Scroll*; and 3) the anticipation of God’s eschatological creation of a glorified city

⁹⁹ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet: Studies in the Role of the Heavenly Dimension in Paul’s Thought with Special Reference to His Eschatology* (SNTSMS 43; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 18.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 18-19. Commonly cited passages focusing on the eschatological restoration of Jerusalem include Isa 2; 54:10-14; 60-62; 65:17-25; Ezek 40-48; Zech 12-14; Tob 13:9-17; 4:7; *Jub* 4:26; *T. Dan* 5:12; *Ps. Sol.* 11:7-8; *1 En.* 90:28-36. Lincoln suggests that the description of a newly created, glorified, and paradisiacal Jerusalem in Isa 65:17-25 comes closest to the later conception of a heavenly Jerusalem and likely served as the “starting-point” for such development.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Schlier, *Galater*, 221-24, who discerns a thematic progression from traditions focusing on the rebuilding of the earthly Jerusalem, to traditions developing the cosmic significance of this rebuilt Jerusalem, to traditions in which a heavenly Jerusalem replaces the earthly city (either as fulfillment or, in Christian texts, antithesis), to traditions involving the pre-existence of a heavenly Jerusalem. Significantly, *1 En.* 90:28-36 represents the only pre-Pauline text that Schlier can cite in these last two categories. See, too, the review of texts in John J. Collins, *Jerusalem and the Temple in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature of the Second Temple Period* (International Rennert Guest Lecture Series 1; Jerusalem: Ingeborg Rennert Center for Jerusalem Studies, 1998).

and temple.¹⁰² The idea of a pre-existent, heavenly Jerusalem that comes to earth in the eschaton accordingly does not appear until the late first / early second century C.E. Jewish apocalyptic works of *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch*, texts whose eschatological views may or may not reflect traditions that derive from before the Temple's destruction in 70 C.E.¹⁰³

Paul's terminology and his application of the concept further weaken the case for an apocalyptic background. By and large, Jewish apocalyptic texts do not use Paul's language of a "Jerusalem above." With a handful of late exceptions,¹⁰⁴ the closest match to Paul's actual terminology therefore comes from later rabbis who speak of a "Jerusalem that is from above" (ירושלם של מעלה) that serves as the prototype for the earthly city (e.g., *b. Ta'an.* 5a). As Lincoln notes, however, the earliest rabbinic accounts do not assign this heavenly city an eschatological role.¹⁰⁵ Lincoln also points out the novel way in which Paul conceives of the Jerusalem above. The opposition that Paul establishes

¹⁰² Adela Yarbro Collins, "The Dream of a New Jerusalem at Qumran," in *The Scrolls and Christian Origins* (ed. James H. Charlesworth; vol. 3 of *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls: The Second Princeton Symposium on Judaism and Christian Origins*; Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2006), 231-54. For the community as a new Jerusalem, see, e.g., *Pesher Isaiah*^d [4Q164] I 1-7. For the divine eschatological creation of a new Jerusalem, see *Temple Scroll* [11Q19] XXIX, 8-10; *Florilegium* [4Q174] I 1, 1-13; and *New Jerusalem*^b ar [4Q554] 2 II, 14-16; cf. *Jub.* 1:17.

¹⁰³ See *4 Ezra* 7:26-27, 8:52, 10:40-54, 13:36 and *2 Bar.* 4:1-6, 32:2-4. Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 66, e.g., specifically correlates Paul's "Jerusalem above" with the descending heavenly Jerusalem of *4 Ezra* 7:26.

¹⁰⁴ Christl M. Maier, "Psalm 87 as a Reappraisal of the Zion Tradition and Its Reception in Galatians 4:26," *CBQ* 69 (2007): 473-86, 485, notes that ἡ ἄνω Ἱερουσαλήμ appears in one manuscript (P) of *2 En.* 55:2, while ἡ ἄνω πόλις Ἱερουσαλήμ occurs in *Paraleipomena Jeremioi* 5:35. Hippolytus also uses ἡ ἄνω Ἱερουσαλήμ in recounting certain gnostic interpretations (*Refutatio omnium haeresium* 5.7.39; cf. 6.34.3). (On gnostic similarities to Paul's usage, see Schlier, *Galater*, 224-25.) All of these instances likely date from the second century C.E. or later.

¹⁰⁵ Lincoln, *Paradise*, 19. He observes that the rabbis often link the concept to Isa 49:16 (cf. *2 Bar.* 4:2).

between this heavenly Jerusalem and the present Jerusalem has no precedent; in Jewish apocalyptic works, the heavenly Jerusalem serves to assure the ultimate salvation of its earthly counterpart. Paul's portrayal even differs from the Qumranic conception of the community as the new Jerusalem since he identifies the Christian community not as the city itself but as its children.¹⁰⁶

The contemporary literary evidence thus hardly establishes “the Jerusalem above” as a widely accepted component of mid-first-century C.E. Jewish eschatological thought. Furthermore, even when the concept—usually not the terminology—does appear in later Jewish thought, it differs considerably from Paul's usage here.¹⁰⁷ Of course, Paul's unexplained reference to the heavenly city could itself constitute the otherwise missing evidence for the concept's early currency.¹⁰⁸ That he makes no effort to defend his position against the predominant first-century hope for a renewed earthly Jerusalem, however, suggests that his imagery does not actually derive from the apocalyptic framework that interpreters often assume as its background,¹⁰⁹ a background with which the gentile Galatians seem unlikely to have been very familiar anyway. The decision to

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 21.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Peter Söllner, *Jerusalem, die hochgebaute Stadt: Eschatologisches und Himmlisches Jerusalem im Frühjudentum und im frühen Christentum* (TANZ 25; Tübingen: Francke, 1998), 169: “Damit wird die Vorstellung vom »Himmlischen Jerusalem« von Paulus auf eine äußerst originäre Weise appliziert, die sich erheblich von allen bisherigen Rezeptionen der Tradition vom eschatologischen Jerusalem unterscheidet.”

¹⁰⁸ So, e.g., Lincoln, *Paradise*, 18.

¹⁰⁹ For an extensive argument against an eschatological background for “the Jerusalem above,” see Söllner, *Jerusalem*, 162-69. He concludes “Diese singuläre Aussage nun allerdings pauschal auf sämtliche Rezeptionen des eschatologischen bzw. »Himmlischen Jerusalem« zu übertragen, ist unzulässig” (166).

locate the city described in Isa 54:1 completely outside the historical, earthly plane therefore requires another explanation.¹¹⁰

Second, with the exception of the proposals that see the citation as primarily distinguishing two groups, these interpretations of the Isaianic citation all suffer from a larger problem. Scholars routinely observe that the second half of Paul's figurative explanation (4:26-27) omits any reference to Sarah or to a second *διαθήκη*. What they often fail to note is that the explanations of Isa 54:1 discussed above render the *διαθήκη* itself largely irrelevant to the perceived logic of the argument in 4:26-27. These interpretations accordingly have difficulty explaining Paul's identification of the two Abrahamic women as *διαθήκαι* in the first place. He presumably introduces the two *διαθήκαι* because they exclusively characterize—and thus differentiate in some fundamental way—the two groups he has in view. If the second *διαθήκη* plays no role in 4:26-27, however, then the argument does not establish the exclusivity of each *διαθήκη*'s “children” but rather presumes it, a presumption the agitators would surely challenge as an artificial and unwarranted division. Furthermore, since these interpretations find no

¹¹⁰ Mark Nanos suggests that the present/above contrast signals different perspectives: the Galatians must not view their situation from the worldly perspective (hence, “present”) that denies their Abrahamic status but instead view it from God's perspective (hence, “above”). See Mark D. Nanos, “What Does ‘Present Jerusalem’ (Gal 4:25) in Paul's Allegory Have to Do with the Jerusalem of Paul's Time, or the Concerns of the Galatians?” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Central States Region of the SBL, St. Louis, Mo., 28 March 2004), 9-10. Cited 14 March 2010. Online: <http://www.marknanos.com/Allegory-Web-Temp-5-2-04.pdf>. Nanos grounds this reading in Isaiah's offering of hope from “above” to those Israelites who were exiles in their “present.” Nothing in 4:24-27, however, indicates that Paul describes perspectives rather than distinct entities. This interpretation thus calls for a more nuanced, implicit understanding of the argument's relationship to the broader Isaianic context than seems likely in a highly polemical letter.

role in the rest of the argument for the Abrahamic (or new) διαθήκη, Paul would have introduced this problematical dynamic to no end, unless, that is, we identify his desire to associate the Sinaitic διαθήκη with Hagar as his motivation.¹¹¹ Such a reading, however, raises the question of why he would have bothered to link *both* women to a διαθήκη.

The presence of the two Jerusalems makes this last question even more pressing. The “present Jerusalem” / “Jerusalem above” contrast constitutes the only pairing in Paul’s explanation with both members explicitly mentioned. Furthermore, the two claims for which Paul provides an explicit defense—the alignment of the present Jerusalem with Hagar-Sinai (cf. γάρ, 4:25c) and the identification of the Jerusalem above as “our mother” (cf. γάρ, 4:27; see below)—each relate to one of the Jerusalems. Given this emphasis on the two Jerusalems, the respective enslaved and free status that Paul asserts for them would seem to make the cities natural parallels for the enslaved and free mothers of Abraham’s children. Why he instead links the women to διαθήκη therefore becomes a mystery in these interpretations. Indeed, this focus on the Jerusalems even undermines the establishment of a Hagar-Sinai connection as a potential motivation for the initial identification of the women as διαθήκη: since Paul presents the enslavements of Sinai and the present Jerusalem as parallel rather than causal (see §4.2.1.2), he could still have asserted the Hagar-Sinai connection even if he had identified the two mothers with the two Jerusalems.

¹¹¹ See, e.g., Cosgrove, “Law,” 224-25.

Interpreting the διαθήκαι not as covenants but as testaments resolves all of these difficulties by making the Abrahamic διαθήκη the key to understanding the relevance of Isa 54:1. In this reading, the crucial aspect of Isa 54:1 lies in its juxtaposition of one “who does not bear” and “who does not experience labor pains” with one who nevertheless has abundant children. This oxymoronic juxtaposition admits of only one resolution: the Jerusalem described in Isa 54:1 must receive her children through adoption.¹¹² The citation thus proves, as its mother-language would lead us to believe, that the Jerusalem above is “our” mother: she is “our” mother by virtue of “our” participation in the adoptive Abrahamic διαθήκη.¹¹³ Furthermore, by establishing a completely different criterion of citizenship than the acceptance of the Sinaitic διαθήκη that effectively determines Abrahamic descent in the present Jerusalem, this reading renders the Sinaitic διαθήκη irrelevant in the Jerusalem that Isa 54:1 describes. It thus establishes the necessary exclusivity of the Sinaitic and Abrahamic διαθήκαι.

This interpretation also accounts for the disjunction between “the *present* Jerusalem” and “the Jerusalem *above*,” a disjunction that, as previously noted, most interpreters attribute simply to the influence of Jewish apocalyptic thought. “Present Jerusalem” relates Abraham’s physical heirs to the present age; “Jerusalem above”

¹¹² Although I would not place too much weight on the point, it is perhaps significant for an adoptive reading that Paul consistently gaps γεννάω when referring to the free woman’s acquisition of children (4:23, 29; cf. 4:24/26).

¹¹³ Technically, adoption implies participation in the Abrahamic διαθήκη only if Paul has Jews in view since gentiles instead receive the Spirit of adoption through the Abrahamic promise. I will return to the consequences of this observation for Paul’s first-person language in §4.3.2.

stresses its citizens' heavenly sonship.¹¹⁴ More importantly, the juxtaposition of a chronological marker with a directional marker symbolizes the break that Paul seeks to create between the two: the Jerusalems do not represent versions of the same city at different points in time or space—as a contrast of, e.g., present and future Jerusalems would suggest—but distinct entities with distinct citizenries.¹¹⁵ In other words, the present/above contrast does not imply the eschatological nature of the Jerusalem above so much as it implies its transcendent nature.¹¹⁶ Accordingly, even if the language does resonate with Jewish apocalyptic thought, we need not assume the Galatians' familiarity with such an outlook in order for the disjunction to make sense to them in the context of Paul's argument.

Finally, I must address a potential objection. I argued extensively in §3.2 that the adoptive testament was a Greek institution based on the Athenian model. Athenian women, however, could not legally dispose of more than a μέδιμνος of property. As a result, since adoption affected the disposition of one's inheritance, Athenian law did not

¹¹⁴ Cf. Boer, "Quotation," 379: "the once barren, then fecund free woman . . . can be characterized as 'the Jerusalem above' (a heavenly Jerusalem) because her children have, 'like Isaac', been begotten through the divine promise, not 'according to the flesh'."

¹¹⁵ So, too, Maier, "Psalm 87," 485: "[Paul] does not designate a sequence of cities but expresses their simultaneity. For Paul, 'the Jerusalem above' is not a future reality but a present entity that represents a people different from the one that actually lives in the city." Cf. Söllner, *Jerusalem*, 163, 163 n. 494: "zwei streng disparate Größen . . . die in der Gegenwart synchron nebeneinander bestehen. . . . Es kann und darf in der paulischen Argumentation deshalb gerade nicht »zukünftiges Jerusalem« heißen." Contra Wagner, "Les enfants," 293, who suggests that Paul does not oppose the divine and human realms as eternally distinct entities but instead views the heavenly Jerusalem as coming to transform the earth through its children. Regardless of whether or not Wagner rightly perceives the ultimate role of the Jerusalem above, Paul's argument in 4:24-27 concerns delineation, not transformation.

¹¹⁶ Contra Lincoln, *Paradise*, 21, then, the passage does not emphasize Paul's realized eschatology.

allow women to adopt (Isaeus 10.10).¹¹⁷ Paul’s argument might therefore falter if it depends upon a woman’s ability to adopt. Fortunately, he does not present a woman as the adopter but a city—the Jerusalem above—and we have evidence that Athenians used adoption as a metaphor for the naturalization of citizens. In Demosthenes 46.15, Apollodorus argues that his father should not be allowed to make a διαθήκη since, as a naturalized citizen of Athens, his father had been adopted by the city (ἐπεποιήτο ὑπὸ τοῦ δήμου) and Solon’s law forbid an adopted person from adopting. Paul therefore stays within common legal conventions when he portrays the Jerusalem above as “our” adoptive mother.

The interpretation of the Abrahamic διαθήκη as an adoptive testament thus enables the implication of adoption in Isa 54:1 to prove that the Jerusalem above is “our” mother. As a result, this reading not only renders the citation relevant to Paul’s argument, but it also creates this relevance in a way that accounts for the introduction of the διαθήκαι in the first place. It explains the otherwise awkward “present Jerusalem” / “Jerusalem above” contrast as well. Finally, because this analysis requires understanding the Abrahamic διαθήκη as an adoptive testament, it indicates that the corresponding Sinaitic διαθήκη should similarly be understood in a testamentary sense, a conclusion that confirms the indications discussed in §4.2.1 above. As the initial focus on Abraham’s having two sons suggests, the argument therefore essentially contrasts two means of

¹¹⁷ Rubinstein, *IV. Century Athens*, 16.

establishing Abrahamic descent. This observation then leads to an additional indicator of a testamentary reading, a consideration of the typological nature of Paul's argument.

4.2.3 "These women are . . . διαθήκαι": The typological nature of a testamentary reading in Gal 4:24-27

A further piece of evidence suggesting that this passage uses διαθήκαι in the sense of "testaments" relates to a much debated question: does Paul's claim in 4:24 that "these women are διαθήκαι" establish an allegorical or a typological connection?¹¹⁸ As I hope to show, a covenantal reading of the διαθήκαι produces an "allegorical" interpretation of the women that the agitators could refute simply by denying the

¹¹⁸ For interpreters who label these connections typological, see Chrysostom, *Galatas commentarius* (PG 61.662.20-21); Theodoret, *Commentarius*, 354; Bruce, *Galatians*, 217; Leonhard Goppelt, *TYPOS: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New* (trans. Donald H. Madvig; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 139-40 (with the exception of 4:25a); Hanson, *Studies*, 161; Oepke, *Galater*, 148; Bligh, *Galatians*, 392-95; Bonnard, "Galates," 96-97; Lagrange, *Galates*, 123-24; Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 180; Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 206-8. For strictly allegorical connections in 4:24-27, see R. P. C. Hanson, *Allegory and Event: A Study of the Sources and Significance of Origen's Interpretation of Scripture* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 80-83; Vouga, *Galater*, 115; Witherington, *Grace*, 326-28; Hansen, *Galatians*, 142; Dunn, *Galatians*, 247-48; Matera, *Galatians*, 175; Koch, *Schrift*, 209-11; Betz, *Galatians*, 243; Schlier, *Galater*, 218-19; K. J. Woollcombe, "The Biblical Origins and Patristic Development of Typology," in *Essays on Typology* (eds. G. W. H. Lampe and K. J. Woollcombe; London: SCM, 1957), 39-75, 52-54; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 208-9. On the further distinction of whether Paul's argument more closely reflects Palestinian/rabbinic or Alexandrian/Hellenistic allegory, see, e.g., Hanson, *Allegory*, 81-83; Curtis D. McClane, "The Hellenistic Background to the Pauline Allegorical Method in Galatians 4:21-31," *ResQ* 40 (1998): 125-35, 126-31; Édouard Cothenet, "À l'arrière-plan de l'allégorie d'Agar et de Sara (Ga 4,21-31)," in *De la Tora au Messie: Études d'exégèse et d'herméneutique bibliques offertes à Henri Cazelles pour ses 25 années d'enseignement à l'Institut catholique de Paris (octobre 1979)* (Paris: Desclée, 1981), 457-65; Woollcombe, "Biblical Origins," 50-54. For the explicit suggestion that 4:24-27 involves elements of both allegory and typology, see Daniel Gerber, "Ga 4,21-31 ou l'indéfissable méthode?," in *Typologie biblique: De quelques figures vives* (LD; Paris: Cerf, 2002), 165-76, 174-76; Bouwman, "Hagar," 3144; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 319-20; Luz, "Bund," 320; Patrick G. Barker, "Allegory and Typology in Galatians 4:21-31," *SVTQ* 38 (1994): 193-209, 208-9.

arbitrarily asserted connections.¹¹⁹ In contrast, a testamentary reading of the διαθῆκαι produces a “typological” interpretation that establishes the dynamics in Abraham’s original family as a precedent for Paul’s current understanding of Abrahamic descent. That the testamentary reading produces a more coherent and compelling argument then favors this understanding of the διαθῆκαι.

Given the varied ways in which interpreters understand “allegory” and “typology,” I should begin by defining these two terms. The former presents little trouble. Two Greek rhetoricians roughly contemporary to Paul—Tryphon and Heraclitus—respectively define ἀλληγορία as “an enunciation which while signifying one thing literally, brings forth the thought of something else” (*De tropis* 1.1) and as a “trope that says one thing but signifies another” (*Homeric Problems* 5.2).¹²⁰ The first century C.E. Roman rhetorician Quintilian similarly defines allegory as a trope that “either presents one thing in words and another in meaning, or else something absolutely opposed to the meaning of the words” (*Institutio Oratoria* 8.6.44 [Butler, LCL]). Quintilian’s explanation of these two possibilities interprets the first primarily as extended metaphor

¹¹⁹ In an argumentative context where the agitators could counter his reading, I find it unlikely that Paul would rely on a “disposition of trust towards the readers . . . , that the Galatian churches would accept Paul as a faithful interpreter of Scripture” (Jeremy Punt, “Revealing Rereading: Part 2: Paul and the Wives of the Father of Faith in Galatians 4:21-5:1,” *Neot* 40 (2006): 101-18, 103). Cf. Fowl, “Abraham’s Story,” 79, 90-95, who notes the problem but suggests that the autobiographical material in Gal 1-2 seeks to establish Paul’s credentials as a faithful interpreter.

¹²⁰ Tryphon: Ἀλληγορία ἐστὶ φράσις ἕτερον μὲν τι κυρίως δηλοῦσα, ἑτέρου δὲ ἔννοιαν παριστῶσα. Heraclitus: Ὁ γὰρ ἄλλα μὲν ἀγορεύων τρόπος, ἕτερα δὲ ὧν λέγει σημαίνων, ἐπωνύμως ἀλληγορία καλεῖται. On the Greek evidence, see Di Mattei, “Allegory,” 105-6, who provides the translations above.

(8.6.44-53; cf. Heraclitus, *Hom. Probl.* 5.1-16), the second as sarcasm/irony/mockery (8.6.54-59).¹²¹ As these explanations suggest, ancient authors tended to identify the non-literal nature of allegory more broadly than modern readers do. Philo, for instance, argues that Moses speaks allegorically (ἀλληγορεῖν) when commanding the Israelites to “walk after the Lord your God” (Deut 13:4) since the command to “walk” refers to following the Lord’s precepts and not to the literal moving of one’s legs (*Migr.* 131).

Scholars therefore have a fairly good grasp on the nature of “allegory” in the first century. We cannot say the same, however, for “typology.” Although biblical authors occasionally identify certain OT entities as “types” (τύποι) of NT realities (1 Cor 10:6, 11; Rom 5:14; 1 Pet 3:21; cf. Heb 8:5, 9:24), they never explicitly define the hermeneutical understanding that this term implies. The task of determining how the “signification of something other” inherent in typology limits or differs from the seemingly equivalent practice in allegory therefore falls to later interpreters. As a result, “typology” has largely become a kind of theological Rorschach test, with scholars often defining it in accordance with their own views of proper OT interpretation so that it

¹²¹ In Quintilian’s terms, the Abrahamic story would constitute a “pure” allegory—contra Witherington, *Grace*, 323, and Brawley, “Contextuality,” 111 n. 45, who instead identify Gal 4:21-5:1 itself(!) as “mixed” allegory—since nothing in the Genesis account suggests that its portrayal of Sarah and Hagar actually refers to two διαθήκαι. Witherington’s secondary suggestion that the “counter-intuitive” nature of Paul’s identifications might qualify the allegory under Quintilian’s second category (323 n. 4) seems to misunderstand the nature of the category, as does the confused analysis in Anne Davis, “Allegorically Speaking in Galatians 4:21-5:1,” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 14 (2004): 161-74.

becomes an “acceptable” counterpart to the “unacceptable” practice of allegory.¹²²

Richard Davidson accordingly observes that,

Despite the prodigious amount of literature on the subject of biblical typology that has appeared in previous centuries, and particularly in recent decades, still almost every area of typological interpretation is as yet unsettled. . . . These include such aspects as terminology, definition, characteristics, relation to other modes of expression in Scripture, origin, scope, and contemporary relevance.¹²³

In other words, nearly every aspect of typology remains in dispute.

In light of this situation, one might question the wisdom of continuing to use the word “typology.”¹²⁴ Nevertheless, I retain it here for two reasons. First, my primary interest lies in determining whether Paul’s audience would likely perceive his figurative connections in 4:24-27 as arbitrary and easily refutable or as reasonable and potentially

¹²² E.g., Gerhard von Rad, “Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament,” trans. John Bright, *Int* 15 (1961): 174-92, 192, understands the OT primarily as a “witness to the creative word of God in history” wherein each divine act becomes the promise of an even greater eschatological fulfillment. He accordingly argues that only “the divine event” can constitute a true type (190), a view that would seem to contradict Paul’s identification of Adam as a type of the Coming One in Rom 5:14. Or again, Goppelt, *TYPOS*, 202, suggests that, for Christians, the OT’s significance lies in “its description of man’s relationship to God.” This “nature of the subject matter” then gives rise to the fundamental typological principle that “Persons, events, and institutions are interpreted only insofar as they express some aspect of man’s relationship to God.” Similarly, since “Christ alone is the fulfillment of this relationship to God . . . all typology proceeds through Christ and exists in him.”

¹²³ Richard M. Davidson, *Typology in Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutical ΤΥΠΟΣ Structures* (Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series 2; Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1981), 112-13. See his review of the literature on pp. 15-110. For a review of more recent literature confirming the same trends, see Peter W. Martens, “Revisiting the Allegory/Typology Distinction: The Case of Origen,” *J ECS* 16 (2008): 283-317, 285-96. Recognizing that much of this confusion results from the imposition of *a priori* definitions, Davidson himself seeks to define typology inductively by examining the six NT passages that use τύπος and its cognates as hermeneutical terms (113). While this method provides a helpful corrective, it also has limitations: the preceding debates set the agenda for Davidson’s investigation, not to mention that inductive analyses, especially conducted over so few instances, ultimately cannot distinguish the essential from the accidental.

¹²⁴ So, e.g., Martens, “Revisiting,” 315.

compelling. Since at least as far back as Chrysostom’s claim that 4:24 “misapplies” ἀλληγορέω to a type,¹²⁵ a significant strand of biblical interpreters has identified typology as the more reasonable alternative—however “more reasonable” was understood—to allegory, a trend that has grown especially pronounced in the last century. Both a lengthy historical precedent and current scholarly discussions therefore identify the very options I seek to investigate as “allegory” and “typology,” respectively.

Second, and more importantly, this historical characterization seems to have merit. To be sure, we cannot maintain an absolute distinction between typology and allegory: since typology involves the “speaking” (ἀγορεύω) of something “other” (ἄλλος) inherent in the etymology of ἀλληγορία, it must represent a particular kind of allegory.¹²⁶ We could accordingly distinguish more accurately between typological allegory and non-typological allegory, although constantly maintaining this level of clarity can become cumbersome. Regardless of how we choose to label this distinction, however, I suggest that two aspects commonly advanced as its basis—namely, the 1) historical and 2) substantial nature of typological connections—together lead to the perception of a more reasonable and, accordingly, potentially more persuasive argument. I will discuss each of these aspects in turn but note here that the grounding of the latter

¹²⁵ Chrysostom, *Galatas commentarius* (PG 61.662.20-21): Καταχρηστικῶς τὸν τύπον ἀλληγορίαν ἐκάλεσεν.

¹²⁶ See James Barr, *Old and New in Interpretation: A Study of Two Testaments* (London: SCM, 1966), 105-15. Cf. Di Mattei, “Allegory,” 113, who rightly notes that allegory consists simply of the “this-said-for-that” principle without regard for the comparison’s basis or the purpose it serves.

aspect in the etymology of τύπος (see below) constitutes the second major reason for retaining the language of “typology.”

First, as commonly defined, typology seeks to make analogical connections *within the framework of history*.¹²⁷ Richard Hays, e.g., characterizes typology as “nothing other than a particular type of allegory, in which the latent sense of a narrative is to be found in later events rather than in ‘higher’ spiritual concepts.”¹²⁸ I would only demur that we need not restrict the latent sense to “events” alone and that the interpreted narrative also needs to be historical in nature. (Since both Paul and his audience seem to accept the historicity of the Abrahamic account in Genesis, I will not distinguish here between history as a genre and history as fact.¹²⁹) In other words, typology represents a form of allegory that differs from (most) non-typological allegories in that it seeks the significance of a historical text in the “resultant system”—to use James Barr’s terminology—of subsequent history, as opposed to the systems of, e.g., Hellenistic philosophy or Christian theology.¹³⁰ This historical framework then renders typology less arbitrary than other forms of allegory because typology seeks the extended significance of the biblical narratives within the same system that the narratives themselves

¹²⁷ E.g., Woollcombe, “Biblical Origins,” 40: “Typological exegesis is the search for linkages between events, persons or things *within the historical framework of revelation*, whereas allegorism is the search for a secondary and hidden meaning underlying the primary and obvious meaning of a narrative” (emphasis original).

¹²⁸ Hays, “Galatians,” 301 n. 224.

¹²⁹ Davidson, *Typology*, 96, notes that modern skepticism about the historical reliability of the OT raises questions as to the necessity of a type’s actual historicity.

¹³⁰ Barr, *Old and New*, 108.

presuppose.¹³¹ That is to say, typology grounds its connections in the straightforward presentation of the biblical texts as historical narratives. Non-historical allegories, in contrast, render this surface presentation irrelevant. While this irrelevance makes such allegories potentially helpful for explaining away ethically or historically dubious narratives in the sacred texts, it also exposes the resulting interpretations to charges of arbitrariness.¹³²

Of course, connections proposed within a historical framework can still appear arbitrary. The second key distinction of typology—a distinction related to the etymology of the term—accordingly emphasizes the nature of the historical connection. Derived from τύπτω (“to strike”), τύπος focuses on the form that a blow imposes. This basic idea then gives rise to a remarkably wide semantic range covering everything from hollow molds to stamps/seals to engraved letters to literary outlines.¹³³ Davidson notes,

¹³¹ See the related discussion of “homogeneous and heterogeneous resultant systems” in *Ibid.*, 115-17.

¹³² Philo’s allegorical interpretations illustrate this point well. For Philo, the biblical narratives reveal philosophical truths. Nevertheless, as Irmgard Christiansen, *Die Technik der allegorischen Auslegungswissenschaft bei Philon von Alexandrien* (Beiträge zur Geschichte der biblischen Hermeneutik 7; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1969), 27, has shown, he does not propose his philosophical connections arbitrarily but rather grounds them in logic, always providing reasons for the associations he proposes. He can even justify his choice of a philosophical framework based on his belief that Moses, having been shown the true nature of all things by God, expressed this knowledge in the scriptures in such a way that allegorical interpretation would lead those who love and seek God to a similar understanding (Christiansen, *Technik*, 170-71; see, e.g., Philo, *Opif.* 8). For anyone who does not share this understanding of the biblical text, however, Philo’s imposition of a philosophical framework will always make his proposed connections appear somewhat arbitrary, no matter how well justified they might appear within that framework. To refute such an interpretation one would need only to reassert the sufficiency of the text’s surface presentation as a historical narrative.

¹³³ For the semantic range of τύπος, see Davidson, *Typology*, 116-28; Leonhard Goppelt, “τύπος, ἀντίτυπος, τυπικός, ὑποτύωσις,” *TDNT* 8:246-59, 246-47.

however, that, despite this wide range, the term's various meanings all reflect its etymological origin in one of three ways, signifying either 1) a formative entity or pattern (*Vorbild*); 2) a formed impression or copy (*Nachbild*); or 3) a formative entity that has itself been formed, i.e., τύπος can signify both directions at once (*nachbildliches Vorbild*).¹³⁴ As a hermeneutical method, then, typology emphasizes the real and substantial correspondence—whether synonymous (1 Cor 10:6, 11) or inverse (Rom 5:14)—between a type and its antitype.¹³⁵

To summarize, typology thus defined constitutes a form of allegory that identifies clear and unambiguous correspondences within a historical framework. As a result, it avoids both the imposition of a foreign interpretive framework and/or the identification of superficial connections that would subject a non-typological allegory to charges of arbitrariness. Determining whether or not this definition fully captures the essence of

¹³⁴ Davidson, *Typology*, 128-32. As examples of the *nachbildliches Vorbild* sense, he points to the image of heavenly tabernacle in Moses' mind that then becomes the pattern for the earthly tabernacle (130-31) and to Paul, who calls upon believers to imitate him as he imitates Christ (153-57).

¹³⁵ Davidson accordingly argues that, although biblical typology does establish links based on specific details, it does not invoke "trivial and extraneous" ones (Ibid., 422). Cf. Woollcombe, "Biblical Origins," 75, who argues that in biblical typology and in the writings of the Church Fathers who follow the biblical model, "the identity between the type and antitype must be real and intelligible." Goppelt, *TDNT* 8:256, similarly captures this sense when he suggests that true biblical types are not "concealed descriptions of what has now been manifested" but rather "point beyond themselves to something definitive." (He makes this point to argue that the typology on display in *Barn.* 7:3, 6-11; 8:1-7; 12:2-3, 4-6; and 13:5, has undergone a "fundamental change.") With respect to the ancient world, Origen illustrates this concern for an appropriate degree of correspondence when he denies that the Paschal lamb serves as a τύπος of Christ's passion on the grounds that the saints sacrifice the lamb whereas the lawless and sinners crucified Christ (*De pascha* 12-13). Martens, "Revisiting," 309-10, points to this passage in identifying "similitude" as a criterion by which Origen distinguishes acceptable from unacceptable—significantly, not typological from allegorical—non-literal readings.

biblical typology lies beyond the scope of this chapter:¹³⁶ my argument ultimately focuses not on determining the full scope of the term “typology” but on identifying the components of a figurative argument that would produce a potentially compelling case in the context of a dispute. Indeed, given that τύπος and its cognates never appear in Galatians, the practical implications of the designation matter much more for my argument than the designation itself.

Since Paul would surely have recognized the problems inherent in trying to persuade his audience through a non-typological appeal,¹³⁷ we might expect his comparison to take a more typological form. Interpreters, however, have often argued otherwise, not least because of the opening claim in 4:24a: “these things are ἀλληγορούμενα.” LSJ defines ἀλληγορέω, which occurs only here in the LXX and NT, as “interpret allegorically” or, when used absolutely, “speak figuratively or metaphorically; speak allegorically.”¹³⁸ Many scholars therefore conclude that Paul’s use of ἀλληγορέω intentionally invokes an allegorical—as opposed to typological—

¹³⁶ E.g., the common assumption that typology represents a peculiarly Christian endeavor—so Davidson, *Typology*, 18: “It is generally agreed that as a hermeneutical approach typology does not occur at all in the non-biblical sphere of the Graeco-Roman world”; cf. Goppelt, *TDNT*, 8:253—often leads to Christian-centric definitions that identify such elements as divine intent, a christological focus, eschatological intensification, and/or a salvation historical framework as essential components. This chapter makes no judgments as to whether or not biblical typology necessarily includes such components.

¹³⁷ Appealing to ps.-Demetrius, Betz, *Galatians*, 240, tries to compensate for the apparent weakness of Paul’s argument by suggesting that allegory’s indirect nature makes it more forceful and allows listeners to discover the truth for themselves. Unconvincing identifications, however, would undermine even these potential positives.

¹³⁸ LSJ, “ἀλληγορέω,” 69. See, too, BDAG, “ἀλληγορέω,” 46: “to use analogy or likeness to express someth., *speak allegorically*” (italics original). Cf. Friedrich Büchsel, “ἀλληγορέω,” *TDNT* 1:260-63, 260.

argument. Such a conclusion, however, requires the kind of absolute distinction between typology and allegory that I have already argued cannot stand: as a verb denoting the “speaking” (ἀγορεύω) of something “other” (ἄλλος), ἀλληγορέω naturally encompasses both typological and non-typological allegory. Accordingly, although Paul admittedly does not identify the women as “types” (τύποι; cf. 1 Cor 10:6, 11; Rom 5:14), his use of ἀλληγορέω does not eliminate the possibility of a typological argument.

An additional consideration further undermines the suggestion that ἀλληγορέω must signify a non-typological argument. Galatians 4:24a claims that “these things” (ἅτινα) are ἀλληγορούμενα. Especially when contrasted with the specifically feminine αὐταί in 4:24b, the neuter form of ἅτινα suggests that “these things” include both the slave-free contrast of the mothers (4:22) and the immediately preceding flesh-promise contrast of the sons’ births (4:23).¹³⁹ As the “just as then . . . so also now” (ὥσπερ τότε . . . οὕτως καὶ νῦν) construction in 4:29 indicates, however, Paul clearly applies the flesh/promise contrast in a more typological manner: Abraham’s original two sons anticipate—both in the nature of their births and in their persecutory relationship—the two kinds of Abrahamic sons discussed in 4:28-29.¹⁴⁰ Paul’s use of ἀλληγορέω thus

¹³⁹ So, e.g., Di Mattei, “Allegory,” 110-11; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 208; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 319.

¹⁴⁰ See, e.g., Vouga, *Galater*, 115; Hansen, *Galatians*, 142; Alain Gignac, “Lorsque Paul «raconte» Abraham, Agar et l’autre femme: Narrativité et intertextualité en Ga 4,21-5,1,” in *Analyse narrative et Bible: deuxième colloque international du RRENAB, Louvain-la-Neuve, avril 2004* (BETL 191; Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 463-80, 466; Dunn, *Galatians*, 244, 256; Betz, *Galatians*, 239, 243, 248-49, all of whom view 4:24-27 as allegory but 4:28-30/31 as typology. Cf. Perriman, “Rhetorical Strategy,” 31-32.

seems to include typology regardless of our interpretation of the διαθῆκαι in 4:24-27. The lexical evidence alone therefore cannot determine the nature of Paul's argument; we must look to the argument itself.

Deciding whether or not Paul's allegory consists of historical connections constitutes a first step in this process. In this regard, Di Mattei argues emphatically that 4:24-27 makes rhetorical connections rather than the historical ones required by typology. He grounds this assessment in the view that Paul's main identifications rest on a wordplay involving the name "Hagar" and the verbal/thematic ties linking Sarah to Isa 54:1,¹⁴¹ positions whose problems I have already discussed above (§4.2.1). He also, however, notes the significance of ἀλληγορούμενα for this determination, a matter that deserves further discussion.

As noted above, the verb ἀλληγορέω itself can mean either "speak allegorically" or "interpret allegorically." For Di Mattei, the secondary nature and relative rarity of ἀλληγορέω's "interpret" nuance make it unfathomable that Paul would mean anything other than "these things are spoken allegorically."¹⁴² In particular, he points to the frequent and unvarying use of ἀλληγορέω to mean "speak allegorically" in Heraclitus' *Homeric Problems*—a relatively short work whose twenty-six instances of ἀλληγορέω constitute approximately a third of the extant instances from before the second century

¹⁴¹ Di Mattei, "Allegory," 113-14.

¹⁴² Ibid., 107.

C.E.—as providing the best guide to the usage of the term in antiquity.¹⁴³ This interpretation then focuses attention on scripture as the medium through which these things are spoken, a textual emphasis that supports Di Mattei’s claims of a rhetorically-based argument. He even suggests that commentators who instead understand ἀλληγορούμενα as indicating the figurative *interpretation* of scripture “inescapably reveal [their] typological presuppositions . . . [and] hermeneutical prejudices.”¹⁴⁴ In other words, interpreters who acknowledge the argument’s scriptural basis have no reason to forego the nuance of ἀλληγορέω that emphasizes the textual nature of scripture, other than the typological need to posit a historical connection.

While Di Mattei rightly highlights the problematical nature for typology of a textually-based scriptural argument,¹⁴⁵ his case for an interpretation of ἀλληγορούμενα that emphasizes this textual nature proves less compelling. I first note that, as definitions of ἀλληγορέω, “interpret allegorically” differs from “speak allegorically” in that the

¹⁴³ Ibid. See Heraclitus, *Homeric Problems* T.1; 1.1; 5.5, 10, 12; 6.2; 13.5; 15.2; 22.1; 23.2; 24.2, 5, 8; 29.4; 41.5, 12; 42.1; 43.1; 59.1; 60.1; 61.3; 68.2; 69.12; 70.1, 11, 13. Given that Di Mattei identifies the length of *Homeric Problems* as 87 pages (107 n. 21), he mistakenly identifies the frequency of ἀλληγορέω in Heraclitus as “three times per page” (107) when it should be one instance every three pages. His comparison of this frequency with the term’s frequency in Philo (“once every 92 pages”) is also somewhat misleading since his page count covers the entire Philonic corpus. More importantly, it remains unclear exactly why we should expect the greater density of instances in Heraclitus’ treatise to produce a more “accurate” gauge of the word’s usage.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 107 n. 22.

¹⁴⁵ See, too, Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 320, who contends that Paul’s use of γέγραπται to introduce his Abrahamic summary in 4:22-23 emphasizes the argument’s textual nature and thus argues against a typological interpretation. Bouwman, “Hagar,” 3144, reaches the same conclusion on the grounds that the neuter ἄτινα focuses attention on the women as textual entities rather than as people (cf. Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 320 n. 20), but the neuter form need signify nothing more than that the pronoun encompasses the nature of their sons’ births (treated in 4:28-29) as well as the women themselves (treated in 4:24-27).

former identifies an additional meaning of the verb's pre-existing object whereas the latter has the production of the verb's object (and, thus, its original meaning) in view. In active constructions with a textual object, then, ἀλληγορέω appears with the sense of “interpreting” whenever the verb's subject is neither the allegorical text's author nor a personification of the allegorical text itself.¹⁴⁶ It accordingly has this sense in fifteen of Philo's twenty-five instances, hardly a “rather slim” percentage.¹⁴⁷ Plutarch similarly uses ἀλληγορέω in this way, as, e.g., in *De Iside et Osiride* 363D: “Greeks allegorically interpret Chronos as time and Hera as air” (Ἕλληνες Κρόνον ἀλληγοροῦσι τὸν χρόνον, Ἥραν δὲ τὸν ἄερα; cf. 362B). Furthermore, this contextual distinction in the meanings of ἀλληγορέω explains why a work such as *Homeric Problems* always uses the verb in the the sense “speak allegorically”: since Heraclitus expressly writes to defend Homer from the charges that his poems portray the gods with great impiety,¹⁴⁸ he must

¹⁴⁶ Since a text always “speaks” in the present, it can be viewed as constantly “producing” its content.

¹⁴⁷ For “rather slim,” see Di Mattei, “Allegory,” 107. He reaches his conclusion by suggesting that the ten instances where a participial instance of ἀλληγορέω modifies an external reader of the text (e.g., *Somn.* 2.207: ἀλληγοροῦντές φαμεν, “interpreting allegorically, we say”) could be read as “speaking allegorically” even though the “meaning clearly expresses that Philo is *interpreting* allegorically” (emphasis original, 107 n. 20). The ten instances are found in *Abr* 99; *Agr.* 27, 157; *Contempl.* 28; *Leg.* 3.60; *Migr.* 205; *Mut.* 67; *Somn.* 2.31, 207; *Spec.* 1.269. To this list we can add *Decal.* 101; *Leg.* 3.4, 238; *Post.* 51; *Spec.* 2.29, all of which clearly indicate “interpret.” Note that Di Mattei identifies twenty-six instances in Philo, but the twenty-sixth instance in TLG comes from a citation of Eusebius that introduces part of Philo's *Hypothetica*.

¹⁴⁸ The treatise opens with the claim, “It is a weighty and damaging charge that heaven brings against Homer for his disrespect for the divine. If he spoke nothing allegorically [εἰ μηδὲν ἠλληγορήσεν], he was impious through and through, and sacrilegious fables, loaded with blasphemous folly, run riot through both epics” (1.1). Translation modified from Heraclitus, *Homeric Problems* (trans. David Konstan and Donald A. Russell; Writings from the Greco-Roman World 14; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 3.

attribute the poems' proposed allegorical meanings to their original author. "Interpret allegorically" therefore constitutes an amply-attested, contextually-determined meaning of ἀλληγορέω whose relative infrequency does not invalidate it as a viable option for the verb's meaning in Gal 4:24.¹⁴⁹

Of course, Gal 4:24 involves a passive construction that leaves the "allegorizer" unspecified, so the particular contextual distinction identified above provides little guidance as to the verb's correct nuance. Nevertheless, other contextual factors do enable a reasonable assessment. The claim that an author "speaks allegorically," for instance, typically re-interprets the designated text so that the allegorical meaning replaces the literal. Thus, Heraclitus argues that the Homeric descriptions of, e.g., Apollo's capricious and deadly wrath truly portray the natural disaster of plague *and not* the actions of the god (*Hom. Probl.* 6.5). In other words, he seeks to show that the poet does not actually mean what he literally writes. Philo similarly understands the allegorical meaning to supplant the literal in at least four of the five instances where he identifies Moses as the subject of ἀλληγορέω.¹⁵⁰ Even *Ebr.* 99, the one possible exception, regards Exod 32:17-19 as thoroughly allegorical; the potential discrepancy arises only in light of the apparently historical treatment of the larger Golden Calf episode in *Mos.* 2.161-166.

¹⁴⁹ On the clear distinction between "interpret allegorically" and "speak allegorically," see Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory*, 152-55. He notes that ancient rhetorical handbooks only discuss speaking allegorically.

¹⁵⁰ *Leg.* 2.5, 10 both pertain to the creating of a helpmate for Adam, an episode that, as part of the primeval history, Philo sees as non-historical (cf. *Opif.* 154, 157). *Somn.* 1.67 and *Migr.* 131 invoke allegorical interpretations to explain difficulties in the literal text. Cf. Demetrius, *De elocutione* 151, 285; Strabo, *Geographica* 1.2.7; Josephus, *A.J.* 1.24.

In Paul’s case, this kind of re-interpretation would suggest that Genesis actually describes two διαθήκαι *instead of* two women, a possibility that the presumption of the Abrahamic account’s historicity throughout Gal 3-4 renders untenable.¹⁵¹ Furthermore, Paul provides no indication—such as a καί—that would suggest to his audience that Moses (the presumed author) simultaneously speaks both literally and allegorically here. It therefore seems highly unlikely that Paul intends ἄτινά ἐστιν ἀλληγορούμενα in the sense, “these things are spoken allegorically [by Moses].”

Accordingly, for Gal 4:24 to employ ἀλληγορέω in the sense of “speak allegorically,” the implied “speaker” would have to be 1) a personification of the biblical text (cf. 3:8, 22; 4:30) that 2) functions independently of its original (human) author.¹⁵² The first criterion would make “speak” the appropriate nuance; the second would allow the literal sense of the text to stand alongside the allegorical. The “speaking” of “scripture” would thus apply rather than re-interpret the literal meaning of the Genesis account. Although this explanation nicely fits the logical requirements of Paul’s argument, it—as well as any other interpretation emphasizing the scriptural text—nevertheless has a fundamental problem: the introductory γέγραπται in 4:22

¹⁵¹ Contra, e.g., Esler, *Galatians*, 212-13, who suggests that Paul identifies the allegorical interpretation as the “real meaning” of the Sarah-Hagar accounts. Cf. Sellin, “Hagar,” 67: “„allegorisch geredet” . . . im (rhetorischen) Sinne der Verschlüsselung bei der Textproduktion.” Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory*, 156, concludes that ἀλληγορούμενα means “is spoken allegorically” largely because Paul does not specify an interpreter—I will address this objection in the main text above—but remains somewhat perplexed as to how Paul would envision the text to have been spoken allegorically. Anderson ultimately concludes that 4:21-5:1 engages in an emotional, sarcastic reading of the Genesis account.

¹⁵² So, e.g., Burton, *Galatians*, 253. Cf. Di Mattei, “Allegory,” 109.

notwithstanding, Paul's scriptures do not actually "speak" the crucial contrasts that he lays out in 4:22-23.¹⁵³

The OT nowhere describes Sarah, e.g., as "the free woman" (ἡ ἐλευθέρα, 4:22-23), the designation that enables her connection to the free Jerusalem above in 4:26-27. The scriptures similarly never characterize Ishmael as the son "born according to flesh" (κατὰ σάρκα γεγέννηται, 4:23) or Isaac as the son born "through a promise" (δι' ἐπαγγελίας, 4:23), let alone as the one born "according to Spirit" (κατὰ πνεῦμα, 4:29). Ishmael's "persecution" (ἐδίωκεν) of Isaac that Paul parallels with the present situation in 4:30 represents yet another Pauline gloss. Even the wording of the textual citations in 4:27 and 4:30 has at most only a secondary importance: these citations do not make their points through word plays or textual connections such as *gezerah shawah* but through the events they describe (a barren woman who nevertheless receives many children, Isa 54:1) and the principles they establish (Abrahamic children by the slave woman do not inherit, Gen 21:10). The correlations between past and present that Paul draws in 4:21-31 therefore depend not on the specific wording of scripture but on the underlying situation those scriptural words portray. That is to say, Paul applies ἀλληγορούμενα to the history recorded in scripture rather than to the scriptural text that records that history.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ Cf. Hays, *Echoes*, 113; Esler, *Galatians*, 211; Elizabeth A. Castelli, "Allegories of Hagar: Reading Galatians 4.21-31 with Postmodern Feminist Eyes," in *The New Literary Criticism and the New Testament* (eds. Edgar V. McKnight and Elizabeth Struthers Malbon; Valley Forge, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 1994), 228-50, 232; Gerber, "Ga 4.21-31," 169-70, 174, who all emphasize that Paul's summary in 4:22-23 already involves a particular interpretation of the biblical account.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Perriman, "Rhetorical Strategy," 34: "the 'allegory' . . . belongs not so much to the original narrative as to [Paul's] restatement of it." Perriman, however, suggests that Paul's changes emphasize the

Since ἀλληγορούμενα therefore seems unlikely to indicate that these things “are being spoken allegorically” by scripture, it must indicate that they “are being interpreted allegorically.”¹⁵⁵ Who, then, does the interpreting?¹⁵⁶ Obviously, Paul proposes the interpretation. The passive construction, however, de-emphasizes his role, thereby implying—modern notions of the social construction of reality notwithstanding—that he does not create the proposed connections so much as he highlights a pattern intrinsic to the general unfolding of current events. In other words, the Galatians find themselves in the midst of circumstances that reveal a figurative significance to Abraham’s two sons and their mothers. The argument thus ultimately does not appeal to Paul’s authority as an interpreter of scripture and history, an argumentative ground that the agitators could refute simply by denying that the passage has an allegorical significance. Instead, it appeals to the assumedly self-evident nature of the connections Paul proposes. This suggestion fits well both with the aspectual sense of the participle’s present tense and with the “just as then . . . so also now” (ὡσπερ τότε . . . οὕτως καὶ νῦν) dynamic

account’s purported covenantal significance by “[shifting] away from the historical towards the abstract and supratemporal.”

¹⁵⁵ So, e.g., Longenecker, *Galatians*, 208-10.

¹⁵⁶ Longenecker proposes the Judaizers, Paul, or both as the implied allegorical interpreters (Ibid., 210). The Judaizers, however, would have no need to allegorize the passage since the straightforward reading of Genesis would seem to support their case. For the problems with Paul as the implied interpreter, see the main text above.

explicitly introduced in 4:29.¹⁵⁷ It also further supports the thoroughly historical nature of Paul's proposed associations.

Paul's argument thus fits the first criterion of typology: it establishes connections within the framework of history. The case for his identification of the women as διαθήκαι in 4:24 as a potentially compelling, typological claim therefore rests on the presumed nature of the διαθήκαι. A covenantal reading offers little to justify their identification with the two women. Paul does draw parallels between the enslaved and free offspring, but these parallels alone hardly constitute the kind of intrinsic, substantial association necessary for a true typological identification. Martyn effectively alleviates the arbitrariness of the connection by presuming that the two διαθήκαι represent covenants made with the two women. As Martyn himself notes, however, this interpretation raises another problem: while Paul could perhaps associate the Abrahamic

¹⁵⁷ Burton, *Galatians*, 255-56, helpfully analyzes the verbal form ἐστὶν ἀλληγορούμενα. He notes that it cannot function as a periphrastic participle of customary action ("are wont to be spoken/interpreted allegorically") since "customary" fits neither scripture's speaking nor Paul's particular interpretation. He similarly dismisses "are to be interpreted allegorically" on the grounds that "Greek usage . . . would have required ἀλληγορητέα." The possibility of a periphrastic present indicative ("are spoken allegorically") he rejects because the progressive/customary present tense would contribute little to—and thus be an odd way of expressing—this more "aoristic" meaning. The present participle could also function as an imperfect indicating a time antecedent the main verb, but he can find no instance of this use where the participle's action already clearly occurs before the main verb, as would have to be the case here. Finally, Burton himself proposes that ἀλληγορούμενα constitutes a general present participle equivalent to a noun ("allegorical utterances"). As he notes, however, the NT otherwise always uses a perfect (τὸ εἰρημένον, Luke 2:24; Acts 2:16, 13:40; Rom 4:18; τὸ γεγραμμένον, Acts 13:29, 24:14; 2 Cor 4:13; Gal 3:10; Rev 1:3) or aorist (τὸ ῥηθέν, Matt 1:22, 2:15, 17, 23, 4:14, 8:17, 12:17, 13:35, 21:4, 22:31, 27:9) substantive participle to designate scriptural sayings. My suggestion above ("are being interpreted allegorically") instead reads ἐστὶν ἀλληγορούμενα as a periphrastic participle of progressive action.

διαθήκη with Sarah, God never makes a διαθήκη with Hagar.¹⁵⁸ A covenantal reading of the διαθήκαι in 4:24-27 therefore produces a largely allegorical reading that the agitators could refute simply by denying the initial identification.

In contrast, a testamentary reading provides the otherwise missing intrinsic connection between the women and the διαθήκαι. That is to say, in a testamentary reading, Paul does not identify the women as διαθήκαι simply because their respective “offspring” share similar statuses but because both the women and the διαθήκαι establish two lines of Abrahamic descent, one enslaved and one free. The connection grows even stronger if, as I will argue in §4.3.2, Gal 4:24-27 seeks to distinguish between non-Christian and Christian Jews, i.e., between two kinds of physical Abrahamic descendants.

Typology consists of exactly these kinds of substantial correspondences within the historical record. Assuming the historicity of the two mothers, Paul’s figurative reading suggests that their enslaved and free statuses prefigure the two types of physical Abrahamic descendants to which the διαθήκαι have subsequently given rise. The women accordingly serve as apt types, anticipating the twofold division of Abraham’s family that

¹⁵⁸ Martyn, *Galatians*, 454-55: “[Paul] identifies the second of these covenants as the covenant of Hagar and her son, ignoring the pointed absence in Genesis of a covenant involving Hagar and Ishmael.” Cf. Williams, *Galatians*, 125. A typological reading based on analogy makes this “pointed absence” irrelevant. The suggestion of Bouwman, “Hagar,” 3148, that the agitators understood the διαθήκη in Gen 15:8 as applying to Ishmael has, to my knowledge, no precedent in Jewish literature. The proposal that Paul’s contrasting covenants might have their basis in a contrast of the promissory covenant in Gen 15 and the circumcision covenant in Gen 17 (Gignac, “Paul,” 478) seems even less likely.

Paul identifies in 4:24-27.¹⁵⁹ Combined with the evidence discussed in §4.2.1 and §4.2.2, this ability to produce a reasoned typological connection in 4:24-27 should then confirm the correctness of a testamentary reading of the διαθηκαι.

Theodore of Mopsuetia thus rightly discerns that the argument in 4:24-27 works through the juxtaposition of past and present circumstances, with the substantial correspondences between the two situations legitimizing the comparison.¹⁶⁰ We must still ask, however, what end Paul hopes to achieve through this juxtaposition. What, that is, does he actually argue? Significantly, the typological allegory does *not* serve to identify the “true” children of Hagar and Sarah. As Di Mattei perceptively notes,

An expression such as ‘the Jews are the sons of Hagar’ misreads the allegory by mixing literal and allegorical contexts. ‘Hagar’ is drawn from the literal narrative, whereas ‘Sinai’ is its allegorical sense; ‘the Jews’ are likewise part of this allegorical narrative, and thus properly ‘the sons of the Sinai covenant’. Mixing literal and allegorical signifieds fabricates something that is not there in Paul’s own thought. . . . Paul’s exegesis does not reverse the Genesis narrative, nor does it claim that the Jews are the sons of Hagar and the Gentiles the ‘true’ or ‘spiritual’ sons of Sarah.”¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ Castelli, “Allegories,” 233-34, rightly notes that, as exemplified by the claim that these women “are” (εἰσιν) two διαθηκαι, the “essential rather than arbitrary” nature of these connections effectively collapses the “distance between . . . representation and essence,” thereby reducing the women to what they (inevitably) prefigure. As the main text will make clear, however, I suggest—in contrast to Castelli—that the typological nature of Paul’s argument restricts this reduction to the argument itself; Paul applies the Hagar-Sarah situation rather than re-defining it.

¹⁶⁰ PG 66:908C: Ἀλληγορίαν ἐκάλεσε τὴν ἐκ παραθέσεως τῶν ἤδη γεγονότων πρὸς τὰ παρόντα σύγκρισιν.

¹⁶¹ Di Mattei, “Allegory,” 113, 119.

Put another way, the allegory does not seek to trace lines of descent from the two matriarchs, nor does it raise such questions as how we should understand the status of Abraham's pre-Sinaitic descendants through Isaac. Paul does not re-interpret the Hagar-Sarah story so much as he applies it as a paradigmatic precedent for the current situation.¹⁶²

What does this precedent contribute to the argument? The answer, I suggest, requires that we consider the rest of the passage, in large part because it relates to the other major issue in 4:24-27 that I have not yet addressed, namely, who constitutes the groups that Paul identifies with the two Jerusalems. I will accordingly turn to these issues in §4.3.

4.2.4 Conclusion

This section has looked at three factors that argue for a testamentary reading of the διαθήκη in 4:24-27. In §4.2.1, I suggested that Paul portrays the children of the Sinaitic διαθήκη as enslaved to the στοιχεῖα, a reading that, because it focuses on Abrahamic descent rather than on relationship with God, favors a testamentary understanding of the διαθήκη. Section 4.2.2 then argued that Paul's citation of Isa 54:1

¹⁶² Contra Fowl, "Abraham's Story," 78, then, 4:21-31 does not constitute a rhetorical "act of power . . . [claiming] (either implicitly or explicitly) that there is something obscure, inadequate or misleading about a conventional interpretation and that a particular interpreter, in this case Paul, has the means to correct this." The indictment of Castelli, "Allegories," 243, that Paul uses an antihegemonic reading strategy (i.e., allegory) to replace one hegemonic reading with another similarly seems to miss the mark.

in 4:27 truly makes sense only as an appeal to the testamentary adoption inherent in the Abrahamic διαθήκη. Finally, §4.2.3 made the case that a testamentary reading enables a typological and, thus, more compelling connection between the women and the διαθήκαι.

In sum, then, I have argued that 4:24-27 contrasts the non-adoptive Sinaitic testament with the adoptive Abrahamic testament. The passage begins by observing that the Sinaitic διαθήκη proves powerless to free Abraham's physical children from the general human condition of enslavement to the στοιχεῖα. The Abrahamic διαθήκη, in contrast, does free its participants from this enslavement because it adopts them as sons of God. Indeed, whereas the Sinaitic διαθήκη effectively contributes to the dominion of the στοιχεῖα by further subdividing humanity into Jew and gentile, the Abrahamic διαθήκη overcomes these elemental divisions by enabling the union of Jew and gentile—as well as the union of slave and free, male and female—in Christ (3:28; see the discussion in §3.4.2.1). The Sinaitic διαθήκη accordingly aligns with the slave woman Hagar and the present Jerusalem—a city that suffers the same human enslavement to the στοιχεῖα—while the Abrahamic διαθήκη aligns with the free Sarah and enables entrance into the free Jerusalem above.

This analysis has largely overlooked two critical exegetical issues that, although important for our overall understanding of 4:24-27, do not relate directly to the nature of the διαθήκαι. First, as the above summary indicates, the identification of the διαθήκαι with Hagar and Sarah seems to have little impact on the actual argument; the reason for

the matriarchs' introduction therefore requires explanation. Second, I have refrained from addressing the identity of the groups that Paul associates with the two Jerusalems. The two issues are, I suggest, related, and their resolution requires a wider perspective that enables us to see how 4:24-27 integrates into the larger argument of 4:21-5:1. Section 4.3 will accordingly address both issues in the context of this wider perspective.

4.3 Identifying the free children of promise: Distinguishing non-Christian Jews, Christian Jews, and Christian gentiles as sons of Abraham in Gal 4:21-5:1

Often taking their cue from the use of *συστοιχεῖ* in 4:25, interpretations of Gal 4:21-5:1 typically proceed by constructing two contrasting columns.¹⁶³ Although some variation occurs, the following tabulation provides a representative sample of the elements usually included:

Hagar	[Sarah]
Enslaved	Free
Sinaitic <i>διαθήκη</i>	[Abrahamic (or new) <i>διαθήκη</i>]
Present Jerusalem	Jerusalem above
[Ishmael]	Isaac

¹⁶³ See, e.g., the extensive table in Gignac, "Paul," 474. Cf. Malan, "Strategy," 236: "two opposing symbolic universes."

Born according to flesh

[Born] through promise / according to Spirit

For most scholars, identifying the group that Paul associates with each column then becomes a critical interpretive task.¹⁶⁴

The historically predominant interpretation identifies the Hagar side with Jews, the Sarah side with Christians. Several recent scholars, however, follow J. Louis Martyn in identifying the two columns respectively with law-observant and law-free Christian missions to the gentiles. Troy Martin instead sees the columns as differentiating non-Christian and Christian Jews. Finally, rather than seeking to limit the Jewish indicators in the Hagar column to a particular type of Jew or Jewish Christian, a few interpreters seek to broaden their significance instead. In other words, they see the two columns' inherent contrast of Jews and Christians as indicative of a larger, worldwide opposition, usually either "law and gospel" or "slavery and freedom."

The number of omitted elements troubles this "columned" approach, as does the likelihood that συστοιχέω signifies simply "stand in alignment with" rather than the more technical "stand in an oppositional column with."¹⁶⁵ More importantly, however, all

¹⁶⁴ For an exception, see Gignac, "Paul," 479, who argues that Paul constructs the columns to help the audience transition from the left side, where they begin in 4:21, to the right side, where they appear in 4:28.

¹⁶⁵ According to TLG, συστοιχέω appears only twice outside of Paul before the second century C.E.: once in Polybius (*Historiae* 10.23.7), where it describes a cavalry unit that maintains its lines while rapidly advancing or retreating, and once in a mathematical treatise by Heron (*Geometrica*, 14.23). The nominal (συστοιχία) form appears more frequently and signifies a series / column / line of related elements (LSJ, "συστοιχία," 1735; cf. "σύστοιχος," 1735-36). In particular, scholars often highlight Aristotle's application of συστοιχία to the two opposing columns formed by the Pythagoreans' ten pairs of fundamental principles (odd/even, right/left, male/female, etc.)—τὰς ἀρχὰς δέκα . . . τὰς κατὰ

of these interpretations of the two columns raise exegetical problems that prevent any of them from offering a very compelling account. As I hope to show, many of these problems arise from the underlying assumption that the passage seeks to construct two oppositional columns. This section accordingly begins with a general critique of these positions before suggesting that we should abandon the two-column model for a more nuanced approach that distinguishes the slave/free typology from the flesh/promise typology. It then demonstrates the exegetical fruitfulness of this approach through a detailed analysis of the key typologies.

συστοιχίαν λεγομένης, *Metaphysica* 986a23; cf. its application to one of the opposing columns in *Metaphysica* 1004b27, 1066a15, 1093b12, *Ethica Nicomachea* 1096b6—to suggest that the rare verbal form in Gal 4:25 signifies “align in oppositional columns.” See, e.g., Martyn, *Galatians*, 438-39; Boyarin, *Radical*, 33; Gaston, *Paul*, 83-85; Lietzmann, *Galater*, 31; Lagrange, *Galates*, 127; Delling, *TDNT*, 7:669. In these Aristotelian instances, however, συστοιχία retains its basic meaning of “column”; only the context indicates that the column to which the word refers forms part of an opposing pair. Context would accordingly also have to show that Paul intends to construct two oppositional columns for συστοιχεῖν to have this sense in 4:25. Although many scholars do indeed find the context to support this interpretation, this section (§4.3) will argue that, to the extent that Paul does invoke opposing columns in 4:25, these columns could consist only of the elements identified in 4:24-27. The lack of explicit antitheses in 4:24-27 and the general development of the argument then suggest that Paul has a different agenda. We should therefore probably understand συστοιχεῖν in 4:25 simply as “stand in alignment with.” Cf. Brawley, “Contextuality,” 111-12; Standhartinger, “Zur Freiheit,” 297-98. Nanos, “Present Jerusalem,” 5-7, similarly argues against a technical use of συστοιχεῖν. His counter-proposal that the verb instead “signals [an] intertextual link” between the Abrahamic account in Genesis and Israel’s story in Isa 54, however, would likely render the argument unintelligible to the Galatians given that Isa 54 does not even enter the discussion until Gal 4:27. For difficulties with the alternative suggestions of Lipsius (“equal in numerical value”), Gaston (“is in the opposite column from”), and Wagner (“walk with”) for the meaning of συστοιχεῖν, see the discussion and footnotes in §4.2.1.2.

4.3.1 Problems with a two-column approach to Gal 4:21-5:1

Any interpretation of 4:21-5:1 as constructing two opposing columns must begin from the columns' apparent contrast of Judaism and Christianity. On the Hagar side of the comparison, the invocation of traditional Jewish symbols (Sinai, Jerusalem) and fleshly descent clearly resonate with Judaism. Meanwhile, the Spirit language, reference to "our" mother, and intimation of persecution by the fleshly descendants describe Christianity well. Scholars tend to interpret this contrast in one of four ways: as representing some larger opposition, as contrasting Jews and Christians absolutely, or as describing a differentiation within either Christianity or, less commonly, Judaism.

Proposals that understand the Jew/Christian contrast as indicative of a larger opposition can themselves take two forms. One type expands the concrete application of the contrast so that the Jews become representative examples of all humanity. For example, in his exposition of the passage as a contrast of law and gospel, Luther expands the text's presumed criticism of the law to include "all laws, human and divine" and sees in 4:30 an indictment of "the Jews, Grecians, Romans, and all others who persecute the Church of Christ," including those who profess to be Christians yet still rely on works for their justification.¹⁶⁶ The chief problem with this approach lies in justifying the expanded application: not only does Paul introduce the passage as an analysis of *Abraham's* two sons, but he also clearly identifies Hagar with the Sinaitic διαθήκη in 4:24. It therefore

¹⁶⁶ Luther, *Galatians*, 297, 309.

seems difficult to view her allegorical children as anything other than Jews. This type of interpretation accordingly belongs to the realm of hermeneutical application, not exegesis.

A second form regards the Jew/Christian contrast as representative of a more abstract opposition between slavery and freedom that Paul sets before the Galatians as a choice. Viewed in this way, the passage focuses primarily on re-orienting the Galatians towards freedom, not on identifying an opposing group.¹⁶⁷ This interpretation finds support in the joining of Jew and gentile as slaves to the στοιχεῖα in 4:1-11 and in the emphasis on the slave/free contrast in the passage's concluding verses (4:31-5:1). Nevertheless, as the analysis below will show, it has trouble reconciling its need for abstraction with Paul's concretizing of the persecutors in 4:29.

In light of these difficulties, the traditional interpretation of 4:21-5:1 as contrasting Judaism and Christianity outright would seem to have much to commend it. Martyn, however, critiques this traditional view on two related points. First, the present tense of γεννῶσα in 4:24 indicates that the "bearing" of the Sinaitic διαθήκη cannot refer to the initial formation of Israel; it must refer to people currently coming under the law. Second, the key descriptions "according to flesh" and "through promise" / "according to Spirit" (4:23, 29) function adverbially rather than adjectivally; they characterize a birthing process, not a static people or a religion.¹⁶⁸ Accordingly, neither

¹⁶⁷ See Bachmann, *Antijudaismus*, 151; Gignac, "Paul," 479; Brawley, "Contextuality," 115.

¹⁶⁸ Martyn, "Covenants," 177-79.

their respective origins nor the characteristics of their respective members serve to differentiate the two contrasted groups. The passage instead differentiates them based on the way in which their respective διαθήκαι “give birth.”

This last observation makes it difficult to see how the passage could contrast Judaism and Christianity. The problem arises in that, viewed covenantally, the Sinaitic διαθήκη determines membership in the Abrahamic διαθήκη, i.e., it determines membership in the people of Israel who, as Abraham’s chosen descendants, share in Abraham’s relationship with his God. While Paul could therefore argue that the Sinaitic legislation represents an “unlawful” addition to the Abrahamic διαθήκη—as many interpreters (mistakenly) claim that he does in 3:15-20¹⁶⁹—distinguishing it as a separate, contrasting covenant with a different “birthing process” would seem rather arbitrary and disingenuous.¹⁷⁰ As a result, reading the passage as a contrast of Jews and Christians truly works only if the two διαθήκαι Paul has in mind are the Sinaitic διαθήκαι (cf. Gal 4:24-25) and an otherwise unmentioned new διαθήκη instituted by Christ (cf. 1 Cor 11:25; 2

¹⁶⁹ See §3.3, where I argue that Paul uses the legal inability to amend a ratified διαθήκη, not to invalidate the Sinaitic διαθήκη, but to distinguish it from the Abrahamic διαθήκη, an interpretation consistent with Paul’s delineation of two distinct διαθήκαι here in 4:21-5:1.

¹⁷⁰ For the “striking” nature of Paul’s reference to *two* covenants, especially in light of his argument in 3:15-20, see Martyn, *Galatians*, 454-55; Dunn, *Galatians*, 248-49; Witherington, *Grace*, 330. Dunn’s resolution that the two covenants effectively represent “two ways of understanding the one covenant purpose of God” (249) cannot be reconciled with the passage’s consistent portrayal of the διαθήκαι as distinct *entities*, not perspectives.

Cor 3:6).¹⁷¹ The preoccupation with the Abrahamic διαθήκη in Gal 3-4, however, makes such a conclusion untenable.

Galatians 4:21-5:1 must therefore contrast the Sinaitic and Abrahamic διαθήκαι, but since the Sinaitic διαθήκη determines membership in the Abrahamic διαθήκη, the “birthing” processes of these two διαθήκαι—when viewed as covenants—cannot be set in absolute contrast with any historical credibility. These conclusions then undermine the suggestion that the Abrahamic covenant signifies Christianity in opposition to the Judaism of the Sinaitic covenant. Resolving this problem requires that we either abandon the covenantal understanding of the διαθήκαι or else argue that Paul refers to a relative application of the covenants that differs from their traditional historical roles. While I will ultimately argue for the former option, Martyn opts for the latter.

Suggesting that the thought of “labor pains” in 4:19 gives rise to—and, thus, highlights the main theme of—the argument in 4:21-5:1,¹⁷² Martyn finds the interpretive key to the passage in Paul’s decision to use γεννάω (4:23, 24, 29) as his verb of begetting/bearing instead of the τίκτω that appears throughout the Genesis account of

¹⁷¹ So, e.g., Willitts, “Isa 54,1,” 200 n. 30; Becker, “Galater,” 71-72; Vouga, *Galater*, 117; Wagner, “Les enfants,” 294; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 211; Betz, *Galatians*, 243; Lietzmann, *Galater*, 30; Luz, “Bund,” 320-21; Meyer, “Galatians,” 206; Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 181; Luther, *Galatians*, 291. Abraham’s presumed participation in the Abrahamic covenant without being a Christian would also point to this conclusion.

¹⁷² Martyn, “Covenants,” 171.

Abraham.¹⁷³ He notes that conformity to the LXX’s consistent practice of rendering the Hebrew לָדָא with γεννάω for instances of male begetting but with τίκτω for instances of female bearing could potentially explain the instances in 4:23 and 4:29 if they assume Abraham as progenitor. The use of γεννώσα to describe the bearing of the Sinaitic διαθήκη “who is Hagar” in 4:24, however, breaks this pattern and therefore demands an explanation.¹⁷⁴ Increasing the need for an explanation, τίκτω has just appeared in the preceding citation of Isa 54:1 in Gal 4:27. According to Martyn, this previous instance shows not only that Paul felt comfortable using τίκτω, but also that he sacrificed an opportunity to establish a linkword connection (*gezerah shawah*) between his Isaiah and Genesis passages.¹⁷⁵ Furthermore, since both τίκτω and γεννάω could signify male begetting as well as female bearing in classical Greek, the flexibility of γεννάω with respect to gender cannot suffice to explain Paul’s preference.¹⁷⁶

Having thus made his case that Paul effectively places γεννάω “in italics,” Martyn then turns to the significance of this “emphatic substitution.”¹⁷⁷ In this regard, he observes that, except for the references to physical birth in Gal 4:23, 4:29, and Rom 9:11,

¹⁷³ With respect to Abraham and his two sons, τίκτω appears in Gen 16:1, 2, 11, 15, 16; 17:17, 19, 21; 18:13; 19:37, 38; 20:17; 21:2, 3, 7; 24:36; and 25:12. In contrast, γεννάω appears only in Gen 17:20, where it refers to Ishmael’s becoming a father of twelve princes.

¹⁷⁴ Martyn, “Covenants,” 174.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 175.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 175 n. 35.

¹⁷⁷ For “in italics,” see Ibid., 177. For “emphatic substitution,” see p. 174.

Paul uses the verb γεννάω “only in speaking of the genesis of Christians and of Christian churches through the power of the gospel entrusted to him by God.”¹⁷⁸ Coupling this observation with an awareness that the present tense of γεννῶσα indicates an ongoing birthing process, he then concludes that γεννάω functions throughout 4:21-5:1—and in 4:24 in particular—as a technical term for Christian conversion (i.e., Paul’s “missioning verb”), a reading that interprets the passage’s argument as distinguishing between two distinct Christian missions to the gentiles, one law-observant, the other law-free.¹⁷⁹

As appealing as Martyn’s analysis has proven to be in a post-Holocaust environment,¹⁸⁰ the evidence simply does not support it. First and foremost, since all the instances of γεννάω in 4:21-5:1 appear in paraphrased summaries of the Abraham story rather than in citations of specific texts, we can hardly speak of a “substitution,” much less an “emphatic” one. Indeed, the only instance of τίκτω in Paul occurs in his citation of Isa 54:1 in Gal 4:27. He even uses γεννάω when describing Rebekah’s “bearing” of Esau and Jacob in Rom 9:11. The evidence thus suggests that Paul simply prefers γεννάω when not citing a specific text that uses τίκτω. The purported cancelling of a

¹⁷⁸ Martyn, *Galatians*, 451. His analysis regards as non-Pauline the instance in 2 Tim 2:23, where speculations “beget” quarrels.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 451-57, followed by Susan Eastman, *Recovering Paul’s Mother Tongue: Language and Theology in Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 131-32, esp. n. 18; Boer, “Quotation,” 381-82; Hays, “Galatians,” 300; Witherington, *Grace*, 331; Williams, *Galatians*, 130-31; Hansen, *Galatians*, 144; Matera, *Galatians*, 176-77; Siker, *Disinheriting*, 45-47. Cf. Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 325, 332, who, emphasizing the occasional nature of Paul’s argumentative context, similarly argues that Paul here targets the agitators and Jewish Christianity rather than Judaism.

¹⁸⁰ Tellingly, Martyn, “Covenants,” 160-63, explicitly situates his reading in the post-Holocaust conversation between Christians and Jews.

potential *gezerah shawah* with the Isaianic citation proves equally unpersuasive, largely because it presumes that Paul would want or need to establish such a connection. I have already argued above, however, that the implication of adoption in Isa 54:1 provides the citation's significance for the argument; establishing a linkword connection with Abraham's story in Genesis on the basis of "giving birth" would only confuse the issue. Paul's use of γεννάω therefore hardly requires a special explanation.

Of course, Paul need not emphasize γεννάω in order to use it in the way Martyn suggests, but, here again, evidence is lacking. Martyn's analysis would be more compelling, for instance, if he could point to more than *two* instances in Paul (1 Cor 4:15; Phlm 1:10) of this supposedly technical use of γεννάω to signify Christian missions. Weakening the case for this technical use even further, Paul does not use γεννάω in Gal 4:19 when describing his own labor over the Galatians, a discrepancy Martyn explains on the grounds that the agitating Teachers' influence has cast doubt on the Galatians' conversion. If the agitators' law-observant influence would lead Paul to "[suppress] his mission-oriented verb" in 4:19,¹⁸¹ however, then on what basis should we expect Paul to recognize the law-observant mission as truly "begetting" Christian churches (cf. "a different gospel," Gal 1:6)? Martyn answers this objection by arguing that Paul refers to the "begetting" of the law-observant mission only in the context of distinguishing it from the true "begetting" of the law-free mission,¹⁸² but the slender exegetical foundation for

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 176; Martyn, *Galatians*, 451.

¹⁸² Martyn, *Galatians*, 451.

the proposed technical use of γεννάω—only two of the six total instances in Paul—cannot bear the weight of all the exceptions. In short, while γεννάω clearly can refer to a specifically Christian mission, no contextual indications require or even suggest this nuance in Gal 4:21-5:1.

Two other issues also trouble both the Judaism/Christianity and the law-observant mission / law-free mission interpretations. First, both of these readings assume that Paul contrasts the types of Abrahamic sons in order to make a point about more abstract entities. While Paul's claim to interpret allegorically (ἀλληγορούμενα, 4:24) perhaps provides some justification for this move, to assume that Abrahamic sonship here stands for something else belies the importance of this sonship throughout Gal 3-4. Paul does not claim to contrast religions or even missions, abstractions which both focus more on a person's relationship to God than on descent from Abraham. Rather, he claims to contrast ways of becoming a son of Abraham, and, thus, types of Abrahamic sons. He provides no indication that he expects his readers to push the argument beyond this concern. Indeed, the emphasis on begetting that Martyn rightly notes in the passage focuses the argument on avenues of Abrahamic descent.

Second, each of these two interpretative models has trouble explaining why Paul develops both the slave/free and the flesh/promise typologies. In the traditional Jew/Christian interpretation, the slave/free contrast signifies a person's stance toward the law while the flesh/promise contrast signifies the nature of a person's Abrahamic "birth." While the two criteria align for law-observant Jews and law-free Christians, they lead to conflicting conclusions for law-observant (i.e., Jewish) Christians. The argument would

accordingly leave the status of such Jewish Christians in doubt: do they align with the Jews because of their enslavement to the law or with the Christians because of their new birth through the promise/Spirit?¹⁸³ Paul could have removed the ambiguity by developing only the most relevant typology, a reality admitted by the many scholars who suggest that the argument becomes clearer if one skips from 4:23 to 4:28.¹⁸⁴

Martyn's two-missions interpretation has the opposite problem. By interpreting the flesh component in the flesh/promise typology as signifying the circumcision of gentile Christians, Martyn enables both typologies to point to a person's relationship to the law. While this equivalence in function means that both criteria produce the same result, it also threatens to make the second contrast redundant. Of course, Paul could simply have sought to make his point in as many ways as possible, but then we would have expected a clear delineation and demarcation of the arguments. The passage instead intermingles the two typologies to the point that R. P. C. Hanson complains, "one is uncertain how far Paul is allegorizing Ishmael and how far Hagar, and whether he is not in fact confusing the two allegories."¹⁸⁵ That Martyn can achieve this uniformity in criteria only by assuming that an argument about Abrahamic descent "according to flesh"

¹⁸³ Betz, *Galatians*, 251, locates the Jewish Christian agitators on the Jewish side. Schlier, *Galater*, 227, in contrast, locates them on the Christian side.

¹⁸⁴ E.g., Callaway, "Mistress," 97; Nanos, "Present Jerusalem," 11; Dunn, *Galatians*, 255 (Paul gets "somewhat sidetracked"); J. C. O'Neill, *The Recovery of Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (London: SPCK, 1972), 63 (4:24-27 is a later interpolation).

¹⁸⁵ Hanson, *Allegory*, 80.

would relegate the Jews to “somewhere in the background”¹⁸⁶ rather than addressing their situation directly makes this reading even less likely.

These difficulties arise, I suggest, largely because scholars assume that both typologies in 4:21-31 map onto the same two oppositional columns. As a result, the passage can describe at most two groups, but Paul’s argument in Gal 3-4 has consistently distinguished three different groups with a claim to Abrahamic sonship: non-Christian Jews, Christian Jews, and Christian gentiles. The traditional interpretation leaves the status of many Christian Jews unaddressed while Martyn’s reading does the same for the non-Christian Jews, odd omissions for an argument focused on establishing true Abrahamic descent. These problems all disappear, however, if Paul’s two typologies contrast two different sets of Abrahamic claimants.

Put another way, I argued above that the identification of the two διαθήκαι in 4:24 as the Sinaitic and Abrahamic διαθήκαι precludes the absolute contrast of covenants that the traditional Jew/Christian interpretation requires. I then noted numerous problems with Martyn’s attempt to argue for a more limited application of these covenants. With covenantal interpretations proving so problematical, I suggest, in accordance with the argument in §4.2, that a testamentary understanding of these διαθήκαι provides the best way forward: it allows the non-adoptive Sinaitic διαθήκη to retain its traditional role of delimiting Abraham’s natural descendants while also explaining how Paul can limit the relevance of the adoptive Abrahamic διαθήκη to

¹⁸⁶ Martyn, “Covenants,” 188.

(Jewish) Christians. As the ensuing analysis will show, however, this testamentary understanding of the διαθήκαι requires that we abandon the two-column interpretation of this passage.

Finally, I should mention the proposal of Troy Martin, who sees 4:21-5:6 as making a differentiation within Judaism. For Martin, the primary problem in Galatia is that the Galatians are returning to their pagan ways as a result of their aversion to the circumcision requirement in the agitators' gospel (cf. 4:8-11).¹⁸⁷ Since the Galatians have no interest in coming under law in this scenario, Paul's opening characterization of his addressees in 4:21 as "those who desire to be under law" must accordingly refer to the agitators rather than to the Galatians.¹⁸⁸ The allegory then serves to differentiate between two types of circumcised Abrahamic descendants—i.e., non-Christian and Christian Jews—warning the agitators that their own circumcision, like Ishmael's circumcision, does not suffice to qualify them as Abraham's chosen offspring.¹⁸⁹ They must therefore choose to continue aligning themselves with Isaac by not practicing the fleshly distinction of circumcision.

Martin's intriguing proposal stands or falls based on his identification of the addressees in 4:21. He defends this claim in part by pointing to Gal 5:1. Since Martin

¹⁸⁷ Martin, "Apostasy," 440-45.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 450-51. He notes that the identity of the addressees constitutes "the most significant exegetical problem in 4:21-5:6" (450). See, too, Herbert Ulonska, "Die Funktion der alttestamentlichen Zitate und Anspielungen in den paulinischen Briefen" (Ph.D. diss., Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, 1963), 65-70, who similarly identifies 4:21-27 as targeting the agitators.

¹⁸⁹ Martin, "Apostasy," 456-57.

understands Paul to distinguish sharply between Jewish enslavement to the law and gentile enslavement to the “things that by nature are not gods” (4:8), he argues that the exhortation in 5:1 to avoid submitting to the law and thereby coming under a yoke of slavery “again” must address Jewish Christians.¹⁹⁰ My earlier argument that Paul does not portray the law as enslaving but instead unites Jew and gentile in a common slavery to the στοιχεῖα undermines both this conclusion and the distinction that lies behind it (§4.2; cf. 4:3, 8-9). The other evidence that he adduces—the references to “practicing the distinction of circumcision” (περιτέμνησθε / περιτεμνομένῳ) in 5:2-3 (cf. 6:13) and the lack of other clear indications in the letter that the gentiles desired to be under law—prove equally indecisive.¹⁹¹

This inability to produce a decisive case, however, does not thereby invalidate Martin’s suggestion that the Galatians’ are apostasizing to paganism rather than to Judaism. As he notes, the Galatians themselves would have known immediately whom 4:21 addressed,¹⁹² that Paul does not clarify the issue therefore need not be a surprise. We must accordingly judge the validity of Martin’s insight based on its overall explanatory power and its ability to clarify the argument in 4:21-5:1 in particular. In this regard, Martin’s analysis seems to produce in a more coherent argument than in the

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 454-55.

¹⁹¹ For “practicing the distinction of circumcision” in 5:2-3, see Ibid., 453-54; for the dearth of other references to the gentiles’ desire, see pp. 455-56. Even granting Martin’s case for “practicing the distinction of circumcision” as the correct nuance of περιτέμνω in 5:2-3, the gentile Galatians’ apparent acceptance of the agitators’ “gospel” indicates that they also recognize a circumcision-based distinction.

¹⁹² Ibid., 450-51.

interpretations discussed above. It also has several points of contact with the interpretation I will offer below, an interpretation that similarly sees much of the passage as distinguishing between non-Christian and Christian Jews.

Nevertheless, a few points do trouble Martin's analysis. For instance, without a clear indication of a shift in subject (as Martin suggests 4:21 provides), the opening second-person verb ἐτρέχετε in 5:7—which Martin rightly understands as addressing the Galatians¹⁹³—would seem to continue addressing the same group as the preceding verses. Martin's argument also requires that the first-person ἡμῶν in 4:26 and the second-person ὑμεῖς in 4:28 signify the same group, i.e., Jewish Christians. Given the context of Paul's previous Abrahamic arguments in 3:6-4:11 and the corresponding shift from the slave/free typology in 4:24-27 to the flesh/promise typology in 4:28-29, I suggest that a shift to the gentile Galatians better accounts for the sudden switch to second person in 4:28.¹⁹⁴ Galatians 4:29 then expands this second typology so as to include Jewish Christians along with their (gentile) Galatian counterparts.

The remainder of this chapter will argue that Paul uses the slave/free typology to contrast non-Christian and Christian Jews while he uses the flesh/promise typology to contrast non-Christian Jews with Christian gentiles. Jewish Christians thus represent the children of the free woman, gentile Christians, the children of promise. United in Christ,

¹⁹³ Ibid., 458, esp. n. 102.

¹⁹⁴ See §4.3.3-4. Ulonska, "Funktion," 69-71, argues that the ὑμεῖς and vocative ἀδελφοί in 4:28 shift the address from the agitators in 4:21-27 back to the Galatians in 4:28. Contextual continuity, however, suggests that the ὑμεῖς in 4:28 designates the same group that Paul addresses in 4:21 as those desiring to be under law.

these two groups then together—and only together—fulfill the full typology of the free woman’s children of promise. As I intend to show, not only does this explanation leave the argumentative focus on Abrahamic descent and account for the introduction of both typologies in a way that is neither contradictory nor redundant, but it also interprets the alternation of first- and second-person references in a manner consistent with their use throughout Gal 3-4, i.e., as respectively signifying Jewish and gentile referents.

4.3.2 Sons of the slave woman and sons of the free woman in Gal 4:24-27: Distinguishing non-Christian Jews and Christian Jews as sons of Abraham

Gal 4:24-27

^{24a}ἄτινά ἐστιν ἀλληγορούμενα· ^bαὗται γάρ εἰσιν δύο διαθήκαι, ^cμία μὲν ἀπὸ ὄρους Σινᾶ, εἰς δουλείαν γεννῶσα, ^dἣτις ἐστὶν Ἀγάρ. ^{25a}τὸ δὲ Ἀγάρ Σινᾶ ὄρος ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ Ἀραβίᾳ, ^bσυστοιχεῖ δὲ τῇ νῦν Ἱερουσαλήμ, ^cδουλεύει γὰρ μετὰ τῶν τέκνων αὐτῆς. ^{26a}ἡ δὲ ἄνω Ἱερουσαλήμ ἐλευθέρα ἐστίν, ^bἣτις ἐστὶν μήτηρ ἡμῶν. ²⁷γέγραπται γάρ, Εὐφράνθητι, στεῖρα ἢ οὐ τίκτουσα· ῥῆξον καὶ βόησον, ἢ οὐκ ὠδίνουσα· ὅτι πολλὰ τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἐρήμου μᾶλλον ἢ τῆς ἐχούσης τὸν ἄνδρα.

^{24a}*These things are being interpreted allegorically, ^bfor these [women] are two testaments, ^cone indeed from Mt. Sinai bearing children into slavery, ^dwhich is Hagar. ^{25a}And this Hagar-Sinai mountain is in Arabia, ^bbut it aligns with the present Jerusalem, ^cfor [the present Jerusalem] is enslaved with her children ^{26a}whereas the Jerusalem above is free. ^bThis [Jerusalem above] is our mother, ²⁷for it is written, “Rejoice barren one who does not bear! Break forth and shout, you who do not suffer birth pains! Because more are the children of the desolate one than of the one having a husband.”*

The first typology whose membership we must determine consists of the sons of the slave woman and the sons of the free woman in Gal 4:24-27. The correlation of the slave woman with the enslaved present Jerusalem surely signifies some form of Jewish membership. Set in contrast to this Jewish “present Jerusalem” and identified by Paul as “our” mother, the free Jerusalem above then suggests some sort of Christian membership. Indeed, as noted above, most interpreters throughout history have absolutized these indications, reading the passage as a contrast of Jews and Christians. Many recent scholars, however, expand the Christian side of the contrast to cover the citizens of the present Jerusalem as well, with the result that the passage becomes a contrast of law-observant and law-free Christian missions to the gentiles.

I suggest that we should instead expand the Jewish side of the equation to cover the citizens of the free Jerusalem above.¹⁹⁵ Previous sections of this chapter have already discussed in some detail both my understanding of the argument in 4:24-27 (§4.2) and the

¹⁹⁵ So, too, Robinson, “Distinction,” 41: “This exposition [4:21-5:1], especially the references to the two covenants and the two Jerusalems, indicates that Paul is describing Jews and does not include Gentiles.” Cf. Martin, “Apostasy,” 450-56; Troy W. Martin, “The Brother Body: Addressing and Describing the Galatians and the Agitators as Ἀδελφοί,” *BR* 47 (2002): 5-18, 16-18; Ulonska, “Funktion,” 65-70, both of whom see 4:21-27 as addressing the agitators. Nanos, *Irony*, 156, suggests that the passage instead addresses the Galatians in the context of an intra-Jewish debate over the requirements for becoming children of Abraham. He accordingly identifies the heavenly Jerusalem with “the authorities of the Christ-believing coalition,” the present Jerusalem with “a non-Christ-believing interest group” contending that gentiles must undergo proselyte conversion. The “slaves” in the allegory then represent gentile proselytes while the “free” represent the Jews plus the gentiles in Christ (Nanos, “Present Jerusalem,” 4). This proposal has at least three significant problems. First, “slavery” ceases to signify an actual enslavement, becoming instead simply an indication that the gentiles would have entered the family in the same way as Abraham’s slaves—and Ishmael—did (i.e., circumcision past eight days old). Second, the passage provides no indication that we should restrict Hagar’s connection to the Sinaitic διαθήκη to “a specific element of the Mosaic covenant . . . namely, proselyte conversion for foreigners who wish to join the house of Israel” (Ibid., 4-5). Finally, I have argued throughout this dissertation that Galatians never describes the Christian gentiles as (needing to be) incorporated into Israel; that position belongs to the agitators. Instead, Paul portrays Christ as enabling the Jews to share in the gentiles’ blessing.

larger problems with the two usual ways of identifying the sons of the slave woman and the free woman (§4.3.1). With the goal of supplementing rather than repeating these earlier discussions, I propose to make my case here by considering an issue that I noted but refrained from addressing earlier—namely, the purpose for which Paul introduces Hagar and Sarah into the argument in the first place—and by focusing mainly on the positive evidence for my proposal.

Interpreters often assume that Paul introduces Hagar and Sarah into the argument in order to establish the enslaved and free statuses of the groups with whom he respectively associates them. Such a purpose, however, would require Paul to link these groups to the women on some other basis than their shared enslaved/free status lest his argument become circular and pointless. Although the etymological or geographical explanations of Hagar's connection to Sinai in 4:25 and the identification of a *gezerah shawah* in Isa 54:1 connecting the formerly barren Sarah to the Jerusalem above in 4:27 could potentially provide such alternative grounds for association, I have already argued for the problematical nature of these interpretations. The argument accordingly works only if slavery and freedom form the grounds on which Paul associates the various entities with Hagar and Sarah, but this conclusion then makes it unlikely that he uses these same connections to prove anyone's free or enslaved status. As Lagrange notes, "Il serait trop aisé de montrer que Paul se serait ainsi mû dans un cercle, et le recours à l'allégorie n'y changerait rien."¹⁹⁶ The allegory would add nothing to the argument.

¹⁹⁶ Lagrange, *Galates*, 118.

Lagrange suggests that 4:21-30 instead seeks to prove from scripture Paul's earlier contention about the temporary nature of the law while at the same time identifying the Jews with Hagar—and Christians with Sarah—so as to destroy any possibility of Jewish race-based claims.¹⁹⁷ Without endorsing the particulars, I suggest that Lagrange's discernment of two distinct purposes provides a helpful insight for understanding the portion of Paul's argument in 4:24-27. As a consideration of the two defended claims in this passage will show, the main argument in 4:24-27 does indeed seek to limit the scope of the Sinaitic διαθήκη, albeit not through scriptural appeals. Perhaps more surprisingly, the analysis will also show that the two mothers actually have nothing to do with this main argument, hence the need to account for their presence through the identification of a second purpose.

Paul's explication of Hagar and Sarah as two διαθήκαι in 4:24-27 contains two claims that he justifies with γάρ clauses.¹⁹⁸ The first γάρ clause (4:25) links the Sinaitic διαθήκη (technically, "this Hagar-Sinai mountain"; see §4.2.1.1) with the present Jerusalem whereas the second (4:27) links "us" to the free Jerusalem above by establishing a connection between the heavenly city and the Abrahamic διαθήκη (see §4.2.2). Each explanatory clause thus associates a διαθήκη with a Jerusalem, but they

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 118-19.

¹⁹⁸ Galatians 4:24 also contains a γάρ clause grounding Paul's claim that "these things are ἀλληγορούμενα" in his identification of the two women as διαθήκαι and, accordingly, in the ensuing argument. Since this use of γάρ appeals to Paul's linking of Sarah and Hagar with the διαθήκαι rather than helping to elucidate it, I do not consider it above.

establish these associations for very different purposes. The former uses the slave-bearing nature of the Sinaitic διαθήκη to link the διαθήκη to the enslaved present Jerusalem rather than to the free Jerusalem above; the latter links the Abrahamic διαθήκη to the free Jerusalem above to establish the διαθήκη's free-bearing nature. This shift, which accounts for the lack of correspondence in the development of the two sides, befits an argument presuming the general enslavement of all humanity to the στοιχῆα: Paul can assume the slave-bearing nature of the Sinaitic διαθήκη but must demonstrate that the Abrahamic διαθήκη produces free children. In other words, he can connect the Sinaitic διαθήκη directly to the slave mother but must invoke the Jerusalem above as a middle term when connecting the Abrahamic διαθήκη to the free mother.

Paul, of course, never explicitly completes the association of the Abrahamic διαθήκη with Sarah, the free mother. Similarly, although he uses Hagar to highlight slavery as the basis for the connection between the Sinaitic διαθήκη and the present Jerusalem (see §4.2.1.2), she does not actually contribute anything to the association. Significantly, then, the two women have no real role in the argument, serving only to introduce the motifs of slavery and freedom that Paul could have gleaned simply from the two Jerusalems instead. The focus of the argument in 4:24-27 falls squarely on the exclusive and permanent contrast that the combination of these two defended claims establishes between the slave-oriented Sinaitic διαθήκη / present Jerusalem on the one hand and the free Abrahamic διαθήκη / Jerusalem above on the other. Accordingly,

establishing this distinction with its inherent limiting of the scope of the Sinaitic διαθήκη constitutes the passage's primary purpose.

If the women serve no real role in the argument, then why does Paul introduce them and their potentially controversial dynamic in the first place? Looking at how the women feature in the rest of the argument for clues, they effectively determine the inheritance status of their sons according to the citation of Gen 21:10 in Gal 4:30. The women thus enable Paul to ground the inheritance argument in scripture. As significant as this function is, it still does not adequately explain the motivation for their inclusion: since the citation mentions the women's sons as well, the Ishmael/Isaac contrast in 4:28-29 could have achieved the same purpose by itself. Furthermore, the argument's concluding inference in 4:31—"therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman but of the free woman"—focuses solely on establishing the line of "our" matrilineal descent, not on establishing "our" inheritance or even "our" freedom. Therefore, while the women might have little relevance to the argument in 4:24-27, establishing the proper maternal line *in and of itself* seems to constitute a principal purpose of the larger argument. What, then, does Paul gain by establishing these lines of maternal descent?

Lagrange's suggestion that Paul wants to subvert Jewish race-based claims of privilege by linking the Jews with Hagar represents a viable possibility, but, again, the more straightforward contrast between the flesh-born Ishmael and the promise-/Spirit-born Isaac in 4:28-29 could have achieved that result without the unnecessary complications introduced by the Hagar/Sarah contrast. I therefore suggest that Paul

invokes Hagar and Sarah in 4:24-27 because they enable him to align the contrasting children of the διαθήκαι in 4:24-27 to the Ishmael/Isaac contrast in 4:28-29 without necessarily equating the two. In other words, the introduction of Hagar and Sarah serves to invalidate what has become the standard interpretation of this passage, namely, the assumption that all the contrasts in 4:21-5:1 describe the same two groups.

Of course, this suggestion makes sense only if Paul associates different groups with the Hagar/Sarah typology than he associates with the Ishmael/Isaac typology. As I will argue below, the contrast of the flesh-born Ishmael with the promise-born Isaac most readily signifies a contrast between Jews as Abraham's physical descendants and gentile Christians as Abraham's descendants through the promise to bless the nations. I accordingly suggest that 4:24-27 instead distinguishes non-Christian Jews from Christian Jews. The Sarah-Isaac connection then ultimately enables Paul to link Jewish and gentile Christians together.

Several lines of evidence support this analysis of 4:24-27. First, reading "our" mother as a reference to Christian Jews remains consistent with Paul's practice throughout Gal 3-4 of using first-person plural references to identify with his Jewish heritage, especially in contrast to his second-person references to the gentile Galatians (e.g., 3:13-14; 4:5-7; cf. ὑμεῖς, 4:28).¹⁹⁹ Second, a distinction between non-Christian and

¹⁹⁹ Cf. Witherington, *Grace*, 336: "Verse 28 returns to direct address . . . probably indicating that the referent and the one addressed in the previous quotation of Isaiah is someone *other* than the Galatians" (emphasis original). Witherington, however, sees 4:27 as a reference to Paul. According to my reading, the πάντων that a few manuscripts insert between μήτηρ and ἡμῶν does not, contra Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 327 n. 55, accurately capture "der Intention des Apostels."

Christian Jews offers a plausible explanation for the omission of any reference to Sarah in 4:26-27: her status as the physical mother of all Jews complicates a simple invocation of her as a type for Christian Jews. After all, while Sarah does exemplify the free woman, she is also the “one with a husband” (4:27) whose physical progeny will one day be outstripped. (The same tension admittedly exists in the other explanations as well, but it becomes more pronounced if the passage distinguishes between types of Jews.) Third, the understanding of διαθήκη as “testament” itself implies an internal Jewish discussion. As I have argued in previous chapters, only Jews participate in the Abrahamic (and, of course, the Sinaitic) διαθήκη; gentiles receive the Spirit of adoption not through incorporation into the Abrahamic διαθήκη but as the beneficiaries of God’s promise to bless the nations (cf. 3:8-10, 14; cf. 4:28: “you [ὑμεῖς] . . . are children of *promise*,” on which see §4.3.3 below). Most decisively, then, the indications of adoption in Isa 54:1 would necessarily imply the involvement of the Abrahamic διαθήκη—as the context established by Gal 4:24 clearly indicates that it should—only if 4:24-27 concerns Jews alone.

More general considerations point to the same conclusion. The identification of Hagar and Sarah with two διαθήκαι that obtain children suggests that the διαθήκαι signify lines of Abrahamic descent. Significantly, both women give birth physically—Paul discusses the significance of their sons being born respectively according to the flesh and promise in 4:28-29 but not here—suggesting that 4:24-27 serves to divide Abraham’s physical children. Similarly, the focus on Jerusalem—the city that epitomizes

Judaism and, thus, Abraham's heirs through Isaac and Jacob—also suggests a concern with Jews, especially if, as I have argued, 4:24-27 seeks to sever an assumed connection between the present Jerusalem and the Jerusalem above by establishing different membership criteria.

Paul's argument in 4:24-27 thus distinguishes between non-Christian and Christian Jews, respectively assigning them to the present Jerusalem and the Jerusalem above based on their participation in the two διαθήκαι that determine Abrahamic sonship.²⁰⁰ The Sinaitic διαθήκη gives birth (cf. γεννώσα, 4:24) to Abraham's physical heirs that compose the present Jerusalem; the Abrahamic διαθήκη adopts them into the Jerusalem above as his divine sons. As seemingly all interpreters agree, the agitators advocate the gentiles' incorporation into the Sinaitic διαθήκη. Paul combats this suggestion in 4:24-27 by arguing not that gentile Christians have a different path to Abrahamic sonship—he will make this argument in 4:28—but rather that not even Jewish Christians still trace their Abrahamic descent through Sinai.

In other words, as in 3:6-14 and 3:21-4:11, Paul first considers the Jewish situation, here addressing the overlap that occurs with Christian Jews, i.e., with those who can claim Abrahamic descent *both* according to the flesh and according to the promise/Spirit. He clearly resolves the ambiguity in favor of the latter: the Jerusalem above is now “our mother.” Furthermore, his bifurcation of Abraham's children into

²⁰⁰ This conclusion undermines the suggestion of Maier, “Psalm 87,” 481, 485, that Paul's analysis derives from the portrayal of Zion as a mother of gentiles in Ps [LXX] 86:5.

slave and free means that his identification of Jewish Christians with the free Jerusalem above not only removes them from the ranks of the enslaved present Jerusalem but also aligns them with Sarah and severs their ties with the slave-bearing Sinaitic διαθήκη “which is Hagar.”

4.3.3 Sons of flesh and sons of promise in Gal 4:28: Distinguishing Jews and gentile Christians as sons of Abraham

Gal 4:28

²⁸ Ὑμεῖς δέ, ἀδελφοί, κατὰ Ἰσαὰκ ἐπαγγελίας τέκνα ἐστέ.

²⁸ *And you are brothers according to [the pattern of] Isaac, children of promise.*

Having explored the typological significance of the mothers’ respective free and enslaved statuses (4:24-27; cf. 4:22), Paul shifts the discussion in Gal 4:28 to the typological significance of the nature of each son’s birth—i.e., whether it proceeded according to flesh (κατὰ σάρκα) or through promise (δι’ ἐπαγγελίας)—a theme first introduced in 4:23. Before proceeding to 4:28, we should therefore consider how these descriptions characterize and distinguish Ishmael and Isaac, both of whom become Abraham’s sons through physical birth. Watson, for instance, suggests that the characterizations respectively signify human initiative (i.e., “human action as the precondition for divine saving action”) and divine initiative (i.e., God’s “unconditional

promise to future action on behalf of the addressee”).²⁰¹ This distinction, however, cannot stand: except in the improbable case that δι’ ἐπαγγελίας portrays Isaac as divinely conceived with no biological contribution from Abraham,²⁰² Isaac’s conception still required a “human action.” The shift in preposition from κατὰ to διὰ also argues against Watson’s reading. That is to say, Paul does not contrast “flesh” directly with “promise” (κατὰ σάρκα versus δι’ ἐπαγγελίας, 4:23) as we would expect if he were contrasting parallel elements such as human and divine initiative.²⁰³ He does, however, contrast “flesh” directly with “Spirit” (κατὰ σάρκα versus κατὰ πνεῦμα) in the parallel construction of 4:29, suggesting, as most scholars agree, that κατὰ σάρκα signifies Ishmael’s strictly natural birth whereas δι’ ἐπαγγελίας and κατὰ πνεῦμα signify the divine involvement in Isaac’s birth.²⁰⁴

Moving to 4:28, Paul begins this new phase of the argument by identifying the gentile Galatian believers (“you”²⁰⁵) as “brothers according to [the pattern of] Isaac,

²⁰¹ Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 206-7. Cf. Cothenet, “L’arrière-plan,” 458; Hays, “Galatians,” 301, who glosses κατὰ σάρκα as “‘fleshly’ stratagem.” Torsten Löfstedt, “The Allegory of Hagar and Sarah: Gal 4:21-31,” *EstBib* 58 (2000): 475-94, 478, adds a moral dimension, suggesting that κατὰ σάρκα portrays Ishmael as “sinfully conceived, the result of human reasoning going against God’s will.”

²⁰² Bligh, *Galatians*, 398-400, considers this possibility but ultimately rejects it based on Rom 4:19-20.

²⁰³ On the significance of the prepositional switch, see Martin, “Brother,” 15 n. 39.

²⁰⁴ E.g., Bruce, *Galatians*, 217, 223.

²⁰⁵ Although some manuscripts (e.g., \aleph A C D^c K P Ψ 614) conform 4:28 to 4:26 by reading ἡμεῖς . . . ἐσμὲν, Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 528, rightly prefers ὑμεῖς . . . ἐστέ based on the early and widespread support (e.g., P⁴⁶ B D* G 33 1739 it^{d, g} syr^{pal} cop^{sa}) for this more difficult reading.

children of promise.”²⁰⁶ As Cosgrove notes, Paul does not ground this claim either in the preceding citation of Isa 54:1 (as indicated by the coordinating conjunction δέ in 4:28) or in the typological comparison that follows (as indicated by the ἀλλά in 4:29). Rather, he simply asserts it.²⁰⁷ The asserted nature of this claim then suggests that 4:28 does not seek to prove the Abrahamic descent of the Galatian believers, a point that Paul has already established (e.g., 3:29). Indeed, the verse seems to assume this relationship, focusing instead simply on locating the Galatians within the flesh/promise typology of Abraham’s two sons.

Since the gentiles clearly do not descend from Abraham “according to flesh,” their identification as the alternative “children of promise” hardly requires any support.²⁰⁸ Nevertheless, Paul could easily have constructed a positive argument for the Galatians as children of promise according to the pattern of Isaac. Isaac, of course, owes his miraculous birth to God’s promises to give Abraham and his barren wife Sarah a son (Gen 15:4; 18:10, 14; cf. 21:1-2). The gentile Galatians similarly receive the Spirit of

²⁰⁶ For ἀδελφοί as nominative rather than vocative, see Martin, “Brother,” 12-16. He points out that ἀδελφοί (or other familial relationships) + κατά represents a common Greek construction for defining the nature of the specified brotherhood. In this case, “children of promise” seems to explain the significance of being brothers κατὰ Ἰσαάκ. While Paul’s expression could refer to a brotherhood shared internally among the Galatians, the implicit contrast with brothers “according to [the pattern of] Ishmael” suggests that it instead relates them to Abraham’s other children, i.e., the Jews.

²⁰⁷ Cosgrove, “Law,” 220. Contra, e.g., Longenecker, *Galatians*, 216, who suggests that the “δέ functions here as a consequential connective (‘so’),” a suggestion that has no basis in the semantic range of δέ. See LSJ, “δέ,” 371: “adversative and copulative Particle”; BDAG, “δέ,” 213: “used . . . to express contrast or simple continuation.”

²⁰⁸ As Perriman, “Rhetorical Strategy,” 31, notes, the anarthrous nature of ἐπαγγελίας signals that the promise that gives birth to the Galatians differs from the promise that gave birth to Isaac.

divine sonship as a result of God's promises to bless the nations ἐν Abraham and his seed (Gen 12:3, 22:18; cf. 18:18), promises that Paul has already discussed in 3:8-10. This same Spirit then unites the gentiles with the Jewish Christians in Christ, thereby qualifying them as sons of Abraham as well. That Paul does not review this evidence here suggests that, by this point in his argument, he feels he can take the gentile believers' status as Abrahamic children of promise for granted.

If a flesh/promise typology makes locating gentile Christians within it rather straightforward, it creates problems for another group: Jewish Christians. On the surface, a flesh/promise typology would seem to contrast Jews—i.e., Abraham's physical descendants—with the Christian gentiles who can call upon him as father only as a result of God's promises. In other words, a straightforward reading of the typology would seem to relegate all Jews—whether Christian or not—to the fleshly side of the equation. Paul therefore needs to make the case that Jewish Christians actually fall on the promissory side, a conclusion prefigured by his identifying the Galatians as “brothers” (ἀδελφοί). As the following section will make clear, he turns to this task in 4:29.

4.3.4 Merging the typologies in Gal 4:29-30: The union of Jew and gentile in Christ as the true fulfillment of the free woman's children of promise

The preceding sections have argued that 4:24-28 develops, not one, but two different typologies of Abrahamic descent. On the one hand, Paul uses the enslaved and

free statuses of the two mothers to differentiate non-Christian Jews from Christian Jews in 4:24-27. On the other hand, he uses the fleshly and promissory nature of the two sons' birth to distinguish between Jews and Christian gentiles in 4:28. The more straightforward application in the latter case accounts for its shorter length, but it also creates a problem: as noted above, the straightforward application would seem to include Christian Jews on the fleshly side of the equation. At the same time, 4:24-27 fails to address the status of the gentile Christians with respect to the free woman.

Accordingly, to complete his argument, Paul needs to correlate the Jewish Christians' status as sons of the free woman (4:24-27) with the gentile Christians' status as children of promise (4:28) and vice versa. Establishing this correlation, I suggest, forms the primary task of 4:29-30, a task symbolized by the framing descriptions of the Galatians as "brothers" (ἀδελφοί) in 4:28 and 31 (cf. 1:11; 3:15; 4:12; 5:11, 13; 6:1, 18). As I intend to show, the two ἄλλά clauses that compose 4:29-30 develop these points chastically with respect to the two typologies in 4:24-28: Gal 4:29 addresses the role of Jewish Christians in the flesh/promise typology of 4:28, while Gal 4:30 addresses the role of gentile Christians in the slave/free typology of 4:24-27.²⁰⁹ Structurally, then, the clauses function similarly to the pairs of consecutive ἵνα clauses in 3:14 and 4:5.

²⁰⁹ For alternative chiasmic proposals that involve the entire passage, see Sellin, "Hagar," 65-66; Bouwman, "Hagar," 45; Bachmann, *Antijudaismus*, 141. Sellin sees the passage developing around the allegory in 4:24-27: he pairs 4:21 and 4:31 as intro and conclusion, 4:22-23 and 4:28-30 as scripture reference and application. He further notes that lexical similarities link 4:22 to 4:30 and 4:23 to 4:29, and that 4:24-27 itself exhibits an internal chiasm pairing the mothers in 4:24b-25a/4:27 and the Jerusalems in 4:25b/26. Bouwman differs only in pairing 4:28 with the claim about Sinai in 4:24b-c. Bachmann's proposal differs from Sellin's chiasm in three main ways: 1) he understands 5:1 as the concluding counterpart to 4:21; 2) he must accordingly group 4:30-31 together as the counterpart to 4:22; and 3) he

4.3.4.1 Galatians 4:29: Locating Jewish Christians in the flesh (Jew) / promise (gentile Christian) typology

Gal 4:29

²⁹ἀλλ' ὡςπερ τότε ὁ κατὰ σάρκα γεννηθεὶς ἐδίωκεν τὸν κατὰ πνεῦμα, οὕτως καὶ νῦν.

²⁹*But just as then the one born according to flesh persecuted the one [born] according to Spirit, so also now.*

Galatians 4:29 further defines the flesh/promise typology: not only is one son born according to the flesh and the other through a promise, but the fleshly son also persecutes (ἐδίωκεν) the one born according to Spirit. The verse thus introduces the theme of persecution into the typology and re-characterizes the one born through promise as the one born according to Spirit. How do these modifications fit into Paul's argument? Any answer must account for two features of Gal 4:29: its implicit invocation of Gen 21:9 and the introductory ἀλλά that connects it to the identification of the Galatians as “children of promise” in 4:28. I will consider each of these features in turn.

I begin with the allusion to Gen 21:9. Somewhat curiously, the biblical account nowhere describes Ishmael as “persecuting” Isaac: Gen 21:9 states only that Sarah sees

agrees with Bouwman in linking 4:24a-c with 4:28 as discussing the covenants of slavery and promise, respectively. These disagreements—particularly the differing treatments of 4:28—highlight the problem areas that keep each of these larger proposals from being compelling. Bligh, *Galatians*, 390, proposes an altogether different and, in many ways, more awkward chiasm with 4:25c (“a slave and the mother of slaves”) at its center: A. 4:21-22/4:30, B. 4:23-24a/4:28-29, C. 4:24b/4:27, D. 4:24c/4:26c, E. 4:24d/4:26aβ, F. 4:25a-b/4:26aα, G. 4:25c.

Ishmael “playing” or “jesting” (παίζοντα, LXX; cf. מצחק, MT) with Isaac.²¹⁰ The key theme that Paul introduces into the typology—namely, persecution—thus has no explicit grounding in the Abraham story.

Before considering the exegetical implications of this observation, I should first note that the agitators seem unlikely to dispute Paul’s substitution of “persecution” for “playing.” The severity of Sarah’s reaction—a demand for the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael in Gen 21:10 that Paul cites in Gal 4:30—often indicated to later rabbinic interpreters that the seemingly innocuous description in Gen 21:9 euphemized a more serious offense, with proposals ranging from mockery over inheritance to idolatry to sexual immorality to shooting arrows at Isaac in an attempt to kill him (cf. Prov 26:18-19).²¹¹ As most scholars note, Paul’s lack of justification for his substitution suggests that such interpretations were probably already current in his day. Alternatively, a few interpreters propose that the characterization reflects the subsequent hostility that arose between the descendants of Ishmael and Isaac (e.g., Ps 83:4-6),²¹² but the extra layer of figuration that this reading requires makes it more easily refutable and therefore less likely. Even if the persecution represents an original Pauline gloss, however, challenging this interpretation would require the agitators to defend the justness of Ishmael’s actions

²¹⁰ The MT does not have “with Isaac” (בצחק), but the phrase could easily have been omitted as a result of homoioteleuton: מצחק בצחק. Regardless, Paul’s citation in 4:30 suggests that he is working with the LXX here.

²¹¹ See *Gen. Rab.* 53.11, *t. Sotah* 6.6, and the texts discussed in R. Le Déaut, “Traditions Targumiques dans le corpus paulinien? (Hebr 11, 4 et 12, 24; Gal 4, 29-30; II Cor 3, 16),” *Bib* 42 (1961): 28-48, 37-43; Callaway, “Mistress,” 98-99; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 200-206, 217.

²¹² E.g., Wagner, “Les enfants,” 294; Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 184.

toward Isaac, thereby calling Sarah's divinely-affirmed judgment into question. Such a scenario seems improbable, especially if, as I will argue below, they essentially agree with Paul's typological conclusion (cf. Gal 6:12).

On the positive side, the lack of any reference to persecution in the Genesis account does indicate that the present circumstances provide the impetus for Paul's characterization of Ishmael's offense as "persecuting."²¹³ This observation then argues against Angela Standhartinger's proposal that 4:29 identifies a potential objection ("Einwand") to the preceding identification in 4:28. In other words, Standhartinger effectively suggests that a lack of persecution by the "fleshly" children threatens to undermine the Galatians' status as children of promise. According to Standhartinger, Paul subsequently explains this lack in 4:30 by arguing that, in Christ, God has permanently cast out the "slavery" that motivates such persecution (cf. 3:28).²¹⁴ Although this proposal makes good sense of the initial ἄλλα, the absence of any such persecution in the Genesis text means that Paul would have no reason to raise the issue if the persecution were not a present reality.

The allusion to Gen 21:9 has another significant implication as well: it suggests that Gal 4:29 helps determine the relevance of the citation of Gen 21:10 in 4:30. This insight, however, challenges the relatively recent suggestions that Paul's overall argument contrasts slavery with freedom as a way of re-orienting the Galatians toward

²¹³ So also Bachmann, *Antijudaismus*, 139-40.

²¹⁴ Standhartinger, "Zur Freiheit," 300. She thus interprets the persecution as a *potential* present reality: "die geistlich gezeugten Kinder *verfolgt würden*" (emphasis added).

freedom.²¹⁵ The command to expel the slaves in 4:30 does not require a reference to the Galatians' persecution in order to suggest that those on the side of slavery will not inherit. Accordingly, establishing a τότε/νῦν contrast to indicate the viability of slavery and freedom as options throughout history would also not require a reference to persecution.²¹⁶ Nor does Paul need 4:29 to introduce the Galatians into the story, as Gignac suggests,²¹⁷ since Gal 4:28 has already identified the Galatians with Isaac. This type of interpretation thus finds itself unable to provide a compelling reason for the insertion of 4:29. At most, the verse would seek to encourage the Galatians toward freedom by identifying their persecutors with the alternative option, but this concretizing of slavery in the persecutors runs counter to the tendency for abstraction that this interpretation requires, suggesting that Paul's argument actually lies in a different direction.

Indeed, for most interpreters, 4:29 expands the flesh/promise typology in order to confirm the Galatians' identity as children of promise, explain their current experience of persecution as typologically grounded, and/or identify the persecutors with the fleshly descendants of Abraham. The ἀλλά that opens 4:29 troubles all of these interpretations, however, since they all build on or support the identification in 4:28 whereas, according

²¹⁵ See Bachmann, *Antijudaismus*, 151; Gignac, "Paul," 479; Brawley, "Contextuality," 115.

²¹⁶ Brawley, "Contextuality," 115, attributes this significance to 4:29.

²¹⁷ Gignac, "Paul," 479: "Lorsqu'il raconte à nouvelle frais l'histoire des deux frères, c'est pour dire à ses narrataires à quels protagonistes ils doivent s'identifier, et que cette intrigue est la leur."

to LSJ, ἄλλά always involves some sort of contrast or limitation.²¹⁸ The NIV accordingly omits the conjunction, and many scholars simply ignore it in their discussions of this verse. Richard Longenecker at least acknowledges the problem when he admits that “On the face of it, ἄλλά introduces a fact that is in contrast to the statement of v 28. Logically, however, it provides a transition to the sentence of v 29 (so ‘and’) rather than a contrast with v 28.” Tellingly, he offers no lexical support for this reading; it derives solely from his understanding of the argument’s logic. Betz grounds his similar understanding of the conjunction as “a transition to the next argument rather than an indication of contrast” in Bauer’s third definition (“other matter for additional consideration”), but all of the examples cited in BDAG involve an implicit contrast with the preceding material.²¹⁹

Some scholars do take the contrasting nature of ἄλλά seriously. I have already noted Standhartinger’s proposal that it signals a potential objection to the identification in 4:28. The aforementioned problems with her interpretation then suggest that the ἄλλά introduces a more elliptical contrast. Mußner, e.g., suggests that the conjunction presumes an implied phrase along the lines of “History repeats!” (“Die Geschichte wiederholt sich!”), with 4:29 accordingly specifying an additional, more sinister

²¹⁸ LSJ, “ἄλλά,” 67-68; BDAG, “ἄλλά,” 44-45.

²¹⁹ Betz, *Galatians*, 249. See BDAG, “ἄλλά,” 45, meaning 3, which cites Matt 11:8; John 7:49; Rom 8:35-37; 1 Cor 10:20; Gal 2:3; and Justin, *Apologia* 3.1, 10.1. Betz, of course, references an earlier edition of Bauer. Cf. LSJ, “ἄλλά,” 68, meaning II.1.

implication of that repetition.²²⁰ More commonly, interpreters understand 4:29 to contrast with the potential implication of 4:28 that, as children according to Isaac, the Galatians should be free from persecution. The verse would thus address the seeming incongruity of the Galatians' being children of promise (4:28) yet (ἀλλά) persecuted (4:29) by portraying that persecution as a typological reality.²²¹

This latter contrast represents the best explanation of the ἀλλά if the identification of the promised children remains consistent from 4:28 to 4:29, but even it fits rather poorly into the context. Nothing in the letter suggests that the Galatians' "persecuted" state has called or would call their status as children of promise into question—to the contrary, the preceding instances of διώκω in Gal 1:13, 23 both refer to Paul's persecution of the Judean church (cf. 5:11, 6:12)—and 4:30 proceeds to discuss the fate of the persecutors rather than further developing the persecution's necessity. This purported concern to justify the persecution of Abraham's promised descendants thus emerges from nowhere and leads nowhere. The current nature of the persecution in 4:29 also troubles this interpretation. That is to say, if the experience of persecution were still only a future possibility, then the Galatians might indeed question its congruity with being a child of promise. As it is, Paul's identification of the Galatians as children of promise in 4:28 already takes the current persecution into account.

²²⁰ Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 329.

²²¹ So Bouwman, "Hagar," 3143; Burton, *Galatians*, 266; Meyer, "Galatians," 210. Cf. Martyn, *Galatians*, 444, who suggests ἀλλά superficially contrasts a positive identity claim with a negative persecution claim, but who nevertheless translates the conjunction as "moreover."

I accordingly suggest that the ἄλλὰ instead signifies a shift in the identity of Abraham’s promised descendants from 4:28 to 4:29. In short, I propose that Paul expands the typology so as to include Jewish Christians with the gentile Christians (“you”) identified in 4:28 as children of promise.²²² The ἄλλὰ then signals that the simple identification of gentile Christians with Isaac does not tell the whole story. Yes, the gentile Christians clearly stand on the promissory side of the equation, *but* they are not the only ones. Yes, gentile Christians align with Isaac, *but* the typology does not therefore indicate that all of Abraham’s children according to flesh therefore align with Ishmael.

The two ways in which Paul expands the typology point to this conclusion as well. First he introduces the theme of persecution. Although many interpreters—especially scholars of the two-missions persuasion—identify the contemporary persecutors with those compelling the Galatians to circumcise,²²³ such readings produce several problems. In the first place, Paul’s characterization of his addressees in 4:21 as “those desiring to be under law” (οἱ ὑπὸ νόμον θέλοντες εἶναι) indicates that the

²²² So also Broer, “Vertreibe,” 187, 189: “V. 29 [zeigt] daß die Galater [i.e., die Heidenchristen] nicht allein gemeint sein können. . . . Paulus an einer Beziehung des ‘nach dem Geist Gezeugten’ nur auf die Galater auch nicht interessiert sein kann.”

²²³ So, e.g., Martyn, *Galatians*, 444-45; Tolmie, *Persuading*, 170; Willitts, “Isa 54,1,” 207; Boer, “Quotation,” 383; Stanley, *Arguing*, 132; Witherington, *Grace*, 337-38; Williams, *Galatians*, 131; Fowl, “Abraham’s Story,” 89; Matera, *Galatians*, 178; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 216-17; Gaston, *Paul*, 90; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 331; Hays, “Galatians,” 305-6, all of whom then further identify the agitators as the contemporary objects of the expulsion command in 4:30. Cf. Ridderbos, *Galatians*, 181, who instead sees 4:30 as a warning to the Galatians. Burton, *Galatians*, 266, also opts for this understanding of the persecution, but then curiously sees 4:30 as proclaiming the rejection of the Jews more generally. Even interpreters who see 4:29 as a general reference to Jewish persecution of Christians often highlight the agitators’ role in such persecution. See, e.g., Lagrange, *Galates*, 131; Ellicott, *Galatians*, 115.

Galatians themselves would probably not have viewed the agitators' work as "persecution."²²⁴ Paul would therefore have to intend that 4:29 suggest this viewpoint to the Galatians,²²⁵ but such over-the-top rhetoric could easily (and foreseeably) backfire given the continuing presence in the community of the apparently popular "agitators." Furthermore, the ἄλλά could then retain its contrasting nature only if it portrayed this "persecution" as an unexpected (hence, ἄλλά) yet necessary implication of the typological identification in 4:28.²²⁶ Typology, however, does not admit of such predictive necessity, not to mention that Paul creates this typological correspondence only by importing the reference to persecution into the biblical text.

More decisively, "[sons of Abraham] according to flesh" would be a singularly ineffective way to characterize the Jewish (i.e., circumcised / law observant) Christian agitators: it would neither limit the implicated to Christian Jews nor would it exclude "enlightened" Christian Jews such as Paul. Since Paul definitely excludes the latter and most scholars adopt this interpretation because they believe Paul would also exclude non-Christian Jews, this interpretation would effectively render meaningless the designation "according to flesh" and its counterpart "according to Spirit." Finally, Cosgrove rightly questions whether Paul would ever label such theological debates and disagreements—

²²⁴ Cf. Siker, *Disinheriting*, 47 n. 56.

²²⁵ So, explicitly, Tolmie, *Persuading*, 174.

²²⁶ I.e., "you are brothers according to Isaac, but this designation implies that you are also persecuted like Isaac [and therefore you should regard the agitators as persecutors]." Significantly, the ἄλλά could not serve to explain the seeming incongruity of being a promised yet persecuted Abrahamic descendant if the Galatians don't recognize their persecuted status.

however serious they might be—as “persecution.”²²⁷ Indeed, the letter’s four other references to persecution—two instances describe Paul’s earlier attempts to destroy the Judean churches (1:13, 23), one appeals to the suffering Paul undergoes for preaching the cross rather than circumcision (5:11), and one portrays the agitators themselves as wanting to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ (6:12)—all suggest the (likely physical) suffering that Christians receive at the hands of Jews. We have no compelling reason to read the persecution in 4:29 any differently. In fact, Paul’s anticipation that the agitators would agree with his typological conclusion (cf. 6:12) even explains his laxity in importing the reference to persecution into the biblical account. This shift in typology from flesh/promise in 4:28 to persecutor/persecuted in 4:29 then allows for a more favorable mapping of Christian Jews since they at the very least share in being persecuted by the ones born “according to flesh.”²²⁸

The substitution of “according to Spirit” (κατὰ πνεῦμα) for “through promise” (δι’ ἐπαγγελίας) as the counterpart to the one born “according to flesh” (κατὰ σάρκα) similarly enables the identification of Christian Jews with the promissory side of the equation. With regard to Isaac, the characterization “according to Spirit” must refer to the

²²⁷ Cosgrove, “Law,” 229 n. 39: “The term διώκω is never used in the New Testament of internal strife.” Cf. Cosgrove, *Cross*, 83-84. Similarly: Schlier, *Galater*, 226-27; Robinson, “Distinction,” 43; Meyer, “Galatians,” 210-11; Dunn, *Galatians*, 257. See also Ernst Baasland, “Persecution: A Neglected Feature in the Letter to the Galatians,” *ST* 38 (1984): 135-50, 136: “διώκω functions more or less as a technical term for persecution of Christians.”

²²⁸ Cf. Robinson, “Distinction,” 43: “There are many references in Paul’s writings to persecution of Christian Jews by their unbelieving compatriots, but there is little or no ground for thinking the Jews persecuted Gentile believers.” All four of the other instances of διώκω in Galatians refer to the persecution of specifically Jewish Christians.

Spirit's supernatural work in overcoming Sarah's barrenness.²²⁹ As the main substance of the Lord's promise to bless the gentiles (cf. 3:14; see §2.5.2-3), the Spirit also plays a critical role in relating the gentiles to Abraham as his promised children, making Paul's substitution apt. "According to Spirit," however, also covers a third group. Reception of the Spirit qualifies Christian Jews as Abraham's seed, thereby relating them to him in a new way and distinguishing them from their fellow Jews. Jewish Christians, however, receive the Spirit through the Abrahamic διαθήκη (cf. 4:1-6); although Paul can speak of their receiving "the promise of the Spirit" (3:14b) when emphasizing their solidarity with the gentiles, they receive the Spirit "through a promise" somewhat indirectly. Since, as 4:28 shows, "through promise" would have sufficed to describe gentile Christians and Isaac, the switch to "according to Spirit" therefore seems intended to broaden the typology to include Jewish Christians as well.

This understanding of Gal 4:29 as an expansion of the flesh/promise typology intended to include Jewish Christians—or at least, those Jewish Christians who align themselves with the gentiles—along with the gentile Christians on the promissory side of the equation can therefore account for the contrasting ἀλλά that opens 4:29 as well as offering a plausible rationale for the ways in which Paul has modified the typology. As the ensuing section will argue, however, it also explains the connection between the

²²⁹ Contra Burton, *Galatians*, 266, who suggests that κατὰ πνεῦμα must either refer only to the Galatians—i.e., it appears here in the place of κατ' ἐπαγγελίαν by "a species of trajection"—or else indicate that the promise of Isaac's birth also implies the ultimate bestowal of the Spirit. The first option seems overly speculative. The second falters in that Gal 3:8, 14 relates the promise of the Spirit to God's post-*Aqedah* promise in Gen 22:18 (see §2.5.2-3), not to the promise of Isaac's birth.

allusion to Gen 21:9 in Gal 4:29 and the citation of Gen 21:10 in Gal 4:30: just as 4:29 establishes the solidarity of Jewish Christians with their gentile counterparts, so 4:30 establishes the need for gentile Christians to stand united with their Jewish counterparts. In other words, Paul uses Gen 21:9-10 in 4:29-30 to connect the typology of the enslaved and free women with the typology of the sons born according to flesh and through promise.

4.3.4.2 Galatians 4:30: Locating gentile Christians in the slave (non-Christian Jew) / free (Christian Jew) typology

Gal 4:30

³⁰ἀλλὰ τί λέγει ἡ γραφή; Ἔκβαλε τὴν παιδίσκην καὶ τὸν υἱὸν αὐτῆς, οὐ γὰρ μὴ κληρονομήσει ὁ υἱὸς τῆς παιδίσκης μετὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς ἐλευθέρης.

³⁰*But what does the scripture say? "Cast out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman shall not inherit with the son of the free woman."*

Having made the case that Jewish Christians align with gentile Christians and Isaac as Spirit-based children of promise, Paul returns to the slave woman / free woman typology in 4:30 through a citation of Gen 21:10. The two main interpretations of the verse accordingly reflect the two predominant ways of understanding the slave/free contrast discussed above, i.e., as contrasting either Jews and Christians or law-observant and law-free Christian missions to the gentiles. Adherents of the former view tend to interpret the citation as proclaiming the exclusion of the Jews in favor of the

Christians.²³⁰ Adherents of the two-missions view, in contrast, typically emphasize the citation's initial imperative as a command for the Galatians to "cast out" (ἐκβάλε) the agitators and their "children"/sympathizers.²³¹ A third, minority view, however, seems to have the right idea: the citation functions neither as proclamation nor as command but as warning.²³²

Susan Eastman makes a strong case for the citation as a warning. Agreeing with Martyn's criticism of the traditional Jew/Christian interpretation that the two women signify modes of birth rather than groups of people, Eastman then notes that the typical two-missions interpretation essentially makes the same mistake: it identifies the slave woman to be expelled with the agitators and, accordingly, the free woman with Paul. Paul's inclusion of himself as a *child* of the free Jerusalem above (cf. "our mother," 4:26) and the contrast of his own labor pains (ὠδίνω) in 4:19 with the lack of labor pains (ἡ οὐκ ὠδίνουσα) experienced by the free mother in 4:27, however, make such

²³⁰ E.g., Fung, *Galatians*, 214-15; Borse, *Galater*, 176-77; Burton, *Galatians*, 267; Oepke, *Galater*, 152; Lietzmann, *Galater*, 33; Meyer, "Galatians," 211; Ellicott, *Galatians*, 115; Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 184. Not all proponents of a Jew/Christian distinction interpret 4:30 as proclamation, however. Ridderbos, *Galatians*, 182, for instance, understands 4:30 as a warning; Dunn, *Galatians*, 258, as command. Betz, *Galatians*, 251, interprets it as both proclamation and warning. The suggestion of Standhartinger, "Zur Freiheit," 300-301, that the citation proclaims the expulsion of slavery (cf. 3:28) in Christ and, thus, the expulsion of the resulting persecution seems hard to justify, either literarily or historically.

²³¹ E.g., Martyn, *Galatians*, 446; Boer, "Quotation," 383; Hays, "Galatians," 306; Witherington, *Grace*, 338; Hansen, *Galatians*, 150; Matera, *Galatians*, 178; Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 332.

²³² So, e.g., Susan G. Eastman, "'Cast Out the Slave Woman and her Son': The Dynamics of Exclusion and Inclusion in Galatians 4.30," *JSNT* 28 (2006): 309-36, 327; Cosgrove, "Law," 233; Ridderbos, *Galatians*, 182. Scholars who see warning as at least part of the citation's function include Betz, *Galatians*, 251; Tolmie, *Persuading*, 175. Cf. Bachmann, *Antijudaismus*, 143, who emphasizes the claim's positive aspect by identifying it as "eine Re-Orientierung."

identifications awkward and counterintuitive.²³³ In contrast to the sons that Paul clearly concretizes, the women should therefore remain metaphorical.²³⁴

The form of ἔκβαλε as a second-person singular imperative further troubles the interpretation of 4:30 as a command. As Eastman shows, Paul never uses a second-person singular imperative from scripture to command a group. He even changes the singular imperative in the common Deuteronomic refrain “drive out (ἐξαρῆς) the wicked person” to a plural form (ἐξάρατε) when he cites the refrain in 1 Cor 5:13 so as to make the command’s application to the group clear.²³⁵ She therefore concludes that ἔκβαλε remains addressed, as in its OT context, to Abraham, with the citation then serving as a warning of what will happen to those who align with Hagar by choosing birth according to flesh (i.e., circumcision).

Eastman convincingly disputes the view of 4:30 as a command. Indeed, while Paul’s inclusion of this initial command might indicate a secondary hope for such an expulsion, the significance of inheritance throughout his Abrahamic argument and his apparent replacement of the LXX’s μετὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ μου Ισαακ with μετὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς ἐλευθέρου—language plainly derived from the slave-free contrast in Gal 4:21-5:1—

²³³ Eastman, “Cast Out,” 317.

²³⁴ Perriman, “Rhetorical Strategy,” 41, accordingly suggests that Paul wants the Galatians to cast out “the Sinaitic covenant and its tradition of enslavement.” Cf. Di Mattei, “Allegory,” 121. While this suggestion does allow the women to remain consistently metaphorical, it cannot overcome the other problems identified above with a “command” interpretation of 4:30.

²³⁵ Eastman, “Cast Out,” 323; Eastman, *Mother Tongue*, 133. The refrain appears in Deut 17:7; 19:19; 21:21; 22:21, 24; and 24:7.

suggest that the citation's main significance lies in its exclusion of the slave woman's son from the inheritance. (If the use of the double negative οὐ . . . μὴ κληρονομήσει in place of the LXX's οὐ . . . κληρονομήσει represents a Pauline modification, then it further supports this conclusion.²³⁶) To these points we can also add Jeffrey Siker's observation that both Paul's conclusion in 4:31 and his concluding exhortation in 5:1 refer to freedom with no mention of a need to cast anyone out, thereby signaling that the command in 4:30 has at most a secondary role in the overall argument.²³⁷

Nevertheless, Eastman's analysis falters in adopting a key tenet of the two-missions view: she interprets the women as metaphors for birth through "the imposition of Sinaitic διαθήκη requirements on gentiles" and through "divine promise," respectively. Paul, however, identifies the women simply as two διαθήκαι—an identification echoed in the citation's correlation of the two women with the inheritance prospects of their respective sons—saying nothing about imposition on gentiles. Accordingly, as I argued with respect to 4:24-27, the two women do serve as metaphors of Abrahamic descent, but they represent the testaments that give birth to non-Christian Jews (i.e., the Sinaitic διαθήκη) and Christian Jews (i.e., the Abrahamic διαθήκη).

²³⁶ Paul's citation also omits the two demonstrative pronouns that appear after each instance of παιδίσκη in the LXX.

²³⁷ Siker, *Disinheriting*, 47. Cf. Bachmann, *Antijudaismus*, 138-43. It makes no difference to this conclusion whether 4:31 draws its inference directly from 4:30 or from the whole preceding argument (4:21-4:30). Siker also questions whether Paul would have had the authority to command that the Galatians cast out "authoritative leaders."

This understanding of the women as distinguishing between non-Christian and Christian Jews then clarifies how 4:30 functions as a warning. The passage begins in 4:21 with a rhetorical question asking whether those desiring to be under the law actually listen (ἀκούετε) to the law. As Willitts rightly notes, it is only here in Gal 4:30 that the law—now glossed as “the scripture” (ἡ γραφή)—finally “speaks” (λέγει).²³⁸ Read with an emphasis on its latter half, the citation of Gen 21:10 corresponds to the initial question in 4:21 by pointing out that becoming a child of Abraham through the fleshly “birth” of circumcision—and, thus, as the intervening material has established, becoming children of a slave woman—would disqualify the gentiles from sharing in Abraham’s promised inheritance. Yes, the gentile Christians are children of promise (4:28) with whom the Jewish Christians must identify (4:29), *but* (ἀλλά, 4:30) such status alone does not qualify them to inherit. Just as the Jewish Christians receive the Spirit only as a result of the promise to the gentiles, so the gentile Christians need their union with the Jewish Christians to inherit from Abraham as the sons of the free woman. If they instead seek to establish Abrahamic descent by becoming Jews, they effectively disinherit themselves. Galatians 4:21-30 thus once again demonstrates the entwined nature of Jews and gentiles in Christ: the typology of the free woman’s children of promise finds complete fulfillment only in the union of Jew (children of the free woman) and gentile (children of promise) in Christ.

²³⁸ Willitts, “Context,” 198, 207 n. 54. Cf. Hays, “Galatians,” 306; Wagner, “Les enfants,” 294.

Finally, I should note that this analysis of 4:30 as a warning in no way seeks to mitigate the clear implication that non-Christian Jews will not share in the promised inheritance. As Broer notes, this so-called “disinheriting of the Jews” has often led scholars to indict this passage as anti-Jewish.²³⁹ Significantly, however, Paul has not “disinherited” anyone. As I have argued, he leaves the Jews’ physical descent from Abraham (and Sarah!) intact with all that that relationship entails, including Israel’s existence under the law and its promises. What Paul denies Israel is a share in the inheritance promised to the Abrahamic seed, but he denies them this share because Israel is not, nor has it ever been, Abraham’s promised seed. The seed must be both a son of Abraham and a son of God, a role that only Christ and the Jews and gentiles united in him fulfill. Thus, while we might conclude that Paul’s argument would disabuse the Jews of a popular misconception, we cannot say that it actually disinherits them.

4.3.5 Concluding summary and exhortation in Gal 4:31-5:1: Gentile Christians must stand firm with their free Jewish counterparts

Gal 4:31-5:1

³¹διό, ἀδελφοί, οὐκ ἐσμὲν παιδίσκης τέκνα ἀλλὰ τῆς ἐλευθέρας. ^{5:1}τῇ ἐλευθερίᾳ ἡμᾶς Χριστὸς ἠλευθέρωσεν· στήκετε οὖν καὶ μὴ πάλιν ζυγῷ δουλείας ἐνέχεσθε.

²³⁹ Broer, “Vertreibe,” 175.

³¹Therefore, brothers, we are not children of a slave woman but of the free woman. ^{5:1a}For freedom Christ set us free; ^bstand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

Although scholars have proposed other endpoints,²⁴⁰ I suggest that the summary and derived exhortation in Gal 4:31-5:1 provide the most fitting conclusion for Paul's Abrahamic argument.²⁴¹ Supporting this interpretation, the inferential διό in 4:31 ties this verse to the preceding argument while the themes of freedom and slavery—themes that do not appear again explicitly until 5:13—unite 5:1 and 4:31 both to each other and to the larger Abrahamic argument in 4:21-30. The ἴδε and personal appeal (ἐγὼ Παῦλος λέγω ὑμῖν) that open 5:2 then signal the next phase of Paul's argument, which discusses the implications of circumcision for a person's relationship to the law and to Christ.²⁴²

As has been the case throughout this analysis, identifying whom the first-person plurals signify proves critical to understanding 4:31-5:1. A scholarly consensus regards

²⁴⁰ For 4:30 as the end of the passage, see Cosgrove, "Law," 232-33; Bligh, *Galatians*, 409; Lagrange, *Galates*, 132-33. For 4:31, see, e.g., Becker, "Galater," 71; Hansen, *Galatians*, 151; Dunn, *Galatians*, 258-59; Matera, *Galatians*, 180; Rohde, *Galater*, 206; Burton, *Galatians*, 268; Schlier, *Galater*, 228; Ridderbos, *Galatians*, 182.

²⁴¹ Galatians 4:31 seems unlikely to derive its claim from the immediately preceding citation in 4:30. The argument in 4:26-27 proving that the free Jerusalem above is "our mother" would make such an argument redundant if, as I argue in the main text, the first-person references in 4:31 refer only to Jewish Christians. Even if 4:31 includes gentile Christians, however, an inference from 4:30 alone makes little sense. Since such a proof could hardly rest on "our" not being cast out, the inference that "we" are children of the free woman would have to result from "our" being heirs, an implied claim that would itself demand some sort of proof lest it beg the question. What demonstrable inheritance the Christians might have received, however, remains a mystery. (While they have clearly received the Spirit, the Spirit cannot indicate the gentile Christians' receipt of an inheritance since they receive the Spirit through the promise and not through the διαθήκη.) Cf. Burton, *Galatians*, 268, who notes that 4:30 does not lead intuitively to the conclusion in 4:31.

²⁴² For a similar defense of 5:1 as the endpoint, see, e.g., Légasse, *Galates*, 342-43; Malan, "Strategy," 425.

them as inclusive of all Christians.²⁴³ In favor of this reading, 4:29-30 has just established the unity of Jewish and gentile Christians as children of promise and of the free woman. Paul also prefaces his conclusion by again addressing the Galatians with the familial “brothers” in 4:31. Furthermore, the exhortation in 5:1b for the Galatians not to submit to a yoke of slavery “again” could easily suggest that Paul includes them in the “us” whom Christ has freed in 5:1a.

Nevertheless, I suggest that a reading limiting Paul’s first-person plural references to Jewish Christians better conveys his intentions in 4:31-5:1. In the first place, this reading maintains the consistency of Paul’s practice throughout his Abrahamic argument of using the first-person plurals to highlight his Jewish background. Second, I have argued above that Paul consistently interprets the slave woman / free woman contrast in terms of non-Christian and Christian Jews, respectively. Finally, 4:31 claims not only that “we” are children of the free woman but also that “we” are not children of a slave woman.²⁴⁴ At no point, however, does 4:21-30 ever consider the possibility that gentile Christians descend from a slave woman. To the contrary, 4:28 simply asserts their status as children of promise.

Both the slave/free typology in 4:24-27, 30 and the flesh/promise typology in 4:28-29, however, seek to differentiate Christian Jews from the non-Christian Jews whom

²⁴³ Notable exceptions include Robinson, “Distinction,” 45, who similarly argues that all first-person references in 4:21-5:1 refer to Jewish Christians, and Martin, “Brother,” 16-18, who identifies even the second-person pronoun in 4:28 as referring to the Jewish Christian agitators. Cf. Martin, “Apostasy,” 450-56.

²⁴⁴ Burton, *Galatians*, 267, notes that the lack of an article before παιδίσκης signals a “qualitative emphasis.”

Paul identifies as corresponding to the son of the slave woman. Galatians 4:24-27 goes against convention by aligning non-Christian Jews with the slave woman Hagar while reserving the status of free children for Christian Jews. Galatians 4:28-29 then links Jewish Christians with the gentile children of promise rather than with the Jewish children of the flesh. In other words, each section of the argument seeks to establish that Jewish Christians are children of the free woman and not, as Paul's typologies might otherwise seem to suggest, sons of the slave woman.

As a strict reference to Jewish Christians, then, Gal 4:31 summarizes the most salient point of 4:21-30: Jewish Christians are sons of the free woman. Paul thus once again arrives at the same conclusion that appeared in 3:6-14 and 3:15-4:11: Christ has freed the Jewish Christians from the very slavery that "those desiring to be under law" (4:21) effectively want to embrace. In other words, as the indications of Christian unity in 4:31-5:1—i.e., the vocative ἀδελφοί in 4:31 and the indication of former slavery for the gentiles in 5:1—attest, Christ has freed the Jewish Christians to become like gentiles; the gentile Christians therefore need to stand firm and refrain from becoming Jews.²⁴⁵

²⁴⁵ Cf. Robinson, "Distinction," 44-45, who, despite some differences in details, reaches a similar conclusion with regard to the arguments in Gal 3:13-14, 3:23-29, and 4:1-11: "The appeal to the Gentile Galatians is based on, and proceeds from, the true position of believing Jews."

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that applying the principal insights from the previous chapters of this dissertation—namely, the understanding of διαθήκη in the sense of testament and the threefold delineation of Abrahamic descendants—to Gal 4:21-5:1 produces a more compelling and coherent argument than interpreters have usually found. It accordingly began in §4.2 by showing that a testamentary understanding of the διαθήκη accounts for the indications that the στοιχεῖα enslave those under law, produces a typological correspondence with the Abrahamic women, and, most importantly, explains the relevance of the citation of Isa 54:1 in Gal 4:27. As for §4.3, it argued that the slave/free and flesh/promise typologies each distinguish different groups of Abrahamic descendants, with Paul applying the slave/free typology to non-Christian and Christian Jews in 4:24-27 and the flesh/promise typology to Jews and Christian gentiles in 4:28. Invoking Gen 21:9-10, Gal 4:29-30 then merges the two typologies with the result that the union of Jewish and gentile Christians becomes the typological fulfillment of the free woman's promised children. Finally, 4:31-5:1 concludes the argument by summarizing and applying the key implication.

Read in this way, the argument of 4:21-5:1 proceeds as follows. Having asked in 4:21 whether those who desire to be under law actually listen to the law, Paul summarizes the story of Abraham's sons and their mothers so as to highlight the slave/free contrast of the mothers (4:22) and the fleshly/promissory natures of their respective sons' births (4:23). He then develops these typologies in turn.

Paul begins by identifying the women as two διαθήκαι in 4:24-27. The slave woman Hagar he associates with the Sinaitic διαθήκη on the grounds that this non-adoptive testament also gives birth into slavery, i.e., it fails to liberate its “children” from the general human slavery to the στοιχεῖα (4:24c-d; cf. 4:1-11). Locating this “Hagar-Sinai mountain” in Arabia (4:25a) then enables him to distance the διαθήκη from its normally close association with Jerusalem so that he can connect the two through their shared slavery to the στοιχεῖα (4:25b-c), a move that effectively restricts the Sinaitic testament’s relevance to the present Jerusalem since the Jerusalem above is free (4:25c-26a). While Paul can assume the slavery of the Sinaitic testament’s children, he must argue for the freedom of those Jews who participate in the adoptive Abrahamic διαθήκη. He makes this argument by citing Isa 54:1 in Gal 4:27, a verse that identifies Jerusalem as a barren woman who gains a multitude of children without ever giving birth. That is to say, she must receive her children through adoption, thereby indicating the involvement of the Abrahamic rather than the Sinaitic διαθήκη. Since this type of Abrahamic descent also qualifies its participants as sons of God, Paul christens this Jerusalem “the Jerusalem above” and identifies it as the mother of Christian Jews, i.e., of Jews who have received the divine Spirit of sonship.

Galatians 4:28 next engages the more straightforward typology of fleshly and promissory births, a distinction that naturally differentiates Jews from Christian gentiles as descendants of Abraham. The seemingly straightforward nature of this typology proves deceiving, however, since Paul does not want to suggest that all Jews necessarily

fall on the fleshly side. Accordingly, in 4:29 he expands the flesh/promise typology by respectively identifying the two groups as persecutor and persecuted and by substituting “according to Spirit” for “through a promise” as the characterizing description of the promissory birth. Since non-Christian Jews persecuted Christian Jews and reception of the Spirit differentiated the latter from the former, both of these expansions serve to unite the Jewish Christians with their gentile brothers and sisters on the promissory side of the typology. Nevertheless, the story does not end there: as 4:30 makes clear, only Abraham’s sons by the free woman will inherit. The gentile Christians must therefore unite with Abraham’s physical descendants through the free woman—i.e., the Jewish Christians—if they want to share in the Abrahamic inheritance.

The passage thus fittingly concludes Paul’s discussion of Abrahamic descent that began in 3:6 by once again affirming the interconnected nature of Jew and gentile in Christ. Just as the Jewish Christians must identify with the gentile Christians as children of promise, so the gentile Christians must stand firm in freedom with their Jewish Christian counterparts (4:31-5:1). The full typology of the free woman’s promised children thus finds its fulfillment only in the union of Jew and gentile in Christ.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Jewish sons, Christ the seed, and the gentile children of promise: A coherent model of Abrahamic descent in Galatians

This dissertation began with the observation that Galatians invokes three different images of Abrahamic descent: “sons” in 3:6-14, “seed” in 3:15-4:11, and “children of promise” in 4:21-5:1. Finding the incoherent and/or foreseeably unpersuasive arguments that result from current interpretations of these appeals to be *a priori* unlikely, it then set out to discern the coherence in Paul’s model of Abrahamic descent. This effort has produced the following analysis of Paul’s Abrahamic appeals.

Chapter 2 examined the “sons of Abraham” (3:7) designation within the context of 3:6-14, arguing that it must refer specifically to Jews and not to Christians. Understood in this way, the initial appeal to Abraham in 3:6-7 does not redefine Abrahamic sonship based on πίστις, as interpreters universally seem to suppose; rather, it highlights πίστις-based righteousness as an essential component in Jewish claims to Abrahamic sonship. Not only does this reading better accord with how the Galatians themselves would likely have heard 3:6-7, but it also avoids the numerous significant theological and contextual problems that the broadening interpretation creates. Furthermore, it provides an initial claim with which everyone involved could agree, albeit with different views on what constitutes the requisite expression of πίστις. The burden of 3:6-14 then becomes

justifying Paul’s understanding of this πίστις as a “hearing of faith” rather than as a faithfulness expressed through “works of law” (cf. 3:2, 5).

Accordingly, 3:8-10 argues that faith considered apart from works of law must ground the righteousness presumed by the Abrahamic blessing to the gentiles since, by definition, no gentile could attain righteousness under the law and remain a gentile. Galatians 3:11-12 then establishes that even the Jews’ justification truly rests not on their law observance but on the faith that underlies their observance. This distinguishing between law observance and faith prepares the way for a christological twist in 3:13-14: by becoming accursed under law, Christ effectively severs the tie between faith and law observance (3:13), thereby enabling the Abrahamic blessing—i.e., the Spirit of divine sonship—promised to the gentiles to come in him to those justified by the hearing of faith (3:14a), including to those Jews who effectively become gentiles by dying to the law and believing into Christ (3:14b; cf. 2:15, 19-20). For reasons that the ensuing arguments in 3:15-4:11 and 4:21-5:1 further explain, the Jewish sons of Abraham thus fully become Abraham’s promised descendants only by surrendering their status as traditional sons of Abraham, an act of faith that proves them to be sons worthy of their forefather’s example (cf. 3:6-7).

Chapter 3 examined the Abrahamic “seed” (3:16, 29) language in the context of 3:15-4:11, arguing that the identification of Christ as the sole Abrahamic seed in 3:16 arises out of Paul’s understanding of the Abrahamic διαθήκη as an instrument of testamentary adoption that God ratifies after the *Aqedah* in Gen 22. Understood in this way, the promised Abrahamic seed must be both a son of Abraham and a son of God, a

condition fulfilled initially by Christ (3:16) and subsequently by those united in him (3:29). The Jews and gentiles therefore both require incorporation into Christ to inherit as Abraham's seed, but they require this incorporation for different reasons. For Jewish sons of Abraham, incorporation into Christ protects them from the curse of the law so that they might share in the gentiles' Abrahamic blessing, i.e., share in the Spirit that qualifies them as sons of God. For gentiles who receive the Spirit of divine sonship as a result of God's Abrahamic promise to bless the nations, incorporation into Christ enables them to share in the Jews' Abrahamic sonship. The resulting union of Jew and gentile in Christ—the union, that is, of the Jewish sons of Abraham and the gentile sons of God—then constitutes the single divine Abrahamic seed who inherits (3:29).

This understanding of the Abrahamic seed then enables Paul's identification of Christ as Abraham's seed in 3:16 to support the verse's earlier argument for the seed's singular nature. Paul highlights this singular nature because of its implications for the law. Since God could not supplement the ratified Abrahamic διαθήκη by adding heirs (3:15), the singular nature of the Abrahamic seed proves that the law—which was given to a plurality of Israelites—cannot qualify a person to receive the inheritance promised to the Abrahamic seed (3:19-20). More positively, the singular nature of the seed explains the need for the law: God could not fulfill his promise to bless the nations with the Spirit of divine adoption without creating multiple Abrahamic seeds. He therefore gave the law to distinguish Abraham's descendants from the nations, thereby excepting them from the promise.

Ultimately, however, the law cannot annul God's previously ratified promise to Abraham to bless all the nations, including Israel (3:17-18). Instead, the law separates the Jews from the nations so that they cannot receive the Abrahamic blessing to the gentiles without transgressing the law and incurring its curse. It accordingly ensures that the Jews cannot receive the Spirit apart from their incorporation into Christ, thereby enforcing the singular nature of the Abrahamic seed. At the same time, by exposing Israel's sinfulness, the law also promotes faith as the source of righteousness, thereby encouraging the Jews to die to the law and embrace the incorporation into Christ that the law's segregating function necessitates, a step of faith that both fulfills and ends the law's role (cf. Rom 10:4). It also proves the Jewish Christians to be true sons of Abraham (cf. Gal 3:7).

Galatians 3:23-4:11 then argues for this end of the law based on the dual nature of Abraham's singular seed. On the one hand, the gentiles' status as in-Christ heirs of Abraham proves that the Jews in Christ are no longer under the παιδαγωγός of the law (3:23-29). On the other hand, the Jewish Christians' status as Spirit-filled, adopted sons of God proves that the gentile Christians are also sons/heirs of God and thus no longer enslaved to the στοιχεῖα (4:1-11), a slavery to which they would again be subjected were they to come under the law. The appeal to Abraham's seed therefore undercuts any possible motivation for the gentile Galatians to come under the Jewish law.

Finally, Chapter 4 examined the "children of promise" (4:28) language in the context of 4:21-5:1, arguing that the phrase designates specifically gentile heirs of Abraham. Understood in this way, the Isaac-Ishmael typology implied in 4:28 serves to contrast Christian gentiles with Abraham's children according to the flesh, i.e., with the

Jews. Lest the Galatians understand this conclusion to indict Christian Jews as well, Paul first differentiates between non-Christian and Christian Jews through his typological interpretation in 4:24-27 of the enslaved Hagar and the free Sarah as the non-adoptive Sinaitic testament and the adoptive Abrahamic testament, respectively. Galatians 4:29-30 then merges these two paradigms to show that the full typology of the free children of promise ultimately finds fulfillment only in the union of Jewish Christians (i.e., the children of the free woman) and gentile Christians (i.e., the children of promise) in Christ. The passage accordingly concludes by exhorting the gentile Galatian Christians to stand firm with their free Jewish counterparts (4:31-5:1).

To summarize, then, this dissertation argues that the promised Abrahamic “seed” who inherits must be both a son of Abraham and, because of Abraham’s divine adoption through the *διαθήκη*, a son of God. The dual nature of this singular seed accordingly enables “sons of Abraham” to retain its traditional denotation signifying Jews, i.e., Abraham’s physical descendants through Isaac and Jacob. “Children of promise,” in contrast, seems to refer to those gentiles who, having received the Spirit of divine sonship as a result of God’s promise to bless the nations *ἐν Ἀβραάμ*, become Abrahamic descendants through their union with Jews in Christ. This model of Abrahamic descent thus creates an interdependence in which the Jews’ reception of the Abrahamic inheritance depends on the blessing of the gentiles, the gentiles’ reception depends on the physical descent of the Jews, and everyone’s reception depends on Christ, the sole seed.

Differentiating Paul’s three images of Abrahamic descent therefore enables a coherent model of that descent to emerge in Galatians. Moreover, in contrast to more

typical interpretations, this model actually produces a coherent argument in Gal 3-4 that accords with Paul's persuasive intent, i.e., it produces an argument that the gentile Galatians could easily comprehend and the Jewish agitators could not easily refute. In light of these proposed advantages, however, it becomes necessary to account for the apparent absence of this interpretation from the letter's extensive history of interpretation. This dissertation has identified two factors in particular that help to explain the omission.

First, the extant interpretive tradition largely begins with interpreters who were likely unfamiliar with the Hellenistic practice of testamentary adoption on which this model of Abrahamic descent depends. The earliest eastern interpreter—namely, Irenaeus—does seem to have understood the Abrahamic διαθήκη in the sense of an adoptive testament (see, especially, *Epid.* 8). Other early interpretations, however, come from western scholars more familiar with Roman law, which did not provide for true testamentary adoption. That subsequent eastern interpreters such as John Chrysostom seem similarly unaware that διαθήκη could designate an adoptive testament should come as no surprise given the apparent decline/demise of the practice in the centuries after Paul, a shift probably hastened by the bestowal of Roman citizenship on all free inhabitants of the provinces in 212 C.E. Without an understanding of the Abrahamic διαθήκη as a Hellenistic adoptive testament, the argument no longer implies Abraham's divine adoption or, consequently, the dual nature of the Abrahamic seed. Not only does this loss of the seed's dual nature then make it difficult to provide a cogent explanation for Paul's asserted identification of Christ as the seed, but it also eliminates the primary rationale for distinguishing the letter's three images of Abrahamic descent.

Second, the extant interpretive tradition emerges from the context of an established gentile church with growing anti-Jewish tendencies. It thus emerges out of a significantly different cultural situation than the situation that Paul addresses when writing to the pro-Jewish, fledgling congregations of the gentile Christians in first-century Galatia. These different cultural settings produce very different readings of the claim in 3:7 that “οἱ ἐκ πίστεως, these are sons of Abraham.” The Galatians, for their part, would have had little reason to question the traditional understanding of “sons of Abraham” as an established designation for Jews and, therefore, little reason to read 3:7 as redefining this sonship. In contrast, due in large part to the clear inclusion of gentiles in the Abrahamic seed in Gal 3:29 and the conflating of Abraham’s “seed” (3:16, 29) with his “sons” (3:7) that results from a non-adoptive reading of Gal 3-4, later interpreters would approach this text with the pre-understanding that gentile Christians comprise at least part of the “sons of Abraham.” This perceived change from the traditional understanding of Abrahamic sonship then enables the possibility that 3:7 effects this change by redefining the sons of Abraham based solely on πίστις. Furthermore, once interpreters have read 3:7 as a redefinition, they can interpret the surrounding argument in such a way that it contains enough apparent support to make this reading seem viable despite the substantial problems that it creates.

In short, then, I suggest that the seeming novelty of my proposed reading derives from a rather significant lacuna in the history of interpretation, namely, the lack of any roughly contemporary interpretations. In the hundred years or so between the writing of Galatians and the writing of the first extant interpretations, the church lost touch with the

Hellenistic legal setting of Paul's argument and, based largely on Galatians itself, further developed their understanding of Abrahamic sonship. The former development eliminated the ability to understand Paul's crucial appeals to the practice of testamentary adoption; the latter gave rise to (problematical) new possibilities of interpretation. Furthermore, these two developments, evident in even the earliest interpretations of Galatians, have remained largely in place over the ensuing two thousand years, making it highly unlikely that my proposed interpretation of Abrahamic descent would make an appearance. Indeed, only the relatively recent recognition that Hellenistic societies likely continued the ancient practice of testamentary adoption into the common era has enabled this dissertation to provide a robust challenge to the problematical models of Abrahamic descent that have prevailed in interpretations of Galatians since the second century.

5.2 Implications and areas for further research

In this concluding section, I want to highlight a few of the more significant implications and areas for further research. I begin with the disputed question of the location of the Galatian churches. In this regard, I am inclined to agree with William Ramsay: the presence of an argument presuming a background in Hellenistic law suggests that the letter addresses churches in Hellenistic southern Galatia.¹ It is, of course, possible that Paul instead writes to churches in Celtic northern Galatia and simply

¹ Ramsay, *Galatians*, 180.

misjudges his audience's probable cultural competency. In the absence of compelling evidence to the contrary, however, the ability to match Paul's argumentation with his audience's cultural background makes a strong case for destinations in southern Galatia.

With respect to the agitators and their message, a scholarly consensus assumes that much of Paul's Abrahamic argument in Galatians responds directly to claims the agitators have made. In particular, the "surprising" introduction in 3:7 of the "sons of Abraham"—a designation that appears nowhere else in the Pauline corpus—suggests to many interpreters not only that the agitators have already introduced this topic but also that it constitutes the primary point of dispute in the Galatian controversy.² This dissertation, however, has argued that 3:7 does not make a radical claim about Abrahamic sonship as scholars widely assume but instead invokes Abrahamic sonship to make a (more expected) point about justification by faith. As for the unusual "sons of Abraham" designation, Paul's need to reserve his more customary "seed" language for Christ and those in him explains his use of this alternative description to designate Jews in 3:7.

Shorn of this crucial evidence in 3:7, the case for the agitators' introduction of Abraham derives primarily from the perception that Abraham truly supports only the agitators' position. That is to say, it derives from the perceived weakness of Paul's case when contrasted with the strength of the agitators' presumed Abrahamic appeal. Paul himself, after all, provides no indication that his arguments seek to rebut the agitators' use of Abraham. He never attributes any specific Abrahamic claims to the agitators, nor

² E.g., Martyn, *Galatians*, 299-300.

does he ever link their argument to Abraham. To the contrary, he always places their call for circumcision in the context of obeying the law and achieving righteousness (e.g., 5:3; 6:12-13; cf. 2:1-21; 4:8-11), never in the context of determining Abrahamic descent. Furthermore, Paul's argument in Galatians clearly uses Abraham to relativize the law's significance (e.g., 3:17-18). This dissertation's demonstration of a coherent Abrahamic argument in Gal 3-4 therefore suggests that Paul introduces the concept of Abrahamic descent into the discussion as a way of countering the agitators' insistence on law observance.

James Ropes similarly argues that Paul introduces Abraham into the discussion but finds this introduction superfluous since Gal 3:2-5 has already conclusively demonstrated the sufficiency of faith for the gentile Galatians. Ropes therefore accounts for Paul's inclusion of an Abrahamic argument by proposing that 3:6 shifts to address a second oppositional group in Galatia, namely "spiritual perfectionists" with no appreciation of Christianity's Jewish roots.³ As noted before, scholars rightly reject this proposal based on the absence of any clear differentiation between opponents in the letter. My analysis of Paul's Abrahamic argument, however, also provides a way to resolve Ropes's initial quandary, as I will now show.

Galatians 3:2-5 decisively proves the sufficiency of faith for the gentile Galatians only if one accepts Paul's dichotomy between "works of law" and the "hearing of faith." It is precisely on this point, however, that the agitators would probably balk. Rather than

³ Ropes, *Singular Problem*, 7-11. Cf. Lütgert, *Gesetz*, 60-61.

distinguishing between law and faith, the agitators seem more likely to have espoused the typical Jewish view that justifying faith ultimately finds expression in law observance, hence Paul's need to specify that 3:2, 5 has the "hearing of faith" in view rather than simply "faith."⁴ As Chapter 2 argues, 3:6-14 then serves largely to establish this dichotomy between a justification by faith that includes "works of law" and a justification based solely on "[the hearing of] faith." The need to counter the agitators' position and justify his proposed distinction thus explains the introduction of Paul's Abrahamic argument.

A final proposed implication of Paul's Abrahamic argument for the agitators—namely, the contention of Nikolaus Walter and Mark Nanos that the establishing of Christ rather than Isaac as the one true Abrahamic seed in 3:16 points to a non-Christian Jewish opposition—also appears unwarranted.⁵ The major difficulty with this view lies in the lack of explicit argumentation for the seed's identification with Christ: as Chapter 3 shows, the line of reasoning in 3:15-20 focuses on establishing the seed's singular nature—a point equally amenable to an identification of the seed with Isaac—rather than its identity. The subsequent appeal to Isaac as Abraham's paradigmatic "child of promise" in 4:28 proves difficult for this view as well. In accordance with these observations, my suggestion that Christ's status as the single seed derives from the seed's

⁴ Significantly, then, the agitators would not have argued, e.g., that a person needs faith *and* law observance, a position that presumes a distinction between the two.

⁵ Walter, "Paulus," 354; Nanos, *Irony*, 154-55. Cf. Muddiman, "Anatomy," 266, who draws a similar implication from the more general fact that Paul appeals to Abraham at all.

dual nature removes the need to posit a specifically anti-Isaac polemic and, thus, the proposed implication of non-Christian Jewish opposition.

This dissertation has significant implications for Paul's theology as well. The summary above has already noted, for instance, that Paul identifies the purpose of the law as compelling Jews into Christ, a task that the law achieves through its dual roles of emphasizing trust in God and separating Israel from the nations. By tying the role of the law to the coming of the promised Abrahamic seed, this interpretation thus resolves one of the principal issues that has plagued the New Perspective, namely, what—from Paul's viewpoint—was the problem with the law? In short, he argues that the law pertains strictly to Jews and fulfills its ultimate purpose when Jews transgress it in faith to unite with the accursed-under-law Christ. Coming under law therefore proves incompatible with being in Christ (cf. Gal 5:2-4).

Equally significant, this reading of Paul's argument offers no reason to suggest that Jesus either annuls the law or disbands Israel; Galatians maintains Israel's status throughout as God's chosen people under the Mosaic διαθήκη, with all the inherent blessings and responsibilities that that relationship entails.⁶ The consistent distinguishing of Israel from the church—i.e., from Abraham's seed—suggests that the oft-debated

⁶ This understanding thus eliminates such vexed questions as whether or not it would be better for a Jew to have died right before the crucifixion than to live past the resurrection but—for whatever reason—not come to accept the gospel.

“Israel of God” on whom Paul wishes mercy in Gal 6:16 refers to traditional Israel.⁷ The consistent distinguishing of Israel from the nations implies that both Christ’s role and the gospel itself actually differ for Jews and gentiles. This distinction then explains not only why Paul and the Jerusalem apostles differentiate the gospels of uncircumcision and circumcision in 2:7, but also why these gospels require distinct apostolates in 2:8-9. At the same time, these differences enable the interdependence of Jew and gentile in Christ in a way that avoids any hint of supersessionism and upholds the righteousness of God, allowing him to remain faithful to his promises to Abraham and the Jews without showing them partiality in comparison to the gentiles, a theme to which Paul returns in Romans.

Indeed, I hope to pursue the implications of this reading for Paul’s argument in Romans at greater length in a subsequent work. At this point, I simply note that the distinguishing of gentiles and Jews as discrete members of Abraham’s σπέρμα in Rom 4:16 (cf. 4:9-12) accords well with the suggested argument in Galatians. The mixture of natural and wild branches in the olive tree analogy of Rom 11:17-24 presents a similarly amenable image. (Significantly, whatever the tree’s sustaining root signifies—Abraham, perhaps?—it does *not* signify Israel since Paul expressly identifies Israel with the natural branches. In other words, the olive tree imagery does not portray the gentiles as being grafted into Israel.) As for the somewhat different tenor of Paul’s Abrahamic argument in

⁷ So, e.g., Susan Eastman, “Israel and the Mercy of God: A Re-reading of Galatians 6.16 and Romans 9-11,” *NTS* 56 (2010): 1-29. The τοῦ θεοῦ would not be superfluous if it provides a theological warrant for the mercy wish, a suggestion that I owe to Douglas Campbell.

Romans, I suspect that it arises from a difference in underlying situations: in Galatians, the gentile Christians essentially want to become Jews, whereas in Romans, the Jewish and gentile Christians both seem to think that they have no need of the other group (hence, e.g., the warnings against boasting in 2:17-29 and 11:17-36, respectively).⁸ The full testing and development of these initial suggestions, however, will have to wait.

Finally, although this dissertation argues for the fundamental importance of the Abrahamic διαθήκη to Paul's argument and underlying theology, it does not support the characterization of Paul as a specifically "covenantal" theologian.⁹ Characterizing him as a "testamentary" theologian would seem more apt, at least with respect to Galatians. In the Corinthian literature, however, Paul twice refers to a "new" διαθήκη, describing it as being "in [Christ's] blood" when he cites the traditional words of institution over the cup in 1 Cor 11:25 and as being "of the Spirit" rather than "of the letter" in 2 Cor 3:6, an apparent allusion to Jer 31:31-34 (cf., too, the reference to the "old" Sinaitic διαθήκη in 2 Cor 3:14). Similarly, the composite citation in Rom 11:27 (Isa 59:20, 27:9; cf. Jer 31:33-34) links God's διαθήκη with Israel to his removing of their sins.¹⁰ These allusions and, especially, the connection with blood in 1 Cor 11:25 suggest that these

⁸ In fact, I suggest that this situation prompts Paul's letter to the Romans. I therefore agree with Campbell, *Deliverance*, 495-501, in his insistence on a contingent explanation for Romans but disagree with his suggestion that the letter combats, perhaps preemptively, the same agitating influence that Paul faced in Galatia.

⁹ Scholars who emphasize the importance of covenant for Paul include Wright, *Climax*, xi; Longenecker, *Triumph*, 115.

¹⁰ The only other instances of διαθήκη in the Pauline literature—Rom 9:4 and Eph 2:12—both simply list the διαθήκῃ as benefits belonging to Israel.

instances of διαθήκη assume a more covenantal significance. How, then, can we account for this apparent fluctuation in such a seemingly fundamental term for Paul's understanding of the gospel?

I do not propose to solve this riddle fully here; such a solution would require an in-depth analysis of these other instances of διαθήκη, including an investigation of Paul's understanding of Jer 31. Rather, I will offer only a few initial observations. First, the seemingly covenantal uses of διαθήκη in Paul all appear in biblical citations (Rom 11:27), citations of Christian tradition (1 Cor 11:25), and allusions to biblical passages (2 Cor 3). Furthermore, although these citations and allusions clearly presuppose a particular understanding of διαθήκη, none of Paul's surrounding arguments appeal explicitly to the nature of the referenced διαθήκαι to make their points. Galatians 3-4 thus constitutes the only passage where Paul actually argues based on his understanding of the word. Accordingly, if we have to decide whether Paul understood the biblical διαθήκαι as testaments or covenants, I suggest that the evidence in Galatians should receive preference.

Second, too much of Paul's argument in Gal 3-4 depends on Abraham's divine adoption for the interpretation of διαθήκη as an adoptive testament to constitute an *ad hoc* formulation, a fortunate coincidence that enabled Paul to make his case specifically to gentiles while *truly* grounding the gospel in some other way. In this regard, it also seems significant that the Jerusalem pillars acknowledged the cogency of Paul's gospel (Gal 2:7-9), a point that Paul makes in defending his (testamentary) gospel's revelatory

(1:11-12) and unchanging (1:8-10) nature. I accordingly find it *a priori* unlikely that, after winning the endorsement of these Jewish Christian leaders, Paul would later shift to a more Jewish understanding of διαθήκη—thereby significantly altering his gospel—between the writing of Galatians and the writing of Romans/Corinthians.

Third, the Jewish leaders' endorsement of a gospel whose fundamental basis lies in a Hellenistic understanding of the Abrahamic διαθήκη suggests another possibility, namely, that first-century Jews understood the biblical “covenants” as more akin to contemporary Hellenistic testaments than to the Ancient Near Eastern covenants to which historically-sensitive scholars typically relate them. The biblical narratives provide some justification for such a conflation. After all, the texts refer to the land that God gives his covenant people as their “inheritance” (נחלה / κληρονομία; e.g., Deut 12:9-10), an observation that could well have prompted the translation of ברית with διαθήκη in the first place. The covenant brings the people into a special relationship with God as well, making him their God and them and their descendants his people (e.g., Gen 17:7; Exod 19:5, 6) in much the same way that an adoptive testament would bring a person into a new family. (These parallels would also help support Paul's argument against the potential objection that the Hebrew text does not support his treatment of the Abrahamic ברית as an adoptive testament.) It therefore seems possible that Jews regarded the biblical “covenant” as a special, divine form of testament. The apparent conflation of testamentary—a διαθήκη requires the death of the testator to be in force—and

covenantal—the first διαθήκη was inaugurated with blood—aspects of a διαθήκη in Heb 9:16-18 even provides potential evidence for such a scenario.

Regardless, Paul's argument in Galatians clearly seems to interpret the Abrahamic διαθήκη as akin to a Hellenistic adoptive testament. Indeed, it is this interpretation that provides the key to discerning the coherence in the letter's three images of Abrahamic descent. Abraham's divine adoption enables Paul's identification of Christ—the only naturally-begotten son of both Abraham and God—as the sole Abrahamic seed (3:16). Christ, in turn, unites the physical Jewish sons of Abraham (3:7) and the Spirit-filled gentile children of promise (4:28) into a single entity, namely, the seed who inherits (3:29). This tripartite model of Abrahamic descent then serves in Gal 3-4 as the basis for a coherent argument intended to discourage the gentile Galatians from coming under the Jewish law.

Bibliography

- Alexander, T. Desmond. "Further Observations on the Term 'Seed' in Genesis." *Tyndale Bulletin* 48 (1997): 363-67.
- Anderson, R. Dean, Jr. *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*. Rev. ed. Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 18. Leuven: Peeters, 1999.
- The Ante-Nicene Fathers*. Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. 10 vols. 1885-1887. Repr., Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.
- Asheri, David. "Laws of Inheritance, Distribution of Land and Political Constitutions in Ancient Greece." *Historia* 12 (1963): 1-21.
- Avramovič, Sima. "The Rhetra of Epitadeus and Testament in Spartan Law." Pages 175-86 in *Symposion 2001: Vorträge zur griechischen und hellenistischen Rechtsgeschichte*. Wien: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2005.
- Baasland, Ernst. "Persecution: A Neglected Feature in the Letter to the Galatians." *Studia theologica* 38 (1984): 135-50.
- Bachmann, Michael. *Antijudaismus im Galaterbrief?: Exegetische Studien zu einem polemischen Schreiben und zur Theologie des Apostels Paulus*. Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus 40. Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1999.
- . "Zur Argumentation von Galater 3.10–12." *New Testament Studies* 53 (2007): 524-44.
- Bammel, E. "Gottes ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ (Gal. III. 15-17) und das jüdische Rechtsdenken." *New Testament Studies* 6 (1959-1960): 313-19.
- Barclay, John M. G. "Mirror-Reading a Polemical Letter: Galatians as a Test Case." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 31 (1987): 73-93.
- Barker, Patrick G. "Allegory and Typology in Galatians 4:21-31." *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 38 (1994): 193-209.
- Barr, James. *Old and New in Interpretation: A Study of Two Testaments*. London: SCM, 1966.
- . *The Semantics of Biblical Language*. London: Oxford University Press, 1961.
- Barrett, C. K. "The Allegory of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar in the Argument of Galatians." Pages 154-70 in *Essays on Paul*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982.

- Bauer, Walter, Frederick William Danker, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3d ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
- Beauchet, Ludovic. *Histoire du droit privé de la république Athénienne*. 4 vols. Paris: Chevalier-Marescq, 1897.
- Becker, Jürgen. "Der Brief an die Galater." Pages 9-103 in *Die Briefe an die Galater, Epheser und Kolosser* 8/1. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998.
- Beker, J. Christiaan. *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980.
- Belleville, Linda L. "'Under Law': Structural Analysis and the Pauline Concept of Law in 3:21-4:11." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 26 (1986): 53-78.
- Berger, Klaus. "Abraham in den paulinischen Hauptbriefen." *Münchener theologische Zeitschrift* 17 (1966): 47-89.
- Bernstein, Moshe J. "כי קללת אלהים תלויית" (Deut 21:23): A Study in Early Jewish Exegesis." *Jewish Quarterly Review* 74 (1983): 21-45.
- Betz, Hans Dieter. *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia*. Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979.
- Bitzer, Lloyd F. "The Rhetorical Situation." *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 1 (1968): 1-14.
- Bjerkelund, Carl Johan. "Nach menschlicher Weise rede ich: Funktion und Sinn des paulinischen Ausdrucks." *Studia theologica* 26 (1972): 63-100.
- Blass, F., A. Debrunner, and Robert W. Funk. *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.
- Blessing, Kamila Abrahamova. "The Background of the Barren Woman Motif in Galatians 4:27." Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1996.
- Bligh, John. *Galatians: A Discussion of St. Paul's Epistle*. Householder Commentaries 1. London: St. Paul, 1969.
- Blinzler, Josef. "Lexikalisches zu dem Terminus τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου bei Paulus." Pages 2.429-43 in *Studiorum paulinorum congressus internationalis catholicus 1961*. Analecta Biblica 17-18. Rome: Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 1963.

- Boer, Martinus C. de. "The Meaning of the Phrase τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου in Galatians." *New Testament Studies* 53 (2007): 204-24.
- . "Paul's Quotation of Isaiah 54.1 in Galatians 4.27." *New Testament Studies* 50 (2004): 370-89.
- Boers, Hendrikus. *Theology out of the Ghetto: A New Testament Exegetical Study concerning Religious Exclusiveness*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971.
- Bonnard, Pierre. "L'épître de Saint Paul aux Galates." Pages 5-132 in *L'épître de Saint Paul aux Galates / L'épître de Saint Paul aux Éphésiens*. Commentaire du Nouveau Testament 9. Neuchatel: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1953.
- Bonneau, Normand. "The Logic of Paul's Argument on the Curse of the Law in Galatians 3:10-14." *Novum Testamentum* 39 (1997): 60-80.
- Borgen, Peder. "Paul Preaches Circumcision and Pleases Men." Pages 37-46 in *Paul Preaches Circumcision and Pleases Men: and Other Essays on Christian Origins*. Trondheim, Norway: Tapir, 1983.
- . "Some Hebrew and Pagan Features in Philo's and Paul's Interpretation of Hagar and Ishmael." Pages 151-64 in *The New Testament and Hellenistic Judaism*. Edited by Peder Borgen and Søren Giversen. Aarhus, Denmark: Aarhus University Press, 1995.
- Borkowski, Andrew and Paul du Plessis. *Textbook on Roman Law*. 3d ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Borse, Udo. *Der Brief an die Galater*. Regensburger Neues Testament. Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1984.
- Bouwman, Gijs. "Die Hagar- und Sara-Perikope (Gal 4,21-31): Exemplarische Interpretation zum Schriftbeweis bei Paulus." *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 2.25.4 (1987): 3135-55.
- Boyarin, Daniel. *A Radical Jew*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.
- Braswell, Joseph P. "'The Blessing of Abraham' Versus 'The Curse of the Law': Another Look at Gal 3:10-13." *Westminster Theological Journal* 53 (1991): 73-91.
- Brawley, Robert L. "Contextuality, Intertextuality, and the Hendiadic Relationship of Promise and Law in Galatians." *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 93 (2002): 99-119.

- Bring, Ragnar. *Commentary on Galatians*. Translated by Eric Wahlstrom. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1961.
- Broadbent, Molly. *Studies in Greek Genealogy*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968.
- Broer, Ingo. ““Vertreibe die Magd und ihren Sohn!”: Gal 4,21-31 im Horizont der Debatte über Antijudaismus im Neuen Testament.” Pages 167-98 in *Der bezwingende Vorsprung des Guten: Exegetische und theologische Werkstattberichte: FS Wolfgang Harnisch*. Edited by Ulrich Schoenborn and Stephan Pfürtnner. Theologie 1. Münster: Lit, 1994.
- Brondos, David. “The Cross and the Curse: Galatians 3.13 and Paul’s Doctrine of Redemption.” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 81 (2001): 3-32.
- Brondos, David A. *Paul on the Cross: Reconstructing the Apostle’s Story of Redemption*. Fortress: Minneapolis, 2006.
- Brown, John. *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians*. New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1853.
- Bruce, F. F. *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982.
- Bruns, Karl Georg and Eduard Sachau. *Syrisch-römisches Rechtsbuch aus dem fünften Jahrhundert*. Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1880. Repr., Aalen: Scientia, 1961.
- Buckland, W. W. *A Text-Book of Roman Law from Augustus to Justinian*. 2d ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950.
- Bultmann, Rudolph. *Theology of the New Testament*. Translated by Kendrick Grobel. 2 vols. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1951-1955.
- Burke, Trevor J. *Adopted into God’s Family: Exploring a Pauline Metaphor*. New Studies in Biblical Theology 22. Downer’s Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2006.
- Burton, Ernest de Witt. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*. International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1980.
- Byrne, Brendan. *Sons of God, Seed of Abraham: A Study of the Idea of the Sonship of God of All Christians in Paul against the Jewish Background*. Rome: Biblical Institute, 1979.
- Calder, W. M. “Adoption and Inheritance in Galatia.” *Journal of Theological Studies* 31 (1930): 372-74.

- Callan, Terrance, Jr. "The Law and the Mediator: Ga. 3:19b-20." Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1976.
- Callaway, Mary C. "The Mistress and the Maid: Midrashic Traditions behind Galatians 4:21-31." *Radical Religion* 2 (1975): 94-101.
- Calvert-Koyzis, Nancy. *Paul, Monotheism and the People of God: The Significance of Abraham Traditions for Early Judaism and Christianity*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 273. London: T&T Clark International, 2004.
- Calvin, John. "Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians." Pages 11-188 in *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I & II Thess., I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon*. Calvin's Commentaries 21. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005.
- Campbell, Douglas A. *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.
- . *The Quest for Paul's Gospel: A Suggested Strategy*. London: T&T Clark International, 2005.
- . "Romans 1:17 -- A *Crux Interpretum* for the ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ Debate." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 113 (1994): 265-85.
- Castelli, Elizabeth A. "Allegories of Hagar: Reading Galatians 4.21-31 with Postmodern Feminist Eyes." Pages 228-50 in *The New Literary Criticism and the New Testament*. Edited by Edgar V. McKnight and Elizabeth Struthers Malbon. Valley Forge, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 1994.
- Cavallin, H. C. C. "'The Righteous Shall Live by Faith': A Decisive Argument for the Traditional Interpretation." *Studia theologica* 32 (1978): 33-43.
- Champlin, Edward. *Final Judgments: Duty and Emotion in Roman Wills 200 B.C.—A.D. 250*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.
- Chilton, Bruce D. *The Isaiah Targum: Introduction, Translation, Apparatus and Notes*. The Aramaic Bible 11. Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1987.
- Christiansen, Irmgard. *Die Technik der allegorischen Auslegungswissenschaft bei Philon von Alexandria*. Beiträge zur Geschichte der biblischen Hermeneutik 7. Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1969.
- Cohen, David. *Law, Violence, and Community in Classical Athens*. Key Themes in Ancient History. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

- Cole, R. Alan. *The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians: An Introduction and Commentary*. 2d ed. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries 9. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989.
- Collins, Adela Yarbro. "The Dream of a New Jerusalem at Qumran." Pages 231-54 in *The Scrolls and Christian Origins*. Edited by James H. Charlesworth. Vol. 3 of *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls: The Second Princeton Symposium on Judaism and Christian Origins*. Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2006.
- Collins, C. John. "Galatians 3:16: What Kind of Exegete Was Paul?" *Tyndale Bulletin* 54 (2003): 75-86.
- Collins, Jack. "A Syntactical Note (Genesis 3:15): Is the Woman's Seed Singular or Plural?" *Tyndale Bulletin* 48 (1997): 139-48.
- Collins, John J. *Jerusalem and the Temple in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature of the Second Temple Period*. International Rennert Guest Lecture Series 1. Jerusalem: Ingeborg Rennert Center for Jerusalem Studies, 1998.
- Corpus Christianorum: Series latina. Turnhout, 1953-.
- Cosgrove, Charles H. "Arguing Like a Mere Human Being: Galatians 3. 15-18 in Rhetorical Perspective." *New Testament Studies* 34 (1988): 536-49.
- . *The Cross and the Spirit: A Study in the Argument and Theology of Galatians*. Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1988.
- . "The Law Has Given Sarah No Children (Gal. 4:21-30)." *Novum Testamentum* 29 (1987): 219-35.
- Cothenet, Édouard. "À l'arrière-plan de l'allégorie d'Agar et se Sara (Ga 4,21-31)." Pages 457-65 in *De la Tora au Messie: Études d'exégèse et d'herméneutique bibliques offertes à Henri Cazelles pour ses 25 années d'enseignement à l'Institut catholique de Paris (octobre 1979)*. Paris: Desclée, 1981.
- Cranford, Michael. "The Possibility of Perfect Obedience: Paul and an Implied Premise in Galatians 3:10 and 5:3." *Novum Testamentum* 36 (1994): 242-58.
- Crownfield, Frederic R. "The Singular Problem of the Dual Galatians." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 64 (1945): 491-500.
- Dahl, Nils Alstrup. "The Atonement--An Adequate Reward for the Akedah? (Ro 8 : 32)." Pages 15-29 in *Neotestamentica et Semitica: Studies in Honor of Matthew Black*. Edited by E. Earle Ellis and Max Wilcox. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1969.

- . “Promise and Fulfillment.” Pages 121-36 in *Studies in Paul: Theology for the Early Christian Mission*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977. Repr. from *Israel, Kirken og verden*, ed. by M. Saebo. Oslo: Land og Kirke (Gyldendal), 1972.
- Das, A. Andrew. *Paul, the Law, and the Covenant*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2001.
- Daube, David. *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism*. Jordan Lectures in Comparative Religion 2. London: Athlone, 1956.
- Dautzenberg, Gerhard. “‘Da ist nicht männlich und weiblich’: Zur Interpretation von Gal 3,28.” *Kairos* n.s. 24 (1982): 181-206.
- Davidson, Richard M. *Typology in Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutical ΤΥΠΟΣ Structures*. Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series 2. Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1981.
- Davies, G. I. “Hagar, el-Heğra and the Location of Mount Sinai: With an Additional Note on Reqem.” *Vetus Testamentum* 22 (1972): 152-63.
- Davis, Anne. “Allegorically Speaking in Galatians 4:21-5:1.” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 14 (2004): 161-74.
- Davis, Basil S. *Christ as Devotio: The Argument of Galatians 3:1-14*. Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2002.
- Debanné, Marc J. “Analysis of Enthymemes in Galatians.” Appendix D2 to *Enthymemes in the Letters of Paul*. Library of New Testament Studies 303. London: T&T Clark International, 2006. Cited 14 March 2010. Online: <http://ntgateway.com/debanne/gal.pdf>.
- Di Mattei, Steven. “Paul’s Allegory of the Two Covenants (Gal 4.21-31) in Light of First-Century Hellenistic Rhetoric and Jewish Hermeneutics.” *New Testament Studies* 52 (2006): 102-22.
- Doeve, J. W. *Jewish Hermeneutics in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts*. Theologische Bibliothek 24. Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1954.
- Donaldson, T. L. “The ‘Curse of the Law’ and the Inclusion of the Gentiles: Galatians 3.13-14.” *New Testament Studies* 32 (1986): 94-112.
- Donaldson, Terence L. *Paul and the Gentiles: Remapping the Apostle’s Convictional World*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997.
- . “Zealot and Convert: The Origin of Paul’s Christ Torah Antithesis.” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 51 (1989): 655-82.

- Dorssen, Jan Christian Cornelis van. *De derivata van de stam ידשׁ in het Hebreeuwsch van het Oude Testament (with a Summary in English)*. Amsterdam: Drukkerij Holland N.V., 1951.
- Dumbrell, William J. "Abraham and the Abrahamic Covenant in Galatians 3:1-14." Pages 19-32 in *The Gospel to the Nations: Perspectives on Paul's mission: In Honor of Peter T. O'Brien*. Edited by Peter Bolt and Mark Thompson. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2000.
- Dunn, James D. G. *The Epistle to the Galatians*. Black's New Testament Commentaries. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1993.
- . "Works of the Law and the Curse of the Law (Galatians 3,10-14)." *New Testament Studies* 31 (1985): 523-42.
- Eastman, Susan. "Israel and the Mercy of God: A Re-reading of Galatians 6.16 and Romans 9-11." *New Testament Studies* 56 (2010): 1-29.
- . *Recovering Paul's Mother Tongue: Language and Theology in Galatians*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007.
- Eastman, Susan G. "'Cast Out the Slave Woman and her Son': The Dynamics of Exclusion and Inclusion in Galatians 4.30." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 28 (2006): 309-36.
- Eckstein, Hans-Joachim. *Verheißung und Gesetz: Eine exegetische Untersuchung zu Galater 2,15-4,7*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 86. Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1996.
- Ellicott, Charles J. *A Commentary, Critical and Grammatical, on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, with a Revised Translation*. Andover: Warren F. Draper, 1865.
- Elliott, Susan M. "Choose Your Mother, Choose Your Master: Galatians 4:21-5:1 in the Shadow of the Anatolian Mother of the Gods." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 118 (1999): 661-83.
- Elliott, Susan Margaret. "The Rhetorical Strategy of Paul's Letter to the Galatians in Its Anatolian Cultic Context: Circumcision and the Castration of the *Galli* of the Mother of the Gods." Ph.D. diss., Loyola University, 1997.
- Esler, Philip F. *Galatians*. New Testament Readings. London: Routledge, 1998.
- Fee, Gordon D. *Galatians*. Pentecostal Commentary. Blandford Forum, U.K.: Deo, 2007.

- . *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.
- Ferguson, William Scott. "Athens and Hellenism." *The American Historical Review* 16 (1910): 1-10.
- Finlan, Stephen. *The Background and Content of Paul's Cultic Atonement Metaphors*. Society of Biblical Literature Academia Biblica 19. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004.
- Fitzmeyer, Joseph A. "The Letter to the Galatians." Pages 2:236-46 in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Edited by Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, and Roland E. Murphy. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1968.
- . "The Use of Explicit Old Testament Quotations in Qumran Literature and in the New Testament." *New Testament Studies* 7 (1961): 297-333.
- Fowl, Stephen. "Who Can Read Abraham's Story?: Allegory and Interpretive Power in Galatians." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 55 (1994): 77-95.
- Fraser, J. "Inheritance by Adoption and Marriage in Phrygia, as Shown in the Epitaphs of Trophimos and His Relatives." Pages 137-53 in *Studies in the History and Art of the Eastern Provinces of the Roman Empire Written for the Quartercentenary of the University by Seven of Its Graduates*. Edited by William M. Ramsay. Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1906.
- Fuller, Daniel P. *Gospel and Law: Contrast or Continuum? The Hermeneutics of Dispensationalism and Covenant Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980.
- Fung, Ronald Y. K. *The Epistle to the Galatians*. New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988.
- Gardner, Jane F. *Family and Familia in Roman Law and Life*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1998.
- Garlington, Don. "Role Reversal and Paul's Use of Scripture." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 65 (1997): 85-121.
- Gaston, Lloyd. *Paul and the Torah*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987. Repr., Eugene, Ore.: Wipf and Stock, 2006.
- Gathercole, Simon J. "Torah, Life, and Salvation: Leviticus 18:5 in Early Judaism and the New Testament." Pages 126-45 in *From Prophecy to Testament: The Function of the Old Testament in the New*. Edited by Craig A. Evans. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2004.

- Gerber, Daniel. "Ga 4,21-31 ou l'indéfinissable méthode?" Pages 165-76 in *Typologie biblique: De quelques figures vives*. Lectio divina. Paris: Cerf, 2002.
- Gernet, Louis. "La loi de Solon sur le « testament »." Pages 121-49 in *Droit et société dans la Grèce ancienne*. Publications de l'Institut de droit romain de l'Université de Paris 13. Paris: Sirey, 1964. Repr. from Paris: Recueil Sirey, 1955.
- Gese, Hartmut. "τὸ δὲ Ἀγὰρ Σινᾶ ὄρος ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ Ἀραβίᾳ (Gal 4 25)." Pages 81-94 in *Das Ferne und nahe Wort: Festschrift Leonhard Rost zur Vollendung seines 70. Lebensjahres am 30. November 1966 gewidmet*. Edited by Fritz Maass. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 105. Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1967.
- Gignac, Alain. "Lorsque Paul «raconte» Abraham, Agar et l'autre femme: Narrativité et intertextualité en Ga 4,21-5,1." Pages 463-80 in *Analyse narrative et Bible: deuxième colloque international du RRENAB, Louvain-la-Neuve, avril 2004*. Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum lovaniensium 191. Leuven: Peeters, 2005.
- Gombis, Timothy G. "The 'Transgressor' and the 'Curse of the Law': The Logic of Paul's Argument in Galatians 2-3." *New Testament Studies* 53 (2007): 81-93.
- Goppelt, Leonhard. *TYPOS: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New*. Translated by Donald H. Madvig. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982.
- Grant-Davie, Keith. "Rhetorical Situations and Their Constituents." *Rhetoric Review* 15 (1994): 264-79.
- Grindheim, Sigurd. "Apostate Turned Prophet: Paul's Prophetic Self-Understanding and Prophetic Hermeneutic with Special Reference to Galatians 3.10-12." *New Testament Studies* 53 (2007): 545-65.
- Guthrie, Donald. *Galatians*. New Century Bible. London: Oliphants, 1974. Repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981.
- Hahn, Scott W. "Covenant, Oath, and the Aqedah: Διαθήκη in Galatians 3:15-18." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 67 (2005): 79-100.
- Halmel, Anton. *Über römisches Recht im Galaterbrief: Eine Untersuchung zur Geschichte des Paulinismus*. Essen: G. D. Bädeker, 1895.
- Hamerton-Kelly, R. G. "Sacred Violence and the Curse of the Law (Galatians 3:13): The Death of Christ as a Sacrificial Travesty." *New Testament Studies* 36 (1990): 98-118.

- Hansen, G. Walter. *Abraham in Galatians: Epistolary and Rhetorical Contexts*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 29. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989.
- . *Galatians*. The IVP New Testament Commentary Series. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1994.
- Hanson, Anthony Tyrrell. *Studies in Paul's Technique and Theology*. London: SPCK, 1974.
- Hanson, R. P. C. *Allegory and Event: A Study of the Sources and Significance of Origen's Interpretation of Scripture*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003.
- Harrison, A. R. W. *The Law of Athens*. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1968-71. Repr., Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett, 1998.
- Harvey, A. E. "The Opposition to Paul." Pages 321-33 in *The Galatians Debate: Contemporary Issues in Rhetorical and Historical Interpretation*. Edited by Mark D. Nanos. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2007. Repr. from pages 319-32 in vol. 4 of *Studia evangelica*. Edited by F. L. Cross. Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur 102. Berlin: Akademie, 1968.
- Hays, Richard B. *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel's Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.
- . *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*. New Haven: Yale, 1989.
- . *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11*. 2d ed. Biblical Resource Series. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.
- . "The Letter to the Galatians." Pages 181-348 in *2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*. The New Interpreter's Bible 11. Nashville: Abingdon, 2000.
- Hekster, Olivier. *Rome and its Empire, AD 193-284*. Debates and Documents in Ancient History. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008.
- Heraclitus. *Homeric Problems*. Translated by David Konstan and Donald A. Russell. Writings from the Greco-Roman World 14. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005.
- Hester, James D. *Paul's Concept of Inheritance: A Contribution to the Understanding of Heilsgeschichte*. Scottish Journal of Theology Occasional Papers 14. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1968.

- Hirsch, Emanuel. "Zwei Fragen zu Galater 6." *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 29 (1930): 192-97.
- Hooker, M. D. "Interchange in Christ." *Journal of Theological Studies* 22 (1971): 349-61.
- Howard, George. *Crisis in Galatia*. 2d ed. Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 35. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Hübner, Hans. *Law in Paul's Thought*. Translated by James C. G. Greig. Studies of the New Testament and Its World. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1984.
- Hughes, John J. "Hebrews 9:15ff and Galatians 3:15ff: A Study in Covenant Practice and Procedure." *Novum Testamentum* 21 (1979): 27-96.
- Humphreys, S. C. "Family Tombs and Tomb Cult in Ancient Athens: Tradition or Traditionalism?" *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 100 (1980): 96-126.
- Jewett, Robert. "The Agitators and the Galatian Congregation." *New Testament Studies* 17 (1971): 198-212.
- Jobes, Karen H. "Jerusalem, Our Mother: Metalepsis and Intertextuality in Galatians 4:21-31." *Westminster Theological Journal* 55 (1993): 299-320.
- Johnson Hodge, Caroline. *If Sons, Then Heirs: A Study of Kinship and Ethnicity in the Letters of Paul*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Jolowicz, H. F. and Barry Nicholas. *Historical Introduction to the Study of Roman Law*. 3d ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972.
- Jones, A. H. M. *The Greek City from Alexander to Justinian*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1940.
- Juel, Donald. *Messianic Exegesis: Christological Interpretation of the Old Testament in Early Christianity*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988.
- Keesmaat, Sylvia C. *Paul and His Story: (Re)Interpreting the Exodus Tradition*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series 181. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999.
- Kennedy, George A. *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984.
- Kertelge, Karl. "Rechtfertigung" bei Paulus: Studien zur Struktur und zum Bedeutungsgehalt des paulinischen Rechtfertigungsbegriffs. Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen, neue Folge 3. Münster: Aschendorff, 1967.

- Kim, Seyoon. *Paul and the New Perspective: Second Thoughts on the Origin of Paul's Gospel*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.
- King, Daniel Hayden. "Paul and the Tannaim: A Study in Galatians." *Westminster Theological Journal* 45 (1983): 340-70.
- Kittel, G. and G. Friedrich, eds. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Translated by G. W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-1976.
- Klein, Günter. *Rekonstruktion und Interpretation: Gesammelte Aufsätze zum Neuen Testament*. Beiträge zur evangelischen Theologie 50. München: Chr. Kaiser, 1969.
- Koch, Dietrich-Alex. "Der Text von Hab 2 4b in der Septuaginta und im Neuen Testament." *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 76 (1985): 68-85.
- . *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums: Untersuchungen zur Verwendung und zum Verständnis der Schrift bei Paulus*. Beiträge zur historischen Theologie 69. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1986.
- Kreller, Hans. *Erbrechtliche Untersuchungen auf Grund der gräko-ägyptischen Papyrusurkunden*. Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1919. Repr., Aalen: Scientia, 1970.
- Lagrange, M. J. *Saint Paul Épître aux Galates*. 2d ed. Études bibliques. Paris: Gabalda, 1950.
- Lane Fox, Robin. "Aspects of Inheritance in the Greek World." Pages 208-32 in *Crux: Essays in Greek History Presented to G. E. M. de Ste. Croix on His 75th Birthday*. Edited by P. A. Cartledge and F. D. Harvey. London: Duckworth, 1985.
- Lategan, B. C. "The Argumentative Situation of Galatians." Pages 383-95 in *The Galatians Debate: Contemporary Issues in Rhetorical and Historical Interpretation*. Edited by Mark D. Nanos. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2002. Repr. from *Neotestamentica* 26.2 (1992).
- Lategan, Bernard. "Is Paul Defending His Apostleship in Galatians? The Function of Galatians 1.11-12 and 2.19-20 in the Development of Paul's Argument." *New Testament Studies* 34 (1988): 411-30.
- Le Cornu, Hilary and Joseph Shulam. *A Commentary on the Jewish Roots of Galatians*. Jerusalem: Academon, 2005.
- Le Déaut, R. "Traditions Targumiques dans le corpus paulinien? (Hebr 11, 4 et 12, 24; Gal 4, 29-30; II Cor 3, 16)." *Biblica* 42 (1961): 28-48.

- Leduc, Claudine. "L'adoption dans la cité des Athéniens, VI^e siècle-IV^e siècle av. J.-C." *Pallas* 48 (1998): 175-202.
- Légasse, Simon. *L'Épître de Paul aux Galates*. Lectio divina, commentaires 9. Paris: Cerf, 2000.
- Levenson, Jon D. *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.
- Liddell, H. G., R. Scott, and H. S. Jones. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. 9th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Lietzmann, Hans. *An die Galater*. 4th ed. Handbuch zum Neuen Testament 10. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1971.
- Lightfoot, J. B. *St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians: A Revised Text with Introduction, Notes and Dissertations*. 1865. Repr., Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1999.
- Lincoln, Andrew T. *Paradise Now and Not Yet: Studies in the Role of the Heavenly Dimension in Paul's Thought with Special Reference to His Eschatology*. Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 43. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.
- Lipsius, R. A. *Briefe an die Galater, Römer, Philipper*. 2d rev. ed. Hand-Commentar zum Neuen Testament 2.2. Freiburg: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1892.
- Löfstedt, Torsten. "The Allegory of Hagar and Sarah: Gal 4:21-31." *Estudios Biblicos* 58 (2000): 475-94.
- Longenecker, Bruce W. "Sharing in Their Spiritual Blessings? The Stories of Israel in Galatians and Romans." Pages 58-84 in *Narrative Dynamics in Paul: A Critical Assessment*. Edited by Bruce W. Longenecker. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002.
- . *The Triumph of Abraham's God: The Transformation of Identity in Galatians*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998.
- Longenecker, Richard N. *Galatians*. Word Biblical Commentary 41. Nashville: Nelson Reference & Electronic, 1990.
- Lührmann, Dieter. *Galatians*. Translated by O. C. Dean, Jr. Continental Commentaries. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992.

- Lull, David John. "The Law was our Pedagogue': A Study in Galatians 3:19-25." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 105 (1986): 481-98.
- . *The Spirit in Galatia: Paul's Interpretation of Pneuma as Divine Power*. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 49. Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1980. Repr., Eugene, Ore.: Wipf and Stock, 2006.
- Lüttger, Wilhelm. *Gesetz und Geist: Eine Untersuchung zur Vorgeschichte des Galaterbriefes*. Beiträge zur Förderung christlicher Theologie 22/6. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1919.
- Luther, Martin. *Commentary on Galatians: Modern-English Edition*. Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1988.
- Luz, Ulrich. "Der alte und neue Bund bei Paulus und im Hebräerbrief." *Evangelische Theologie* 27 (1967): 318-36.
- Lyall, Francis. "Roman Law in the Writings of Paul: Adoption." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88 (1969): 458-66.
- Lyonnet, S. "L'emploi paulinien de ἐξαγοράζειν au sens de 'redimere' est-il attesté dans la littérature grecque?" *Biblica* 42 (1961): 85-89.
- Lyons, George. *Pauline Autobiography: Toward a New Understanding*. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 73. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985.
- MacDowell, Douglas M. *The Law in Classical Athens*. Aspects of Greek and Roman Life. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1978.
- Maier, Christl M. "Psalm 87 as a Reappraisal of the Zion Tradition and Its Reception in Galatians 4:26." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 69 (2007): 473-86.
- Malan, F. S. "The Strategy of Two Opposing Covenants: Galatians 4:21-5:1." *Neotestamentica* 26 (1992): 425-40.
- Malina, Bruce J. and John J. Pilch. *Social-Science Commentary on the Letters of Paul*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006.
- Martens, Peter W. "Revisiting the Allegory/Typology Distinction: The Case of Origen." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 16 (2008): 283-317.
- Martin, Troy. "Pagan and Judeo-Christian Time-Keeping Schemes in Gal 4.10 and Col 2.16." *New Testament Studies* 42 (1996): 105-19.

- Martin, Troy W. "Apostasy to Paganism: The Rhetorical Stasis of the Galatian Controversy." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 114 (1995): 437-61.
- . "The Brother Body: Addressing and Describing the Galatians and the Agitators as Ἀδελφοί." *Biblical Research* 47 (2002): 5-18.
- . "The Covenant of Circumcision (Genesis 17:9-14) and the Situational Antitheses in Galatians 3:28." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 122 (2003): 111-25.
- . "Whose Flesh? What Temptation? (Galatians 4.13-14)." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 74 (1999): 65-91.
- Martínez, Florentino García and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, eds. *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*. 2 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1997-1998.
- Martyn, J. Louis. "The Covenants of Hagar and Sarah." Pages 160-92 in *Faith and History: Essays in Honor of Paul W. Meyer*. Edited by John T. Carroll, Charles H. Cosgrove, and E. Elizabeth Johnson. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990.
- . *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Anchor Bible 33A. New York: Doubleday, 1997.
- Marxsen, Willi. *Einleitung in das Neue Testament: Eine Einführung in ihre Probleme*. 4th ed. Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1978.
- . *Introduction to the New Testament: An Approach to its Problems*. Translated by Geoffrey Buswell. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968.
- Matera, Frank J. *Galatians*. Sacra Pagina 9. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 1992.
- Matlock, R. Barry. "Detheologizing the ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ Debate: Cautionary Remarks from a Lexical Semantic Perspective." *Novum Testamentum* 42 (2000): 1-23.
- . "ΠΙΣΤΙΣ in Galatians 3.26: Neglected Evidence for 'Faith in Christ'?" *New Testament Studies* 49 (2003): 433-39.
- Mayordomo, Moisés. *Argumentiert Paulus logisch? Eine Analyse vor dem Hintergrund antiker Logik*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 188. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005.
- McClane, Curtis D. "The Hellenistic Background to the Pauline Allegorical Method in Galatians 4:21-31." *Restoration Quarterly* 40 (1998): 125-35.

- McLean, B. Hudson. *The Cursed Christ: Mediterranean Expulsion Rituals and Pauline Soteriology*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 126. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996.
- McNamara, Martin. “τὸ δὲ Ἄγαρ Σινᾶ ὄρος ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ Ἀραβίᾳ” (Gal. 4:25): Paul and Petra.” *Milltown Studies* 2 (1978): 24-41.
- Meeks, Wayne A. “The Image of the Androgyne: Some Uses of a Symbol in Earliest Christianity.” *History of Religions* 13 (1974): 165-208.
- Meiser, Martin. *Galater*. Novum Testamentum Patristicum 9. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007.
- Mendenhall, George E. and Gary A. Herion, “Covenant,” *ABD* 1:1179-202.
- Metzger, Bruce M. *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*. 2d ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994.
- Meyer, Heinrich August Wilhelm. “Critical and Exegetical Hand-book to the Epistle to the Galatians.” Pages 1-275 in *Galatians and Ephesians*. Meyer’s Commentary on the New Testament 7. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1884.
- Minde, Hans-Jürgen van der. *Schrift und Tradition bei Paulus*. Paderborner theologische Studien 3. München: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1976.
- Misener, Geneva. *The Meaning of GAP*. Baltimore: The Lord Baltimore Press, 1904.
- Mitchell, Stephen. *Anatolia: Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor*. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1993.
- Mitteis, Ludwig. *Reichsrecht und Volksrecht in den östlichen Provinzen des römischen Kaiserreichs. Mit Beiträgen zur Kenntniss des griechischen Rechts und der spätrömischen Rechtsentwicklung*. Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1891.
- Moberly, R. W. L. *The Bible, Theology, and Faith: A Study of Abraham and Jesus*. Cambridge Studies in Christian Doctrine. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Mommsen, Theodor. “Zur Lebensgeschichte des jüngeren Plinius.” Pages 366-468 in *Gesammelte Schriften IV: Historische Schriften I*. Berlin: Weidmann, 1906.
- Moore-Crispin, Derek R. “Galatians 4:1-9: The Use and Abuse of Parallels.” *The Evangelical Quarterly* 60 (1989): 203-23.

- . “The Sources and Meaning of ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ and Related Terminology in Galatians III.15 - IV.7.” Ph.D. diss., University of London, 1975.
- Morales, Rodrigo José. “The Spirit and the Restoration of Israel: New Exodus and New Creation Motifs in Galatians.” Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 2007.
- Morland, Kjell Arne. “Expansion and Conflict: The Rhetoric of Hebrew Bible Citations in Galatians 3.” Pages 251-71 in *Recruitment, Conquest, and Conflict: Strategies in Judaism, Early Christianity, and the Greco-Roman World*. Edited by Peder Borgen, Vernon K. Robbins, and David B. Gowler. Emory Studies in Early Christianity 6. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998.
- . *The Rhetoric of Curse in Galatians: Paul Confronts Another Gospel*. Emory Studies in Early Christianity. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995.
- Muddiman, John. “An Anatomy of Galatians.” Pages 257-70 in *Crossing the Boundaries: Essays in Biblical Interpretation in Honor of Michael D. Goulder* Edited by Stanley E. Porter, Paul Joyce, and David E. Orton. Biblical Interpretation Series 8. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994.
- Munck, Johannes. *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*. Translated by Clarke Frank. Richmond: John Knox, 1959.
- Mußner, Franz. *Der Galaterbrief*. Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament 9. St. Benno: Leipzig, 1974.
- Nanos, Mark D. *The Irony of Galatians: Paul’s Letter in First-Century Context*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002.
- . “What Does ‘Present Jerusalem’ (Gal 4:25) in Paul’s Allegory Have to Do with the Jerusalem of Paul’s Time, or the Concerns of the Galatians?” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Central States Region of the SBL. St. Louis, Mo., 28 March 2004. Cited 14 March 2010. Online: <http://www.marknanos.com/Allegory-Web-Temp-5-2-04.pdf>.
- Norton, Frederick Owen. *A Lexicographical and Historical Study of ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ from the Earliest Times to the End of the Classical Period*. Historical and Linguistic Studies in Literature related to the New Testament, Second Series: Linguistic and Exegetical Studies 1.6. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1908.
- Noth, Martin. “‘For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse’.” Pages 118-31 in *The Laws in the Pentateuch and Other Studies*. Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1966.
- O’Neill, J. C. “‘For this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia’ (Galatians 4.25).” Pages 210-19 in *The Old Testament in the New Testament: Essays in Honor of J.L. North*.

Edited by Steve Moyise. *Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series 189*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000.

———. *The Recovery of Paul's Letter to the Galatians*. London: SPCK, 1972.

Oepke, Albrecht. *Der Brief des Paulus an die Galater*. Edited by Joachim Rohde. 4th ed. Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament 9. Berlin: Evangelische, 1979.

Patrologia graeca. Edited by J.-P. Migne. 162 vols. Paris, 1857-1886.

Perriman, Andrew C. "The Rhetorical Strategy of Galatians 4:21-5:1." *The Evangelical Quarterly* 65 (1993): 27-42.

Plumer, Eric. *Augustine's Commentary on Galatians: Introduction, Text, Translation, and Notes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Prévost, Marcel-Henri. *Les Adoptions politiques à Rome sous la République et le Principat*. Publications de l'Institut de droit romain de l'Université de Paris 5. Paris: Recueil Sirey, 1949.

Punt, Jeremy. "Revealing Rereading: Part 2: Paul and the Wives of the Father of Faith in Galatians 4:21-5:1." *Neotestamentica* 40 (2006): 101-18.

Rad, Gerhard von. "Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament." Translated by John Bright. *Interpretation* 15 (1961): 174-92.

Räsänen, Heikki. *Paul and the Law*. Tübingen: J. C . B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1983. Repr., Minneapolis: Fortress, 1986.

Ramsay, William M. *A Historical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*. 2d ed. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1900.

———. "Studies in the Roman Province Galatia." *Journal of Roman Studies* 12 (1922): 147-86.

Reicke, Bo. "The Law and This World according to Paul: Some Thoughts concerning Gal 4 1-11." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 70 (1951): 259-76.

Richards, E. Randolph. *Paul and First-Century Letter Writing: Secretaries, Composition and Collection*. Downer's Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2004.

Richardson, Peter. *Israel in the Apostolic Church*. Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 10. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969.

- Ridderbos, Herman N. *The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia*. New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956.
- Robert, Louis. *Études anatoliennes: Recherches sur les inscriptions grecques de l'Asie Mineure*. Études orientales publiées par l'Institut Français d'Archéologie de Stamboul 5. Paris: De Boccard, 1937. Repr., Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1970.
- Robinson, Armitage. *St. Irenaeus: The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching: Translated from the Armenian with Introduction and Notes*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1920.
- Robinson, D. W. B. "The Circumcision of Titus, and Paul's 'Liberty'." *Australian Biblical Review* 12 (1964): 24-42.
- . "The Distinction between Jewish and Gentile Believers in Galatians." *Australian Biblical Review* 13 (1965): 29-48.
- Rohde, Joachim. *Der Brief des Paulus an die Galater*. Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament 9. Berlin: Evangelische, 1989.
- Roover, Emile de. "La maternité virginale de Marie dans l'interprétation de Gal 4,4." Pages 2.17-37 in *Studiorum paulinorum congressus internationalis catholicus 1961*. Analecta Biblica 17-18. Rome: Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 1963.
- Ropes, James Hardy. *The Singular Problem of the Epistle to the Galatians*. Harvard Theological Studies 14. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929.
- Rossell, William H. "New Testament Adoption: Graeco-Roman or Semitic?" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 71 (1952): 233-34.
- Rubinstein, Lene. "Adoption in Classical Athens." Pages 45-62 in *Adoption et fosterage*. Edited by Mireille Corbier. Paris: De Boccard, 1999.
- . *Adoption in IV. Century Athens*. Opuscula Graecolatina 34. Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum, 1993.
- Rubinstein, Lene, Lars Bjertrup, Mogens Herman Hansen, Thomas Heine Nielsen, and Torben Vestergaard. "Adoption in Hellenistic and Roman Athens." *Classica et Mediaevalia* 42 (1991): 139-51.
- Rusam, Dietrich. "Neue Belege zu den στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου (Gal 4,3.9; Kol 2,8.20)." *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 83 (1992): 119-25.

- Saller, Richard P. *Patriarchy, Property and Death in the Roman Family*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Salomies, Olli. *Adoptive and Polyonymous Nomenclature in the Roman Empire*. Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum 97. Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1992.
- . “Names and Adoptions in Ancient Rome: The Possibility of Using Personal Names for the Study of Adoption in Rome.” Pages 141-56 in *Adoption et fosterage*. Edited by Mireille Corbier. Paris: De Boccard, 1999.
- Sanders, E. P. *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1977.
- . *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1983.
- Schäfer, Peter. “Die Torah der messianischen Zeit.” *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 65 (1974): 27-42.
- Schlier, Heinrich. *Der Brief an die Galater*. 12th, rev. ed. Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament 7. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962.
- Schmithals, Walter. *Paul and the Gnostics*. Translated by John E. Steely. Nashville: Abingdon, 1972.
- Schmitthenner, Walter. *Oktavian und das Testament Cäsars: Eine Untersuchung zu Politischen Anfängen des Augustus*. Zetemata 4. München: C. H. Beck, 1952.
- Schoeps, H. J. *Paul: The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History*. Translated by Harold Knight. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961.
- Schreiner, Thomas R. “Is Perfect Obedience to the Law Possible?: A Re-Examination of Galatians 3:10.” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 27 (1984): 151-60.
- . “Paul and Perfect Obedience to the Law: An Evaluation of the View of E. P. Sanders.” *Westminster Theological Journal* 47 (1985): 245-78.
- Schulz, Fritz. *Classical Roman Law*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1951.
- Schwartz, Daniel R. “Two Pauline Allusions to the Redemptive Mechanism of the Crucifixion.” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 102 (1983): 259-68.

- Schweitzer, Albert. *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*. Translated by William Montgomery. London: A & C Black, 1931. Repr., Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1998.
- Schweizer, Eduard. "Slaves of the Elements and Worshipers of Angels: Gal 4:3, 9 and Col 2:8, 18, 20." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 107 (1988): 455-68.
- Scott, James M. *Adoption as Sons of God: An Exegetical Investigation into the Background of ΥΙΟΘΕΣΙΑ in the Pauline Corpus*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. Second Series 48. Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1992.
- . "'For as Many as Are of Works of the Law Are Under a Curse' (Galatians 3.10)." Pages 187-221 in *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel*. Edited by Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders. Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series 83. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993.
- Sellin, Gerhard. "Hagar und Sara. Religionsgeschichtliche Hintergründe der Schriftallegorese Gal 4,21-31." Pages 59-84 in *Das Urchristentum in seiner literarischen Geschichte: Festschrift für Jürgen Becker zum 65. Geburtstag*. Edited by Ulrich Mell and Ulrich B. Müller. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 100. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1999.
- Sieffert, Friedrich. *Der Brief an die Galater*. 9th, rev. ed. Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament 7. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1899.
- Siker, Jeffrey S. *Disinheriting the Jews: Abraham in Early Christian Controversy*. Louisville: Westminster / John Knox, 1991.
- Smith, D. Moody, Jr. "Ο ΔΕ ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΕΚ ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ ΖΗΣΕΤΑΙ." Pages 13-25 in *Studies in the History and Text of the New Testament*. Edited by Boyd L. Daniels and M. Jack Suggs. Studies and Documents 29. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1967.
- Söllner, Peter. *Jerusalem, die hochgebaute Stadt: Eschatologisches und Himmlisches Jerusalem im Frühjudentum und im frühen Christentum*. Texte und Arbeiten zum neutestamentlichen Zeitalter 25. Tübingen: Francke, 1998.
- Standhartinger, Angela. "«Zur Freiheit . . . befreit»? Hagar im Galaterbrief." *Evangelische Theologie* 62 (2002): 288-303.
- Stanley, Christopher D. *Arguing with Scripture: The Rhetoric of Quotations in the Letters of Paul*. New York: T&T Clark International, 2004.

- . *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature*. Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 74. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- . “‘Under a Curse’: A Fresh Reading of Galatians 3.10-14.” *New Testament Studies* 36 (1990): 481-511.
- Ste. Croix, G. E. M. de. Review of A. R. W. Harrison, *The Law of Athens: The Family and Property*. *The Classical Review, New Series* 20 (1970): 387-90.
- Steinhauser, Michael G. “Gal 4,25a: Evidence of Targumic Tradition in Gal 4,21-31?” *Biblica* 70 (1989): 234-40.
- Sumney, Jerry L. *‘Servants of Satan’, ‘False Brothers’ and Other Opponents of Paul*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 188. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999.
- Syme, Ronald. “Clues to Testamentary Adoption.” Pages 159-73 in *Roman Papers IV*. Edited by Anthony R. Birley. Oxford: Clarendon, 1988. Repr. from pages 397-410 in *Epigrafia e ordine senatorio I*. Tituli 4. Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1982.
- Taubenschlag, Raphael. *The Law of Greco-Roman Egypt in Light of the Papyri 332 B.C. - 640 A.D.* New York: Herald Square, 1944.
- . “Le droit local dans les Digesta et Responsa de Cervidius Scaevola.” *Bulletin International de l’Academie polonaise des sciences et des lettres (Classe de philologie, Classe d’histoire et de philosophie)* (1919-1920): 45-55.
- Taylor, Greer M. “The Function of ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ in Galatians.” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 85 (1966): 58-76.
- Theodoret. *Commentarius in omnes b. Pauli epistolas*. Edited by C. Marriott. Oxford: J. H. Parker, 1852.
- Thielman, Frank. *From Plight to Solution: A Jewish Framework for Understanding Paul’s View of the Law in Galatians and Romans*. Supplements to Novum Testamentum 61. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989.
- . *Paul & the Law: A Contextual Approach*. Downer’s Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1994.
- Thompson, Wesley E. “Athenian Attitudes Toward Wills.” *Prudentia* 13 (1981): 13-25.

- Thomson, Ian H. *Chiasmus in the Pauline Letters*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 111. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995.
- Todd, S. C. *The Shape of Athenian Law*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1993.
- Tolmie, D. Francois. *Persuading the Galatians: A Text-Centred Rhetorical Analysis of a Pauline Letter*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. Second Series 190. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005.
- Ulonska, Herbert. "Die Funktion der alttestamentlichen Zitate und Anspielungen in den paulinischen Briefen." Ph.D. diss., Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, 1963.
- Vos, J. S. "Die Hermeneutische Antinomie bei Paulus (Galater 3.11-12; Römer 10.5-10)." *New Testament Studies* 38 (1992): 254-70.
- Vouga, François. *An die Galater*. Handbuch zum Neuen Testament 10. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998.
- Wagner, Guy. "Les enfants d'Abraham ou les chemins de la promesse et de la liberté: Exégèse de Galates 4,21 à 31." *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses* 71 (1991): 285-95.
- Wakefield, Andrew H. *Where to Live: The Hermeneutical Significance of Paul's Citations from Scripture in Galatians 3:1-14*. Society of Biblical Literature Academia Biblica. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003.
- Walter, Nikolaus. "Paulus und die Gegner des Christevangeliums in Galatien." Pages 351-56 in *L'apôtre Paul: Personnalité, style, et conception du ministère*. Edited by A. Vanhoye. Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum lovaniensium 73. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1986.
- Walters, James C. "Paul, Adoption, and Inheritance." Pages 42-76 in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook*. Edited by J. Paul Sampley. Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2003.
- Waltke, Bruce K. *Genesis: A Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001.
- Wan, Sze-kar. "Abraham and the Promise of the Spirit: Galatians and the Hellenistic-Jewish Mysticism of Philo." Pages 6-22 in *SBL Seminar Papers, 1995*. Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers 34. Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1995.
- Waters, Guy. *The End of Deuteronomy in the Epistles of Paul*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. Second Series 221. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006.

- Watson, Francis. *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*. London: T&T Clark International, 2004.
- . *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles: Beyond the New Perspective*. Rev. and exp. ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007.
- Watts, Rikki E. “‘For I Am Not Ashamed of the Gospel’: Romans 1:16-17 and Habakkuk 2:4.” Pages 3-25 in *Romans and the People of God: Essays in Honor of Gordon D. Fee on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*. Edited by Sven K. Soderlund and N. T. Wright. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.
- Wentzel, Astrid. “Studien über die Adoption in Griechenland.” *Hermes* 65 (1930): 167-76.
- Wilcox, Max. “The Promise of the ‘Seed’ in the New Testament and the Targumim.” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 5 (1979): 2-20.
- . “‘Upon the Tree’ -- Deut 21:22-23 in the New Testament.” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 96 (1977): 85-99.
- Williams, Sam K. “Again *Pistis Christou*.” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 49 (1987): 431-47.
- . *Galatians*. Abingdon New Testament Commentaries. Nashville: Abingdon, 1997.
- . “The Hearing of Faith: ΑΚΟΗ ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ in Galatians 3.” *New Testament Studies* 35 (1989): 82-93.
- . “Justification and the Spirit in Galatians.” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 29 (1987): 91-100.
- . “Promise in Galatians: A Reading of Paul’s Reading of Scripture.” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 107 (1988): 709-20.
- Willitts, Joel. “Context Matters: Paul’s Use of Leviticus 18:5 in Galatians 3:12.” *Tyndale Bulletin* 54 (2003): 105-22.
- . “Isa 54,1 in Gal 4,24b-27: Reading Genesis in Light of Isaiah.” *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 96 (2005): 188-210.
- Wisdom, Jeffrey R. *Blessing for the Nations and the Curse of the Law: Paul’s Citation of Genesis and Deuteronomy in Gal 3.8-10*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. Second Series 133. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001.

- Witherington, Ben, III. *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Galatians*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.
- Woollcombe, K. J. "The Biblical Origins and Patristic Development of Typology." Pages 39-75 in *Essays on Typology*. Edited by G. W. H. Lampe and K. J. Woollcombe. London: SCM, 1957.
- Wright, N. T. *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993.
- Wyse, William. *ΙΣΑΙΟΣ: The Speeches of Isaeus with Critical and Explanatory Notes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1904.
- Young, N. H. "Pronominal Shifts in Paul's Argument to the Galatians." Pages 205-15 in *Ancient History in a Modern University, Vol. 2: Early Christianity, Late Antiquity and Beyond*. Edited by T. W. Hillard, R. A. Kearsley, C. E. V. Nixon, and A. M. Nobbs. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.
- Young, Norman H. "Paidagogos: The Social Setting of a Pauline Metaphor." *Novum Testamentum* 29 (1987): 150-76.
- . "Who's Cursed: And Why? (Galatians 3:10-14)." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 117 (1998): 79-92.
- Zahn, Theodor. *Der Brief des Paulus an die Galater*. 3d ed. Kommentar zum Neuen Testament 9. Leipzig: Deichert, 1922.
- Zerwick, Maximilian. *Biblical Greek: Illustrated by Examples*. Translated by Joseph Smith. Scripta Pontificii Instituti Biblici 114. Rome, 1963.

Biography

Bradley R. Trick was born in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1975. After a childhood spent primarily in Birmingham, Alabama, he attended Harvard University, concentrating in computer science and graduating *cum laude* in 1996. He then moved to Qingdao, China (PRC), for a brief time before returning to the academy in the fall of 1997, this time to pursue theological studies at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia. Trick received his M.Div. from Regent in 2000. A Th.M. in New Testament, also from Regent, followed in 2003 with the completion of his Master's thesis, "Peter's Exodus into Christ: The Prescript of 1 Peter as Key to the Letter's Structure and Content."

Trick has spent the past eight years engaged in doctoral studies in New Testament as a James B. Duke Fellow at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. Awarded a fellowship from the Duke Graduate Program in Religion and a 2007 Duke Summer Research Fellowship, he also received national recognition in 2007 when he was named a Dolores Zohrab Liebmann Fellow. Trick has published an article on Mark ("Death, Covenants, and the Proof of Resurrection in Mark 12:18-27") in *Novum Testamentum* and is an active member of the Society of Biblical Literature. He currently resides in Durham with his wife, Elizabeth, and their two-year-old daughter, Makara.