

*The Meaning of 'Works of the Law' (ἔργα νόμου)
in Galatians and Romans*

by Robert Keith Rapa

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Supervisor: Professor E A C Pretorius,
University of South Africa

Joint Supervisor: Professor R N Longenecker,
Wycliffe College, University of Toronto

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Abstract

This study investigates the meaning of Paul's expression 'works of the law' (ἔργα νόμου). A survey of representative scholars regarding Paul's attitude toward the Mosaic law demonstrates that confusion over this issue continues as a difficulty in Pauline studies. It is suggested that ascertaining the meaning of this expression will help alleviate that confusion.

This study indicates that Paul's use of ἔργον is ethically neutral: 'work' itself is neither positive nor negative for Paul. The ethical orientation of a given 'work' is determined by the descriptors Paul attaches to it. Paul speaks positively and negatively about the law itself, yet only negative descriptors are used with ἔργα νόμου. This gives significant direction for the interpretation of 'works of the law.'

The historical backgrounds of Galatians and Romans support this negative orientation for ἔργα νόμου. These letters were written to confront separate crisis situations in different churches. Yet they share common situational elements. Paul was faced in both churches with a form of 'judaizing' opposition that insisted that Gentile converts become 'practical Jews' in order to 'complete' the Abrahamic covenant through the Mosaic.

Paul addresses this threat to these churches by means of epistolographical and rhetorical mechanisms. He uses these persuasive communication devices powerfully, insisting that these converts recognize what it means to be 'in Christ,' and what it means and does not mean to be 'Jewish.' 'Works of the law' are not necessary for salvation, and were never intended for

redemption. Likewise, identity as one who performs 'works of the law' does not provide any claim upon God. One does not have to become a 'practical Jew' to have a right relationship to God, and a Jew has no redemptive status before God on the basis of ethnicity.

'Works of the law,' then, serve as a factor in Paul's polemics because the continuing validity of the Mosaic law is the issue being addressed by Paul and his opponents. They are a feature in Paul's view of the law because he is both positive and negative toward the law, depending upon one's intended salvific orientation to God through it.

Key Terms:

Galatians; Romans; Paul; Works of the Law; Works Righteousness; Justification in Paul; Law in Paul; Paul's Opponents; Rhetorical Criticism of Galatians; Rhetorical Criticism of Romans; Epistolographical Structure of Galatians; Epistolographical Structure of Romans.

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Part One -- Sharpening the Focus

1. Introduction: The Problem of ἔργα νόμου.

One of the most difficult areas of inquiry in Pauline studies has been that of Paul's relationship to the law of his fathers. This difficulty is as well recognized as it is well documented; even a brief scanning of theological indices illustrates the extensive scholarly activity that has been centered in this field. After wrestling with this thorny question, many identify (or at least empathize) with the words ascribed to Peter: that Paul wrote 'some difficult things to understand' (2 Peter 3:16).

The importance of this question for a correct understanding of Paul's thought has often been noted and remarked upon. One recent statement to this effect is that of Georg Eichholz: 'One can hardly understand his [Paul's] theology, if one does not grasp his theology of the Torah' (Weima 1990:219).¹ Yet the question of Paul's relationship to the law is so vast, and the various answers proposed so dissimilar,² that the question may only finally be settled as answers to other, subsidiary questions are formed, tested, and then applied to the broader question of Paul and the law.

Paul speaks often about the law. Yet his statements are diverse. According to some, they are contradictory. Others insist that Paul 'grew' in his understanding of the law between his writing of Galatians and his writing of Romans, and so 'cor-

rected' his view. Still others who question Paul's attitude toward the law find him confused by his 'Damascus Road' experience.

Many of Paul's statements about the law do, in fact, appear to be contradictory. On the one hand, for example, he speaks favorably about the law:

Christians establish the law through faith (Rm 3:31).

The law is holy and the commandment is holy and righteous and good (Rm 7:12).

The law is spiritual (Rm 7:14).

The law is good (Rm 7:16).

I serve the law of God with my mind (Rm 7:25).

The law is fulfilled in us who walk according to the Spirit (Rm 8:4).

He who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law (Rm 13:8).

Love is the fulfillment of the law (Rm 13:10).

The law is not contrary to the promises of God (Gl 3:21).

The law was a 'custodian' (Gl 3:23).

The law has become our guardian unto Christ (Gl 3:24).

On the other hand, this same Paul can also make what can only be regarded as negative statements about the law:

By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified (Rm 3:20).

Through the law is the knowledge of sin (Rm 3:20; 7:7).

The promise to Abraham was not through law (Rm 4:13).

The law brings about wrath (Rm 4:5).

The law came in that transgressions might increase (Rm 5:20).

Christians are not 'under law' but under grace (Rm 6:14).

Christians died to the law (Rm 7:4).

The law aroused sin (Rm 7:5).

Christians have been released from the law (Rm 7:6).

The law was weak through the flesh (Rm 8:3).

Christ is the 'end' (τέλος) of the law (Rm 10:4).

The power of sin is the law (1 Cor 15:56).

Through the law I died to the law (Gl 2:19).

If righteousness comes through the law, Christ died in vain (Gl 2:21).

As many as are of the works of the law are under a curse (Gl 3:10).

The law is not of faith (Gl 3:12).

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law (Gl 3:13).

If the inheritance is based on law it is no longer based on promise (Gl 3:18).

The law was added because of transgressions (Gl 3:19).

Righteousness that leads to eternal life cannot be based on law (Gl 3:21).

If you seek to be justified by law you have fallen from grace (Gl 5:4).

Law righteousness is opposed to Christ righteousness (Phlp 3:9).

The above statements, drawn only from his undisputed letters, illustrate the enigmatic nature of the data that the interpreter encounters when considering Paul's relationship to the law. At first glance, many statements appear to be flatly contradictory. Are they the product of a 'confused' or 'corrected' mind, or are the contradictions more apparent than real? The task of discerning Paul's meaning in these statements is a complex one, even somewhat forbidding.³ Yet it is not one that may be turned away from. For clarity in the understanding of Paul's thought can only be achieved by attempting to ascertain what he says about the law, which means also trying to find answers to the numerous subsidiary questions related to this issue.

Since Luther, Paul's attitude to the law was thought to have been more or less settled. In a traditional Reformed understanding, Paul was thought to be arguing against the 'legalistic' perspective of the Judaism of his day, particularly as practiced by the Pharisees and certain Jewish Christians. Evidence of such a legalism could readily be found, it was assumed, in the opposition to Jesus' ministry by the Pharisees, as portrayed in the canonical Gospels. When Paul argues against 'works of the law,' therefore, he 'den[ies] the efficacy of such works for the securing of justification or related concepts....In the "Lutheran orthodox" paradigm, these statements, which are pretty clearly polemical thrusts against Paul's opponents, are seen as directed against Judaizers who are advocating what is taken to be a typical Jewish belief that obedience to the law can secure one's standing before God' (Moo 1987:292-293).

Recently, however, this 'traditional' interpretation has been called into question. Reactions against (1) anti-Semitism in Christianity (which is said to have been largely responsible for the rise of the legalistic 'caricature' of Judaism as a religion obsessed with 'merit theology')⁴ and (2) a forced 'occidental' exegesis of the New Testament, have been the catalyst for scholars to seek a new understanding of these texts. Two scholars, in particular, though dealing with questions quite diverse, proved to be seminal in the rise of the current debate over Paul and the law, as well as for the narrower question of the meaning of the expression ἐργα νόμου.

In 1963 Krister Stendahl warned that the Bible must not be understood or interpreted through Western eyes, lest its impact and meaning be distorted.⁵ Stendahl's thesis was that New Testament interpretation has been adversely influenced by Luther's Augustinian exegesis, which laid emphasis upon humanity's 'sinful conscience.' According to Stendahl, Luther's 'guilt-ridden' conscience colored his approach to Scripture, and all Western exegetes thereafter have interpreted Paul through Luther's sixteenth century grid.⁶ Consequently, the law has been seen as a somewhat harsh, negative imposition by God upon his Old Testament people. Given this understanding, Paul speaks against the law because of the negative relationship with God brought about by attempts at merit-justification, which were doomed to certain failure. And this understanding of Paul and his attitude to the law has, according to Stendahl, generally prevailed throughout the Western world.

Stendahl's article opened the way for the asking of a number of questions relative to the traditional interpretation. For if Paul is not arguing against a 'legalistic' Judaism of his day, a Judaism that neither he nor his opponents would have recognized, then what do his statements about the law mean? Once the justification of the individual is removed from the center of Paul's theology, and Paul is no longer thought of as having personally experienced the 'burdensome task of joylessly carrying out the commands of God,' is the nature of Paul's teaching on the law not also subject to reinterpretation, if not radical revision (cf Moo 1987:287-288)?

Stendahl's article laid the foundation for E P Sanders' *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*.⁷ In this work, Sanders undertook a survey of Jewish tannaitic writings from approximately 200 BC to AD 200 to disprove the notion that rabbinic Judaism was a 'works righteousness' religion, especially as 'caricatured' by scholars since Luther, and then compared the findings of that research with the writings of Paul. For Sanders, the question revolves around whether Paul was, indeed, combatting 'works righteousness' as 'merit theology,' as has been commonly perceived among traditional Reformed theologians, or whether he was an apostate Jewish Christian who believed that Jesus is the Messiah. Sanders' suggestion that Paul was an 'apostate' is not meant to ridicule or disenfranchise Paul. Rather, he believes that Paul gladly became such for the sake of 'his gospel,' that of the good news of Jesus Christ as Messiah for the Gentiles.

Sanders' 'new perspective on Paul' (the phrase is Dunn's; cf Dunn 1982-83) paved the way for the asking of further questions

relative to Paul's attitude toward the law, as well as questions regarding the relationship between early Christianity and Judaism. His 'new perspective' eventuated in what for many became a 'paradigm shift' in the understanding of Paul's thought. A number of recent scholars, in fact, have followed Sanders in this paradigm shift. And their contributions to the ongoing scholarly debate also have had, to some degree, an impact on the proper understanding of the expression 'works of the law.'⁸

Debate over the meaning of ἔργα νόμου has to do with Paul's overall intent in the passages where the expression occurs, and is only a part of the broader question of Paul's relationship to the Jewish law (whatever is meant by 'Jewish' law; on that question, see Thielman 1989; Winger 1992). Paul uses the expression ἔργα νόμου eight times in Galatians and Romans: Galatians 2:16 (three times), 3:2, 5, 10; and Romans 3:20, 28.⁹ Each of these eight occurrences is in a context where Paul is developing the concept of justification/righteousness as it is received through the Spirit. In each context, Paul negates the idea that such a reception comes about through 'works of the law.' Both righteousness and the reception of the Spirit are key theological constructs for Paul, and so the meaning of ἔργα νόμου in these contexts is also of importance for a proper understanding of Paul and his thought.¹⁰ Nevertheless, though there is general agreement as to its importance, there is no scholarly consensus as to the meaning of this significant expression.¹¹

The rationale for this study, therefore, as well as its potential value, lies in the benefit to be derived from a proper understanding of Paul's meaning in and the theological signif-

icance he places on the expression ἔργα νόμου. This expression occurs in two letters that have long been regarded as 'key' for the articulation of Paul's theology. So in clarifying the meaning of this crucial terminology, some clarity ought also to be obtained with regard to Paul's argument in these two letters. And as that clarity is evidenced, a contribution toward clarification of Paul's overall theological schema should obtain as well, especially with regard to Paul and the law.

Methodology

The question of the 'meaning' of any particular expression in the exegetical enterprise can only be determined by its usage. Care must be taken, however, to note a term's semantic range (or 'domain;' cf Louw & Nida 1988:viii-xi) so as to give a fair consideration to all the possibilities of meaning.

With regard to ἔργα νόμου, there is a general consensus among scholars that the νόμος in question is the Jewish law. Yet there is a great deal of diversity as to the precise meaning of the expression as a whole, together with questions concerning the exact character of the law being referred to and what Paul intends to be one's attitude toward that law (cf Chapter Two, below; see also Winger 1992; Schreiner 1991:218-225; Thielman 1989). With respect to ἔργα, however, there is no such consensus. What 'works' are in view here, and how do these 'works' relate to 'law?' In order to establish the parameters for the possible meanings for the expression 'works of the law,' a

statistical analysis of Paul's use of ἔργον outside the ἔργα νόμου construct must be carried out. Then with these parameters in view, it will be possible to engage in the exegetical enterprise itself, which is the principal thrust of this study, analyzing the letters of Galatians and Romans in order to treat the 'works of the law' expression correctly.

With regard to Galatians, a number of exegetical issues present themselves, the resolution of which will, of course, determine how ἔργα νόμου is to be understood in Paul's argument of this letter. To begin with, the perplexing question of where Paul's words to Peter end and his exhortation to the Galatians begins in 2:14-21 must be answered. The meaning of the term 'sinners' in verse 15 is also significant, as is the determination of the identity of the 'we' of verse 16. As well, it will be necessary to determine the proper interpretation of ἐὰν μή in this latter verse, as that will help to ascertain if the 'works of the law' might somehow have served previously in Paul's thinking as a *qualification* to his doctrine of justification by faith (cf Dunn 1990:195ff). In addition, it will be necessary to establish the referent of the πίστις Χριστοῦ here in 2:16 (ie, is Paul referring to 'faith in' Jesus Christ, or the 'faithfulness of' Jesus Christ?). Further exegetical difficulties in this section include questions regarding how Jesus Christ might be termed a 'promoter' of sin (2:17), what Paul means by 'rebuilding' what he once destroyed, and what entity it is that he refers to in this way (2:18). Finally in this section, explication of

Paul's co-crucifixion terminology (2:19-21) will help to elucidate the consistency of his argumentation.

Further in Galatians, the meaning of the ἔργα νόμου expression must be investigated at 3:2, 5, 10. In this section, Paul contrasts ἔργα νόμου with ἀκοῆς πίστεως, and so his 'hearing with faith' phraseology becomes significant if 'works of the law' are here properly to be perceived. In addition, questions regarding Paul's concept in 3:10 of who is involved in 'works of the law' as being 'under a curse' (ὑπὸ κατάραν) must be resolved if this section is to contribute to the understanding of the ἔργα νόμου expression in Paul's thought.

Romans also contains several exegetical challenges pertinent to a consideration of the meaning of Paul's ἔργα νόμου terminology. Foremost among these is the question of what Paul means in 3:1 by Jews having an 'advantage' (τὸ περισσὸν) over Gentiles, and how that statement fits with his denial in 3:9 of 'priority' or 'privilege' (προεχόμεθα). Correlative questions, as well, exist throughout this pericope: Is the πρῶτον of 3:2 to be understood in terms of sequence or priority? What does Paul mean in that same verse by the τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ? What about the unbelief of 'some,' and who are they? How are verses 5-8 that follow to be understood in the light of the Jewish 'advantage?'

The ἔργα νόμου expression in Romans occurs at 3:20, 28. In order to interpret this expression correctly in Romans, it will be necessary to determine Paul's intent when he says that the law 'speaks' in order to make everyone 'accountable' to God, and when

he says that 'the knowledge of sin' comes through the law. In addition, the concept of the 'righteousness of God' (δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ) must be investigated to determine whether Paul refers here to God's righteousness as imputed to believing humanity or God's righteousness as an attribute of his character, and what that may mean for his argument at this point in the letter. It will also be imperative to investigate how this righteousness is manifested 'apart from the law,' and whether this comes about through 'faith in' Jesus Christ or through his 'faithfulness' (διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ). Also, the significance of the 'now' (νῦν) of 3:21 must be noted if this section is to be exegeted properly. Finally, Paul's concept in 3:25 of Jesus Christ as a 'propitiatory sacrifice' (ἱλαστήριον) must be discussed, as well as what he intends in 3:27 by the term 'boasting' (καύχησις). By noting and working through these exegetical difficulties, the meaning of ἔργα νόμου in Romans will be elucidated.

As an aid to proper exegesis, the historical setting of each letter must be given due consideration. For these letters were not written in a vacuum. Nor did Paul write simply to communicate information. Galatians and Romans grew out of specific crisis situations in the life of Paul and his churches, which situations to a large extent shaped the content and message of the letters. So the particular situations must be respected if these letters are to be understood correctly.

As letters, Galatians and Romans are part of a well established form of communication of the first century. The letter-genre of Paul's day followed certain prescribed conventions,

which helped shape Paul's communication to his churches. These epistolary conventions of the day, therefore, must be considered in the attempt to exegete these letters correctly. And a correct exegesis of these letters, then, will aid in the proper determination of the 'works of the law' expression.

In addition, Galatians and Romans are a form of *communication*. As communication, the letters of Paul were undoubtedly impacted, at least to some degree, by the rhetorical constructs current in the first century *Weltanschauung* out of which he wrote. So an analysis must be conducted of the pertinent passages on the basis of the principles of rhetorical criticism, recognizing that Paul could use rhetoric to serve his own polemical and Christian purposes. Rhetorical criticism contributes to a discussion of the 'works of the law' passages in Galatians and Romans, since an awareness of rhetorical principles provides a basic guide for the interpretation of writings that are written to persuade or convince.

The expression 'works of the law' occurs in Galatians and Romans in specific contexts within the apostle's argumentation in each letter. Therefore, as an obvious feature of the exegetical process, the *ἔργα νόμου* texts must be analyzed carefully in light of their respective contexts. In this way Paul's theological intent and the import of this expression in each of its occurrences will be given adequate parameters of meaning. The findings of such an exegetical enterprise will have important consequences. Most immediately, Paul's meaning in his use of *ἔργα νόμου* will lend a greater degree of intelligibility to his polemical argumentation in the two letters. The presence of

polemics in Galatians is well known. But Paul argues polemically, as well, in Romans. Implications relative to the question of how ἔργα νόμου functions in that polemical argumentation will be noted.

More ultimately, however, understanding the expression 'works of the law' in Galatians and Romans will provide insight into the larger question of Paul's view of the law. And with such an insight greater clarity with respect to Paul's overall theological thinking will result.

In procedural terms, the investigation of Paul's expression ἔργα νόμου will advance along the following stages. In Part One, the current scholarly debate surrounding the question of Paul and the law will be surveyed as a means of informing the discussion regarding the 'works of the law' expression. For while the question of the meaning of ἔργα νόμου is not always directly addressed in the debate over Paul and the law, it nonetheless forms a part of that discussion. And so some help and direction for the question of this study is to be found in such a survey.

In a further attempt to focus properly the present discussion, Paul's use of ἔργον outside the ἔργα νόμου construct will be analyzed.¹² In this way the possible meanings that may be adduced for this expression will be set out and other uses of the term noted.

The letters of Galatians and Romans will then be turned to directly in Parts Two and Three. In an attempt to establish the proper meaning for ἔργα νόμου, notice will be taken of the historical setting of these letters. Also, epistolary and rhetorical analyses relative to both letters will be considered. And then,

most importantly, the ἔργα νόμου texts in their contexts will be addressed.

Finally, the findings of the various aspects of this study will be drawn together. Implications from this research will be suggested relative to ἔργα νόμου as a factor in Paul's polemics and as a feature in Paul's view of the law. Others, however, will have to take up the challenge presented by these implications, for a full exposition of Paul and the law.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 1

1. Weima takes this quote from Eichholz's work, *Die Theologie des Paulus im Umriss* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1972, page 178). Eichholz's statement is also quoted by Räisänen 1986b:1.
2. Note, for example, Schreiner 1991:218-225; Moo 1987:287-298; and Barclay 1986-87: 5-10.
3. 'Meaning' is used here to include both the strict linguistic intention of a term (ie, the identity of the reality behind a symbol is implicit in the term itself) and what is generally referred to as *reference* (ie, the content of a term as supplied by the context). For a stimulating treatment of the question from a strictly linguistic perspective, see Winger 1992.
4. Pressed too far, however, this portrait of those who view Judaism as a religion of 'works righteousness' may itself become a caricature.
5. Stendahl 1963, *The Apostle Paul and the introspective conscience of the West*. *HTR* 56, 119-215.
6. Cf Morna Hooker (1986:37): 'Luther was concerned with his own personal salvation, and with the abuses of medieval Catholicism, which "offered" salvation in return for "merits"....Protestant Christians have tended to read Paul through Lutheran eyes ever since.'
7. E P Sanders 1977, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: a comparison of patterns of religion*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press. Sanders' second work, *Paul, the law and the Jewish people* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983) is an expansion of the second part of the first book, an attempt to explain further his understanding of Paul and his theology, largely in response to criticisms of that first book.
8. Cf especially Räisänen 1986 *Paul and the law* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press); Dunn 1988 *Romans*, (WBC). 2 Vols (Waco: Word Inc). In a slightly differing vein, Sanders has also influenced Hübner, *Law in Paul's thought* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1984; ET of *Das Gesetz bei Paulus: Ein beitrag zum werdender paulinischen Theologie* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978]). This 'influence' comes from Sanders'

discussion of Hübner's German original in Sanders' *Paul, the law and the Jewish people* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983:32ff and *passim*), to which Hübner reacts; see Hübner 1984, especially pages 151-154.

9. The expression is ἐξ ἔργων νόμου in all occurrences except Rm 3:28, which reads χωρίς ἔργων νόμου. Similar expressions are found at Rm 2:15 (τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου); Rm 3:21 (νυνὶ δὲ χωρίς νόμου δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ πεφανέρωται; cf Cranfield, *Romans* [ICC] 1975, 1:201); Rm 3:27 (διὰ ποίου νόμου; τῶν ἔργων; οὐχί, ἀλλὰ διὰ νόμου πίστεως); Rm 4:2 (εἰ γὰρ Ἀβραάμ ἐξ ἔργων ἐδικαιώθη) Gl 2:21 (εἰ γὰρ διὰ νόμου δικαιοσύνη; cf Betz, *Galatians* [Hermeneia] 126); Gl 3:11 (ὅτι δὲ ἐν νόμῳ οὐδεὶς δικαιούται παρὰ τῷ θεῷ δῆλον; cf Betz, *Galatians* [Hermeneia], 146); and Eph 2:9 (οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων). The meaning and significance of these expressions relative to that of the eight occurrences of ἔργα νόμου must be explored as a secondary issue to that question.
10. cf T R Schreiner 1991. 'Works of law' in Paul. *NovT* 33, 217-244.
11. Cf M P Winger 1992, *By what law?* (Chico: Scholars Press); C E B Cranfield 1991, The 'works of law' in the epistle to the Romans. *JSNT* 43, 89-101; idem *Romans* (ICC) 1979, 2:845-862; J D G Dunn 1991, The theology of Galatians: the issue of covenantal nomism, in *Pauline theology vol 1: Thessalonians, Philippians, Galatians, Philemon* ed J M Bassler (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 125-146); idem 1988c *Romans* (WBC) 1:lxiii-lxxii; T R Schreiner 1991, 'Works of law' in Paul. *NovT* 33 (3), 217-244; J Ziesler 1991, Justification by faith in the light of the 'new perspective' on Paul. *Theology* 94, 188-194; S E Porter 1990, The pauline concept of original sin, in light of rabbinic background. *TynBul* 41, 3-30; F Thielman 1989, *From plight to solution: a Jewish framework for understanding Paul's view of the law in Galatians and Romans* (Leiden: E J Brill); D J Moo 1987, Paul and the law in the last ten years. *SJT* 40, 287-307; D Zeller 1987, Zur neueren Diskussion über das Gesetz bei Paulus. *ThPh* 62, 477-499; J M G Barclay 1986, Paul and the law: observations on some recent debates. *Themelios* 12, 5-15. With the exception of Winger and Thielman (who attempt to locate Paul's understanding of the law in Jewish thought constructs and behavior patterns) and Schreiner (who discusses the meaning of ἔργα νόμου, but is limited to the constraints associated with the journal article format), these works are basically surveys of the state of the question within the scholarly community, and do not attempt to establish the meaning of ἔργα νόμου itself.

12. For the purpose of this study, and in order to gain as complete a picture as possible from the New Testament, data from what are commonly called the 'deuteropauline' letters will be included. On the one hand, the rejection of pauline authorship is not necessarily a 'given;' on the other, most agree that the 'questionable' letters are in any case *influenced* by Paul and/or his 'community.'

2. Issues in the Debate Surrounding Paul and the Law

Questions arising out of Paul's instruction regarding the law and its place in Christianity are not altogether new.¹ But the asking of questions relative to his position on the law -- for example, is his thought on the subject confused, developing, contradictory -- is, for the most part, a rather recent development.² That is not to say that the early church was disinterested in such matters or that the tensions between Paul's positive and negative statements about the law had never been felt until recent scholarship brought them to light. Indeed, scattered references to problems associated with Paul's understanding of the law can be found from the earliest periods of church history.³ Nonetheless, for the first several centuries after the time of the apostles the church was preoccupied with self-definition in the light of both missionary expansion and varied controversies regarding heresy and orthodoxy, and so concentrated its energies in somewhat different areas. It is only in the modern period, in fact, that biblical scholarship has given attention to questions about difficulties with Paul, particularly as centered in his teaching regarding the law.

The purpose of this chapter, then, will be to focus on the modern period, surveying representative viewpoints and tracing recent developments in the treatment of Paul and the law.⁴ Particular attention will be paid to contributions in this

discussion as to the understanding of the expression *ἔργα νόμου*. Evaluation of each of these views will be left to specific exegetical considerations to be taken up later, in Parts Two and Three.

2.1 Perspectives on Paul and the Law

2.1.1 The Perspective of the Reformers

Any treatment of Paul and the law must begin with some examination of the background to that debate, if only to 'set the stage' for an informed discussion. And as has recently been remarked, 'without Luther, the current debate [over Paul and the law] is inconceivable' (Westerholm 1988:12). In general agreement with that statement, one might merely add that the importance of Calvin cannot be overlooked. It is, in fact, the combined heritage of these two men that has come to form what is currently considered the 'traditional' view.⁵

For Luther, the central canon of Paul's teaching, as well as the teaching of all of Scripture, was the doctrine of *sola fide*: justification by faith alone -- apart from any 'works of the law' (cf 26:106).⁶ Perhaps nowhere is this more clear than in his preface to Romans, the letter that Luther considered 'the gospel in its purest expression' (1961:19). There he writes,

The first duty of a preacher of the gospel is to declare God's law and describe the nature of sin. Everything is sinful that does not proceed from the [S]pirit, or is not experienced as the outcome of faith in Christ. The preacher's message must show men their own selves and their lamentable state, so as to make them humble and yearn for

help....In this way Paul adduces a cogent example from Scripture in support of his doctrine of faith....He....calls David as a....witness, and he says....that we shall be justified apart from works....Paul then....extends [this example] to all other observances of the law. He concludes that the Jews cannot be the heirs of Abraham merely by virtue of their descent, and still less by observing the works of the law. Rather....they must inherit his faith, because....Abraham was justified by faith and described as the father of all believers (1961:19, 25-28).

The understanding of a strict dichotomy between righteousness by faith and righteousness as a result of works allowed Luther to subsume all of the Bible under the two categories of law and gospel, or works and grace. The law, said Luther, demands that humanity 'do' something for God (works). The gospel teaches that people cannot 'do' for God but that they receive from God, and what is received comes only by faith (26:208, 272). Moreover, whatever is of works cannot at the same time be of grace (26:122). Thus Luther maintained that a person is justified 'neither by the righteousness of the law nor by [one's own] righteousness, but solely by faith in Christ' (26:22).

While Luther acknowledged that Paul's 'works of the law' (ἔργα νόμου) are not to be identified exactly with 'works' in the general sense, he nowhere attempted to explain what ἔργα νόμου are. Nonetheless he did apply Paul's Galatian arguments both to Paul's judaizing opponents and the battles of his own day. And in that regard he argued, 'If the law of God is weak and useless for justification, much more are the laws of the pope weak and useless for justification' (26:407).⁷

Further, Luther believed that only the gospel of justification 'by grace alone through faith alone,' and not a gospel of 'works,' gives glory to God, to whom alone glory is due (26:66). For one to interject any personal effort into the process of justification would result in that person having something to boast about with respect to his or her relationship with God: 'to praise and glorify God means for us to be silent [before Him], not to extol ourselves [our good works], but believe that we are lost sinners.'⁸

Yet Luther also held that works have a place in the life of the believer. Once a person has been justified through faith, good works, which include obedience to the law of God, have their proper function. He writes, '....we teach also good works. Because thou hast laid hold upon Christ by faith, through whom thou art made righteous, begin now to work well. Love God and thy neighbor....Do good to thy neighbor and serve him: fulfill thine office' (1961:111-112).

'Why then, the law,' from Luther's perspective? He understood the law to be both (1) the instrument by which God demonstrates the individual's need for redemption and restrains communal and personal sin, and (2) the 'great hammer' God uses to pulverize the 'great and horrible monster' of self-righteousness, or efforts at personal justification. As he says,

....you must understand that there is a double use of the law. One is civil....God hath ordained civil laws, yea all laws to punish transgressions. Every law then is given to restrain sin....The first use....of laws is to bridle the wicked....Another use of the law is theological or spiritual, which is (as Paul saith) 'to increase transgressions;' that is to say, to reveal unto

man his sin....But to the end that God might beat down this monster and this mad beast (I mean the presumption of righteousness and religion)....it behoved Him to send some Hercules....to utterly destroy him....For [the law] is the hammer of death, the thundering of hell and the lightning of God's wrath, that beateth to powder the obstinate and senseless hypocrites. Wherefore this is the proper and absolute use of the law....to terrify....and....to beat down and rend in pieces that beast which is called the opinion of righteousness....For as long as the opinion of righteousness abideth in man, so long there abideth also in him....pride, presumption, security, hatred of God, contempt of His grace and mercy, ignorance.... therefore the opinion of righteousness is a great and an horrible monster, a rebellious, obstinate and stiff-necked beast: so, for the destroying and overthrowing thereof, God hath need of a mighty hammer; that is to say, the law (1961:139-141; cf 26:308, 310).

For Luther, therefore, the law serves both to demonstrate the unbeliever's depravity and need for redemption, and to restrain sin in general for the good of all humanity. Yet due to his understanding of the justification of the individual by faith as the 'center' of Paul's thought, and (as affirmed by some) in light of his own personal struggles relative to justification, Luther formulated his understanding of the law in largely negative terms. His focus was upon the law as condemnatory and as pointing up humanity's depravity, with little note of any beneficial function of the law beyond that of restraining sin.

John Calvin viewed the law in a rather more positive light than did Luther.⁹ While humanity is incapable of 'fulfilling' the moral law, the law as an entity nonetheless fosters the hope of salvation in Christ (II.vii.3-5). Viewing the moral law as the 'true and eternal rule of righteousness' (IV.xx.15), Calvin suggested three 'uses' of the law (formulated in II.vii.6-13).

The first use is to demonstrate humanity's depravity and sinfulness, as opposed to the righteousness of God (II.vii.6-9). The severity of the punishment associated with the law teaches humanity to avoid self-deception with regard to sin. In addition, this punitive function of the law serves both to terrify the wicked and make the believer realize how dependent upon God one really is. Thus personal 'works' or 'boasting' are automatically eliminated from the question of one's justification, which remains the province of God alone.

The second use of the law, according to Calvin, is to act as a check upon humanity's sinful activity, whether this activity is the occupation of 'despisers of [God's] majesty' or of those who are not yet (but will later become) believers (II.vii.10-11). From this perspective, the law functions to protect the larger human community from the machinations of those who are unjust. Due to fear of the law and its punishment, Calvin says, the unjust are more righteous and scrupulous in their dealings with others than they might otherwise be, and those who are the 'children of God' are also restrained by the law until they come to faith. He writes,

The second function of the law is this: at least by fear of punishment to restrain certain men who are untouched by any care for what is just and right unless compelled by dire threats in the law....But this constrained righteousness is necessary for the public community of men, for whose tranquility the Lord herein provided....Nay, even for the children of God, before they are called and while they are destitute of the Spirit of sanctification....so long as they play the wanton in the folly of the flesh, it is profitable for them to undergo [the law's] tutelage (II.vii.10).

Calvin's 'third use' of the law is one of admonition for believers. That is, the law exhorts every child of God to a life of well-doing (II.vii.12-13). It is this use that he considered the principal one, the use which pertains most closely to the law's proper purpose as given by God to Israel, the elect nation. Luther held the *condemning* feature of the law to be its primary function; for Calvin this feature of the law was 'accidental.'¹⁰ The issue for Calvin did not turn so much on the question of 'works' as on the total inability of humanity to fulfill the law, and so the necessity for the mediating life and death of Jesus Christ for humanity's justification (II.vii.5-17). While he does not discuss the 'works of the law' phrase as such,¹¹ Calvin rejects any attempts at works for justification (III.xiv.9-11; cf II.vii.3-5). And like Luther, Calvin believed justification by faith to be the center of Paul's theology (indeed, the Bible's theology), referring to the doctrine of justification by faith as 'the main hinge upon which religion turns' (III.xi.1).

So for Calvin, the law is allowed a significant positive role in the Christian life, albeit a role that is mediated in the person and work of Jesus Christ (cf III.xiv.9-11). The believer's righteousness is an imputed righteousness, which can only come through faith. Yet every believer bears the continuing responsibility to relate correctly to God and humanity on the basis of God's law (III.xiv).

The 'traditional' view of Paul and the law, therefore, arises out of the teachings of both Luther and Calvin, though it is Luther's view that is most often interacted with. This is undoubtedly due, in part, to the presence of often forceful and

'colorful' language in Luther's argumentation, which arose out of the intensity of his own polemical and theological situation. Such polemical argumentation as Luther's is more easily interacted with on a critical basis than is Calvin's systematic treatment (Calvin's own polemical circumstances notwithstanding). As well, Luther's situation was more directly involved in the question of the individual's justification, which for various reasons is at the theological center of the modern debate.

Nonetheless, there are several elements common to the teaching of Luther and Calvin that may be said to have solidified into the 'traditional' view. These elements are primarily as follows: (1) the belief that humanity is composed of fallen sinners who are in need of justification; (2) that fallen humanity, both collectively and as individual persons, is totally unable to keep the law of God; (3) that some 'legalists' (Jews!!) were attempting self-righteousness by means of the law; and (4) that Paul attacks such 'works of the law' (*ἔργα νόμου*) in order to defend 'his' gospel, which is the proclamation of justification by faith in the efficacious nature of the death of Jesus Christ, apart from any religious 'meritorious achievement' on the part of the individual.

This 'traditional' position, with particular emphasis upon the 'works of the law' phrase, has been explicated and defended by numerous scholars, and in several permutations.¹² The main divisions of the 'traditional' perspective are: (1) those who view 'works of the law' as being inadequate for justification due to humanity's inability to keep the law perfectly, coupled with the fact that legalism, in and of itself, is sin;¹³ (2) those

who understand attempted obedience through 'works of the law' as being itself sinful idolatry, manifested in attempts at self-justification with its (necessary) corollary, 'boasting' before God;¹⁴ and (3) those who propose that while attempting to obey the law is not in itself sinful, no one is able perfectly to obey the law, and so the 'works of the law' do not justify.¹⁵

In various nuanced forms, then, the 'traditional' view of Paul and the 'works of the law' survives from the days of the Reformation. And it continues to serve as what can only be considered the 'majority' opinion in New Testament scholarship, at least in Reformed theological circles. Yet this 'majority opinion' (as popularly understood and propagated, at any rate) has in recent years faced rather ardent and persistent questioning, as well as careful scrutiny, in certain quarters within New Testament scholarship. Such tidy systems as those represented by the various permutations of the 'traditional' view are eyed warily by scholars, and in a few cases with good reason. For something as complex as Paul's occasional writings, directed as they are to differing local circumstances and addressing divergent needs, cannot easily be tied up into one neat, simplistic whole, as Paul's thought is occasionally depicted. Nor can first century Judaism be so succinctly represented as simply a 'legalistic, works-righteousness' religious system. In addition, there is the ever-present danger of interpretive misrepresentation of Paul's thought due to the great chronological and cultural differences between his time and the modern day. As has recently been noted, 'Our reconstruction of what we might call a theology of Paul will always be a modern abstraction, a

distillation that we gain from his thought world' (Sampley 1991:3). The 'traditional' position then, as commonly conceived, has consequently become the foil for the modern debate.

2.1.2 The Modern Perspective

The modern debate regarding Paul and the *ἔργα νόμου*, as noted above, has been framed largely against the backdrop of and in reaction to the position of the Reformers, and Luther in particular. Forms of the 'traditional' interpretation of 'works of the law' (ie, that of Paul arguing against Jewish legalistic 'works righteousness' in which one must 'earn' justification by performing more good works than bad) have constituted the majority opinion in Western scholarship, though represented by a plethora of nuanced views. As indicated above, however, attempts at systematizing or categorizing these disparate views have met with only a limited measure of success. This is due largely to the fact that there are nearly as many distinct views as there are interpreters of Paul.¹⁶ And, the cataloging of scholars into discrete groups based upon their readings of Paul is, though helpful, often an oversimplification. At best, it is an arbitrary process. For that reason, the views of representative scholars on Paul and the law who react against the 'traditional' view will be grouped here into two broad categories. The first category will include those views pertinent to this thesis that consider the traditional and other interpretations of Paul as generally a 'misunderstanding' of Paul and his attitude toward the law. Particular emphasis will, of course, be placed upon the various scholars' interpretations of the *ἔργα νόμου* expression. The

second category will consist of those views that posit a 'confused,' 'inconsistent,' or 'developing' Paul (ie, 'developing' in the sense of a radical change regarding the law between Galatians and Romans, specifically, as opposed to a 'maturing' or growth in Paul's understanding).¹⁷ And again, the focus of attention will be the question of how the 'works of the law' expression is understood by scholars in this category.

2.1.2.1 The 'Misunderstood' Paul

The problem of the misunderstanding of Paul by 'traditional' interpreters has been variously defined. Representative positions related to this 'misunderstanding' include (1) a misunderstanding arising out of reading into Paul Luther's agony over his sin; (2) a failure to comprehend the true nature of the Judaism Paul responds to in his writings, and thereby inaccurately positing that Judaism as a 'works-righteousness' religion; (3) a failure to note the fact that circumcision, food laws and Sabbath observance were the 'boundary markers' of the Judaism of Paul's day; and (4) confusion over what 'works' are in view in the expression 'works of the law.'

2.1.2.1.1 The Problem of the 'Lutheran' Paul.

The concept that Western interpreters of the New Testament have misunderstood Paul gained renewed momentum with the publication of Krister Stendahl's influential 1963 article, 'The apostle Paul and the introspective conscience of the West.'¹⁸ Stendahl's leading premise in this article was that Western interpretation of Paul has been greatly misled by following Luther in

reading his personal struggles with a 'guilty conscience' into an understanding of Paul. Luther's contention with the *via moderna* of the late medieval Roman Catholic Church, coupled with his anxiety over his personal justification and his exegesis of Scripture based on the Augustinian-induced 'Western plague' of an introspective conscience, led him to interpret Paul through his own sixteenth-century experiential grid, rather than understanding Paul in Paul's own polemical context (Stendahl 1963:203-205).¹⁹ As Stendahl elsewhere describes the situation,

It was not until Augustine, more than three hundred years after Paul, that a man was found who seemed to see...what made Paul 'tick,' and who discerned the center of gravity in Pauline theology: justification....The introspective conscience is a Western development and a Western plague. Once the introspective conscience came into the theological bloodstream of Western culture, it tended to dominate the scene far beyond its original function. It reached its theological climax and explosion in the Reformation (1976:16-17).

By reading Paul through Luther's 'Augustinian' experience in this way, the 'traditional' position misunderstands Paul's statements regarding sin and guilt. According to Stendahl, in contrast to Augustine, Luther, and 'traditional' Western exegetes who followed in their course, Paul had a 'robust conscience.' Paul's conscience was untroubled with regard to sin, either past or present. Speaking to the issue of this 'robust conscience,' Stendahl writes,

....does not Paul ever speak of himself as a sinner? He certainly does. But the only concrete sin *qua* sin in his life, the sin which he mentions, is that he persecuted the church....To recognize that kind of sin does

not require an introspective conscience. And he also says, quite frankly, that he has made up for that sin and, moreover, he is proud of the extent to which he has made up for it....Paul is confident that he has made up for the only sin which he speaks about concretely. Here is a man with a quite robust conscience. Here is a man not plagued by introspection. The difference between Paul and Luther, and perhaps, modern Western man, is precisely at that point (1976:14; emphasis in original).

This observation regarding the 'untroubled' nature of Paul's conscience with regard to personal sin is based upon Stendahl's interpretation of Paul's statement regarding 'blamelessness' in Philipians 3:6.²⁰ Paul, who according to Stendahl was a 'happy and successful' Jew, never indicated that he had any remorse over his prior life in Judaism, especially as touching his former practice of the law. Remarking upon Paul's assertion of blamelessness, Stendahl says

that is what he says [ie, that he is blameless regarding his observation of the requirements of the law]. He experiences no troubles, no problems, no qualms of conscience, no feelings of shortcomings.... There is no indication that psychologically Paul had some problem of conscience with which he *had* had, or was to have, any major difficulties (1976:13; emphasis his).

So Paul could not be speaking out against Jewish attempts at self-justification when he polemicizes against 'works of the law' (ἔργα νόμου) in Galatians and Romans. Rather, Paul is attempting to advance his cause of Jew-Gentile equality in the new economy of God in Christ. He is, in effect, attempting to communicate 'his' gospel, that of Gentile Christian acceptance into the new

covenant on an equal footing with Jewish believers in Jesus as Messiah. As Stendahl states the case,

....such a doctrine of justification by faith was hammered out by Paul for the very specific and limited purpose of defending the rights of Gentile converts to be full and genuine heirs to the promises of God to Israel. Their rights were based solely on faith in Jesus Christ. This was Paul's very special stance, and he defended it zealously against any compromise that required circumcision or the keeping of kosher food laws by Gentile Christians....We think that Paul spoke about justification by faith, using the Jewish-Gentile situation as an instance, as an example. But Paul was chiefly concerned about the relation between Jews and Gentiles -- and in the development of *this* concern he used as one of his arguments the idea of justification by faith (1976:2-3; emphasis is his).

For proponents of this view (most notably Stendahl), then, Paul has been misunderstood by Western Christianity. Influenced by Augustine through Luther, and to a lesser extent Calvin, the 'introspective conscience' of the West has led its theologians to read Paul's statements relative to the 'works of the law' as negating personal 'merit theology.' Paul's emphasis is not upon individual justification, but upon how Gentiles are included on an equal basis as children of God, which is a position already enjoyed by Jews. And that, Paul says, is not by 'works of the law' but by faith in Jesus Christ.

2.1.2.1.2 The Problem of 'Legalistic' Judaism.

Dissatisfaction with what has been termed the 'traditional' understanding of Judaism as a 'works-righteousness' religion has grown steadily in the course of modern New Testament scholar-

ship.²¹ This dissatisfaction has arisen out of a desire to understand Judaism on its own terms, as well as the recognition that the theological thought constructs of Christianity have their base in the religious self-understanding of Judaism. The position that 'traditional' interpreters of the New Testament have misunderstood Judaism was brought sharply into focus in 1977 with the publication of E P Sanders' major study on the issue of Paul and the law, entitled *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (hereafter *PPJ*). This was followed in 1983 by an expansion and clarification of the thesis contained in *PPJ*, in the book entitled *Paul, the law and the Jewish people* (from this point, *PLJP*).²² By utilizing the documents of Judaism from 200 BC to AD 200, and the Pauline epistles of the New Testament, Sanders sought to demonstrate that 'traditional' New Testament scholarship has been badly mistaken in its understanding of the Judaism of Paul's day. And, as a result, this scholarship has misinterpreted Paul himself with regard to his view of the law.²³

In *PPJ* Sanders aspires to refute the picture of Judaism that has emerged from the 'traditional' interpretation of Paul and the law by uncovering the 'pattern' of religion inherent in the two religious systems, which can then be compared, each on its 'own terms' (*PPJ* xi).²⁴ Sanders' goal is to demonstrate from the evidence adduced from first century Judaism that it was not a merit-oriented 'works-righteousness' religion devoid of grace and forgiveness, but rather was founded in the electing grace and mercy of God toward Israel. He also wants to show that Paul is not arguing against Jewish 'merit theology' when he contends against 'works of the law,' but rather argues from his new-found

conviction that since God has provided a Savior for the world in Jesus Christ, then the world must need to be saved.²⁵

Standard to the thought constructs of the literature of Palestinian Judaism, Sanders asserts, is the 'pattern' of religion that he dubs 'covenantal nomism' (cf *PPJ* 75; 236; and especially 422-423). Sanders distinguishes this 'covenantal nomism' from any systematic rabbinic 'works-righteousness' concern, as commonly conceived (*PPJ* 74-75). He delineates its 'pattern' or 'structure' as follows:

....the type of religion best called 'covenantal nomism' is common to Judaism as it appears in the literature considered here. The 'pattern' or 'structure' of covenantal nomism is this: (1) God has chosen Israel and (2) given the law. The law implies both (3) God's promise to maintain the election and (4) the requirement to obey. (5) God rewards obedience and punishes transgression. (6) The law provides for means of atonement, and atonement results in (7) maintenance or re-establishment of the covenantal relationship. (8) All those who are maintained in the covenant by obedience, atonement and God's mercy belong to the group which will be saved. An important interpretation of the first and last points is that election and ultimately salvation are considered to be by God's mercy rather than human achievement (*PPJ* 422).

Covenantal nomism grows out of the conviction that Israel is God's elect, chosen nation, in contractual relationship with God as demonstrated in the covenant ceremony and giving of the law at Sinai (cf Ex 20-24). Atonement is provided by God to the elect nation for the purpose of maintaining that covenant relationship, which was understood to be eternal. So Jewish 'works-righteousness,' as commonly interpreted (ie, a 'merit theology' of good deeds outweighing bad), was not only unnecessary, but wrong-

headed from the start. The proper understanding, as Sanders insists, was

....that the Rabbis believed in the *enduring validity of the covenant relationship*, that they *did not count and weigh merits against demerits* (but rather atoned for transgression), and that they *believed that God had provided for the salvation of all faithful members of Israel* - all those who maintain their place in the covenant by obedience and by employing the means of atonement provided by the covenant, especially repentance, for transgression (PPJ 236; emphasis is Sanders').

According to Sanders, the documents of first-century Judaism indicate that salvation is based upon the electing grace of God, and that it is presumed for one in the covenant, unless some intentional, flagrant violation of covenant stipulations positioned that one outside the elect group. Forgiveness for sin was provided for by atoning sacrifice, based upon God's merciful character (PPJ 1-428, but especially 419-428). Soteriologically, then, one 'gets in' by election and 'stays in' by God's grace. The law was given as a means of maintaining the covenant, not for 'earning' a place within the covenant community. For one who 'opted out' of the covenant by grievous sin, repentance and atoning sacrifice became the means for getting 'back in.'

In part two of *PPJ* Sanders attempts to apply the insights gained from the literature of Judaism to the interpretation of Paul's letters. Having already concluded that Judaism could not have been a meritorious, self-righteousness styled religion (cf *PPJ* 33-59), Sanders assumes as a consequence that to describe Paul's thought as a critique of Judaism's view of the law is to badly misunderstand him. Therefore, Sanders looks for an explana-

tion for Paul's thought that will protect Judaism from such a charge. He finds that protection in the notion that Paul's thought is not rooted in first century Judaism or Jewish 'theological' constructs, but rather in Paul's conviction that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world. This is stated most directly with regard to his discussion of Paul's view of the law and humanity's plight. Sanders writes,

The most important observation to make in order to understand the situation of the non-Christian in Paul's view is...that, for Paul, the conviction of a universal solution preceded the conviction of a universal plight. It is perhaps the principal fault of Bultmann's treatment of Paul that he proceeded from plight to solution and supposed that Paul proceeded the same way....I should have said that his doctrine of salvation led to the necessary conclusion that all men required salvation, with the result that his description of the human plight varies, remaining constant only in the assertion of its universality (PPJ, 474).

Arguing from solution (salvation for all in Christ) to plight (humanity totally fallen), then, allows Paul the following critique of Judaism as a system of religion: 'in short, *this is what Paul finds wrong with Judaism: it is not Christianity* (PPJ 552; emphasis in original). So Sanders claims that Paul does not criticize Judaism from a Jewish religious (ie, 'theological') construct, but from outside the pale of Judaism, as one committed to the universal salvation provided by God in Jesus Christ. F Thielman (1989:16) describes Sanders' perspective on this issue as follows: '....Paul did not criticize Judaism from within -- claiming that it pursued the correct goal (righteousness) in the wrong way (works) -- but from without -- claiming that it began

at the wrong place (the law) and arrived at the wrong goal (righteousness by the law).'²⁶

According to Sanders, Paul argues this way as a result of his 'participationist' theology. Paul centers his argument in the belief that salvation is found in the Christ-event, and *not* in the Jewish concept of repentance and forgiveness (PPJ 499-500). One must 'transfer' lordship from sin to Christ, through faith in him ('righteousness is primarily a transfer term in Paul;' PPJ 500-501; emphasis is Sanders'). Paul's main concern, however, is not juristic categories, but in participatory categories (PPJ 502). 'Righteousness' is a fluid term for Paul, depending on whether he is speaking of faith in Christ (the 'right kind' of righteousness) or the righteousness which comes by 'works of the law' (PPJ 502-508). The righteousness produced by 'works of the law' is a genuine righteousness; Paul himself claimed to have attained it (as Sanders understands Phlp 3:4-12). However, this is not the correct righteousness, the righteousness which is in Christ, and to attain it is looked upon as worthless by comparison. Salvation comes only through faith in Christ (cf PPJ 493). In Sanders' understanding of Paul, therefore, the locus of salvation is not a righteousness attained by justification, despite obedience or disobedience to the law. Rather, salvation comes when one participates in the Christ-event through faith (PPJ 502-504). Thus faith becomes the *sine-qua-non* of the one who is 'righteoused' by God.

Paul's view of the law, therefore, according to Sanders, does not result from his 'misunderstanding' of Judaism (*contra* Montefiore and Schoeps). Nor is it to be understood in any way

as connected to his Jewish or Hellenistic background (a la' Schweitzer and Davies). Rather, 'It is the Gentile question and the exclusivism of Paul's soteriology which dethrone the law, not a misunderstanding of it or a view predetermined by his background' (PPJ 497; emphasis is his). So then, says Sanders, Paul believes that Judaism, and in particular Judaism's perspective on the law, is wrong -- not due to the law itself, but because Judaism is not Christianity (PPJ 552).

In Sanders' understanding of the Palestinian Judaism of Paul's day, then, entrance into the covenant is by the electing grace of God. It is *not* a works-righteousness religion, but has been misconstrued as such by 'traditional' Christian interpretation, which basically worked only with the Pauline and other New Testament materials and largely ignored the literature of Judaism. That literature indicates that the covenant people are not guaranteed an entrance into the kingdom (cf PPJ 420f), but are given an 'edge' over others. Entrance is still by faith. The Dead Sea Scrolls reflect a more strict approach from this position within Judaism, while IV Esdras teaches to a certain degree a concept of works-righteousness. According to Sanders, however, these are not representative of Palestinian Judaism as a whole. They might be termed the 'exceptions' that 'prove' the rule. It is obedience to God's stipulations that keeps one 'in' covenant. So the best term to describe the Judaism of this era is 'covenantal nomism.'

In *PLJP* Sanders attempts 'to consider the problem of Paul and the law as a whole' (*PLJP* ix). In so doing, he hopes to rectify a basic shortcoming in *PPJ*, that of failing to focus on 'Paul's

Jewishness, his overall relationship to Jewish tradition and thought,' as well as on areas in Paul's thought on the law that were passed by in the first book.

Sanders' basic thesis relative to Paul's view of the law and 'works of the law' is unchanged from *PPJ*. That is, he still maintains the view that Paul interprets the law and humanity's relationship to it in Christological terms. He writes,

I have previously argued, and I wish here simply to repeat, that much of what Paul says...is controlled by certain central and identifiable convictions: that God had sent Jesus Christ to provide for the salvation of all, whether Jew or Greek, on the same basis ('faith in Christ,' 'dying with Christ'); that the Lord would soon return; that he, Paul, was called by God to be the apostle to the Gentiles; and that Christians should live in accordance with the will of God (*PLJP* 4-5).

Sanders continues to believe that Paul's statements about the law can only be correctly understood from Paul's perspectives that Christ is the Savior of the world and that righteousness comes only by faith in Christ, and not by 'works of the law.' Paul's reasons given for his statements have created a great deal of confusion, both for Paul's initial readers and for his later interpreters, Sanders says. For the answers that Paul gives to questions about the law are varied and may sometimes even be perceived as contradictory, because 'each answer has its own logic and springs from one of [Paul's] central concerns; but the diverse answers...do not form a logical whole' (*PLJP* 4; cf 93-122). This is so because the diverse things that Paul says about the law depend upon differences in the questions asked or the problems posed to him. Yet, Paul's own 'central convictions,'

that Christ is the Savior of the world and that righteousness comes through faith in him and not by 'works of the law' remain unchanged.

As he seeks to substantiate his basic thesis in this second work, Sanders concentrates on the epistles of Paul where the discussion of righteousness in Christ as opposed to works of law is paramount, namely Galatians and Romans. In this manner Sanders hopes to suggest a possible answer to the basic questions surrounding this issue, in particular why Paul states that no one can be 'righteoused' by the 'works of the law' (PLJP 17).

Sanders contends that the Galatian controversy centers around the Gentile converts' 'getting in' to covenant relationship. Paul's opponents, evidently, were insisting that his Gentile converts must 'do' the law as an entrance requirement. That is, the opponents insisted that these converts must accept circumcision and the law (in effect becoming Jewish proselytes in the process) in order to be 'righteoused' before God. With regard to the opponents' argument, Sanders remarks that,

Theirs was an entirely reasonable position, and its great strength was almost certainly the support which reading the Bible would give it. The most forceful passage is Genesis 17:9-14, where God tells Abraham that he and his seed (τό σπέρμα; cf Gl 3:16, 19) must be circumcised....The opposing missionaries could also have read to the Galatians Isaiah 56:6-8, where the 'foreigners' who join the people of God are expected to hold fast the covenant (circumcision) and especially to keep the Sabbath (PLJP 18).

In addition, Sanders argues, Paul did not consider 'doing' the law to be wrong, in and of itself. In any case, that is not

Paul's problem in Galatians. For in Galatians Paul is not arguing against Jews who thought that everyone must quantitatively do the law in order to be saved. Rather, he is arguing against Jewish Christians who wanted Gentile converts to 'add' the law to faith in Christ. As Sanders represents Paul's position, he says,

The question is not about how many good deeds an individual must present before God to be declared righteous....but, to repeat, whether or not Paul's Gentile converts must accept the Jewish law in order to enter the people of God or to be counted truly members. In focusing on the controversy as one regarding 'entry,' I do not mean to imply that the requirement of faith alone for entry (to be a descendant of Abraham; to be righteous) is a fleeting one....The debate in Galatians is a debate about 'entry' in the sense of what is essential in order to be considered a member at all. Paul holds that faith is the sole membership requirement; his opponents would require also circumcision and acceptance of the Mosaic law....it is not the doing of the law which, in Paul's view, is wrong. Circumcision is, from one perspective, a matter of indifference (Gl 6:15). It is completely wrong, however, when it is made an essential requirement for membership (PLJP 20; emphasis in original).

Paul's stance against righteousness by means of 'works of the law' (ἔργα νόμου) in Galatians grows out of his conviction regarding God's redemptive plan (cf PLJP 25-27). Paul maintains in Galatians 3:8-13 by means of Jewish exegetical arguments from proof texts and the use of *Stichworte*²⁷ that (1) accepting the law leads to a curse; (2) righteousness comes only by faith, not law; and (3) that faith-righteousness is available to the Gentiles. Thus, according to Sanders, Paul argues that righteousness was never intended in God's redemptive plan to be made

available through the law; that 'righteousing' comes only through the death of Jesus Christ.

With regard to Romans, particularly chapters 3-4 and 9-11, Sanders asserts that Paul's concern is to demonstrate that both Jews and Gentiles are alike counted acceptable before God only on the basis of faith in Christ (*PLJP* 23; 29-43). Thus the situation of Romans is somewhat different from that of Galatians (in spite of the similarities between Gl 3 and Rm 4). For, whereas in Galatians Paul argued for Gentile freedom from the law as an 'entrance requirement,' in Romans his argument is more complex. While his conclusion is the same (ie, the law is not an 'entrance requirement'), the discussion in Romans concentrates on the theme that Jews as well as Gentiles are under the bondage of sin. So Jews must also express faith in Christ in order to 'change that status' (ie, 'bondage to sin;' *PLJP* 30). Jewish 'boasting' before God for works achieved is not the issue in Romans 3-4 and 9-10. Rather, the issue in Romans is the acceptance of both Jews and Gentiles as part of the people of God on the basis of faith in Christ. From that perspective, then, 'works of the law' cannot be an 'entrance requirement' (cf *PLJP* 33).

The conclusion to all of this for Sanders is that Paul cannot be arguing against Judaism as a legalistic 'works-righteousness' religion. Paul's point is that one need not be Jewish in order to be 'righteous' before God. In this way, says Sanders, Paul is arguing against a common Jewish understanding that to be Jewish and keep the law is to achieve and maintain a 'favored' status or position (*PLJP* 46f). And since this is the case, Paul's arguments against 'works of the law' (ἔργα νόμου) in Romans cannot be

used as evidence that he was attempting to refute the Judaism of his day as a legalistic system. As Sanders says,

The application to Judaism, however, is not against a supposed Jewish position that enough good works earn righteousness. In the phrase, 'not by works of law' the emphasis is not on *works* abstractly conceived but on *law*, that is, the Mosaic law. The argument is that one need not be Jewish to be 'righteous' (PLJP 46; emphasis in original).

So then, in Sanders' view, Paul has been misunderstood by the 'traditional' interpreters of his letters, and due to this misunderstanding, first-century Palestinian Judaism has also been misunderstood. Paul's polemic against the law is not that it leads to legalism, self-righteousness, or that it is impossible to keep.²⁸ Rather, according to Sanders, Paul argues that because salvation has come in the person of Christ, the necessity of accepting the law is abolished by faith in Christ (PLJP 154-162).

To summarize Sanders' overall position, a number of points may be made. First of all, in Sanders' opinion the literature of Palestinian Judaism from 200 BC to AD 200 indicates that the Rabbis understood Judaism to be a religion based upon the electing grace of God. Israel was in covenant with God as a result of God's electing grace, and corporate Israel, as well as individual Israelites, were given the law as a means of maintaining their relationship to God within the structure of that covenant. The Judaism represented by this literature, therefore, is a religion of faith and not of works.

As for Paul, Sanders understands him to be arguing from 'solution to plight' with respect to humanity and its need for

salvation. Because God has acted in Jesus Christ, Paul is convinced that all people, whether Jews or Gentiles, must come to faith in Christ in order to be made 'righteous.' Paul does not fault Judaism as a 'legalistic, self-righteousing, self-aggrandizing' religion of works. Rather, he finds fault with Judaism because, as Sanders puts it, Judaism 'is not Christianity' (PPJ 552). The righteousness that comes through 'works of the law' is a true form of righteousness; Paul even says that he attained it himself (Phlp 3:4-16). Nevertheless, this righteousness is not the 'correct' righteousness, which righteousness comes only through faith in Jesus Christ. So Paul polemicizes against it. He is concerned to argue that Gentiles need not become Jews through the 'entrance requirement' of the law, and that both Jews and Gentiles alike must come to Christ through faith as the only means to salvation.

2.1.2.1.3 The Problem of Jewish 'Identity.'

The works of E P Sanders led many scholars to reject the understanding of first-century Judaism as found in the 'traditional' view. Rejection of one paradigm does not necessarily mean an all-embracing sanction of another, however, and refinement of Sanders' understanding of Judaism and Paul and the law soon followed.

J D G Dunn is one scholar who was greatly impacted by Sanders' work. Dunn has written extensively on the question of Paul and the 'works of the law,' his most significant recent contribution being *Jesus, Paul and the law: studies in Mark and Galatians*.²⁹ Dunn's understanding of Paul and the 'works of the law' comes out

of what he terms the 'new perspective' on Paul that resulted from Sanders' work (Dunn 1990a:183-214). Sanders' understanding of Judaism and Paul and the law, Dunn maintains, has revolutionized modern studies on Paul. As he states it,

If Stendahl cracked the mould of twentieth-century reconstructions of Paul's theological context, by showing how much it had been determined by Luther's quest for a gracious God, Sanders has broken it altogether by showing how different these reconstructions are from what we know of first-century Judaism from other sources. We have all.... been guilty of modernizing Paul. But now Sanders has given us an unrivalled opportunity to look at Paul afresh...to see Paul properly within his own context...to let Paul be himself (1990a:186).

This 'mould-breaking' new perspective allows Paul to be understood in theological constructs other than that of the 'traditional' perspective, which asserts a basic antithesis between Paul and rabbinic Judaism. This is understood to be an antithesis that is centered in how salvation is obtained. As Dunn speaks to the question of this basic antithesis, he writes,

The problem focuses on the character of Judaism as a religion of salvation. For rabbinic specialists the emphasis in rabbinic Judaism on God's goodness and generosity, his encouragement of repentance and offer of forgiveness is plain. Whereas Paul seems to depict Judaism as coldly and calculatingly legalistic, a system of 'works' righteousness, where salvation is earned by the merit of good works. Looked at from another angle, the problem is the way in which Paul has been understood as the great exponent of the central Reformation doctrine of *justification by faith* (1990a:185; emphasis his).

So by demonstrating the nature of Palestinian Judaism to be a religion centered in the covenant, with that covenant being

based in the grace of God ('covenantal nomism') and having faith as a central feature, Sanders has opened the way for the formulation of a totally new understanding of both first-century Judaism and Paul. Dunn does have, however, a basic difficulty with Sanders, for Sanders has failed to pursue this new insight into Paul far enough. As Dunn articulates this difficulty, Sanders 'remained more impressed by the *difference* between Paul's pattern of religious thought and that of first-century Judaism' (1990a:186; emphasis is in original). This led Sanders to conclude, too quickly (in Dunn's mind), that Paul's 'pattern' of religion was a totally different system than that of his countrymen 'after the flesh.' Such an understanding of Paul is for Dunn 'only a little better' than that former view, and so Sanders' view of Paul is also quite unacceptable to Dunn. In his words,

The Lutheran Paul has been replaced by an idiosyncratic Paul who in an arbitrary and irrational manner turns his face against the glory and greatness of Judaism's covenant theology and abandons Judaism simply because it is not Christianity (1990a:187).

Dunn's solution to the problem of the several modern misunderstandings of Paul, as well as to what he considers to be Sanders' lack in not taking his 'new perspective' far enough and thereby distorting Paul, is to be found in the exegesis of Galatians 2:16. For it is in this verse, Dunn maintains, that Paul's view on the law is to be found in microcosm (cf 1990a:188-200, especially 188-195). And so Galatians 2:16, with its double reference to 'works of the law,' is 'the most obvious place to

start' in the search for a proper understanding of Paul's position from 'our new perspective' (1990a:188).

In the immediate context of Galatians 2:16, Dunn insists, Paul is not 'separated' from first-century Judaism, as Sanders suggests. For rather than rejecting Judaism because 'it is not Christianity,' Paul assumes the basic covenantal nomism structure of first-century Judaism -- in fact, he assumes the very covenantal nomism which is accurately portrayed by Sanders. Paul's appeal to 'Jewish sensibilities' in 2:11-14 places the discussion in 2:16ff squarely within the context of first-century Judaism's understanding of the covenant. Therefore, in speaking of 'being justified,' Paul is not talking about God's 'initiatory' action, but rather of 'God's acknowledgement that someone is in the covenant, whether this is an *initial* acknowledgment, or a *repeated* action of God (God's saving acts), or his *final* vindication of his people' (1990a:190; Dunn's emphasis).

Dunn goes on to remark that in speaking of justification by faith in this context Paul is 'wholly at one' with his fellow Jews. 'Justification by faith' is a concept that is 'integral to the idea of covenant itself' (1990a:190-191). Therefore, justification by faith is not a distinctively Christian concept. Those to whom Paul appeals in 2:16 are Jews whose Christian faith is 'but an extension of their Jewish faith,' as bound up in the covenant-election concept of first-century Judaism (1990a:191). This understanding is vital, says Dunn, for,

....to ignore this fundamental feature of Israel's understanding of its covenant status is to put in jeopardy the possibility of a properly historical exegesis. Far worse, to start our exegesis here from the

Reformation presupposition that Paul was attacking the idea of *earning* God's acquittal, the idea of meritorious works, is to set the whole exegetical endeavor off on the wrong track (1990a:191; emphasis is Dunn's).

The only logical conclusion that may be drawn from this realization, Dunn says, is that in Galatians 2:16 Paul is not refuting works that (attempt to) earn salvation, but rather 'works' that are distinctively Jewish, that is, the works associated with 'covenantal nomism.' According to Dunn, Paul 'was thinking of covenant works, works related to the covenant, works done in obedience to the covenant' (1990a:191; original emphasis). The 'traditional' view of 'works of the law' and Sanders' view of 'works of the law' are, by Dunn's reckoning, both wide of the mark. The 'traditional' view sees Paul refuting the Jews of his day for their legalistic approach to God whereby they attempted to curry his favor and/or cajole him into justifying them on the basis of their performance of works. Sanders has Paul opposed to first-century Jews and Judaism because it was not Christianity, that is, a righteousness obtained by fidelity to covenant is not the correct righteousness, which can only come by faith in Christ. Thus Sanders makes the exegetical mistake of understanding 'works of the law' as equivalent to 'doing the law' in general. In Sanders' view, then, Paul rejects the law and breaks from Judaism entirely (1990a:201).

From Dunn's perspective, however, any fully accurate interpretation of Paul must take into consideration the fact that Paul is thinking of justification in strictly *Jewish* categories, in Jewish covenant theological constructs. Thus, he says,

....[Paul's] denial that justification is from works of law is, more precisely, a denial that justification depends on circumcision or on observation of the Jewish purity or food taboos. We may justifiably deduce, therefore, that by 'works of law' Paul intended his readers to think of particular observances of the law like *circumcision and the food laws*....But why these particular 'works of the law?'....From the broader context, provided for us by Greco-Roman literature of the period, we know that *just these observances were widely regarded as characteristically and distinctively Jewish*....It is clear, in other words, that just these observances in particular functioned as identity markers, they served to identify their practitioners as Jewish.... they were the peculiar rites which marked out the Jews as that peculiar people...They functioned as badges of covenant membership. A member of the covenant people was, by definition, one who observed these practices in particular (1990a:191-192; emphasis in original).

So in Dunn's understanding, Paul is arguing against circumcision, feast and Sabbath days, and Jewish dietary restrictions as 'works of the law,' that is, 'works' associated with a Jewish adherence to the covenant, because these 'works' discriminated against Gentiles who would become part of the people of God. These 'works' were part of the warp and woof of Judaism; indeed, they were the very 'identity markers' or 'boundaries' of the Judaism of the first century (Dunn 1988c, 1:lxix). Therefore, Paul recognizes that to impose these restrictions upon the Gentiles as 'entry requirements' would be to force them, in effect, to become Jews. And as the apostle to the Gentiles, he will have none of it.

For Paul, according to Dunn, there has been a shift in the redemptive program of God. Now the 'identity marker' for the people of God is no longer 'works of the law,' but rather faith

in Christ. The coming of Christ has inaugurated the time of fulfillment, including the fulfillment of the covenant. Therefore, God's people are to respond to this eschatological development by recognizing this 'broadening' of the covenant to include the Gentiles *qua* Gentiles (1990a:195-197). Dunn argues that Stendahl was correct in his earlier thesis that Paul's main concern is not the justification of the individual, but relationship between Jews and Gentiles as the one new people of God (1990a:202). So the 'new perspective' demands a shift in outlook in order to interpret Paul properly. Rather than allowing the interpretive grid through which Paul is viewed to be that of Reformation categories, the interpreter of Paul must utilize a perspective 'properly set within the horizons of the social world of first-century Judaism' (1990a:219).

2.1.2.1.4 The Problem of 'Works.'

Misunderstanding of Paul and the law on the part of 'traditional' interpreters of the New Testament may have origins other than those posited above. Lloyd Gaston has suggested that the fundamental flaw in the 'traditional' position is its inherent 'anti-Judaism,' which causes first-century Judaism to be misunderstood as a 'works-righteousness' system of belief.

Gaston has written a number of articles concerned with the broad question of Paul and the law. These articles were recently collected and published as *Paul and the Torah*.³⁰ Most of these essays were written to address what Gaston describes as the problem of 'anti-Judaism' within Christianity, and are avowedly a self-conscious reaction against such an anti-Judaism and the

presuppositional context out of which they were written (1987:1-14, especially 1-5). It is, however, in his concern to exegete properly the expression 'works of the law' (ἔργα νόμου) that Gaston becomes important for the purposes of this study.

It is Gaston's contention that the Christian understanding of 'law' is distorted, due to the unfortunate circumstance of woodenly translating the Hebrew 'Torah' (תורה) as 'law' (νόμος).

As Gaston describes the situation,

Torah has a richness of meaning in ancient Jewish texts which may be paralleled by *nomos* in other texts, but which is greatly distorted by the translation 'law.' That is because 'law' is used in a special theological sense in Christian, and especially Protestant, systems of thought that is quite inappropriate for the ancient texts themselves. Such deep-seated theological presuppositions about what a word or phrase must mean thus take precedence even over normal rules of lexicography and grammar (1987: 100).

In order to illustrate that such distorted 'presuppositional' thinking is normative for New Testament scholars, Gaston draws upon the earlier work of Ernst Lohmeyer as an example.³¹ Because he was one of the few who actually attempted to exegete the expression, as opposed to merely assuming its meaning after the 'traditional' pattern, Gaston asserts that Lohmeyer is 'still worth reading' (1987:100). Lohmeyer, as Gaston notes, admits that 'the only natural grammatical possibility' for ἔργα νόμου is as a *genetivus auctoris* -- a genitive of origin, which Gaston then translates as 'the works worked by the law.' Yet Lohmeyer nonetheless asserts, as Gaston points out, that the expression

obviously must mean 'works which the law prescribes.' Gaston comments: '[Lohmeyer] is then faced with the problem of how the phrase can mean what it obviously must mean' (1987:101). In attempting to prove that ἔργα νόμου means 'works which the law prescribes,' Lohmeyer concentrates on the idea of 'works.' Yet, for all his insights into the problem, says Gaston, Lohmeyer fails to answer satisfactorily the question of the meaning of 'works of the law.'

For his part, Gaston proceeds in this material to survey Paul's use of genitives similar to the ἔργα νόμου expression. He finds distinctive parallels in the τὰ ἔργα τῆς σαρκός of Galatians 5:19 and the ὁ καρπὸς τοῦ πνεύματος of Galatians 5:22; and in the τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου of Romans 2:15, as well as Romans 4:14-16, where the concepts of 'law' and 'work' are associated and where Paul says that 'the law works wrath' (ὁ γὰρ νόμος ὀργὴν καταργάζεται; 1987:103-106, but particularly 104-105). By Gaston's reckoning, the Galatians genitive phrases indicate works done by the flesh (5:19) and by the Spirit (5:22), thereby demonstrating that Paul's genitives are to be understood as subjective genitives.³² And this is then taken to lend support to the thesis that 'works of the law' should also be interpreted as a subjective genitive.

Emphasizing that he is speaking of 'law apart from covenant, law as it applies to Gentiles' (and so not to Jews; 1989:104), Gaston says that, in addition to the Galatians evidence, with the Romans 4:15 phrase he is 'almost prepared to rest [his] case:'

...Romans 4:15, 'the law works...wrath.' No wonder the works of law are not a source of justification. No wonder that they can be

said to put people under a curse. No wonder that they are opposed to the 'faithfulness of Christ' as God's act of redemption (1987: 105).

Gaston then couples this with his interpretation of Romans 2:15, which he understands as saying that the Gentiles, who are outside the covenant, indeed do the 'things of the law:' that is, they 'do' sin. By doing this 'work of the law,' this 'work which the law works,' Paul's argument, as understood by Gaston, appears to be that the Gentiles put themselves in the place of God's *Torah*, and therefore commit idolatrous sin. So then, the 'work' produced by the law is evil work; and as evil work, surely the 'works of the law' cannot justify (1987:105-106).

So for Gaston, too, Paul has been misunderstood. For rather than objecting to Judaism as a 'works-righteousness' religion, he opposes 'works of the law' for Gentiles because such works become a form of idolatry, which amounts to sinning of the first magnitude. The 'works of the law,' which are works 'produced by the law' for Gaston, bring condemnation upon the Gentiles, because outside the covenant the law kills. For this reason, Gaston contends, Paul insists that Gentiles are to be initiated into the community of God's people on the basis of faith in Jesus Christ, and not through 'works of the law.'

2.1.2.2 The 'Inconsistent' Paul

Paul's varying statements on the law and the 'works of the law' are said to cause difficulty if the interpreter insists upon understanding Paul's thought as a neat, coherent whole. So, according to some scholars, 'traditional' interpreters of Paul

have misinterpreted him because they have not been willing to understand Paul as one who could alter his theological position or counter the statements of one letter by those in another. Such interpretive reluctance must be rectified, according to these scholars, by recognizing that Paul (1) changed his position from one letter to another; or (2) simply made different theological pronouncements from letter to letter within the Pauline corpus.

2.1.2.2.1 The Problem of the 'Vacillating' Paul.

Some scholars suggest that Paul's theological thinking changed during the course of his life and ministry. This change is reflected, they contend, in the varying pronouncements Paul makes with regard to the law, especially as seen in the disparate statements in Galatians and Romans. One scholar representative of this position is H Hübner. In 1978 Hübner published *Das Gesetz bei Paulus: Ein Beitrag zum Werden der paulinischen Theologie*.³³ In this study Hübner refers to Paul's change of mind with regard to the law as a 'development in Paul's understanding of the law and...in his theology' (1984:xi).

The essence of this 'development' may be seen, according to Hübner, in the manner in which Paul writes about the law in these letters. Hübner's concern is not so much *why* or *how* Paul's thought 'developed' between these two epistles (in strict 'mechanical' terms), as it is the *fact* of that development.

In Galatians, Hübner understands Paul to hold the function of the law as having two main emphases: to provoke sin and to enslave humanity (1984:26-36). Regarding the arousing of transgressions, Hübner says that the τῶν παραβάσεων χάριτι προσετέθη of

Galatians 3:19 should be translated as a final clause. That is, the expression must be understood as saying that 'the law has been given "for the sake of transgressions" or more pointedly "to provoke transgressions"' (1984:26). This does not mean, according to Hübner, that the law simply makes sin recognizable as sin, or merely clarifies the true character of sinful deeds as themselves sin. The purpose of the giving of the law, he says, is to force people to transgress the law that was given. But, Hübner asserts, this is true only if the distinction is made between the immanent intention of the Jewish law (which was for life) and the intention of the legislator. Contrary to the understanding of most, however, the 'legislator' is not God, says Hübner. Rather, the 'legislator,' or better, 'legislators,' are fallen angels, or demons. Hübner writes,

....this raises the question of the legislator. *Who* is it who thus intends that mankind should be provoked to sinful deeds through the giving of the law - and this means in context all men and women? The answer given by most commentators is 'God'This consequence would of course no longer result if not God but the angels were the legislators...if the angels are the authors of the Law and if it is their intention to provoke men...to transgress the stipulations of the law....this intention is not identical with God's intention. In other words, the angels are now to be understood as demonic beings who in contrast to God do not desire the salvation of mankind (1984:-26-27; emphasis is Hübner's).

But, says Hübner, by Paul's reckoning God foresaw this situation, and so provided a means of escape for humanity. 'God foresees man's failure in the Law, which, *in itself*, is life-giving. He also foresees the intention of the angels to entice

men to destruction through the giving of Law, and he therefore takes all this into account and creates justification by faith' (1984:31; emphasis in original). The law then, in the overriding purposes of God, was used as a 'custodian' until the time of Christ (cf 1984:29). Justification comes by faith in Christ, and not by 'works of the law.' This is self-evident, says Hübner. Speaking 'from Paul's perspective,' as it were, he writes,

our theological judgement [*sic*] is as follows: man is justified by faith - that is to say without the works of the law! If then accordingly it is justification by faith....then this certainly cannot be.... the righteousness aimed at by means of works. This is also clear from the nature of the case (1984:116; emphasis is in original).

Now, in Christ, the Christian is no longer enslaved to these 'works of the law,' but has true freedom (1984:33-36). The Galatians do not fully understand this freedom, and consequently Paul must explain the nature of that freedom to them. They are seeking assurance in 'external things' (ie, circumcision, feast and Sabbath day observances, etc). But Paul insists that if they adhere to these things, they 'fall from grace.' In using such an argument, Hübner asserts, Paul appeals to the Galatians' fear of the 'elements of the world' to persuade them not to return to the law (1984:34-36).

In Romans, the most striking 'development' in Paul's thought for Hübner (what he refers to as 'the decisive difference;' cf 1984:52-53) is the idea that circumcision is no longer viewed as wholly negative, as it was in Galatians. Hübner writes,

In Galatians the entire discussion of Abraham occurred solely by way of support for the view that circumcision leads to an existence on the basis of the works of the law, and that it therefore effects a falling from grace....Now, however, Paul is more discriminating in his judgements [sic]. Being a child of Abraham is now no longer regarded as a mere opposite of circumcision. Someone who has previously read only Galatians is astonished to note that Paul is now suddenly in a position to integrate the idea of circumcision into that of being a child of Abraham (1984:53; emphasis is Hübner's).

This 'integration' has come about, says Hübner, due to the fact that between the writing of Galatians and Romans Paul has given considerable thought, in a 'far from trivial process of reflection and development,' to 'certain inconsistencies in his argument in Galatians...and...abandoned them' (1984:53-54). The 'far from trivial' reflection that led to Paul's 'development' with regard to circumcision came about, asserts Hübner, at least in part because of the reaction of Jerusalem Christians to Paul's Galatian stance. In other words, after the heated polemic of Galatians, the Jerusalem Christians heard of Paul's stance on the 'works of the law' and through a process of interaction (related to the collection for Jerusalem) caused Paul to question his earlier position. He had essentially misunderstood the previous findings of the 'Jerusalem Conference,' and so was corrected by James (1984:20-24; 150f; cf 54-55). So in Romans there is less emphasis on 'freedom' from the law, for the law may have a positive function for the Christian. This 'positive function' may be realized if the law is perceived from the perspective of faith (cf 1984:143), and as long as by observing the law one is not led into 'boasting' of one's own achievements (1984:116). The

prohibition against 'boasting' is also a change from Galatians, according to Hübner. There Paul apparently permits boasting for one's own efforts, but prohibits boasting in the works of another (cf 1984:102f).

For Hübner, then, Paul underwent a 'development' in his understanding of the law from the writing of Galatians to the writing of Romans. In the earlier letter he held the law to be a hostile, demonically-legislated entity which was intended to cause humanity to trespass and so incur the wrath of God. In Romans, however, the law is sacred, and it is given to bring to humanity the knowledge of sin (cf 1984:76). In Galatians, Paul opposed the law, and especially any quantitative attempt to attain righteousness through 'works of the law' ('only total obedience to the law is obedience to the law at all;' 1984:24). In Romans, however, the law is interpreted 'qualitatively,' that is, the whole law is summed up for the life of the believer in the love command of Romans 13:8ff (1985:83-85). Further, in Romans the law is not the 'perverted' law of works, as in Galatians, but rather it is the correct representation of the will of God, which Christians are to fulfill in the Spirit (1984:135-148). Thus, for Hübner, the Paul of Romans has a more fully developed understanding of the law than does the Paul of Galatians.

2.1.2.2.2 The Problem of the 'Contradictory' Paul.

In his *Paul & the law*,³⁴ H Räsänen exceeds the stance of Hübner and others who posit a 'developmental' view of Paul. For Räsänen argues that Paul's differing statements relative to the law between Galatians and Romans are not due to a changed mind

or maturing understanding. Rather, they are the result of psychological, historical and/or social factors. As a result, they are conflicting and inconsistent. With regard to solving the dilemma of these perceived inconsistencies in Paul's thought, Räisänen writes,

I can see one way only: contradictions and tensions [in Paul's writing on the law] have to be accepted as constant features of Paul's theology of the law. They are not simply of an accidental or peripheral nature....Paul's reasoning has a very 'elastic' character (1986b:11; emphasis in original).

Paul, in fact, is not the 'prince of thinkers,' according to Räisänen, and his analysis of the law was not so 'penetrating' or 'final' as it has often been regarded by many New Testament scholars. And, Paul's theology should no longer be seen as the 'starting point' in Christian doctrinal formulation or apologetic (1986b:1-4). Still, Räisänen insists, this should not adversely affect how Paul is viewed. For even if he 'turn[s] out to be a less than consistent theologian than many have imagined, this need not...diminish his grandeur in his own time and milieu.' Only for those who are caught up in 'modern Paulinism,' the 'theological cult of the apostle,' would Paul lose credibility or stature in the face of such an analysis (1986b:15).

The first contradiction Räisänen sees in Paul's notion of responsibility to the law is his 'oscillating concept' of that law. Paul never defines νόμος, says Räisänen, but the majority of his uses refer to the Old Testament תורה (1986b:16). And, of course, this Old Testament *Torah* concerns only the Jews, since

Gentiles are not 'under the law.' Yet in writing to his Gentile churches, Paul's use of pronouns when referring to responsibility to 'do' *Torah* vacillates, so one can never be sure of Paul's ultimate position in this regard (1986b:18-23). This type of 'waffling' or vacillation by Paul can also be seen with regard to the question related to whether or not the *Torah* can be reduced to only its 'moral' aspects, as some suggest (1986b:23-41).

Räisänen next turns to Paul's stance on the abolition of the law. He dispenses with Cranfield's hypothesis that Paul's vocabulary had no words for 'legalism,'³⁵ insisting that Paul could only have had the law given at Sinai in mind as he wrote (1986b:43-50, but especially 43-46). Paul clearly teaches that the Mosaic law has been abolished, through his use of *καταλύω* in Galatians 2:18 and *καταργέω* in 2 Corinthians 3:7ff. In addition, Paul speaks of the *τέλος* of the law, and he cannot have had both 'end' and 'goal' in mind at the same time (1986b:53-56). The law was abolished, according to Räisänen's understanding of Paul, because it was temporal, because it was itself 'death-dealing,' and because Christ had died to it (1986b:56-62).

When Räisänen considers the question of the fulfillment of the law, he again finds Paul to be less than consistent. Though at times Paul speaks of some 'kernel law' as still valid, he also makes statements to the effect that the law is devalued and therefore no longer binding (1986b:62-64). Thus there are two conflicting lines of thought in Paul: the abolition of the law and the permanent validity of the law (1986b:69). Theologians from Justin to Cranfield to Käsemann have proposed a legion of differing distinctions in Paul's meaning to resolve the tension

found in this area of his thought. Räisänen, however, insists that these tensions must be allowed to stand as a constant feature of Paul's thinking. In his responses to varying circumstances in which questions about the law arose, Paul was simply not able to be invariable in his answers, due to his own circumstantial, psychological and/or theological difficulties (1986b: 72f).

Even with regard to his personal practice and his instructions regarding the Christian's obedience to the 'law of Christ,' Paul is both selective and ambiguous. His theology of the law, in fact, can only be understood if the tensions and self-contradictions within it are taken seriously. Räisänen states the case as follows:

Paul's practical attitude to the Torah is characterized by unmistakable laxity....His theoretical answer to the question whether or not the law is still in force, contains a strong tension. The law, 'letter' by nature, is a thing of the past. Christians are no longer under it; they have died to it. Christ is the end, the termination, of the law. And yet Paul can exhort his readers to Christian love by emphasizing that love is the fulfillment of that very law. He can also motivate various moral...instructions by appealing to words of the law....Paul thus wants to have his cake and eat it....I suggest that Paul's theology of the law can only be understood if the tensions and self-contradictions in it are taken seriously... they should be accepted as clues to Paul's internal problems (1986b:82-83).

Räisänen also sees Paul's thinking with regard to the potentiality of fulfilling the law to be filled with discrepancies and conflicting propositions. Paul writes about the impossibility of fulfilling the whole law,³⁶ and that all are under sin.³⁷ But

then he also writes about the 'fact' that Gentiles do fulfill the law (Rm 2:14-15, 26-27), which flatly contradicts the doctrine that 'all are under sin.' The only way Paul can be understood to be advancing an argument that is even remotely cogent, says Räsänen, is if he is arguing from his Christology, for his Christology is his 'compulsion.' That forces him to argue backwards, as it were, from solution to plight (to use Sanders' terms). Paul is forced to argue this way because of his conviction that God has sent Christ into the world to die for humanity due to the effects of sin, and because no one could ever fulfill the law. In Paul's mind, the 'medicine' God provides in Christ is so 'wholesome and indispensable' to man's 'disease,' that he is compelled to argue that the law cannot save.³⁸

Paul also argues, according to Räsänen, that non-Christians cannot do good at all, but Christians do fulfill the law (1986b:109-118). But in arguing this way, Paul is being unfair to Jews, says Räsänen. For if Christians are not perfect, then they are no better than the Jews Paul has condemned for not being perfect. The argument is then reduced to some such absurdity as: 'You [Jews] do not fulfill the law; we [Christians] do fulfill it, except when we do not!' (1986b:118).

In terms of the origin and purpose of the law, Räsänen again sees Paul as contradictory. For outside of Galatians, Paul always refers to the law as given by God. Yet in Galatians, in a 'burst of emotion' that engenders an 'overreaction' (cf 1986b:133), Paul ascribes the giving of the law to angels. Paul cannot bring himself to believe that these were demonic angels, says Räsänen (*contra* Hübner). In fact, in that same passage he indicates that

God did have a positive use in mind for the law after all. Yet to Räsänen's way of thinking, this merely demonstrates that Paul is again arguing from contradictions, if not outright duplicities, with regard to his understanding of the law (1986b:133ff).

Räsänen next discusses what he believes to be the antithesis Paul sets up between 'works of the law' (ἔργα νόμου) and faith in Christ that is found in Galatians 2:16; 3:2-5; 5:4; and Romans 6:14. This results in two lines of Pauline salvific conceptuality: on the one hand, there is the law and 'works of the law;' on the other hand, there is Christ, grace, the Spirit, faith, and promise (1986b:162-163). This antithesis exists in Paul's mind, asserts Räsänen, due to the fact that Paul's Christology has preempted every other aspect of his theology (1986b:168ff). For Paul, it is axiomatic that faith in Christ and a 'merit theology' obedience to the law are mutually exclusive principles of salvation. But that is not what Paul intends by the expression 'works of the law.' Rather, by those words he refers to the demands of the *Torah*, which relate to Jews and not Gentiles. The real issue in the 'law-works' contexts, Räsänen insists, is Jew-Gentile redemptive equality, not legalism. As he states the case,

It is striking how often the polemics against law as the way to salvation are found in a context where the question of the inclusion of the Gentiles is the most important problem (Gl 2-3, Rm 3-4, Rm 9-10). It is above all in this connection that Paul underscores that faith in Christ is the only 'prerequisite' for man's salvation. Even for the Gentiles, who cannot produce the works required by the law, the way to salvation has been opened by God: faith in Christ is enough. In the light of the...discussion it is easy to decide what Paul means by 'works of the law' (Gl 2:15f, 3:2-5, 3:10-12, etc).

The reference is not to 'self-chosen' works accomplished with the purpose of acquiring a reason for boasting. The 'works of the law' are simply the works demanded by the Torah. They are works which, if demanded of the Gentiles, would actually exclude them from the union with Christ (1986b:176-177; emphasis in original).

So then, 'works of the law' are not Jewish attempts at self-righteousness or 'legalistic' attempts at justification, as found in the 'traditional' view. Rather, they are simply the things demanded by the Torah. As Räsänen understands Paul's perspective, these demands do not apply to the Gentiles in any case. They would, in fact, exclude them from the community of believers. No Jew, including Paul, believed the law to be the 'gateway to salvation.' Adopting Sanders' 'covenantal nomism' perspective in a qualified sense (cf 1986b:177-191, especially 179-182), Räsänen argues that the real problem for Paul was not 'works of the law' as a salvific 'merit-theology.' Rather, Paul was arguing against opposing Jewish Christians in order to provide for Gentile acceptance into the Christian church on an equal footing with Jews. In order to give the Gentiles a 'free lunch,' Paul argues against the need for Jewish 'works of the law.' His argumentation, however, intentionally distorts Judaism in the process (1986b:177-191, especially 184-191).

According to Räsänen, then, Paul's concept of the law is to be understood as a self-serving polemical expediency resulting from the controversial and/or theological circumstances that he found himself in when he wrote. This results in what Räsänen refers to as Paul's 'oscillation' wherein, for example, Paul states unambiguously that the law has been abolished and yet also

states just as unambiguously that the law is still valid. Again, Paul implies that no one is able to fulfill the law and yet speaks of some Gentiles as fulfilling the demands of the law. In addition, while on the one hand Paul sees the law only in negative terms with an angelic origin, on the other hand he speaks of the law as holy, righteous and good, designed by God to lead humanity to life. Finally, the law and faith in Christ are set up as being antithetical to each other.

The result of all of this is that, for Räsänen, Paul's thought relative to the law is full of difficulties and inconsistencies. Paul is, of course, an important 'voice' in primitive Christianity, and so it is necessary to listen to him. But he must no longer be understood to be the 'whole choir.' He must be interpreted in light of his occasional orientation and polemics, and appreciated in spite of all of his conflicting thought constructs. These contradictions and tensions are to be regarded as 'constant features' of Paul's thought and theology. New Testament scholarship, therefore, will be able to interpret Paul accurately only if the existence of these contradictions and tensions in his mind is accepted, and Paul is dealt with on that basis.

2.2 Conclusion

Solutions to the problem of Paul and the law are based upon a wide range of foundations. For some, Paul has been 'misunderstood' by 'traditional' New Testament scholarship. This confusion with regard to Paul is attributed to an occidental exegetical process (reading Luther's *Angst* over a guilty conscience into

Paul's situation), or to a fundamental misunderstanding of the Judaism of Paul's day and the place of the law in the redemptive economy of God (whether that Judaism is [mis]understood as 'legalistic' or incorrectly identified due to failure to comprehend its 'identity markers,' or the place of the law in God's covenant with Judaism is misinterpreted).

For others, Paul is 'inconsistent.' This inconsistency is said to manifest itself especially in Paul's teaching regarding the law. Paul may variously be thought of as 'vacillating' in his position regarding the law (as indicated by his changing position on the law between Galatians and Romans), or simply as being self-contradictory in his formulation of thought on this matter. It is proposed, in either case, that the difficulties of interpretation lie as much with Paul as with those who would correctly read his writings.

The above survey of the several proposals provided by New Testament scholars regarding answers to this question shows that there is as yet no consensus as to how to approach the problem of Paul and the law. The probability exists that such an answer will only finally be realized as answers to secondary questions are formulated and allowed to inform that broader question. Such a probability exists with respect to the consideration of the meaning of the expression *ἔργα νόμου*. So then, as a means of informing that broader question of Paul's attitude toward the law of his fathers, the investigation of the meaning of *ἔργα νόμου* will now ensue. This investigation will proceed by first narrowing the focus of this study through an examination of Paul's use of *ἔργον* outside the *ἔργα νόμου* construct. The analysis of the Galatians and

Romans texts will then follow, in order to further the understanding of Paul's intention by that expression.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

1. Cf 1 Cl xxxi-xxxxii; Ig Mag viii, x. Clement makes reference to Abraham bringing about 'righteousness and truth through faith' (δικαιοσύνην καὶ ἀλήθειαν διὰ πίστεως) and speaks of the Christian's justification as having come about 'not by ourselves, nor by our own wisdom, or understanding, or godliness, or works which we have wrought in holiness of heart; but by that faith through which, from the beginning, Almighty God has justified all men' (1 Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, in *The Apostolic Fathers*, Vol 1 [Eerdmans edition, 1975, 13]; cf Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, Vol 1, 398. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981. Reprint of the 1889-90 Macmillan edition). This reference, of course, is not one out of polemic; nevertheless, it lends insight into the manner in which the early sub-apostolic church used such doctrine relative to faith and works. And, within a very short time of Clement's writing, Ignatius could warn the Magnesian Christians against what he considered the 'false doctrines of Judaism' (ie, law, not grace), and against 'becoming Jews' (*Apostolic Fathers*, Vol 1 [Eerdmans edition, 1975]; chapters viii and x of the Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians, pages 62 and 63, respectively).

2. The standard and oft-quoted reference for research into the question of Paul and the law from the late 1880's to the 1960's is O Kuss 1966, *Nomos bei Paulus*. *MTZ* 17, 173-227. One should also not overlook the excellent bibliography on Paul and the law compiled by H Räisänen 1986b:270-297.

3. Most telling in this regard is the remark attributed to Porphyry, to the effect that Paul is guilty of continual self-contradiction, and that he is 'feverish' in his mind and 'weak' in his reasoning (in Macarius Magnes, *Apocriticus* III, 30.34; the author is indebted to Räisänen 1986b:2-3, footnote 21 for this reference. Räisänen goes on to note that the attribution of this statement to Porphyry is disputed, and that in any case, Porphyry was biased). In general, the works of Marcion, Tertullian, Valentinus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Chrysostom, and Theodore of Mopsuestia stand out in the earliest period of church history as most directly engaged in the questions regarding Paul and the law (their own polemical and/or

church ministry situations notwithstanding). For a fully developed treatment of these and other early authors relative to Galatians, see Longenecker 1990: xliii-lii; for Romans, see Cranfield 1975, 1:30-44, especially 32-37.

4. The literature on Paul and the Law is massive, as the Räsänen bibliography demonstrates (1986b:270-297). This study is concerned with a subsidiary aspect of that larger question and will consequently reflect that literature somewhat. At the same time, however, only certain authors whose work is deemed to be most representative of various views relative to the *ἔργα νόμου* issue, or most formative in the current discussion, will be interacted with in the thesis itself.
5. The historical circumstances that gave rise to Calvin's and Luther's respective understandings of Paul and his teaching on the law are well known. For a bibliography of Luther's life and work, see K S Latourette 1975, *A history of Christianity, Volume II: Reformation to the present*. Revised, paperback ed. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 742-744. On Calvin, see W Niesel 1961, *Calvin Bibliographie, 1901-1959* (Munich: Kaiser Verlag) for suggested biographical and analytical writings.
6. References to Luther's position on this issue are taken from his lectures on Galatians, as found in *Luther's works*, Vols 26-27, ed J Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1963-64), and from *Martin Luther: selections from his writings* ed J Dillenberger (Anchor Paperback Books. Garden City: Doubleday, 1961) unless otherwise noted. Citation will be given for the former as '26:106' and for the latter as '1961:106.'
7. This is also noted by Westerholm (1988:5).
8. *Commentary on the epistle to the Romans*, trans & ed J T Mueller. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1954, page 59. Bracketed words are the translator's.
9. References to Calvin's thought are taken from his *Institutes of the Christian religion*. Library of Christian Classics, Vols XX-XXI, trans & ed F L Battles. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960. Reprint of Calvin's 1559 ed.
10. Note Calvin's commentary, for example, on Romans 7:10-12 and 2 Corinthians 3:7.
11. The nearest Calvin comes to a discussion of the 'works of law' expression is found in his commentary on Romans 3:20.

12. The 'traditional' position is carefully detailed by Schreiner 1991:218-220. Schreiner makes a point of indicating that placement of individual scholars into categories is an unfortunate oversimplification of intricate, and at some points, differing theories and positions; this situation is regrettable, but the observation is sound. At the same time, such placement ultimately does help to simplify what are otherwise very complicated and somewhat disparate views.
13. In this category Schreiner lists Calvin (*Commentaries* ed D W & T F Torrence 1961. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 8:78-79; 11:53-55); W Sanday & A C Headlam (*Romans* [ICC] 1895:76, 94); E D Burton (*Galatians* [ICC] 1921: 120, 164); A Nygren (*Romans* 1949:142-143, 162-165); O Kuss (*Römerbrief* 1957, 1:108-109, 175-177); C K Barrett (*Romans* [HNTC] 1957:70-71, 82-83); F J Leenhardt (*Romans* 1961:96-97, 108-111); D Guthrie (*Galatians* [NCB] 1973:87-88, 96-98); J Murray (*Romans* [NICNT] 1968, 1:107, 122-123); C E B Cranfield (*Romans* [ICC] 1975, 1:197-198); L Morris (*Romans* 1988:171-172, 185-187); R Y K Fung (*Galatians* [NICNT] 1988:113-114); and Luther (26:122-123, 126-127, 131, 139-140, 253-260, 268; 27:219, 223-225, 256-257). Schreiner's list is both reliable and helpful, and is followed here and in notes 14 & 15 for the purpose of utilizing a convenient ready reference.
14. Here Schreiner places Bultmann (*Theology of the New Testament*. New York: Scribners, 1951, 1:262-267; *idem*, *Romans 7 and the anthropology of Paul*, in *Existence and faith* [New York: Meridian, 1960, 147-157]; *idem*, *Christ the end of the law*, in *Essays philosophical and theological* [London: SCM, 1955, 36-60]); E Käsemann (*Romans* 1980:89, 102-103); G Bertram (*Ἐργον*, in *TDNT*, 1974, 2:651); H Conzelmann (*An outline of the theology of the New Testament*. New York: Harper & Row, 1969, 226-235); J Blank (*Warum sagt Paulus: 'Aus Werken des Gesetzes wird niemand gerecht?'* in *EKK Vorarbeiten* [Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969, 1:79-95, especially 87-90); F Hahn (*Das Gesetzesverständnis im Römer- und Galaterbrief*. *ZNW* 67 [1976], 36, 39, 43-44); G Klein (*Sündenverständnis und theologia crucis bei Paulus*, in *Theologia Crucis - Signum - Crucis* [Dinkler festschrift, ed C Anderssen and G Klein]; Tübingen: J C B Mohr, 1979, 249-282; *idem*, *Gesetz III* in *TRE* 13:58-75, especially 64-75); H D Betz (*Galatians* [Hermeneia] 1979:116-119, 126, 144-146); H Hübner (*Law in Paul's thought* [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1984] 113-124; *idem*, *Was heisst bei Paulus 'Werke des Gesetzes?'* in *Glaube und Eschatologie* [Kümmel festschrift, ed E Grässer and O Merk]; Tübingen: J C B Mohr, 1985, 123-133); H Weder (*Gesetz und Sünde. Gedanken zu einem qualitativen Sprung im Denken des Paulus* *NTS* 31 [1985] 357-376; *idem*, *Einsicht in*

Gesetzlichkeit: Paulus als verständnisvoller Ausleger des menschlichen Lebens, *Judaica* 43 [1987] 21-29); R Bring (*Galatians* 1961:87-90, 118-125); H Schlier (*Der Römerbrief* [HTKNT] 1949:100-101, 117); D P Fuller (Paul and 'the works of the law' *WTJ* 38 [1975] 28-42); G S Duncan (*Galatians* [MNTC] 1934:65-66; 92-96); F F Bruce (*Galatians* [NIGTC] 1982:137-138, 157-161, especially 160); F Mussner (*Galaterbrief* [HTKNT] 1974: 230-231); and W Schmithals (*Der Römerbrief: ein Kommentar*. 1975:113-115).

15. This category is headed by U Wilckens (Was heisst bei Paulus: 'Aus Werken des Gesetzes wird Mensch gerecht?' in *Rechtfertigung als Freiheit: Paulusstudien* [Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1974, 77-109]; also in his Romans commentary [EKK] Römer 1:173-178, 244-250); others holding this or a similar position as listed by Schreiner include A van Dülmen (*Die Theologie des Gesetzes bei Paulus* [SBT 5] Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk 1968, especially 173-179); S Westerholm (*Israel's law and the Church's faith: Paul and his recent interpreters* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988: 120-121]; F Thielmann (*From plight to solution: a Jewish framework for understanding Paul's view of the law in Galatians and Romans* [SuppNovT 61] Leiden: E J Brill, 1989, 61-65); D Zeller (*Zur neuen Diskussion über das Gesetz bei Paulus* *ThPh* 62 (1987), 497-499); J Lambrecht (*Gesetzesverständnis bei Paulus*, in *Das Gesetz im Neuen Testament* [QD 108, ed K Kertelge]. Freiberg: Herder, 1986, 112-127); and D J Moo ('Law,' 'works of the law' and legalism in Paul *WTJ* 45 [1983] 91-99). It is in this category that Schreiner himself most probably belongs, although on the basis of an earlier article (Is perfect obedience to the law possible? A re-examination of Galatians 3:10 *JETS* 27 (1984), 151-160) one might also place him in the first category.
16. To illustrate the difficulty, notice may be taken of three recent treatments of scholarly opinions on Paul and the law. One lists 13 scholars in 5 different categories (S Westerholm 1988. *Israel's law and the Church's faith: Paul and his recent interpreters*. [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 15-101]); a second places 19 scholars into 3 divisions (F Thielman 1989. *From plight to solution: a Jewish framework for understanding Paul's view of the law in Galatians and Romans*. [Leiden: E J Brill, 1-27]); and the third has 22 positions reflecting 4 classifications (B L Martin 1989. *Christ and the law in Paul*. [Leiden: E J Brill, 39-67]).
17. For an appropriate treatment of 'development' in Paul's thinking, see R N Longenecker 1979, On the concept of development in Pauline thought, in *Perspectives on evangelical theology: papers from the thirti-*

eth annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society ed K S Kantzer & S N Gundry (Grand Rapids: Baker, 195-207). Longenecker helpfully describes the process of development in Paul's thought as one that 'stresses both continuity with an unchanging foundational core and genuine growth of conceptualization and expression' (pages 202, 204). For other views on Pauline development, see Dodd 1934; Hurd 1983:8-9, notes 2 and 3.

18. K Stendahl 1963. The apostle Paul and the introspective conscience of the West. *HTR* 56, 199-215. This article was followed in 1963 and 1964 by two lecture series in which Stendahl further explicated his understanding of Paul and Paul's view of the law. These lectures were published as *Paul among Jews and Gentiles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), and included the earlier 'introspective conscience' article. The substance of Stendahl's position on this issue is contained in this publication.
19. Note also Schreiner 1991:241. This premise is a major factor in Stendahl's argument in this article, though he does not consider it as his 'thesis' (contra Käsemann 1971:60-78; cf also Stendahl 1976:129-133). The thesis of the article, according to Stendahl, is that Paul's arguments against the law in Galatians and Romans are apologetic, ie, Gentile converts are free to become 'full members' of the household of God apart from any 'works of the law' (cf Stendahl 1976:130f). Nevertheless, it is this basic premise which indeed shapes the character of the argument advanced by Stendahl as the article develops.
20. Cf Espy 1985:162ff.
21. Cf, for example, Davies [1948] 1981. *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press); Moore 1921. *Christian writers on Judaism*. *HTR* 14, 197-254; --- 1927. *Judaism*. 3 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press); Sandmel 1978. *Judaism and Christian beginnings* (New York: Oxford University Press).
22. Both books were published by Fortress Press, Philadelphia. That *PLJP* is an 'expansion and clarification' of the thesis of *PPJ* is noted in *PLJP* on page lx, where Sanders writes, 'The first and third chapters expand and clarify, and in some cases correct, the account of Paul's view of the law which was sketched in *PPJ*.'
23. One detects here a parallel with Stendahl; cf *PPJ* 436-437, and especially notes 34 and 35.
24. Sanders asserts that the impetus for the 'traditional' evaluation of Judaism is to be found in F Weber 1880. *System der altsynagogalen palästinischen Theologie aus*

Targum, Midrasch und Talmud ed F Delitzsch and G Schnedermann; revised as *Jüdische Theologie auf Grund des Talmud und verwanter Schriften* Leipzig, 1897.

25. Cf PPJ page 6. Sanders is at this point discussing G F Moore's understanding of Paul, which his own understanding on this issue will reflect to a marked degree; cf PPJ 475; 551-552.
26. Cf PPJ 549ff.
27. These *Stichworte* are 'Gentiles' (or 'nations'), 'blessing,' and 'curse.'
28. Also in this regard note especially Thielman 1989:20.
29. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990. Other material on this subject that has flowed from Dunn's prolific pen includes the following: 1975, Romans 7:14-25 in the theology of Paul. *TZ* 31, 258-273; 1981-82, The relationship between Paul and Jerusalem according to Galatians 1 and 2. *NTS* 28, 461-478; 1982-83, The new perspective on Paul. *BJRL* 65, 95-122; 1983, The incident at Antioch (Galatians 2:11-18). *JSNT* 18, 3-57; 1984-85, Works of the law and the curse of the law. *NTS* 31, 523-542; 1985, Once more -- Galatians 1:18: *ἰσοπρεπὴν Κηρῶν*. In reply to Otfried Hofius. *ZNW* 76, 138-139; 1987a, 'A light to the Gentiles:' the significance of the Damascus Road Christophany for Paul, in *The glory of Christ in the New Testament: studies in Christology in memory of George Bradford Caird* ed L D Hurst & N T Wright (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 251-266); 1987b, 'Righteousness from the law' and 'righteousness from faith:' Paul's interpretation of Scripture in Romans 10:10, in *Tradition and interpretation in the New Testament: essays in honor of E Earle Ellis for his 60th birthday* ed G F Hawthorne & O Betz (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 216-228); 1988a, The theology of Galatians, in *SBL seminar papers* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1-16); 1988c, *Romans* (WBC). Waco: Word, Inc; 1990b, What was the issue between Paul and 'those of the circumcision?' in *Paulus als Missionar und Theologe und das antike Judentum* (Tübingen: J C B Mohr); 1991, The theology of Galatians: the issue of covenantal nomism, in *Pauline theology, vol 1: Thessalonians, Philippians, Galatians, Philemon* ed J M Bassler (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 125-146).
30. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987.
31. Probleme paulinischer Theologie. II. 'Gesetzeswerke.' *ZNW* 28 (1929), 177-207.

32. Gaston does not address the fact that these genitives may be understood as objective, viz., that these may be 'fleshly' works and 'spiritual' works; while there may be little difference between 'works of the flesh' and 'fleshly works' or 'works of the Spirit' and 'spiritual works' in the context of Galatians 5:19ff, nevertheless a distinction may be made. And if that distinction may be made here, there is no necessity to demand that the 'works of the law' be understood as a subjective genitive.
33. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. The English translation was published as *Law in Paul's thought*, trans J C G Greig and ed J Riches (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1984). This thesis interacts with the English translation.
34. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986.
35. Räisänen states that, 'a Paul might have been able to form a few sentences through which to indicate that he wished to make such an important distinction between the law and its false interpretation' (1986b:43; cf Cranfield 1979, 2:853. There Cranfield states, '...it will be well to bear in mind the fact...that the Greek language of Paul's day possessed no word-group corresponding to our "legalism," "legalist," and "legalistic"').
36. This is based upon Räisänen's interpretation of Gl 3:10 and Rm 1:18-3:20; cf 1986b:94-96.
37. This is Räisänen's understanding of Paul's position in Rm 1-3, although he believes that Paul's argument in this section of Romans is both out of context and 'simply a piece of propagandist denigration' (1986b: 97-101).
38. Räisänen writes, 'The argument that no one can fulfill the law is a device to serve the assertion that the death of Christ was a salvific act that was absolutely necessary for all mankind' (1986b:101-109, but especially 107-109).

3. A Linguistic Analysis of Terms and Expressions Related to ἔργα νόμου

3.1 Comparable Phrases in Analogous Texts

Consideration of what Paul meant by the expression 'works of the law' is complicated not only by a lack of consensus in scholarly interpretation of that term, but also by the fact that there are no close verbal parallels to this phrase in the rest of the New Testament or in the Septuagint. Indeed, in the whole of the related literature, there are only a few instances where apparently analogous terminology exists. And the infrequent corollary phrases to Paul's ἔργα νόμου formulation that do exist occur only in the Qumran texts and the pseudepigraphical 2 Baruch.¹ As a means of informing the later discussion of Paul's use of ἔργα νόμου, the analysis of which is the purpose of this dissertation, a brief overview of these corollary phrases need be undertaken here.

In the Apocalypse of Baruch (2 Baruch) the literary figure Baruch is perplexed about the vision he has received. The angel Ramael explains it to him by describing the 'black cloud' of Adam's and the fallen angels' initial transgressions and the resulting sin of all humanity that followed their actions. This sin Ramael contrasts to the 'bright cloud' of Abraham's obedience. For during his time the 'works of the commandments' were accomplished by Abraham and his family, as well as by 'others like [Abraham]' (2 Bar 55-57; 'works of the commandments' is

found at 57.2). Here in 2 Baruch 57.2 the 'works' are undoubtedly those done by Abraham and the others in obedience to the commandments, and not 'works' produced in them by those commandments. So 2 Baruch provides a linguistic parallel to Paul's 'works of the law' phrase.

Further parallels to Paul's ἔργα νόμου phrase are contained in the Qumran texts. The only Hebrew expression in the Scrolls that appears to be an exact linguistic equivalent to Paul's ἔργα νόμου formulation occurs in 1QS. This scroll is made up of material pertaining to the 'doctrines, ceremonies and rites' of the Qumran community.² As represented by this material, members are classified according to their 'deeds of the law' (מעשי תורה) in 1QS 5:21-23; 6:18.³ Members with 'understanding and perfection of conduct' with respect to these 'deeds of the law' were to be promoted year by year, and those with faults relative to the same were to be demoted according to those faults.

Given the fact that these 'works of the law' (Dupont-Sommer's translation; 1973:312, note 5) were the basis for a member's inclusion and standing in the community, the phrase can only refer to 'works' attained by the members and not those brought about by the law. The phrase explicitly refers to actions done in obedience to the law. That is, they are 'works of the law' in the sense that they are deeds performed by the members of the community in conformance to the law, and not deeds 'produced' in those members by the law. These 'works' were also understood as those that would discriminate between community members and their

enemies, as well as others who found themselves outside the community, in the end days.

Other phrases in the Dead Sea Scrolls, though not exactly equivalent, also closely approximate Paul's *ἔργα νόμου* expression.

In 1QH 1.26 and 4.31 it is stated that all 'works of righteousness' (מעשי הצדקה) belong to the 'most high,' the 'God of righteousness.' In the context of the hymns, the 'works of righteousness' referred to are the righteous acts of God. That is, they are works characterized as being righteous because they are God's works. It is unlikely that this reference could be construed to mean 'works produced by righteousness,' since God is understood to be more than the mere personification of an attribute. God is righteous in himself, so, by definition, his works are characterized as themselves 'righteous.' These righteous deeds of God are then contrasted to the iniquitous 'works of deceit' belonging to men (1QH 1.27).

Another *Hymn* parallel is found at 1QH 6:9, which speaks of those who make up God's people (his 'inheritance'): these will ultimately be raised up by God as survivors because of 'their deeds in [God's] truth' (מעשיהם באמתה). The 'deeds in truth' of these God-ordained 'survivors' result in their being cleansed from sin and pardoned, as well as in their inclusion in God's 'council' in glory. Their deeds are accomplished in the realm of truth, and so they are truthful deeds and not deeds produced by the truth.

These linguistic/conceptual parallels suggest two initial observations of significance for the purposes of this study. The

first is that the perception of 'works of the law' as eventuating in justification (or its concomitant, righteousness) was evidently not so foreign a theological construct in first-century Jewish thought as some have suggested. At least some segments within Judaism could well have thought of the law in this fashion, however 'minor' or 'secondary' those segments may have been within the Judaism of Paul's day. Thus the *possibility* exists that some form of the 'traditional' understanding of ἔργα νόμου as works performed in obedience to the law -- or, at least as an attempt to gain God's favor through keeping the law -- is indeed a correct understanding of the expression. This possibility cannot be rejected out of hand. And, the best contextual understanding of the above parallel expressions necessitates that they be interpreted as objective, and not subjective, expressions. This further suggests that Paul's expression 'works of the law' should likewise be taken in this manner to mean 'works done in obedience to the law.'

A second significant observation from the above material has to do with the law itself. For the most natural inference to be drawn from these Qumran phrases is that they admit of no bifurcation in the law. So those who argue that Paul is referring *only* to Jewish 'boundary markers' or 'identity badges' in his use of ἔργα νόμου need to demonstrate how and why he would make such a distinction in the law when that distinction would apparently be quite different from the typical Jewish understanding of his day.⁴ While the probability exists that these 'boundary markers' are a part of the picture, especially in Galatians, it

is unlikely that they represent the whole of Paul's thinking on that point.⁵

What Paul does mean by 'works of the law,' then, is as yet open to investigation, as well as discussion, particularly with reference to what 'works' are in mind. As a means toward advancing that investigation, a survey of Paul's usage of ἔργον in contexts other than the ἔργα νόμου formulation will be conducted.

3.2 The ἔργον Lexical Data

The word ἔργον occurs in some form a total of sixty-eight times in the Pauline letters,⁶ eight of which are in the ἔργα νόμου construct.⁷ Of the sixty references outside the 'works of the law' phraseology, thirteen are found in Romans, eight in 1 Corinthians, three in 2 Corinthians, two in Galatians, four in Ephesians, three each in Philippians and Colossians, two each in 1 and 2 Thessalonians, six each in 1 and 2 Timothy, and eight in Titus. D J Moo has helpfully categorized all sixty-eight occurrences of ἔργον, as follows (cf Moo 1983:93):

1. ἔργον used with no ethical connotation.

1.1 Action or activity; 'deed' as opposed to 'word.'

Singular - Rm 15:8; 1 Cor 5:2; 2 Cor 10:11; Gl 6:4;
Col 3:17.

1.2 God's work in believers.

Singular - Rm 14:20; Phlp 1:6.

1.3 Paul's apostolic work.

Singular - 1 Cor 9:1; Phlp 1:22

1.4 The 'work' of ministry in general, or a particular gift or office.

1.4.1 Singular, absolute - 1 Th 5:13.

1.4.2 Singular, with θεοῦ, Χριστοῦ or κυρίου - 1 Cor 15:58; 16:10; Phlp 2:30.

1.4.3 Singular, with διακονίας - Eph 4:12.

1.4.4 Singular, with καλοῦ - 1 Tm 3:1.

1.4.5 Singular, with εὐαγγελιστοῦ - 2 Tm 4:5.

2. Ἔργον used with an ethical connotation.

2.1 As the criterion of judgment.

2.1.1 Singular - Rm 2:7 (with ἀγαθοῦ); 1 Cor 3:13a, b, 14, 15.

2.1.2 Plural - Rm 2:6; 2 Cor 11:15; 2 Tm 4:14.

2.2 To which believers are called.

2.2.1 Singular, with ἀγαθός or καλός - Rm 13:3; 2 Cor 9:8; Col 1:10; 2 Th 2:17; 1 Tm 5:10; 2 Tm 2:21; 3:17; Tt 1:16.

2.2.1 Plural, with ἀγαθός or καλός - Eph 2:10; 1 Tm 2:10; 5:10, 25; 6:18; Tt 2:7, 14; 3:8, 14.

2.3 From which believers are called.

2.3.1 Singular, plus πονηρός - 2 Tm 4:18.

2.3.2 Plural.

2.3.2.1 Plural, absolute - Tt 1:16.

2.3.2.2 Plural, with πονηρός - Col 1:21.

2.3.2.3 Plural, with τοῦ σκότους, ἀκάρποις τοῦ σκότους - Rm 13:12; Eph 5:11.

2.3.2.4 Plural, with τῆς σαρκός - Gl 5:19.

3. Ἔργον used with reference to salvation.

3.1 Plural, absolute.

3.1.1 Justification not ἐξ ἔργων - Rm 4:2; cf 9:32.

3.1.2 Justification χωρὶς ἔργων - Rm 4:6.

3.1.3 Election not ἐξ ἔργων - Rm 9:12; 11:6.

3.1.4 Salvation not ἐξ ἔργων - Eph 2:9; Tt 3:5 (with τῶν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ).

3.1.5 Salvation and calling not κατὰ τὰ ἔργα - 2 Tm 1:9.

3.2 (Plural, ἔργα νόμου - Rm 3:20, 28; Gl 2:16; 3:2, 5, 10).

3.3 Other references with νόμος.

3.3.1 Singular, with νόμου - Rm 2:15.

3.3.2 Plural, with νόμου - Rm 3:27.

3.3 Significance of the ἔργον Lexical Data

An analysis of the sixty ἔργον occurrences tabulated above indicates several important matters that are relevant to the question addressed by this study. Care must be taken to avoid overstating the weight to be borne by the evidence afforded by this data. At the same time, however, the data offers a measure of direction for the inquiry at hand, and so such matters will be set out in what follows.

3.3.1 Category One - ἔργον without Ethical Connotation

As determined by its usage in the first category, ἔργον functions for Paul as activity in a general or 'ordinary' sense, without any necessary implications as to the ethical orientation of that activity. This is what might be considered the 'normal' usage of the word: it simply delineates or categorizes an activity as 'work.' That is not to deny the possibility of specificity with regard to 'work,' for it may be used in contexts

describing God's work, or Paul's work, or the 'work' of the ministry, and so on. Nevertheless, the use of ἔργον in Category One merely indicates the function of the activity. As such, this category does not provide any guidance for the question of the meaning of ἔργα νόμου.

3.3.2 Category Two - ἔργον with Ethical Connotation

Paul's use of ἔργον as depicted in Category Two distinguishes 'work' in a manner that admits of an ethical orientation, which orientation is dependent upon the verbal or descriptive qualifiers he attaches to it. The 'good' or 'bad' character of a given work does not reside in the fact that it is 'work,' but with whom or what that work is aligned and its moral or ethical result. In this manner Paul uses 'work' in three ways: (1) as that which will be evaluated by God at the final judgment; (2) as a specific activity to which the believer is called; and (3) as a specific activity that the believer is to avoid.

3.3.2.1 ἔργον as the Criterion for Judgment

When he writes concerning ἔργον as a standard for God's judgment, Paul uses the term eight times in seven different verses. Included in this sub-category are Romans 2:6-8; 1 Corinthians 13:3a, b, 14, 15; 2 Corinthians 11:15; and 2 Timothy 4:14.

Romans 2:6-7 occurs in the midst of a section in which Paul is admonishing Jews regarding their condemnatory attitudes toward the sin of Gentiles, when some of them were, in fact, guilty of practicing many of the same evils. These Jews are 'without

excuse,' Paul maintains, because of this blind or hypocritical stance. Paul warns them that God will pass judgment upon all those whose lives are iniquitous after this fashion, regardless of their privileged position as recipients of the 'kindness and forbearance and patience' of God (2:1-4). In fact, he says, it is their stubbornness and unrepentant hearts that cause them to believe that they will escape God's judgment when they routinely sin in the same manner the Gentiles do. They are effectively 'storing up wrath' for themselves against the day when God will 'repay each one according to his works' (ἀποδώσει ἕκαστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ). This 'repayment' will be in the form of eternal life and glory for those who 'with steadfastness strive after good works' (τοῖς μὲν καθ' ὑπομονὴν ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ...ζητοῦσιν).

These who are involved in 'good' works are then contrasted by Paul in Romans 2:8 to those who 'do not obey the truth but obey unrighteousness,' who will receive as their reward 'wrath and indignation.' The 'works' in view in Romans 2:6-7 are, then, 'good' works, obtained of a 'proper' ethical orientation, as evidenced by the subsequent reward which is based upon those 'works.' By way of contrast, the disobedience reflected in 2:8 is 'bad,' or 'improperly' oriented ethically, as evidenced by the fact that these works result in God's judgment against those who practice such things. So in this context 'works' may be either good or bad, depending upon the descriptor or qualifier attached.

1 Corinthians 3:13a, b, 14 and 15 provide a similar context for the word ἔργον. Here Paul speaks of 'work' in the context of 'building' the church of Jesus Christ, an activity in which he

himself has been involved by laying the foundation. The judgment referred to here is not the 'final' judgment of Romans 2, but God's evaluation of the ἔργον of those who build upon the foundation that Paul and others have laid. As such, this is not strictly a redemptive 'work,' but a work of service that will be found to be of either lasting or transient value for the church, God's 'building,' depending upon the moral/ethical character of the ἔργον expended. 'Each man's work' will be tested for approval (δοκιμάζω), which approval will come only if the work is of the proper 'sort' (ὁποῖόν). That approved type of 'work' will be rewarded, whereas improper 'work' will cause loss of reward.

In 2 Corinthians 11:15 ἔργον occurs in the context of Paul's defense of his apostleship against the 'superapostles' (ὑπερλίον ἀποστόλων, 11:5), who are charging Paul with an inferior ministry. For his part, Paul 'turns the tables' on his accusers, identifying them to be servants not of Christ, but of Satan, the adversary of Jesus Christ and his Church. These are actually 'false' apostles, Paul says, deceivers who disguise themselves as Christ's ministers. In this way they mimic the one whom they really do serve, that is, Satan. Their end, which in this context can only be perceived of as negative (ie, destruction), will be 'according to their works' (ὡν τὸ τέλος ἔσται κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν). Thus, in this verse also, 'work' is aligned ethically only by the description of the character of its result.

2 Timothy 4:14 is another example of God's judgment against one considered harmful to the church of Jesus Christ. Alexander the coppersmith apparently caused Paul no little grief in

carrying out ministry; Paul says that Alexander 'did me much harm' (πολλά μοι κακά ἐνεδείξατο, historical aorist). As a result, Paul says, the Lord 'will repay him according to his deeds' (ἀποδώσει αὐτῷ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ). The implication is that those 'deeds' (ἔργα) are evil, and the 'reward' will be some form of judgment by God against Alexander due to the negative impact of his deeds (cf 4:15).

3.3.2.2 Ἔργον to which Believers are Called

Paul's use of ἔργον in terms of an activity which believers are to take on as the expression of their faith is contained in a number of his letters (Rm 13:3; 2 Cor 9:8; Eph 2:10; Col 1:10; 1 Th 1:3; 2 Th 1:11; 2:17; 1 Tm 2:10; 5:10 [2x], 25; 6:18; 2 Tm 2:21; 3:17; Tt 1:16; 2:7, 14; 3:1, 8, 14). Again, in these passages the ethical dimension of 'work' is determined by the positive or negative results of that work.

Romans 13:3 is found within the paranetic portion of that letter. In chapter 12 Paul has urged his readers to faithful, sacrificial service to Jesus Christ, and then in chapter 13 goes on to a consideration of believers' civic responsibilities. Rulers are God's agents, Paul says, established by him as the bearers of the sword against those who practice evil (13:4). But those who do 'good works' need not fear these ministers of God (οὐκ εἰσιν φόβος τῷ ἀγαθῷ ἔργῳ ἀλλὰ τῷ κακῷ), for the doers of good will receive praise from their rulers. So believers are urged to do 'good works,' that is, those works that may be called 'good' due to the positive nature of their result.

In 2 Corinthians 9 Paul exhorts his converts to contribute to a collection for needy saints at Jerusalem. He tells them that God will provide generously for those who give profusely, in order that they 'may have an abundance for every good work' (ἔχοντες περισσεύητε εἰς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθόν). Here the 'work' is 'good' because it contributes to the meeting of the need of other believers, resulting in a tangible expression of the Corinthians' love for God and concern for other believers.

Ephesians 2:10 proclaims that Christians are responsible to live as God's 'workmanship' (ποίημα), created in Christ Jesus for the purpose of effecting 'good works' (ἐπὶ ἔργοις ἀγαθοῖς, ἐπὶ with the dative denoting purpose). This comes in the context of Paul's reminding the Ephesians that salvation does not come by 'works' (2:9, on which see Category Three, below), but by grace, and that God has preordained (προητοίμασεν, historical aorist) that believers conduct themselves in this way to achieve the objective God had in mind when he created them in Christ. These are, then, 'good works,' for they accomplish God's new-creation intention. Paul's uses of ἔργα in Colossians 1:10, 1 Thessalonians 1:3, 2 Thessalonians 2:17, 1 Timothy 2:10, 5:10, 25, 6:18, 2 Timothy 2:21, 3:17, and Titus 2:7, 14, 3:1, 8, 14 are all indicative of this same type of new-creation thought construct. The 'works' mentioned in these passages are 'good' because they result in a constructive moral/ethical orientation in the lives of believers.

In 1 Thessalonians 1 Paul speaks in thanksgiving to God for the believers at Thessalonica. He relates the nature of his prayers for them, and he lists reasons for being encouraged by

their faith. He tells them that he remembers their 'work of faith' (ὁμῶν τοῦ ἔργου) ^{ζῆς πίστεως} and 'labor of love' (τοῦ κόπου τῆς ἀγάπης) and 'steadfastness of hope' (τῆς ὑπομονῆς τῆς ἐλπίδος) in the Lord, which they expressed when he first came to them with the gospel (1:3). In context, these are undoubtedly subjective genitives (ie, 'work' that arises from faith, etc). And again, the 'work' Paul has in mind is 'good' (by implication) because its result had a positive impact on the Thessalonians and those around them. 2 Thessalonians 1:11 also fits this description.

In Titus 1:16 Paul speaks of those outside the faith, whose mind and conscience are 'both defiled' (ἀλλὰ μεμιάονται αὐτῶν καὶ ὁ νοῦς καὶ ἡ συνείδησις). Though they 'profess to know God,' they are in actuality proved by their deeds to be deniers of God, detestable and disobedient. As a result, they are 'unqualified for any good deed' (πρὸς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἀδόκιμοι). Here the 'good' deed is 'good' in distinction to the implied 'bad' nature of the works of those detestable people. That is, the works are called 'good' because they result, by implied contrast, in a proper moral/ethical alignment toward God.

3.3.2.3 Ἔργον from which Believers are Called

The final sub-category of Paul's use of 'work' in Category Two is the 'work' that believers are admonished to avoid. This 'work' is termed 'bad' or 'evil' or 'unclean' because of its impact on the life of the believer or on the community in a manner contrary to God's intention. Paul's use of ἔργον in this manner is found

in a significant number of his letters (Rm 13:12; Gl 5:19; Eph 5:11; Col 1:21; Tt 1:16).

Romans 13:12 occurs, again, in that paranetic section of the letter wherein Paul instructs believers as to the proper behavioral conduct of the Christian in exemplifying one's new-creation status. This involves an awareness that, eschatologically speaking, the time of 'night' is about gone and the 'day' is coming ('night' and 'day' functioning here as metaphors for the temporal realm of the dominion of sin and the triumph of God's redemptive plan, respectively). So Paul warns believers to 'lay aside the works of darkness' (ἀποθέμεθα οὖν τὰ ἔργα τοῦ σκοτοῦς) and clothe themselves with the 'armor of light.' The 'works of darkness' are those works that belong to the realm of sin, and therefore are 'evil' due to the fact that they belong to the wrong domain.

Galatians 5:19 belongs in this grouping as well (though there the 'evil' deeds are 'of the flesh,' which is another improper relational category), as do also Ephesians 5:11, Colossians 1:21, and Titus 1:16.

Throughout Category Two, then, as has been demonstrated above, ἔργον is used by Paul as a descriptor of *ethically-oriented activity* that believers are called on to express in their lives. They are to do this either to prepare for evaluative judgment by God for their deeds or simply as an expression of their new relationship to God in Christ. In this classification of 'work,' the emphasis is upon deeds or activities that result in a certain status or condition. For while 'work' may itself be neutral, it is described as 'good' or 'bad' depending on the bearing that work has upon the individual's relationship to God and others.

So 'work' then takes on an ethical dimension as it describes the individual's orientation to God and his commands. And this becomes significant for the question of the meaning of ἔργα νόμου since for Paul, as seen above, 'work' displays either a positive or negative relationship to God, with the ethical alignment of the word being able only finally to be determined by its immediate context or the presence of further verbal descriptors.

3.3.3 Category Three - ἔργον Related to Salvation

The fact that 'work' can take on an ethical dimension becomes meaningful for assessing the word ἔργον in Category Three. In these contexts ἔργον is used with definite ethical/relational overtones in a salvific or redemptive manner, but always in a negative sense, to deny the efficacy of ἔργα to bring about justification, righteousness, election and/or the Spirit (the only possible exception to this is found at Rm 2:14-15, which will be commented upon later). In other words, while 'work' may itself be either good or evil, Paul speaks only negatively when he describes or qualifies 'work' in contexts that are considered to be redemptive in intention.⁸

3.3.3.1 ἔργον used as a Plural Absolute

Verses in which ἔργον appears as a plural absolute are found in several Pauline letters (Rm 4:2, 6; 9:12; 11:6; Eph 2:9; 2 Tm 1:9; Tt 3:5). The 'works' Paul discusses in these texts are said to be inadequate for bringing about salvation or any salvific benefits.

In Romans 4 Paul is expanding upon his argument in 1-3, where-
in he argued that both Jew and Gentile are equally guilty before
God and so equally in need of justification. Justification comes
about as a result of God's gracious gift, Paul says (3:21ff), for
those who exercise faith in the redemptive work of Christ. All
forms of boasting, therefore, are excluded.

Abraham is a demonstration of this, for Paul writes, 'if
Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about'
(ει γὰρ Ἀβραάμ ἐξ ἔργων ἐδικαιώθη, ἔχει καύχημα). Since this statement occurs
in the context of Paul's denial of such a possibility of
Abraham's claim for 'boasting,' the implication is that such
justification cannot come about ἐξ ἔργων, 'by works.' David, too,
understood that God reckons righteousness 'apart from works' (ὁ
θεὸς λογίζεται δικαιοσύνην χωρὶς ἔργων; χωρὶς with the genitive functioning
as 'without regard to, independent of').

So then in Romans 4 'works' are spoken of negatively. They are
spoken of in this way, however, *not because they are 'works,'* but
because they fail to achieve righteousness or justification.
Whether or not someone might hypothetically 'boast' upon
realizing his or her own justification through personal effort
is not the issue in this chapter. Rather, Paul's concern here is
to point out that a proper relationship with God cannot be
achieved ἐξ ἔργων. Likewise in Romans 9:12 and 11:6 election is
spoken of in exactly the same negative manner, indicating again
that 'works' are inadequate because they simply do not bring
about the desired result. And in Ephesians 2:8-9 Paul contravenes
the idea of salvation as being accomplished 'of yourselves...of

works' (οὐκ ἐξ ἑμῶν...οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων, ἐκ with the genitive indicating source or origin). Here he states that, contrary to salvation coming by 'works,' it is the gift of God, a result of his grace. In addition, both 2 Timothy 1:9 and Titus 3:5 signify a like conceptuality. Thus, for Paul, salvation, justification, and/or righteousness cannot come about ἐξ ἔργων.

3.3.3.2 Νόμος τῶν ἔργων - Romans 3:27

In Romans 3:21-31 Paul discusses the ramifications of his previous discussion concerning the equality of Jews and Gentiles in their redemptive needs. Having condemned both groups because of their equal culpability before God, Paul now speaks of justification being equally available to both by virtue of God's grace through the death of Christ (3:21-26). Because this redemption/justification is available to all, and results from God's grace through the individual's expression of faith in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, Paul states that 'boasting' is excluded. Rhetorically he then asks, 'What kind of law' is it that excludes such 'boasting?' His answer is that it can only be a 'law' of faith, not one 'of works' (διὰ ποίου νόμου; τῶν ἔργων; οὐχί, ἀλλὰ διὰ νόμου πίστεως).

It is most likely here that Paul intends his use of 'law' in the rhetorical question of verse 27 to be understood in terms of 'principle' or 'general rule' (understanding ποίου here non-qualitatively, on the order of τί; cf Moo 1991:252), rather than some aspect of the Mosaic code. Probably, however, the use of 'law' in the answer should be seen as Paul's *double entente*, his

attempt to blend both concepts into one.' That is, Paul's use of 'law' in both occurrences in verse 27 is best understood to communicate neither a strictly metaphorical use nor merely the Mosaic law. Instead, he attempts to dramatize the Jewish understanding of the demands placed upon them by the Mosaic law ('works') in contrast to his understanding of the demand of the new covenant ('faith'). In this manner, 'works' are excluded, because 'faith' is the only proper 'work' in terms of one's ethical orientation toward God.

3.3.3.3 Ἔργον νόμου - Romans 2:15

Romans 2:14-15 is the single possible exception to the above Category Three analysis. In Romans 2:14-15 Paul says that the Gentiles 'do instinctively the things of the law' and are thus 'a law unto themselves, in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts' (emphasis added). This statement does appear to be either an exception to the above 'negative conceptuality' attached to the ἔργα νόμου expression, or an apparent contradiction to some of Paul's other statements made with regard to the law. Räisänen, for example, is one who sees this as another illustration of inconsistency in Paul's thinking. He says, '2.14-15, 26-27 stand in flat contradiction to the main thesis of the section,' and then concludes that Paul must have in mind Gentiles who 'somehow' fulfill the law outside the Christian community (Räisänen 1986b:102-109, especially 103-106). The 'inherent contradictions' in this entire section are, Räisänen maintains, the result of Paul's anti-Jewish argumentation, a result of his desire to prove the Jew guilty.¹⁰ So

according to Räsänen, Paul's polemic against the Jews at this point forces him to argue from expediency, with the result that he contradicts himself badly. Hübner, in a somewhat more congenial vein, merely refers to this statement by Paul as an 'imbalance' (1984:81).¹¹

A careful scrutiny of Romans 2:14-15 in context indicates that understanding the passage as an 'exception' to the third-category negative overtones of ἔργον may be a case of noting an exception which is more apparent than real. Consideration of the larger context of Paul's argumentation allows one to avoid such a conclusion.¹²

Romans 2:14-16 is part of Paul's overall argument of chapters 1-3, wherein he is concerned to show that both Jews and Gentiles alike are under the just condemnation of God due to their sin. Depicting the analogous condemnation of Jew and Gentile in this fashion is Paul's literary vehicle for demonstrating that both are ultimately to be justified by faith. As Sanders puts it, 'it is clear [in Romans 1-4] that one of Paul's major concerns is to assert that salvation is for both Jews and Gentiles and that it must be based on the same ground (PPJ 488; cf 515f. Emphasis is Sanders'). To achieve that end, Paul demonstrates the guilt of the Gentiles first, in a cause-to-effect manner. The Gentiles, Paul says, are ungodly and unrighteous (ἀσέβειαν καὶ ἀδικίαν) because they suppress (κατεχόντων, participle in apposition to ἀνθρώπων) God's truth in unrighteousness (1:18; cf Cranfield 1985:28-30). What these Gentiles know about God, identified by Paul as God's 'eternal power and divine nature' (ἀίδιος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θεϊότης,

1:20), they refuse to give submissive credence to. They are therefore culpable before him. They have an understanding of God, Paul says, both from creation around them and from their own existence (1:19-20). Yet, in their wickedness, the Gentiles (generically speaking) refused to accede to the claims this truth holds upon them: they did not honor God as God, nor were they thankful to him for who he is, or for their own existence. Instead they progressed in a downward-moving spiritual relationship, moving away from God and the knowledge of God to worshipping humanity, to birds, to beasts, and finally to crawling things. They were utterly foolish and their darkened minds could no longer help them. God honored their choices, and 'gave them over' to their desires and the natural consequences of those desires (Διὸ παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῶν καρδιῶν, 1:24; cf 1:26, 28). They progressed from impurity to lust to degrading passions. This downward spiral included depravity of mind, as Paul indicates, to the extent that the Gentiles not only practiced these and all kinds of other evil (1:28-32), but they even 'approved' of others who did such things. This resulted in God's giving to them exactly what they wanted -- they lived in their depravity and wickedness, which resulted in their rejection of God (and rejection by God) and an ever-descending practice of wickedness, unto ultimate condemnation.

When Paul speaks to the issue of the culpability of the Jews, his approach is just the opposite of that found in his discussion of the Gentiles. As he considers the question of guilt for his 'relatives according to the flesh' in Romans 2:1-3:8, he argues from effect (guilt and its resultant condemnation) to cause

(sin). He shows the Jews to be under God's just sentence, 'without excuse' (Διὸ ἀναπολόγητος εἶ, 2:1). This is so, Paul writes, because they too are guilty (generically speaking) of many of the same activities for which they condemn the Gentiles. They, too, refuse to obey God and submit to him (2:3-6). While Paul concedes that righteous living does bring reward (2:7-10), the Jews are guilty of unrighteousness, just as the Gentiles are. Evil deeds bring equal recompense for Jew or Gentile, because God is impartial in his judgment (2:11). Whether one sins without knowledge of the law or sins as one 'under the law,' the sinner will be judged. But, doers of the law will be justified (2:12-13).

This brings Paul to a parenthetical explanation: even Gentiles who do not have *the* law (ie, the law of Moses) are yet a law unto themselves (ἐαυτοῖς εἰσιν νόμος). That is, that which some Gentiles do instinctively, 'by nature' (φύσει), indicates their awareness of similar moral restraints as those making up the demands of God's moral law (as paralleled throughout Greek literature; cf Koester 1974:267-269).¹³ This awareness of God's divine standard leads them, by means of conscience, to either excuse or accuse themselves, as a precursor to the final judgment.¹⁴

Following this aside, Paul charges the Jews (who do have *the* law) both with specific sins (such as 'robbing' God [2:21; cf Malachi] and spiritual idolatry [2:22; cf Hosea]), and general evil deeds, in terms of their breaking the very law by means of which they claim to serve God (2:17ff). Therefore, as Paul has earlier implied, they deserve the same wrath of God as the Gentiles deserve.

This understanding of the greater context of Romans 2:14-16, 26-27 indicates that in the theological mental backdrop to these verses Paul must have in mind both the realization of the universal fall of humanity and the 'circumcision of the heart' spoken of by Jeremiah as the only means of righteousness (Jr 31:31-34; cf Cranfield 1975, 1:343f; Dahl 1977:80).¹⁵ True righteousness, according to Paul (and Jeremiah!) is inward: it is found in that circumcision of the heart. True righteousness is not found in externals, whether practiced by Jew or Gentile (though externals may be used as an *expression* of inward righteousness; cf Paul's personal practice as illustrated in Ac 21:15-26; 1 Cor 9:19-23). A 'true Jew,' in the context of Romans 2:28-29, is therefore one who has experienced this inward transformation (2:28ff; cf Jn 3:3-8), this 'spiritual circumcision,' and not one who merely adheres in an external, perfunctory manner to an outward law-code. Nor are Gentiles justified merely for having an understanding of 'right and wrong' based upon some concept of 'natural law,' even though at times that may indeed be carried out. The implication here is that they, too, must be inwardly circumcised, transformed by grace through faith.

Paul's 'cause-to-effect' argument with respect to the Gentiles (in a 'downward spiral' line of reasoning), and his 'effect-to-cause' reasoning regarding the Jews (in which he works backwards from the Gentile argument) in this section may be diagrammed as follows:

Gentiles

Suppress the truth

Refuse to 'see'

Given over

Jews

External circumcision

External law observance

'External' Jew

 CONDEMNATION

 CONDEMNATION

The only way for either Jew or Gentile to become 'circumcised' of heart and experience this inward transformation is, according to Paul, by faith in Christ (3:21-28).

So Paul's point in Romans 2:14-16, 26-27 need not be understood as inconsistent (Räisänen) or imbalanced (Hübner). Nor is it necessary to postulate that Paul has 'hypothetical' Gentiles in mind (cf, eg, Howard 1980). And, understood properly in context, it is not necessary to make this passage an exception to the 'negative conceptuality' of the third category of Paul's use of ἔργον. Paul's point is that even though some Gentiles do 'the things of the law' (τὰ τοῦ νόμου, 2:14), they do these things out of an awareness of God's ethical standards and so are held accountable for their actions. Paul does not say that they actually 'do the law,' but rather speaks here of their ethical activities as based upon God's divine moral standards which are universally recognized as 'right' or 'proper,' of which these Gentiles have an innate realization (φύσις). This awareness in turn functions to demonstrate their guilt (cf Moo 1991:147ff, 153; Harrison 1976:31). And though the Jews traditionally practice the law, the devotion of some is futile in the light of the fact that much of that devotion is external, and not an expression of an inward reality, an internal 'circumcision of heart.' This section

is indeed, therefore, couched in 'negative conceptuality.' It expresses for Jew and Gentile the certainty of the condemnation both face in light of their sin. The answer to their shared dilemma is, again, faith in Christ.

3.3.4 Conclusion

Paul's use of ἔργον outside the 'works of the law' terminology has demonstrated that he uses the word in both 'neutral' and ethical formulations. The word 'work' in itself merely communicates a category of action or a function of an activity which is carried out, and has no necessary moral implications. When Paul couples 'work' with verbal qualifiers or contextual descriptors, however, the ethical orientation of ἔργον is revealed by that qualifier or descriptor. Paul can speak of 'good' work (ἀγαθός, καλός) and 'bad' or 'evil' work (τοῦ σκότους, πονηρός, ἀκάθαρτος), depending upon how work affects one's relationship to God and/or his commands. The determining factor for Paul, in ethical terms, is not the fact of the 'work' itself, but the consequential moral or 'spiritual' orientation of that work.

Due to the fact that all of the occurrences of the ἔργα νόμου phrase are in the 'negative conceptuality' construct of the third category, and function as a 'subset' of Paul's use of ἔργον (as Moo correctly notes; 1983:95), the parameters for the meaning of this phrase must not too quickly be supposed to lie outside the bounds of this negative terminology without very strong contextual evidence indicating otherwise. As a result of this qualification, the interpretation of this key term in its Galatians and

Romans contexts must give the implications of this negative conceptuality sufficient weight.

This circumstance carries significance for the consideration of the meaning of ἔργα νόμου, due to the fact that Paul always qualifies these 'works of the law' in negative terms. He does not do so because they are works of 'law,' as such. Rather, the evidence drawn from Paul's use of ἔργον as tabulated above suggests that Paul speaks against these 'works of the law' because they are not efficacious for bringing about for humanity as a whole or for an individual what he (Paul) considers a proper ethical/moral alignment or relationship with God, as evidenced by justification, reception of the Spirit, election, and so on. As noted briefly above, such evidence must not be allowed to be overstated at this point of investigation into Paul and the ἔργα νόμου. Nonetheless, it is significant evidence and should be considered informative when evaluating the 'works of the law' texts of Galatians and Romans. If the exegetical, literary and rhetorical dimensions of those contexts do not contravene this evidence, the information imparted by this survey of Paul's use of ἔργον will prove to be instructive for finally determining Paul's meaning by this significant expression.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

1. The only other parallel text of which this author is aware is that referenced by James Dunn (1988c, 1:154), who speaks of a 4Q scroll in possession of J. Strugnell that mentions 'deeds in the Torah (מעשי התורה)'. This phrase is the same as that found in 4QFlor 1.7.
2. As noted by Dupont-Sommer 1973:68.
3. Note also 4QFlor 1.1-17, especially verse 7.
4. In this regard, note Schreiner 1991:230f; also Thielman 1989:58f.
5. In a recent article, J D G Dunn has more candidly allowed that the 'works of the law' cannot be restricted to circumcision and food laws; cf Dunn 1992:102f.
6. Again, for the sake of as thorough a picture as possible, data from the 'deutero-pauline' letters are included. Whether or not Paul was personally responsible for these epistles, he was at least instrumental in the conceptual development of their contents.
7. Cf H Bachmann & W A Slaby, eds 1987. *Konkordanz zum Novum Testamentum Graece* 3rd ed. Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, columns 683-686.
8. Moo's data led him to a similar conclusion (1983:97, note 77): 'What is important is that Paul always polemicizes against 'works of the law' within the context of justification texts: nowhere does he criticize them as such. This stress on justification explains why Paul could allow other Jewish-Christians, as well as himself, to observe the law -- it was only when used to justify or imposed on the Gentiles that Paul fought against it' (emphasis original). Moo's observations are sound, but regrettably have not received the attention they deserve.
9. Though note also Cranfield 1979, 1:219ff; Dunn 1988c, 1:185f; and for a similar, though now slightly more nuanced view, see Moo 1991:252-253.

10. These alleged contradictions include, for example, Gentiles fulfilling 'just a few' requirements of the law who are then able to condemn the Jews for their 'failure' at law-keeping (2:27), when in fact the Jews themselves have 'fulfilled a few things as well;' and, Gentile Christians cannot be said to fulfill the law 'by nature' (φύσει, 2:14) because Paul has said that it is by the Spirit that Christians fulfill the law (Gl 5:22f; cf Rm 8:4).
11. At the same time, however, to anticipate the following discussion, Hübner does hold to an understanding of Paul's argument here to be one involved in condemning both Jews and Gentiles alike as under sin; cf 1984:161, note 138.
12. Räisänen discusses using the larger context of Paul's argument as a hermeneutical control, but he does not then use that larger context in drawing his conclusions; cf 1986b:104ff.
13. Räisänen argues here as though Paul claims that Gentiles 'fulfill' the Mosaic law, when in fact Paul only indicates that (some) Gentiles do 'things of the law.' Paul has already argued that natural revelation (to use a modern theological term) is sufficient to teach these Gentiles enough about God to make them culpable for their sins; certainly this must include the moral 'things of the law,' or God could not hold them accountable for the failure to do these 'things.'
14. Cf Käsemann 1980:164ff; Cranfield 1975, 1:155-163, especially 157-159; Bassler 1982:148f.
15. Cranfield speaks of Paul '[drawing] on the drama of Genesis 2 and 3' in depicting humanity's situation with regard to the Mosaic law; (Cranfield 1975, 1:343). Dahl writes, 'In Romans 2:12-29 Paul applies the... axiom of God's impartiality to the Gentiles who have sinned "without the law" and to the Jews who sinned "under the law." The Gentiles can get a fair trial because they know what the law requires (2:14-16)...It is not the external circumcision of the body but only the inner circumcision of the heart that counts before God' (Dahl 1977:80; cf also note 18, on the same page).

Part Two -- The Use of ἔργα νόμου in Galatians

4. The Historical Setting of Galatians

Paul's letters to his churches were not written in a vacuum. Nor did he write merely to communicate information. Behind Paul's correspondence with his churches existed complex 'historical realities' that served to shape the content and subject matter contained in each of his letters. These historical realities must be recovered as fully as possible before Paul's letters can be properly understood. As Garland points out, the circumstantial and historical realities that constitute the backdrop of each letter helped to form the 'stage setting' for Paul's correspondence, and one will only finally grasp the significance of the 'players' in Paul's communication process as one is able to understand the conditions that prompted him to pen those letters (1991:350f). In turn, an understanding of these 'players,' whether individuals or circumstances, should then aid in an improved comprehension of the message of Paul's letters and a greater perception of the significant exegetical issues contained therein. Not least among such hoped-for results is a clarification of the meaning of ἔργα νόμου.

With regard to Galatians, certain basic historical questions must be considered before attempting an exegetical analysis of the ἔργα νόμου texts. For of all Paul's extant letters, Galatians is the one most obviously polemical and written as a defense of

his apostolic authority. So an awareness of the historical situation that provoked this apologetic posture on the part of Paul, and what he felt to be at stake as potential consequences of that confrontational situation, is necessary in order to elucidate the meaning and intention of the text of Galatians. And such an awareness will, in turn, aid in the clarification of the 'works of the law' expression in this vital letter.

The purpose of this chapter will be to investigate the specific historical components of that conflict pertinent to the argument of Galatians and the meaning of ἔργα νόμου. In particular, it is necessary to consider the identification of Paul's opponents, the substance of their arguments, and the resulting argumentative situation that existed within the Galatian churches that caused Paul to write.

There is an additional historical problem to be considered, which is no less important than the others. This problem is the issue of whether a pre- or post-Jerusalem conference date is the correct timing for this letter.¹ This matter demands a measure of attention here because of its relation to the character of the conflict represented in Paul's letter to the Galatians. The answer given to this question, however, though significant, will have limited impact upon the meaning of the 'works of the law' texts. It will receive a less extensive degree of attention here, therefore, as deemed appropriate to its importance for the purpose of this chapter. This secondary question will nevertheless be dealt with first.

4.1 Date of Galatians

The question as to when Paul wrote his letter to the Galatian churches impacts this study when considering the conflict represented there. Paul writes to Galatian churches that are 'under attack' by those who preach 'another gospel' (ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον, 1:6) than that he himself preached. The character of this conflict (usually identified as 'judaizing,' ie, Jewish or Jewish-Christian attempts to force Paul's Galatian converts to adhere to a nomistic Jewish lifestyle) is such that the issue of the timing of the Jerusalem Council relative to when Paul wrote Galatians becomes significant, since the Gentile issue addressed by the Council (as recorded by Luke in Acts) appears to be the counterpart of the 'judaizing' problem represented by Galatians. The difficulty that arises from this 'mirroring' of situations is in determining which came first, and which, if either, then 'reflects' the other. Steps may be taken toward the resolution of this issue by the determination of which Acts visit is equivalent to Galatians 2:1-10.

4.1.1 Galatians and Acts - The Jerusalem Council

The Acts references to Paul's visits to Jerusalem and their possible Galatian correspondents have been helpfully categorized by A J Mattill, Jr as follows (1959:462-466, especially 466):²

- A 1 (Ac 9:26-30) Post-Conversion Visit
- A 2 (Ac 11:30; 12:25) Famine Visit
- A 3 (Ac 15:1-30) Jerusalem Council Visit
- A 4 (Ac 18:22) Hasty Visit
- A 5 (Ac 21:17-23:22) Collection Visit
- G 1 (Gl 1:18-20) Acquaintance Visit
- G 2 (Gl 2:1-10) Jerusalem Council Visit

The opinion of New Testament scholars is divided on the issue of which Acts visit corresponds to Galatians 2:1-10, and a number of options have been proposed to resolve this difficulty. Of the various attempted answers to this question, five stand out as the most significant and will be considered briefly here.³

The 'traditional' view holds that Galatians 2:1-10 is the Jerusalem Council visit of Acts 15:1-30 (A 3 = G 2), with Acts 9:26-30 being the 'acquaintance visit' of Galatians 1:18-20 (A 1 = G 1). The Acts 11:27-30 famine visit is not mentioned in Galatians 2, according to proponents of this view, due to the fact that Paul either considered discussion of that visit as unimportant to his argument at that point or its not being related to the question addressed there. Most who break with the 'traditional' view do so because of Paul's apparent 'omission' of the Acts 11:27-30 visit in Galatians 1-2, when he had strenuously defended his veracity in his communication with them (1:20).

A second view is that Galatians 2:1-10 is the famine visit of Acts 11:27-30 (A 2 = G 2), with the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15:1-30 occurring after Galatians was written. The acquaintance visit is still identified as A 1 = G 1. This view hinges upon the identification of the Galatian churches with those of southern Galatia (the 'South Galatian' hypothesis) and the lack of the necessity to explain how Paul could have 'left out' a visit to Jerusalem in Galatians 1-2. The weight of this argument is especially felt when it is remembered that Paul has in very strong language assured the Galatians that he is being truthful with them as he relates this information to them ($\alpha\ \delta\epsilon\ \gamma\rho\acute{\alpha}\phi\omega\ \upsilon\mu\acute{\iota}\nu,\ \text{ιδού}$

ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ ὅτι οὐ ψεύδομαι, 1:20). In addition, this view argues that it is difficult to imagine Paul 'failing' to mention the decree of the Council to his Galatian converts if Galatians was written after the Council, since that decree was in his favor and could have clinched for him his argument against his opponents.

A third view, argued chiefly by Kirsopp Lake (1933, 5:201ff), and Ernst Haenchen (1966:271; *idem*, 1971:400-404, 438-439) assumes that Luke used two main sources in his compilation of Acts. These sources are identified as a Jerusalem source and an Antioch source. According to this reading of the evidence, in the conflation of these sources Luke 'made two visits out of one, connecting the one with charity (11:27-30) and the other with controversy (15:1-30).' So both the Acts 11:27-30 famine visit and the 15:1-30 Council visit (A 2 = A 3 = G 2) are made equivalent to the Galatians 2:1-10 visit. A variation of this view has Paul making one visit out of two, rather than Luke's making two out of one (Orchard 1944:154-174). From this perspective, Paul has paralleled part of Galatians 2 (2:1-2, 6-10) with Acts 11:27-30, while the part of Galatians 2 that is the situation at the time of his writing (2:4-5) is to be equated with the account of Acts 15:1-30.

A fourth proposal, which also equates Galatians 2:1-10 with Acts 15 (A 3 = G 2), is that Acts 11:27-30 is misplaced, actually belonging with the material found in Acts 21:15-17. This view holds that Luke has placed Acts 11:27-30 because of his theological tendency (Beare 1943; Funk 1956).⁵ Such a tendency on the part of Luke ostensibly allowed him to compose material quite freely, as required by his theological purposes. Concerning the

type of creative composition that flowed out from Luke's theological 'tendency,' Dibelius has stated,

Lukas handelt....als schriftstellernder Historiker, nur eben nicht als Historiker in unserem Sinn, der zeigen will, wie es wirklich gewesen ist, sondern als antiker Schriftsteller, der das Bedeutsame heraushebt und....unterstreicht (1961:97).

In other words, in order to wed his narrative to his theological purposes, as a 'literary historian' Luke handled his sources in a purposely 'doctrinal' or dogmatic fashion, emphasising from his sources that which he considered to be important according to the dictates of his theology.

A variation of this view has Luke fabricating either the acquaintance visit of 9:26-30 or the famine visit of 11:27-30, or even erroneously interjecting Paul into the famine visit with Barnabas (Mattill 1959:464).⁶ Again, it is his theological tendency that allows Luke his 'fabrication' of material.

A fifth view is that of John Knox (1936, 1939, 1950), who is followed in the main by D T Rowlingson (1950), J C Hurd (1967), C Buck and G Taylor (1969), R Jewett (1979), G Lüdemann (1984) and others. In this view, the Jerusalem Council visit is moved back in Paul's missionary career to Acts 18:22. Luke's account of the proceedings of the Council is placed at Acts 15, due either to his tendentious theological structure or because he is confused by his sources, or perhaps simply mistaken. In either case, by this reckoning A 3 = A 4 = G 2.

One who is concerned to make use of all the data available for resolving historical difficulties between Galatians and Acts is limited to views one and two above. Only these two positions make

a real attempt to treat the Acts material seriously and reconcile these accounts accordingly (though of course one may hold the 'traditional' view on this question and still reject the historical reliability of Acts).⁷ Those adhering to the third and fourth solutions to the problem, in the final analysis, often 'second guess' Luke's handling of his 'sources' (the content of which is ultimately defined and determined by those who are evaluating his treatment of them), and as a result manage the text around their own theories regarding *Tendenzkritik* or *Stilkritik*. As a consequence their results are usually far more complicated, and for that reason far less probable, than any straightforward reconciliation of the Galatians and Acts material proves to be.⁸ Knox's solution (the fifth option) fares no better, as it has been found to be inadequate, even on its own terms (cf Ogg 1953:37f; Hemer 1990:20-21). In addition, it has also recently been demonstrated by Longenecker to be internally inconsistent. (1990:lxxv-lxxvii).⁹

As mentioned above, views one (A 3 = G 2) and two (A 2 = G 2) are those that appear to represent the most adequate solutions to the relative question of the date of Galatians. Both positions allow one to recognize the (secondary) value of Acts for determining chronological factors in Paul's life and so to utilize the evidence from Acts in attempting to solve difficulties with his letters.¹⁰ Both views also hold Acts 15 and Galatians 2 to reflect the same 'judaizing' problem reflected in Galatians. The difference between the two views is, of course, in how each correlates Acts 15 with the Galatians material (A 3 = G 2 or A

2 = G 2), which has been called the 'decisive question' for the ascertaining of the date of Galatians (Kümmel 1975:301).

The view that A 3 = G 2 is called the 'traditional' view largely because it has been the opinion most widely held by New Testament scholars, for a variety of reasons, having remained 'virtually unchallenged until the early twentieth century' (Longenecker 1990:lxxiv).¹¹ One influential expression of this 'traditional' view is that of J B Lightfoot. Lightfoot's reasons for the identification of Galatians 2 with Acts 15, which reasons he summed up in the expression 'the striking coincidence of circumstances' (1865:123), included the following: (1) Both passages agree on the geographical setting of the Council. Also, in both narratives the communication is between Jerusalem and Antioch, the opponents are headquartered at Jerusalem but are involved at Paul's place of ministry, and the apostles to the Gentiles go from Antioch to Jerusalem and back to Antioch in both accounts. (2) Relative chronology is the same, or 'at least not inconsistent.' Paul speaks of the event as 15 or 16 years after his conversion. Luke has it at about the year 51, which Lightfoot believed not to be in disharmony with the figure of 16 years after the approximate date of Paul's conversion. (3) The persons of the accounts are the same: Paul and Barnabas, and Peter and James, are present in both accounts, and Luke also mentions 'certain other Gentiles,' while Paul names Titus. Even the 'agitators,' whose activities are similarly described in the two narratives, are noted. (4) The subject of the dispute is identical in both accounts. (5) The character of the Conference is the same, 'in general' that character being a 'prolonged and hard-

fought contest.' (6) The result of the Council is considered to be the same in both accounts: the Gentiles are exempted from the Mosaic legislation, and the apostolic credentials of both Paul and Barnabas are recognized by that body. Lightfoot completes this substantial list of agreements with the statement that this 'combination of circumstances so striking is not likely to have occurred twice within a few years' (1865:124). This observation, following as it does Lightfoot's vigorous argumentation, has caused many to swing the 'benefit of the doubt' in their own thinking to this A 3 = G 2 identification, considering this to be the most natural reading of the passages involved, without what might be considered undue 'forcing' or naive manipulation of the evidence. As Silva has expressed this perspective,

....the *similarities* between Acts 15 and Galatians 2:1-10 are so fundamental, that dating Galatians prior to the Jerusalem Council requires us to use the least satisfactory method of harmonization; the positing of two distinct events when the *prima facie* reading of two passages suggests that they are treating the same event (emphasis original; Silva 1983:380).

Lightfoot and those who follow him, however, do not address the fact that Paul apparently faced opposition such as reflected in Galatians 2 and Acts 15 for an extended period in his ministry, as seems evident in several of his letters (cf 1 & 2 Cor, Rm, Phlp). Lightfoot himself used these 'similarities in tone' and subject matter to date the *Hauptbriefe* within a few years of each other, indicating that he recognized the on-going nature of these difficulties. So, rather than a naive or 'unsatisfactory' harmonization, the A 2 = G 2 view may indeed

reflect an actual historical circumstance in the life and ministry of Paul.

The A 2 = G 2 scenario suggests that Galatians 2 reflects the 'famine visit' meeting of Acts 11 (not the Council meeting of Acts 15) between Paul and the Jerusalem leadership wherein they discussed many of the same issues that would later be addressed at the Jerusalem Council, with that later meeting being necessitated by the fact that the 'judaizers' persisted in following Paul's footsteps and attacking or questioning his gospel and ministry. The 'striking combination of circumstances' could indeed have occurred twice in the span of a few years, *precisely because similar, continued opposition to Paul and his ministry occurred*, and so demanded further attention by the Jerusalem authorities in a Council called expressly to address the issue. Such opposition to Paul was a nearly constant feature of his life and ministry, as his letters seem to indicate. It is therefore not inconceivable that much of this opposition came about as a result of his continued work among the Gentiles.

Further arguments that are usually marshalled in favor of the A 3 = G 2 position by its adherents, in addition to their belief that the 'most natural' reading of the evidence demands identifying Acts 15 and Galatians 2, include the following major points: (1) this position allows for the first missionary journey to have taken place, and thus time for both successful ministry among the Gentiles and rising opposition from the judaizers, necessitating the Jerusalem Council; (2) the major question in both accounts has to do with salvation for the Gentiles rather than any secondary issue;¹² (3) the main speakers are the same in both

accounts; (4) in both accounts it is judaizers who speak out against the Gentile mission (cf Ac 15:5; Gl 2:4,5); and (5) in both accounts there is in no way any question of yielding to the judaizers (Ac 15:8-19, especially verse 10; Gl 2:5). The A 3 = G 2 position, then, has been well-argued and is by all accounts an imposing one.¹³

The A 2 = G 2 position has gained favor with a number of prominent New Testament scholars, despite the above evidence for the A 3 = G 2 position.¹⁴ Generally following Ramsay's South Galatian hypothesis, they hold to the A 2 = G 2 identification for two main reasons.¹⁵ These reasons are: (1) this view alleviates the difficulties attendant to Paul's 'leaving out' a Jerusalem visit in his epistle to the Galatians if A 3 = G 2; and (2) if Paul wrote Galatians after the Jerusalem Council, he would naturally have mentioned the Council's decision to approve him and Barnabas and 'their gospel' (thus defending his apostleship), and the decision to accept Gentiles as Gentiles, with no necessary 'judaizing' on their part. As Longenecker has written,

....one point drawn from the polemic in Galatians needs to be made....Paul's silence in Galatians as to the decision of the Jerusalem Council forces the irreconcilable dilemma of saying either (1) that Luke's account in Acts 15 of a decision reached in Paul's favor at Jerusalem is pure fabrication or (2) that Galatians was written before the Jerusalem Council. That Paul felt obliged to mention his visits to Jerusalem shows that his adversaries had been using one or both of these visits in a manner detrimental to his position and authority. But that he should recount his contacts with the Jerusalem leaders and fail to mention the decision regarding his mission reached at the Jerusalem Council...is entirely inconceivable (1981:440; cf also Longenecker 1971:48).

So to fail to mention a Jerusalem visit, and then further to compound that error by missing an argument from the Council proceedings which would have 'clinched' Paul's case against his opponents, seems too difficult to imagine if Paul were writing after the Jerusalem Council. Paul's polemical language throughout the book of Galatians appears to be too stringent, too intense, to believe that he could have missed the opportunity to prove his point and thwart the purpose of his opponents by quoting the decision of the leadership of the Jerusalem Church in the Council.¹⁶ Too much was at stake for him to do so. The same general conceptuality has been advanced by F F Bruce, who writes that 'irreconcilable' accounts of identical events in Paul's career and Acts must be interpreted from Galatians (or the other epistles) first, and thus the polemical 'atmosphere' of Galatians must be borne in mind when understanding the A 2 = G 2 thesis. Bruce goes on to indicate that in Galatians Paul is responding to criticism against him, and so is stating his case forcefully, asserting that he did not receive his apostolic authority and commission from men, but from the risen Christ. As part of his argument to establish that fact, Bruce says, Paul

enumerates the visits to Jerusalem after his conversion....the apologetic thrust of Paul's account here demands that he should include every visit he paid to Jerusalem between his conversion and the moment of writing; had he omitted any, for any reason, the omission would inevitably have aroused suspicion (1968-69b:295-296).

The result of all of this is that the evidence put forward for the A 2 = G 2 position is sufficient for Bruce and others to suggest that Paul's statements in Galatians 2:1-10 be understood

to correspond to his 'famine visit' to Jerusalem recorded in Acts 11:27-30. Otherwise, Paul could have been demonstrated to be untrustworthy, and his opponents at Galatia would have made easy prey of him in their battle for the Galatians' loyalties.

4.1.2 Conclusion

The arguments for both the A 3 = G 2 and A 2 = G 2 positions are weighty and in many respects persuasive. Any decision as to which view is correct must be held tentatively. The balance of evidence as compiled above, however, appears to favor the A 2 = G 2 position. In addition, as demonstrated by Drane (1975:140-143) and Longenecker (1990:lxxiii-lxxxviii), the theology of Galatians indicates that Paul wrote the epistle earlier in his writing career, rather than later. It also suggests that Paul wrote Galatians very near the time of the Council itself. Perhaps he wrote 'on the eve of the Council' as Bruce suggested. If the above scenario is correct, and Paul met with judaizing opposition to his Gentile mission which continued even after his 'famine visit' to Jerusalem (Acts 11:27-30), a return visit there to meet the Jerusalem leadership again to attempt to solve the problem 'once and for all' is not out of the question. And a letter written to his beloved Galatians upon hearing that they were being infiltrated by this same 'false gospel' as he encountered at Antioch could have indeed been quickly written just before the Council meeting (cf Bruce). Thus, the best solution to the pre- or post-Jerusalem Council date of the epistle is that of the pre-Council position.

4.2 Paul's Opponents

The study of Paul's opponents has a significant impact upon the understanding of his letters and theology. In fact, it has been said that 'a correct understanding of the epistles of Paul is possible only with a correct understanding of his opponents' (Ward 1967b:185). A great deal of research and effort has therefore gone into the attempt to identify both Paul's opponents and their claims against him.¹⁷ Such an identification would presumably yield greater insight into Paul the man, the formation of his thought and theology, the circumstances surrounding both him and his churches, and into the character of early Christianity. It would also perhaps give present-day interpreters a larger measure of certainty in applying first-century principles to their contemporary context.

This is especially true in terms of individual writings within the Pauline corpus. Each individual letter has its own unique historical circumstances that spawned it and shaped its content. In the case of Galatians those circumstances are decidedly polemical in nature. An understanding of who opposed Paul, and the message or theology of the individual or group, will go far in providing a more precise interpretation of this letter. In what follows, then, an attempt will be made to recover the identity and message of Paul's Galatian opponents as a means of gaining greater insight into the historical background of Galatians, and thereby also to gain further information for the more precise interpretation of the *ἔργα νόμου* expression as used there by Paul.

4.2.1 The Identity of Paul's Opponents

The process of identifying Paul's Galatian opponents must be carried out with appropriate methodological caution. Because Paul does not identify his opponents and/or their teaching directly within the text of Galatians, but only hints at such as a natural concomitant to the mechanics of his argumentation, the identity of those opponents must be 'mirror read' from statements Paul makes about them.¹⁸ Mirror reading is a process which lends itself fairly well to the genre of polemic or apologetic. There is a measure of risk associated with this discipline, however. Therefore 'mirror-reading' methodologies cannot be adopted altogether uncritically; a number of cautionary suggestions are in order.

It must be noted that it is all too easy to 'mirror read' a text or a letter so as to find what one desires to find or has been trained to see there, and thus confirm one's presuppositions about the text (Carson 1981a:100-104).¹⁹ Such an approach reduces the exercise of investigation of Paul's opponents to one of mere confirmation of preconceived notions. A further caveat to such a process is the fact that when one reads Paul's letters, he or she must be aware that what is being read is 'third-hand' material. What one is reading is not a direct interchange between Paul and his opponents, but is an exchange between Paul and his churches regarding his opponents and their doctrines or their accusations against him (cf Barclay 1987:74). The process of identification is further complicated by the fact that Paul no doubt presents his arguments against his opponents' teachings as forcibly as possible, while at the same time casting the false

teachers, teaching or ethical behavior which he is refuting in language which amounts to something less than an endorsement. As Gunther has said, 'The detection of opposing viewpoints is admittedly a hazardous undertaking, as Paul did not intend to present them clearly or plausibly, much less perpetuate memory of them' (1973:14). In a similar, albeit less charitable vein, Philipp Vielhauer writes,

The manner in which Paul polemicizes and defends himself makes a precise reconstruction of the situation difficult to grasp; he does not first present a systematic statement of the position of his opponents -- which was of course already known to his readers -- in order then to demolish it, but determines the course of his argument against them himself. It is thus not always clear whether he is quoting, exaggerating, or distorting their views (Vielhauer 1975: 146; translation is that of Lüdemann, 1989: 254, note 2).

This overall assessment by Gunther and Vielhauer, despite its underlying negative assumptions about Paul, does make a valid point. The fact that the biblical record at face value represents only one side of the situation demands that caution be exercised when attempting to reconstruct a confrontational encounter. Recapturing the historical context of Galatians is further complicated by the fact that Paul used words and phrases which, while familiar to his audience, are no longer as clear to twentieth-century readers of the letter. And, the ambience of polemical argumentation is such that the opponents' identity and teaching may become somewhat distorted in the process of reconstruction (cf Ward 1967b:187-189). It is imperative to note, then, that care must be taken in the process of identifying the opponents

or their teaching to avoid the fallacy of finding reference to them in every phrase of the letter. By the same token, however, references to the opponents' identity or teaching which fit the overall characteristics of that identity or teaching should be included in any tentative reconstruction, for the purpose of providing balance and completeness.

It may be noted, after having recognized the above caveats to the process of mirror reading Galatians, that the letter itself does indeed contain a number of clues as to the identification of Paul's antagonists and their message. These clues are in the form of 'charges and counter-charges' in the letter itself, and if carefully 'mirror-read' they will help determine the opponents' identity and (later) their teaching more precisely. For convenience these data are tabulated as follows:

- 1:6 A 'different' (ἕτερος) gospel is being preached by Paul's opponents.
- 1:7 Some (the opponents) are disturbing and distorting the gospel of Christ (cf 5:10, 12).
- 1:9 The opponents represent the highest authority in their antagonism toward Paul ('an angel from heaven;' cf Longenecker 1990: xcv).
- 1:14 Paul's opponents maintain a zeal for ancestral traditions, and Jerusalem (cf 1:17-19).
- 2:3 Circumcision for Gentiles is demanded by the opponents (cf 5:2-3; 6:12-13).
- 2:4 The 'false brethren' sought bondage instead of liberty (cf 5:1).
- 2:12 The opponents tried to prohibit eating with the Gentiles.
- 2:12 The opponents belonged to the 'Party of the Circumcision,' those attempting to 'correct' Paul's gospel.
- 2:14 The opponents compel Gentiles to live like Jews (Ἰουδαίειν).
- 2:16 The adversaries teach that people are justified by 'works of law' (justification is not apart from Covenant; faith alone is not enough, works are necessary).

- 2:17 Paul's Christ is said to be a promoter of sin.
- 2:21 Righteousness comes through the law, according to the 'false brethren ('true righteousness' = LAW).
- 3:1 The opponents are perhaps able to 'spell-bind' the Galatians.
- 3:3 Gentiles are not 'perfect' (that is, 'complete,' τελειώω) Christians unless they submit to the false teachers, according to Paul's adversaries.
- 3:7 Law-works are claimed by the antagonists as necessary to be a 'true son' of Abraham.
- 3:18 Inheritance is based upon law, according to Paul's challengers.
- 3:24 Observance of the law functions as a 'pedagogue' to order the daily life of the Christian (cf Longenecker 1990:xcv).
- 3:28 The 'false brethren' teach that Gentiles must become Jews in order to be 'in Christ.'
- 4:10 Gentiles must observe Jewish days (including Sabbath), months, seasons, years, if they are going to participate fully in the people of God, say the opponents.
- 4:17 The opponents force the Gentiles to seek them for salvation (Gentiles had to adopt the opponents' ethic in order to be saved).
- 4:21-31 The opponents teach the Gentiles that they must be under law; the Abrahamic Covenant is valid only with the Mosaic as its fulfillment or extension.
- 5:6 Circumcision (representative of ancestral traditions; 're-newed covenant') has absolute priority over uncircumcision, in the opponents' teaching.
- 5:24 Paul's gospel promotes antinomianism (cf 6:7-8, 17), according to his rivals.
- 6:12 The opponents want to avoid persecution from non-Christian Jews.
- 6:13 Paul's adversaries boast in the numbers following them (perhaps large numbers).

Several things become immediately apparent from even a cursory reading of this material. Theological conclusions must not be too quickly drawn from a mere tabulation of data (ie, Paul's use of literary convention and rhetoric in making these statements, and an exegesis of them in their contexts, must be analyzed before such conclusions may be drawn), and it must be realized that much

of the data is not as clear as direct statements would be (inferences are therefore to be made tentatively; cf Longenecker 1990:xcvii). Nevertheless, something of the opponents' identity as 'judaizers' and their agenda in Galatia does come into sharper focus here. That agenda clearly includes their association with Judaism/Jerusalem and/or Jesus and their emphasis upon law, circumcision, and/or 'superiority' or 'priority' of the Jews. Further, this agenda revolves around three foci: Paul's gospel, his apostleship, and his understanding of the place of the law.

The question of the identification of Paul's opponents in Galatia is a subject that has received a great deal of attention from interpreters of the New Testament, and has resulted in a proportionate multiplicity of answers. The history of scholarly research into this area is a long and divergent one, and the literature on this subject is massive (as a perusal of theological indices will show). A brief sketch of representative positions before proceeding with an identification of Paul's opponents based upon the above data will nonetheless help form the parameters for the final verification of that identity.

Following F C Baur, most late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century interpreters of Galatians have considered Paul's opponents to have been 'judaizers' who represented the Jerusalem church, having been sent out by James (and Peter).²⁰ Baur believed that early Christianity was made up of two competing groups, a Petrine group (which included the 'Christ party) and a Pauline group. The Petrine group was thought to have been centered in Jerusalem, and was the locus of opposition to Paul. The judaizers opposed Paul with the knowledge of this group, but not

necessarily their approval (Baur 1831:61-206). This supposition by Baur was refined by his students Zeller and Schweigler to suggest that the authority of the leadership of the Jerusalem church was indeed behind Paul's opponents. This understanding of the New Testament background later developed into the basis of the Tübingen approach to the interpretation of the New Testament (Longenecker 1990:xc). This Tübingen approach posits the existence of what was labeled as *Frühkatholizismus* ('early catholicism') as the second-century compromise between the rival Peter/Paul factions. The Pauline letters are interpreted in light of this rivalry, as are later Christian documents and any other New Testament materials that are thought to betray this 'early catholic' compromise (eg Acts).

Baur's understanding of opposition to Paul, then, revolves around his reconstruction of the Peter/Paul conflict and traces the strife in the early church to these two divisions. One party was loyal to Judaism and adherence to the law, and was beholden to Peter and James for its founding and nurture. The other party, identified with Paul, was of a libertine, antinomian persuasion. Baur's understanding was that these two groups were struggling to define Christianity according to their own persuasions regarding Christ and the law. The 'Peter party' was a law-keeping group headquartered in Jerusalem and loyal to Judaism, which would welcome Gentiles into the church only so long as they ascribed to keeping Covenant. Paul, the 'Apostle to the Gentiles,' fought to maintain the freedom of the Gentiles from keeping the law, and opposed the efforts of those from Jerusalem to force the Gentiles to 'judaize.' Paul's opponents, then, were

seen as Jewish Christians who represented Peter and James, and hence the 'mother church,' who were attempting to force Paul's Galatian converts to maintain the practice of the Mosaic law. Variations on Baur's view on this issue are numerous (cf Longenecker 1990:lxxxix). Nevertheless, Baur's identification of Paul's opponents as 'judaizers,' with some modification, is still representative of the typical approach to the question. And, as demonstrated by the most recent revival of the Tübingen stance on this issue (cf Lüdemann 1989), there are still those who will, with certain revisions, argue for his main point of factious parties within early Christianity, as well.

Baur's reconstruction of the early Christian context has been criticized, however, as being 'too simplistic' (Schütz 1975:3ff), as 'forcing the stream of early Christian history into too narrow a channel' (Dunn 1977:3-5), as being the result of the application of the Hegelian dialectic to the New Testament's historical situation (a charge which has been made often; cf Hemer 1977-78:28-51 and Gasque 1969:68-88), and as causing his exegesis to become 'too much the servant of his theory' (Ellis 1978:88). Each of these criticisms is valid. What is more, others could be added: there is little evidence in Acts or Paul's letters which will support a full-blown cleavage between Paul and the Jerusalem *Urapostel* in the manner Baur represented, particularly in matters of Christian belief. In addition, the evidence of strife that is present in the New Testament documents themselves is far too slight as to bear the weight Baur and his followers give it. Conflict cannot be made the *Leitmotiv* of New Testament studies (Gasque 1989:271ff).

Others were uncomfortable with Baur's simple 'one front' hypothesis. Lightfoot, like Baur, interpreted the controversies which are reflected in the pauline epistles in the context of the whole of early Christian history. According to Ellis (1978:89, note 28), however, Lightfoot's critique of Baur's 'factions' thesis accounted almost singlehandedly for the failure of those views to become entrenched in the English-speaking world.²¹ Lightfoot himself reckoned Paul's opponents, from the beginning to the end of his recorded ministry, as 'Pharisaic and gnostic judaizers' (1865:311). Rather than continual strife against representatives from the 'mother church,' that is, from 'Peter and James,' Paul faced opposition from Jewish Christians who were both zealous for the law and for certain gnostic doctrines. The party of Cephas was not to be thought of as a group representing Peter and his personal hostility toward Paul, according to Lightfoot, but instead should be thought of as a group which 'is simply [made up of] Jewish Christians of rather strict ritual observance' (Ellis 1978:90).

In consideration of Paul's Galatian opponents, specifically, both Lightfoot and Ramsay understood Paul to be attacked by and attacking a 'three-party' opposition (Lightfoot 1865:284; Ramsay 1900:258, 326-371, 394-395). This view, however, appears to over-interpret such statements as Galatians 5:13 ('don't use your liberty as an occasion for the flesh...'). This results in an unnecessary fully-developed antinomian faction in Galatia being posited. There is definite evidence in Galatians of a spirit of 'libertinism;' however, it is difficult to maintain from this textual evidence a fully-formed 'third party' presence.

Wilhelm Lütgert and J H Ropes both understood Paul's opposition in Galatia to be made up of two separate groups, in contrast to the three of Lightfoot and Ramsay. Lütgert posited 'a libertinistic group and a judaizer group which claims the support of the Jerusalem "pillars"' (1919:477). Ropes essentially agreed with this assessment, with the distinction that he believed that the nomistic group originated within Galatia itself (Ropes 1929). However, both Lütgert and Ropes fail to consider satisfactorily Paul's handling of the Galatians as a whole, or with the Galatian converts' 'nomistic' tendencies. As Jewett has said, 'Neither Lütgert nor Ropes could explain why Paul dealt with the congregation as a more or less homogeneous group. Furthermore, they could not make plausible the strange and sudden enthusiasm of Gentile Christians for the *Torah* or circumcision' (Jewett 1970-71:198).

Another who proposed a 'dual front' hypothesis relative to Paul and his Galatian opponents was H J Schoeps (1961). Schoeps believed that Paul was fighting a petrine faction and a 'Pharisaic party' in Galatia. In this way, he dealt more adequately with the nomistic characteristics within the Galatian congregation, but he still failed to account for the more libertine elements among them.

Another view which stands out for specific mention is that of Johannes Munck (1959:87 and *passim*). Munck essentially agreed with the 'dual front' theory, with the modification that it was chiefly Paul's own Gentile converts at Galatia who opposed him there. Munck's thesis rests primarily upon his identification of the ~~οἱ ἀπεριτομήτοι~~ of 6:13 as Gentile converts ('those having

themselves circumcised'). This reading has been shown, however, to be less than precise.²²

There are still others who find evidence for Paul's opponents further outside the traditional mold. Rudolf Bultmann, Walter Schmithals, and Willi Marxsen all understand a gnostic influence on the Galatians as the source of opposition.²³ There is little to be said for this approach, however. As Fung asserts, 'the interpretation of the heretics' demand for circumcision as a means of securing release symbolically from the dominion of the flesh has no basis at all in the letter' (1988:5). Gnostic elements in the New Testament, if present at all, generally speaking reflect an incipient gnosticism which is far less developed than such an approach would necessitate (cf Yamauchi 1983).

Another type of opposition-theory is that espoused by F Crownfield (1945:491-50), H Köster (*RGG3*, cols 18-21), and D Georgi (1965:35-38). While their views differ at a number of points, the broad perspective of their approaches includes what have been called 'enthusiastic' elements: pneumatic judaizers, either Jewish or Christian, were attempting to persuade the Galatians to syncretize Christianity and mystery religion.²⁴ This type of approach also remains unconvincing, however, both through the reading of the Colossian situation into Galatians, and in the case of Brinsmead, of implying far too divergent views as being characteristic of one group of believers in the first century.

A more satisfying approach, given the textual data of Galatians, is that of Robert Jewett (1970-71:198-212). Jewett

demonstrates that Paul's opponents were Christian Jews who insisted upon circumcision for salvation, seeing this as the *sine-qua-non* of Christianity (οὗτοι ἀναγκάζουσιν ὑμᾶς περιτέμνεσθαι, 6:12). Judaism's understanding of circumcision during this period, according to Jewett, 'centered on its significance as a sign of the covenant carried by those who were heirs of the promise given to Abraham' (1970-71:200). This, coupled with the opponents' desire to avoid persecution for the cross of Christ (6:12), indicates without doubt their Christian origin, with an orthodox view of the Jewish law (*contra* Schmithals; cf Jewett 1970-71:200f). The fact that Paul polemicizes against those demanding circumcision for Gentile converts is also handled correctly by Jewett -- Paul is arguing that those advocating this necessity are actually opposing God's will as revealed in תורה. Circumcision was being promoted by Paul's adversaries as the means whereby one entered 'fully' into the promise to Abraham (ie, the Mosaic Covenant 'completes' the Abrahamic). The 'advocates of circumcision' (Lightfoot's phrase; 1865:222) are also concerned to demonstrate their zeal for the law lest they be unduly persecuted (6:12) by a Zealot 'Jewish purity' movement current at this time (Jewett 1970-71:204-206). Jewett's conclusion is that the opponents of Paul in the Galatian churches were 'judaizers' who took advantage of the Galatian Christians' Hellenistic background. They capitalized on these Gentiles' former cultic understanding of 'days, months, seasons and years' (Gl 4:10) to persuade them to 'judaize' so that they themselves would not be persecuted by their Jewish brethren who remained

zealous for the law. This understanding seems to lead in a promising direction, as has been noted elsewhere (Longenecker 1990:lxxxviii-c), despite some who object to Jewett's reconstruction of the Zealot influence upon the Judaism of the day (cf Fung 1988:3-9, especially 5-7).²⁵

Jewett's identification of the opposition to Paul in Galatians as Jewish-Christian 'judaizers' is in the main the same as that of Bruce (1982:25-27), Ellis (1978:101-112), Longenecker (1990:x-cvi-xcviii), Tyson (1968:249-250) and others. This identification is in keeping with the textual evidence of Galatians, and is therefore adopted here as the proper understanding of the identity of Paul's Galatian opponents.

4.2.2 The Message of Paul's Opponents

As is true of the identity of Paul's opponents, so it is with their message; the evidence from Galatians points in a certain direction, but any identification of the content of the opponents' teaching must be advanced tentatively and held somewhat 'loosely.' Based upon the identification of Paul's opponents as judaizers having a concern for Jerusalem, Judaism and the law, however, certain inferences may be drawn from a 'mirror reading' of the data that will suggest parameters for the later conclusions relative to the Galatian meaning of *ἔργα νόμου*. Evidence from Galatians as to the message of Paul's opponents may be tabulated for convenience, as follows:

1:6 The opponents' 'gospel' is 'different'
 (*ἕτερος*, 'of another kind;' cf Burton 1921:
 420-422) than is Paul's.

- 1:7 Paul's foes are 'disturbing' his converts (ταράσσοντες), and 'distorting' or 'altering' (μεταστρέφειν) his gospel message.
- 1:10 Paul, by his foes' reckoning, sought to 'please men' rather than God; thus he denied the need for circumcision on some occasions, and insisted upon it at other times (cf 5:11; note also Longenecker 1990:xcviii). Paul was untrustworthy, as he 'vacillated' on this issue.
- 1:11 Paul's gospel was 'inferior,' and did not carry the approval of the Jerusalem authorities (cf 2:1-10). His gospel was the 'elemental' form of the truth, but the adversaries brought the 'developed' form to the Galatians (cf Longenecker 1990:xcvii).
- 1:14 The adversaries are zealous for 'ancestral traditions,' that is, for the 'markers' of Judaism (circumcision, Sabbath, food laws, etc).
- 2:3 The opponents argued that Gentiles must be circumcised (cf 5:2-3; 6:12-13).
- 2:4 The 'false brethren' were seeking bondage for Paul's converts rather than liberty for them.
- 2:12 The antagonists' apparently forbade eating with Gentiles.
- 2:14 The foes attempted to 'compel' or 'force' (ἀναγκάζειν) the Gentile converts to 'live like Jews' (Ἰουδαΐζειν). Even Peter agreed with this practice, as his behavior at Antioch demonstrated.
- 2:16 Paul's rivals apparently taught that men are not 'justified' (δικαιούται) apart from works of law; justification is not apart from covenant (Faith + Works; cf 3:11; 5:4).
- 2:17 The opponents taught that Paul's Christ was a 'promoter' (δύκωνος) or 'servant' of sin.
- 2:21 The foes taught that righteousness comes through the law ('true' righteousness = LAW).
- 3:1 Paul's adversaries were able to 'spell-bind' (βασκαίνω, to 'bewitch' or 'put under a spell;' cf Betz 1979:130-132) the Galatians.
- 3:3 Gentiles could not be 'perfect', ie, 'complete' or 'completed' Christians (τελειώω, 'make perfect, complete') according to the opponents, without submission to their teaching.

- 3:7 Paul's rivals taught that law-works are necessary to be a true 'son of Abraham.' They are 'true sons of Abraham,' because they keep the law, and thus they can determine what this entails for Christianity (cf Lategan 1992).
- 3:18 Inheritance in God's economy is based upon law, say the opponents.
- 3:24 The law was the opponents' solution to ethical guidance needed for daily life (cf Longenecker 1990:xcviii). Paul had failed the Galatians when he neglected this fact.
- 3:28 The opponents pressured the Gentiles to become 'practical' Jews.
- 4:10 Gentiles must observe Jewish days, months, seasons, and years, according to Paul's adversaries.
- 4:17 The opponents taught the Gentile converts to 'seek' (ζηλώω, to 'set one's heart on' or 'court someone's favor') them for salvation (ie, the converts were taught that they had to adopt the opponents' ethic to be saved).
- 4:21 Paul's rivals taught the Gentiles that they must be under law.
- 5:6 The antagonists taught the absolute priority of circumcision over uncircumcision (cf 1:14, 'ancestral traditions;' cf also 6:15).
- 5:24 Paul was charged by his adversaries with an antinomian gospel (cf 6:7-8, 17).
- 6:12 Paul's opponents desired to avoid persecution by non-Christian Jews, and thus fashioned their gospel in a manner which would be non-threatening to that group.
- 6:13 The adversaries apparently boasted in the (possibly large) numbers following them.

Building upon scholarly identification of Paul's opponents as 'judaizers' and attempting to integrate the data from Galatians relative to the judaizers' message with that identification requires interaction with the Galatian epistle itself. So what follows will be an attempt to perform a reconstruction of the identity of Paul's opponents as 'judaizers' from the text of Galatians, keeping in mind the contributions made by Jewett and others. This tentative reconstruction of the Galatian situation

will be suggested in order to check the identification derived from the textual data and prepare for further development.

The evidence of the text of Galatians, when read in light of the identity of the opponents and their teaching as discussed above, suggests that Paul's opponents were Jewish Christians who came into Galatia preaching 'another gospel.' This was a gospel that was substantively different from Paul's own. The content of this 'other' gospel contained elements not found in the preaching and teaching Paul had accomplished among the Galatians. The opponents' claimed for their gospel the authoritative backing of the Jerusalem church (1:8, 17; cf 2:1-10). Their interest was either to 'correct' Paul's gospel regarding the Mosaic law, or to offer the Galatian converts the 'full expression' of the gospel which included an emphasis upon that Sinaitic code (ie, the necessity of circumcision and 'works of the law,' thus reflecting their understanding of the gospel's 'complete development'). As Longenecker remarks,

....Paul seems to be interacting with a typically Jewish attitude, as expressed most clearly in the Talmud, that truth comes in two guises, the first in an elemental form and the second in a developed form.... and....he is countering in particular the Judaizer's application of this Jewish motif to the effect that Paul's message was an elemental form of the gospel proclamation while theirs is the developed (1990:xcvii).

So the Judaizers came 'disturbing' or harassing the Galatian converts with a distorted message relative to Paul's gospel of salvation (1:6,7). Paul, they claimed, was 'pleasing men,' since he announced to these Galatians a 'circumcision-free' gospel. And the fact that he vacillated on this issue (cf 5:11) demonstrated

that he put his desire to please men above his desire to please God (cf Longenecker 1990:xcvii). Paul's gospel was devoid of the 'ancestral traditions,' the Jewish 'identity markers,' and thus was an 'easy,' antinomian proclamation (1:14; 2:4). This resulted in Paul's Christ logically becoming a 'servant' of sin (2:17). The Galatians should, then, become circumcised and practice the 'works of the law' particular to Judaism if their desire was to fully please God and to become 'complete' Christians (2:3-4, 12-14, 16-21; 3:3). They must leave behind the inferior teaching of Paul, who not only taught an 'incomplete' or untrustworthy gospel, but was himself untrustworthy and inferior (1:11, 17; 2:6-10).

The adversaries apparently also believed that circumcision was necessary for salvation (2: 3-4; 5:2-3; 6:12-13; cf Acts 15:1) and that Gentiles must become 'practical' Jews in order to become salvifically 'complete' (ἐπιτελείετε, 3:3; cf 3:7, 28; 4:10, 21; 5:6; Rm 3:29; 9:25-33; Acts 15:9). They evidently also thought that the Abrahamic promise could only be extended or completed through the Mosaic/Sinaitic Covenant (1:14; 2:16, 21; 3:17-18; 4:21-31; Rm 3:20, 28; Acts 15:1, 5). The opponents considered themselves to be among the 'true' descendants of Abraham, and so it was their responsibility to determine the content of belief for those whose faith would replicate Abraham's (cf Lategan, 1992). It has been suggested that the opponents' argument relative to this extension of the Abrahamic Covenant by the Mosaic amounted to forcing the Gentiles into practicing idolatry through obedience to the law (the law as an idol; cf Calvert 1991:1-12). However, the opponents could argue that the Abrahamic

Covenant was never revoked, and Paul's point about the promise coming ahead of the law (Gn 15:6) was perhaps well-intentioned, but nevertheless proved nothing. His opponents could point to the extension of the Covenant by God to include circumcision, both for Abraham (Gn 17) and for the nation Israel (Ex 20-24; cf Longenecker 1990:xcvii). Abraham was circumcised as a sign of his faith in God and his membership in the covenant community. Moses and Israel followed this same practice, as did Jesus (cf Lk 2:21ff), who never abrogated circumcision as this sign of faithful obedience to the covenant. Inheritance as God's people remained based upon law, according to the opponents, and the law also remained as an ethical barometer for the course of life, providing direction for Christians as to right and wrong behavior and thought constructs (3:7, 18, 24; 4:21). But not only is daily life involved, by the opponents' reckoning. The Jewish Sabbath, celebrations and feast days were also important as a means of guiding relationships to God and one another (4:10). Also, the dietary regulations of the Pentateuch were never abolished. Moses, Israel, and Jesus all adhered to these regulations, and no person rightly related to God would sin by eating with Gentiles (cf 2:11-14) or eating unclean foods.

Paul's rivals also taught the Galatians to 'seek' them, that is, to curry favor with them instead of demonstrating loyalty to Paul (4:17; 6:12). This would be accomplished by following their teachings, as perhaps large numbers of other Christians were doing (6:13). This would in turn keep the opponents from facing persecution from fellow Jews still zealous for the law (6:12-13).

Paul's opponents' agenda in this way focused their 'correc-

tive' verbal attack against him in three areas: Paul's gospel, his apostleship, and his (mis)understanding of the Christian's relationship to the law. This teaching may be theologically formulated as being composed of several general elements, and summarized as follows:

1. God's covenant with Israel at Sinai is permanent, and the 'works of law' thus have continuing validity. Circumcision remains as the genuine sign of faithful obedience to the covenant.
2. The law was never abrogated, annulled, rescinded, or otherwise abolished by Jesus; rather, he himself claimed that he 'fulfilled' the law (cf Mt 5:17-20).
3. The Gentiles should have to keep the law as a means of right relationship to God (2:16) and fellow believers (3:18-24).
4. Paul's gospel is antinomian, and makes Christ the promoter or servant of sin.

4.2.3 Conclusion

From the above textually-based reconstruction of the identity and message of Paul's adversaries, it is clear that Paul's opponents in Galatia were Jewish Christians who were attempting to protect the Mosaic Covenant and the Jewish 'works of the law' that had become the social 'identity badges' of the Judaism of their day (Dunn 1988c, 1:lxix).²⁶ These Jewish Christians opposed Paul and his gospel because of his willingness (indeed, his insistence; cf Eph 2) to accept Gentiles into the church as they were, without incorporating them into the Mosaic Covenant first. This insistence resulted in the 'judaizers' demand that the Galatian converts become 'practical' Jews (cf 2:14).²⁷ It

is in this sense, then, that Paul's Galatian opponents were 'judaizers.' That is, they were Jewish Christians (or more accurately, 'Christian Jews') who were concerned that Paul's Gentile converts learn the continuing necessity of keeping the Mosaic law in their daily lives as an expression of their devotion to God, becoming in the process 'practical Jews.' The message they carried into Galatia was (falsely) presented by them as coming from the Jerusalem 'pillars' themselves, and thus superior to Paul's gospel. Paul's gospel, they maintained, garbled the place of the law in the salvific economy of God and the life of the Christian, or at the very least was the 'incipient,' less-developed form of the gospel as compared to their 'complete' presentation. Paul's opponents thus pressured the Galatian believers to accommodate themselves to the 'different' gospel they proclaimed.

4.3 The Situation in the Galatian Churches

Paul's letter to the Galatian churches betrays the serious nature of the crisis he faced there. For Paul nothing less than the truth or purity of the gospel was at stake. The presence of the judaizers was one thing. But the fact that their teaching was beginning to make inroads among Paul's converts indicated a severe breach of the gospel truth that he could not afford to tolerate. The judaizers were apparently able to lead some of the Galatians away from Paul's (true) gospel to accept 'a different (ἕτερος) gospel - which is not the gospel' (1:6-7). Many of Paul's converts were also being tempted to demonstrate their

allegiance to the judaizers' form of the gospel by becoming circumcised. Perhaps some of them had done so already.

There was another influence Paul had to deal with in Galatia, and that from within rather than from without: there was in Galatia an inclination on the part of some toward libertinism. In dealing with this problem (5:13-6:10), Paul cautions his Galatian converts, 'I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God' (Longenecker 1990:xcix; translation and emphasis Longenecker's; note also in this regard Pretorius 1992). So another serious aspect to the Galatian problem is indicated. However, as also (correctly) noted by Longenecker and Jewett (1990:xcix and 1970-71:210, respectively), this does not indicate two radically separated groups within the church who were diametrically opposed to each other. Paul's communication to them is too homogeneous for that to be the case. He addresses the Galatians as a group, regardless of which problem he is emphasizing in any given portion of the letter. So the probability is that Paul deals with two serious inclinations within the one uniform community of people.

The words of Lategan will serve as a summarization of this final section of the background of the Galatian epistle. As he writes concerning the situation at Galatia, he says

However difficult it may be to come to a full understanding of the anti-Pauline opposition in Galatia, it is clear that they were very successful on at least one point. They were able to convince the Galatians that they should - in addition to faith in Christ - obey the Torah and adopt a Jewish way of life. Considering the [Hellenistic] background of most of the Galatians, it is not difficult to understand why the argument was so persuasive. Their conversion to the

Christian faith implied a complete reorientation of both their value system and their lifestyle. For Jews this transition was difficult enough, but did not entail the abandonment of their own tradition - it was rather understood as its continuation and completion. For Gentiles, the break was much more incisive. They found themselves at a double disadvantage - new to the Christian faith, but also unfamiliar with its Jewish roots. As Johnny-come-latelys they were in desperate need of practical advice to guide their day to day life in an environment not very sympathetic or supportive of their new convictions. Thus they became easy targets for the proponents of 'another gospel.' For whatever reason Paul has - at least in their own understanding of the matter - not given them enough practical guidelines to survive as believers under these circumstances. That is why they are so susceptible to the argument of the opponents. Faith in Christ isessential, but to translate that into action and to make it workable in everyday life, one needs a set of time-tested rules for the practice of this faith. That is exactly what the Jewish way of life can offer (Lategan 1992).

4.4 Conclusion

The historical background of Galatians is by all accounts very difficult to ascertain. Yet, that background is extremely important to a proper understanding of Paul's intended meaning in the letter. There are various equally persuasive and sound answers to the questions of whether Paul wrote before or after the Jerusalem Council, the identity of his opponents and their teaching, and the overall situation at Galatia which prompted Paul to write. So the process of selecting which position to take on these matters is a complicated one. Nevertheless, each of these questions impacts certain other areas of interpretation of

the letter, and therefore tentative conclusions must be reached in order to proceed with any interpretation of this epistle.

The positions taken here relative to these issues are held provisionally, yet firmly, as a means to proceed with the investigation of the meaning of the ἔργα νόμου. The above discussion of the areas of historical difficulties for Galatians have led to the following conclusions.

The investigation of the question of the timing of Paul's writing of the letter to his Galatian converts led to an adoption of the pre-Council position (A 2 = G 2). This position obviates the necessity of defending Paul for what would be his failure to mention one of his visits to Jerusalem after telling the Galatians in extremely forceful language that he would not deceive them. The idea that Paul could fail to mention the decision reached by the Council, when in fact it had found in his favor on the 'judaizing' issue, also seems untenable when it is just this 'judaizing' matter he faces as his main problem in Galatia.

Paul's opponents were identified as 'judiazers' from outside the Galatian congregation, Christian Jews who taught the Galatian converts that they must become 'practical' Jews in order to be 'complete' as Christian descendants of Abraham. These 'judaizers' came from Jerusalem, perhaps claiming the authority of the Jerusalem church, and attempted to 'help' the Galatians live as true sons of Abraham through the observance of the Jewish 'identity markers.'

Paul faced two serious problems in the Galatian church, both of which threatened the converts' status within Christianity according to Paul's gospel. In addition to the the judaizing

problem from without, there was present in Galatia some form of libertinism which also demanded correction. Paul handled both problems within the Galatian epistle, but he addressed his beloved Galatian converts as a group, treating these issues as grave dangers for the community as a whole.

It is this understanding of the above issues that will serve as the historical background to the epistle to the Galatians as the investigation of the meaning of ἔργα νόμου continues.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

1. The problem of the destination of Galatians is also of great significance for this letter. This problem does not, however, bear directly upon the issue of this study, and has been argued extensively elsewhere (most notably by Bruce 1982; Longenecker 1990). Therefore, the discussion of this question need not be repeated here. A South Galatian destination for the letter is presumed for the purposes of this study.
2. In his outlining of Paul's Jerusalem visits and the possible Galatian correspondents, Mattill self-consciously follows Caird 1955. Mattill's survey of views on this issue, though dated, is still the most comprehensive; views proposed since the time of this 1959 dissertation may easily be placed within his overall scheme. The descriptors attached to Mattill's designations are as per Longenecker 1990:lxiii-lxiv.
3. Note in this regard Bruce 1990:50ff; Longenecker 1990:lxivff.
4. This as noted by Mattill 1959:465; cf Lake & Cadbury 1933, 2:266-286.
5. On the 'tendency' of Acts, see Vielhauer 1966:33-50; Goodenough 1966:51-59; E Schweitzer 1966:186-193; Haenchen 1971:90-111; Dibelius 1961:9-28; and Conzelmann 1987:xl-xlviii; but *contra* this position, see Bruce 1990:21-40, 60-66; Gasque 1989:21-54 and *passim*; Marshall 1971:21-76; 1986:23-44; Hemer 1990:1-29, 43-53, 63-100, 415-443; and Longenecker 1981:214-221. Marshall (1971:57) has said, '....we can say that the view that Hellenistic history writing was in general tendentious and that therefore Luke must also be tendentious and inaccurate is ungrounded, both in its assumption and in its logic.' This statement is a sound assessment of the former position.
6. Mattill also refers here to the 'ever occurring explanation of J B Lightfoot.' Parker (1967:179f) is in essential agreement with this position on Luke's fabrication of material, indicating that Luke has concocted the 9:26-30 visit ('the Jerusalem visit of Acts 9 did not occur'), and he equates Galatians 1:18-20 with Acts 11:27-30.

7. Many scholars have of course rejected the historical reliability of Acts and yet hold the traditional view of this question on the basis of Pauline epistolographical evidence; yet the words of Oxford historian Sherwin-White relative to this matter are apposite to this discussion; he says, 'For Acts the confirmation of historicity is overwhelming....any attempt to reject its basic historicity even in matters of detail must now appear absurd. Roman historians have long taken it for granted' (1963:189). So then, the more defensible position on this issue from an *evidential* base is to take the data from both the epistles and Acts seriously, and attempt to reconcile (not 'harmonize') that evidence accordingly.

8. In speaking to the issue of the improbability of the correctness of such complex literary theories (eg, *Tendenzkritik* or *Stilkritik*), D A Carson (1981a:108) has aptly remarked, 'Extremely complex and detailed literary and critical theories are usually much less plausible than is often thought; yet somehow, unfortunately, they convey a general impression of convincing coherence even after detail after detail has been demonstrated to be implausible.' Carson's assessment is not meant to reject the use of such methodology, but rather represents a call to use this or any methodology consistently and responsibly.

9. Longenecker notes four insurmountable problems with Knox's position, which must be answered if Knox is to be thought of as correct; no compelling answer to these objections has thus far been forthcoming. Longenecker lists these problems with Knox's position as follows:
 1. Barnabas is not mentioned in any of Paul's letters in connection with the founding of churches in Macedonia and Achaia, nor does he figure largely in any of the further correspondence with those churches; yet if Knox's view is correct, all of those churches were founded prior to the Jerusalem Council, during which time Paul and Barnabas were still itinerant missionaries together. It would be only reasonable to expect mention of Barnabas in these letters if they had indeed been together during that time.

 2. In Galatians 1:21-24 Paul explicitly states that he stayed in the regions of Syria and Cilicia between his visits to Jerusalem; Knox's supposition that the Jerusalem Council visit occurred late in Paul's ministry, identified by Knox with the 'hasty visit' of Acts 18:22 (itself uncertain), does not square with the time needed for missionary activity in Macedonia and Achaia that the Corinthian correspondence and Romans 15 would require, the statement of J Weiss notwithstanding (1937, 1:204). As Longenecker says

(1990:lxxvi), '....to include missions to Macedonia and Achaia within Galatians 1:21-24 seems to make a mockery of language and discredit entirely Paul's endeavor to be truthful (1:20).'

3. Knox's position requires a fourteen year period of establishing Gentile churches before the Jerusalem Council; yet if the situation regarding Gentile inclusion in the church was as desperate as all reports indicate, this is far too long a time period before the Council was held.

4. Knox's hypothesis that the Collection was an official responsibility laid upon Paul by the Jewish Christians at the Council does not mesh with the evidence, which suggests that Paul was more than a little concerned with whether or not the Jerusalem church would even receive the Collection from the Gentiles (cf Rm 15:25-32).

10. Of course recognizing the historical value of Acts is not *demand*ed; not everyone holding to view one is actually willing to recognize Acts in this way.
11. Note in this regard Fung 1988:12 and Robinson 1976:39-42, whose discussion is especially helpful. Notable among those holding this A 3 = G 2 position are Askwith 1902:137-153; Bornkamm 1971:31-42; Buck 1951, *passim*; Burton 1921:xliv-xlv; Dibelius 1919:5ff; Hendriksen 1968:70-77, especially 70-74 and note 45; Hurd 1965:12-22; Lake and Cadbury 1933; Lightfoot 1865:123-128; Oepke 1937; Parker 1967:175-182 (especially 179ff); Rendall 1904, 3:141-144 (1983 Reprint); Robertson 1931, 4:272-319; Schlier 1949:66-78; and Weiss 1917:195ff.
12. Note here the discussion of Hendriksen 1968:71.
13. Hendriksen (1968:71-73, note 45) exemplifies the typical defense of this position; in brief his answer to objections raised against the A 3 = G 2 position are as follows:
 1. With regard to the question of how Peter could have been hypocritical at Antioch after the Council decision, refusing table fellowship with the Gentiles when 'some from James' came on the scene, Hendriksen remarks that Peter was both mercurial with respect to personality, and motivated by fear when the judaizers came to Antioch, so could have easily acted out of harmony with the decision of the council.
 2. The judaizers were 'unconvinced' by the findings of the Council and so worked to undermine Paul's activity in Galatia, necessitating Paul's defense and account-

ing for the fact that Paul did not mention the Council's decision in his letter to the Galatians.

3. Galatians 2 leaves room for both a private meeting between Paul and the 'pillars' and the public Council meeting.

4. There is no real conflict between Paul's going to Jerusalem by revelation and as a delegate of the Antioch church.

5. Even though Titus is not mentioned in Acts 15 but is in Galatians 2, the two are not necessarily in conflict; the record of Acts 15 certainly does not exclude Titus' presence, and in fact, the reference to 'some others' could include Titus.

6. The regulations mentioned in Acts 15 are not explicitly mentioned in Galatians 2 because they do not address the main issue in Galatia; and, in 2:6, there may indeed be a veiled reference to those regulations.

7. The word 'again' (*πάλιν*) in Galatians 2:1 does not demand that this verse refer to Paul's *second* visit to Jerusalem; the word is sufficiently ambiguous to allow for more previous visits than one.

When all this evidence is considered, says Hendriksen, it becomes apparent that the A 3 = G 2 position is certainly not out of the question.

14. Among those holding this position are Amoit 1946:32; Bate 1926:45ff; Blunt 1922:182ff; 1925:22ff; Bruce [1951] 1990; 1982b:43-56; Burkitt 1924:116ff; Calvin [1548] 1965:24ff; Duncan 1934:xxiiff; Emmet 1912: xivff; W L Knox 1948:40ff; Lake 1911:297ff (he later abandoned this view in favor of the A 2 = A 3 = G 2 position); Longenecker 1981:440-442; 1990:lxiii-lxxviii; Machen 1925:80ff; Plooiij 1918:111ff; Round 1906; Weber 1900.
15. Ramsay, however, did not explicitly state his view on the Acts/Galatians correspondence with finality.
16. Cf Machen 1925:80; Guthrie 1970:460.
17. Cf Baur 1831:61-206; Ellis 1978; Gunther 1973; Lüdemann 1989. In addition, there are a great number of assorted monographs and articles dealing with individual epistles and passages (cf bibliography).
18. On 'mirror reading,' cf Barclay 1987:73-93, and Brinsmead 1982, especially 23-33.

19. Note also the comments of Longenecker 1990:lxix; Wire 1990:10. This difficulty of confirming one's presuppositions about the text holds true especially for Galatians, with the long hermeneutical tradition associated with its teaching and theology, particularly regarding the expression 'works of the law.'
20. Tyson helpfully lists those who follow Baur, including Hilgenfeld 1852; Meyer 1884; Sieffert 1899; Zahn 1909; Bousset 1917; and Burton 1921, as well as others. Cf Tyson 1968:241-254.
21. Lightfoot's critique of Baur's position may be found in his Galatians commentary in an appendix entitled 'Saint Paul and the Three;' 1865:292-374.
22. Munck's thesis regarding Paul's converts is found at 1959:87ff. For the refutation of this view, see Jewett 1970-71:202-203; cf also Moule 1963:107, note a; Robertson 1934:808ff.
23. Note here also the comments of Brinsmead 1982:17.
24. Cf Brinsmead's discussion (1982:159, 184); Brinsmead himself sees the opponents as 'nomistic enthusiasts,' possibly Essene in origin, who are 'judaizing' Christians.
25. Despite Fung's argument against Jewett's position, L L Grabbe has recently argued convincingly for a historical reconstruction of this Zealot 'purity' movement which lends credence to Jewett's understanding of the circumstances surrounding Paul and his Galatian opponents. Cf Grabbe 1992, 2:457-459.
26. Dunn's technical phrase is 'identity markers.'
27. As Barclay has noted, '...both in Galatians and elsewhere [the word *Ἰουδαίαν*, 2:14] means to adopt Jewish customs or live like a Jew' (1988:36, note 1).

5. Epistolary and Rhetorical Considerations

The text of Paul's letter to the Galatians bristles with intense, emotionally charged language, which indicates a deeply agitated and distressed author. As such, the book includes a great deal of material that may be construed as either (1) pejorative and unfair invective directed by Paul toward those who have 'invaded' his territory, or (2) a masterful apology and justification by the apostle of his stand against the 'judaizing' opposition, depending upon the sympathies of the reader. Such diverse interpretive possibilities demand some type of controls to facilitate a proper understanding of these texts, both for his original readers and for those attempting to apply the apostle's message to their own times. Fortunately, some such controls do exist, particularly in epistolary and rhetorical approaches to the study of the text.

Since meaning is inherently linked to both the form and the content of a communication (Winger 1992:8-10), attention must be given to the way a biblical author expressed his message. In the words of Longenecker, '...it is necessary to give attention not only to what is said but also how it is said -- that is, to the forms used to convey meaning and to the function served by each particular form' (1990:ci).¹ In the process of investigation, historical, epistolary and rhetorical evaluative methodologies need be brought more comprehensively to bear in an attempt to identify how a biblical letter writer crafted his argument and composition. This will, in turn, enable the interpreter to

understand more adequately the intention of the author with regard to the text's meaning.

The purpose of this chapter, therefore, will be to highlight the epistolary and rhetorical conventions of Paul's day, and then to seek to understand Galatians by means of these conventions. The results of this analysis will aid in the exegesis of the Galatian *ἔργα νόμου* texts, particularly as the epistolary and rhetorical structures 'dialogue' with the other interpretive methodologies discussed thus far.²

5.1 Epistolary Considerations

5.1.1 Literary Analysis

The Bible contains written material relative to certain 'theological, metaphysical, anthropological, ethical and historical issues' (Davies 1990:402). Because it is made up of written material, the Bible may be classified as literature and the analysis of biblical texts (such as Galatians) may be conducted on a literary basis. The insights into authorial intention and the theological meaning of biblical texts that are gained through the practice of the other critical disciplines may consequently be augmented through the application to the text of certain principles of literary criticism. Literary criticism, of course, is a vast and daunting field of investigation (Longman 1987:13ff), and not all of its principles are equally beneficial for the study of Scripture. Nevertheless, a number of insights from this discipline may be utilized in the study of Paul's *ἔργα νόμου* texts.

The beginning point of any literary-critical approach to Scripture is the understanding that literature, including biblical literature, is an act of communication.³ While some literary theories would question even this basic assumption (eg, Deconstruction), it must be understood that the biblical authors attempted to send some sort of message by means of their writings. The language of Galatians, for example, bristling with polemic as it does, nonetheless conveys a specific message from Paul to his converts. This message was intended for a particular audience: his Galatian readers. And, this message was also intended to communicate a certain meaning to that audience, even though that meaning may have been misunderstood by the original recipients and/or read differently by some of the Galatian congregations. As noted by Longman,

....interpretations of any text, and biblical literature in particular, are partial, hypothetical, probable, and contextualized....our interpretations may never be dogmatic, because the texts are rich in meaning, the mind of God (the final author) is ultimately unfathomable, and, recognizing that interpretation necessarily includes application, the situations that readers confront are various....the position advocated [here] is that the biblical authors communicated to their readers through texts (1987:64).

Understanding, therefore, that whatever else may be said about the Bible, the fact that its texts convey meaning must be a 'given' in its study. The Bible is, indeed, literature. But it is literature that is historically based and so cannot be classed as fiction. It may be accurate to say that 'the Bible is as literary as it can be without actually being literature' (Frye

1962:62). The fact that it is in some sense 'literary,' however, must not be allowed to obscure the fact that it is at the same time 'more than literature' (Longman 1987:57).

The biblical text, then, relates a message from an author to his readers. Understanding that message is the goal of biblical interpretation, which is 'correct' only insofar as it represents the author's intended meaning.

To facilitate interpretation, literary theory distinguishes between the 'real' author and the 'implied' author, the 'real' readers and the 'implied' readers. The writer of a text is the 'real author,' that is, the historical 'flesh and blood person who at some point in history crafted the text' (Tate 1991:195). Questions having to do with sources, amanuenses and redactors do not affect such a designation. The authors of biblical literature, however, are, for the most part, known only through the text. Their relevant biographical or circumstantial particulars must then be reconstructed through the utilization of textual clues. This 'reconstructed' author, the 'literary entity who is found only within the text,' is the 'implied author' (Tate 1991:195), the 'textual manifestation' of the real author (cf Longman 1987:66, 84-85).

The 'implied author' is different from the 'real author' in that the implied author is only a partial and incomplete image of the real author. As Tate observes, 'the implied author is that composite of discernable ideologies underlying a particular text' (Tate 1991:195). The flesh and blood Paul who wrote Galatians is identical to the Paul who wrote Romans. Yet the 'implied' Paul of Galatians is much more direct and instructive than the Paul

of Romans appears to be. This distinction between the two 'authors' may be a subtle one. It is, nevertheless, real, and may at times provide clarity in interpretation.

Those who historically received the epistolary communication of the real author are the original 'real readers' of the text. But the text also has meaning from the standpoint of the 'implied readers,' and this meaning helps the literary critic to grasp the significance and meaning of the text for modern-day 'real readers' (twentieth-century readers of the biblical text are 'real readers;' they come to the text from a greater distance and may ask a whole new set of questions of the text, but the text conveys meaning to them just the same). The identity of the 'implied readers' must be inferred from textual clues, like that of the 'implied author.' The implied reader is defined by the text, as he or she is 'the audience presupposed by the narrative itself' (Chatman 1978:149f). The 'implied reader' distinguishes the original 'real readers' from the readers addressed by the text itself, in that the implied reader is (ideally) expected to accept the ideology and perspectives of the author, while in fact the 'real readers' may not do so (cf Tate 1991:195ff). The 'real readers,' then, may or may not fully enter into the text. To the degree that this is the case, the 'real reader' either becomes or refuses to become the 'implied reader.' In the case of Galatians again, the 'real readers,' that is, the recipients of the letter, became 'implied readers' only if they were in sympathy with Paul's position and adopted it as their own. This, too, may at times be a subtle distinction. Yet it can also aid in certain aspects of biblical investigation.

In addition to the literary roles of 'real' and 'implied' authors and readers are the roles in narrative literature of the 'narrator' and the 'narratee.' Literature that is in narrative form includes the 'voice' of a narrator, the person from whose perspective the story is told. The narrative may be in the first or third person, and the narrator may either be included in the action as a character in the story or completely outside the story, 'looking on.' In addition, the narrator's knowledge may range anywhere from very little awareness of the narrated situation to a complete understanding of it. The narrator is not to be identified with the 'implied author.' Rather, the narrator is 'a fictive creation of the implied author and is dependent upon the implied author for any characteristics and abilities which may be discernable from the text' (Tate 1991:196).

The narratee, however, is the fictive entity to whom the narrator tells the story. Tate describes the narratee as follows:

the narratee is distinct from the implied reader in a dramatic way. The narratee, on the one hand, receives the story as it unfolds moment by moment. The implied reader, on the other hand, reads what the narrator tells the narratee. The implied reader is implied by the text but is not totally confined by it. The narratee...has total definition only by the work. Like the narrator, the narratee may be a character within the story, but is usually a person who has no place within the story (Tate 1991:196).

The categories of 'real' and 'implied' authors, 'real' and 'implied' readers, as well as 'narrator' and 'narratee,' are intended by literary theorists to enable an interpreter to note fine distinctions within a text. These distinctions, as well, help to elucidate difficult passages in Scripture, allowing the

interpreter to read, exegete and understand the text more accurately.

5.1.2 Literary Genre

The New Testament contains several types of literature, the foremost being the 'letter.' In writing letters to specific churches, the New Testament authors made use of a form of writing that was long established and easily adapted to the immediate practical needs of both author and recipients (cf Milligan 1913:86-87).

Since the work of Adolf Deissmann, New Testament scholars have noted that while there is a direct relationship between a 'letter' and an 'epistle,' there are also differences of intention and form between the two (cf Doty 1969: 183). Deissmann reckoned a 'letter' as something almost totally uncontrived and spontaneous, sparked by an immediate personal circumstance and written out of that context. Such communication is to be considered a 'true' letter (1910:53, 213-219). By contrast, an 'epistle' crosses the line of demarcation from 'non-literature' into what Deissmann considered to be art, a 'literary letter' or 'artistic letter' (1901:9, note 1; cf also 1910:147).

Deissmann's thesis was received by New Testament scholars as both enlightening and helpful. His insight proved to be instrumental in subsequent studies of the form and function of New Testament letters, in particular those of Paul. A number of scholars built upon the foundation laid by Deissmann.⁴ As significant as Deissmann's findings proved to be, however, further studies of literary form have indicated several ways in

which those findings must be 'fine-tuned' to be totally applicable to the writings of the New Testament.

Richard Longenecker addresses four areas in which Deissmann's conclusions are to be, as he states it, 'nuanced more carefully' (Longenecker 1990:ci). In the first place, Paul's letters are not strictly 'private letters,' reflecting primarily a 'people's movement' among lower classes as Deissmann maintained (cf Stowers 1986:18-19). Paul wrote to churches made up of groups of individuals banded together more by their Christian beliefs than their socio-economic or class status. He wrote to these believers 'as an apostle, an "official representative" of early Christianity,' and so his letters must be understood to be in some sense public correspondence (Longenecker 1990:ci-cii).⁵ Thus Deissmann's thesis of Paul's letters as strictly 'private,' 'non-literary' writings must be refined to include the realization that they were, indeed, at least to some extent, intended for public consumption (albeit 'public' in a restricted sense). As such, Paul's writings represent a hybrid, a 'blend' of the two categories, apparently for both circumstantial and functional reasons.

A second revision of Deissmann's position by subsequent New Testament scholarship is the realization that Paul's letters reflect the epistolary forms and structures of the day. Deissmann thought of Paul as a 'religious' man, and not as a 'dogmatician' or 'theologian.' He believed, therefore, that Paul wrote informal, private letters regarding 'his faith, not his dogmatics; his morality, not his ethics; his hopes, not his eschatology' (Deissmann 1901:58). Thinking of Paul as a private

letter writer, then, Deissmann believed that Paul's correspondence with his converts showed little relationship to that of an 'epistolographer,' and hence bore scarce resemblance to the form and structure of conventional literary epistles. Recent studies have shown, however, that Paul's letters contain more than 'a few stereotyped conventions and customary formulae in the salutations, thanksgivings, and closings;' rather, they include 'many conventional forms and structural features...of the Hellenistic period' (Longenecker 1990:cii).⁶ And any interpretation of those letters that is in any sense 'correct' must take the fact of their utilization of such epistolary forms into account (cf Stowers 1986:18).

A third way in which Deissmann's work is to be refined is in the recognition that the distinction drawn between a letter and an epistle is too broad. As Doty has remarked, 'An "epistle" is a letter' (1969:191; emphasis in original). The separation of these two forms of communication into divergent categories is, therefore, unwarranted, particularly in light of the various letter forms now known to have existed in the day of the writing of the New Testament. These forms were listed in the classical handbooks according to type (eg, Demetrius *On Style*). Some of the handbooks listed more types of letters than others, but most included illustrations of letters of recommendation, request, friendship, praise and/or blame, advice, consolation, mediation, thanksgiving, rebuke, business, information, political letters, 'non-real' letters, and 'discursive' letters or 'letter-essays.'⁷ Thus the existence of different types of letters in antiquity suggests that the ancient 'letter' form was broader in

terms of possible content and application than Deissmann suspected. The category of 'letter,' therefore, certainly would have included what is normally thought of as an 'epistle' (Longenecker 1990:ciii).

The fourth area in the modification of Deissmann's position involves his neglect of Paul's use of other contemporaneous literary forms and traditions in his letters. For in structuring his communications, Paul also utilized pre-existing Christian hymns (eg, 1 Cor 13; Phlp 2:6-11), rhetorical patterns of persuasive speech, stock literary lists/catalogues, and other patterns of writing then current.⁸

So then, Paul's letters must be seen as 'real' letters, which were, in the main, sparked by specific circumstances, and written somewhat extemporaneously. At the same time, however, they were, at least partially, produced with the help of current epistolary practice. In the composition of his letters, Paul used quite naturally those forms and conventions that were current in the practice of his day.⁹ Hence, Paul's cultural milieu is partly responsible for the shape his letters took. The letter writing practices of his day impacted Paul's epistolary formulation, particularly as certain of these formulaic expressions were 'clustered' together to mark significant breaks in the letter or to shift the letter's train of thought (and, as has been frequently pointed out since Mullins 1972:387, 'the use of one form tends to precipitate the use of others with it;' emphasis his. Cf Longenecker 1990:cvi).

5.1.3 Epistolary Analysis

An awareness of Paul's use of conventional forms of epistolary correspondence is reinforced when it is recognized that Greek letter writing followed 'a regular and established order and [letters] were shaped in a well-defined way' (Meecham 1923:113). In addition, letters were a common feature of the Jewish community out of which Christianity was born, as Jewish leaders found letter writing the easiest way to communicate with other Jews scattered throughout the Roman Empire (Goulder 1987:479). In both instances, the pattern of letter writing was similar.¹⁰

In general, Greek letters of the time began with a formulaic opening address or salutation, naming both the sender and the recipient(s) in a standard manner: 'A to B, greetings.'¹¹ This opening greeting would ordinarily include χαίρειν (literally 'rejoice,' but colloquially 'greetings;' cf Meecham 1923:116). The Jewish community letter would include a similar expression of greeting, usually accompanied by a reference to a desire for peace (שלום) and/or health (cf 2 Macc 1:1, 10). Paul often combines the concepts of these greeting-forms, using a modified form of χαίρειν (χάρις, 'grace') and the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew shalom, εἰρήνη ('peace'). In so doing, he appropriated the customary greetings of both his Jewish heritage and his Greek cultural background and applied them in a unique way to his correspondence.

The ending of a Greek letter was also a standard literary device, usually ἐπιπροσθεῖν σε εὐχομαι ('I pray you good health;' this was later shortened to simply ἐπιπροσθη ['farewell']). Cf Doty 1973:

39; Longenecker 1990:cv). In Paul's letters, however, this closing formula is abandoned in favor of a doxology or benediction, as, for example, in Galatians 6:18: 'Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ τοῦ πνεύματος ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί· ἀμήν' ('The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen').

Following the opening greetings of Greek letters, a number of conventional formulae may have been used to lead to the letter 'body.' Many of these appear in New Testament letters, demonstrating a significant formal similarity between the letters of the New Testament and those of the non-literary papyri. After the initial greeting there would ordinarily be a thanksgiving/prayer/blessing formula. The significance of the thanksgiving formula for the interpretation of the New Testament has been widely recognized since Schubert's monograph on the subject (1939a). As he noted, the thanksgiving section of the Greek letter would often summarize and divulge the contents of the letter-body, and in terms of its own content, this section would generally include an expression of gratitude by the writer for health, safety, prosperity, and so on, either for him/herself or the addressee, or both. It may also contain the expressed desire that such fortune continue (cf Doty 1973:31-33; Stowers 1986:21-22). An example of what might be considered a fairly typical thanksgiving is as follows: 'εὐχαριστῶ τῷ κυρίῳ Σεράπειδι, ὅτι μου κινδυνεύσαντος εἰς θάλασσαν ἔσωσε εὐθέως' ('I give thanks to the lord Serapis, for he immediately saved me from peril in the sea;' *BGU* II, 423). Many of the thanksgiving sections in the non-literary papyri also include prayer, as in *BGU* III, 846: 'καὶ διὰ πάντων εὐχομαι σοὶ ὑγιαίνειν.'

τὸ προσκύνημά σου ποιῶ κατ' αἰκάστην ἡμαίρον παρὰ τῷ κυρίῳ Σεράπειδ' ('I pray always that you are well; I bow down on your behalf every day before the lord Serapis'). Most of Paul's letters contain such a thanksgiving/prayer/blessing formula (though Galatians does not), but the sequence in Paul's letters is prayer/thanksgiving.

Following the thanksgiving section would come the letter's body proper. This was considered the principal portion of the letter, where the sender communicated the content of his or her purpose in writing. According to Doty (1973:34-37), several stock patterns of expression identified as conventional transitional 'body-openings' of Greek letters may be found in the New Testament, again demonstrating the literary parallels between these two examples of early writing. Many such body-openings, 'following a conjunction, [include] a verb of request or appeal [especially παρακαλῶ]... followed by the vocative case...' Also, in the body proper, 'The formula...functions "to introduce new material, to change the subject of discussion, or when the argument takes a new tack"' (Doty 1973:34, quoting Sanders 1962:349). Other examples of transitional body-openings include the following formulae:¹²

Disclosure

The disclosure formula includes the verb of disclosure in the first person indicative (θέλω or βούλομαι); the verb of knowing in the infinitive form (γινώσκείν); the vocative of address (usually ἀδελφοί in Paul); and the subject to be disclosed, introduced by ὅτι. Examples:

'I want you to know....,' or 'I make known to you' (cf Gl 1:11, 'γνωρίζω γὰρ ὑμῖν; PGiss 11:4, 'γινώσκειν σε θέλω).

'I do not want you to be ignorant....' (eg, 2 Cor 1:8, 'Οὐ γὰρ θέλομεν ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί;' cf Sanders 1962:94; Mullins 1964).

Request

The request formula includes the elements of an introduction of the request period with a conjunction (eg, δὴ), a verb of request (eg, παρακαλῶ), the use of the vocative of address, and the substance of the request introduced by a conjunction or a clause (eg, a περί or ἵνα clause). Example:

'I beg you....' (cf 1 Cor 1:10, 'Παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί...;' PGiss 17:7, 'παρακαλῶ σε, κύριε....').

Astonishment

The expression of astonishment includes a verb of astonishment (θαυμάζω) and the cause of the astonishment, usually introduced by ὅτι or πῶς. Example:

'I am amazed that you are so quickly turning away from the One who called you...' (Gl 1:6, 'Θαυμάζω ὅτι οὕτως ταχέως μετατίθεσθε ἀπὸ τοῦ καλέσαντος ὑμᾶς...;' cf PMich 479:4, 'Θαυμάζω πῶς...').

Statement of Compliance

This is a reference to previous instruction, reminding the addressee that compliance with the instruction is expected (in the case of a superior to a subordinate) or has been effected (a subordinate writing to a superior). Examples:

Galatians 1:9 ('ὡς προειρήκαμεν, εἴ τις...εὐαγγελίζεται...ἀνάθεμα ἔστω;') 'As we said before,...if anyone...is preaching...let him be anathema').

PWarren 14:5ff ('καθὼς ἐνεθειλόμεθα...περὶ...οἶδομεν ὅτι...;') 'Just as I was willing...concerning...we know that').

Formulaic use of verbs of Hearing or Learning

The verbs ἀκούω ('I hear') and ἐπιγινώσκω ('I learn') are the ordinary means of introducing a report of some nature in the body of a letter. According to White (1972a), in the non-literary papyri this type of formula usually introduced a report of grief or anxiety of some type.

Notification of an Impending Visit

As in POxy 1666:11, 'θεῶν σὺν βουλομένων, πρὸς τὴν ἑορτὴν...πειράσομαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς γενέσθαι' (If the gods are willing, therefore, I will try to be with you...for the feast').

Reference to Writing

This is the mention of previous communication; examples:

2 Corinthians 2:4, 'ἐκ γὰρ πολλῆς θλίψεως καὶ συνοχῆς καρδίας ἔγραψα ὑμῖν διὰ πολλῶν δακρύων...;' ('For out of much suffering and anxiety of heart I wrote to you through many tears...').

PMich 36:1, 'ἔγραψας ἡμῖν ὅτι...;' ('You wrote to us that...').

Verbs of Saying and Informing

As found in the following:

Romans 3:5, '...κατὰ ἄνθρωπον λέγω' ('I am speaking according to man,' ie, using an argument from human wisdom or understanding).

PFay 122:14, 'καὶ δηλώσον μοι πόσα ἐξέβησαν ἵνα εἰδῶ' ('and inform me how many came out in order that I might know').

Again, these and similar formulaic body-openings made the transition from the greetings section of the letter to the main body. The letter writer used these and other stock expressions for this transitional purpose so as to introduce the information he or she intended to divulge in the contents of the body of the letter (Schubert 1939; cf White 1971:97).

From the opening formulae the letter writer moved to the main section of the letter, which often included traditional paranetic material and catalogues or lists relative to that paranesis.¹³ This traditional material would be adapted by the letter writer for the specific needs of those he or she was addressing, and often included a number of otherwise unrelated proverbs or aphorisms strung together (τοιοί) to give advice as to proper behavior in a particular situation (Bradley 1953:246). Paul used such traditional material in Galatians and Romans (as well as others of his letters), drawing both from his Jewish Pharisaic background and knowledge of the Scriptures, and from his Hellenistic environment (cf Doty 1973:37-39). So, again, there is a great deal of correspondence between the letters of the New Testament and the culture of its day. The text of the New Testament, therefore, may be helpfully elucidated by comparison with the letters of the non-literary papyri with which it shares so many common elements.

From this brief overview of the practice of letter writing in Paul's era it becomes apparent that Paul's letters did follow the pattern of contemporary routine (cf Meecham 1923:113). It must be recognized that these conventional forms were often molded to fit the particular character of the New Testament writings as both occasional and theologically paranetic literature. And, one must be careful not to make too much of the presence of conventional formulae in these letters (use of normal forms does not imply necessary dependence upon 'handbooks' or 'lists'). Nevertheless, Paul and other New Testament writers wrote letters which were in keeping with the form and function of letters in their world. Much can be added to the understanding of these New Testament materials if that fact is borne in mind.

5.1.4 The Epistolary Structure of Galatians

Richard Longenecker has produced a list of conventional formulae as found in Galatians that closely approximate those of the non-literary papyri (1990:cvii-cviii). Longenecker's list is as follows:

1:1-2, salutation:

'Παῦλος...ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Γαλατίας,' 'Paul...to the churches of Galatia'

1:3, greeting:

'χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη,' 'Grace and peace to you'

1:6, rebuke formula:

'θαυμάζω ὅτι οὕτως ταχέως μετατίθεσθε,' 'I am amazed that you have so quickly deserted'

1:9, reminder of previous instruction:

'ὡς προειρήκομεν, καὶ ἄρτι πάλιν λέγω,' 'as we have said before, so I say now again'

1:11, disclosure formula:

'γνωρίζω δὲ ὑμῖν,' 'Now I make known to you'

1:13, disclosure formula:

'Ἦκούσατε γὰρ τὴν ἐμὴν ἀναστροφήν ποτε ἐν τῷ Ἰουδαϊσμῷ,'
'For you have heard of my previous manner of life in Judaism'

3:1, vocative-rebuke:

'Ὡ ἀνόητοι Γαλάται, τίς ὑμᾶς ἐβάσκαεν,' 'You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you'

3:2, verb of hearing:

'τοῦτο μόνον θέλω μαθεῖν ἀφ' ὑμῶν,' 'I want to learn only this from you'

3:7, disclosure formula:

'Γινώσκετε ἄρα ὅτι ἐκ πίστεως, οὗτοι υἱοὶ εἰσιν Ἀβραάμ,'
'Know, therefore, that those [who are] of faith, these are the sons of Abraham'

3:15, vocative, verb of saying:

'Ἀδελφοί, κατὰ ἄνθρωπον λέγω,' 'Brothers, I am speaking according to man;' (ie, by human reasoning)

3:17, verb of saying:

'τοῦτο δὲ λέγω,' 'so I say this'

4:1, verb of saying:

'λέγω δέ,' 'Now I say'

4:11, statement of distress:

'φοβοῦμαι ὑμᾶς μή πως εἰκὴ κεκοπίακα εἰς ὑμᾶς,' 'I am afraid for you, that perhaps I have labored over you to no purpose'

4:12, request formula:

'ἀδελφοί, δεόμεθα ὑμῶν,' 'brothers, I beg you'

4:13, disclosure formula:

'οἴδατε δὲ ὅτι,' 'Now you know that'

4:15, disclosure formula:

'μαρτυρῶ γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι,' 'I can bear witness for you that'

4:19, vocative:

'τέκνα μου,' 'my children'

4:20, apostolic parousia:

'ἤθελον δὲ παρῆναι πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἄρτι,' 'and how I wish I could be with you now'

4:21, verb of saying:

'Λέγετέ μοι, οἱ ὑπὸ νόμον θέλοντες εἶναι,' 'Tell me, you who desire to be under law'

4:28, vocative:

'ὁμεις δέ, ἀδελφοί,' 'Now you, brothers'

4:31, vocative:

'διό, ἀδελφοί,' 'therefore, brothers'

5:2, motivation for writing formula:

'Ἴδε ἐγὼ Παῦλος λέγω ὑμῖν,' 'Look here! I, Paul, tell you that'

5:3, disclosure-attestation:

'μαρτύρομαι δὲ πάλιν,' 'I testify again'

5:10, confidence formula:

'ἐγὼ πέποιθα εἰς ὑμᾶς ἐν κυρίῳ ὅτι,' 'I am confident toward you in the Lord that'

5:11, vocative:

'ἐγὼ δέ, ἀδελφοί,' 'now for my part, brothers'

5:13, vocative:

'Ὑμεῖς γάρ...ἀδελφοί,' 'for you...brothers'

5:16, verb of saying:

'λέγω δέ,' 'Now I say'

6:1, vocative:

'Ἀδελφοί,' 'Brothers'

6:11, autographic subscription:

'Ἴδετε πηλίκους ὑμῖν γράμμασιν ἔγραψα,' 'See what large letters I use as I write to you'

6:16, benediction:

'εἰρήνη ἐπ' αὐτοὺς καὶ ἔλεος,' 'peace and mercy upon them'

6:18, grace wish, vocative:

'Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ τοῦ πνεύματος ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί,' 'May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers'

Longenecker's examination of these materials indicates that in Galatians the conventional formulae are 'clustered' in significant ways. This clustering, in turn, eventuates in the following important structural overview of the book of Galatians:

Salutation, 1:1-5.

Rebuke Section (including autobiographical details and theological arguments), 1:6-4:11.

Request Section (including personal, scriptural, and ethical appeals), 4:12-6:10.

Subscription, 6:11-18.

Longenecker's outline of Galatians, based as it is upon Paul's use of conventional epistolary formulae and materials, is sound. What is more, this analysis indicates that all of the occurrences of the Galatians ἔργα νόμου phrase under scrutiny in this study

take place in the 'Rebuke Section' of the letter. This seems to suggest, together with the implications of Chapter Three relative to Paul's negative use of *ἔργα νόμου*¹⁴ and the description in Chapter Four of judaizing opposition against him,¹⁵ that the meaning of *ἔργα νόμου* in Galatians will have specific negative overtones.

5.2 Rhetorical Considerations

5.2.1 Rhetorical Analysis

Biblical texts are, again, literary devices aimed at achieving communication between an author and his readers. As *communication* devices, however, it is imperative that they be understood not as 'private communications to be read in silence, but [as] the spoken word recorded' (Young 1990b:598). So while the biblical texts are a form of written literature, they are at the same time reflective of the style and thought constructs of oral speech. Put another way, the written text reveals the thought of the writer as he would say it or 'as he thinks it' (Muilenburg 1969:7). And this being the case, it is necessary not only to analyze a biblical text by means of epistolary considerations, but also to use rhetorical analysis to help elucidate the meaning of that text.

The application of rhetorical criticism to the study of the New Testament is still in its early stages of development. Before the second half of the twentieth century, modern biblical exegesis was relatively unacquainted with (though not totally ignorant of) the application of the principles and procedures of

rhetoric to Scripture (cf McDonald 1990:599).¹⁶ In his 1969 Society of Biblical Literature presidential address, James Muilenburg challenged biblical scholars to rectify this condition by moving beyond Form Criticism and related disciplines as principal exegetical methods, and to use literary and rhetorical constructs in interpretation as well (Muilenburg 1969).¹⁷ His challenge was both timely and productive, and yet progress in this area was not immediate. In 1974 Kessler could still assess the situation with the remark that 'because this area is still very much in flux, and common agreement has not yet been established, its precise methodological boundaries must remain undefined' (Kessler 1974:24).

This circumstance generally obtained until the groundbreaking work of H D Betz on Galatians in 1979.¹⁸ Though based on what has been termed a 'revised classical tradition of rhetoric' (McDonald 1990:599) and sometimes applied too rigidly to the whole of the Galatian letter, Betz' approach has proved to be foundational for the application of rhetorical analysis to this important epistle of Paul (cf Longenecker 1990:cix-cxiii). Betz' work has been rightly criticized in several areas, particularly for his inflexibility in the assigning of Galatians to the category of an 'apologetic' letter (cf Meeks 1981; Longenecker 1990: ciii-cv). Nevertheless, by providing a model for the task, Betz pointed the way for biblical scholars to the subsequent rhetorical analysis of the whole of the New Testament.

The 'art' of Rhetorical Criticism (Greenwood 1970:422), as applied to the New Testament, has been developed along the lines of ancient rhetoric by, most notably, G A Kennedy (1984) and B

L. Mack (1990). Both Kennedy and Mack propose a methodology for rhetorical criticism which recognizes the 'new rhetoric' approach of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969). This approach emphasizes that ancient rhetoric was the 'art of persuasion' or argumentation, and not the 'ornamental' stylistic speech which was developed in the Roman world and later cultivated mainly by and for Christianity (Mack 1990:14-15). The 'new' rhetoric of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca is then actually a 'rearticulation of the old rhetoric' (Mack 1990:16). This was the rhetoric that was ubiquitous in the society of those who wrote the New Testament documents.¹⁹ Every New Testament document is an attempt at (formal, written) speech communication and is an undertaking directed toward persuasion of some sort. This written communication involves, therefore, the author's conscious or unconscious use of the principles of rhetoric.

The methodological principles extrapolated from the ancient handbooks and suggested by Kennedy and Mack (among others) include several components.²⁰ To begin with, there must be a determination of the rhetorical unit to be studied. In the case of the New Testament, this involves 'delimiting the pericope or textual unit for investigation,' usually 'by form- and literary-critical criteria' (Mack 1990:21). These textual units are then subjected to a rhetorical-critical analysis, which analysis will provide greater insight into the author's purpose in argumentation and thus elucidate the meaning of the passage in question. The second step is to examine the rhetorical situation and problem being addressed in the material under investigation. The assumption here is that each textual unit 'has its own rhetorical

situation...[the] rhetorical occasion or exigency which has prompted the author's or speaker's response and includes the rhetorical problem to be overcome' (McDonald 1990:600). It is at this point that one must take note of the author's/speaker's attempted involvement of the audience's sympathies (ethos) and emotion (pathos), as well as the use of logic (logos) in the argumentation. These rhetorical tools are designed to enable the author/speaker to persuade the audience and make the point being argued. One should note also at this point the genre of argumentation being employed. As McDonald indicates, 'The three traditional types [of argumentation] are judicial [or "forensic:" designed to elicit judgment], deliberative [or "symbouleutic:" aiming at effecting decision], and epideictic [fostering assent to, or dissent from, a particular stance]' (McDonald 1990:600; cf Mack 1990:34-35). These types of argumentation were sometimes mixed, and the categories may at times become 'blurred' together. Nevertheless, a preliminary assigning of rhetorical material to one or another of these categories helps to clarify the author's or speaker's purpose in the textual unit being studied.

The third stage of rhetorical analysis consists of attempting to deduce the author's or speaker's intention by means of inference from clues contained in the rhetorical arrangement of the text. It is assumed that the author or speaker is employing rhetorical constructs in order to persuade his or her audience and so deliberately crafts his or her argument to that end. In this process, the author or speaker selects the proper rhetorical techniques to further his or her purpose (cf Mack 1990:32). So then, rhetorical structure is 'a dynamic strategy developed in

relation to the rhetorical situation' as the author or speaker seeks to bring about the greatest impact and rhetorical effect through his or her textual arrangement (McDonald 1990:600). Once the interpreter discovers the rhetorical arrangement of the text he or she is better able to grasp the author's or speaker's intended meaning and purpose. The attempt on the part of the author or speaker to find materials suitable for the proving of his or her point was known as 'inventio' or 'heuresis,' and is defined as 'the conceptual process of deciding on the subject to be elaborated, the position one would take on an issue of debate, or the thesis one wished to propose' (Mack 1990:32). The ancient rhetorical handbooks contained catalogs of stock ingredients for such purposes. Many of these stock lists may, in fact, be behind certain New Testament passages (eg, 2 Cor 11). The New Testament also employed examples and maxims from the Hebrew Scriptures in this regard (cf 1 Cor 15; 2 Cor 9). This material would then be ordered into an outline for presentation ('taxis,' 'dispositio'). Again, the handbooks contained examples which could be incorporated into one's argumentation or used as patterns to follow. By noting the textual arrangement of the author, the interpreter of the New Testament is able to find further clues as to the intended meaning and significance of given passages of Scripture. The cognizance of the rhetorical arrangement may also aid the interpreter by lending clues to the identity of the intended or 'implied' audience, which would provide further clarity of authorial meaning.

The final stages of rhetorical analysis of any textual unit involve an analysis of the author's stylistic devices ('lexis,'

'elocutio'), with a review of the whole unit (cf Mack 1990:32; McDonald 1990:600). Because rhetoric attempts to persuade through argumentation, stylistic devices were employed in the composition of one's argument with a view to accomplishing the intended rhetorical purpose. The interpreter must note these devices and correctly evaluate their impact upon the author's argumentation in the process of interpretation. However, a correct evaluation will take care to bear in mind that the New Testament is writing and not oratory. Also, style in the rhetoric of the New Testament should not be unduly overemphasized. Style and substance operate together to lend force to the argument of these documents (cf Mack 1990:33; McDonald 1990:600).

Finally, the rhetorical effect of the whole unit under examination must be evaluated. The impact of a rhetorical text is designed to be cumulative, and can thus be gauged ultimately only as a whole. The attempt at this stage is to discern how well the author used rhetoric to meet the rhetorical problem or fit the rhetorical circumstances reflected by the text being studied. In terms of the exegesis of a Scripture passage, such an analysis often leads to a greater understanding, as textual difficulties are rendered more intelligible.²¹

These principles of rhetoric are beneficial for lending clarity to difficult New Testament texts. Yet it must also be remembered that the New Testament was written for the most part as occasion demanded. The epistolary material of Paul, therefore, does not always strictly conform to classical rhetorical norms and practices as closely as one might like. The precepts of rhetorical criticism may help to elucidate a given text, both in

terms of the author's intention and the rhetorical situation (the 'occasion' of the writing of the text). One must recognize, however, that there are inherent limitations in the application of these principles to the study of the New Testament. Mack has stated,

Most attempts to define precisely the issue of an early Christian argument fail...simply because the social circumstances of the early Christian movements did not correspond to the traditional occasions for each type of speech. Early Christian rhetoric was a distinctively mixed bag in which every form of rhetorical issue and strategy was frequently brought to bear simultaneously....Thus the occurrence of traditional patterns of argumentation may not always be a firm basis upon which to judge the intention of a speech....It should be emphasized that [rhetorical outlines] were never understood in antiquity as rigid templates....The value of the standard patterns is heuristic, providing...a checklist of items that frequently occur and a theoretical construct for discerning connections among small units of discourse that might otherwise be overlooked (Mack 1990:35, 49).

So rhetorical analysis, if used prudently as an aid to understanding the New Testament, may be a fruitful exegetical and interpretive tool that enhances the interpreter's ability to grasp the author's meaning in difficult areas. An attempt will be made in what follows to ascertain the rhetorical structure of Galatians as a means to further understand this letter.

5.2.2 The Rhetorical Structure of Galatians

Classical rhetoric, as developed by rhetoricians and theorists such as Aristotle (*Rhetoric*), Cicero (*De Inventione*, *De Optimo*

Genre Oratorum), Quintilian (*Institutio*), and the anonymous author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, among others, distinguished three major types or 'species' of argumentation, as noted above: (1) 'forensic' (or 'judicial'), designed to elicit judgment favorable to the position of the rhetor; (2) 'deliberative' (or 'symbouleutic') intended to evoke consensus or bring about a decision; and (3) 'memorial' (or 'epideictic'), aimed at extolling the virtues of an individual or at demonstrating the value of a particular stance or fostering assent to that stance. Pinpointing the proper rhetorical 'genre' or classification of Galatians among these species of rhetoric would conceivably give a measure of solid direction for its interpretation. Two notable attempts recently have been made to assign Galatians to a 'species' of rhetoric and interpret it on the basis of that rhetorical type.

In 1979 H D Betz published his Galatians commentary.²² Betz worked from the assumption that Galatians represents an example of forensic or 'apologetic' rhetoric. Paul, according to Betz, constructed his letter to his Galatian converts on that apologetic basis. In classical forensic or judicial rhetoric, the rhetor attempts to accuse others or defend him- or herself before a judge or jury (cf Mack 1990:34f). The typical speech or thesis pattern as contained in the handbooks had taken on a fairly standard form, usually along the following lines (cf Mack 1990:34-43; Longenecker 1990:cx):

Exordium (Introduction) - acknowledges the rhetorical situation, and establishes the *ethos* of the speaker (the *ethos*, or character of the speaker, established his or her

trustworthiness, credibility, and right to be heard).

<i>Narratio</i>	(Narration) - statement of the case to be argued.
<i>Propositio</i>	(Proposition) - sets out points of agreement and disagreement and the issues for proof.
<i>Probatio</i>	(Confirmation) - develops the arguments of the view being defended. Here, <i>logos</i> (structure of the speech, logic of argumentation) was especially important.
<i>Refutatio</i>	(Refutation) - refutes the position of the opponent(s).
<i>Peroratio</i>	(Conclusion) - summarization of the argument and encouragement of a favorable response. At this point <i>pathos</i> was especially stressed (<i>pathos</i> , 'affection,' was the means whereby the rhetor attempted to emotionally or stylistically 'connect' with the audience, engendering sympathy for his or her argument).

Betz saw a natural framework for Paul's letter to the Galatians in this classical model. His reconstruction of the letter intimates that the converts, as the target of Paul's persuasive efforts, serve as the 'jury,' those who are to be convinced. Paul then acts as the defendant, as he through rhetorical devices and argumentation states his case as strongly as he is able. The opponents, of course, function as Paul's accusers. Betz' outline of Galatians, adhering to these classical elements, is as follows (cf Betz 1979:16-23):

I.	Epistolary Prescript	1 : 1 - 5
II.	<i>Exordium</i>	1:6-11
III.	<i>Narratio</i>	1:12-2:14

IV.	<i>Propositio</i>	2:15-21
V.	<i>Exhortatio</i>	5:1-6:10
VI.	Epistolary Postscript, with a <i>Peroratio</i> or <i>Conclusio</i> (6:12-17)	6:11-18.

Betz' work has been widely recognized as a revolutionary approach to the problem of the interpretation of Galatians. He has demonstrated, by means of the application of this rhetorical framework to Paul's argumentation, that Paul's defense throughout the letter is not the disjointed, passionately incoherent *pastiche* of material it is sometimes alleged to be (cf Meeks 1981:305f). And, as Longenecker has remarked, any future treatment of Galatians which attempts to demonstrate an illogical argument by Paul or lack of relationship between sections of the letter will have failed adequately to have taken Betz' rhetorical reconstruction into account (1990:cx).

Betz' suggested rhetorical analysis of Galatians, ingenious as it is, must however be refined somewhat. Regular criticism has been leveled against Betz for attempting to force all of Galatians into the mold of forensic rhetoric.²³ The category fits chapters one and two very well, but breaks down from chapter three on. Betz himself recognized this difficulty, and resorted to removing passages from their contexts in order to fit them to the forensic mold. He attempted to explain his perspective by writing,

Admittedly, an analysis of chapters 3 and 4 in terms of rhetoric is very difficult. One may say that Paul has been very successful - - as a skilled rhetorician would be expected to be -- in disguising his argumentative strategy....Quintilian's advice is to

"diversify by a thousand figures." Paradoxically, extremely perfected logic was thought to create suspicion and boredom, not credibility, while a...mixture of some logic, some emotional appeal, some wisdom, some beauty, some entertainment was thought to conform to human nature and to the ways in which human beings accept arguments as true. Galatians 3 and 4 are such a mixture (1979: 129).

A corollary of the above difficulty for Betz is found in the fact that Paul does deviate from the standard forensic rhetorical form, and Betz does not attempt to answer for Paul's inclusion of paranesis in a forensic document. Nor does he address in the first place the question of the degree of formal acquaintance Paul might have had with the classical handbooks. This is, of course, only a problem for Betz in that he 'push[es] a good thesis too hard and too far' (Longenecker 1990:cxi). This results in Betz' allowing the external parallels of forensic rhetoric to overwhelm Paul's argumentation, which undoubtedly included other constructs, such as Jewish exegesis and rhetorical forms, chiasm, and the existence of the deliberative rhetoric genre in the later chapters.²⁴ Notwithstanding these criticisms, Betz' work remains the major foundational paradigm for a rhetorical understanding of Galatians.

In a second attempt to understand Galatians on the basis of rhetorical constructs, G A Kennedy attempted to interpret the letter solely as 'deliberative' rhetoric (1984:144-152). Kennedy's thesis is that although Paul 'certainly *could* have written a defense of the charges made against him at Galatia...he did not choose to do so' (1984:144f; emphasis his). Kennedy maintains that Paul concentrated instead on preaching the gospel in this

letter. His concern was less for himself or what the Galatians thought of his apostolic credentials than it was how the community responded to that gospel, which was God's gospel and not from man, and so was the one true gospel the Galatians needed.

Paul structured his argument in the whole of Galatians according to the classical framework of deliberative rhetoric, as Kennedy interprets it, and not the forensic model of Betz. According to Kennedy, Betz overemphasizes narrative and misses the paranesis in Galatians, and so misses the rhetorical point of 'linearity.' Taking his cue from the fact that '[t]he basic argument of deliberative oratory is that an action is in the best interest of the audience' (1984:146), Kennedy proceeds to interpret Galatians on that basis. The argument of the letter, says Kennedy, is that Christians must avoid conformance to the Jewish law, and circumcision in particular, which was not only unnecessary, but wrong. In their own best interest, as Paul saw it, they must instead love one another and practice the Christian life, thus continuing in their faith and not capitulating to the demands of the judaizers and returning to Judaism (1984:146). The overall argument of Galatians, says Kennedy, reinforces this stance, and supports Paul's claim that his gospel was from God. Kennedy's basic outline of Galatians, inferred from his statements on the epistle, is as follows:

I.	Introductory Salutation	1:1-5
II.	<i>Proem</i>	1:6-10
III.	Proof	1:11-5:1

IV.	Conclusion	5:2-6:10
V.	Epilogue	6:11-18.

Kennedy's analysis of Paul's arrangement of his Galatians argument is on the whole less structured on the lines of classical rhetoric than is the outline of Betz. This is true because Kennedy emphasizes the presence of narrative in Galatians, whereas Betz does not. Deliberative rhetoric, says Kennedy, lends itself more adequately to narrative methodology than does forensic (1984:145f). Paul needed to establish his *ethos* throughout the letter in order to support his claim to truth, and he accomplished this by means of long narrative sections in the epistle. Also, Kennedy argues, the exhortation of 5:1-6:10 is 'deliberative in intent,' and thus poses an insurmountable difficulty for Betz' thesis (1984:145ff).

The issue of what rhetorical 'species' Galatians represents is not a closed matter, as is illustrated by these two different rhetorical adaptations. The opinions of respected scholars such as Betz and Kennedy are not to be cast aside easily. Yet they are at divergent points in their approach to Galatians from a rhetorical construct. And, as Kennedy has said,

[i]n all critical methods there is certainly some room for difference of opinion, but there are critical principles which need to be observed to reach valid results, and in this case the significance of the epistle is at issue (1984:147).

This disagreement over what type of rhetoric is represented by the Galatian epistle is perhaps less significant for New Testament studies than the realization of the fact that Paul did

in fact utilize principles of rhetoric in his composition of the letter. Betz' work, as noted above, proved to be a milestone in New Testament interpretation for just that reason: in his interpretation of Galatians based upon rhetorical principles, he provided a ready model for others to follow. As is often true of first attempts at a new interpretive approach, much additional work needs to be accomplished in terms of refinement of Betz' and Kennedy's theses before any final rhetorical interpretation will be arrived at. Yet in raising the issues, they have laid the foundation for this continuing effort. The building upon that foundation will take place only when the all the various elements which go into interpretation, along with the evaluation of rhetorical constructs, are allowed to interact with each other in the interpretive process. In the words of Longenecker,

The persuasive modes of the classical rhetorical handbooks had become the common coinage of the realm in Paul's day. One did not have to be formally trained in rhetoric to use them. Nor did the rhetoricians have proprietary rights on them. In his Galatian letter...Paul seems to have availed himself almost unconsciously of the rhetorical forms at hand, fitting them into his inherited epistolary structures and filling them out with such Jewish theological motifs and exegetical methods as would be particularly significant in countering what the Judaizers were telling his converts. All this he did in order to highlight his central messageIt is, in fact, this combination of Hellenistic epistolary structures, Greco-Roman rhetorical forms, Jewish exegetical procedures, and Christian soteriological confessions...that makes up Paul's letter to the Galatians (1990:cxix).

So tying Galatians to a single rhetorical 'genre' is perhaps less important than the realization that typical rhetorical constructs

helped to shape Paul's argumentation in this letter. As he wrote to persuade his Galatian converts of the importance of his gospel and their adherence to that truth, Paul used those various rhetorical constructs which were the warp and woof of the (persuasive) communication of his times as a means to help reinforce his message to the Galatians.

5.3 Conclusion - An Epistolary-Rhetorical Outline of Galatians

Greater clarity in the understanding of the content of Galatians will result if the letter is interpreted with a view toward both rhetorical structures and epistolary conventions. Richard Longenecker's recent analysis of Galatians combines these several factors (1990). Longenecker's epistolary-rhetorical outline of Galatians is as follows:

- I. Salutation (1:1-5)
- II. Rebuke Section (Forensic Rhetoric Prominent)(1:6-4:11)
 - A. Occasion for Writing/Issues at Stake (*Exordium*): (1:6-10)
 - B. Autobiographical Statements in Defense (*Narratio*)(1:11-2:14)
 - 1. Thesis Statement (1:11-12)
 - 2. Early Life, Conversion, and Commission (1:13-17)
 - 3. First Visit to Jerusalem (1:18-24)
 - 4. Second Visit to Jerusalem (2:1-10)
 - 5. The Antioch Episode (2:11-14)
 - C. The Proposition of Galatians (*Propositio*)(2:15-21)
 - D. Arguments in Support (*Probatio*)(3:1-4:11)
 - 1. Righteousness Apart from the Law: Against Legalism (3:1-18)
 - 2. The Believer's Life not 'under Law' But 'in Christ': Against Nomism (3:19-4:7)
 - 3. Paul's Concern for the Galatians (4:8-11)

III. Request Section (Deliberative Rhetoric Prominent)(4:12-6:10)

A. Exhortations against the Judaizing Threat (*Exhortatio*, Part I)(4:12-5:12)

1. Personal Appeals (4:12-20)
2. The Hagar-Sarah Allegory (4:21-31)
3. Holding Fast to Freedom (5:1-12)

B. Exhortations Against Libertine Tendencies (*Exhortatio*, Part II)(5:13-6:10)

1. Life Directed by Love, Service to Others, and the Spirit (5:13-18)
2. The Works of the Flesh and the Fruit of the Spirit (5:19-26)
3. Doing Good to All (6:1-10)

IV. Subscription (6:11-18)

This outline of Galatians is an improvement upon those of Betz and Kennedy, whose outlines are primarily one-dimensional in that they concentrate only upon the rhetorical structure of the letter. Longenecker's analysis has the advantage of taking both the rhetorical and epistolary constructs into consideration (as witnessed especially by the two-part letter-body section), thereby allowing these conventions from Paul's day to inform the current understanding of Galatians. As such, this outline is an advance upon earlier ones, and will serve as the basic framework from which the exegesis of the Galatians *ἔργα νόμου* texts will proceed in this study.²⁵

NOTES TO CHAPTER 5

1. In this vein, J N Vorster has recently suggested that interpretation of letters, and especially 'persuasive' letters, must include conversational as well as structural analysis. He writes, '...an interactional model for the analysis of letters has now become a necessity. It is even more a necessity where a letter is studied as a text of persuasion' (1990:107). This is true, Vorster maintains, because 'a letter's communicativeness' makes an interactional approach necessary in order to give full weight to the speech situation and its 'narrowing' locus, the rhetorical situation (1990:126).
2. Such a 'dialogue' is referred to by Marshall as a part of the process of interpretation he describes as having four steps: (1) recognize the place in exegesis of textual and linguistic study; (2) note the several 'levels' of understanding, viz., the 'historical' level, the '[authorial]' level, and the 'interpreter's' level; (3) discovery of the meaning of the text in the mind of the original author for his intended audience, which is accomplished by allowing the result of the previous steps to 'dialogue' with each other; and (4) note the significance of divine inspiration of the text, ie, recognize that the text as given by God to the original author did have some meaning for both the author and his audience, which may be recovered by the exegete and then 'translated' into the contemporary scene (Marshall 1977:15-17). The facilitation of this final step in the interpretive process will perhaps be more accurately accomplished by including an informed understanding of the social system of the 'time and place' of both the author and his intended audience (cf Malina 1991:5).
3. Here again, cf Vorster 1990:107-130.
4. Note especially Milligan 1913; Meecham 1923; Mullins 1962ff; Sanders 1962; White 1971ff.
5. In this regard note also Meecham 1923:97-102; Selby 1962:239.
6. As examples of such recent studies on this issue, Longenecker cites J L White 1972a, *The form and function of the body of the Greek letter: a study of the letter body in the non-literary papyri and in Paul*

the Apostle (SBLDS 5. Missoula: Scholar's Press); --- 1972b, *The form and structure of the official petition: a study in Greek epistolography* (SBLDS 5. Missoula: Scholar's Press); C H Kim 1972, *The form and structure of the familiar Greek letter of recommendation* (SBLDS 4. Missoula: Scholar's Press). Additional examples include F Exler 1923, *The form of the ancient Greek letter: a study in Greek epistolography* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press); R W Funk 1967, *The apostolic parousia: form and significance, in Christian history and interpretation: studies presented to John Knox* (ed Farmer, Moule & Niebuhr. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); T Y Mullins 1962, *Petition as a literary form in the New Testament. NovT 5, 46-54*; --- 1964, *Disclosure as a literary form in the New Testament. NovT 7, 4-50*; --- 1968, *Greeting as a New Testament form. JBL 87, 418-426*; ---1972, *Formulas in New Testament epistles. JBL 91, 380-390*; --- 1973, *Visit talk in the New Testament letters. CBQ 35, 350-358*; --- 1977, *Benediction as a New Testament form. AUSS 15, 59-64*; J T Sanders 1962, *The transition from opening epistolary thanksgiving to body in the letters of the Pauline corpus. JBL 81, 348-362*; D E Aune 1987, *The New Testament in its literary environment* (Philadelphia: Westminster); S K Stowers 1986, *Letter writing in Greco-Roman antiquity* (Philadelphia: Westminster); A J Malherbe 1986, *Moral exhortation: a Greco-Roman sourcebook* (Philadelphia: Westminster); and W G Doty 1973, *Letters in primitive Christianity* (Philadelphia: Westminster). Further examples may be found in the bibliography of this work.

7. For illustrations of these and other examples, see Stowers 1986:49:183; Longenecker 1990:ciii; Doty 1973:4-8; also note Doty 1969; Mullins 1962.
8. Longenecker adds to this list Paul's use of chiasm and midrashic exegesis; cf 1990:ciii.
9. As Funk (1969:270) has noted, '[This] is simply the way Paul writes letters.'
10. Much research has been conducted on ancient letter writing as reflected in the non-literary papyri. Prominent works in this field include J L White 1972a, *The form and function of the body of the Greek letter: a study of the letter body in the non-literary papyri and in Paul the Apostle* (SBLDS 5. Missoula: Scholar's Press), which is an invaluable aid and contains a number of representative letter texts; P Schubert 1939a, *Form and function of the Pauline letters. JR 19, 365-377*; H G Meecham 1923, *Light from ancient letters: private correspondence in the non-literary papyri of Oxyrhynchus of the first four centuries, and its bearing on New Testament language and thought*

(London: Allen & Unwin); G J Bahr 1968, The subscriptions in the pauline letters. *JBL* 87, 27-41; D G Bradley 1953, The τόπος as a form in the pauline paranesis. *JBL* 72, 238-246. In addition, the works of Mullins, Sanders, and White cited in the above note are applicable here.

11. A full discussion of the Greek letter opening may be found in Exler 1923:23-68; cf also White 1972:1ff; Longenecker 1990:cv.
12. Additional examples may be found in White 1971:93-95 and Longenecker 1990:cvii-cviii.
13. Note here Doty 1973:37-39; Bradley 1953.
14. That is, ἔργον itself is neutral, the ethical alignment of the term only being determined by qualifiers or descriptors attached. And when Paul uses ἔργον with salvific qualifiers or descriptors, it is always in the negative.
15. That is, that Christian Jews were attempting to force Paul's converts to subscribe to the Mosaic code in order to be salvifically 'complete.'
16. Though note Lightfoot's analysis of the contents of Galatians, which includes several rhetorical notations (1865:65-68).
17. Also in this regard, note Wilder 1964.
18. On which see below, 'The Rhetorical Structure of Galatians.'
19. In the words of Longenecker 1990:cxiii, '...the forms of classical rhetoric were "in the air," and Paul seems to have used them almost unconsciously for his own purposes -- much as he used the rules of Greek grammar.' Mack 1990:31 concurs, as he writes, 'To be engulfed in the culture of Hellenism meant to have ears trained for the rhetoric of speech.' Martin Hengel has recently challenged this understanding of the rhetoric of Paul, and presumably most of the other authors of the New Testament, stating that Paul 'acquired [in Jerusalem] the basic knowledge of a Jewish-Greek rhetoric aimed at Synagogue preaching which was essentially different from the literary style of the Greek schools' (Hengel 1991:61; emphasis added). Even if this refinement proves to be valid, however, the basic fact of the cultural awareness of rhetoric on the part of the authors of the New Testament does not change.

20. The principles of ancient rhetoric are contained in handbooks known to have been used as primers or exemplars for the practice of persuasive speech. Most notable among these are Aristotle, *The 'art' of rhetoric* (trans by J L Freese. LCL, 1926) and *Topica* (trans by E S Forster. LCL, 1960); Cicero, *De Inventione*, *De Optimo Genere Oratorum* and *Topica* (trans by H M Hubbell. LCL, 1949); Demetrius, *On Style* (trans by W Rhys Roberts. LCL, 1932); Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* (trans by H E Butler. LCL, 4 Vols, 1920-22); and the anonymous *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (trans by H Caplin. LCL, 1954). These handbooks are the primary sources for the modern study of rhetoric and form the basis of rhetorical criticism of the New Testament.
21. For example, rhetorical analysis elucidates how Galatians 1 and 2 fit together and fit with the rest of the letter as Paul carefully structured his argumentation (cf Betz 1979:14-19, 37-127). Also, rhetorical analysis has helped to establish the authenticity of Romans 16 (Jewett 1991).
22. Hermeneia series, Fortress Press, Philadelphia.
23. Note Aune 1981; Kennedy 1984:144f; Longenecker 1990: cx-cxiii; Silva 1983:377-380.
24. Cf Longenecker 1990:cxi; Kennedy 1984:144ff; Meeks 1981:304ff.
25. The adequacy of Longenecker's epistolary-rhetorical outline of this letter has been reinforced to a marked degree by the discourse analysis of Galatians carried out by Pelser, Du Toit, Kruger, et al (addendum to *Neotestamentica* 26, 1992). Their configuration of the macrostructure of Galatians, indicating the rhetorical adaptation of the main sections of the letter and the supporting argument of individual pericopes within those main sections, demonstrates that Galatians is, indeed, a piece of persuasive literature that may be understood properly only as the rhetorical structure of the letter is taken into consideration.

6. Exegesis of Galatians ἔργα νόμου Texts

The exegetical investigation of any given biblical text cannot stand alone. The preceding chapters in this study have, therefore, been occupied with general background material relevant to the question of Paul's use of ἔργα νόμου. A brief summarization of the findings of what has gone before will serve as a foundation to the exegetical process that will occupy this chapter.

The survey of the field of scholarly discussion related to the problem of understanding Paul's view of the law demonstrated that there is no current consensus as to Paul's relationship to the law of his fathers. Methodological, hermeneutical and exegetical difficulties in this area were seen to exist in part due to the complexity and overall magnitude of this field of inquiry. There are, of course, valid insights from that broader investigation that will prove helpful as they inform the exegetical enterprise of this chapter. At the same time, however, it was suggested that the problem of Paul and his relationship to the law may only finally be resolved after answers to numerous subsidiary issues are formed and tested, and then applied to that broader question as a means of providing specific parameters for definitive exploration of the issue.

The appraisal of Paul's use of ἔργον outside the ἔργα νόμου construct resulted in two principal observations that have significant implications for the purpose of this study. On the one hand, the term ἔργον itself was shown in essence to be neutral,

taking on certain moral and ethical dimensions only as used with qualifiers or descriptors that indicate a *relational* orientation of a given task or endeavor. 'Work' itself, then, is not at issue. The term ἔργον for Paul simply describes the character of a function or activity engaged in as one that requires some degree of expenditure of effort.

On the other hand, Paul uses ἔργον *in negative terms* when the descriptors or qualifiers he attaches to it relate to any salvific activity. So in the realms of salvation, justification, reception of the Spirit or righteousness, no ἔργον is sufficient. This observation is, of course, no necessary advance over previous understandings of the issue of 'works of the law.' At the same time, however, it does require that the boundaries within which the meaning of ἔργα νόμου is to be found *must* be circumscribed by that negative relational orientation that is demanded by Paul's ἔργον usage patterns. Bearing this in mind brings a measure of clarification to the issue.

With regard to the historical background of the Galatian letter, it was demonstrated that Paul faced opposition from outside the Galatian congregation as well as controversy generated from within. Some converts within the Galatian community were inclined to libertinistic tendencies, and so Paul found it necessary to address the issues raised by those antinomian propensities. Paul's opponents from outside the Galatian congregation were identified as Christian Jews who, though undoubtedly well-intentioned and motivated in part by a desire to avoid offending the 'nationalistic' sensibilities of Jewish Zealots, had not

moved beyond the 'Gentile proselyte' stage in their comprehension of God's program of incorporating the Gentiles into the new community in Christ. As a result, these rivals for the loyalties of the Galatian converts wanted the Galatians to become 'practical Jews' by maintaining the ritual observance of the Jewish 'identity markers' as a means to be 'complete' in their relationship to God. In their desire to persuade the Galatian converts to follow their teaching, the opponents attacked Paul relative to his gospel, his apostleship, and his teaching regarding the law. Their position was that the Mosaic covenant remained in force as the only true expression of submissive obedience and proper relationship to God. In that sense, the opponents were identified as 'judaizers.' Their apparent insistence upon the continuing ritual performance of 'works of the law' forced Paul to argue against their 'covenantal nomism' stance.

Paul was also shown to have used epistolary and rhetorical conventions in his writing of Galatians. Paul's meaning in this letter can be partially deduced from the manner in which he uses these customary letter writing and persuasive devices. That is, the epistolary-rhetorical framework upon which Paul structured his message is itself a communication tool that imparts a certain amount of information. In the case of the epistolary patterns of Galatians, it was suggested that these forms indicate progression of Paul's thought: the epistolary formulae are 'clustered' so as to mark significant breaks and transitions in the thought of the letter, as Paul moves conceptually from one point to the next.

The rhetorical mechanisms found in Galatians demonstrate categories of Paul's argumentation. At one point in the letter

Paul defends his apostleship and the content of 'his' gospel over against the claims of his accusers, and so uses forensic rhetoric as a means to bring his converts to 'decide' in his favor. At another juncture in the letter, his concern is for the well-being of his converts in terms of their behavior or ethical orientation. Such concern demands that he utilize deliberative rhetoric to effect change to his desired end. Recognizing these communicative patterns, therefore, helps to elucidate the message of this important letter.

With these insights forming the background of understanding, then, this chapter will proceed to investigate from an exegetical base the meaning of Paul's Galatian use of *ἔργα νόμου*.

6.1 *ἔργα νόμου* Texts and Contexts

The argument of Galatians is extremely detailed and complex, and interpretive confusion is often generated by the complexity of argumentation itself. Likewise there are difficulties inherent in working with too extended and detailed a text at any one time. So in an endeavor to appreciate fully and to exegete correctly the *ἔργα νόμου* passages, the procedure to be followed here will be to approach each section of the letter separately, following Longenecker's epistolary-rhetorical outline of the text, and then to draw together the findings from each of these sections in a final summarization.

6.1.1 Galatians 2:11-14.

The difficulty in Galatians with which this study is concerned begins at 2:11. According to the rhetorical scheme of Betz and

Longenecker, 2:11-14 forms the 'third part' of the *narratio* section, wherein Paul sets forth continuing statements in defense of his gospel and apostleship.¹ In this autobiographical portion, the 'implied' Paul, explicitly representing himself to the Galatians as the authoritative Apostle to the Gentiles, recounts the significant details of his confrontation with Peter at Antioch. In this section, Paul writes,

Ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν Κηφᾶς εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν, κατὰ πρόσωπον αὐτῷ ἀντέστην, ὅτι κατεγνωσμένος ἦν. πρὸ τοῦ γὰρ ἔλθειν τινὰς ἀπὸ Ἰακώβου μετὰ ἔθνων συνήσθην· ὅτε δὲ ἦλθον, ὑπέστελλεν καὶ ἀφώριζεν ἑαυτόν, φοβούμενος τοὺς ἐκ περιτομῆς, καὶ συνυπεκρίθησαν αὐτῷ [καὶ] οἱ λοιποὶ Ἰουδαῖοι, ὥστε καὶ Βαρναβᾶς συναπήχθη αὐτῶν τῇ ὑποκρίσει. ἀλλ' ὅτε εἶδον ὅτι οὐκ ὀρθοποδοῦσιν πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, εἶπον τῷ Κηφᾷ ἔμπροσθεν πάντων, Εἰ σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ὑπάρχων ἐθνικῶς καὶ οὐχὶ Ἰουδαϊκῶς ζῆς, πῶς τὰ ἔθνη ἀναγκάζεις Ἰουδαΐζειν;

But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned before God. For before certain ones came from James, he used to eat with Gentile believers; but when they came, he began to draw back and separate himself, fearing those of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews were joining him in his hypocritical actions, so that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not on the right road toward the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in front of them all, "If you, being a Jewish believer, are living like a Gentile and not as a Jew, how is it that you compel Gentile believers to live like Jews?"

In his previous defense statements in 1:11-2:10, Paul used the adverb *ἔπειτα* ('then, next') to mark the the progressive stages in his explanation of how he received the gospel and his relationship to the apostles and the Jerusalem church (at 1:18, 21; 2:1). Now at 2:11 he begins with the temporally less precise *ὅτε*, 'when.' This has led some interpreters to assume that Paul has

not related the Antioch episode in its true chronological order, but has placed it after the meeting related at 2:1-10 for polemical purposes (cf Féret 1955; Munck 1959:100-103). This position, however, has been shown to cause a number of difficulties and to fail to advance the understanding of the text.² For that reason most commentators choose to take the order of events in Galatians 2 at face value, assuming those of 2:1-10 to have chronologically preceded that of 2:11-14.³

In any case, this incident is one that is both complex and at the same time fascinating, in that it is long on allusion and innuendo but short on facts that might aid in its interpretation. Questions about the situation in the church at Antioch both before and after this confrontation, who 'won' the battle between Paul and the others, what Peter was doing in Antioch and how long he was there, and so on, are not addressed in the text. All that is offered here is Paul's perspective of a previous confrontational situation that the Galatians were apparently aware of. And, Paul uses the particulars of that incident to bolster his case as he vigorously defends his apostleship. As Dunn has remarked concerning this circumstance,

If the controversy in Jerusalem was relatively straightforward (whether Gentile converts should be circumcised) and its resolution amicable, the same cannot at all be said for the...dispute at Antioch....Here is one of the most tantalizing episodes in the whole of the NT. If we could only uncover the full picture of what happened here...we would have gained an invaluable insight into the developments of earliest Christianity. Instead we have to be content to make what we can of the clues and hints Paul gives us (Dunn 1977:253; emphasis in original; cf also Dunn 1983:3-57).

The 'clues and hints' contained in Paul's record of this incident indicate that he censured Peter for what Paul considered inappropriate behavior.⁴ Evidently, before 'some from James' came to Antioch, Peter was present there (though the purpose for his stay there, and its duration, is indeed unknown). While in Antioch Peter engaged freely and apparently on a regular basis at table fellowship with both Christian Jews and Gentiles there in the church community (2:12, taking *συνήθησαν*, 'used to eat with,' as an iterative imperfect and assuming an ethnically mixed church at Antioch; but on the issue of the ethnic makeup of the church[es] at Antioch, see Longenecker 1990:71-72). When these 'judaizers' came on the scene, however, claiming representation and authority of the Jerusalem church (ie, James), Peter was moved out of fear to withdraw from that table-fellowship (cf Betz 1979:106-107). Peter's (and James'?) 'fear,' as suggested by Jewett, seems to have been precipitated by the rising pressure from Jerusalem Jews toward persecution of any Jew who showed Gentile sympathies or associations, due to increasing nationalistic tendencies sparked by a Zealot nomistic campaign (Jewett 1970-71:204-205).⁵ Peter's withdrawal from table fellowship with Gentiles at Antioch upon the arrival of these judaizers was apparently due, then, to his uncertainty as to the manner of treatment the Jerusalem and other Palestinian churches could expect if these Gentile converts offended Jewish nationalistic sensibilities with regard to the law.⁶ And, as noted by Dunn, this 'nationalistic pressure' was focused at least in part upon the adherence to the Jewish 'identity markers' of circumcision, Sabbath and feast day observances, and dietary restrictions

during this time period (Dunn 1983:7-11). So Peter's removal of himself from Gentile associations at table was, at least in part, the result of a desire to avoid undue complications and persecution with regard to the Jewish-Christian relations with fellow Jews at Jerusalem.

As if Peter's withdrawal from fellowship with the Gentile brethren was not bad enough in itself, however, others in the party of Christian Jews present there at Antioch were enticed to follow Peter. The extent of 'damage' done to Paul's gospel is seen in the fact that, as Paul states it, 'even Barnabas,' Paul's companion in the Gentile missionary effort and the mediating 'son of consolation' (cf Ac 9:27ff) followed Peter's lead and acted in this same hypocritical fashion (Gl 2:13, italics added).⁷ Paul sees this 'inconsistency' (οὐκ ὀρθοπροδοῦσιν, 'not on the right road toward the gospel,' [2:14]; cf Bruce 1982b:132) toward the truth of the gospel on the part of Peter the 'pillar' apostle, and those who followed him, as a threat to the Jew-Gentile equality that is promised in that gospel (cf Bornkamm 1971:46). The actions of Peter and those who were influenced by him, whatever their practical motivation, served to contradict theologically Paul's teaching that the 'barrier' between Jews and Gentiles was removed in Christ (cf Eph 2:12-15; cf also Bruce 1977:175-178). As the Apostle to the Gentiles, Paul could tolerate no such potential bifurcation of God's new people. To allow Peter's action to go unchallenged would be *implicit* agreement to the attitude that was being *explicitly* communicated by the Galatian judaizers. That attitude was one of understanding believing Gentiles to be 'second-class' Christians who did, after all, have to become Jews

to become fully a part of God's new people in Christ (cf 3:3, 'ἑπιτελείετε').⁸ If he had not confronted Peter on this issue, then, Paul's opponents at Galatia (who undoubtedly also knew of the Antioch incident) could have 'rested their case' against him and his teaching. So Paul's accounting of his 'face to face' censure of Peter presents a confrontation that is exceptionally harsh (κατὰ πρόσωπον αὐτῷ ἀνέστην, 'I stood against him, opposed him to his face') because he recognizes that 'his' gospel is at issue here. Under these extreme circumstances, his denunciation of Peter is stated in the strongest possible terms (ὅτι κατεγνώσμενος ἦν, 'because he stood condemned before God').⁹

So Paul assailed Peter for his about-face in behavior with respect to the Gentiles (2:14). Peter had, though a Jew, 'lived like the Gentiles' (ie, he ate like - and with - the Gentile believers at Antioch). But under the combined pressure of these Jewish Christians 'from James' and the fear of possible retribution against believers in Jerusalem, he 'withdrew' and began to 'separate himself' (2:12). He began once again to practice ritual or cultic dietary restrictions and separation from 'unclean' Gentiles.¹⁰ So by this behavior, Peter compelled the Gentiles in Antioch to 'become (practical) Jews' (Ἰουδαΐζειν).¹¹ In other words, Peter had been living in the manner of the Gentiles, by no longer practicing the cultic behavior associated with the Jewish dietary laws (the essence of the term Ἰουδαϊκός).¹² But his behavior in turning back to the no-longer valid distinction between Jew and Gentile (that had been expressed in part through the dietary restrictions of the Jewish nomistic lifestyle, ie

'living as a Jew,' and thus included sociological overtones) after the appearance of the emissaries from James was tantamount, as Paul saw it, to demanding that the Galatian converts not just 'act like Jews,' but actually become practicing Jews in order to secure their salvific relationship to God.¹³ For Peter this may have been a practical matter of avoiding complications in Jewish-Christian relations with their more nationalistic fellow Jews in and around Jerusalem. Such complications could have been avoided by forcing Paul's Galatian converts to proselytize in order to conform. But for Paul this situation became intolerable as the soteriological implications of the judaizers' demands became apparent to him. This situation presented a theological challenge to the very core of the gospel message itself. As King has termed the implications of the judaizers' position, 'In order to become a Christian...a Gentile had first to become a full proselyte to Judaism, submitting to circumcision and showing himself zealous for the law' (1983:349). This leads to Paul's statement of his theological proposition in the next section.

6.1.2 Galatians 2:15-21 -- The *Propositio*

The proposition of Galatians (the *propositio*) is located in the passage found at 2:15-21. Theologically speaking, this is the most important section of the letter.¹⁴ Yet it is at the same time one of the most difficult passages in Galatians to interpret, due in large part to its structure and language. It is extremely difficult in exegeting this section to decide where Paul's comments to Peter end and his theological commentary begins, or to know the relationship of these verses to the

passages that precede and succeed them.¹⁵ A significant measure of help in this regard is afforded, however, by recognizing the character of this section of Galatians, and bearing in mind the forensic rhetorical function of the *propositio* of this portion of the letter.

According to the principles of ancient rhetoric as discussed in the works of Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, and others, and as noted by Betz and Longenecker (1979:114 and 1990:80f, respectively), the *propositio* functions to 'sum up' the material content of the *narratio* of Galatians 1:11-2:14 and establish the arguments for the later *probatio* of 3:1-4:11. The rhetorical function of the *propositio* is therefore to serve as a recapitulation of prior thought and a basic introduction to what follows.

In the case of Galatians 2:15-21, the dual rhetorical role of the *propositio* is seen in the manner in which Paul 'bridges' from his expression of horror at Peter's actions as recorded in 2:11-14 to a summary of the reason for that horror (2:15-16), and then sets forth his statement of a proper Christian behavior pattern as opposed to an improper nomistic lifestyle (2:17-21).

Paul believed that Peter should have understood the hypocritical nature and theological 'gospel-damaging' implications of his actions when he chose to withdraw and separate himself from the Gentiles at Antioch. This understanding is expressed conclusively by Paul when he states in 2:15-16 the conceptual theological basis for his condemnation of Peter's actions. Paul articulates here that which he considered to be a 'given' in the discussion, what he judged all believers to have to agree upon and the things Peter should have clearly seen: the fact that 'the law plays no

positive role in one's becoming a Christian, *contra* "legalism" (Longenecker 1990:82).¹⁶ So Peter, as a Jew, should have understood that the practical implication of his actions was to force the Gentile converts to 'do' something to be acceptable in the presence of God and 'God's people,' the Christian Jews. This was unacceptable to Paul, and contrary even to typical contemporary Jewish teaching. As Thielmann has helpfully pointed out,

Paul is not accusing Judaism, or even Jewish Christianity, of denying God's grace by thinking that 'works of the law' will justify. Actually, he is doing the opposite. He is reminding certain Jewish-Christian missionaries of what every Jew should know -- that no one can be justified before God by keeping the law. 'We who are by nature Jews and not Gentile sinners,' Paul says, 'because we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus...' Paul's point is simply that to deny justification to Gentiles unless they do something other than put their faith in God is to deny the commonly accepted Jewish teaching that God justifies the sinner because God is gracious, not because the sinner somehow deserves justification (Thielmann 1989:62; emphasis original).¹⁷

Paul's tightly condensed and theologically loaded language found in 2:15-21 contains, in addition to this first argument, a second major contention. That second contention is the notion that 'the law plays no positive role in Christian living, *contra* "nomism"' (2:17-21, expounded at 3:19-4:7; cf Longenecker 1990:82-83). In other words, the life of the Christian is to be ordered by relationship to God in Jesus Christ, rather than in sociological or ritual nomistic patterns or practice (cf Dunn 1983:36-37).¹⁸

Paul's purpose in this *propositio*, then, is to move from his earlier statements of defense (Gl 1:11-2:14) to the proof of his proposition, which proof he will set forth in the following *pro-batio*. Approaching the Galatians 2:15-21 passage in this manner obviates the necessity of determining where Paul's comments to Peter end and his own theological commentary begins, and lends guidance to the otherwise difficult interpretation of this section.

6.1.2.1 Galatians 2:15-16

The first argument of this *propositio* is found in verses 15 and 16, in what has been termed the Jewish-Christian racial and theological 'self-definition' (cf Betz 1979:115; Longenecker 1990:83). In verse 15 Paul writes, Ἡμεῖς φύσει Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἔθνῶν ἁμαρτολοί, 'We who are born Jews, and not 'sinners' from among the Gentiles.' Paul concedes in this phraseology that he and Peter, as well as the other Jewish Christians ('we,' Ἡμεῖς), are 'born Jews' (φύσει Ἰουδαῖοι, ie, 'Jews by nature,' indicating natural birth). The implication is that these Christian Jews, because of their birth into the Jewish race, enjoy certain privileges by virtue of their status as God's people. These privileges include especially the possession of the law and the covenants.¹⁹ The 'Gentile sinners' do not enjoy such a privileged status. The Jews were to maintain both social and ceremonial distinction from the Gentiles (in part through the Jewish 'identity markers'), because the Gentiles were ceremonially 'unclean' (cf *Jubilees* 22:16; 23:23-24).²⁰ This attitude may help explain the judaizer's ac-

tions, as well as Peter's compulsion to join them, particularly in light of the nationalistic Zealot movement identified by Jewett (1970-71:204ff). Paul, however, most likely uses the term 'Gentile sinners' here ironically, as a hyperbolic mechanism to get Peter's (and now the Galatians') attention. The point seems to be that in contrast to the Jews, the Gentiles ('sinners') had not been the recipients of God's law and covenants. Therefore, they had generally lacked the opportunity to obtain God's relational (*not* salvific) favor through them.²¹ Paul and the others, 'born Jews,' *had* had that opportunity, *but even at that*, they recognized that 'a person is not justified by works of the law' (2:16). He and Peter and the others were born with all the rights and privileges of Judaism. But even at that, they recognized that such a status did not automatically equate to righteousness before God.

So Paul comes to his main thesis (2:16):

εἰδότες δὲ ὅτι οὐ δικαιοῦνται ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἐάν μὴ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν, ἵνα δικαιωθῶμεν ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου, ὅτι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιωθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ,

and we who know that a person is not justified by the works of the law but only [by faith in/by the faithfulness of] Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, in order that we might be justified [by faith in/by the faithfulness of] Christ and not by the works of the law. Because by the works of the law no one will be justified.

In 2:16 the perfect participle εἰδότες serves as an adverbial participle of attendant circumstances, as correctly noted by Longenecker, and as such cannot be conceptualized apart from the intention of 2:15.²² This indicates that the 'we' of verse 15

is the same 'we' of verse 16, that is, the Christian Jews, who were born as Jews and by their Jewish heritage together 'know' that a person (the indefinite ἄνθρωπος) is not justified by the works of the law.²³ Longenecker goes so far as to suggest that the coordination of 'we know' with verse 15 implies that the 'known' content may be understood as 'common knowledge,' that which is 'widely affirmed.'²⁴ This 'common knowledge' is no doubt assumed by Paul, at least to some degree, on the basis of Psalm 143:2 (Septuagint 142:2). This is demonstrated by his partial quote at the end of 2:16 (οὐ δικαιοθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ, 'no one ['flesh,' ie, living person] will be justified). The Septuagint (hereafter LXX) reads 'ὅτι οὐ δικαιοθήσεται ἐνώπιόν σου πᾶς ζῶν' ('because every living person will not be justified before you'), which Paul has changed to 'πᾶσα σὰρξ.' Paul's interpretive change is primarily due to the fact that, as Longenecker has expressed it, Paul recognizes that "the works of the law" are done by people of "flesh" and the flesh cannot be justified by its own efforts' (Longenecker 1990:88; cf also Betz 1979:118f). Thus, Paul takes for granted Peter's (and presumably the others') tacit agreement to the statement that they 'know' that justification comes about through Christ, and not by any 'works of the law' (cf again Betz 1979:115).²⁵ If the above reconstruction of the identity of Paul's opponents is correct, they too would agree, because they believed that Jesus was the Messiah. The focus of contention at this point, however, was not strictly over the identity of Jesus as Messiah, but over the question of whether the ἔργα νόμου had any continuing validity or purpose in the economy of God in Christ.

The ultimate implication of Peter's actions at Antioch, and the apparent teaching of the judaizers, was that there was some continuing validity to the ἔργα νόμου (whether or not Peter recognized his actions as implying such). This is why Paul censures Peter so harshly. The conclusive theological ramification of Peter's action is, in Paul's mind at least, the nullifying of the work of Christ!²⁶ This is the very difficulty facing Paul with regard to his Galatian converts, and why Paul must refute Peter's position here. If Paul can demonstrate to the Galatians' satisfaction the correctness of his argument in his confrontation with Peter on the occasion of the 'incident at Antioch,' he has in effect solved this aspect of his 'Galatian problem.' There is no need to be 'made complete' through any 'works of the law' if Paul is correct and Peter is wrong.

What Peter and Paul and the others 'know' is that 'a person is not justified by the works of the law, but only '[by faith in/ the faithfulness of] Jesus Christ.' The ἐάν μὴ here is exceptive, not adversative (as understood by Räisänen 1984-85:547). It also does not refer to a broad provision related to the whole preceding statement (ie, the Christian Jews thought that one is justified through the sociological law-works and faith in Christ, as stipulated by Dunn; cf 1983:112ff). Rather, it refers to the 'faith/faithfulness of Christ' clause.²⁷ This indicates that the ἐάν μὴ must be read by means of a round-about construction such as 'but only.' This English rendering effectively communicates the concept inherent in the Greek construction, and accords quite well with Paul's statements elsewhere. As Burton has noted,

ἐάν μή is properly exceptive, not adversative (cf on 1:19), but it may introduce an exception to the preceding statement taken as a whole or to the principal part of it - in this case to οὐ δικαιοῦται ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ἔργων νόμου or to οὐ δικαιοῦται ἄνθρωπος alone. The latter alternative is clearly to be chosen here, since the former would yield the thought that a man can be justified by works of law if this can be accompanied by faith, a thought never expressed by the apostle and wholly at variance with his doctrine as unambiguously expressed in several passages....But since the word 'except' in English is always understood to introduce an exception to the whole of what precedes, it is necessary to resort to the periphrastic translation 'but only' (1921:121).

So justification is 'excepted' by Paul here from any activity other than the means he establishes. That means, Paul says, is 'faith in' or 'faithfulness of' Jesus Christ.

Paul's complex premise in this verse may be helpfully clarified by noting the following chiastic structure:²⁸

- A We (ie, Christian Jews) know that a man is not justified by works of the law.
- B A person is justified on the basis of [the faithfulness of or faith in] Jesus Christ.
- B' We (ie, Christian Jews) believed in Christ Jesus.
- A' In order to be justified on the basis of [the faithfulness of or faith in] Christ and not by the works of the law. Because by the works of the law shall no one be justified.

From this structure it is clear that the argument of verse 16 is extremely complicated. And, the interpretation of the verse is made the more difficult by the fact that Paul is dealing here with major theological themes and terminology. In the short space of the thirty-nine words of this verse (Greek text), Paul touches

upon justification or righteousness (δικαιῶ, δικαιοσύνη, δίκαιος), the law and works of the law (νόμος, ἐξ ἔργων νόμου), and the faith/faithfulness of Jesus Christ (πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ). The understanding of each of these individual concepts will of course make a significant impact upon determining the meaning of the verse as a whole. For that reason, each of these theological terms or factors demands separate treatment as a means of providing the framework for a proper interpretation of this verse, and by extension, of this entire section.

6.1.2.1.1 Justification/Righteousness

The basic question with regard to Paul's use of the δικαιῶ word group is what Paul intends in his usage of the words of this cluster. On the one hand, his use of this terminology has been interpreted as indicating that one is forensically *declared* by God to be righteous, so that the individual is acquitted of sin and brought into a right relationship with God.

On the other hand, Paul's use of this word-group may signify his understanding that one is *made righteous* by God, and as a result of that divine activity the 'righteoused' individual lives in a proper ethical behavior pattern or lifestyle.

E P Sanders understands Paul's use of this terminology as that contained of the soteriological construct he calls 'transfer terminology.' In speaking of these words in such phraseology, Sanders indicates that he regards the proper semantic sphere for these words to be relational, rather than behavioral. Sanders writes,

...English has no cognate verb [to δικαιώω]. Thus it is customary to translate the verb 'justify,' which leads to the occasional translation of the noun [δικαιοσύνη] with the cognate 'justification'....The translation of the verb as 'make righteous' is objected to on the ground that it implies that one is to be righteous, whereas it actually refers to the establishment of a right relationship [with God] (PPJ 470, emphasis his).

So for Sanders, δικαιώω is a forensic term indicating the status of one who is declared to be justified, that is, as having been acquitted of guilt for sin and thereby pronounced 'righteous.' This has also been the 'traditional' approach of much of Protestantism.²⁹

James Dunn exemplifies those who understand Paul's meaning in the δικαιώω word category as that of principally an ethical orientation, as opposed to one of relationship. As Dunn understands Paul in this regard,

...the issue at Antioch was the day-to-day conduct of those who had already believed ...Paul's concern regarding the Galatians is over their ending rather than their beginning....Paul's doctrine of justification by faith should not be understood primarily as an exposition of the individual's relation to God (1982-83:121).

So then, Dunn maintains that Paul primarily communicates the individual's ethical behavior pattern through the terminology of this word group. When one is 'justified,' he or she lives in an ethical/moral framework that is characterized as 'righteous.'

It is most likely that the interpretation that best satisfies Paul's intentions in Galatians 2:16 (and elsewhere) is that suggested by J A Ziesler (1972).³⁰ Ziesler has fully investigated

Paul's uses of the δικαίω word group, and as a result of extensive research concludes that,

...the verb 'justify' [δικαίω] is used relationally, often with the forensic meaning 'acquit,' but that the noun [δικαιοσύνη], and the adjective δίκαιος, have behavioral meanings, and that in Paul's thought Christians are both justified by faith (ie, restored to fellowship, acquitted) and also righteous by faith (ie, leading a new life in Christ). These two are not identical, yet they are complementary and inseparable. This viewappears to be demanded by the linguistic and exegetical data (1972:1).

In other words, the δικαίω word group as used by Paul brings together both forensic and ethical categories in his understanding of righteousness. These two categories are distinct, and yet when Paul writes concerning righteousness as representative of the believer's relationship to God, the ethical connotations of God's expectations for one's behavior must be understood as a concomitant to that relationship.²¹ This is particularly significant for the epistle to the Galatians, and especially for this 2:15-21 section, where Paul uses the verb four times in verses 16-17 and the noun at 2:21. As noted by Longenecker, this indicates that these uses

cannot be treated as simply 'transfer terms' when the issue at both Antioch and Galatia had to do with the lifestyle of those who were already believers in Jesus....here in 2:15-21...we must treat the δικα- cluster of words as having both forensic and ethical significance, though...over all such terms stands the relational, participatory concept of being 'in Christ' (1990:85).

The importance of this observation for the proper interpretation of Galatians 2:16 cannot be overstated. When Paul speaks of being 'justified' here, he has in mind both the relational forensic category of acquittal for sins and the consequent ethical 'right' behavior pattern of God's people. The one who is 'righteous' or 'justified' is at the same time in right relationship to God, and living an ethical lifestyle as part of that relationship, as based upon the character of God (cf Ziesler 1972:17-46, 128-146). This, Paul affirms, comes about 'not by the works of the law,' but rather through 'faith in' or 'the faithfulness of' Jesus Christ. Relational approval before God and its consequent (and necessarily attendant) ethical lifestyle is for Paul not a matter of 'works of the law,' as Peter's actions implied and the judaizers must have taught.³² On the contrary, this circumstance can only come about through the agency determined by God. That agency is trust in God and his promises, as now (ie, *vúv*, the post Christ-event period, as opposed to *πρωτέ*, the former period) most notably bound up in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

6.1.2.1.2 Paul and the Law

Paul's understanding of the law, as already noted, has been the focus of an on-going debate. This debate has been sustained over an extended period of time and across the spectrum of New Testament scholarship.³³ Basic to the concern of scholars attempting to understand Paul on this issue is the question of why Paul, a former Pharisee, appears to attack the law of God. It is freely granted that Paul says many positive things about

the law. It must also be acknowledged, however, that he makes an even greater number of seemingly harsh, negative statements on this topic. And the negative statements serve, for many, to 'outweigh' any of the positive things he says about the law. For still others, such negative declarations are said to at least confuse the issue. The strict question of Paul's relationship to the Jewish law is, again, outside the scope of this study. Yet as an aid for the exegesis of Galatians 2:16 and in understanding what Paul intends here relative to the law and 'works,' it will prove helpful to reiterate briefly at this point Paul's statements regarding that law. The subsequent examination of these statements will then provide a measure of direction for the correct interpretation of this verse and the entire section. Paul's positive and negative statements about the law may be listed for immediate reference, as follows:

Positive Statements

1. Christians establish the law through faith (Rm 3:31).
2. The law is holy and the commandment is holy and righteous and good (Rm 7:12).
3. The law is spiritual (Rm 7:14).
4. The law is good (Rm 7:16).
5. I serve the law of God with my mind (Rm 7:25).
6. The law is fulfilled in us who walk according to the Spirit (Rm 8:4).
7. He who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law (Rm 13:8).
8. Love is the fulfillment of the law (Rm 13:10).

9. Paul became as 'under the law' to those who were 'under the law' (1 Cor 9:20).
10. The law is not contrary to the promises of God (Gl 3:21).
11. The law was a custodian (Gl 3:23).
12. The law has become our guardian unto Christ (Gl 3:24).
13. If you are led by the Spirit you are not under law (Gl 5:18).
14. The law is good if used lawfully (1 Tm 1:8).

Negative Statements

1. By the works of the law no one will be justified (Rm 3:20; Gl 2:16).
2. Through the law is knowledge of sin (Rm 3:20; 7:7).
3. The promise to Abraham was not through law (Rm 4:13).
4. The law brings about wrath (Rm 4:15).
5. The law came in that transgressions might increase (Rm 5:20; Gl 3:19).
6. Christians are not under law but under grace (Rm 6:14).
7. Christians died to the law (Rm 7:4).
8. The law aroused sin (Rm 7:5).
9. Christians have been released from the law (Rm 7:6).
10. I was alive apart from the law (Rm 7:9).
11. The law was weak through the flesh (Rm 8:3).
12. The mind does not submit to the law of God (Rm 8:7).

13. Christ is the end (τέλος) of the law (Rm 10:4).
14. The power of sin is the law (1 Cor 15:56).
15. Through the law I died to the law (Gl 2:19).
16. If righteousness comes through the law, Christ died in vain (Gl 2:21).
17. As many as are of the works of the law are under a curse (Gl 3:10).
18. The law is not of faith (Gl 3:12).
19. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law (Gl 3:13).
20. If the inheritance is based upon law it is no longer based upon promise (Gl 3:18).
21. The law was added because of transgressions (Gl 3:19).
22. Righteousness that leads to eternal life cannot be based upon law (Gl 3:21).
23. Circumcision demands keeping the whole law (Gl 5:3).
24. If you seek to be justified by the law you have fallen from grace (Gl 5:4).
25. Christ abolished the enmity which is of the law of commandments (Eph 2:15).
26. Law-righteousness is opposed to Christ-righteousness (Phlp 3:19).
27. The law was not made for a righteous man (1 Tm 1:9).

An examination of the above positive and negative statements indicates that for Paul, *the law was both 'good' and 'bad,' depending upon one's intended orientation to God through it.* When speaking of the law as 'the revelational standard' of God (Longenecker 1990:85), Paul could speak positively. Paul

understood the law to have been given by God to Israel for the purpose of keeping Israel distinct as a nation, a 'kingdom of priests' to God (Ex 19:5-6; Rm 9:4). The law was intended for the purpose of governing relationships within the theocratic nation, as well as to keep Israel pure as God's people (cf Kalluveettill 1982:211-213). Paul states that the law was a 'pedagogue' (*παιδαγωγός*), and functioned to keep Israel 'in custody' until the time of Christ (Gl 3:23-24). As such, the law had a temporary but beneficent function for God's people, serving as the covenant stipulations for the behavior of God's 'holy nation.' This covenant was based upon the character of God, and upon the promise God had made to Abraham. On that basis, Paul understood the Mosaic legislation to be an *extension* of the Abrahamic covenant, and not its *replacement*.³⁴ In Paul's understanding, and contrary to the argument of the judaizers,³⁵ the Mosaic legislation was *never intended* by God to be a religious system, as his quotation of Psalm 143:2 (LXX 142:2) here indicates (on which see above).³⁶ The judaizers' argument was stated in terms of the Mosaic covenant, while Paul argued in terms of Christ's fulfillment of both the Abrahamic (Promise) and the Mosaic.³⁷ This is precisely why Paul harshly polemicizes against the law in justification texts -- the law was never intended by God to be salvific (cf Dt 30:6; Jr 31:31-34; Ezk 36:26-27). Its (temporary) function was to serve as a 'guardian' of God's people until the arrival of the Seed, Jesus Christ (to anticipate the discussion of 3:15-26).³⁸

It is this understanding of the redemptive deficiency of the law that serves as the basis for Paul's negative statements.³⁹

Evidently, the judaizers had somehow confused God's revelational standard with a religious system, believing the Mosaic covenant to have superseded the Abrahamic. They therefore taught that Gentile converts must become 'practical' Jews as they came to Christ (who was, after all, himself a Jew, and in fact the Jewish Messiah). Galatian Gentiles who wished to become heirs to the covenant by incorporation into Israel, according to this 'judaizing' perspective, also took upon themselves the responsibility of the yoke of the law as the Jewish 'way of life.' Paul argued, on the other hand, that the Abrahamic covenant was foundational to all other covenants, and that Abraham was the father of all believers (Rm 4). So he believed that *Christ* served as the bridge between Jew and Gentile - it was not the function of the law to be that bridge. In Christ, not the law, God had now equalized both Jew and Gentile through the cross. The 'barrier' between Jew and Gentile, which had been in part made up of distinctions based upon law (cf Eph 2:12-15), had been broken down in this work of Jesus Christ (cf Moo 1983:81).⁴⁰ Jew and Gentile are now equal before God, yet not 'neutralized' or combined into a 'third race.'⁴¹ The enmity that had existed between nomistic Jews and Gentile 'sinners' could now be done away with, and as equals both could enter Christ's Body, the church (Eph 2:15-16). Now (*vúv*), in the Spirit, both have equal access to God's grace, and both are included in God's new people.⁴² The Gentiles are admitted as Gentiles, and not as proselyte Jews.⁴³

Paul could appreciate the law and its intention by God for the good of the Jewish people. At the same time, he adamantly opposed the use of the law as salvific or as sustaining any distinction

between God's people now brought together in the person and work of Christ. As long as the law was used as originally intended, to restrain sin and maintain ritual purity for those believing Jews desiring so to demonstrate or express affection toward God, Paul had no real quarrel. His attitude toward the law in such an instance was positive, as indicated by the above positive statements and illustrated by his personal practice (cf Ac 21:15-26; 1 Cor 9:19-23). But for those who would impose the law upon Gentiles as a means for them to be 'righteoused' before God, or even as a standard for their 'ethical behavior,' Paul had another attitude entirely. He was negative both toward those who attempted to use the law in such a 'legalistic' or 'nomistic' fashion, and also toward the law they tried to use. The law was not given for such a 'righteousing' one before God.⁴⁴ It was this use of the law that the judaizers were attempting to foist upon Paul's Galatian converts, and it was this situation that Paul polemicized against as the *soteriological* implications of the judaizers position became apparent to him.

The significance of this conclusion relative to Galatians 2:16 is found in the indication that here, Paul's bone of contention was not with the 'law' or with 'Judaism' as such, but rather with what the opposing judaizers were attempting to bring about in the lives of the Gentile converts by means of that law (cf Winger 1992:131ff). They were attempting primarily to cause Paul's Galatian converts to maintain the ritualistic practices of Judaism as a means to satisfy God's salvific requirements for believers, and also through (necessary) nomistic practice to express their devotion to God. This observation leads directly

into the consideration of Paul's intention by the phrase ἐξ ἔργων νόμου.

6.1.2.1.3 'Works of the Law'

Building on the above understanding of Paul's attitude toward the law, it is significant to note that in the phrase ἐξ ἔργων νόμου, the 'works' almost certainly function as the object of the (English) prepositional phrase 'of the law.' This is, then, an objective genitive, *contra* Gaston. For Paul to polemicize against 'evil' works of the Mosaic law, as Gaston contends, would at the very least involve Paul in a tautological argument: no one of his opponents in Galatians (or Romans) would think to argue that an individual could be justified by performing evil works (cf Schreiner 1991:231).

On the other hand, if the phrase is subjective and Gaston's interpretation is correct, Paul is found in this context to be rigorously affirming only that which all would readily agree to. This would have the result that his argument in this key section, in which he refutes the view of his opponents, would not be at all advanced by this strident affirmation. In effect, his polemical purpose would thereby be dampened considerably.⁴⁵ On balance, therefore, the phrase is best understood as an objective genitive. So then, in the ἔργα νόμου construct Paul is not speaking of 'the works worked by the law,' but rather 'the works required by the law.'⁴⁶

That this is the correct understanding of ἐξ ἔργων νόμου can be contextually demonstrated. As noted at several points above, Paul

is arguing against the *soteriological* implications of the judaizers' position that to *Ἰουδαϊκῶς ζῆναι* is to secure one's place in the people of God.⁴⁷ The judaizers' understanding was based upon their belief in the priority and permanency of the Mosaic covenant. Thus, the 'works of the law' were the *nomistic observances related to the Jewish law that these judaizers argued were part and parcel of what it meant to be 'Christian'*. In refuting this position of the judaizers, Paul applied his denunciation of Peter in the incident at Antioch to the Galatian situation. There he condemned Peter for his hypocritical action of living as a Gentile (ie, apart from the law) and then succumbing to 'judaizing' pressure and returning to the 'works of the law.' Peter's actions may, of course, have been well-intentioned. But, Paul says, 'we born Jews know that one is not justified by the works of the law.' In other words, Paul corrected Peter's 'nomistic' behavior at Antioch because the *soteriological* implications of his behavior confirmed the ('legalistic') position of the judaizers, and this position was incorrect (cf Räsänen 1986b:259f). To perform 'works of the law' as a means to be justified was to *Ἰουδαϊκῶς ζῆναι* in order to secure one's salvific place before God. That, says Paul, is not how one is justified (cf Winger 1992:136f). Justification comes 'by faith in/the faithfulness of' Jesus Christ.

In essence, then, in 2:16 Paul negates 'the works required by the law' as the agency whereby believers are to be justified.⁴⁸ It has already been noted that he is not attacking Judaism or the (Jewish) law as such, and is only saying that which believing Christian Jews already agreed to. The *soteriological* implications

of what he is arguing here, however, point to an important degree beyond what has been said above. Paul is asserting in this statement that, just as it is improper for Christian Jews to think of 'works of the law' (ie, works required by the law) as making them heirs of the covenant or as the salvific basis of their relationship to God, *it is equally true that Gentiles do not salvifically relate to God on the basis of ('legalistic' or 'nomistic') 'works of the law.'* The judaizers had apparently maintained that the Mosaic covenant extended and fulfilled the Abrahamic, and therefore it was necessary for Gentile converts to 'proselytize' and become practical Jews in order to relate correctly to God. That is, in the judaizers' understanding, the Gentiles had to 'do' something to be acceptable in the presence of God and become part of 'God's people.' The judaizers understood the 'works of the law' to be prerequisite to the reception of salvation, and therefore necessary, as well as expressive of one's devotion to God. Paul, Peter and other Christian Jews, however, understood that it is one's trust in the promise(s) of God as centered most significantly in the death and resurrection of the Promised Seed, Jesus Christ, and not any 'works of the law' which brought one into a proper relationship to God.⁴⁹ Paul reinforces that understanding here, and in drawing out the soteriological implications of the judaizers' position, clarifies this point with reference to the Gentiles, as well. So in 2:16 when Paul speaks of 'works of the law,' he refers to the Jewish nomistic way of life that involves the ritual practices required by the Mosaic legislation.⁵⁰ In Paul's mind, therefore, and in contrast to the position of the judaizers, the only 'continuing

validity' to be found in 'works of the law' was in the domain of a believing Jew's expression of devotion to God (based upon his personal practice as noted in Ac 21:15-26; 1 Cor 9:19-23). Gentile converts to Christianity, like Jews who believed in Jesus as Messiah, did not establish their relationship to God through the 'works of the law,' but only through faith in, or the faithfulness of, Jesus Christ.

6.1.2.1.4 'Faith In/Faithfulness of' Jesus Christ

Paul has declared that Christian Jews 'know' that no one will be justified by 'works of the law,' but that justification comes only 'through faith in' or 'through the faithfulness of' Jesus Christ. The interpretive question involved here is whether this genitive phrase (διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) should be understood and translated as an objective genitive ('through faith in Jesus Christ') or as a subjective genitive ('through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ'). Either reading of this expression is grammatically and contextually possible. The underlying theological inference in one's answer to this question has to do with whether one believes that Paul is affirming something here about God, or about humanity.⁵¹

At first glance it would appear that this phrase should be understood objectively (ie, 'through faith in Jesus Christ'), as this balances nicely with the objective 'works of the law' phrase and with which it would structurally then be a parallel objective genitive. In addition, directly following this phrase Paul asserts that 'even we believed in Christ Jesus' (καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν, aorist of πιστεύω), strongly suggesting that in

this immediate context he is predicating something about humanity (ie, Christian Jews' faith in Christ), and not about God. As Bruce has stated,

when Paul expresses himself by the verb πιστεύω and not by the noun πίστις, Christ is the undoubted object of the faith, as in the clause immediately following [ie, following διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ]: καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύομεν....This determines the sense of the preceding διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ and of ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ in the next clause' (Bruce 1982b:139).⁵²

This view does appear to be the most viable and the least complicated contextually and theologically. On the one hand, this understanding reinforces Paul's soteriological contention against the implications of the position of the judaizers with regard to the Mosaic code as a 'religious system,' as it states the (humanity-oriented) positive corollary to the negative 'not by the works of the law.' On the other hand, it obviates the necessity of justifying what would be Paul's thought shift, in the narrow context of successive phrases within one verse, from having predicated something about God in one section to asserting something about humanity in the next. In other words, this view understands Paul's argument here to be conceptually consistent throughout the verse. In addition, a majority of commentators in the Reformed tradition have held to this position, this having been the conventional perspective at least since the time of Luther (cf Hays 1991:715, note 4).⁵³ Nevertheless, a number of scholars do opt for the subjective-genitive reading of this expression.⁵⁴ One recent and articulate proponent of the subjective-genitive view is Richard Longenecker (1990:87f).

In Longenecker's opinion, there are two primary reasons for taking this phrase as subjective (ie, 'the faithfulness of Jesus Christ'). First, the Greek πίστις must be understood against the backdrop of the 'parent' conceptuality of the early Christian thought world, that being the Hebrew Old Testament. The Hebrew term underlying the Greek πίστις is אֱמוּנָה, which communicates both 'faith' and 'faithfulness' at the same time. As Paul speaks of πίστις Χριστοῦ therefore, he has in mind the faithful obedience to God rendered by Christ on behalf of humanity as the 'objective basis for the Christian gospel' (1990:87).

Longenecker's second point involves Paul's subjective-genitive construction with πίστις elsewhere, as balancing out the objective basis for faith. In this vein he cites the following: Romans 3:22, 'this righteousness of God is διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ('through the faith/faithfulness of Jesus Christ') εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας ('to all who believe'); Galatians 3:22, 'so that the promise, ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ('which is based upon the faith/faithfulness of Jesus Christ') δοθῆ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ('might be given to those who believe'); and Philipians 3:19, 'a righteousness τὴν διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ ('that is based upon the faith/faithfulness of Christ') and τὴν ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει ('that depends upon faith'). Longenecker is correct as he helpfully points out 'these are not just redundancies in the Pauline vocabulary...but Paul's attempts to set out both the objective and subjective bases for the Christian life' (1990:88).

These two arguments are impressive, and Longenecker's considered expertise strengthens the weight of their persuasive influence. Nevertheless, it must be noted that even though Paul does use $\pi\sigma\tau\epsilon\varsigma$ in subjective-genitive constructions, the word is also capable of being used in an objective-genitive construction. The observations of Burton are apposite here, as he states,

On the view...that the genitive in such cases [as in 2:16] is subjective....[t]he evidence that $\pi\sigma\tau\epsilon\varsigma$...may take an objective genitive is too clear to be questioned (cf Mk 11:22; Ac 3:16; Col 2:12; 2 Th 2:13 [to this list others might be added, eg, Rm 4:3-4; Eph 3:12; Ja 2:1; Rv 2:13]). This once established, the context in the present case...is decisive for its acceptance [as an objective genitive] here; and the meaning here in turn practically decides the meaning of the phrase throughout the epistle (1921: 121).

It must also be cautiously noted in this regard that 'analogy creates no [necessary] presumption in favor of the interpretation in question' (Murray 1968:369f).⁵⁵ That is, though Paul certainly could and did use $\pi\sigma\tau\epsilon\varsigma$ in the subjective genitive construct, and that understanding does indeed avoid attributing to Paul a senseless redundancy in the other passages pointed out by Longenecker, this does not demand that the use of $\pi\sigma\tau\epsilon\varsigma$ with the genitive be understood as a subjective genitive in every case, and particularly not in this verse. Other, contextually based clues must guide the interpretation of Paul's separate genitival constructions.

Further, understanding Paul's use of $\pi\sigma\tau\epsilon\varsigma$ on the basis of the Hebrew אֲמוּנָה may inadvertently attribute a measure of flexibili-

ty inherent in the Hebrew term to the Greek word, to which such flexibility may not belong to an equal degree (cf Barr 1961:161-205, especially 172-175). Though Longenecker does not appear to fall into this 'semantic trap,' but merely suggests a correlation, caution must be exercised to avoid making too much of a Hebrew concept in a Greek term.

This is indeed a 'difficult expression' (Longenecker 1990:87). And, faith in Jesus Christ certainly involves confidence in his faithful obedience to God, so that faith in Jesus includes trusting in his person and work.⁵⁶ It seems best, however, on the basis of the above evidence, to understand the phrase διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ here as an objective genitive. The significance of this interpretation for Galatians 2:16 is found in the fact that Paul is then contrasting 'the works required [of humanity] by the law' with one's 'faith in Jesus Christ.' Rather than Gentile converts or Jewish believers 'doing' anything to secure their salvific relationship to God, as the soteriological implications of the judaizers' position demanded, Paul states that forensic righteousness and its attendant behavioral ethic is received through faith in Jesus Christ (which by its very nature includes trusting in his 'faithfulness').

6.1.2.1.5 Galatians 2:15-16 -- Conclusion

In Galatians 2:15-16, Paul addresses matters of agreement between himself and his fellow Jewish Christians. In that process he also refutes the 'legalism' of his opponents.⁵⁷ Paul suggests through his argumentation in these two verses that he and Peter and the other Christian Jews, unlike the Gentile 'sinners'

(ie, those outside covenant), realized certain covenant privileges by virtue of their Jewish birth (cf Rm 3:1-4; 9:4-5). To state it in redemptive-historical terms, the Jewish nation enjoyed the favor of God in the administration of a special relationship that included God's revelation and representation ('the law, the fathers and the prophets'). Yet, Paul says, even though they were 'born Jews,' he and Peter and the others 'know' that one is not justified (declared righteous, forensically, with an assumed ethical, 'righteous' lifestyle the result) by means of 'works of the law.' The privileged status of Judaism, with its covenanted ritual means of expression of commitment and devotion to God, did not automatically equate to righteousness before God. This is not for Paul in any way a negative reflection upon the law or upon Judaism. He is instead reacting here to Peter's inappropriate actions at Antioch that *implied* that Gentile converts were somehow inferior to 'born Jews' in terms of salvific relationship to God, something Paul's opponents at Galatia (and elsewhere) were indeed teaching. These judaizers apparently believed that the Mosaic covenant remained in force, and taught its soteriological priority over the Abrahamic covenant (Promise). The judaizers evidently insisted that Gentile converts must become 'practical' Jews through proselytization, with their fidelity to Judaism and Moses to be demonstrated through 'works of the law.' Paul reminds Peter and the Galatians that this is unnecessary for (salvific) justification because that justification comes through faith in Jesus Christ (both his person and work). The Christian Jews, who both 'know' and agree with Paul that no one is justified by 'works of the law,' had themselves believed in

Christ Jesus in order to be justified by faith in him and not 'works of the law,' because as the Scripture says (Psalm 143:2), 'no flesh (no living being) will be justified by the works of the law.'

6.1.2.2 Galatians 2:17-21

Paul comes now to a point in the argument of his *propositio* wherein he shifts the focus of his argumentation. He moves in his discussion from things he and his opponents agree upon to specific matters of disagreement. Paul will, in the process of this discussion, also speak out against 'nomism' as a lifestyle for both Jewish and Gentile Christians, as carefully noted by Longenecker (1990:82f, 95).

Verse 17 begins Paul's explication of the thesis set forth in verses 15-16. In this verse Paul says, 'but if, while we are seeking to be justified by [or in] Christ, we ourselves are found to be sinners, [then] is Christ a servant (ie, 'promoter') of sin? May it never be!' (εἰ δὲ ζητοῦντες δικαιοθῆναι ἐν Χριστῷ εὐρέθημεν καὶ αὐτοὶ ἁμαρτωλοί, ἄρα Χριστὸς ἁμαρτίας, μὴ γένοιτο). Here Paul argues specifically against the idea that faith in Christ somehow promotes antinomianism or libertinism. To that end the verse makes three assertions, which are undoubtedly to be understood as being made in the form of a question (cf Winger 1992:143f). The verse ends with a vehement denial of at least the last assertion (the sentence is structured as 'proposition, inference, denial'). In the protasis of the sentence, Paul makes two statements: 'we are seeking to be justified by Christ,' and 'we are found to be sinners.' In the apodosis of the sentence, he draws an inference

from those two statements: 'Christ is the servant of sin' (stated as a rhetorical question). He immediately denies such an inference in the strongest possible language.

Taking the protasis as a first-class conditional construction (indicated by the *ei*, 'if'), the truth of the first two assertions Paul makes here is assumed. That is, he acknowledges that he, Peter and the others are indeed 'seeking to be justified by Christ' (the 'we' of 2:17 being identified as the same 'we' of verses 15 and 16). He also admits that they are 'found to be sinners.'⁵⁸ Paul strongly denies the third proposition (which is located in the apodosis), however, as indicated by the inferential particle *ὄρα* and the following *μὴ γένοιτο*.⁵⁹

The primary interpretive difficulty in this verse is found in the proposition that Paul, Peter and the others are 'found to be sinners.' In what sense are they 'sinners' (*ἁμαρτωλοί*), and how does this relate to Christ becoming the 'servant, promoter' of sin (*ἁμαρτίας*)? Answers to these questions are crucial to the understanding of Paul's argument in this passage.

Paul's use of the emphatic 'we' (*εὐρέθημεν...οἱ*) indicates that he does indeed have the 'we' of verses 15 and 16 in mind, the 'born Jews' who 'know that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but only by faith in Jesus Christ.' 'We ourselves,' he now says, are 'found [to be] sinners.' It seems clear that Paul's meaning for 'sinners' should, like the 'we,' also be understood the same way in verse 17 as in verse 15. In the context of Paul's *propositio*, this is best understood as an ironic mechanism intended by Paul to make a strong statement

about the 'sinner' Gentile-like status of himself and the Jewish Christians.⁶⁰ In other words, Paul, Peter, and perhaps others had exercised their freedom in Christ to 'live like the Gentiles': having in certain matters decided not to Ἰουδαίως ζῆναι, they had become, from the judaizers' perspective, ἁμαρτωλοί. They had put themselves, in terms of certain behavior, outside the Mosaic covenant, as the Gentiles were. They had eaten like and with the Gentiles, and perhaps disregarded other portions of the law as well (cf Burton 1921:125). In so doing, they opened themselves and their incipient Christian movement to charges of antinomianism, which was in fact one of the difficulties facing Paul in the Galatian congregation, and for which the nomistic lifestyle of Judaism potentially offered a ready solution (as indicated by Longenecker 1990:89f). The opponents could then use Paul's and Peter's behavior to claim Christ was the promoter of sin (ἁμαρτωλοί, representing 'sin' in a more general sense; thus their becoming 'sinners,' ie, 'covenant-breakers,' from the judaizers' perspective makes the Christ preached by Paul to be the champion of 'sin'). Far from being 'an absurdity formulated by Paul' (Lambrecht 1977-78:484) this was an actual charge leveled against him, seemingly with some success (cf Rm 3:31; 6:1, 15; 13:14). His resounding, 'May it never be!' (μὴ γένοιτο) was intended by Paul to indicate just how far he wished to distance himself from such a preposterous contention.

Paul had no desire, either, to rebuild what his 'Gentile-like' behavior destroyed (verse 18). He writes, 'εἰ γὰρ ἄ κατέλυσα ταῦτα πάλιν οἰκοδομῶ, παραβάτην ἑμαυτὸν συνιστάνω' ('for if I build again those

things that I destroyed, I demonstrate myself [to be] a lawbreaker'). Paul emphasizes, by means of this true-to-fact first class condition, the 'why' of his previous μή γένοιτο, answering the charge made by his opponents relative to his 'sinful' status and the position of Christ as sin's promoter. The 'I' is used by Paul here to personalize the charge meant for Peter and the others, perhaps in a diplomatic attempt to defuse the polemical nature of the situation.⁶¹ In an argument by 'contrary reasoning' (*e contrario*; cf Burton 1921:130f), Paul indicates that 'to go back to the law (as a Christian) after having been done with the law (for both acceptance before God and living a life pleasing to him) is what really makes one a lawbreaker' (Longenecker 1990:90). One becomes a 'transgressor' in the act of rebuilding that which one previously destroyed.⁶² That Christ is not the 'promoter of sin,' says Paul, is evident in that Paul's own behavior relative to the ἔργα νόμου is consistent. Paul 'annulled, destroyed' the law as a religious system (ἀ κατέλυσα, an aorist 'once-for-all' activity) when he placed his faith in Jesus Christ as the sufficiency for justification and its consequent ethical behavior. It is Peter's and the others' behavior, which behavior undoubtedly serves as the conceptual backdrop for Paul's thinking here, that in effect amounts to 'rebuilding' the law. To return to the law after believing in Christ, then, is to go back to a system that could never accomplish, and that never intended, the bringing about of redemption.⁶³ In other words, there never was and will never be any 'legal' basis for one's salvific relationship to God.

Verses 19 and 20 express the Christian's experience in Christ relative to the law and nomism. Paul, using the emphatic 'I' now as representative of all who place their faith in Jesus Christ (a 'universal' or 'gnomic' I), speaks of the believer's death to the law in Christ's crucifixion and the necessary implications of that death. He writes,

ἐγὼ γὰρ διὰ νόμου νόμῳ ἀπέθανον ἵνα θεῷ ζήσω. Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι· ζῶ δὲ οὐκέτι ἐγώ, ζῆ δὲ ἐν ἐμοὶ Χριστός· ὃ δὲ νῦν ζῶ ἐν σαρκί, ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῇ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀγαπήσαντός με καὶ παραδόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ.

'For through the law I died to the law, in order that I might live unto God. I have been crucified with Christ; I no longer live, but Christ lives in me; and the life I now live in the [flesh] body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.'

These verses contain four statements or propositions:⁶⁴ (1) 'I died to the law through the law, in order that I might live unto God;' (2) 'I have been crucified with Christ;' (3) 'I no longer live, but Christ lives in me;' and (4) 'the life that I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.' Determining the meaning of each of these statements separately will clarify the meaning of these verses as a whole.

Paul states 'For I died to the law through the law' (ἐγὼ γὰρ διὰ νόμου νόμῳ ἀπέθανον). He does not elaborate on this statement here, but will 'decode' or 'expand' his meaning in the *probatio* section of 3:19-4:7, particularly at 3:19-25 (cf Betz 1979:122; Longenecker 1990:91f). Nevertheless, his intent here is further to expound the assertion made at 2:18 that he is not a transgressor

of the law (as indicated by the γὰρ, 'for'). Elsewhere when Paul speaks of 'dying to' something, he intends to say metaphorically that all relationship to that entity has been cut off (cf Rm 6:2, 10-11, 'died to sin;' Rm 7:2-6, 'died to the law'). So here he contends that the believer cannot be a transgressor of the law because one who has trusted Jesus Christ has been cut off from any (intended salvific) relationship to the law. Paul does not indicate that the believer is cut off from the law in each and every sense (again, the context is the *propositio*, wherein he is setting forth his thesis statement regarding justification and 'works of the law'). However, in both the 'legalistic' connotation and in the sense of the law functioning as the nomistic guideline for life, as argued by Paul's opponents, the believer is no longer in relationship to the law, and is thus 'dead' to it (cf Burton 1921:132f; Longenecker 1990:91f). This 'death to the law' came about 'through the law.' That is, 'the believer's death to the law...is "through law" because he died in Christ's death' (Tannehill 1967:59). Jesus' death, a result of the condemnation of sinful humanity on the basis of the law, is then the believer's death to the law because he is incorporated into Christ. As Fung has written,

By virtue of his incorporation into Christ (cf v. 17) and participation in Christ's death Paul has undergone a death whereby his relation to the law has been decisively severed and the law has ceased to have any claim on him....But since the vicarious death of Christ for sinners was exacted by the law...and was first an affirmation of [the law's] verdict, Paul's death to the law through participation in Christ's death can be said to be 'through the law.' This death 'through the law...to the law' means not

only that the law as a false way of righteousness has been set aside but also that the believer is set free from the dominion of the law...for a life of consecration to God (1988:123).

And as Bruce states simply, Paul (as the paradigmatic 'I') 'no longer lives under the power of the law; he has been released from its dominion and has entered into new life' (Bruce 1982b: 142). The believer now lives 'unto God.' Living 'unto God' implies the opposite of 'dying' to the law: Paul's death to the law was effected in order that he might live in full relationship to God.⁶⁵

Next Paul states, 'I have been crucified with Christ' (Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι, intensive perfect passive). This incorporation into the work of Christ is the basis of the previous statements regarding the believer's death to the law and life to God. Paul speaks metaphorically here of the believer's spiritual identification with Christ in his death (συν-), indicating that union with Christ by faith includes being united with him in his experience of death to the old order, and to the law.⁶⁶ The perfect tense of the verb indicates a (once-for-all) past action of union with Christ (at conversion) that carries continual implications for the present life of the believer.

Paul goes on to affirm, 'I no longer live, but Christ lives in me' (ζῶ δὲ οὐκέτι ἐγώ, ζῆ δὲ ἐν ἐμοὶ Χριστός). Incorporation into Christ extends not only to death to the law, but also to life in Christ. The Christian's life is 'hidden with Christ' (Col 3:3). The believer is transferred, by virtue of association with the crucified Christ, to the sphere of resurrection life in him (cf

Matera 1992:103; Bruce 1982b:144). In what Longenecker refers to as 'not only death to the jurisdiction of the Mosaic law,' but also 'death to the jurisdiction of one's own ego' (1990:92), the believer's life is now lived under the ethical standard and guidance of Jesus Christ. Just as sin was the operative power of the former (ie, ποτέ) life, exercised through the law and the self, now (νῦν) Christ lives both in and through the believer (cf Sanders, *PPJ* 467f).

So Paul explains, 'and the life I now live in the [flesh] body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me' (ὁ δὲ νῦν ζῶ ἐν σαρκί, ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῆ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀγαπήσαντός με καὶ παραδόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ). The present life ('now') in the mortal body is, for the believer, a life that is lived 'in Christ,' that is, in union with him, through faith in Christ, the 'Son of God.'⁶⁷ The Christian life is a life lived out in union with Jesus Christ, by virtue of one's commitment to him. Christ, the Son of God, 'loved me and gave himself for me.' The title 'Son of God,' as stated so well by E Schweizer, 'describes the close bond of love between God and Jesus and thus emphasizes the greatness of the sacrifice....The Son of God title has for [Paul] the function of describing the greatness of the saving act of God who offered up the one closest to him' (1972:384). The two participial phrases (aorist substantival participles in the genitive) indicate the work of Christ on behalf of the believer. He 'gave himself up' out of love, to be crucified, in order to bring about redemption and make the way clear for this 'faith-life' of union with him.

In verses 19-20, then, Paul has expressed the core of his theology of the Christian life: the believer is 'dead' to the law by virtue of his or her incorporation into Christ, with whom he or she has been co-crucified. Life is now lived in union with him, in a daily existence of faith in him. The law has no dominion over the believer, who lives rather in the ethical sphere of Christ, whose power it is that 'energises' one by faith in his person and work.

As a result, Paul says, 'I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness is through the law, then Christ died needlessly' (οὐκ ἀθετῶ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ· εἰ γὰρ διὰ νόμου δικαιοσύνη, ἄρα Χριστὸς δωρεὰν ἀπέθανε). Paul ends his *propositio* in the typical rhetorical fashion, refuting the charge of his opponents against him (cf Betz 1979:126; Longenecker 1990:94). The 'faith-life' of the believer does not in any way 'set aside' or 'nullify' the grace of God. In context, as suggested by Longenecker (1990:94f), the specific 'grace' being referred to by Paul and his accusers is undoubtedly the covenant grace of God toward Israel as expressed through the Mosaic legislation. But, contrary to the judaizers' theology, righteousness does not come through the law.⁶⁸ If that were so, Paul says, 'then Christ died needlessly.' If God had intended the law as the means of providing his redemptive grace, then there would have been no need for Christ's crucifixion and death. However, the law could not provide, and was never intended to provide, that righteousness. That righteousness could come only through the gracious promise of God, and now specifically in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

6.1.2.3 Conclusion to the *Propositio*

In this section Paul has stated his main thesis: justification comes through faith in Christ, and not by 'works of the law,' that is, by the judaizers' 'legalistic' approach to a relationship with God. That 'works of the law' are inadequate for justification is a known fact among both Jews and Jewish Christians; the law was not given for justification, as even the Psalmist indicated (Ps 143:2). Apparently some Jews and Christian Jews believed otherwise, however, and these Christian Jews zealously opposed Paul's gospel as a 'law-free' corruption of the truth of God's relationship with humanity (both redemptive and ethical), which the judaizers understood to come through the Mosaic legislation as an extension of the Abrahamic covenant. As a result of this understanding, these judaizers attacked Paul's gospel as inadequate or 'incomplete,' and attempted to compel his Galatian converts to 'proselytize' to conform to Jewish lifestyle norms. Paul was forced, as a result, to polemicize against their position of justification by 'works of the law.' He does so not because these are 'works,' or 'of the law,' but because the soteriological implications of the judaizers' position would of necessity nullify the redemptive work of Jesus Christ by making the Jewish nomistic lifestyle itself soteriological.

Further, Paul is obliged to explain that living in the manner of a 'Gentile sinner' (ie, apart from 'works of the law') does not make Jesus Christ the promoter of sin. On the contrary, Paul asserts, it is his consistent lifestyle (living apart from 'works of the law' because he is in Christ) that proves his point. Peter, and others like him who vacillated between living ἐθνικῶς

and Ἰουδαίους depending upon who was present to observe their behavior, were the ones who 'nullified' the grace of God. Paul's (salvific) relationship to God was based upon the person and work of Christ, not 'works of the law.' To believe and/or behave otherwise was unnecessarily to demean the death of Christ.

In the following *probatio* Paul will set forth the 'proofs' of the thesis statement contained in the *propositio*. In the process of doing so, he will use the ἔργα νόμου phrase again at 3:2, 5, 10. The investigation of the meaning of this phrase in Galatians must therefore continue to include these verses.

6.1.3 Galatians 3:1-4:11 - The *Probatio*

The *probatio* section of Paul's letter to the Galatians is the most significant argumentative portion of the letter because it is here that Paul attempts to demonstrate the truth of his thesis statements of 2:15-21. It is in the argument of this part of the letter that Paul will succeed or fail to 'make his case' for his preaching of the gospel and the Galatians' continued adherence to it. As Betz observes,

In a speech the *probatio* section is the most decisive of all because in it the 'proofs' are presented. This part determines whether or not the speech as a whole will succeed. *Exordium* and *narratio* are only preparatory steps leading up to this central part (1979: 128).

Paul desired to make his case against the ἔργα νόμου as strongly as possible. So, he constructed his Galatian letter according to the epistolary-rhetorical conventions of his day (cf Betz 1979:128ff, and particularly notes 6-12), and included persuasive

argumentation according to contemporary Jewish exegetical methods (Longenecker 1990:97f). In short, in this section Paul apparently utilized every communicative weapon available to him to drive home his thesis of the salvific priority of faith in Jesus Christ and so protect his beloved Galatians from straying from the 'right road' of the gospel.⁶⁹

It has been noted above (chapter 5) that Longenecker's epistolary-rhetorical outline of Galatians has proved the most adequate in terms of recognizing and making use of both epistolary and rhetorical conventions of the time of Paul's writing. Longenecker's analysis of the letter demonstrates the communication value of the structure of the letter itself, allowing greater insight into Paul's treatment of the strategic matters for which he contends. So this outline advances the understanding of the epistle as it was written, and, again, becomes the framework from which the exegesis of the following Galatians ἐργα νόμου texts will proceed.

According to Longenecker's epistolary-rhetorical analysis of the letter (1990:97f), the *probatio* section contains two main components wherein Paul sets out his 'proofs' for the statements made in the *propositio* of 2:15-21. The first main constituent of this section is found at 3:1-18 ('righteousness apart from the law: against legalism'). This is further divided into three subsections: (1) 3:1-5, 'arguments from experience;' (2) 3:6-14, 'arguments from Scripture;' and (3) 3:15-18, *ad hominem* theological arguments. The second main component of the *probatio* is located at 3:19-4:7 ('the believer's life not "under law" but "in Christ:" against nomism'). This is also divided into three

subsections: (1) 3:19-25, 'the purpose and function of the law;' (2) 3:26-29, 'new relationships "in Christ;"' and (3) 4:1-7, 'an illustration of relationships.' The component located at 4:8-11 expresses Paul's concern for his Galatian converts.

The *ἔργα νόμου* texts, as clearly indicated by this analysis of Galatians, are found within the first main component of the *probatio*. It is these verses within this section, then (3:1-18), that prove most significant for the understanding of the meaning of the phrase within the text of the Galatian epistle. With the above epistolary-rhetorical framework as the background for investigation, the exegesis of these Galatian *ἔργα νόμου* texts in their overall context (3:1-18) will proceed. A brief summary of Paul's argument in the final sections (3:19-4:11) will be included for the sake of completeness.

6.1.3.1 Galatians 3:1-18: Against Legalism

It is in 3:1-18 that Paul expounds upon (or 'unpacks') his thesis that 'the law plays no part in becoming a Christian, *contra* "legalism"' (Longenecker 1990:80f, 97f). It is here, then, that Paul explicates the previous affirmations relative to justification and *ἔργα νόμου* that are found in 2:15-16. And Paul will again employ the expression *ἐξ ἔργων νόμου* in the development of these previous affirmations, as he uses 'arguments from experience' (3:1-5) and 'arguments from Scripture' (3:6-14). So particular exegetical attention must be paid to these subsections before concluding with a less concentrated approach in the

treatment of the remaining subsection, '*ad hominem*' theological arguments (3:15-18).

6.1.3.1.1 Galatians 3:1-5

Paul intends that the Galatians understand the full implications of their judaizing tendencies as he begins here his argumentation against the legalism of his opponents. To this end, he immediately draws upon what he perceived to be the most effective communicative weapon he has at his disposal: the salvation experience of the Galatians themselves. Paul hopes to contradict the Galatians' present inclination and exclude the message of the judaizers from further consideration as he reminds them of their original response to the proclamation of the gospel. In the process of this argumentation Paul makes extensive use of conventional rhetorical methods (cf Betz 1979:128ff; Longenecker 1990:99). He begins this section with the indignant verbal ejaculation of verse one: 'O foolish Galatians!' This remonstrance is in the style of the diatribe and is not intended by Paul to be insulting beyond the measure proportionate to the Galatians' need (Betz 1979:130f).⁷⁰ Most notably, however, Paul employs here the rhetorical *interrogatio*, in the form of six questions, as an 'inductive' method of rhetorical 'cross examination' whereby the eyewitness Galatians are compelled to concur with the self-evident truth of Paul's diatribe style of argumentation (cf Betz 1979:128f, and especially note 19). These rhetorical questions, then, will have the desired pragmatic effect of removing the Galatians' resistance to Paul's argumentation at this point (Lemmer 1992:374f).

Paul begins his invective with the acerbic vocative, 'O foolish Galatians' (3:1 - ὦ ἀνόητοι Γαλάται, alternatively translated 'You foolish Galatians'). Initially this may appear to be a quite harsh assessment of the Galatians' intellectual capacities (ἀνόητοι is literally 'without mind,' ie, without the power of perception; cf Burton 1921:143). Recognizing it as a fairly common feature of the diatribe style, however, allows one to understand that Paul is not so much insulting his converts as he is at once aggressively and passionately expressing his deep anguish and concern for them. His frustration at the Galatians' lack of spiritual discernment as evidenced by their 'so quick' departure from the truth of the gospel is unmistakable in this stinging rebuke.

This brings Paul to the first rhetorical question: τίς ὑμῶς ἐβάσκαεν, οἷς κατ' ὀφθαλμοῦς Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς προεγράφη ἐσταυρωμένος; ('who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was openly placarded as having been crucified?'). Here Paul suggests that the Galatians have been 'bewitched' (ἐβάσκαεν, aorist of βασκαίνω, 'to fascinate, place under a spell'), a rhetorical characterization of his opponents' teaching (cf Betz 1979:131f). The use of this word by Paul does not indicate that he thought any actual magical 'spells and charms' were at work. Rather, as Burton suggests, Paul is referring in figurative language to the opponents' 'perverting' or 'confusing' the teaching of the gospel message (1921:144; cf also Lemmer 1992:373). That his converts could give credence to this perversion of the gospel is all the more difficult for Paul to believe in that the Galatians had

clearly understood the gospel message relative to Christ's crucifixion. He had been 'openly placarded as having been crucified before their eyes' (προεγράφη, taking the προ- in the locative sense). The statement related to Christ's crucifixion (ἑσταυρωμένος, a perfect passive participle) is Pauline 'shorthand' for what Hays refers to as the 'narrative substructure' of the teaching regarding the whole of Jesus' ministry. This theologically loaded 'shorthand' was intended by Paul to communicate the totality of his prior teaching about Jesus' life, ministry and death to the Galatians.⁷¹ This, coupled with the verb προεγράφη, suggests a vivid and impressive verbal portrayal of the person and work of Christ by Paul in his original proclamation of the gospel to these Galatians. Their response to this imposing portrayal was to believe the message Paul preached. He reminds them now of their initial response, as a means of recalling to their minds that earlier portrayal - both to express his perplexity at their deviation from the truth of the gospel and to call them back to that truth. As Bruce has noted, 'the gospel of Christ crucified...so completely ruled out the law as a means of getting right with God that it was scarcely credible that people who had once embraced such a gospel should ever turn to the law for salvation' (1982b:148).

This leads to Paul's second rhetorical question, a masterfully crafted dialogical mechanism intended to cause the Galatians themselves to articulate the conclusive argument against their own current actions (at 3:2).⁷² Paul writes, 'I want to learn only this from you: did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?' (τοῦτο μόνον θέλω μαθεῖν ἀφ' ὑμῶν, ἐξ ἔργων

νόμου τὸ πνεῦμα ἐλάβετε ἢ ἐξ ἰσχυρῆς πίστεως;). Paul presses the point of their experience of God's grace in order to help the Galatians recognize their mistake in judaizing. He forcefully reminds them that they did not receive the Spirit of God by the judaizers' 'works of the law,' but by 'hearing with faith.'⁷³ Paul intends that the Galatians remember their initial response to the gospel, and their experience of God's grace as characterized by the reception of the Spirit (cf Lk 11:13), in order that they understand that it is Paul's gospel and not the 'works of the law' to which this divine activity in their midst must be attributed.⁷⁴ The Galatians, then, would perceive through personal recollection and answer to Paul's question that their current proclivity to judaize was indeed 'foolish,' wrong-headed, and destined to lead them away from the God to whom they had earlier turned. If this can be avoided, Paul has won his argument against the legalistic position of his opponents and 'rescued' his beloved Galatians.

Paul contrasts 'works of the law' to 'hearing with faith' (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου and ἐξ ἰσχυρῆς πίστεως, the ἐκ in both phrases being recognized as the source of something or the basis for its existence). Justification (2:16) and reception of the Spirit (3:2, 5) are in this manner conceptually and theologically linked: both are received through faith, and not by 'works of the law.'⁷⁵ So the 'works of the law' of 3:2 are identical to those of 2:16. It should now be clear to the Galatians, by virtue of Paul's recalling of his confrontation with Peter (2:16) and in terms of their own experience with the gospel (3:2), that the 'way of faith' is salvifically to be chosen over 'works of the law.'⁷⁶

Paul's third and fourth rhetorical questions underscore this point being made to the Galatians (3:3). Paul asks, 'Are you so [οὕτως, 'in this manner, thus'] foolish? Having begun by [with] the Spirit, will you now be made complete in the flesh?' (οὕτως ἀνόητοί ἐστε; ἐναρξάμενοι πνεύματι νῦν σαρκὶ ἐπιτελείσθε;). The 'foolish' of this verse hearkens back to verse one, rhetorically reinforcing in the Galatians' minds Paul's frustration with (and from his own perspective, the hopelessness of) their abandonment of the gospel.⁷⁷ The Galatians were 'foolish' to involve themselves in the self-contradiction of attempting to move back into the realm of flesh after having been delivered into the realm of Spirit through faith in the gospel message. The judaizers were apparently claiming the need for ἔργα νόμου to 'perfect' or 'complete' salvation in Christ (ἐπιτελείσθε, present passive of ἐπιτελέω, 'to end, finish, bring to an end'). Their understanding, presumably, was that since the Mosaic covenant extended the Abrahamic, 'works of the law' (ie, 'works required by the law') were the intrinsic fulfillment to faith in Jesus Messiah. So they were necessary if Gentile converts were to participate fully in the community of God's people (cf Dunn 1990a:208, note 1 [c]). At the very least, the judaizers demanded carrying out the requirements of the law as a means to proper Christian behavior. Paul again reminds the Galatians of their earlier experience ('having begun in the Spirit,' the aorist adverbial participle ἐναρξάμενοι referring to the time of conversion) in order to refute the judaizers' erroneous theological perspective.⁷⁸ Paul's contrast of 'Spirit' and 'flesh' here corresponds to the 'works of the law'/'faith in

Jesus Christ' contrast of 2:16 and the 'works of the law'/'hearing with faith' contrast of 3:2 (cf Longenecker 1990:103).⁷⁹ So Paul consistently argues his primary point repeatedly: salvation comes, not through human effort of any type, but through the gracious act of God. This grace is now (vûv) displayed in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Paul's next question is somewhat enigmatic. He writes, 'did you [suffer or experience] so many things in vain? - if indeed it (the suffering or experiencing) was in vain' (τοσαύτα ἐπάθετε εἰκῆ; εἰ γὰρ καὶ εἰκῆ). The interpretive discussion relative to this rhetorical question centers on how to understand the ἐπάθετε (from πάσχω, 'to suffer, experience, undergo'). It has been argued that when used absolutely, πάσχω means 'having to suffer misfortune' (Michaelis 1967:905f). And, if the term is understood analogously according to its use in the LXX and the rest of the New Testament, it must be taken as the Galatians' having suffered for the sake of the gospel, either through persecution or some other form of oppressive activity. This has caused most interpreters to understand the experiences referred to here in just such a negative manner.⁸⁰ The term πάσχω, however, may be 'neutral,' or even positive, as referring favorably to that which is experienced.⁸¹ If taken in either of these senses, the word in Galatians 3:3 would be understood more positively, particularly when the context of verses 1-5 are borne in mind (cf Longenecker 1990:104). That is, in these verses Paul has been rehearsing the Galatians' experience of hearing the gospel and receiving the Spirit on the basis of faith. So it may be that these (positive)

manifestations of divine activity are the 'things experienced' Paul has in mind. Paul is again using a rhetorical question, then, to remind the Galatian converts of their earlier positive spiritual experiences and to reinforce his argument that what they had received and experienced came by means of faith, and not by 'works of the law.' The statement 'if indeed it was in vain' serves rhetorically to emphasize Paul's point too, by calling into question the Galatians' unspoken assumption inherent in their actions (ie, faith in Christ was empty, vain, lacking). In other words, if justification-righteousness might come by 'works of the law,' then faith in Christ is vain. But since faith in Christ (and not 'works of the law') was the catalyst for the Galatians' reception of the Spirit, faith in him was not in vain.

Paul's final rhetorical question is found at 3:5, where he summarizes his argument by recapitulating verse two. Here he asks, 'Did he [God] then supply to you the Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law or by hearing with faith?' (ὁ οὖν ἐπαχορηγῶν ὑμῖν τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἐνεργῶν δυνάμεις ἐν ὑμῖν ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἢ ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως;). God, says Paul, had supplied his Spirit to the Galatians and worked miracles among them (a common phenomenon as the gospel penetrated new areas, as recorded throughout the New Testament). These miracles were no doubt manifestations of power that authenticated both messenger and message as the gospel was proclaimed. In the experience of the Galatians, these 'works of power' had accompanied Paul's preaching of the gospel and their expression of faith. Paul intended that the Galatians realize, through this rhetorical reminder, that this divine activity came about by faith, and not 'works of the law.' This would demon-

strate his premise and 'win' the Galatians over to his position. Again, as at verse two, the contrast is between faith and 'works of the law,' indicating that the ἐξ ἔργων νόμου expression has the identical meaning at 3:5 as at 2:16 and 3:2.

In these verses (3:1-5) Paul has challenged the Galatians to reconsider their current judaizing tendencies. He has accomplished this by means of rhetorical questions designed to bring to their remembrance their earlier experiences in hearing the gospel proclaimed, and to 're-live' their earlier response of faith. If the Galatian converts would respond honestly to Paul's rhetorical questions, they would be forced to agree that they had indeed received the Spirit through faith and not 'works of the law.' The natural implication of this realization is that 'if it was good enough then, it must be good enough now.' The Galatians were 'foolish' to believe that it was proper to move from the realm of the Spirit to that of the flesh (human effort). The judaizers' doctrine of the 'completion' of the Abrahamic covenant in the Mosaic led ultimately to a vain practice of legalism, something Paul would save the Galatians from. It is faith, Paul argues, and not 'works of the law' that initiated the Galatians' experiences with Christ and their incorporation into the community of God's people. He warns the Galatians here against the 'foolishness' of turning away from that faith to a vain practice of 'works of the law.'

6.1.3.1.2 Galatians 3:6-14

Paul advances his position against the judaizers' legalistic activity in this segment by turning from the experience of his

Galatian converts for support of his argument to authoritative, Jewish Scripture. He linguistically unites his reasoning in this section with his previous line of thought by means of the *Stichworte* πίστις or πιστεύω (using these words or variants eight times in the nine verses). He thematically links these sections through his continued emphasis upon justification by faith (3:6, 8, 11, 13) and denial of the efficacy of the 'works of the law' (3:10), grounding this argument on the reception of the Spirit by faith.⁸² Paul also deviates from the use of Greco-Roman communication norms such as epistolary convention (cf verse 7, Γινώσκετε ἄρα ὅτι, 'you know then that...,' a standard epistolary disclosure formula) and rhetorical device (using Abraham and his faith as an *exemplum* for the Galatians) to include the use of Jewish exegetical procedures as he employs this citation of Scripture.⁸³

Paul begins this section with a two-pronged attack. First, he assumes the Galatians' answer to his question of verse five must be that they experienced the miraculous activity and reception of the Spirit by faith, and not by 'works of the law.' And, if the Spirit has been received by believing Paul's gospel, then 'works of the law' cannot be the means by which the Spirit was received (Pelser 1992:395). Second, he capitalizes upon that obvious answer, using the unspoken reply to meet the argument of his opponents on its own ground. To accomplish this, Paul appealed through Scripture to God's dealing with Abraham, as his opponents also undoubtedly did (cf Barclay 1988:52f). Abraham, considered to be the paradigmatic believer by both Paul and the judaizers (cf Burton 1921:152f; Moo 1983:94f), provides the one

illustration of Paul's point that both 'sides' of the Galatian controversy respected and held as a model for proper relationship to God.⁸⁴ Paul's use of Abraham, then, was designed to correct his opponents' view of Abraham's faith, and to supply the example that should prove conclusive for his Galatian converts. He writes, 'Consider Abraham; he believed God, and [that faith] it was reckoned to him as righteousness' (καθὼς Ἀβραὰμ ἐπίστευσεν τῷ θεῷ, καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην).

The term καθὼς is normally used in the New Testament to indicate a comparison, or to introduce a quotation from Scripture (when followed by γέγραπται). It is, therefore, customarily interpreted here at 3:6 as an abbreviated introductory formula to the quotation of Genesis 15:6 which follows. If Abraham is used here by Paul as the prototype believer in the sense of the rhetorical device of *exemplum*, however, as suggested by Betz (1979:137f), the word does not function strictly as an introductory formula. As a rhetorical mechanism, καθὼς should be translated as 'consider Abraham' (NIV) or 'take Abraham for example' (JB).⁸⁵ In this instance, then, the word is to be considered a verbal 'bridge' between the rhetorical illustration of Abraham and the citation from Scripture, by which Paul now initiates his Jewish exegetical argumentation (as demonstrated by Longenecker 1990:112; cf also Barclay 1988:78, note 8). This allows Paul to structure his proof more powerfully, as he uses both conventional argumentative patterns and Scriptural proofs to shape his reasoning.

Paul goes on to say that 'Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness' (cf Rm 4:3; Ja 2:23). Paul quotes the LXX almost exactly here, only deviating from the form there by moving Ἀβραάμ from after the ἐπίστευσεν to before it. His emphatic placement of Ἀβραάμ indicates that Abraham was declared by God to be righteous on the basis of his faith (ἐπίστευσεν, aorist once-for-all action of believing).⁸⁶ In an implied contrast, Paul's point seems to be that circumcision was not instituted by God until Genesis 17. Paul's opponents undoubtedly coupled Abraham's faith (Gn 15) with his obedient circumcision (Gn 17), as did others within Judaism (cf Betz 1979:138f; Longenecker 1990:112f). But Paul has in mind the fact that faith must precede action in one's relationship to God (cf 2:16; 3:2, 5; Rm 10:9-10; Eph 2:8-10). The stress upon Abraham's faith is relative to the promise inherent within Genesis 15, as Paul will explain later (3:15-18). Abraham's faith was in God and God's promise of a Seed, just as the Christian's faith is in God's promised Seed. One is incipient and anticipatory, the other developed and retrospective (in the sense of looking back to the completed work of Christ). Yet both Abraham and his spiritual descendants express faith in God's promise.⁸⁷ That is why Paul says at 3:7, 'you know therefore that those of faith, these are the sons of Abraham' (γινώσκετε ἄρα ὅτι οἱ ἐκ πίστεως, οὗτοι υἱοὶ εἰσιν Ἀβραάμ). The γινώσκετε ἄρα ὅτι is better understood as a conventional disclosure formula consequentially following verse 6, as pointed out by Longenecker (1990:114), and not as a didactic imperative (thus contra Betz 1979:141). This is so not only as it reflects the

typical letter-writing form of Paul's day, but also because in context Paul has called on the Galatians to return to his former teaching. The concept of this statement as a reminder of what the Galatians were expected to know already is, therefore, more accurate than understanding this as an imperative pronouncement of obligation. Paul is reminding the Galatians that Abraham is the norm (in the sense of 'pattern' or 'standard') for all who are of faith, and it is faith that replicates Abraham's faith that brings righteousness before God. It is not 'works of the law' that make one a child of Abraham, despite the judaizers' claims.

Paul reinforces this argumentation in verses 8 and 9. He says there, 'And the Scripture, seeing beforehand that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying "All the nations will be blessed in you." So then, those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the man of faith' (προϊδούσα δὲ ἡ γραφή ὅτι ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοὶ τὰ ἔθνη ὁ θεὸς προεπηγγείλατο τῷ Ἀβραάμ ὅτι Ἐνευλογηθήσονται ἐν σοὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη. ὥστε οἱ ἐκ πίστεως εὐλογοῦνται σὺν τῷ πιστῷ Ἀβραάμ). Paul buttresses his argument once again by means of (authoritative, Jewish) Scripture. The judaizers' teaching no doubt included stress upon circumcision for Gentile converts as the means of demonstrating relationship to Abraham. Paul has just said that such relationship comes by faith (3:6-7). Now he sets out to demonstrate this from Scripture. He interprets Genesis 12:3 as scriptural foresight of salvation history (ie, divine foresight as recorded in Scripture), the 'gospel preached beforehand' by God to Abraham (cf Sanders 1983a:53, note 24). The promise of Genesis 12:3, which also came before the institution of

circumcision, included the Gentiles with the Jews in the covenant of blessing (so also Dunn 1990a:197, 247f). Abraham, the neither-Jew-nor-Gentile 'proto-believer,' thus becomes for Paul the father of all who believe, whether Jew or Gentile (understanding the ~~word~~ that begins verse 9 as emphasizing result). So Paul adds that all who believe as Abraham did are blessed through justification as a result of their faith.

Paul explains from Scripture the implications of his immediately preceding statements in verses 10-14. There is no doubt that Paul's quotes in these verses reflect passages that were being used by his opponents in their attempts to persuade the Galatian converts of the scriptural necessity to obey the law. But Paul astutely turns this strategy against the judaizers as he demonstrates from two of these same passages (Dt 27:26 and Lv 18:5) that 'there is no reference to faith, righteousness, or blessing, but rather only curse' (Longenecker 1990:116). Two other Scripture references indicate that faith is the only requisite for justification (Hab 2:4; Dt 21:23), just as Paul has contended. In these verses, then, Paul sets out to correct the judaizers' continued (mis)use of Scripture, and the Galatians' errant tendencies in giving ear to the judaizers' teachings.

In verse 10 Paul indicates that those who rely on *ἔργα νόμου* to justify themselves before God are under a curse, as he writes 'for all who are of works of the law are under a curse, for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to do them"' (*ὅσοι γὰρ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου εἰσὶν ὑπὸ κατάραν εἰσὶν· γέγραπται γὰρ ὅτι Ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὃς οὐκ ἐμμένει πᾶσιν τοῖς*

γεγραμμένοις ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τοῦ νόμου τοῦ ποιῆσαι αὐτά). The postpositive γάρ indicates that Paul's reasoning in this verse furthers the conceptuality of his previous statements, as he intends to explain the salvific priority of faith over 'works of the law.' He states that those who rely on 'works of the law' are not blessed with justification, as was Abraham. In fact, they are cursed. The fact that Paul continues his explication of the faith/law-works dichotomy here, with no shift in thought construct, indicates that the ἐξ ἔργων νόμου in verse 10 must have the same meaning as at 2:16 and 3:2, 5. As noted by Tyson, existence under the law is for Paul opposed to existence in Christ. By speaking of ὅσοι...ἐξ ἔργων νόμου Paul marks out a 'specific mode of existence,' an existence of nomistic service that 'does not serve as a basis for justification' (Tyson 1973:430). So the expression ἔργα νόμου has the same meaning throughout its occurrences in Galatians, as it is found within the framework of one on-going argument against the judaizers' teaching.

Paul's quotation of Deuteronomy 27:26 in this verse has occasioned no small debate. Of chief concern for most scholars is what is taken as Paul's apparent 'quantitative' view of 'doing' the law in this citation.⁸⁸ This difficulty is compounded by the fact that Paul's quotation does not follow any extant Hebrew or LXX text (cf Bruce 1982b:158ff). On that basis, some have indicated that Paul has crafted this quote to meet his immediate polemical needs (cf Fuller 1975-76:30ff). The textual issue is complicated (see Betz 1979:144-146, and notes 61-65), but Galatians 3:10 is close to the LXX reading of some manuscripts.⁸⁹

Paul may have quoted from memory, or may have had a slightly different text before him as he wrote. In any case, Paul's intended meaning is the significant question.

In that regard, it is better from a contextual standpoint to understand that Paul is not referring to this passage in order to demand perfect obedience to the law, or to indicate the curse as the consequence of failure to carry that off. Paul's intention in his quote of Deuteronomy 27:26 here is to emphasize the *result* of being 'of works of the law,' that is, as being 'cursed.' The law, unlike faith that brings blessing (as the illustration of Abraham in Paul's argument has just indicated), brings the curse to those who are 'of' it, that is, identified as 'belonging to' or 'oriented toward' the law (the ὅσοι...ἐξ ἔργων νόμου; cf BAG 225).⁹⁰

In other words, Paul uses this verse to accentuate the negative result of any attempted salvific use of the law, as he juxtaposes curse to blessing, and those who are oriented to law with those oriented to faith. He continues this juxtaposition in verse 11, as he writes, 'However, that no one is justified by law before God is clear, because the righteous one will live by faith' (ὅτι δὲ ἐν νόμῳ οὐδεὶς δικαιούται παρὰ τῷ θεῷ δῆλον, ὅτι ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται).

Paralleling the thought of verse 10, Paul here reemphasizes the fact that no one is justified by the law.⁹¹ The essence of Paul's scriptural argument, then, continues along the same lines as the immediately preceding verses: 'righteousness' is the province of faith, while 'curse' is the stronghold of law.⁹²

There is again a measure of textual confusion with Paul's quote of Habakkuk 2:4 here (the MT reads באמונתו יחיה וצדיק, 'the

righteous will live by his faith/faithfulness;' LXX B has ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως μου ζήσεται, 'the righteous will live by my [God's] faithfulness,' while LXX A has ὁ δίκαιός μου ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται, 'my righteous one will live by faith/faithfulness'). Paul's omission of the possessive pronoun, however, would not have affected his argument in any case. As Bruce has written, 'the faith by which one becomes righteous in God's sight is faith in God, believing acceptance of his promise, as Abraham showed' (1982b:162).

Paul's use of Habakkuk is probably, as first suggested by Dodd, an *ad hominem* use of an early Christian word of faith (1952:50f).⁹³ The point he seems to be making in this quotation is that one who is 'within this faith' shall live (on the strength of the ἐκ πίστεως, 'from within this faith').⁹⁴ In other words, Paul here 'strips faithfulness to its core of faith in God,' thus expressing the validity of Habakkuk's message as applied to his Galatian converts (Fung 1988:144-145).⁹⁵ In essence, Paul is simply emphasizing his previous point that the one who would emulate Abraham and share in his blessing is the one who exercises faith in God's promise and integrity. It is not the one who practices ἔργα νόμου as a means to justification who will share in this blessing.

This is true because 'the law is not of faith, but the one doing these things will live by them' (ὁ δὲ νόμος οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ πίστεως, ἀλλ' ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὰ ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς, 3:12). Paul has been accused here of 'disagreeing' with or 'misunderstanding' Moses (cf Sanders 1978:106; Mussner 1974:11-29), of 'contradicting' Moses (Dahl 1977:106f), or as 'Christologizing' Leviticus 18:5 (Bring

1961:128-142). But the likelihood is that Paul does not understand this verse to promise eternal life. Indeed, in its context Leviticus 18:5 points to the blessing of life in the promised land of Canaan. Paul is, therefore, undoubtedly thinking of the concept of the guarantee of that life in the land based upon faithful obedience to the law.⁹⁶ Obedience then works the reward of life in the land, and such a process of reward for obedience cannot be called (justifying) faith.⁹⁷ By analogy, Paul now extends this concept to the process of justification, and draws the conclusion that 'the law is not of faith.' The law was never intended by God to bring about justification, contrary to the implications of the judaizers' position, because the law and such (justifying) faith are incompatible as a means of righteousness before God (cf Jones 1972:478). The antithesis between faith and blessing on the one hand (verse 11), and law and curse on the other (verses 10 and 12), is thus continued here.

The point of justification by faith is driven home in verses 13 and 14, where Paul writes, 'Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us, as it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree, in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through this faith' (Χριστός ἡμᾶς ἐξηγόρασεν ἐκ τῆς κατάρας τοῦ νόμου γενόμενος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν κατάρα, ὅτι γέγραπται, Ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὁ κρεμώμενος ἐπὶ ξύλου, ἵνα εἰς τὰ ἔθνη ἡ εὐλογία τοῦ Ἀβραάμ γένηται ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ἵνα τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος λάβωμεν διὰ τῆς πίστεως) .

Paul again alludes in these verses to the concept of the law as a means of justification as a 'curse' (cf verse 10). Here in

verse 13, after a sudden change of subject (from curse to redemption), Paul combines the concept of the curse in Deuteronomy 27:26 (referred to in verse 10) with the curse concept found in Deuteronomy 21:23. He interprets the former in terms of the latter by means of the Jewish exegetical principle of *gezerah shawah* (cf Fung 1988:147f). Paul adapts his citation of Deuteronomy 21:23 to the curses of Deuteronomy 27:26 in order to make the factual statement ('everyone is accursed who hangs on a tree') an anathema ('cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree;' Lindars 1961:232). So Paul is able to demonstrate that Christ's death (*ἐξοργάζω*, aorist once-for-all activity, pointing to the historical incident of Jesus' death on the cross) fit both the demands of the law for disobedience, and the extension of the promise made to Abraham to all who express faith as Abraham did. Because the sinless Christ paid the price for sin in his death on the 'tree,' anyone exercising faith in him is justified.⁹⁸ One who exercises faith in the work of Christ believes the promise of God (for forgiveness), and God 'accounts it to him as righteousness' in what is considered the result of 'an exchange curse.' Jesus takes the curse of sin and the law upon himself and extends his righteousness to those who trust in him (cf 2 Cor 5:21). So God fulfills the Abrahamic covenant in the cross of Christ and Gentiles are included in the community of God's people, in the newly inaugurated age of the Spirit received by faith.⁹⁹

In 3:6-14, Paul has contended for his position of the salvific priority of faith as over against 'works of the law' by using authoritative Scripture as his basis for argumentation. Paul has used scriptural proofs in these verses to show his Galatian

converts that his opponents' arguments were grounded upon false assumptions and misunderstandings of the theological intentions of biblical passages relative to the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants. Paul argued that it is replication of Abraham's faith that causes one to become a 'child of Abraham,' that is, to be included in the covenant promise, and not 'works of the law.' He also reinterpreted key Scripture passages for his Galatian converts, demonstrating to them the antithesis between law and curse on the one hand, and faith and righteousness on the other. There can be no doubt in the Galatians' minds, if they have followed Paul's arguments from Scripture, which course to follow. They must eschew 'works of the law' and cling to God through faith in Christ.

6.1.3.1.3 Galatians 3:15-18

In these few verses Paul spells out in summary fashion the theological implications of what he has been arguing since the *propositio*, particularly in reference to the promise of the Abrahamic covenant. Here he will counter the arguments of the judaizers in an *ad hominem* fashion (cf Longenecker 1990:125f), focusing on the fact that Christ is the Seed, the Promised One in whom are bound up all the potential and assurances of God's commitment to Abraham.

Paul begins this section at 3:15 by drawing 'an illustration from human practice' (Burton 1921:178; the text is *κατὰ ἄνθρωπον λέγω*, 'I speak according to human terms'). Paul speaks here in terms of an argument from the lesser to the greater (ie, what is true of agreements in the human realm is all the more true of an

agreement between God and humanity). He begins by addressing the 'brothers' with regard to a covenant between people ('Ἀδελφοί,' the vocative of address linked to a verb of saying indicating progression of argument). Paul says that when such a covenant has been ratified, no one changes that agreement by nullification or new stipulations (ὅμως ἀνθρώπου κεκυρωμένην διαθήκην οὐδεὶς ἀθετεῖ ἢ ἐπιδιατάσσει, 'even when a human covenant has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it'). However strictly this assumption may or may not conform to contemporary legal practice (cf Longenecker 1990:128-130), Paul's point is that once a 'testament' is set in force, for all practical purposes that testament established the disposition of one's estate as an expression of one's will. With this conceptual background of the inviolability of a διαθήκη, Paul's thought shifts analogously to the 'agreement' between God and Abraham, that is, God's covenant promise to Abraham (3:16). He writes, 'and, the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his Seed. He does not say, "And to his seeds," as to many, but as to one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ' (τῷ δὲ Ἀβραάμ ἐρρέθησαν αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι καὶ τῷ σπέρματι αὐτοῦ. οὗ λέγει, Καὶ τοῖς σπέρμασιν, ὡς ἐπὶ πολλῶν, ἀλλ' ὡς ἐφ' ἑνός, Καὶ τῷ σπέρματί σου, ὃς ἐστὶν Χριστός). The promises of the covenant, Paul says, were spoken to Abraham and his 'seed.' Paul uses the inherent singularity of the collective noun σπέρματι (Hebrew, שׂרָפָה) to make reference to one individual, Christ. Christ is the 'authentic son of Abraham' (cf Jones 1972:478), the true Seed, through whom 'all the nations' would be blessed. Paul again implicitly references here the

inclusion of the Gentiles in the promise, subtly underscoring the law/faith dichotomy for his Galatian converts.

Paul draws his applicatory conclusions from his analogy of the previous verses at 3:17-18.¹⁰⁰ Completing the thought that he began in those earlier verses, Paul states in verse 17, 'this is what I am saying: the law that appeared 430 years later does not invalidate a covenant previously established by God, to do away with the promise' (τοῦτο δὲ λέγω· διαθήκην προκεκυρωμένην ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ μετὰ τετρακόσια καὶ τριάκοντα ἔτη γεγονὼς νόμος οὐκ ἀκυροῖ, εἰς τὸ καταργῆσαι τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν). The promise to Abraham takes precedence over the law, Paul insists, since it came '430 years before' the law.¹⁰¹ The law cannot, therefore, invalidate the covenant agreement made between God and Abraham. That is, the Mosaic legislation could not supersede the Abrahamic covenant, and the promise is not replaced by nomistic requirements. So Paul concludes that inheritance based upon God's promise cannot be removed by law (3:18). He writes, 'for if the inheritance is based upon law, it is no longer based on promise; but God graciously gave it to Abraham by promise' (εἰ γὰρ ἐκ νόμου ἢ κληρονομία, οὐκέτι ἐξ ἐπαγγελίας· τῷ δὲ Ἀβραάμ δι' ἐπαγγελίας κεχάρισται ὁ θεός). Here Paul ties the promise to 'inheritance,' the concept of God's blessing. Inheritance, though for the most part 'material' in Jewish history, was also understood to be more than material possession in the land. It contained spiritual elements, such as God's favor and relationship with him. Given Paul's argument relative to the promise and the Abrahamic covenant, these are undoubtedly at the forefront of his

thought here. And, Paul says, these spiritual blessings are obtained through promise, not law.

Paul has theologically argued in this section (3:15-18) for the salvific priority of the Abrahamic covenant and its promised Seed, Jesus Christ. Just as no one sets aside agreements among people, Paul says, it is also true that the agreement (covenant) between God and Abraham (and by extension Abraham's Seed, Jesus Christ) is not set aside or annulled by the giving of the law some 430 years later. The inheritance intrinsic to the promise, therefore, cannot be claimed on the basis of law. It comes as a result of promise. So again in this section Paul implicitly underscores the salvific priority of faith and promise, as over against 'works of the law.'

6.1.3.2 Galatians 3:19-4:11

In the verses making up the following two sections (3:19-4:7, 'Against nomism;' 4:8-11, 'Paul's concern for the Galatians'), Paul should not be understood to be digressing from his previous argument, as he is usually understood to be. Paul is actually advancing his case against his judaizing opponents, in terms now not of legalism, but of their insistence upon a nomistic lifestyle (cf Longenecker 1990:135f). In the course of his argumentation, Paul will speak of the purpose of the law (3:19-25) and the implications of his argument for spiritual relationships ('in Christ,' 3:26-29, and 'an illustration of relationships,' 4:1-7). This will be followed by Paul's expression of concern for the Galatians, an expression that is based upon his 'relationship' to the Galatians as the founder of their church and as the

apostle to the Gentiles. The analysis of this section will be brief, following only the main lines of Paul's thought. This analysis is included here for the sake of demonstrating the coherency and consistency, as well as the completeness, of Paul's case against 'works of the law.'

As Paul's argument progresses in light of his preceding reasoning, he must answer the inevitable question, 'Why the law?' The law was positive and necessary, he says, due to sin and sinfulness (*παράβατον*, used with *ἕνεκα* in a prepositional phrase, and thus translated 'on account of, for the sake of, transgressions').¹⁰² 'Because of transgressions,' that is, because humanity is sinful and that sin must be both restrained and shown to be sin, God gave the law to Israel, his 'chosen' covenant people. As succinctly stated by Fung, the law was given 'to make wrongdoing a legal offense' (1988:159). Paul's point, in other words, is not that the law created sin, but that the law revealed the true nature of humanity's unlawful deeds.¹⁰³ The law was added (*προστέθη*, the 'it' of this aorist passive verb referring to the 'law,' which came historically after the Promise) to be a temporary, subordinate restriction placed upon humanity until Christ should come (cf Burton 1921:188; Bruce 1982b:176). The validity of the law as a revelatory agent ceased at the coming of Christ, who is the consummate revelation of God's character and person (cf Hebrews 1:1-4). The law, ordained through the mediating agency of angels, made humanity's powerlessness and helplessness more visible, until the Seed should come.¹⁰⁴

Was the law antagonistic to the Promise, then? 'Μη γένοιτο,' Paul responds, 'May it never be!' But because all humanity is in the sinful condition alluded to earlier (at verse 19), all are soteriologically helpless (verse 22). No amount of law or 'law-works' identity can remedy that condition. If law could have remedied that situation, Paul asserts, righteousness before God would have been based upon law and Christ would not have suffered in humanity's behalf (cf 2:21). As it is, all humanity is condemned by law, in order that all humanity might be made potential heirs of the Promise that comes by faith (3:22; cf Rm 5:12-21).

Paul continues his explanation (3:23). He says, 'Before this faith came (τὴν πίστιν, the τὴν functioning here as an article of previous reference, ie, alluding to the previously-mentioned faith that is like Abraham's),¹⁰⁵ the law 'kept [the Jews] in custody' (ἐφρουρούμεθα, descriptive imperfect) until the time for 'this faith' to come. The law was, therefore, a 'pedagogue' to lead to Christ (παιδαγωγός, 'one who leads a child,' ie, instructor, administrator of discipline; cf Longenecker 1982:53). That is, the law both kept (or guarded) and disciplined the people of God until Christ. Burton remarks that a pedagogue was 'a slave employed by Greek and Roman families to have general charge of a boy in the years from about six to sixteen, watching over his outward behavior and attending him' (1921:200). By analogy, then, Paul is demonstrating both (1) the minority of the one under a pedagogue; and (2) the temporary nature of such an arrangement. This is the point of 3:25, where Paul goes on to say that since 'this faith' has come, a pedagogue is no longer necessary.

Through 'this faith' in Jesus Christ, the Galatians are all, like Abraham, children of God (3:26), having been baptized into Christ and 'clothed' in him (3:27; cf 1 Cor 12:13). So there is no salvific need for 'works of the law,' as the pedagogical nature of the law itself was temporary, never intended by God for salvation. It was intended, rather, only as a 'check' upon sin and as a 'keeper' of his people, Israel.

Now (since 'this faith' has come, the *vûv* or 'in Christ' period) Paul says, there are no distinctions based upon law to be maintained (3:28-29). All believers are incorporated into the promise to Abraham by virtue of their incorporation into Jesus Christ. They have become heirs, Abraham's 'spiritual' offspring, because they are ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ according to faith in the promise, not according to 'works of the law.'

Picking up on the 'heir' theme, Paul illustrates his point further (4:1-7). The heir, while a minor child, has no control over family assets or even his or her own inheritance. The heir in this situation is 'as a slave' (cf Burton 1921:211ff). Even though the heir stands to 'own it all' someday, by virtue of inheritance, he or she is under guardians (ἐπιτρόπους) and stewards (οἰκονόμους) until the date appointed by the father. This, Paul argues, is analogous to the position of Israel under the law (here identified as 'elemental things,' στοιχεῖα, ie, the things belonging to an elementary age characterized by chronological or developmental immaturity; cf Fung 1988:181ff). The 'bondage' or accountability to the law held until the coming of the Seed. The Seed came in the 'fulness of time' (πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου, 4:4), when

Israel was prepared to enter into maturity through the person and work of Christ. In salvation history, as in the human realm, the Father determined the appropriate moment for the filling up of his promise to Abraham. The promised Seed came 'in order to' (ἵνα, expressing purpose) redeem (ἐξαγοράσῃ) those in bondage to the law, fulfilling the promise by making believers God's children through faith (4:5). Now, by virtue of incorporation into Jesus Christ, the Spirit has been received, and as children, the Galatian believers are able to cry out, 'Abba!' With sins forgiven, acting as children of God, they can live in the Spirit and fulfill the law of Christ, the law of love (cf Rm 13:10).

This thought leads to Paul's expression of anguish over the Galatians' current judaizing tendencies (4:8-11). He reminds the Galatians that before they knew Jesus Christ, they served idols or spirits that 'by nature are no gods' (φύσει μὴ οὖσαν θεοίς). Their practice of nomistic or legalistic ritual law-keeping will return them to an idolatrous activity that, by implied analogy, is like that earlier lifestyle (4:9-10). Paul is afraid that his labor on their behalf, in bringing the gospel to them, praying for them, and perhaps even in writing to them, might come to no purpose if they persist in their judaizing ways. Their legalistic behavior will, in effect, invalidate the reception of the blessings of the promise, inasmuch as they turned away from that promise to embrace nomistic law-keeping as a way of life.¹⁰⁶

Paul ends his argument in this overall section (3:1-4:11) as he began it: righteousness and its attendant ethical lifestyle is a result of faith in God's promise, now displayed in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Such righteousness does not, for

it cannot, come about as a result of 'works of the law.' The law was given by God to the people of Israel for the purpose of protecting them from the ravages of sin. Its purpose, therefore, was to show up sin for what it is, that is, to make humanity aware of the terrible nature and consequences of sin. The law did not contradict God's promise, in that it was never intended to be its replacement. It was a temporary extension of the promise for the good of God's covenant people. When Israel reached a point of readiness for maturity, that maturity came in the person and work of the promised Seed, Jesus Christ. This is illustrated by Paul in terms of the heir and the age of maturity. The heir receives nothing of all that belongs to him or her, until the proper time appointed by the father. In the same way, the believer receives all the blessings of the promise in the age of the Spirit, by virtue of incorporation into Jesus Christ by faith. Paul's anxiety toward the Galatian converts is expressed in these terms. He fears for their position in Christ, due to their desire to live a lifestyle of nomistic and legalistic practice. His implied desire is that the Galatians heed his warnings in these chapters, in order to escape such an existence.

6.2 Conclusion -- The Meaning of ἔργα νόμου in the Argument of Galatians

Paul's intended meaning by his use of ἔργα νόμου has been demonstrated above to indicate legalistic observances related to the Jewish law. The judaizers were attempting to impose ritual observance of 'works of the law' upon the Galatians as a means

for them to become 'complete' or fully obedient Christians. The judaizers' perspective relative to the law was that the Mosaic legislation was the proper (salvific) extension of the Abrahamic covenant. As such, the ἔργα νόμου were a necessary part of Gentile incorporation into the 'people of God.' When Paul argues against 'works of the law' in the epistle to the Galatians, then, he is not attacking Judaism or the Jewish law. He is rather excoriating the judaizers' misappropriation of that law. The judaizers, undoubtedly like certain minority groups within the mainstream of the Judaism of Paul's day, believed the law to be salvific. It is Paul's contention that the law was never intended by God to redeem, but was given only temporarily to protect and discipline the Israelites until Jesus Christ, the promised Abrahamic Seed, came to become a sacrifice for sin.

The argumentation relevant to demonstrating this understanding begins at Galatians 2:11-14. There Paul reminds the Galatians of a confrontation between himself and Peter that the Galatians, and most likely the judaizers, were well aware of. This confrontation took place at Antioch.

Paul challenged Peter at Antioch because of what Paul perceived as Peter's hypocritical actions, the implications of which threatened the truth of the gospel. Peter had been living freely as a Gentile, forsaking Jewish ritualistic lifestyle norms (cf 2:14, ἔθνικῶς...οὐχὶ Ἰουδαϊκῶς ζῆς, ie, eating with Gentiles and eating what they ate, without regard for the Jewish doctrine of purity through separation and dietary restrictions). But when 'some' came to Antioch from Jerusalem, claiming to represent James and the Jerusalem church, Peter ceased his Gentile-like

ways out of fear of the ramifications such behavior might cause the infant church with respect to the Jews (in particular, the fear was for the Jerusalem church as it faced rising pressure from a Jewish nationalistic Zealot movement). Paul assailed Peter's actions, as he could not tolerate what this 'turn-about' behavior insinuated for his Gentile converts. The implications of Peter's actions served to reinforce the position that Gentile converts to Christianity must become 'practical Jews' in order to be fully acceptable to God (forcing the Gentiles to *Ἰουδαίῳ*, to 'judaize,' ie, 'become Jews'). This was exactly the position of Paul's Galatian opponents, and exactly the reason Paul recounts the Antioch incident here in his Galatian epistle.

Natural-born Jews, Paul says, understand that justification does not come by 'works of the law,' but by faith (2:15-16). This accords well with what mainstream Judaism of Paul's day taught, as the emphasis in one's salvific relationship to God was upon God's grace, and not upon human effort. The judaizers, however, and perhaps a segment within the Judaism Paul knew, were teaching the salvific priority of the Mosaic covenant as an extension of the Abrahamic (ie, the priority and permanency of the Mosaic covenant). Psalm 143:2 is quoted by Paul to remind Peter and the others of the fact that 'by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.' In addressing these 'matters of agreement' between himself and his fellow Jewish Christians, Paul has also refuted the 'legalism' of his opponents ('legalism' being the judaizers' insistence upon *Torah* observance as the means to become 'complete' Christians, or to 'gain favor' with God; ie, the necessity to 'do' something in order to become God's children). Paul and

Peter and the other Jewish Christians, by virtue of their natural birth into the Jewish nation, enjoyed certain covenant privileges that did not pertain to the 'Gentile sinners.' Nevertheless, Paul suggests, these privileges did not equate to righteousness before God. Even though they were 'born Jews,' they understood that the basis for a salvific relationship to God was faith, and now that faith was to be expressed in terms of the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Paul is next forced to argue that this 'law-free' gospel does not make Christ the 'promoter' of sin (2:17-21). The judaizers, themselves Jewish Christians, sensed the need for an ethical lifestyle as God's people. This need was acute with respect to the Galatian congregation, as some there were displaying libertinistic tendencies. Thus the judaizers' 'gospel' of nomistic practice made a certain amount of sense in terms of the Galatian situation. Yet Paul insists that to return to the law, even as a nomistic means of 'regulation of relationship' for the Christian, was to rebuild what was taken away in Christ. Those who vacillated between living *ἔθνικῶς* and *Ἰουδαϊκῶς* due to the insistence of others were those who risked nullifying the grace of God. Paul's (salvific) relationship to God was based solely upon the person and work of Christ, not 'works of the law.' Therefore his lifestyle was consistent with regard to the law. While Paul believed that one could, as a Jew, express devotion to God through the Jewish law, that law did nothing to 'earn' relationship to God. To believe and behave otherwise was to disgrace the Christ who loved and died for humanity.

Paul's argument advances as he challenges the Galatians to remember specifically the basis for God's work among them (3:1-5). It was by faith, he asserts, and not 'works of the law' that the Galatians received the Spirit and saw God do miracles among them. The Galatians must understand, Paul insists, that the work of God among them will only continue on that same basis, that is, by faith. They cannot 'begin' with God on the basis of faith and then return to 'works of the law.'

That relationship with God is based upon faith, Paul continues, is illustrated both by the life of Abraham and scriptural criteria (3:6-14). The great patriarch, the model believer for both Jews and Christians, was justified by God and related to him on the basis of faith. Those who emulate Abraham's faith are then the true children of God. God had told Abraham as much when he promised to bless both Abraham and 'all the nations' through faith in his promise. The 'works of the law,' unlike an Abrahamic-type faith that brings blessing, bring only a relationship of 'curse' to those who attempt to relate salvifically to God through them. But for the believer, Christ became a curse when he was crucified and hung upon the 'tree,' and those who exercise faith in him receive the blessing of Abraham through that faith.

Paul next argues theologically for the salvific priority of the Abrahamic covenant and the promised Seed, Jesus Christ (3:15-18). The 'agreement' between God and Abraham, like agreements between people, cannot be set aside through the law. The inheritance God promised to Abraham was to come about through God's faithfulness to his own promise, in the person of the Seed, Jesus Christ. This inheritance could not then be received through

'works of the law,' as the law came '430 years' after the promise. The promise therefore has priority over the law.

This brings Paul to the necessary defense of the giving of the law and living an ethical lifestyle not characterized by Jewish nomism (3:19-4:7). Since inheritance (salvific relationship to God) is based upon faith, yet the Jews had received the law as a divine institution, the purpose and function of the law must be clarified. Paul does so by indicating that the law's purpose was to make humanity aware of sin, and its function was to 'hedge in' Israel (for both protective and disciplinary reasons) until the time was right for the coming of the Messiah, the promised Seed. The law acted as an entity leading Israel to the knowledge of sin and the need for a relationship with God based upon faith. 'Works of the law' could not bring such a relationship. In addition, life in Christ is a life of maturity, of unity and blessing as children of God through the realization of the promise made to Abraham. Paul illustrates this new relationship by drawing an analogy from human experience. The experience he uses is one that also has to do with receiving that which is promised, as Paul focuses upon the Greco-Roman world's custom relating to inheritance. As long as the heir is a child, Paul says, he or she will not realize the privileges or prerogatives of ownership. This must await the time set by the heir's father. In a similar way, believers under the law were under the 'tutelage' of the law until the time set by the Father, the time of maturity that could come only in and through the promised Seed, Jesus Christ. Jesus was born 'in the fulness of time,' that is, at the appropriate time as established by the Father. Now, the restrictive function

of the law is no longer necessary, as believers are 'complete' in Christ (cf Col 2:10) and living in the age of maturity.

This allows Paul to articulate now his burden for the Galatians (4:8-11). He is concerned that they will return to the 'elementary' things of nomistic practice, and fail to live according to their mature status. Paul speaks strongly of his fear for them, a fear that is prompted by their apparent willingness to forsake the way of faith and return to 'works of the law' for their relationship to God. This, he suggests, would be a grave mistake.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 6

1. Cf Betz 1979:16-18; Longenecker 1990:cx-cxiii. Certain other analyses of Galatians also prove helpful for determining the flow of Paul's thought, though not strictly from an epistolary/rhetorical perspective. Note Bruce 1982b:57-58; Burton 1921:lxii-lxxiv; Fung 1988:104-111; and for an attempt to structure this epistle on a chiasmic scheme, see Bligh 1969:37-42, especially 39f.
2. On that issue see especially the critique of this type of reconstruction by Ogg 1968:92-98.
3. This statement remains true whether a given interpreter in this majority holds to an Ac 11:27-30 = Gl 2 position or the position that Ac 15 = Gl 2.
4. There is of course a rich and varied history of exegesis and historical enquiry surrounding this incident, ranging from the question of Paul's relationship with Peter and the other Jerusalem apostles to the question of the timing of this incident relative to Acts 15. For the views of the ancient church and others from that time, note what is generally understood as a thinly veiled defense of Peter as over against Paul in the *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies*, chiefly homily 17.19; cf also Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 1.20; *idem*, *De Praescriptione Haereticorum* 23; Irenaeus *Adversus Haereses* 3.12.15; and Origen *Contra Celsum* 5.64. For a fuller treatment of these and related issues from the modern perspective, see Baur 1963 (Reprint), 1:54-55; Dunn 1983:3-57; Gasque 1989; Lightfoot 1865:128-132; Lüdemann 1984:77-79, 101-105; Mussner 1977:146-154 and F Overbeck [1877] 1968.
5. Cf also Longenecker 1990:73f; and for a moderately more nuanced view of this Jewish 'nationalism' of the period, see Dunn 1983:5-7.
6. The φοβούμενος τοὺς ἐκ περιτομῆς of 2:12 indicates Peter's fear of these nationalistic, nomistic Jews, as already noted by Longenecker, as suggested by Paul's immediately previous use in Gl 2:7-9 of ἡ περιτομή; cf also Rm 3:30; 4:9, 12; 15:8; Eph 2:11; Col 3:11; 4:11; Tt 1:10.

7. Bruce notes that Paul refers to Peter's and the others' separation as ὑπόκρισις here 'because it sprang from expediency, not principle' (Bruce 1982b:131). Bauckham (1979:61-70) goes so far as to say that Paul's failure to mention Barnabas anywhere in the Galatian epistle is due to this 'desertion' by Barnabas from their previous mutual teaching while among the Galatians.
8. Note here also Burton 1921:112-113, '[Paul] interpreted the creation of such a situation as a forcing of the Gentile Christians to judaize.'
9. As translated by Wilkens 1972, 8:568 note 51. Paul expressed himself by means of a periphrastic pluperfect participle in order to indicate the stark intensity of his view of the state of Peter's condemnation at that previous juncture. Also in this connection, Bruce (1982b:129) illustrates Paul's use of the verb καταγινώσκω in his condemnation of Peter for hypocrisy by Josepus' remark on the Essenes' avoidance of oaths due to their belief that 'he who is not believed unless he invokes God is condemned already' (ἤδη...καταγινώσκει; cf Josephus BJ 2.135).
10. According to Betz, Paul's description of this separation in the terminology ἀπορίσεν ἑαυτὸν indicates just such a ritual or cultic separation; cf Betz 1973:96. This cultic separation by the Jews from the Gentiles came to full expression during the intertestamental period (cf Dunn 1988c, 1:lxix). The attitude of certain Jews toward Gentiles in this regard may be illustrated by Jubilees 22:16, 'Separate yourself from the Gentiles, and do not eat with [or like] them, and do not perform deeds like theirs. And do not become associates of theirs. Because their deeds are defiled, and all their ways are contaminated, and despicable, and abominable' (translation is that of Wintermute 1985:98). It is this specific attitude Paul encounters as he is attacked by the 'judaizers.'
11. Betz considers Ἰουδαΐζειν to be 'not quite synonymous' with Ἰουδαϊκὸς ζῆς, 'to live as a Jew,' describing rather the 'artificial behavior' of the Galatian converts; cf Betz 1979:112, note 497. Cf also Dunn 1983:26-27.
12. Cf Longenecker 1990:78; and again, Dunn 1983:7-11, 26-27.
13. This is based upon the distinction between Ἰουδαϊκὸς ζῆς and Ἰουδαΐζειν; cf Betz 1979:112; Longenecker 1990:78. The soteriological implications of the judaizers' position included the understanding that Ἰουδαϊκὸς ζῆς was tantamount to securing one's place in the people of

God, based upon the Mosaic covenant. As Betz notes, 'In Paul's view, the implications of this doctrine show what the doctrine itself means' (1979:119). Sanders mysteriously interprets this statement in 2:14 as Paul 'say[ing] simply, Gentiles cannot live by the law' (PPJ 496). This understanding seems to miss entirely the fact that Paul is clearly not addressing the Gentiles' ability or inability to live by law at this point. He is asking Peter how Peter could live 'as a Gentile,' throwing off the nomistic practices of Judaism, and then expect the Gentiles to 'become [practical] Jews.' Räisänen seems to comprehend the soteriological nature of this encounter from Paul's perspective, but at the same time accuses Paul of falsely attacking Peter, who '[p]robably...did not in any way attempt to "compel the Gentiles to live in a Jewish way"' (1986b:259). While it is true that only one side of the conflict's situation and argumentation is represented in the text of Galatians, it nevertheless must be regarded as methodologically indefensible to base one's exegesis of this text on what Peter 'probably' attempted to do or had in mind in this situation.

14. According to Longenecker, the *propositio* is the 'central affirmation' of Galatians; cf 1990:83.
15. Such intricacies seem to trouble the majority of commentators. Cf Bruce 1982b:136-137; Burton 1921:117-118; Fung 1988:113; Hendriksen 1968:96ff; Lightfoot 1865:113-114. This difficulty is usually solved by positing some sort of melding or blending of Paul's words to Peter with his theological argumentation. Typical in this regard is the statement by Fung to the effect that, 'Paul's recital of his address to Peter in Antioch is progressively colored by polemic against his Galatian detractors and, as it were, gradually shades into a theological discussion with his readers' (Fung 1988:105). Lightfoot comments that the question of where Paul's rehearsal of his words to Peter leave off and his remarks to the Galatians begin is 'impossible to answer' (1865:113f). Cf also Matera 1992:97f.
16. As Longenecker notes (1990:82), this first argument will be explicated at 3:1-18. Cf also Winger 1992:132f; and Betz writes, 'Paul begins the *propositio* by stating what he assumes is common ground between him and Jewish Christianity' (1979:115).
17. Thielmann's (correct) understanding of the role of faith in greater Judaism of the period is diametrically opposed to the 'traditional' Christian understanding. Betz (1979:116) states the traditional position clearly when he remarks that here in 2:16 Paul's conviction that 'man is not justified by the works of the law' is 'the denial of the orthodox (Pharisaic)

doctrine of salvation.' This understanding of greater Judaism fails to do justice to the gracious God of the rabbis (so Sanders *PPJ*), as well as incorrectly attributing to the Judaism of Paul's day a 'normative' theology. As noted by Ferguson (1987:316, 425), 'Judaism was hardly a single entity in the first century....At any given time it would be possible to find Jews believing almost anything and everything, and this is especially true at the beginning of the Christian era. To list the elements of Jewish "orthodoxy" is an all but impossible task. It could even be argued that Judaism was more a matter of "orthopraxy" than of "orthodoxy."' While the understanding of Betz and others does apparently reflect the position of Paul's judaizing opponents (who were a segment within Judaism, until Christianity and Judaism were understood as separate religions), it is an injustice to the greater Judaism of Paul's day to attribute indiscriminately the attitude of one part to the whole.

18. Dunn writes, 'The significance of Paul's stand should not be underestimated...the principle of "justification through faith" applied not simply to the acceptance of the gospel in conversion, but also to the whole of the believer's life....justification through faith was not simply a statement of how the believer entered into God's covenanted promises...; it must also regulate his life as a believer' (1983:36-37).
19. This is what Sanders refers to as the 'standard distinction' between being a righteous Jew and a Gentile 'sinner;' cf 1983:72f. Note also Rm 3:1-2; 9:4-5.
20. The term 'Gentile sinners' (literally 'sinners of the Gentiles,' ἐξ ἐθνῶν ἁμαρτωλοί) is a colloquialism used by Jews to express the fact that Gentiles were outside the covenant (cf Fung 1988:113). Dunn explains ἁμαρτωλοί here in 2:15 as a technical term of the period; he writes, '[This] was a word which had by this time in Jewish circles developed a particularly Jewish [flavor]. It denoted not just a "sinner" in general terms, but a sinner determined as such precisely by his relation to the law. "Sinner" was becoming more and more a technical term for someone who either broke the law or did not know the law....it was probably a word used of the Gentile believers by the men from James to express their disagreement or dismay at the table-fellowship being practised by Peter and the other Jewish believers. And it probably had the connotation of "unclean" (= Gentile = sinner)' (1990a:150-151; emphasis is Dunn's). This assessment is accurate, and lends emphasis to the above interpretation of the situation at Antioch. However, Dunn's restriction of the ἔργα νόμου in Galatians only to sociological factors

is unwarranted (cf Räisänen 1984-85:544f). Certainly τὸ 'Ἰουδαϊκὸς ζῆλος' includes the Jewish nomistic factors of circumcision, Sabbath and feast day observances, and dietary restrictions. However, Paul also has in mind here the dichotomy between the two covenants, the Mosaic and Abrahamic, as now (vûv) expressed in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

21. Walter Kaiser has demonstrated that an accurate understanding of the Sinai covenant is that it extends the Abrahamic, particularly in terms of *relationship*; thus, the Mosaic legislation was intended only for maintenance of relationship, and not in any salvific sense (Kaiser 1971:21ff).
22. That is, the 'knowing that a person cannot be justified by works of the law' is the attendant circumstance to what Paul intends by the phrase 'born Jews.'
23. Thus Sanders, *contra* Hübner (1978:183), is correct when he says in regard to this statement that Paul is 'not [writing] against Judaism' (1983:19; 51, note 18). And Räisänen (1986b:162ff) is essentially incorrect in his assumption that Paul has created here a new redemptive system.
24. Taking here the introductory ὅτι as a ὅτι *recitativum*, ie, repeating a statement from conventional wisdom; cf Longenecker 1990:83.
25. Fung also makes the important observation that Peter will independently confirm his agreement to this principle in his speech at the Jerusalem Council (Ac 15:7-11, especially verses 9 and 11; cf Fung 1988: 113).
26. As Deidun (1981:47) expresses this point, 'The *sola fide* theme is formally introduced in 2:16....to attempt to obtain justification on the basis of one's own ποιεῖν is to reject God's χάρις with contempt, and since God's χάρις is historically realized in Christ's death ὑπὲρ μου, to render Christ's death pointless.'
27. Dunn maintains that the ἐν μὴ of 2:16 refers to a broad provision relating to the whole of the preceding statement. Commenting upon Paul's 'progressive thought shift' there, he writes, '...in this clause [2:16a] faith in Jesus is described as a *qualification* to justification by works of law, not (yet) as an antithetical alternative. Seen from the perspective of Jewish Christianity at that time, the most obvious meaning is that *the only restriction on justification by works of law is faith in Jesus as Messiah*....in this first clause, covenantal nomism itself is not challenged or called in question -- restricted,

qualified, more precisely defined in relation to Jesus as Messiah, but not denied...[Now, 2:16b] Paul followed a different logic....what is of grace through faith cannot depend...on a particular ritual response. If God's verdict in favor of an individual comes to effect through his faith, then it is dependent on nothing more than that. So, in repeating the contrast between justification by works of law and justification through faith in Jesus Christ, Paul alters it significantly: what were initially juxtaposed as complementary, are now posed as straight alternatives' (Dunn 1990a:195f; cf 244-246. Emphasis original). This understanding of Galatians 2:16 allows Dunn to posit Paul's meaning in 2:16a as indicating that 'covenantal nomism' is compatible with faith in Jesus as Messiah, but then objecting to 'works of the law' in 2:16b. Dunn then concludes that Paul is objecting to the 'identity markers' of Judaism because they are exclusive of Gentiles. Such an understanding of Galatians 2:16 has been said to 'run counter to Greek idiom' and is thus tenuous, at best (cf Bruce 1988:125; Silva 1991:346f). This verse, and the whole of Galatians, indicates that Paul is concerned with far more than just 'identity markers.'

28. Winger (1992:130f) provides a similar chiasmic scheme for this verse.
29. That is not to say that Protestant scholars have not been impressed with the ethical nature of the terms; note especially in that regard Burton 1921:119f, 460-474, and in particular 468ff. Burton there indicates that the 'emphasis' is upon the forensic element of the words, but that there is attendant to the forensic a 'consequent subordination of the moral element' (1921:469). Note also the discussions of Bruce 1982b:-138f; Hendriksen 1968:97-99; Reumann 1982:56ff.
30. This despite the reservations expressed by Sanders (PPJ 492-495); cf also Longenecker 1990:85.
31. Or, as Ziesler terms it, 'behavior within relationship' (1972:212); in this regard note also the remarks of Dahl 1977:108-110.
32. If it is argued that it cannot be demonstrated that the content of the judaizers' teaching included this understanding, it must at the very least be maintained that this was Paul's theological interpretation of the judaizers' teaching, as he recognized the soteriological implications of their message.
33. Cf Chapters One through Three; and as an illustration of the vastness of this topic, note again the exhaustive bibliography in Räisänen 1986b:270-297.

34. In this regard see Wright 1991:137-156, especially 141-144; and again, cf Kaiser 1971:21ff.
35. It is important to reiterate here that Paul's judaizing opponents represented only *one* faction of the Judaism of the period, and not 'normative' Judaism or Judaism as a whole. However, ample evidence exists for the probability that at least a segment of the Judaism of Paul's day had a 'legalistic' or 'perfunctorily ritualistic' orientation toward the law, and at least some of these (former Pharisees or priests? Cf Ac 15: 1, 5) became Paul's Jewish-Christian opponents as he proclaimed the gospel.
36. Note also Thielmann 1989:62f; and this *contra* Räisänen 1986b:163, where he insists that Paul here attacks Judaism, and in effect 'replaced an old soteriological system by a new one, works of the law by faith in Christ.'
37. Cf Mt 5:17-20; Christ did not 'annul' or 'replace' the law, but embodied the meeting of its surpassing moral demands. Note Grier 1991:165-177, especially 173-174.
38. The statement of 3:12, 'the one who practices them shall live by them' (quoting Lv 18:5) is no necessary contradiction to this statement: whatever else may be made of Paul's intention there, the statement taken in its context in Leviticus demands nothing more than the promise of 'life' referring to 'the good life' of God's blessing in the promised land (cf Wenham 1979: 253; Kaiser 1971:19-28). However, Paul's argument in 3:12 has more to do with the mutual exclusivity of faith and law than with the quantifying of the 'life' which is involved in either case.
39. Cf Longenecker 1990:85; Moo 1983:97, note 77.
40. Cf also Stendahl 1976:5f, who was then partially correct, in the sense of insistence upon Jew-Gentile equality as *one* factor in Paul's concern.
41. This *contra* Sanders 1983:29f; 171-179.
42. Paul's understanding of Jew-Gentile relationships as based upon the work of Christ has recently been helpfully structured along the lines of his biblical theology of the significance of the Christ-event, ie, in the $\mu\omicron\tau\epsilon$ - $\nu\omicron\nu$ contrasts in his writings. Cf C B Hoch, Jr 1992:98-126, especially 102f. For a thorough discussion of the significance of the $\sigma\upsilon\nu$ - compounds for Paul's understanding of Jew-Gentile relationships in the body of Christ, see C B Hoch, Jr 1982:175-183.

43. Further on the Eph passage, see Bruce 1984b:249-416; Salmond 1903:201-395.
44. The term 'legalistic' is used here as deduced from the nuance of Paul's usage of 'law' in this context; cf Bruce 1982b:137f; Cranfield 1964:55. Longenecker (1990:86) concurs, as he writes, 'relations between the Mosaic law and the message of the gospel became antithetical, with legalism the result.' Moule (1967:392) states, 'Paul saw Christ as the fulfillment of law, when law means God's revelation of himself and of his character and purpose, but as the condemnation and termination of any attempt to use law to justify oneself. And it is this latter use of law which may conveniently be called..."legalism"' (emphasis in original). Also in this regard Dunn indicates that 'the covenant promise and law had become too inextricably identified with ethnic Israel as such, and so led to...a "righteousing" view of the law' (Dunn 1988c, 1:lxxi).
45. As noted also by Dunn 1988c, 1:154; Schreiner 1991:231f; Westerholm 1988:116f.
46. Gaston's charge of 'theological bias' (as the cause of one coming to the conclusion of *ἔργα νόμου* as an objective genitive) is one to which he is also vulnerable. His self-conscious reaction to what he considers to be 'anti-Judaism' forces him to the artifice of forced exegesis in order to prove his (presupposed) theological point. Cf Gaston 1987:1-14.
47. Thus the judaizers' position was both theological and sociological; however, the sociological overtones of the judaizers' position were problematic for Paul only insofar as they were argued to be necessary salvifically.
48. 'Justified,' ie, declared righteous, with an attendant righteous lifestyle to be assumed; justification is the relational forensic category of acquittal for sins, with the consequent ethical ('right') behavior pattern presumed as a natural result of having been justified.
49. Note the discussion of the centrality of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ for Christian faith in Bultmann 1968, 6:203; cf also Sanders *PPJ* 445.
50. This nomistic way of life was expressed through (but certainly not limited to) circumcision, Sabbath and feast day observances, and the dietary restrictions. Note Winger 1992:137f, note 58; and 158, where he writes, 'Paul sees Jewish νόμος in essentially human

terms, as the way of life of the Jewish people rather than the command of God' (emphasis is Winger's).

51. Or, as Hooker has stated it, '[this] question is one which cannot be settled on the basis of appeals to grammatical construction alone' (1989:321).
52. In this regard note also Westerholm 1988:111f, note 12; Dunn 1988c, 1:177f; Murray 1968:363-374.
53. This position may be found in the great majority of works on the passage in question; in fact, many commentaries do not even raise the issue of whether this phrase may be understood subjectively. Most notable among scholars deciding in favor of the objective reading are the following: Burton 1921, *Galatians* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 121f, 481-485); C F D Moule 1956-57, *The biblical conception of faith. ExpTim* 68, 157; J Barr 1961, *The semantics of biblical language* (London: Oxford University Press, 161-205); J Murray 1968, *Romans* (NICNT combined edition; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans); C E B Cranfield 1975, 79, *Romans* (2 vols; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1:203, note 2); H D Betz 1979, *Galatians* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 117-118); A Hultgren 1980, *The πίστις Χριστοῦ formulations in Paul. NovT* 22, 248-263; F F Bruce 1982 *Commentary on Galatians* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 138-139); W Johnson 1987, *The paradigm of Abraham in Galatians 3:6-9. TrinJ* 8 NS, 179-199; J D G Dunn 1988, *Romans* (2 vols; WBC. Waco: Word, Inc, 1:178); J Barclay 1988, *Obeying the truth: a study of Paul's ethics in Galatians* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark); C H Cosgrove 1988, *The cross and the Spirit: a study in the argument and theology of Galatians* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press); R Y K Fung 1988, *Galatians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans); S Westerholm 1988, *Israel's law and the Church's faith: Paul and his recent interpreters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans); and G W Hansen 1989, *Abraham in Galatians: epistolary and rhetorical contexts* (JSNTS 29; Sheffield: JSOT Press).
54. Some espousing this view are as follows: J Haussleiter 1891, *Die Glaube Jesu Christi und der christliche Glaube* (Leipzig: Dorffling & Franke); *idem*, 1895 *Was versteht Paulus unter christlichen Glauben?*, in *Theologische Abhandlungen* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 159-181); G Kittel 1906, *πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ bei Paulus. TSK* 79, 419-436; K Barth 1933, *The epistle to the Romans* (New York: Oxford); A G Herbert 1955, 'Faithfulness' and 'faith.' *Th* 58, 373-379; T F Torrance 1956-57, *One aspect of the biblical conception of faith. ExpTim* 68, 111-114; E Fuchs 1958, *Jesu und der Glaube. ZTK* 55, 170-185; P Vollaton 1960, *Le Christ et la foi: Etude de theologie biblique* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 41-144); R N Longenecker 1964, *Paul: apostle of*

liberty (New York: Harper & Row, 149-152); G M Taylor 1966, The function of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Galatians. *JBL* 85, 58-76; E R Goodenough & A T Kraabel 1967, Paul and the Hellenization of Christianity, in *Religions in antiquity: essays in memory of E R Goodenough* ed J Neusner (Leiden: E J Brill, 35-80); G Howard 1967, On the 'faith of Christ.' *HTR* 61, 459-465; J Bligh 1968, Did Jesus live by faith? *HeyJ* 9, 418-419; M Barth 1969, The faith of the Messiah. *HeyJ* 10, 363-370; G Howard 1970, Romans 3:21 and the inclusion of the Gentiles. *HTR* 64, 223-233; D W B Robinson 1970, 'Faith of Jesus Christ' - a New Testament debate. *RTR* 29, 71-81; G Howard 1973-74, The 'faith of Christ.' *ExpTim* 85, 212-215; R N Longenecker 1974, The obedience of Christ in the theology of the early church, in *Reconciliation and hope: New Testament essays on atonement and eschatology presented to L L Morris on his 60th birthday* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 142-152); G Howard 1979, *Paul: crisis in Galatia. A study in early Christian theology* (SNTSMS 35; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); L T Johnson 1982, Romans 3:21-26 and the faith of Jesus. *CBQ* 44, 77-90; R B Hays 1983, *The faith of Jesus Christ* (SBLDS 56; Chico: Scholar's Press); B Byrne 1986, *Reckoning with Romans* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 79-80); T L Donaldson 1986, The 'curse of the law' and the inclusion of the Gentiles: Galatians 3:13-14. *NTS* 32, 94-112; B R Gaventa 1988, The singularity of the gospel: a reading of Galatians, in *SBL seminar papers* ed E H Lovering, Jr (Atlanta: Scholar's Press, 17-26); M D Hooker 1989, πίστις Χριστοῦ. *NTS* 35, 321-342; S K Stowers 1989, Ἐκ πίστεως and διὰ τῆς πίστεως in Romans 3:30. *JBL* 108, 665-674; D Campbell 1990, πίστις Χριστοῦ: a new solution (paper read in SBL pauline epistles section); C B Cousar 1990, *A theology of the cross: the death of Jesus in the pauline letters* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 39-40); R N Longenecker 1990 *Galatians* (WBC. Waco: Word, Inc); and R B Hays 1991, πίστις and pauline Christology: what is at stake? in *SBL seminar papers* ed D J Lull (Atlanta: Scholar's Press, 714-729).

55. This despite the persuasive and well-argued comments of Hooker 1989:321-342 and Winger 1992:139-141. Winger states that, unlike the analogous genitival uses of πίστις found in Gl 3:22 (and 3:26 in P46); Rm 3:22, 26; Eph 3:12 and Phlp 3:9, Gl 2:16 is 'less clear.' He defends the subjective reading by stating that otherwise Paul is saying, "We knew we had to believe, so we believed" (1992:139). But Paul is surely rehearsing here the historical progression of his and the other Christian Jews' faith: by virtue of their Jewish heritage they knew that justification came not 'by the works of the law,' but by faith (faith like Abraham's; cf Gl 3; Rm 4); and because they are chronologically after the Christ-event, they were better able to

recognize the redemptive deficiency of the law and so exercise faith in Jesus Christ.

56. Paul never conceptually separates Jesus' person from his work (ie, his earthly ministry [obedience], suffering and death). Pertinent here are the words of Bultmann: 'to believe in Christ Jesus....means to believe that Jesus died and rose' (1968, 6:203). Also note Bornkamm 1971:141, 'Paul never defines faith. The nature of faith is given in the *object* to which faith is directed' (emphasis added). Jesus Christ as the *object* of faith includes for Paul the concept of Jesus' obedient life, suffering and death: cf Rm 5:19; 2 Cor 5:14-15, 21; Phlp 2:5-8. This means that to have faith in Jesus Christ is to express, as an *element* of one's faith, a confidence in his 'faithfulness.'
57. That is, the judaizers' demand for *Torah* observance as the means to become 'complete' Christians or to 'gain favor' with God; cf Longenecker 1990:82f, 95.
58. This in spite of the comments to the contrary made by Betz (1979:119f).
59. Cf Lambrecht 1977-78:489f; Betz 1979:120; Bruce 1982b:141; Longenecker 1990:90.
60. Räisänen misses the ironic nature of this statement, but does perceive Paul's defense of Christ, as he writes, 'Paul admits that he has become a "sinner" in a relative (*Torah*-oriented) sense...but denies that this makes Christ a servant of "sin" in a pregnant sense' (1986b:76, note 173). Note also the comments of Winger 1992:142-144; and *pace* Longenecker 1990:89f, who reads this in a broad sense as sin in general.
61. But cf Munck 1959:128f.
62. As Bruce states it, 'One way or another, someone who builds up what he formerly demolished acknowledges his fault' (Bruce 1982b:142).
63. And, in contrast to the position of Räisänen on this verse (1986b:47f), it is *only in this sense* that Paul argues here 'against' the law.
64. Betz accurately refers to these statements as 'theses,' as one would find in a typical rhetorical *expositio*; cf Betz 1979:121f.
65. This 'full relationship to God' is to be understood as primarily an *ethical* sphere of relationship; cf Burton 1921:134f; Longenecker 1990:91f. And, the concept of 'living to God' as continued relationship with him was not unknown in the Judaism of Paul's day. As pointed out by Longenecker (1990:91) and Matera (1992:103), 4

Maccabees 7:19 and 16:25 both refer to such a relational use of the term ζῆν τῷ θεῷ. 4 Maccabees 7:19 reads, 'πιστεύοντες ὅτι θεῷ οὐκ ἀποθνήσκουσιν, ὥσπερ οὐδὲ οἱ πατριάρχαι ἡμῶν Ἀβραὰμ καὶ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακώβ, ἀλλὰ ζῶσιν τῷ θεῷ ('believing that to God they do not die, just as our patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did not [die], but live to God'). The use and conceptuality at 4 Maccabees 16:25 is similar.

66. Cf Dunn 1977:195, '...union with Christ for Paul is characterized not by lofty peaks of spiritual excitement and ecstasy...but more typically by self-giving love, by the cross - union with Christ is nothing if it is not union with Christ at his death.' Emphasis is Dunn's.
67. The variant θεοῦ καὶ Χριστοῦ has strong support (p46, B, D*, G, etc), but is surely to be rejected in favor of the reading given here; cf Metzger 1975:593.
68. Again, righteousness is for Paul both forensic, in the sense of 'justification,' and ethical, a lifestyle of obedience and 'conformance to the image' of Christ (Rm 8:29), as Paul has stated in 2:16. '[T]hrough the law' here is the conceptual equivalent of the 'works of the law' in verse 16.
69. H R Lemmer has recently indicated that Paul did, indeed, use 'all kinds of persuasive strategy' in this section to reinforce for his Galatian converts the truth of his gospel and to deliver them from the 'situation of exigence' they found themselves in. This situation, according to Lemmer, involved the Galatians in 'unwittingly finding themselves in an impending spiritual existential crisis,' as the opponents of Paul applied coercion to attempt to dissuade the Galatians from Paul's gospel to their own. This crisis, Lemmer notes, functioned on different levels:
1. There is for the Galatians the risk of the denial of the actual message from God (1:6-9); the experience of faith (3:1-5); God himself (1:6; 3:5; 5:8); of the object of their faith, the Christ himself (5:4).
 2. The Galatians are on the verge of accepting an inferior and specious message and value system, at least as far as Paul is concerned.
 3. There is the possibility of severing the significant and meaningful relationship with God's own emissary to the Gentiles.
 4. They may be under seige to yield to social pressure, since they do not possess the correct identity markers in order to belong to the people of God.

5. As 'objects of expedience' for the opponents, the Galatian converts were subject to power politics.

6. As the result of the former elements of exigence, there would be in the community instability and tensions.

7. The readers face religious slavery.

This impending spiritual crisis forms the exigence in Galatians, which precipitated Paul's employment of various rhetorical mechanisms to allay the situation in which the Galatians found themselves (Lemmer 1992: 359, 361f).

70. Lemmer is undoubtedly correct when he notes that this sudden outburst by Paul actually addresses his opponents in the rhetorical situation (Lemmer 1992:369). Further, this technique of deviation from more customary exposition to insulting rebuke has been identified by Cronjè as *defamiliarisation* (Cronjè 1986; quoted by Lemmer 1992:372), a rhetorical method that employs vocatives and emphasizes the persuasive point being made.
71. As Hays explains the 'shorthand' of his narrative substructure, 'Paul is operating in the "mode of recapitulation"' of his previous teaching; Hays 1983:196-198.
72. This is a common dialogical device, having ancient parallels; cf Betz 1979:132, note 42.
73. The reception of the Spirit is the *sine qua non* of Christianity for Paul, as indicated both here and at 3:5; cf Rm 8:2, 9, 14; 1 Cor 12:13; Gl 5:18; Eph 1:13-14. In the words of Lemmer, '[t]he Spirit becomes a beacon of association, a hallmark, of everything represented by Paul's gospel' (1992:386). Note also Longenecker's discussion of the importance of the Spirit for Paul in Galatians (1990:102).
74. These questions thus contain a powerful 'rational coercion' effect, as the readers are led to conclude that if Paul's argument is valid, by their return to nomism their experience of the Spirit is rendered vain; cf Lemmer 1992:375f.
75. This understanding takes ἀκοή to refer to both the act of hearing and the content that is heard (note Burton 1921:147, 'hearing accompanied by faith'). Cf Bruce 1982b:149; Longenecker 1990:103; Sanders PPJ 482; and *contra* Fung 1988:103ff.

76. Räisänen refers to this antithesis as a 'question-begging alternative.' He goes on to say, '....one would never come to the idea that observance of the law ought to be the source of spiritual gifts, as long as the law is properly viewed' (1986b:189; emphasis is Räisänen's). This is, of course, exactly the point: Paul's converts were in danger of adopting an erroneous view of the law which held the law to be salvific, a view whose implications would demand that the law indeed be the source of every gift of God. Paul states the issue in these terms precisely because he wants the Galatians to see the contradictions inherent in their previous profession and their current behavior.
77. According to Betz, Paul employs at this point the rhetorical device of 'frankness of speech' (Betz 1979:133).
78. This according to Dunn 1970:108, as noted by both Bruce 1982b:149 and Longenecker 1990:103.
79. Longenecker carefully demonstrates that Paul uses these figures to represent two sets of ideas 'in antithetical relation to one another' (1990:103).
80. Note, for example, Lightfoot 1865; Bruce 1982b; Fung 1988.
81. See BAG 633ff, though as Longenecker notes, Josephus Ant 3.312, used there as an example of this type of usage, is uncertain. Note also the discussion of Bruce 1982b:150, who earlier had noted Michaelis' comments (1967:905, note 3) in regard to Josephus, as against A Oepke.
82. Pelser concurs, indicating that in this section the preponderance of the faith-works antithesis as 'fundamentally incompatible and mutually exclusive' entities is intended by Paul not only to emphasize faith, but persuasively to deny 'works' (Pelser 1992, especially 393-400).
83. On this see Betz 1979:136ff; Longenecker 1990:108f; also 1975:19-50, 104-132. The complex question of the New Testament authors' use of Old Testament citations has a long history of discussion and attempted understanding. Of the many articles and monographs addressing this subject, a few of the more notable are as follows: O Michael 1929, *Paulus und seine Bibel* (Gutersloh: Bertelsmann); B M Metzger 1951, The formulas introducing quotations of Scripture in the New Testament and the Mishnah. *JBL* 70, 297-307; C H Dodd 1952, *According to the Scriptures: the substructure of New Testament theology* (London: Nisbet); R Nicole 1958, The New Testament use of the Old Testament, in *Revelation and the Bible* ed C F H Henry

(Grand Rapids: Baker, 137-151); B Gerhardsson 1961, *Memory and manuscript. Oral tradition and written transmission in rabbinic Judaism and early Christianity*, trans E J Sharpe (Lund: Gleerup); C H Dodd [1952] 1963, *The Old Testament in the New* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press. Reprint); J Barr 1966, *Old and New in interpretation: a study of two Testaments* (New York: Harper & Row); C F D Moule 1967-68, Fulfillment words in the New Testament: use and abuse. *NTS* 14, 293-320; R G Bratcher, ed 1967, *Old Testament quotations in the New Testament* (London: United Bible Societies); F F Bruce 1968, *This is that: the New Testament development of some Old Testament themes* (Exeter: Paternoster Press); J Jeremias 1969, Paulus als Hillelit, in *Neotestamentica et Semitica* ed E E Ellis & M Wilcox (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 88-94); E E Ellis 1969, Midrash, Targum and New Testament quotations, in *Neotestamentica et Semitica* ed E E Ellis & M Wilcox (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 61-69); M Black 1971, The Christological use of the Old Testament in the New Testament. *NTS* 18, 1-14; D M Smith, Jr 1972, The use of the Old Testament in the New, in *The use of the Old Testament in the New and other essays* ed J M Ebird (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 3-65); R N Longenecker 1975, *Biblical exegesis in the apostolic period* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans); W J Beecher [1905] 1975, *The prophets and the promise* (Grand Rapids: Baker. Paperback reprint); E E Ellis 1978, *Prophecy and hermeneutic in early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. Paperback edition); S L Johnson, Jr 1980, *The Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan); E E Ellis [1957] 1981, *Paul's use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker. Paperback reprint); R T France [1971] 1982, *Jesus and the Old Testament: his application of Old Testament passages to himself and his mission* (Grand Rapids: Baker. Paperback reprint); and D A Carson and H G M Williamson, eds 1988, *It is written: Scripture citing Scripture. Essays in honor of Barnabas Lindars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

84. Abraham was considered within Judaism to be the model of faithful obedience. Ben Sira says of him, 'Abraham, the great ancestor of a host of nations, no one was ever his equal in glory. He observed the law of the Most High, and entered into a covenant with him. He confirmed the covenant in his own flesh, and proved himself faithful under ordeal' (Sir 44:19-21, NJB). *Jub* 23:10 reads, 'For Abraham was perfect in all his actions with the Lord, and was pleasing through righteousness all the days of his life' (translation is that of Wintermute 1985, 2:100). And 1 Macc 2:52 says, 'Was not Abraham tested and found faithful, was that not considered as justifying him?' (NJB). Betz and Longenecker (1979:139 and 1990:110f, respectively) both point out the fact that this 'righteousness' of

Abraham was considered within Judaism to be the result of his actions, whereas Paul argues that Abraham's faith preceded his actions of obedience. This accords well with the understanding advanced in this thesis, ie, the judaizers interpreted the Abrahamic covenant through the Mosaic, whereas Paul understood the Mosaic legislation to be only a temporary extension of the Promise.

85. Ridderbos has already noted the 'exemplary' role of Abraham here, on linguistic rather than rhetorical grounds, as he says, 'the idea of a norm or measure is contained in *καθώς*' (1953:118, note 1).
86. The emphasis is upon Abraham's belief, not his 'faithfulness;' cf Dunn 1990a:235, note 53; Longenecker 1990:113ff.
87. Räisänen again accuses Paul of begging the question here by 'tacitly identifying Abraham's "faith" with faith in Christ, rather than taking it in the sense of trust in God' (1986b:189; emphasis his). It is clear, however, that Paul does not here directly connect Abraham's faith to the person of Christ, but to the promise of God (Gn 15:6), which was historically realized in the person and work of Christ. It is only *de facto* that Paul makes any association between the promise and the person of Christ. Howard's comment in this connection (1979:63) to the effect that Paul 'would have been laughed off the scene' for posing faith and 'works of the law' as an antithesis because 'faith was the warp and woof of the law' also misses Paul's illustrative use of Abraham as the paradigmatic believer in God's Promise.
88. In this vein Sanders speaks of Paul's view of circumcision 'without complete obedience' as 'worthless' (PPJ 551; cf 1983:27); Räisänen says that Galatians 3:10 is 'nonsense' (1986b:4, note 29), and that the verse teaches that whoever accepts *Torah* must fulfill its totality (1986b:63); Hübner remarks that the curse comes because 'none has complied with the primarily quantitative demand of the law that all - really without exception all - its stipulations be followed out' (1984:38; cf 1973:215-231, in which he argues that Paul was a Shammaite, expecting 100% obedience to the law); from another standpoint, T R Schreiner (1984:151-160) argues that theologically Paul insists that the law demands perfect - complete - obedience, and that is why Paul taught that 'only Christ could remove the curse from humanity' (1984:159). In keeping with this understanding, one should not overlook E Schürer, who speaks of Gentile converts to Judaism of this time period. He writes, 'those who underwent circumcision presumably undertook thereby the obliga-

tion to observe the entire law to its full extent' (1986 revised edition, 3:164).

89. Betz notes here ms A and the text of Ambrosius.
90. Cf also Westerholm 1988:121, 162. Longenecker writes, 'Coming under a curse was therefore inextricably bound up with receiving the law, and Paul seeks to make that point explicit in his treatment of Dt 27:26' (1990:117). And again, in his restriction of the ἔργα νόμου to the 'identity badges' of Judaism, Dunn (esp 1982-83:110f, though consistently throughout his writings on the subject) misses the fact that the ὅσοι of 3:10 is connected to the ἔργα νόμου by the copulative εἰμί, denoting 'belonging to' (BAG 225). In other words, Paul has *more* in mind here than the sociological factors of a Jewish lifestyle, though they are of course included. But Paul *also* has in mind throughout his argument in Galatians 2-3 the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant in the person and work of Jesus Christ. The 'works of the law' were never intended to be salvific, and so cannot *replace* the Abrahamic covenant.
91. The ἐν νόμῳ here is the functional equivalent to ἐξ ἔργων νόμου, both expressions 'reflecting the old covenant with its demands and sanctions' (Canedy 1989:192, note 28); the δέ is taken here as adversative. Cf Dunn 1990a: 235, note 51; Bruce 1982b:161; Longenecker 1990:118.
92. So also Longenecker 1990:118; cf Sanders 1983:53, note 23; Hübner 1980:461f posits Paul's quoting of Dt 27:26 to prove that the law could not be perfectly obeyed, but the citation of Lv 18:5 gives Paul's theoretical agreement that it could. This seems unnecessarily to make Paul either deceptive or exegetically gymnastic.
93. Cf Bruce 1982b:162; Longenecker 1990:119; and this despite the well-argued reasoning of Canedy 1989:204f.
94. Cf Jones 1972:478; Robertson 1934:577; Moule 1963:72.
95. Note also in this regard the comments of Duncan 1934:94-95; Lightfoot 1865:155.
96. Cf Wenham 1979:253; Kaiser 1971:19-28.
97. Cf Longenecker 1990:120, 'the law has to do with "doing" and "living by its prescriptions" and not with faith.'
98. Verse 13a, as noted by Betz (1979:149-151) and Longenecker (1990:121f) is probably an early Jewish-Christian confessional formula expressing the redemptive,

atoning, self-sacrificial nature of the death of Christ.

99. As noted by Jones, 'this [exchange] meant nothing less than a new humanity and a new existence in the Spirit' (1972:478).
100. So Longenecker 1990:125f, 132, *contra* Burton 1921:182; Betz 1979:156.
101. On Paul's use of '430 years,' see D H King 1983:340-370, especially 366ff.
102. J Philipose argues that the ὅτι of Romans 5:20 is resultative, ie, as a result of God's giving the law, human sinfulness was shown for what it is (1977:445). Galatians 3:19, while not a verbal equivalent of Romans 5:20, is surely a conceptual equivalent. Thus the purpose of God's giving of the law is consistent in both Galatians and Romans, and at least one aim in that giving of the law was the demonstration to humanity of its own sinful condition.
103. Thus the giving of the law served a 'cognitive' function, and was not for 'righteousing' or 'perfecting' anyone, to use Longenecker's terms for this purpose; cf 1990:138.
104. The question of the involvement of angels in the giving of the law has been variously understood. Fricke (1879) is cited by Burton (1921:191) as saying that over 300 interpretations had been proposed for the 'ordained by angels' phrase. In more recent years the understanding of an angelic presence at Sinai has come about as a result of further research into Jewish understandings of the giving of the law; cf *Jub* 1.27-29; *Ac* 7:38; *Heb* 2:2; *Josephus Ant* 15.136 (despite Davies 1954:135-140); and for a full discussion of rabbinic (midrashic) thought on this issue, see T Callan 1980:549-567, especially 551-559.
105. The understanding of Paul's use of ὅτι as an 'article of previous reference' is crucial if one is fully to comprehend Paul's argument. Here Paul is clarifying the *temporary* nature of the law, as opposed to the Abrahamic covenant (promise) and faith. God had made a promise to Abraham, based upon his character and faithfulness, which was to be believed and involved both Abraham's physical descendants and the Gentiles. The law (Mosaic covenant) was *added* to that promise in order to make humanity aware of its own sin and to protect the covenant-nation from the destructive results of sinful activity. So the law functioned in one sense as a 'pedagogue' to 'hedge in' the Israelites and Gentile God-fearers until such time as the

Seed should come and usher in the age of maturity, the age when all of God's people would demonstrate a faith 'like Abraham's' (this contra Barclay 1988:87, note 31, where Barclay argues that Paul fails to 'demonstrate any clear correspondence between Abrahamic and Christian faith').

106. Paul will also have to deal more explicitly with the ethical implications of this potential return to nomistic practices (5:13-6:10). As recently demonstrated by E A C Pretorius, the Galatians' return to nomism as a way of life would mean rejection of the Spirit as the guide to proper ethical behavior, allying themselves once again with the law and the flesh (Pretorius 1992:441-460, especially 444-448, 451-459).

Part Three - ἔργα νόμου in Romans

7. The Historical Setting of Romans

The first words of Romans identify the author as 'Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus' (Παῦλος δούλος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ). This Paul is conventionally acknowledged to be the Paul known from the beginnings of Christianity as the Apostle to the Gentiles. There is currently no serious challenge as to the identity of the author of this letter, or its authenticity.

The same cannot be said, however, regarding the letter's historical background. Questions persist as to the Christian community at Rome at the time of Paul's writing, particularly with respect to its origin and ethnic make-up. Also the occasion or purpose of Paul's writing persists as a cause for debate, and has caused more than a little scholarly ink to flow. How one answers such questions will, of course, affect the interpretation of the letter as a whole, as well as impact one's understanding of the meaning of Paul's use of ἔργα νόμου in Romans.

This chapter, therefore, will explore the main historical issues related to the background of Romans, attempting thereby to establish the necessary parameters for understanding that background. The result of this investigation will then be used to inform the exegesis of the expression ἔργα νόμου in Romans 3:20 and 28.

7.1 The Christian Community at Rome

7.1.1 The Origin of Roman Christianity

With a large number of Jews already present in Rome by the first century AD,¹ it was perhaps inevitable that Christianity would take root there among them.² Though the process by which this took place is lost in the obscurity of the time period, Acts 2:10-11a records that worshipers from Rome were among those in Jerusalem who heard Peter's Pentecost sermon: καὶ οἱ ἐπιδημοῦντες Ῥωμαῖοι, Ἰουδαῖοί τε καὶ προσήλυτοι, 'visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes.' The fact that Luke mentions only Rome from the continent of Europe suggests Luke's special interest in this group, and from that interest it may be inferred that some of those present in Jerusalem on that occasion returned to Rome with the good news of the gospel. The fourth century Latin document known as 'Ambrosiaster' seems to lend a measure of credence to this impression, for there is a remark in the prologue of this commentary on this letter that the Romans adhered to faith in Christ according to the Jewish rite, without ever having seen miracles or any of the apostles.³

Jews were present in Rome as early as 139 BC. Thereafter, the attitude of the Roman government toward them and their *superstitio barbara* periodically wavered between disinterested toleration and aggressive opposition, depending upon the political climate of Rome relative to foreign groups in their midst (Wiefel [1977] 1991:86, 88). An increasingly large and strong Jewish community resulted from the freeing of many of the captives brought to Rome by Pompey in 62 BC. During the first years of the

40's BC Julius Caesar permitted the Jews to retain their ancestral rights, including the right of assembly (cf Josephus Ant 14.214-215). Josephus also indicates something of the strength of the Jewish community in Rome when he reports that more than 8,000 Roman Jews supported the delegation from Judea in 4 BC to petition for the removal of Archelaus (BJ 80-83; Ant 17. 299-303). Though forced by Tiberius in AD 19 to leave Rome, perhaps due to an inordinate influence of their religious customs upon Roman citizenry (Smallwood 1976:202-210), the Jews were later allowed to return in large numbers, so that by AD 38 Philo could remark, 'the great section of Rome on the other side of the Tiber is occupied and inhabited by Jews' (*LegGaj* 155).

It is not surprising, therefore, to note that there was a large number of synagogues in Rome during this period, as indicated by extant inscriptions that bear the various names of individual synagogues.⁴ The internal structure of these Roman synagogues seems to have been essentially the same, for the same titles for the various officials occur repeatedly in the inscriptions. Furthermore, Greek, rather than Latin, is the common language of the inscriptions from these institutions for all but religious quotations, which indicates something of a common practice (cf Leon 1927:210-233). Yet these synagogues seem to have functioned independently of one another, each having its own leadership and distinct worship style.

There seems to have been in Rome, in fact, no overarching control network uniting the whole of the Jewish religious community, as was typical of large cities elsewhere.⁵ This becomes significant for the founding of Christianity at Rome in that the

individual Roman synagogues, with no single ruling body, were more open than most to outside influences, even if those influences at times caused difficulties for Judaism -- as the Christian message certainly did. As noted by Wiefel,

[This] loose structure...provided an essential prerequisite for the early penetration of Christianity in Rome. The multitude of congregations [ie, synagogues], their democratic constitutions, and the absence of a central Jewish governing board made it easy for the missionaries of the new faith to talk in the synagogues and to win new supporters....since Rome had no supervising body which could forbid any form of Christian propaganda in the city, it was possible to missionize in various congregations concurrently or to go successively from one to the other. It is likely that the existence of newly converted Christians alongside the traditional members of the synagogue may have led to increased factions and even to tumultuous disputes (Wiefel [1977] 1991:92).

As Jewish religious pilgrims (as reported in Acts 2) or traders who had traveled to Jerusalem returned to Rome, they brought back to their synagogues the message of Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah. As this message spread throughout the Jewish community, the result was undoubtedly the same at Rome as elsewhere within Judaism: a mixture of reception and rejection, causing discord between those Jews who were responsive to the message and those Jews who remained unresponsive. Such a mixed response to the gospel brought inevitable tension, which eventually resulted in such a dispute regarding 'Chrestus' as to cause the emperor Claudius in AD 49 to expel all Jews from Rome.⁶

Later when Jews and Jewish Christians returned to Rome, they found that Gentile Christians had developed their own assemblies, most likely structured as the 'house churches' reflected in Romans 16 and elsewhere in Paul's writings.⁷ This allowed Christians in Rome to avoid the ban against the synagogues, as suggested by Wiefel (cf [1977] 1991:95f). But it may also have caused a rift between the returning Jewish Christians who were loyal to the synagogues and the nomistic traditions of Judaism, on the one hand, and the Jewish Christians and Gentile converts who were attracted by Paul's 'law-free' gospel, on the other.

If the above reconstruction is correct, as seems most likely, Christianity at Rome had its origins in conversions among both Roman Jews and Gentile God-fearers who were exposed to the good news regarding Jesus of Nazareth. Such exposure came either as Jews from Rome themselves traveled to Jerusalem and brought back the gospel message, or as others ventured to Rome bearing the communication of the gospel as they came.

7.1.2 The Ethnic Identity of Roman Christianity

Since F C Baur's assertion that Paul wrote Romans to Jewish Christians in order to persuade them to change their particularistic and largely nomistic outlook, the question of the ethnic identity of Roman Christianity has been contested.⁸ Some, following Baur, have continued to identify the church at Rome as made up almost exclusively of Jewish Christians.⁹ Others have held to a predominantly Gentile identity for the church.¹⁰ The majority opinion, however, is that the Christian congregation at Rome was made up of both Jewish and Gentile believers, and that

Paul addresses most of his comments to the church as a whole.¹¹

Kümmel exemplifies this majority opinion:

Romans manifests a double character: it is essentially a debate between the pauline gospel and Judaism, so that the conclusion seems obvious that the readers were Jewish Christians. Yet the letter contains statements which indicate specifically that the community was Gentile-Christian....Even so the Roman community is *not purely Gentile-Christian*. The story of the origin of the Christian community in Rome makes likely a Jewish-Christian strain in it (Kümmel 1975:309f; emphasis in original).

Kümmel's remarks about the character of Romans may be somewhat open to challenge (ie, does Romans actually depict a 'debate' between Paul and Judaism?). But his statement that the recipients of Romans were both Jews and Gentiles reflects the majority view. The 'story' of the origin of Christianity at Rome assumes that after the expulsion from Rome in AD 49, the churches left there became mostly Gentile in their composition.¹² As these churches continued to grow, new members would also have been Gentiles, many of whom may not have been God-fearing proselytes or familiar with the religious tenets of Judaism. When, however, Claudius took the 'first step' of moderating his expulsion order, both Jews and Jewish Christians began to return to Rome.¹³ Thus the ethnic identity of the Roman churches at the time of Paul's writing was a mix of Gentiles and Jews, with Gentile Christians probably in majority.¹⁴

That this is the likely scenario for the ethnic make-up of the Roman churches is to be seen from the contents of the letter itself. Paul appeals to Gentile Christians to avoid any sense of 'superiority' over their Jewish-Christian brothers and sisters,

either in terms of their soteriological standing (11:17-21) or their freedom from nomistic constraints (14:1-15:7). He also reminds the Roman believers that he is the Apostle to the Gentiles, the group among which 'you also are' (1:5-6). In 1:13 he communicates his desire to bear fruit among the Romans, as 'among the rest of the Gentiles' (Rome being the Gentile 'capital' of the world at that time). And other suggestions as to their Gentile nature could also be adduced from such passages as 9:3ff; 10:1f; 11:13 and 15:15ff.

In terms of a Jewish presence in the Roman church, Paul requests greetings be passed along to his 'kinsmen' (16:7, 11), which term, in context, can only apply to Paul's fellow Jews. The repeated references to Jew and Gentile equality and shared responsibility indicate a Jewish presence (cf 1:16; 2:9ff, 25; 3:29; 10:12), as does also the discussion of 9-11 (cf Kümmel 1975:310). As well, Paul's consideration of Jewish motifs and his challenges to Jewish theological constructs presume a Jewish constituent within the Roman churches (cf 2:17; 3:1ff; 4:1ff; etc).

7.1.3 Conclusion

The origins of Roman Christianity cannot be determined with historical certainty. The earliest indisputable evidence for Christianity in Rome is Paul's letter to the Romans itself. Yet this is not a church that was founded by Paul or any other of the apostles. It is likely that the gospel was carried to Rome by those who had traveled to Jerusalem, heard the gospel there, became convinced of its truth, and returned to the Roman

synagogues, where fellow Jews and God-fearing Gentiles also adhered to this new expression of faith in God. It is also possible that other Jewish Christians, and perhaps some Gentile Christians as well, traveled to Rome from Jerusalem and Judea, and related the gospel message to friends and relatives there. In either or both cases, the Christian gospel penetrated the Jewish community at Rome through the synagogues and religious institutions of Judaism.

The first Roman converts to Christianity, therefore, appear to have been Jews, or at least Gentile proselytes attached to the synagogues of Rome. When the church began to grow, tensions arose between Jews and God-fearing Gentiles who were convinced of the identity of Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, and Jews who remained unconvinced. This tension eventually erupted in open conflict, which resulted in Claudius taking action against the Jews by expelling them from Rome. Gentile Christians, however, were probably able to remain in Rome, and there organized the church into house congregations because of the loss of the synagogues as meeting places.

When Jews were allowed by Claudius to return to Rome, they were still banned from synagogue meetings. So Jewish Christians evidently met with Gentile Christians in their house churches. Some of these Jewish Christians may also have formed their own house churches, since the congregations they left behind had grown to include Gentiles who were unfamiliar with Judaism and its practices (cf Dunn 1988c, 1:liii). A measure of friction and dissention, therefore, undoubtedly arose among the Christian

congregations. And this is, in part, why Paul wrote the letter to the Romans (cf Wedderburn 1988:140ff).

7.2 The Purpose of Romans

Establishing the purpose for which a letter was written is essential to the understanding of that letter.¹⁵ Paul's purpose in writing to the Roman congregation(s) has provoked a great deal of speculation and debate.¹⁶ Much of this debate has included discussion relative to the literary integrity of the letter and its original length, as well as its destination. While each of these issues is important, and the discussions that surround them significant, the literary integrity of the letter is assumed here. Also assumed is the extension of the original text of Romans through the conclusion of chapter 16, with the shorter recension attributable to an editor, probably Marcion.¹⁷ For the purposes of this study, these issues are secondary to the questions concerning *why* Paul wrote the letter and what he hoped to accomplish by it.

7.2.1 Paul and the Roman Churches

An examination of the letter itself suggests that Paul is writing to the Roman congregations for several reasons. First, the text reveals that he writes to make the Romans aware of his future plans. By this time in his missionary career Paul had been involved in the evangelization of the whole of the eastern Mediterranean basin, to the point where he could say that there is 'no further place for me in these regions' (15:19-23). Now he

sets his sights on the western end of the Roman empire, toward Spain (15:24). His plans to travel there to spread the gospel will also allow him to fulfill a long-standing desire to see Rome (1:8-15; 15:22-24), but only after a trip to Jerusalem to deliver the collection for the saints (15:25-32). Hence, Paul writes to the Roman churches to apprise them of his plans to visit them, to request their help in his future trip to Spain, and, since he cannot be overly confident of the Jerusalem churches' response to receiving the contribution from the Gentile churches, to solicit the Roman churches' prayers for this trip to Jerusalem.¹⁸ By writing to these churches in this way, Paul initiates a relationship of mutual respect and beneficial support between himself and the believers in Rome.

A second purpose Paul has in writing to the Roman congregations is to acquaint them with the content of 'his' gospel and include them in his sphere of apostolic influence.¹⁹ As an 'ambassadorial' letter (Jewett 1982), Romans served as an authoritative expression of the truth of the gospel. This authoritative expression lent credibility to Paul, and furthered his apostolic influence to include the Roman congregations. It also provided the potential means for the divided Roman congregations to come together (cf Jewett 1982:16-18, 20).

A third likely purpose for Romans is the congregations' need of pastoral care and counsel. Paul found it necessary to advise the Gentile members of Roman Christianity to avoid despising their Jewish brothers and sisters in Christ, and the Jewish Christians were to allow their Gentile counterparts the freedom to serve the Lord in an unrestricted manner. Paul must be seen,

therefore, to be addressing the Roman situation directly.²⁰ By stressing the Gentile's soteriological indebtedness to Israel and his own appreciation for his 'kinsmen according to the flesh,' Paul makes a strong case for Gentile Christian-Jewish Christian unity, rather than division. The extended section of Romans 9-11 admirably meets this need in the church at Rome, as do the paraneses of chapters 12-15, and particularly that of 14-15.

Another aspect of Paul's 'pastoral purpose' in Romans is his introduction of Phoebe to the Roman congregations in 16:1-2. As the probable bearer of this letter to the Roman churches, Phoebe would have cause to require such an introduction to 'open the door' of those churches to her. In the same portion of the letter, Paul also extends his pastoral greetings to those individuals listed there (16:3-16).

It is hard to escape the notion that another of Paul's purposes was an apologetic one. Paul wrote to the Roman churches to defend his gospel and apostleship, and that to a singular degree. His extensive statement of the content of 'his' gospel indicates that he felt it necessary to acquaint the churches in the capital of the empire with his teaching. As a partial motivation, this perhaps served as a 'final statement' of his understanding of the acts of God in history.²¹ In addition, however, statements that Paul makes throughout the letter seem to reflect a dispute of some magnitude within the Roman churches, a dispute that centered, at least in part, in his own teaching.²² And this leads to the conclusion that many earlier controversies in Paul's ministry remained substantially unresolved at the time of his writing of Romans.

While evidence for the character of Roman Christianity remains, as Wedderburn has so poignantly stated it, 'tantalizingly scanty' (1988:54), it is nonetheless probable that the Roman Christians struggled to a greater or lesser degree with certain 'judaizing' forms of behavior, as did the Galatians. Paul addressed these issues in Romans in order to clarify the content of his teaching and settle the disputes within the Roman congregations over the place of the law in the life of the believer. As noted by Bruce,

Among the house-churches of Rome...we should probably envisage a broad and continuous spectrum of varieties of thought and practice between the firm Jewish retention of ancestral customs and Gentile remoteness from these customs, with some Jewish Christians, indeed, found on the liberal side of the halfway mark between the two extremes and some Gentile Christians on the 'legalist' side. Variety of this kind can very easily promote a spirit of division, and Paul wished to safeguard the Roman Christians against this (1991:186).

In addition, Paul is certainly also requesting the Roman churches to 'stand behind' him (at least in prayer) as he travels to Jerusalem (15:25, 31). He undoubtedly sensed the need for divine aid when he appeared in Jerusalem, which was at the heart of both Judaism and Christianity. All of this indicates a definite apologetic intent to Paul's writing of Romans.

Paul's 'reasons for Romans,' therefore, seem to have been many and varied. He wrote to address specific needs in both his own life (eg, his trips to Spain and Jerusalem, his desire to visit Rome and include those congregations within his sphere of apostolic influence, and his self-defense relative to continuing

attacks against his message and apostleship) and the life of the Roman churches, as he understood those needs (eg, the 'factious' attitudes on the part of some Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians toward each other, and disputes about the judaizing character of some).²³ Paul's purpose in writing Romans cannot be restricted to just a single purpose. This complex letter suggests an equally complex historical situation behind it. This situation was such that one must speak of Paul's *purposes* in writing the letter. As Wedderburn states in the conclusion to his study on this subject:

The reasons for Romans are thus a cluster of different interlocking factors: the presence of both judaizing and law-free Christians in the church there, the present situation of Paul, the visit to Jerusalem now being undertaken and the prospect of a future visit to Rome. All played their part in provoking Paul to write to the Roman Christians as he did (1988:142).

7.2.2 Paul's Opponents at Rome

In view of Paul's 'apologetic' purpose for writing Romans, it is necessary further to delineate the argumentative character of the letter. For Romans, unlike Galatians, is not an obvious piece of polemical literature. The historical circumstances that spawned it and helped to shape its content were not identical to those of Galatians. Paul's personal situation had also changed since the time of writing to his Galatian converts. So the understanding of Galatians and its 'judaizing' opposition, and with that the understanding of ἐργα νόμου in that letter, cannot automatically be read into Romans. The letter to the Romans

itself must indicate a similar 'judaizing' opposition if the expression ἔργα νόμου is to be seen as having the same meaning in Romans as it does in Galatians (which is by no means a foregone conclusion). Each of Paul's letters must be viewed on its own merits before similarities between letters may be 'unified' on the basis of similar situational backgrounds (Munck 1959:85).

There have been conflicting interpretations of the evidence in Romans as to the existence and/or identity of Paul's opponents. While many have been willing to 'unify' Galatians and Romans and to see a like degree of judaizing opposition in both letters, others have been unable to justify that adversarial identification for Romans. There has been, in fact, an increasing reluctance on the part of many scholars to speak of Paul's 'Roman opponents.'²⁴ Nevertheless, Romans itself betrays certain characteristics that seem to indicate that Paul was, indeed, facing some level of opposition, or at least thought it necessary to defend 'his' gospel against specific charges. In an effort to clarify the historical background of Romans relative to this issue, the following will attempt to identify Paul's Roman opposition and to set out the nature of their message.

7.1.2.1 The Identity of Paul's Opponents

The task of identifying Paul's opponents at Rome by 'mirror-reading' the letter of Romans must be carried out with a measure of circumspection. This was true for Galatians; but it is all the more true for Romans, since its polemical nature is more limited and conclusions reached through 'mirror-reading' are less certain when dealing with a non-polemical writing. Nevertheless, bearing

in mind the cautions relative to a mirror-reading methodology as expressed in Chapter Four, various clues to the opposition that Paul faced may be found throughout the letter. Chief among such clues are the following:

- 2:16 Paul's gospel is represented by his opponents as a gospel of 'cheap grace' (cf Stuhlmacher 1991:239f).
- 3:8 The opponents claim that Paul's version of the gospel leads to antinomianism (cf 3:31; 6:1, 15; 13:14).
- 3:20 The opponents claim that justification comes through 'the works of the law' (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου; cf 3:28).
- 3:22 The opponents teach a basic distinction between Jews and Gentiles (διαστολή), and Gentiles are subordinate to Jews, soteriologically speaking (cf 10:12).
- 3:27 The 'false brethren' boast in the law (boast, *καυχάομαι*, = 'have confidence in').
- 3:29 God is the God of the Jews; therefore the adversaries claim that Gentiles must become ('practical') Jews in order fully to know God.
- 3:31 Paul's gospel of faith is said to 'overthrow' (*καταργέω*) the law (cf Stuhlmacher 1991:240).
- 4:1 Abraham was justified by works (circumcision), according to Paul's opponents.
- 4:13 According to Paul's adversaries, the promise to Abraham is said to be reinforced by the law (διὰ νόμου); the Mosaic covenant 'fills up' the Abrahamic promise (law = a buttress, a catalyst to obedience).
- 4:14 Inheritance is based on law, the opponents claim.
- 4:16 The adversaries teach that Abraham is the father of the Jews only, or at least primarily.
- 7:7 It is claimed that Paul's gospel imputes sin to the law (cf 7:12, 14).
- 9:7 All of Abraham's descendants are God's children, according to the opponents (one 'gets in' by birth).
- 9:19 Paul's gospel, it is claimed, attributes everything to the sovereignty of God and has no place for the obedient efforts of humanity (γὰρ βουλήματι αὐτοῦ τίς ἀνθέστηκεν;).

- 9:24b-26 The opponents claim that only the Jews are God's people; therefore Gentiles must become 'practical' Jews to be included as God's people.
- 10:4 Christ said he came to fulfill, not end, the law. The opponents claim that Paul thus distorts the plain teaching of Jesus.
- 11:1 If Paul is correct, say his opponents, then God has rejected his people, Israel (ἀπόσπαστο ὁ θεὸς τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ).
- 11:6 Grace and works cooperate rather than compete for humanity's salvation, according to Paul's rivals.
- 15:31 Among Paul's adversaries are 'those who are disobedient in Judea' (cf Ac 15:1, 5).
- 16:17-18 Paul's opponents cause divisions, hindrances to the gospel, and deceive hearts.

Again, as with Galatians, so with Romans: deductions from such data must be formed and held tenuously, as these data do not reflect direct statements made by Paul to or about his opponents. Indeed, not everyone would be willing to allow that all of the above statements reflect anything other than the logical flow of Paul's theological argumentation, quite apart from his own circumstances or those of the Roman congregations.²⁵ Nevertheless, granted that each of the above 'clues' may be interpreted in the overall argument of Romans as pointing in some fashion to opposition to Paul (and, arguably, make better sense of Paul's reasoning if so understood), it may be seen from the above tabulation of data that in Romans there is an emphasis upon the law and Judaism, Paul's gospel and its effects upon the 'ancestral traditions,' and upon the soteriological 'superiority' or 'priority' of the Jews. So if Paul is reacting against 'false teaching' and is under assault, as seems most likely, he is again (as in Galatians) being attacked in three broad areas: his gospel, his apostleship, and his understanding of the place of Judaism and

the law. The debate over Judaism and the law, however, seems to have advanced from the simple question of Gentile observance or non-observance in Galatians to that of the place of Israel in God's redemptive economy.

This textual evidence for opposition to Paul in Romans has been variously interpreted. The identification of Paul's Roman opponents has historically received less attention than has been given that question in relation to Galatians, Philippians or the Corinthian correspondence, and so less guidance is available from collective scholarship on this issue. Nevertheless, a brief overview of representative positions with regard to this question will serve to establish interpretive boundaries for the above data and the picture it eventually yields of Paul's opponents.

The understanding of opposition in Romans has basically fallen into three broad categories: (1) those who see Paul being opposed by gnostics or gnostic libertines; (2) those who do not believe that Paul reacts to any type of formal or organized opposition; and (3) those who view Paul to be responding to judaizers or legalistic Jewish Christians who are loyal in some measure to Judaism or the nomistic practices of the Jews. This latter category includes those who believe that Paul responds to actual or potential opponents, as well as those who believe that Paul merely uses the idea of this type of opposition rhetorically or argumentatively.

An early advocate of the view that Paul was opposed by gnostics was Henrico Hammond (1651:1-51, especially 11-28). Hammond found references to adversarial gnostic or gnostic/libertine teaching in Romans, Galatians, the Corinthian correspondence,

Philippians, Ephesians, the Pastorals and the Thessalonian letters. In fact, Hammond attributed virtually all the false teaching he found reflected in Paul's letters to this gnostic influence. Hammond, however, dealt with this issue only 'in passing,' and so did not develop a thoroughgoing thesis with respect to the issue of opposition to Paul (cf Ellis 1978:81).

Edward Burton also ascribed the 'heresies of the apostolic age' in the main to gnostic influences (1829:68-78, 111, 263f), and identified the 'heretics' of Romans 16 as gnostics (80-85; 113f). Burton was more cautious than Hammond in ascribing Paul's epistolary statements to his 'adversarial theology.' Nonetheless, Burton also fell prey to the temptation to read the entire pauline corpus through the lens of Paul's reaction to gnostic thought and influence.

Walter Schmithals has more recently seen the opposition to Paul as coming from adherents to gnosticism.²⁶ Schmithals argues that the opponents in Romans, Galatians, Corinthians and Thessalonians were all gnostic teachers who opposed Paul on the grounds of their own superior wisdom and preferred status as teachers. Their attacks against Paul centered on his inferior *γνώσις* (cf 1 Cor 2:1-16) and substandard deportment as a teacher. The views of Schmithals, however, though well articulated, have not been generally accepted outside his sphere of influence.²⁷

Ernst Käsemann is another advocate of the gnostic-opposition theory, but only for chapter 16 of Romans. Käsemann believes that Romans gives too little information for the positive identification of any opponents throughout the whole of the letter. He rejects what he terms 'dramatic incidents' as the cause for

Paul's 'diatribe' style of argumentation in the earlier parts of the letter (eg, on 3:1-8), preferring to see this diatribe as Paul's customary manner of argumentation.²⁸ At the same time, however, on the basis of conceptual and verbal parallels with 1 and 2 Corinthians, he identifies the opposition to Paul reflected in chapter 16 as originating with 'libertinizing and gnosticizing' Jewish Christians (1980:416-419). And in this identification he is followed by N A Dahl, who adds to Käsemann's hesitancy regarding the depiction of any opposition in chapters 1-15 of Romans the reservation that Paul apparently did not understand the Judaism of his opponents.²⁹

But Schmithals, Käsemann, Dahl and others who have found gnosticism behind the opposition to Paul have not confirmed that the gnosticism of the first century was sufficiently developed to account for Paul's argumentation against it. The operative assumption for those finding such gnostic thought in Paul's opponents is that the gnosticism of the third and fourth centuries that influenced Christianity in that time was analogous to the 'incipient' form presumed to be displayed in the New Testament. This assumption, however, has never been satisfactorily confirmed.³⁰ So this position has failed to persuade many.

Other scholars, those of Category Two above, do not see in Romans any suggestion of Paul arguing against any formal or organized opposition. E P Sanders, for example, is of the opinion that

Galatians is written in a polemical setting against the views of Christian missionaries who are undermining Paul's work. Romans...is

written...not directly against Paul's opponents within the Christian movement (1983a: 148).³¹

So Sanders is able to interpret Romans as Paul's sweeping theological treatise regarding Jewish and Gentile salvation by faith in Christ rather than through Judaism. In this way Sanders avoids dealing with Romans as addressing specific needs of the Jewish-Christian Roman congregation, preferring rather to interpret the letter as 'coming out of Paul's own situation' (1983a: 31; cf also 1983:45-48, and *passim*).

Sanday and Headlam also expressed uncertainty regarding opposition to Paul being reflected in Romans. Their position was that Paul wrote in Romans the way he did out of recognition of the *potential* for continued questions over his gospel and view of the law, but not because he was actually being opposed at Rome. Because Paul's proclamation of the gospel had sparked controversy elsewhere, Paul judged it best to preclude any such response by the Roman church as that congregation received his theological treatise (1895:400ff). While such a reading of Romans may indeed be accurate, it is difficult to understand how concern about potential opposition to Paul and his gospel is essentially different from concern about actual opposition. The interpretation of the letter remains the same in either case.

Gerd Lüdemann is another who interprets Romans apart from any portrayal of opposition to Paul. Reacting against Baur's rigorous dichotomous understanding of Peter/Paul 'parties' or factions in the apostolic church,³² he presumes that the portions of the letter that have traditionally been interpreted as demonstrating opposition show, instead, Paul's argumentative style. Lüdemann

rejects the prospect of finding anti-Pauline factions or opponents represented in the letter, and, like Käsemann, remains firmly within the Bultmannian tradition regarding Romans as Pauline 'diatribe' (cf Bultmann 1910). The only possible exception to this he finds at 3:8, which he believes discloses a Jewish-Christian resistance to Paul's gospel and which he identifies as 'nomistically oriented Jewish Christianity' (1989:109-111, 114-115). Thus the possibility of judaizing opposition to Paul in Romans is grudgingly admitted by Lüdemann, albeit in only one verse.

Still other scholars, those of Category Three above, who traditionally have made up the majority view, hold that opposition to Paul can be detected in Romans and that that opposition stemmed from legalistic Jewish Christians. Among the Church Fathers, Ignatius, for example, writing to the Magnesians early in the second century, warned against the false doctrines bound up in the practice of 'judaizing' (Ig Mag viii-xi).³³ Ignatius, of course, does not cite or quote Romans or other Scripture passages directly. However, the letter to the Magnesians is filled with allusions to passages in Romans and Paul's other letters as he cautions his readers against 'becoming Jews' (cf Mag viii, x). And 'Ambrosiaster,' as the Latin document of the fourth century is commonly known, is essentially a commentary on Romans which refers to Paul's opponents as judaizers.³⁴

In the Reformation period, a number of interpreters continued to understand the character of the opposition to Paul in Romans to be one of a judaizing nature. Calvin, in his 1540 commentary on Romans, regarded opposition to Paul as coming from 'legalis-

tic' Jews or Jewish Christians, and saw Paul's rhetoric as countering the misunderstanding of those 'judaizing' (or 'legalistic') Jewish Christians relative to the law and faith ([1540] 1960:5-11, 69-81, and *passim*). Martin Luther also seems to have been content with the idea that Paul generally fought against Jewish or Jewish Christian 'legalism' as he wrote Romans, against those who 'think themselves righteous and trust in their own works to save them' (1954:52f). Luther has, of course, been lately accused of interpreting Paul through his own contemporary situation, developing the doctrine of 'justification by faith' from Paul's writings to answer the 'excesses' of the medieval Roman Catholic church. This charge is, to a certain extent, valid. Out of concern for fairness, however, it must also be said that Luther has been equally misread by some today in order to allow for the advancement of their own views.³⁵

In the modern period of New Testament critical scholarship, F C Baur also believed Paul to have been opposed by 'judaizers,' whom he identified as the 'Peter/James' Hebraic Jewish Christians that he saw behind all of the opposition reflected in Paul's writings (cf [1845] 1876: 59-178). Baur, of course, believed that the early church was split into a 'Peter party' (predominantly Jewish Christians) and a 'Paul party' (mostly Gentile Christians) over the issue of the continued relevance of Jewish customs and the nomistic outlook of some Jewish Christians. And he interpreted all of the pauline literature according to this scheme.

While J B Lightfoot reacted against Baur's rather wooden dichotomization of Christianity, he, nonetheless, asserted that 'Paul's career was one of life-long conflict with judaizing [ie,

Jewish-Christian] antagonists' (1865:311). Lightfoot understood these opponents in various contexts to be either Pharisaic or gnostic judaizers (1865:311). In the case of Romans, Lightfoot believed the opposition to Paul reflected in 6:1-23 and 14:1-15:6, 17-19 to be Pharisaic judaizers, though he believed Paul to be addressing them apostrophically, as a rhetorical foil in his argumentation (1865:88ff, 144; 1868:155).

H Lietzmann, following Baur's rigorous division of Gentile/Jewish Christianity, understood Paul's writings against the backdrop of radical Jewish Christian and Gentile Christian separation. In his oft-quoted work on Paul, he says,

Wherever [Paul] went, the 'judaizers' followed....These emissaries were in constant contact with Jerusalem, and they made it seem credible that James and the original Apostles stood behind them. Moreover the shadow of Peter was continually falling on the path of Paul, whose relationship with the original Apostles at last broke down completely (1937, 1:109).

J J Gunther is another who understands a 'judaizing' opposition to Paul in Romans. Gunther explores Paul's writings in the light of the sectarian teaching common to the thought-world of Paul's day, and concludes that the Pauline corpus as a whole depicts a 'common thread' of opposition throughout. This opposition reflects both incipient gnostic and legalistic tendencies, according to Gunther, with a 'basic unity' of nomistic thought and action that can be characterized as 'judaizing' (cf 1973:314-317).

Others who refer to Paul's Roman opponents as 'judaizers' in some sense include F F Bruce, C E B Cranfield, E E Ellis, H

Hübner, H Räisänen, and J D G Dunn.³⁶ In addition, in what is perhaps the most persuasive current explanation of the 'judaizers' at Rome, A J M Wedderburn has given a clear description of Paul's opponents (1988). As a part of his overall discussion of the various 'reasons for Romans,' Wedderburn speaks of the circumstances of the Roman church as a motivating factor in Paul's writing. Among these circumstances he includes the 'judaizing' nature of Roman Christianity. Strongly suggesting that the text of Romans and extrabiblical evidence from Ambrosiaster and Clement of Rome all support the notion of a hostile judaizing presence against Paul at Rome, Wedderburn cogently describes this 'judaizing Christianity' as

a form of Christianity which treats Christianity as simply a part of Judaism, and, more important, requires of all its adherents, whether they are Jews or not, that they observe the Jewish law as the Jewish law either in whole or in part. (They should observe it 'as the Jewish law' and not just because some of its requirements happen to overlap with the imperatives of some form of the Christian gospel.) In other words, *the patterns of thought and of behavior of Judaism are dominant and determinative for the nature of Christianity* (1988:50; emphasis added).

This brief survey of scholarly positions relative to the question of the existence and character of opposition to Paul as reflected in Romans has demonstrated the existence of a diversity of opinion. Nonetheless, it has also shown that in the view of a majority of scholars, it is most likely that Romans depicts opposition to Paul and that that opposition is to be identified as coming from 'judaizing' opponents. Whether or not that opposition was actual, potential, or simply serves as a rhetori-

cal foil for Paul's argumentation, the interpretation of the letter remains the same. It is the character of that opposition as 'judaizing' that controls the understanding of Paul's apologetic or polemical statements in the letter.³⁷ And so Paul's opponents in Romans, and their 'judaizing' agenda, are to be identified as the same or nearly the same as those reflected in his letter to the Galatians.

7.1.2.2 The Message of Paul's Opponents

The identification of Paul's Roman opponents as 'judaizers' who had concerns for (1) the law and Judaism, (2) the impact of Paul's preaching upon the 'ancestral traditions,' and (3) the soteriological priority of the Jews, makes it possible to draw certain inferences about their teaching. Again, as is the case with the identification of the opponents as 'judaizers,' conclusions about the content of their teaching must be tentatively advanced, and recognized as only one possible reading of the evidence. Nonetheless, the data from the epistle to the Romans may lend itself to a cautious judgment about that teaching, and the mirror-reading of the evidence will again suggest parameters for later conclusions relative to the meaning of ἔργα νόμου in Romans. In addition to the evidence cited for the identity of Paul's opponents, information which leads to understanding the content of their message may also be tabulated for convenience, as follows:

- 2:16 The adversaries taught that Paul's teaching of Jesus as Savior apart from teaching obedience to the law, amounted to a gospel of 'cheap grace' (cf Stuhlmacher 1991:239f).
- 3:8 According to his detractors, Paul's version of the gospel leads to antinomianism (Ποιήσωμεν τὰ κακὰ ἵνα ἔλθῃ τὰ ἀγαθὰ).
- 3:20 Paul's opponents apparently taught that justification cannot come apart from 'the works of the law' (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιοθήσεται).
- 3:22 Paul's opponents believed that a soteriological distinction (διαστολή) existed between Jew and Gentile, Jews having soteriological priority (cf 10:12).
- 3:27 God intends for his people to have their confidence before him (καυχόομαι) in their carrying out of the law, according to the opponents.
- 3:29 Paul's adversaries taught the necessity of the Gentiles becoming (practical) Jews, because God is the God of the Jews.
- 3:31 The opponents believed that Paul's gospel of faith resulted in the law being undone (καταργέω; cf Stuhlmacher 1991:240).
- 4:1 The adversaries pointed to Abraham as the best example of one who was justified by his works.
- 4:13 According to Paul's opponents, the promise to Abraham is reinforced by the law (διὰ νόμου); the Mosaic covenant 'fills up' the Abrahamic.
- 4:14 The claim of the opponents is that inheritance is based upon law, not faith.
- 4:16 Abraham is primarily the father of the Jews, and not the Gentiles, according to the opponents.
- 7:7 Paul's gospel makes the law tantamount to sin, the adversaries claim.
- 9:7 Paul's opponents apparently claimed that physical descent from Abraham insured a proper relationship to God.
- 9:24b-26 The Jews are God's people, claim the opponents; therefore, Gentiles must become (practical) Jews to come to God.
- 10:4 In the opponents' understanding, Jesus did not abrogate the law; therefore Paul distorts the plain teaching of Jesus when he speaks against the law.
- 11:1 Paul's version of the gospel amounts to God's rejection of his people Israel, claim the opponents.
- 11:6 Paul's adversaries teach that man's efforts play a corresponding part to God's grace in man's salvation.

It will be necessary to interact with the text of Romans itself as a means to further the scholarly identification of Paul's Roman opponents as 'judaizers' and to attempt to integrate with that identification the data from Romans relative to the judaizers' message. What follows, then, will be an attempt to reconstruct the message of Paul's opponents from the text of Romans, bearing in mind the contributions of Wedderburn and others. This tentative reconstruction of the Roman situation will be suggested in order to verify the identification of the opponents and their teaching as derived from the textual data, and prepare for further development.

Read from the perspective of the identity of the opponents and their teaching as discussed above, the evidence of Romans suggests that Paul's opponents were Jewish Christians who were zealous for the Jewish ancestral traditions and who accused Paul of preaching a Jesus who was 'all grace and no law' (2:16). This sympathy with nomistic Judaism on their part led them to charge Paul with preaching a gospel message which encouraged antinomianism (3:8, 31; 6:1, 15; 13:14). They further argued that because God is the God of the Jews, and because the law was given to the Jews as God's people, justification before God must come by 'works of the law' (3:20, 28). The law was never abrogated by Jesus (10:4), and the Jews remain as God's covenant people. It is fitting, therefore, that the Jews' 'boast' is found in the law (3:27). The soteriological distinction between Jews and Gentiles remains (διαστολή, 3:22), and the Gentiles must proselytize (become 'practical' Jews) in order to become a part of God's people (3:29). A gospel of faith apart from the demands of the

law, therefore, results in the 'annulment' or destruction of the law (*καταργέω*, 3:31).

As a means to support this argument, the judaizers raised the example of Abraham, the Jewish model of righteousness. Abraham, they claimed, was justified by his works when he obeyed God and was circumcised (4:1-5, 9-12). According to their line of reasoning, this suggests that the promise to Abraham found its fulfillment in the Mosaic covenant, and the promised inheritance comes through law, not merely faith. Law, then, becomes a catalyst for obedience (4:13, 14). The 'fatherhood' of Abraham applies primarily to Jews (9:7, 24b-26), to whom the law was given, and applies to Gentiles only by extension as they are incorporated into messianic Judaism through faith in Christ and obedience to the law. In this 'faith and obedience' symbiosis, grace and works operate together for humanity's salvation, according to the opponents (11:6).

As an antinomian gospel, the judaizers seemingly argued, Paul's gospel imputes sin to the law (7:7, 12, 14). In addition, it is a 'deterministic' or 'fatalistic' gospel, attributing everything to God's sovereign control, and thus necessarily reduces humanity to the role of a 'puppet.' Obedient efforts to live by the law have no place in Paul's soteriological scheme (9:19). Thus, if Paul is correct, then by implication God has rejected his people Israel (11:1ff).

From this tentative reconstruction of the identity and teaching of Paul's judaizing opponents, it may be seen that the agenda of Paul's opponents in Romans has again focused upon 'correcting' him in three areas: (1) his gospel; (2) his understanding of

Judaism, Christianity and the law; and (3) by implication, his apostleship. Romans does, therefore, 'echo' the Galatian situation from this broad perspective. And again, the argument of the opponents reflected in Romans may be theologically formulated as being composed of several general elements, as follows:

1. God's covenant with Israel at Sinai is permanent, and the 'works of the law' thus have continuing validity. Faithful obedience to the covenant (including circumcision) is still expected.
2. The law was never abrogated, annulled, rescinded or otherwise abolished by Jesus; rather, he himself claimed that he 'fulfilled' the law (cf Mt 5:17-20).
3. The Gentiles should have to keep the law as a means of right relationship to God (3:20, 28).
4. Paul's gospel is antinomian and makes the law to be sin.

7.2.3 Conclusion

It has been noted that Paul had several purposes in writing Romans. He wrote to advise the Roman congregations of his future plans and his desire to visit them. He wrote to greet his friends and acquaintances in Rome, in particular the many people he had met elsewhere who had migrated to the empire's capital (eg, Prisca and Aquila). He wrote to apprise the Roman churches of the content of his teaching, as perhaps indeed a 'final statement' of his gospel, and to bring the Roman congregations into the 'orbit' of his apostolic authority. This would of course set the stage for his visit with them, and prepare the way for Paul's realization of 'some fruit' among them (1:11-13).

The realization of such spiritual fruit perhaps began with the writing of the letter itself, as Paul also wrote to quiet the disturbances among the Roman churches. These disturbances existed because of the differences between those Jewish (and perhaps some Gentile) Christians who desired to maintain Jewish ritual observances as a part of their Christianity, and those Jewish and Gentile Christians in Rome who did not. Paul addressed these concerns as he wrote, perhaps because he knew that the Roman churches were not directly founded upon apostolic teaching (and so he felt free to 'instruct' these believers and bring them under his apostolic authority), and perhaps also to settle any controversy over what 'his' gospel entailed.

Paul also wrote this letter in order to request prayer for his coming trip to Jerusalem. He knew that such a trip contained many potential hazards, not the least of which concerned the reception or possible rejection by the Jerusalem church of an offering from the Gentile churches (15:25-31). He was aware of the fact that in Jerusalem he would meet with hostility because of his mission among the Gentiles (from the 'disobedient in Judea'), and asked the Roman believers to pray for him as he made his defense in Jerusalem. The 'apologetic' thrust to this letter is seen in that request, as well as in the character of the statements he makes throughout the letter.

It is these 'apologetic' statements in Romans which betray the judaizing opposition to Paul. Again, whether this opposition is actual (as is most likely), potential, or even rhetorical, the end result is the same: Paul writes to defend his gospel against the inroads of the opposing judaizers, whose teaching as reflec-

ted in Romans echoes that found in the Galatian situation. While the Roman and Galatian historical settings are obviously very different, and the tone of opposition in Romans is much more muted than in Galatians, there are distinct similarities. As in Galatians, in Romans the judaizers were apparently attempting to protect the Mosaic covenant against Paul's perceived antinomian stance, and taught the necessity of the Jewish 'works of the law' as the only true realization of relationship to God. The law is a continuing heritage of God's people, and the Gentiles who come to God must do so on the basis of both Jesus Messiah and obedience to that law. They must, in effect, 'become' Jews in order to be acceptable before God.

It must be acknowledged here that this reconstruction represents only one *possible* reading of the data from Romans. Many are uncomfortable with the finding of such a direct correspondence of judaizing opposition between Galatians and Romans, especially because the historical setting of the book of Romans is somewhat more obscure than that of Galatians, and due to the less polemical nature of this letter. The 'opposition' statements of Romans are not as directly revelatory of a hostile judaizing antagonism in Romans as in Galatians. Nevertheless, this reading of Romans does accurately reflect the textual data as one possible reading. If the consideration of Romans from epistolary and rhetorical perspectives allows for this same identification of the opponents and their teaching, perhaps one more piece of the puzzle of this epistle of Paul will have been put into place.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 7

1. Cf Cicero's reference to the 'large crowd' of Jews at the trial of Flaccus, held in 59 BC (*Pro Flacco* 28.66).
2. Dunn remarks that this is what should be expected of a 'movement which began as a sect within the spectrum of first century Judaism and whose first missionaries were all Jews' (1988c, 1:xlvi).
3. The Ambrosiaster reference may be found in *PL*, 17, columns 45-184; the original Latin text of this statement is also reproduced in Sanday & Headlam 1895: xxv-xxvi, note 3.
4. Cf *CIJ* 284, 301, 338, 343, 365, 368, 416, 425, 496, 502, 503, 517.
5. Cf, eg, the report of Philo regarding the practice in Alexandria (*Flacc* 10).
6. Suetonius, biographer of Caesar Claudius, records the fact that *Judaeos assidue tumultuantes impulsore Chresto Roma expulit* (*Claudius* 25.2). Assuming that this use of 'Chrestos' is actually a mistaken reference to Jesus of Nazareth, a dispute among the Jews over the person of Jesus as the Christ ultimately grew so violent or disruptive that Claudius evicted the Jews from Rome (cf *Ac* 18:2). Orosius (*Historia* 7.6.15f) dates this expulsion at the ninth year of Claudius, or AD 49. This reference and date have become generally accepted (this despite Lüdemann 1984:158ff). And in addition, according to Wiefel ([1977] 1991: 93ff) Claudius moderated his edict in a 'first step' by allowing the Jews to return to Rome but banning them from synagogue meetings for a time, as the synagogues had been the place where the disputations had arisen. Thus Christians had to develop new organizational forms to honor the ban against synagogue assemblies, and coped by meeting in homes and loosing ties with the synagogues. This accounts in part for the character of Paul's epistle to the Romans, as he wrote to unite the Jewish and Gentile Christians in spite of their now ambivalent attitude toward the synagogues and Jewish nomistic customs.

7. This assumes that Paul's original letter to the Romans included chapter 16 (cf Gamble 1977:96-131; Donfried [1977] 1991:102ff).
8. Baur did not use the term 'nomistic,' but his intention in describing first-century Judaism would have been in sympathy with that descriptor (cf 1836:59-178).
9. For example, Zahn 1909, 1:422f; W Manson 1951:172ff; Krieger 1959:146ff; Fahy 1959-60:182-191.
10. Cf Sanday & Headlam 1895:xxxiiiif; Denney 1904, 2:561-567; Barrett 1957:6f, 22; T W Manson 1948:224-240; Munck 1959:196, 200-2-2.
11. This statement is not to deny ethnic specificity to many of Paul's remarks.
12. Note here Bruce 1985:17; Dunn 1988c, 1:liii; Käsemann 1980:405f; Kümmel 1975:309-311.
13. Again, as per Wiefel [1977] 1991:93f.
14. Paul wrote Romans not long after the death of Claudius, which occurred in AD 54; most place the date of Paul's writing between AD 55-57.
15. Cf Baur 1831; [1845] 1876; and, more recently, Vorster 1991.
16. In addition to this question being addressed in the multitude of commentaries on Romans, a number of significant articles and monographs speak to the issue of the occasion and purpose of Romans. Significant among these are the following: T W Manson 1948, *St Paul's letter to the Romans - and others* (*BJRL* 31, 224-240; reprinted several times in other formats); G Bornkamm 1963, *The letter to the Romans as Paul's last will and testament* (*AusBR* 11, 2-14; reprinted several times in other formats); K P Donfried 1970, *A short note on Romans 16* (*JBL* 89, 441-449; reprinted in 1977 and 1991 *The Romans debate* ed K P Donfried. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 44-52 [pagination here and in what follows is from the 1991 edition]); J Jervell 1971, *The letter to Jerusalem* (*StTh* 25, 61-73; reprinted in 1977 and 1991 *The Romans debate*, 53-64); A Suhl 1971, *Der konkrete Anlass des Römerbriefes* (*Kairos* 13, 119-130); H W Bartsch 1972, *The historical situation of Romans* (*Encounter* 33, 329-338); R J Karris 1973, *Romans 14:1-15:13 and the occasion of Romans* (*CBQ* 35, 155-178; reprinted in 1977 and 1991 *The Romans debate*, 65-84); W S Campbell 1973-74, *Why did Paul write Romans?* (*ExpT* 85, 264-269); K P Donfried 1974, *False presupposition in the study of Romans* (*CBQ* 36, 332-358; reprinted in 1977 and 1991 *The*

Romans debate, 102-124); R J Karris 1974, *The occasion of Romans: a response to Professor Donfried* (*CBQ* 36, 155-178; reprinted in 1977 and 1991 *The Romans debate*, 125-127); U Wilckens 1974, *Über Abfassungszweck und Aufbau des Römerbriefes* (in *Rechtfertigung al Freiheit: Paulusstudien* ed U Wilckens. Neukirchen: Neukirchener, 110-170); T Boman 1975, *Die dreifache Würde des Völkerapostels* *StTh* 29, 63-69); W Schmithals 1975, *Der Römerbrief als historisches Problem* (Gütersloh: Mohn); W Wüllner 1976, *Paul's rhetoric of argumentation in Romans: an alternative to the Donfried-Karris debate over Romans* (*CBQ* 38, 330-351; reprinted in 1977 and 1991 *The Romans debate*, 128-146); B N Kaye 1976, *'To the Romans and others' revisited* (*NovT* 18, 37-77); D Zeller 1976, *Juden und Heiden in der Mission des Paulus: Studien zum Römerbrief* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk); A J M Wedderburn 1979, *The purpose and occasion of Romans again* (*ExpT* 90, 137-141; reprinted in 1991 *The Romans debate*, 195-202); R D Aus 1979, *Paul's travel plans to Spain and 'the full number of the Gentiles' of Romans 11:25* (*NovT* 21, 232-262); J W Drane 1980, *Why did Paul write Romans?* (in *Pauline studies: essays presented to Professor F F Bruce on his 70th birthday* eds D A Hagner & M J Harris. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 208-227); H Moxnes 1980, *Theology in conflict: studies in Paul's understanding of God in Romans* (Leiden: E J Brill); S K Williams 1980, *The 'righteousness of God' in Romans* (*JBL* 99, 241-290); F F Bruce 1981-82, *The Romans debate - continued* (*BJRL* 64, 334-359; reprinted in 1991 *The Romans debate*, 175-194); G Theissen 1982, *The social setting of pauline Christianity* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark); H Boers 1982, *The problem of Jews and Gentiles in the macro-structure of Romans*. *Neotestamentica* 15, 1-11; F Watson 1986, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles: a sociological approach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); A J M Wedderburn 1988, *The reasons for Romans* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark); G Klein [1977] 1991, *Paul's purpose in writing the epistle to the Romans* (in *The Romans debate*, 29-43); W Wiefel [1977] 1991, *The Jewish community in ancient Rome and the origins of Roman Christianity* (in *The Romans debate*, 85-101; ET of *Die jüdische Gemeinschaft im antiken Rom und die Anfänge des römischen Christentums. Bemerkungen zu Anlass und Zweck des Römerbriefes*. *Jud* 26 [1970] 65-88); J N Vorster 1991, *The rhetorical situation of the letter to the Romans: an interactional approach* (D.D. University of Pretoria); P Lampe 1991, *The Roman Christians of Romans 16* (in *The Romans debate*, 216-230); P Stuhlmacher 1991, *The purpose of Romans* (in *The Romans debate*, 231-242; ET of *Der Abfassungszweck des Römerbriefes*. *ZNW* 77 [1986] 180-193); and L Ann Jervis 1991, *The purpose of Romans: a comparative letter structure investigation* (Sheffield: JSOT Press).

17. Once again, cf Gamble 1977:96-131; Donfried [1977] 1991:102ff; and here especially notice the well-reasoned arguments of Lampe 1991:217-221.
18. The fact that Paul includes this request in the letter is not sufficient exegetical grounds to theorize that Jerusalem is therefore the intended 'secret' destination of the letter, contra Jervell [1977] 1991:53-64. Jervell's thesis is intriguing, and takes note of the likely necessity for Paul to defend himself at Jerusalem, but at the same time is not totally persuasive. Jervell apparently does not appreciate the nature of Romans as a first-century letter ([1977] 1991:60f), and he also inflates the importance of the Roman congregations within the Christendom of Paul's day ([1977] 1991:63ff). In addition, this reading of Romans assigns the significance of the letter's contents to Jerusalem, assuming that relatively nothing can be known about the situation of the Roman congregation. This is a notion which is more than adequately disabused by Wiefel ([1977] 1991:85-101) and Bruce, who after evaluating the available evidence concludes, 'There is nothing in the letter to suggest that its contents are not primarily intended for Roman consumption...its contents are as a whole suited to the Roman situation, as they are for the most part unsuited to the Jerusalem situation' (1991:192).
19. Note here L A Jervis 1991. Jervis argues that Paul's purpose for Romans is to exercise his apostolic 'mandate,' and include the Roman congregations within his 'orbit' of authority, making them a 'part of his "offering" of "sanctified" and "obedient" Gentiles' (1991:163ff). She comes to this conclusion as a result of a 'comparative letter structure' analysis, wherein she relates the various epistolographical units of Romans to others of Paul's letters. Jervis' conclusions regarding Paul's establishing of his authority and his acquaintance of the Romans with his teaching are helpful. At the same time, however, she concludes that Paul is not concerned 'with the doctrine or practice of his addressees' (1991:155-157, 163). This latter conclusion seems to place undue weight upon epistolary form and convention, giving that form interpretive precedence over circumstantially-generated letter content. So, *contra* Jervis at this point, an accurate understanding of the purpose of Romans on the basis of letter content must include Paul's concern with the 'doctrine and practice' of his addressees.
20. So Bruce 1991:183ff; cf also Wiefel [1977] 1991:106-119; Donfried [1977] 1991:105ff; Minear 1971:8ff, though his thesis of five divisions of Roman Christianity undoubtedly overstates the situation; and Watson 1986:94-98, though his assertion that Paul advocates Gentile separation from the synagogue and

formation of a separate Pauline sect has been demonstrated to be incorrect (note Campbell 1989:462-467). Boers (1982:9-10) states the situation accurately when he says, 'Paul's letter to the Romans appears to be as much as any of his other letters, directed to what he believes to be concrete pastoral issues of the church at Rome. The letter is as direct, and as hard-hitting a moral confrontation as is Galatians....The immediate occasion for the letter is obviously his intended visit to Rome on his way to Spain, but that is not what carries the argument. Paul knows only one way of relating to his readers -- as a pastor. Thus, the semantic deep structure of the letter (ie, its macro-structure) is not his planned visit, but the addressing of the church at Rome on the issue of the judgment of others.' And again, this is *contra* Jervis, who writes that '[her] proposal stands at the farthest end of the spectrum from...the "pastoral" purpose proposal' (1991:163).

21. This is a popular view of the purpose of Romans; cf T W Manson 1948:225ff; Dodd 1954:xxv; Munck 1959:196-209, especially 199f; Kümmel 1975:312-314; Bornkamm [1977] 1991:16-28; Cranfield 1979, 2:815-823.
22. As reflected in 2:16; 3:8, 20, 22, 27, 29, 31; 4:1, 13, 14, 16; 7:7; 9:7, 19, 24b-26; 10:4; 11:1, 6; 15:31; and 16:17-18.
23. This despite Karris [1977] 1991:65-84, and again, Jervell [1977] 1991:53-64.
24. One recent commentator, in fact, sagely avoids the issue by discussing the passages in the first eight chapters of the letter traditionally interpreted to betray 'opposition' in terms of the letter's mixed audience, rather than as necessarily reflective of opponents of Paul; cf Moo 1991:10-13, and *in loc.*
25. It is acknowledged that these 'clues' are read here as such, ie, as clues to the argument of Paul's opponents, but that these statements may be understood differently if their respective contexts are read non-polemically or non-apologetically. Mirror reading is difficult, at best, and precarious if applied to the wrong context. In the words of Longenecker, 'Its difficulty lies in the fact that it is not always possible to distinguish among (1) exposition, (2) polemic (ie, an aggressive explication), and (3) apology (ie, a defensive response), and mirror reading works only where there is reasonable assurance that we are dealing with either polemic or apology' (1990: lxxxix). It is presumed here that a reasonable case has been made for polemic/apologetic as a partial purpose for Romans, and therefore these 'clues' may be read on that basis.

26. Schmithals has consistently advanced his identity of Paul's opponents as gnostics through several works, as follows: 1956, *Die Häretiker in Galatien*. *ZNW* 47, 25-67; 1957, *Die Irrlehrer des Philipperbriefes*. *ZTK* 54, 297-341; 1965, *Paul and James* (London: SCM Press); 1965, *Die Gnosis in Korinth* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht); 1969, *The office of the Apostle in the early Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press); 1971 *Gnosticism in Corinth: an investigation of the letters to the Corinthians* (Nashville: Abingdon Press); 1972, *Paul and the Gnostics*, trans J E Steely (Nashville: Abingdon Press); 1975, *Der Römerbrief als historisches Problem* (Gütersloh: Mohn); and 1983, *Judaisten in Galatien?* *ZNW* 74, 27-58.
27. Cf Barrett 1970-71:236-238.
28. Note 1980:78-85; Käsemann essentially follows here Bultmann's theory of Paul's 'diatribe' style of argumentation (cf Bultmann 1910).
29. Cf Dahl 1977:178-191. Dahl follows the 1973 edition of Käsemann's *An Die Römer*.
30. In this regard note especially E M Yamauchi 1983, *Pre-Christian Gnosticism: a survey of the proposed evidences*. 2nd edition. Grand Rapids: Baker. Paperback.
31. On this point cf also Michel 1966:2, note 1.
32. Though Lüdemann holds to a 'modified' form of that understanding; cf 1989:1-7.
33. Cf Schaff 1910, 2:656.
34. Note the Ambrosiaster commentary on Romans in *PL* 17.
35. Note here especially the comments of Westerholm 1988:189-192, and Schreiner 1991:241-244.
36. Cf Bruce 1977:325ff; 1985:90ff, where Bruce implies that Paul shapes his argument through the rhetorical device of an opposing interlocutor. Cranfield (1979, 2:845-860) identifies Paul's Roman opponents as 'legalistic' Jews. Ellis (1978:80-115, especially 109ff) refers to Paul's Roman opponents as 'legalistic Jewish Christians.' Hübner (1984:68ff) agrees with the identification of Paul's Roman opponents as 'judaizers,' as does Räisänen (1986b:162-198 and *passim*). In spite of this identification, however, Räisänen believes that Paul continues an unfounded and unwarranted attack against Judaism and Christian 'judaizers,' and so is not convinced that those adversaries are actually 'opponents' in the strict sense. Rather, according to Räisänen, they are opponents only by Paul's reckoning, because of his anti-Jewish agenda.

Dunn (1988c, 1:xlⁱⁱ-xlⁱⁱⁱ, lxⁱⁱⁱ-lx^{xii}) concurs with the identification of Paul's Roman opponents as 'judaizers,' though in the commentary proper he of course emphasizes circumcision, dietary restrictions, and Sabbath and feast day observances as the core of the opponents' 'judaizing.'

37. Or, as Wedderburn suggested, the thought and behavior of Judaism became 'dominant and determinative' for Christianity; cf 1988:50.

8. Epistolary and Rhetorical Considerations

The text of Romans, as noted earlier, contains language that implies an atmosphere of polemic or apologetic. This polemic results from the historical context out of which the letter comes. The polemical tone of Romans may be interpreted as having been precipitated by actual judaizing opposition to Paul, or perhaps as coming out of 'a critical dialogue which Paul conducts with his fellow pupils in the school of Judaism, in which the aim is to understand...the Jewish heritage common to both [Judaism and Christianity]' (Dunn 1988c, 1:lxiiif). In other words, Paul's language in Romans suggests that this letter is, at least in part, a response to criticisms of or challenges to his message. This challenge, in turn, may have come from actual opponents, or may be a result of Paul's rhetorical style of argumentation in the letter as he attempts to stave off continued criticisms of himself and his ministry. In either case, the letter communicates Paul's defensive posture regarding his mission to the Gentiles and their place among the people of God.

Though more muted in its polemical tone than is the letter to the Galatians, Romans conveys a message that is similar with respect to Jews and Gentiles and the place of the law in the economy of God. And, like Galatians, the meaning of the language of Romans is directly linked to its form and structure as a letter. So attention must be paid to the way Paul expresses his

message in Romans, noting in particular the epistolary and rhetorical forms he used in its composition.

This chapter, therefore, will focus upon Paul's use of epistolary and rhetorical conventions. The purpose will be to construct a more accurate interpretation of meaning in the letter through its use of conventional epistolary and rhetorical forms of expression. The result of this analysis will then aid in the exegesis of the *ἐργα νόμου* texts in Romans.

8.1 Epistolary Considerations

8.1.1 Epistolary Analysis

Like other examples of early Greek letters, Paul's Romans evidences a common epistolary framework. The introduction (1:1-15) and conclusion (15:14-16:27) are generally recognized as the apostle's variations on conventional formulations of ancient letter writing.¹ Questions arise, however, with regard to how the letter body (1:18-15:13) relates to the introduction and conclusion.² Given the fact that Romans is, by far, conceptually more complex than the extant non-literary papyri, and that its distinctive character as a theological document embraces a broad, seemingly 'universal' context, many have expressed doubt whether Romans is to be considered an example of the personal letter form at all. In that regard James Dunn has noted,

the body of the letter is highly distinctive in content and character. It seems to share little if anything of the personal letter form and would more accurately be described as a 'treatise' or 'literary dialogue' or 'letter essay' (Dunn 1988c, 1:lix).³

Others share Dunn's reservations about the nature of Romans as a 'personal' letter, often going beyond Dunn in believing that Paul is not addressing a concrete Roman situation at all in Romans. Günther Bornkamm, for example, is one who rejects the idea of Romans as a letter occasioned by personal considerations, whether Paul's or the Roman congregations.' Bornkamm's pessimism in this regard is based mainly upon the fact that in his reading of the letter, 'actual and concrete references' to specific historical situations 'have disappeared' from Romans as over against Galatians, Corinthians, and Philippians ([1977] 1991:25). Noting the obvious theological nature of the document, Bornkamm suggests that Romans is Paul's 'last will and testament,' the definitive declaration of his understanding of the work of God in the history of humanity.'

W G Kümmel also holds that Paul wrote Romans as a compendium of his theology in order to allow the Roman church to understand his teaching, with an ultimate view to persuading them to support his later missionary efforts to Spain (cf Kümmel 1975:305ff). An analogous view is that of R Karris, who understands Romans as 'a letter which sums up Paul's missionary theology and paranesis' (Karris [1977] 1991:84). But though this 'compendium of Paul's theology' concept is generally considered to be the 'traditional view,' it need be noted that Romans fails to mention some topics of particular theological interest to Paul, as found in other of his letters (eg, the resurrection, Christology, ecclesiology, communion, etc). If Romans, then, represents a précis of Paul's theology, 'there are some curious gaps' (Morris 1988:8). Furthermore, on such a 'compendium' view, the letter becomes

simply a theological abstract -- an interesting and perhaps ethically challenging discourse, but one that remains unrelated to its audience in all but the most general way. Or as Klein expresses his view:

Paul could hardly have moved in a more indirect way than to write a letter including his most fundamental ideas and systematic concepts, not because he wanted to deal with these issues directly, but because he had...other goals in mind...[as a result] the message and its content [are] no longer interrelated; in fact, there [is] such an irreconcilable contradiction that one would no longer be able to conclude one from the other. Thus, theology [is] reduced to merely a means to an end; nothing but grist for [Paul's] apostolic calling card (Klein [1977] 1991:33).

Like Dunn, Klein believes Romans to be more a 'tractate' or 'treatise' than a personal letter, though it may at the same time include aspects of the Roman situation. For Klein, Paul wrote Romans as a theological treatise to provide the Roman congregations with the apostolic foundation he felt they lacked (Klein [1977] 1991:29-43, especially 39-43). Klein grounds his theory on the wording of Romans 15:20, which he terms Paul's 'non-interference clause,' that is, that Paul made it his missionary policy to avoid preaching the gospel where it had already been preached. The gospel had surely been preached in Rome by others before Paul. Yet since no *apostolic* preaching of the gospel was conducted there, Klein argues, Paul intended that both his letter and his proposed visit to Rome provide the necessary apostolic foundation for the congregations in that city.⁵

Klein's thesis, however, fails to convince, simply because it has little exegetical justification. Paul indicates within the

context of chapter 15 itself that the Romans are spiritually mature (15:14) and he is merely 'reminding' them of their responsibilities to one another (15:15). In addition, taking 15:20 in context demands no more than it be understood as Paul's reason for delaying his trip to Rome. As Donfried observes,

Romans 15:20 cannot be used to support Klein's thesis since the context of this pericope moves in another direction. The phrase 'thus making it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named' must be understood as an apology as to why Paul has not yet been in Rome...his first responsibility was to preach Christ where he had not yet been preached, in the area 'from Jerusalem as far around as Illyricum' (Donfried [1977] 1991: 45; emphasis in original).

What has been said above relates, of course, as much to Paul's purpose in the writing of Romans as it does to the epistolary characteristics of the letter. Yet this discussion also indicates that the question of the epistolary form of Romans is still an open one (cf Morris 1988:17). Some attribute the general inability of scholars to agree on epistolary conventions in Romans to the distinctiveness of the literary form Paul originated as he communicated to this particular church. Others prefer to withhold final judgment on this question. Like Brevard Childs, they argue that

regardless of the concrete character of Paul's original addressee, in their present literary form, the chapters [of Romans] serve to denote a genuine ambiguity. The occasional addressee recedes within the larger context and a universal referent emerges which far transcends local Roman party rivalries in order to speak a word for all. It is not by chance that the point of the chapters focuses on a universal appeal

for radical Christian living which relativizes all such petty human factions (Childs 1985:262).

While in Romans Paul freely adapted the 'idiom of the age' to suit his purposes (Dunn 1988, 1:lix) and intended his comments to enjoy a wide dissemination, at the same time the letter displays a certain affinity to the non-literary letters of Paul's day. An analysis of Romans in light of the conventional practices of ancient Greek letter writing demonstrates that this letter must, indeed, be considered to be in keeping with the form of a 'personal' letter.⁶

8.1.2 The Epistolary Structure of Romans

Romans includes a number of epistolary features and conventions common to the Greek private letter. Doty has laid out the general epistolary framework of Romans as follows:⁷

Opening -

Sender	1:1
Addressee	1:7
Greeting	1:7b

Thanksgiving/ Blessing -	1:8-12
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Intercession	1:9-10
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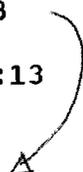
Body -	1:13-8:39
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Formal opening	1:13-15
Eschatological Conclusion	8:31-39, 11:25-36

Travelogue -	15:14-33
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Paranesis -	12:1-15:13
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Closing -	
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Greetings	16:3-16, 23
Doxology	16:25-27
Benediction	15:33, 16:20

In addition, there are a number of epistolary conventions and formulaic materials contained in Romans that also serve to accentuate its affinity to the Greek non-literary papyri. A register of these conventions and formulae as found in the letter is as follows:⁸

1:1-7a, salutation:

Ἰαύλος δοῦλος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ,....πᾶσιν τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν Ῥώμῃ,
'Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus,....to all those who are in Rome'

1:7b, greeting:

ἡχάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,
'grace and peace to you, from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ'

1:8-10, thanksgiving/prayer formula, apostolic parousia:

Ἐρῶτον μὲν εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου....πάντοτε ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν μου, δεόμενος εἰ πως ἤδη ποτὲ εὐδοθήσομαι ἐν τῷ θελήματι τοῦ θεοῦ ἔλθειν πρὸς ὑμᾶς,
'First, I thank my God.... always in my prayers, asking if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may come to you'

1:11-13, apostolic parousia delay, disclosure formula:

Ἐπιποθῶ γὰρ ἰδεῖν ὑμᾶς,....οὐ θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι πολλάκις προεθέμην ἔλθειν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, καὶ ἐκωλύθη ἀχρι,
'for I desire to see you....and I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, that I have often purposed to come to you, but have been hindered until now'

1:14-16, formulaic catchword transition:

Ἐλλῆσιν τε καὶ βαρβάροις,....ὀφειλέτης εἰμί....εὐαγγελίσασθαι....
Οὐ γὰρ ἐκαιοσχύνομαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, 'I am under obligation both to the Greeks and the barbarians,....to preach the gospel...For I am not ashamed of the gospel'

1:29-31, vice list:

'πεπληρωμένος πάση ἀδικία....οὐ μόνον αὐτὰ ποιῶσιν ἀλλὰ καὶ συνευδοκοῦσιν τοῖς πράσσουσιν,' 'being filled with all unrighteousness....[they] not only do these things but also approve of those that practice them'

1:32, formulaic transition:

'οὐ μόνον....ἀλλὰ καὶ,' 'not only....but also'

2:1, 3, vocative:

'ὦ ἄνθρωπε,' 'Oh man'

2:2*, disclosure formula:

'οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι,' 'Now we know that'

2:11, formulaic transition:

'οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν,' 'for there is no'

2:13, formulaic transition:

'οὐ γὰρ....ἀλλ' 'for not....but'

2:28, formulaic transition:

'οὐ γὰρ,' 'for not'

3:1, formulaic transition:

'Τί οὖν,' 'What....therefore'

3:5, verb of speaking:

'τί ἐροῦμεν,' 'what will we say'

3:9, formulaic transition:

'Τί οὖν,' 'what then?'

3:19, disclosure formula*, verb of speaking:

'Οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι ὅσα ὁ νόμος λέγει,' 'Now we know that whatever the law says'

3:22, formulaic transition:

'οὐ γὰρ,' 'for there is no'

4:1, formulaic transitional verb of speaking:

'Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν,' 'what, then, will we say'

4:3, verb of speaking:

'τί γὰρ ἡ γραφή λέγει,' 'For what does the Scripture say'

4:12, formulaic transition:

'οὐκ...μόνον ἀλλὰ καί,' 'not....only, but also'

4:16, formulaic transition:

'οὐ...μόνον ἀλλὰ καί,' 'not....only, but also'

4:18, verb of speaking:

'κατὰ τὸ εἰρημένον,' 'according to what had been said'

4:23-24, formulaic conclusion:

'οὐκ...μόνον...ἀλλὰ καί,' 'not....alone....but also'

5:3, formulaic transition:

'οὐ μόνον....ἀλλὰ καί,' 'not only....but even'

5:10, formulaic transition:

'εἰ γὰρ...πολλῶ μᾶλλον,' 'for if....how much more'

5:11, formulaic transition:

'οὐ μόνον...ἀλλὰ καί,' 'not only....but also'

5:12, formulaic transition:

'ὡσπερ...καὶ οὕτως,' 'just as....and in the same manner'

5:15, formulaic transition:

'οὐχ ὡς..., οὕτως καί,' 'not as..., so also is'

5:17, formulaic transition:

'εἰ γὰρ...πολλῶ μᾶλλον,' 'for if....how much more'

5:18, formulaic transition:

'Ἄρα οὖν,' 'Consequently, therefore'

5:19, formulaic transition:

'ὡςπερ...οὕτως καὶ,' 'just as....so also'

6:1, formulaic transition, verb of speaking:

'Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν,' 'What will we say, then?'

6:3, disclosure formula:

'ἢ ἀγνοεῖτε ὅτι,' 'Or do you not know that'

6:4, formulaic transition:

'ὡςπερ...οὕτως καὶ,' 'just as....even so'

6:15, formulaic transition:

'Τί οὖν,' 'What then?'

6:16, disclosure formula:

'οὐκ οἶδατε ὅτι,' 'Do you not know that'

7:1, disclosure formula, vocative:

'Ἡ ἀγνοεῖτε, ἀδελφοί,' 'Or are you unknowing, brothers'

7:3, formulaic transition:

'Ἄρα οὖν,' 'consequently, then'

7:4, vocative:

'ἀδελφοί μου,' 'my brothers'

7:7, formulaic transition, verb of speaking:

'Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν,' 'What will we say, then?'

7:14*, disclosure formula:

'οἶδαμεν γὰρ ὅτι,' 'For we know that'

7:25, formulaic transition:

'Ἄρα οὖν,' 'Consequently, then'

8:12, formulaic transition, vocative:

'Ἄρα οὖν, ἀδελφοί,' 'Consequently then, brothers'

8:22*, disclosure formula:

'οἶδομεν γὰρ ὅτι,' 'For we know that'

8:23, formulaic transition:

'οὐ μόνον...ἀλλὰ καί,' 'not only....but even'

8:28*, disclosure formula:

'οἶδομεν δὲ ὅτι,' 'And we know that'

8:31, formulaic transition, verb of speaking:

'Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν,' 'What will we say then?'

8:38, confidence formula:

'πέπεισμαι γὰρ ὅτι,' 'For I am confident that'

9:1, verb of speaking:

'Ἀλήθειαν λέγω,' 'I am speaking the truth'

9:2, statement of distress:

'ὅτι λύπη μοί ἐστιν μεγάλη καὶ ἀδιάλειπτος ὀδύνη τῇ καρδίᾳ μου,' 'I have great grief and incessant distress in my heart'

9:10, formulaic transition:

'οὐ μόνον...ἀλλὰ καί,' 'not only....but also'

9:12, verb of speaking:

'ἐρρέθη αὐτῇ,' 'it was said to her'

9:14, formulaic transition, verb of speaking:

'Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν,' 'What will we say, then?'

9:19, transitional verb of speaking:

'ῤεῖς μοι οὖν,' 'You will say to me, then'

9:20, contrasting particle, vocative, verb of speaking:

'Ὁ ἄνθρωπε, μενοῦνγε σὺ τίς εἶ...μὴ ἐρεῖ τὸ πλάσμα τῷ πλάσαντι,' 'On the contrary, who are you, oh man?...Will the thing molded answer back to the molder?'

9:24, formulaic transition:

'οὐ μόνον....ἀλλὰ καί,' 'not only....but also'

9:30, formulaic transition, verb of speaking:

'Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν,' 'What will we say, then?'

10:1, vocative:

'Ἀδελφοί,' 'Brothers'

10:6, verb of speaking:

'ἡ δὲ ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοσύνη οὕτως λέγει,' 'But the righteousness based upon faith speaks in this way,'

10:8, verb of speaking:

'ἀλλὰ τί λέγει,' 'But what does it say'

10:11, verb of speaking:

'λέγει γὰρ ἡ γραφή,' 'For the Scripture says'

10:16, verb of speaking, vocative*:

'Ἡσαΐας γὰρ λέγει, Κύριε,' 'For Isaiah says, "Lord"'

10:18, 19, verb of speaking:

'ἀλλὰ λέγω,' 'But I say'

10:20, verb of speaking:

'Ἡσαΐας δὲ ἀποτολμᾷ καὶ λέγει,' 'And Isaiah is bold, and says'

10:21, verb of speaking:

'πρὸς δὲ τὸν Ἰσραὴλ λέγει,' 'But to Israel, he says'

11:1, transitional verb of speaking:

'Λέγω οὖν,' 'I say, then'

11:2, disclosure formula, verb of speaking:

'ἢ οὐκ οἴδατε ἐν Ἠλίᾳ τί λέγει ἡ γραφή,' 'or do you not know what the Scripture says concerning Elijah'

11:4, verb of speaking:

'ἀλλὰ τί λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ χρηματισμός,' 'For what (says)
is the response from God to him'

11:7, formulaic transition:

'τί οὖν,' 'what then?'

11:9, verb of speaking:

'καὶ Δαυὶδ λέγει,' 'And David says'

11:11, transitional verb of speaking:

'Λέγω οὖν,' 'I say, then'

11:13, verb of speaking:

'Ἰμῖν δὲ λέγω τοῖς ἔθνεσιν,' 'But I am speaking to
those of you who are Gentiles'

11:19, verb of speaking:

'ἐρεῖς οὖν,' 'You will say, then'

11:24, formulaic transition:

'εἰ γὰρ...πόσῳ μᾶλλον,' 'for if....how much more'

11:25, disclosure formula, vocative:

'Οὐ γὰρ θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί,' 'For I do not
want you to be unknowing, brothers'

11:30-31, formulaic transition:

'ὡςπερ γὰρ...οὕτως καὶ,' 'for just as....so also'

12:1, request formula, vocative:

'Παρακαλῶ οὖν ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί,' 'I beg you therefore,
brothers'

12:3, transitional verb of speaking:

'Λέγω γὰρ,' 'For I say'

12:4-5, formulaic transition:

'καθὼςπερ γὰρ...οὕτως,' 'For just as....so also'

14:14, confidence formula:

'οἶδα καὶ πέπεισμαι ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ ὅτι,' 'I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that'

15:14, confidence formula:

'Πέπεισμαι δέ, ἀδελφοί μου,' 'And I am persuaded, my brothers'

15:15, reference to writing:

'τολμηρότερον δὲ ἔγραψα ὑμῖν ἀπὸ μέρους,' 'But I have written very boldly to you on some points'

15:22, apostolic parousia, delay:

'Διὸ καὶ ἐνεκοπήμην τὰ πολλὰ τοῦ ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς,' 'For this reason I have been hindered many times in coming to you'

15:23-24, apostolic parousia:

'ἐπιποθίαν δὲ ἔχων τοῦ ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς...ἐλπίζω γὰρ διαπορευόμενος θεάσασθαι ὑμᾶς καὶ ὑφ' ὑμῶν προπεμφθῆναι ἐκεῖ,' 'And having a desire to come to you...for I hope to see you while passing through and to be sent on my way there by you'

15:29, confidence formula:

'οἶδα δὲ ὅτι ἐρχόμενος πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐν πληρώματι εὐλογίας Χριστοῦ ἐλεύσομαι,' 'And I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fulness of the blessing of Christ'

15:30, request formula, vocative:

'Παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί,' 'Now I beg you, brothers'

15:32, apostolic parousia:

'ἵνα ἐν χαρᾷ ἐλθὼν πρὸς ὑμᾶς,' 'so that I may come to you in joy'

15:33, benediction:

'ὁ δὲ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν ἀμήν,' 'Now may the God of peace be with you all; amen'

16:1-16, closing farewell, instructions:

'Συνίστημι δὲ ὑμῖν....Ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν φιλήματι ἁγίῳ,
'Now I recommend to you....Greet one another
with a holy kiss'

16:17, request formula, vocative:

'Παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί' 'Now I beg you, brothers'

16:22, reference to writing:

'Ἐγὼ Τέρτιος ὁ γράψας τὴν ἐπιστολὴν,' 'I, Tertius, the
one writing this letter'

16:25-27, final benediction:

'Τῷ δὲ δυναμένῳ ὑμᾶς στηρίξαι...μόνῳ σοφῷ θεῷ διὰ Ἰησοῦ
Χριστοῦ ᾧ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας. ἀμήν,' 'Now to the one
who is able to establish you....to the only
wise God be the glory forever through Jesus
Christ. Amen'

An analysis of these epistolary conventions indicates that the argument of Romans is extremely complex, as evidenced especially by the number of formulaic transitions. Yet this is what might be expected of a letter that is of such length and obvious theological weight.

Furthermore, it need be observed that these conventional formulae, which seem to be rather evenly distributed throughout all parts of the letter, are located in key places in the letter, clustered in ways that are suggestive of Paul's argumentative conceptuality. For example, the disclosure formulae and the usage of verbs of speaking both occur, for the most part, in the argumentative section of the letter (1:16-11:36), and seem to indicate that Paul reasons through the defense of 'his' gospel in a manner calculated to be as persuasive as it is well-articulated. This 'clustering' of formulae may also be indicative

of Paul's sensitivity toward Jewish Christians who reject his gospel, as his line of argument and his profuse use of Scripture would attest. The manner in which Paul uses the traditional epistolary conventions suggests that the epistolary framework of Romans should be seen along the following lines:

Salutation and Greeting, 1:1-7.
 Thanksgiving Section, 1:8-12.
 Body Opening, 1:13-15.
 Extended Argumentative Section, 1:16-11:36.
 Extended Paraneitic Section, 12:1-15:13.
 Body Closing, 15:14-33.
 Farewell Instructions & Greetings, 16:1-24.
 Final Benediction, 16:25-27.

And this outline of Romans, based upon Paul's use of epistolary conventions and formulaic materials, highlights the fact that both of the occurrences of ἔργα νόμου in Romans are found in the extended 'Argumentative Section' of the letter.

Yet the epistolary framework, conventions and features of Romans, while helpful, cannot be allowed to stand alone. For as Wuellner has said,

Hellenistic-Roman and Near Eastern epistolographic studies...cannot [alone] solve the problem of Romans or that of any other letter of Paul. Such studies will clarify the letter *frame*, and the conventions of letter frames, but they cannot solve the problem of the letter structure (Wuellner [1977] 1991:131f; emphasis is Wuellner's).

So before turning to an exegesis of ἔργα νόμου in Romans, it is necessary first to carry out an analysis of the rhetorical structure of the letter. For if rhetorical considerations suggest a negativity for the concept of 'works of the law' in the letter, the exegesis of ἔργα νόμου in Romans will have been given explicit

parameters within which the meaning of this expression must be found.

8.2 Rhetorical Considerations

Building upon the rhetorical analysis section of Chapter Five above (5.2.1), and assuming classical rhetoric as the literary-verbal 'coinage of the realm' in Paul's day (also as discussed above, 5.2.2), the rhetorical structure of Romans may now be directly discussed. The problem of a rhetorical genre for Romans has attracted surprisingly little scholarly attention.⁹ Yet there have been, nonetheless, several notable attempts to identify the letter as a species of one rhetorical type or another.

Consideration of the rhetorical character of Paul's letter to the Romans was brought to the fore by R Bultmann in his 1910 doctoral dissertation, *Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe*.¹⁰ Bultmann's supposition in this dissertation was that Paul's letters reflected the literary *Gattung* known as 'diatribe.' Bultmann was basically indecisive throughout his study as to what the relationship between Paul and the 'diatribe' genre specifically entailed. He nonetheless concluded that, while the 'impression of differences' between Paul and the diatribe style were greater than the 'impression of similarity,' at the same time 'the similarity of expressions of speech is due to Paul's dependence upon the diatribe' (1910: 107f). So Bultmann attributed Paul's argumentation in Romans and the other Pauline literature to the influence of the 'diatribe' upon his thinking and writing.

Bultmann's thesis was met with immediate negative reaction and skepticism.²¹ In the first instance, there is no general agreement that Bultmann adequately demonstrated the influence of the diatribe upon the Pauline corpus (cf Stowers 1981:175-184). And at the same time, there is no consensus among classical scholars that a specific literary *Gattung* of 'diatribe' existed at all. The lack of assurance regarding the existence of this genre is due to the fact that this type of reasoning (what is commonly understood as 'diatribe') is found throughout various categories of rhetorical argumentation (cf Donfried [1977] 1991:118ff). So then, Bultmann failed to demonstrate that Paul had actually been influenced by a formal literary genre known as 'diatribe.' He did succeed, however, in again pointing out the fact that Paul was influenced by the rhetorical methodology generally current during his day.

Because Bultmann's thesis regarding the rhetoric of Romans proved unsatisfactory (though generations of scholars have continued, correctly, to note elements of 'diatribe' within the argument of Romans), several others have investigated the letter to ascertain its rhetorical character. Wilhelm Wuellner recently initiated serious discussion of Romans from a rhetorical standpoint with his suggestion that Romans be considered an example of the 'argumentative' letter ([1977] 1991:128-146). Wuellner based his observations regarding the argumentative situation of Romans upon the 'rediscovery' of rhetoric as a persuasive discipline as represented chiefly in the work of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (English translation 1969). As has been noted

elsewhere, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca emphasized the function of rhetoric as argumentation, and in the process

revived the ancient classical definition of rhetoric as 'the art of persuasion,' described as a logic of communication that could be applied to widely ranging modes of human discourse, and immersed the study of speech events in social situations (Mack 1990:15).

Building upon this observation, Wuellner proposes that New Testament scholars replace what he calls the 'traditional priority on propositional theology' in Paul with a new priority, that being interpreting the letters as letters of argumentation ([1977] 1991:128). In this way, he asserts, the 'impasses' created by form criticism and concerns over the social or political situations of Romans will be alleviated. The result of this 'new priority' will be, according to Wuellner, a methodology of interpretation which will enable scholars to account for 'the nature and effects of [Paul's] argumentation' ([1977] 1991:146).

Wuellner's work, while not the only recent attempt to understand Romans from a rhetorical base,¹² has nonetheless proved to be instrumental in moving the contemporary consideration of the rhetoric of Romans beyond mere classification to analysis.¹³ Since the original publication of his article,¹⁴ a number of scholars have taken up the challenge of analyzing Romans on the basis of classical rhetorical models.

Daive E Aune (1991:278-296) has proposed that Romans be understood as an example of the rhetorical *λόγος προτροπτικός* (speech of exhortation). The purpose of this type of speech was the persuasion of converts or young people to take up or maintain a parti-

cular way of life by exposing the error of an alternative lifestyle and contrasting that error to the benefits of the lifestyle being proposed. The primary historical setting for this protreptic speech, according to Aune, was the philosophical schools of Hellenism (1991:278). As Judaism began to be presented as an alternative philosophy to Hellenistic traditions, it was often presented to outsiders in a protreptic manner. Christianity then 'inherited' this form of presentation, and Aune suggests that this is distinctly exemplified by Paul in Romans. Aune describes Paul's use of the protreptic in Romans as follows:

Romans is a speech of exhortation in written form which Paul addressed to Roman Christians to convince them (or remind them) of the truth of his version of the gospel (Rm 2:16; cf 16:25; Gl 1:6-9; 2:1) and to encourage a commitment to the kind of lifestyle which Paul considered consistent with his gospel. Thus Romans is protreptic not only in the sense that Paul is concerned to convince people of the truth of Christianity, but more particularly in the sense that he argues for his version of Christianity over other competing 'schools' of Christian thought (1991:278f; emphasis is Aune's).

Aune outlines the generic features of the *logos protreptikos*, and details the history of the genre and its use in antiquity, in both speech and writing. He then offers his analysis of Romans as a protreptic document.

Aune considers Romans 1:16-4:25 to be a unit which functions in the letter as a protreptic *ἔλεγχος*, consisting of three constitutive sections: (1) 1:16-2:11, universal sinfulness and divine impartiality; (2) 2:12-3:20, God impartially condemns those who do not obey the law/torah; and (3) 3:21-4:25, justifi-

cation is by faith, not works of the law. Aune notes that in these sub-units, Paul uses the diatribe style of argumentation, debating with a 'fictional Jewish interlocutor' to establish the persuasive mechanism which will compel the Romans to adopt Paul's 'version' of the gospel. By the use of diatribe, Paul attempts to persuade those 'outside' the Christian faith to convert to his gospel (1991:290-292).

Romans 5:1-8:39 is Paul's address regarding the life of the 'insider' of the community, according to Aune. In this section, Paul focuses on the proper lifestyle for the Christian and the avoidance of sin. So in this section, Paul's use of diatribe is minimal, being replaced by the positive focus of the ἐνδεικτικός. This section is also divided into several subsections by Aune: (1) 5:1-21, undeserved justification through the obedience of Christ; (2) 6:1-7:25, the conflict between sin and obedience to God; (3) 8:1-39, life in the Spirit and its rewards. Aune notes Paul's focus on sin and the struggle between flesh and the Spirit in this section, and digresses long enough at this point to consider parallels to this discussion in Greek philosophical protreptic. Aune sees a direct correspondence in this regard between the anthropological dualism of 'popular Greek philosophy' and that of Paul (1991:293). Noting the platonic concept of humanity as body-soul, material-immaterial, Aune finds distinct structural parallels in Paul's thought. He also suggests that Paul's ethical dualism is a reflection of the Greek philosophical desire to live out the pursuit of φρόνησις. By drawing these parallels, Aune attempts to solidify his hypothesis that Romans is to be regarded as a type of protreptic document.

Romans 9-11 is understood by Aune to be a formally delimited section which argues for the trustworthiness of God in light of Jewish unbelief. This section, he says, involves Paul in argumentation which is 'inconsistent.'¹⁵ The function of this section, as demonstrated by the return to the diatribe style in 9:14-33, 10:18-21 and 11:1-24, is, according to Aune, Paul's 'delayed answer' to an earlier objection to his gospel (1991:295). No further attempt is made by Aune to put the material of this section into his concept of the protreptic framework of the letter.

Aune ends his analysis of Romans with 12:1-15:13. This extended paranetic section closes the entire central section of the letter with a protreptic admonition to live lives of total dedication to God. So it provides a 'fitting conclusion to [Paul's] presentation of the gospel' (1991:296), as Paul draws out the lifestyle implications of a commitment to Jesus Christ.

Aune's thought-provoking analysis of Romans as a protreptic letter has an advantage over strictly historical-exegetical views of the letter, in that it respects its rhetorical dimension. Aune takes seriously the need to understand the literary-persuasive features of the New Testament, and this article contains a number of helpful insights in that regard. Further, much of the content of Romans is obviously hortatory in its intent, and thus betrays protreptic features. Rhetorical analyses of Romans must include the understanding of its protreptic features. Nevertheless, it remains doubtful that Romans fits this genre fully enough for the letter to be identified as an example of 'protreptic.'¹⁶

A more adequate rhetorical model for the understanding of Romans has recently been advanced by Robert Jewett (1991:265-277). Jewett views the letter as one sent by Paul to a congregation he has never visited, but whose assistance he will need if the Gentile mission is to expand to Spain (cf 1991:266ff). Paul writes his letter to the Romans in order to bring the factious house churches in Rome together and to facilitate this missionary enterprise. In his attempt to be as persuasive as possible in this letter and to attain 'common ground' between the Jewish and Gentile house churches, Paul employs rhetorical constructs which 'counterbalance' the prejudices of both groups and expand their theological understanding to include the realization that the gospel transcends cultural barriers and has the capacity to bring about world unification (1991:276). So, Jewett argues, Paul shapes Romans from a rhetorical perspective to indicate that salvation is 'inextricably joined with cosmic transformation, theology with ethics, faith with tolerance' (1991:277).

Jewett builds his rhetorical understanding of Romans upon both his own earlier work and that of G A Kennedy.¹⁷ Recognizing the five-fold discourse method of Cicero and Quintilian as the rhetorical model for Romans, Jewett agrees with Kennedy that Romans represents in its entirety an 'expression of demonstrative rhetoric' which uses argumentative categories typical of ancient theories of persuasion (1991:269f). These categories, Jewett argues, are descriptive of the material found in Romans, and it is by noting these categories that many interpretive difficulties with this epistle may be solved. As an example of one significant difficulty, Jewett mentions the problems associated with the

relationship of 1:18-4:25 to the remainder of the letter. He remarks that this is a subject that 'has been intensively debated by Romans commentators' (1991:271). Jewett states,

The main argument is stated in the first four chapters; yet themes, questions, and implications from that discussion are taken up in subsequent arguments in the letter.... these later sections are all part of the proof of the letter, elaborating the basic thesis that has been developed in the *confirmatio* section of Rm 1:18-4:25....One might visualize the structure of the argument as a thesis in 1:16-17 followed by an initial circle of proof in 1:18-4:25 that confirms the thesis. The next three proofs ...provide extensive developments of this thesis, answering relevant theological and ethical objections while amplifying important themes and implications (1991:271).

Jewett is, in this way, able to demonstrate the unity of the main section of Romans (1:18-15:23) as the rhetorically structured *probatio* of the epistle. Understanding the letter from this rhetorical perspective, then, allows an interpretation which respects its theological and literary integrity, and as Jewett indicated, 'solves' a number of previous difficulties in comprehending Paul's complex argumentation. It becomes unnecessary, therefore, to employ various composition theories or complicated hypotheses regarding differing destinations to make sense of the letter.

Jewett next 'sketches' the argument of Romans to demonstrate his thesis regarding Paul's use of classical rhetorical mechanisms (1991:272-274). The overview of Romans which may be extrapolated from Jewett's discussion at this point provides a useful and compelling rhetorical model for the proper understanding of

this letter. Using Jewett's terminology and building upon his annotation, this summarization is as follows:

Part One: *Exordium* (Introduction, 1:1-12). Introduces Paul to the Roman audience, emphasizes his apostolic authority, and defines his gospel in a preparatory fashion.

Part Two: *Narratio* (Narration, 1:13-15). Paul describes his missionary project to come to Rome.

Part Three: *Propositio* (Thesis Statement, 1:16-17). The major contention of the letter regarding the gospel as the powerful embodiment of the righteousness of God.

Part Four: *Probatio* (Proof, 1:18-15:13). The demonstration that the righteousness of God, rightly understood, has transforming and unifying implications for the Roman congregations and their participation in world evangelism. There are four elaborate proofs:

A. First Proof: *Confirmatio* (Confirmation, 1:18-4:25). Paul's confirmation of his basic thesis of 1:16-17 by showing that God's impartial righteousness provides righteousness for both Jew and Gentile alike, by faith.

1. The revelation of divine wrath, 1:18-32.
 - a. Exposure of human suppression of the truth about God, 1:18-23.
 - b. Elaboration of human distortions as a current indication of wrath, 1:24-32.
2. The righteous judgment of Gentiles & Jews, 2:1-29.
 - a. A diatribe concerning impartial judgment according to works, 2:1-16.
 - b. A diatribe concerning the non-exemption of Jews from impartial judgment, 2:17-29.
3. Jewish involvement in universal sin, 3:1-20.
 - a. A diatribe refuting objections to impartial judgment, 3:1-8.
 - b. A diatribe and catena of quotations showing the universal condemnation of sin, 3:9-20.
4. The righteousness of God that makes right all persons of faith, 3:21-31.
 - a. The triumph of righteousness in Christ, 3:21-26.
 - b. A diatribe showing the one God of Jews and Gentiles, 3:27-31.

5. Abraham as the example of righteousness that comes through faith, 4:1-25.
 - a. A diatribe and midrash showing Abraham received righteousness by faith before he was circumcised, 4:1-12.
 - b. A midrash showing that Abraham's promise comes to the righteous through faith, 4:13-25.

B. Second Proof: *Exornatio* (Elaboration, 5:1-8:39). In this section Paul deals with a series of implications and objections to the doctrine of God's righteousness conveyed by Christ.

1. Introduction, 5:1-11. States and explains the theme of righteousness as peace with God and hope in the midst of afflictions.
2. Ratiocination, 5:12-21. Deals with the contrasting realms of Adam and Christ.
3. Diatribe, 6:1-14. Refutes an objection on the basis of baptism, with a concluding exhortation.
4. Diatribe, 6:15-23. Refutes an objection on the basis of the exchange of lordship.
5. Enthymeme, 7:1-6. Concerns life in Christ as freedom from the law.
6. Refutation, 7:7-12. Refutation of an objection concerning the moral status of the law.
7. Refutation, 7:13-25. Refutes an objection concerning the effects of the law.
8. Thesis and rationale concerning the cosmic struggle between flesh and Spirit, 8:1-17.
9. Thesis and rationale concerning the hopeful suffering of the children of God, 8:18-30.
10. Conclusion, 8:31-39. Shows that nothing can separate believers from the love of Christ.

C. Third Proof: *Comparatio* (Comparison, 9:1-11:36). In this section Paul speaks to the issue of unbelieving Israel to demonstrate that the righteousness of God will triumph. Thus Rm 9-11 is fully integrated as an essential argument in Paul's 'proof' of his original thesis statement.

1. Introduction, 9:1-5. Deals with the tragic riddle of Israel's unbelief.
2. Thesis and midrash on Israel and the righteousness of divine election, 9:6-18.
3. Diatribe and midrash refuting an objection by scriptural proofs, 9:19-29.
4. Diatribe, 9:30-10:4. Responds to a question about righteousness by a doctrine of unenlightened zeal.
5. Ratiocination, 10:5-13. Shows that righteousness by faith is confirmed in Scripture.
6. Diatribal Syllogism, 10:14-21. Concerns the gospel preached but rejected.
7. Diatribe, 11:1-10. Answers a question about the status of Israel in relation to the Remnant chosen by grace.
8. Diatribe, thesis, and simile, 11:11-24. Deals with the missional purpose of Israel's trespass.
9. Oracular disclosure, 11:25-32. Rationale of the mystery of Israel's salvation.
10. Conclusion, 11:33-36. A hymn concerning the mysterious mind of God.

D. Fourth Proof: *Exhortatio* (Exhortation, 12:1-15:13). Here Paul dispenses ethical guidelines for righteous living, thus developing the final proof of the thesis of 1:17 that the righteous shall live by faith.

1. Introduction, 12:1-2. Thesis concerning the motivation and assessment of praiseworthy behavior.
2. Elaboration, 12:3-8. Explication of sober self-appraisal and the exercise of charismatic gifts.
3. Elaboration, 12:9-21. Guidelines for genuine love.
4. Elaboration, 13:1-7. Guidelines for relations to the government.
5. Definition of love in relation to the neighbor, 13:8-10.

6. Admonition, 13:11-14. Moral alertness necessary in the last days.
7. Exemplary guidelines and rationale for the weak and the strong, 14:1-12.
8. Exemplary guidelines and rationale for mutual upbuilding in pluralistic congregations, 14:13-23.
9. Admonition, 15:1-6. Admonition to follow Christ's example in edifying each other.
10. Conclusion, 15:7-13. Recapitulation of the motivational horizon of world mission and unification.

Part Five: *Peroratio* (Peroration, 15:14-16:27). Consists of an appeal for the cooperation of the Roman churches in missionary activities in Jerusalem, Rome, and Spain.

Jewett's comprehension of the rhetorical structure of Romans has the advantage of permitting an understanding which allows Paul a measure of 'rhetorical skill and forethought' (1991:276). Paul may then be understood as having purposely structured this epistle as a persuasive device which was directly attuned to both his needs and the needs of the Roman congregations. Looked at in this way, Paul's arguments are therefore coherent, consistent, and commanding. While not all of Jewett's assumptions regarding Romans should remain unchallenged,¹⁸ his reasoning with regard to Paul's use of conventional rhetoric provides a sound and ready model to follow as an initial rhetorical approach to the epistle.

8.3 Conclusion - An Epistolary-Rhetorical Outline of Romans

Romans (like Galatians) must be interpreted with a view toward both its rhetorical structures and epistolary conventions, in order to avoid a one-dimensional understanding of the letter's

content. In addition, other interpretive factors must be kept in mind, in order to ensure a thorough and proper exegetical process. To that end, an epistolary-rhetorical outline will attempt to take all these factors into consideration. With this perspective in mind, the following is suggested as an epistolary-rhetorical outline of Romans:

- I. Salutation, 1:1-7.
- II. Dialectic Section (Indicative; functions as Paul's logical argument for his gospel), 1:8-11:36.
 - A. Part One: Introductory Concerns (*Exordium*), 1:7b-12.
 - B. Part Two: Autobiographical Statements of Purpose (*Narratio*), 1:13-15.
 - C. Part Three: The Proposition of Romans (*Propositio*), 1:16-17.
 - D. Part Four: Supportive Arguments (*Probatio*), 1:18-11:36.
 - 1. First Proof: *Confirmatio*, 1:18-4:25.
 - 2. Second Proof: *Exornatio*, 5:1-8:39.
 - 3. Third Proof: *Comparatio*, 9:1-11:36.
- III. Paranetic Section (Imperative; Christian lifestyle functions as the ultimate 'proof' of Paul's gospel), 12:1-15:13.
 - A. Part One: *Exornatio*, 12:1-13:14.
 - B. Part Two: *Exemplum*, 14:1-15:13.
- IV. Conclusion (*Peroratio*), 15:14-16:27.
 - A. Part One: *Complexio* (including instructions and farewell greetings), 15:14-16:24.
 - B. Part Two: *Conclusio* (formal conclusion, in this case by apostolic benediction).

This analysis improves upon the strictly rhetorical depiction of Paul's intent in Romans, as it allows both the epistolary and rhetorical conventions current in Paul's day to inform the con-

temporary exegesis of the letter. In addition, understanding Romans from this perspective indicates that the *ἔργα νόμου* passages of Romans are found in the dialectic *confirmatio* section of the letter. As such, they are a part of that larger section dealing with the impartial righteousness of God in providing justification/righteousness for all humanity on the basis of faith, as opposed to that justification/righteousness coming about by works. This, then, indicates that from both an epistolary and rhetorical perspective, the understanding of 'works of the law' will be a negative understanding. Such a perception of negativity will of necessity inform the interpretation of *ἔργα νόμου* in Romans.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 8

1. It should be restated here that this study presupposes the textual integrity of Romans through the end of chapter 16. While the textual history of the letter demonstrates uncertainties, to be sure, the case for the letter's original length and destination is most persuasive (cf Bruce 1991:176). Dr Harry Gamble has shown convincingly that the correct reading of the textual evidence supports this conclusion (cf Gamble 1977, especially 36-126).
2. J N Vorster has recently suggested from a functional interactional approach to the letter that the theological framework of Romans is to be found in 1:1-17 and 15:7-16:23, which is expanded upon in the letter 'body' through communicative and rhetorical techniques (Vorster 1991).
3. In this regard note also Longenecker 1983:104ff; Stirewalt [1977] 1991:147-171.
4. Bornkamm [1977] 1991:16-28. Bornkamm considers Romans to be Paul's argument against the Jew as 'man exactly in his highest potential: the pious man...who exults in his piety before God' ([1977] 1991:26).
5. Klein's thesis differs from that of Jervis (1991) in that he sees Paul's purpose as laying a 'proper' apostolic foundation for the faith of the Roman Christians. Jervis, on the other hand, understands Paul to have written to commend the Romans' faith (cf 1991:163); but since those churches had no apostolic head, Paul wrote also to bring them into his 'orbit' of apostolic authority.
6. This despite Jervell, who writes, 'Actual letter style can only be found in the introduction and conclusion of the letter' ([1977] 1991:60). Also, this is not to deny a 'literary' quality to Paul's writing; cf the analysis of the rhetorical aspects of the letter.
7. Cf 1973:43ff. As this is not an exhaustive discussion of Romans by Doty, he makes no reference to Romans 9-11 in his epistolary framework.
8. An asterisk [*] denotes material that fits the technical form of conventional material, but does not appear

within the argument of the letter to be necessarily used as such.

9. Cf the discussion of this point by Aune (1991:287).
10. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
11. This is according to Bonhöffer 1911:179, note 1, as also noted by Donfried ([1977] 1991:118, note 75).
12. Note, for example, the work of Kennedy 1984:141-156, especially 152-156.
13. A comprehensive history of research into the rhetorical principles reflected in Romans, beginning with the church fathers, may be found in F Siegert 1985, *Argumentation bei Paulus gezeigt an Römer 9-11* (Tübingen: J C B Mohr). A brief overview of this same history is given by Mack 1990:9-17.
14. *CBQ* 38 (1976), 330-351.
15. Aune does not elaborate upon this charge; cf 1991:294f.
16. Aune admits as much when he states, '...Romans is not precisely similar to other surviving examples of the *logos protreptikos*...not only because of the inherent inflexibility of the genre, but also because Paul has Christianized it by adapting it as a means for persuading people of the truth of the gospel' (1991:296). In addition, Aune has not demonstrated that the parallels he finds between Romans and Greek philosophical thought are due to Greek philosophy and not Hebrew thought constructs arising out of a Jewish *Weltanschauung*. Paul's anthropological and ethical dualisms may have been more the result of Old Testament or intertestamental Jewish influences than popular Greek philosophy used in a protreptic atmosphere.
17. R Jewett 1982, Romans as an ambassadorial letter. *INT* 36, 5-20; G A Kennedy 1984, *New Testament interpretation through rhetorical criticism* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, especially pages 152-156).
18. Eg, his reconstruction of the historical situation; cf 1991:266ff, 274f.

9. Exegesis of Romans ἔργα νόμου Texts

The immediately preceding chapters of this study have been concerned with background material relevant to the question of Paul's use of ἔργα νόμου in Romans. Because the historical, epistolographical and rhetorical factors directly impact these key texts within the Roman epistle, a brief summarization of the findings of those chapters will provide a basis for the exegetical process which will occupy this chapter.

In terms of the historical setting of the letter to the Romans, it was suggested that Christianity took hold in Rome by means of the synagogues and religious institutions of Judaism. Jewish religious pilgrims traveling from Rome to Jerusalem came into contact there with the Christian gospel. Many of these people were persuaded of the claims of Christianity, and returned to Rome and began to spread the gospel among Jews and Gentile proselytes there (cf Ac 2). In the economic and commercial atmosphere of that day, it is also likely that Christian Jews from Jerusalem and other parts of the Empire travelled to Rome and proclaimed Jesus as Messiah among their Jewish brethren and Gentile God-fearers.

So the first Christians in Rome were Jews, or Gentiles who had attached themselves to Judaism. As the church grew, tensions arose between those Jews and proselytes who had become convinced that Jesus was the Messiah and others in the synagogues and the larger Jewish community who remained unconvinced of that identity. This tension eventually caused a disturbance among the Jew-

ish community of such a magnitude that the emperor Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome, banning all synagogue meetings in the process. Many Gentile Christians apparently remained in Rome, and the church continued to grow through the evangelization of Gentiles during this period. When Claudius relaxed his expulsion edict and allowed the Jews to begin to return to Rome, Jewish Christians who did return found the ban against synagogue meetings still in place, and the Gentiles in the majority in the house churches which had replaced the synagogue meetings (cf Wiefel [1977] 1991:95ff). In addition, the greater majority of Gentiles who had become Christians during this period had never been proselytes to Judaism. This group apparently enjoyed a form of Christianity that nomistic Jewish Christians and some Gentiles who had come to Christianity through proselytization to Judaism found unacceptable in light of Jewish lifestyle and ritual norms. So a controversy over the law threatened the unity of the Christian churches at Rome.

This controversy was one of the reasons Paul wrote his letter to the Roman congregations. It is most likely that this is the case, in spite of the fact that many have doubted and even denied that Paul could have written to address the situation of a group of churches which he had never visited.¹ Paul had for some time desired to visit the churches in the city where his citizenship was grounded. Several of his converts from elsewhere in the Empire had gravitated to Rome and perhaps even made up part of the leadership of the very congregations which are addressed by this epistle (cf Rm 16). Paul had, accordingly, a vested interest in what happened in and to these churches, in spite of the fact

that he had never personally visited them. This 'vested interest' also included the fact that the churches at Rome had no apostolic head, and so Paul wrote to include these congregations in his apostolic 'leadership orbit.'

Paul also wrote to inform the churches of his travel plans. In the process of informing them of those plans, he advised them of his purpose to visit Rome and requested their help in prayer, both for his immediate Jerusalem trip and subsequent journey to Rome. He also intimated that he would require prayer and the financial backing of the Roman churches for his proposed mission to Spain.

Another of Paul's 'reasons for Romans' has an apologetic cast to it. He wrote in part to clarify the content of his teaching and to settle the disputes in the Roman congregations over the place of the law in the life of the believer. Textual clues from the letter indicate that it is quite probable that the Roman Christians struggled with particular judaizing forms of behavior, and that Paul faced a certain amount of opposition to 'his' gospel among nomistically oriented Jewish Christians there in Rome (cf Stuhlmacher 1991:333). These Jewish Christians believed that the thought and behavior of Judaism should shape the character of Christianity (cf Wedderburn 1988:50). For this reason they opposed any 'gospel' which made a radical distinction between the identity and forms of Judaism, and Christianity. In other words, they believed and taught that in order to be Christian, one must first be 'practically' Jewish: one must practice the ancestral traditions of Judaism and obey the stipulations of the Mosaic covenant.

As Paul wrote to the Roman churches, he employed epistolary and rhetorical constructs which were common in his day. This fact is significant in that Paul's meaning in this letter is partially shaped by his use of those conventional forms. The epistolary and rhetorical devices Paul used are themselves forms of communication, and, properly understood, these mechanisms elucidate the message of this letter for a modern day audience, as they had previously done for Paul's original readers.

In the case of the epistolary structure of Romans, it was indicated that the conventional epistolary forms used by Paul make it most likely that Paul was addressing specific circumstances within the Roman congregations in this letter. In that sense, Romans may be understood as a form of the Greek 'private' letter, lending further credence to the historical reconstruction given above. The conventional epistolary materials in this letter were also seen to be 'clustered' in such a way as to mark significant shifts in Paul's thought, particularly with regard to the development of his argument and his use of Scripture. This allows one to follow Paul's intricate conceptuality in the letter more closely, and so to be more assured of one's understanding of the overall argument of the letter.

Paul's use of rhetorical conventions in the letter to the Romans demonstrated that he self-consciously and skillfully designed his argument according to the classical theories of persuasion common in the Greco-Roman world of his day. It is difficult, however, to assign the entirety of the letter to any one specific rhetorical genre. It is perhaps enough to recognize that classical rhetoric played a definite role in the shaping of

his argument. Paul undoubtedly did not wed himself to any one specific form, but rather shaped his argument to be as persuasive as his cultural background allowed him to be, and so used every argumentative weapon at his disposal. As an example of a rhetorically structured argument, the letter may be understood as a coherent whole, structured to prove Paul's main contention that the gospel of Jesus Christ is God's righteous plan of salvation for all humanity (Rm 1:16-17).

With this background of understanding relative to Romans, the exegesis of the *ἔργα νόμου* passages may proceed.

9.1 *ἔργα νόμου* Texts and Contexts

The Romans *ἔργα νόμου* texts (3:20, 28) both occur within the larger *confirmatio* section of 1:18-4:25, which serves as Paul's 'first proof' of his thesis in 1:16-17 that the gospel is the 'powerful embodiment of the righteousness of God.'² In this letter the 'implied' Paul, as the now somehow vulnerable apostle to the Gentiles, finds himself in need of the assistance of the Roman congregations. The 'implied' readers are those Roman Christians who will respond by prayerful and moral support for Paul, both in terms of his trip to Jerusalem, and the reception and promotion of 'his' gospel message at Rome, as he is in this letter attempting to demonstrate to that group of congregations that God's righteousness is provided for both Jew and Gentile alike by means of faith. The argument of this 'first proof' section of Romans is intricate and complex, and filled with interpretive difficulties which arise out of both its complexity and its length. Each passage appropriate to the *ἔργα νόμου* texts

and contexts in Romans will therefore be approached independently. This is so as to avoid complications which might arise out of attempting to interpret too large an amount of material at one time. In addition, there are a number of interpretive questions in this section of Romans which will not be addressed here. In the process of exegeting this material, notice will be given of the existence of most of these questions. Only those factors bearing most directly upon the question at hand, however, will be dealt with at any length. The major difficulties of this section can only be resolved by working through the greater context of the entire epistle. And, this study is not a 'commentary' on the letter, but only seeks to elucidate the meaning of the portions of the epistle which will help to clarify the contextual background of the two *ἔργα νόμου* texts.

The analysis of this section will be accomplished basically following Jewett's rhetorical understanding of the letter.³ The findings of the analysis of each of these independent sections will then be drawn together in a final summary.

9.1.1 Romans 3:1-20

Paul has discussed, in the preceding two sections of the *confirmatio*, God's revelation of his exceeding displeasure at (Gentile) humanity's sin (1:18-32) and the impartial righteous judgment of God upon the sin of both Jews and Gentiles (2:1-29). Both Gentile and Jew (possession of the law notwithstanding) are found alike to be 'under sin,' as demonstrated by individual acts of rebellion and law-breaking. Both are therefore alike 'guilty,' and stand in an equivalent condition of condemnation. Paul con-

tinues in this section to argue in a 'diatribe' style regarding Jewish involvement in universal sin, as he develops the concept of Jewish culpability and the appropriateness of Jews' inclusion among those who receive God's judgment. A brief overview of his speaking to the issues of objections regarding impartial judgment (3:1-8) and the universal condemnation of sin (3:9-18) will establish the foundational context for a more detailed analysis of the pertinent ἔργα νόμου text in this section (3:19-20).

9.1.1.1 Romans 3:1-8

Recognizing that an erroneous inference from his immediately preceding argumentation (2:17-29) might cause a misunderstanding relative to the Hebrew Scriptures and the covenant faithfulness of God (cf Cranfield 1975, 1:176), Paul here meets objections to his reasoning that God must judge the sin of the Jew even as he does that of the Gentile (cf Dahl 1977:80). In 3:1-8, he writes

Τί οὖν τὸ περισσὸν τοῦ Ἰουδαίου, ἢ τίς ἡ ὠφέλεια τῆς περιτομῆς; καλὸν κατὰ πάντα τρόπον. πρῶτον μὲν [γάρ] ὅτι ἐπιστεύθησαν τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ. τί γὰρ εἰ ἠπίστησάν τινες; μὴ ἡ ἀπιστία αὐτῶν τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ καταργήσῃ; μὴ γένοιτο· γινέσθω δὲ ὁ θεὸς ἀληθής, πᾶς δὲ ἄνθρωπος ψεύστης, καθὼς γέγραπται, Ὅπως ἂν δικαιοθῆς ἐν τοῖς λόγοις σου καὶ νικήσῃς ἐν τῷ κρίνεσθαί σε. εἰ δὲ ἡ ἀδικία ἡμῶν θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην συνίστησιν, τί ἐροῦμεν; μὴ ἄδικος ὁ θεὸς ὁ ἐπιφέρων τὴν ὀργήν; κατὰ ἄνθρωπον λέγω. μὴ γένοιτο· ἐπεὶ πᾶς κρίνει ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον; εἰ δὲ ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ ψεύσματι ἐπερίσσευσεν εἰς τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, τί ἔτι καὶ ἐγὼ ὡς ἁμαρτωλὸς κρίνομαι; καὶ μὴ καθὼς βλασφημούμεθα καὶ καθὼς φασὶν τινες ἡμᾶς λέγειν ὅτι Ποιήσωμεν τὰ κακὰ ἵνα ἔλθῃ τὰ ἀγαθὰ; ὧν τὸ κρίμα ἐνδικόν ἐστιν.

Then what is the advantage of the Jew? Or what is the profit in circumcision? Much in every way. For, in the first place, they were entrusted with the oracles of God. But what if some did not believe? Their unbelief will not annul the faithfulness of God, will it? May it never be! But let God be proved

true, and every man proved a liar; just as it is written, That you may be justified in your words, and overcome in your judgments. And, if our unrighteousness establishes the righteousness of God, what will we say? The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is he? (I am speaking according to human understanding.) May it never be! For otherwise, how will God judge the world? But if through my lie the truth of God brought an abundance of his glory, why am I still being judged as a sinner? And why not say (as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say) 'Let us do good that evil may come'? Their condemnation is deserved.

Responding to the thought that he has denigrated the position of Judaism in the argumentation of Romans 2:17-29, Paul here insists that there is indeed 'advantage' (τὸ πλεονέκτημα) to being a Jew, there is 'profit' (ὠφέλεια) in circumcision (circumcision here representing merely the 'identity' of Judaism, as a parallel to 'Jew').⁴ 'First,' Paul says, they were entrusted with 'the very words of God.' This is, for Paul, the principal benefit of Jewish heritage.⁵ In particular, the likelihood is great that Paul has in mind here the specific 'logia' of God to the Jews relative to the promised Messiah, the 'gospel preached beforehand to Abraham' (Gl 3:8).⁶ But, Paul argues, even though some among those who were 'entrusted' (ἐμπιστεύθησαν) with those Messianic promises were 'unbelieving' (ἠπίσθησαν) of them, God's 'faithfulness' (πίστις) is not therefore annulled by that unbelief.⁷ Paul is well aware that throughout Israel's history 'some' people within the covenant nation had resisted God's presence and promises. The Scriptures were full of examples of disobedience to God's commands, and of occasions during which God's prophetic spokesmen were rebuffed by their own people. Even Jesus met with

by many within the nation of Israel. If 'some' Jews, even if they were the majority, did not believe these Messianic promises of God, or that these promises were fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth, Paul argues, that does not 'undo' the faithfulness of God (cf Rm 11:1ff). 'May it never be!' God *did* keep his promise to Abraham, and through Jesus Christ 'all the nations will be blessed' (Gn 12:3). God is faithful to remember (ie, 'keep') his covenant promises to Abraham, to Israel, and through them to all humanity.⁸ This is the assumed reality for Paul behind his statement, 'Let God be true.'⁹ And, Paul asserts, God is 'true' even if every individual were to reject that truth. The reception or rejection by humanity of God's promise cannot alter the covenant faithfulness of God.¹⁰ The quotation of Psalm 51:4 (LXX 50:6) reinforces Paul's point. Speaking in terms of the 'covenant lawsuit,' Paul maintains that God will ultimately be proved true to his word as he imposes his justice over all creation (cf Käsemann 1980:80ff). Though Israel may mistakenly believe that the implication of Paul's reasoning leaves them free to charge God with unfaithfulness (based upon the Jewish presumption of election and justifying righteousness as contained in covenant), God will nonetheless be vindicated when all is said and done.

Continuing to speak 'unmistakably' in covenant-lawsuit terms (cf Hays 1980:111), Paul moves in verse 5 to a discussion of God's righteousness.¹¹ Though at first glance this may appear to be an 'unexpected turn' in his argument (Cranfield 1975, 1:183), Paul actually addresses this issue as a logical extension of the answer to the previous misunderstanding of his reasoning

as reflected in verses 3-4. God is not 'unrighteous' to include the Jews in universal condemnation (taking the use of ὀργή here to indicate the eschatological judgment), despite the election of Israel and the covenant, because Israel is 'unrighteous' (and thereby violates covenant), just as the nations are. In fact, Paul argues, God's 'right' or ability to judge the world exists precisely because he judges both Israel and the nations by the same righteous standard (the implication of verse 6). But, Paul continues (7-8), that does not mean that humanity's sin may remain unjudged or that more sin brings more glory to God as he deals with that sin (cf Rm 6:1). Though verses 7 and 8 are notoriously difficult (cf Cranfield 1975, 1:185-187), it seems best to understand this as Paul's ironic restatement of verse 5 (so Bruce 1985:90f), directed toward the 'blasphemous' misunderstanding of his perspective on the law and the covenant (the underlying thought construct for all of chapters 2 and 3). God has not abandoned Israel, his elect people, nor has he forgotten to be faithful to his promises. Paul's 'version' of the gospel does not make God unjust in judging Israel, nor does it allow God to 'wink at' sin because he gains 'glory' as he forgives it. God is not to be held accountable for Israel's unbelief and subsequent judgment, nor is he to be accused of injustice on that basis.

So in 3:1-8 Paul has dealt with the 'rightness' of God's inclusion of sinful Israelites in the just condemnation of sin. Though there were those who may have objected to this reasoning, on the basis of their understanding of covenant, Paul reminds his detractors (apostrophic, or more likely, actual) that God is

just, whether or not humanity responds correctly to him and his promises. His wrathful judgment is impartial, and includes both Jews and Gentiles on the basis of their sin.

9.1.1.2 Romans 3:9-20

In this section Paul furthers his 'covenant lawsuit' type of argumentation regarding God's just condemnation of all humanity, both Jew and Gentile, because of sin (cf Hays 1980:112). In support of his contention, he turns again to authoritative Scripture, demonstrating that all are equally without excuse.

Romans 3:9 is another extremely difficult verse. This difficulty involves punctuation, textual variants, and the interpretation of the middle voice of the verb *προεχόμεθα*. The text of the verse reads as follows:

Τί οὖν; προεχόμεθα; οὐ πάντως, προηγουμένως γὰρ Ἰουδαίους
τε καὶ Ἕλληνας πάντας ὑφ' ἁμαρτίαν εἶναι,

What then? Are we preferred above them? Not at all; for we have already charged both Jews and Greeks to be alike under sin.

Punctuation is largely dependent upon interpretation, and so varies with the answers given to the remaining difficulties. As to the textual variants, the *lectio difficilior* is the reading given above, which is taken here to be the correct one.¹² The most significant question for the interpretation of this verse, therefore, is that of how to understand the verb *προεχόμεθα*.

N A Dahl suggests that the verb should be understood as a genuine middle, with no punctuation between Τί οὖν and *προεχόμεθα* (1982:184-204).¹³ In the middle voice, the verb *προεχόμεθα* has

the sense of 'to hold, to have, to set before oneself.' Dahl believes that this sense fits the context of Romans 3 well, reflecting his understanding of Paul's use of the diatribe form of argumentation at this point. To further 'smooth out' the text of the verse, he advocates following the text of P, dropping the οὐ πάντα as an early gloss (1982:195). Dahl then renders the verse as 'What, then, do we hold before us as a defense?' The thought that Paul is communicating, according to Dahl, is that since Jew and Gentile are both condemned by sin (the collective 'we'), they have 'nothing' to offer God in defense of their sinfulness or for their justification. This explanation, though it may be made suitable to the context (though not perhaps for all of Dahl's reasons), must be rejected on the basis of the superior textual evidence for the inclusion of οὐ πάντα^{ω} (cf Metzger 1975:507f) and the necessity of taking $\tau\acute{\iota}$ as the object of προεχόμεθα if the οὐ πάντα^{ω} is excluded. In addition, it is doubtful whether προεχόμεθα used by itself can possess the meaning 'have an excuse' or 'excuse oneself' in such a circumstance (cf Cranfield 1975, 1:188ff).

A second option is to translate the verb προεχόμεθα as passive.¹⁴ This is a grammatical possibility, and with the inclusion of οὐ πάντα would give the verse the sense of 'Are we [ie, Jews] worse off than they (or 'excelled by them')? Not altogether.' The major difficulty with this interpretation is that it is seemingly contextually inconsistent both because Paul has been at pains to demonstrate the 'equality' of condemnation for both Jew and Gentile (so neither should be considered 'worse off'),

and in light of the immediately preceding discussion of the 'advantage' of the Jew.

The final option is to take *προεχόμεθα* as an example of a middle voice verb with an active sense, and include the *οὐ πάντας*, as the majority of manuscripts do. This would render the verse as something like, 'What then? Are we [ie, Jews] better than they are? Not at all.' Objections to this interpretation have been raised however, because though it is common in Greek for middle voice verbs to be used with an active meaning, there are no other examples of the verb *προεχόμεθα* being so used. Also, this has been said to open Paul up to the charge of 'direct self-contradiction' due to his previous reference to the 'advantage' of the Jew (cf Dodd 1932:47). This latter point causes some to understand the 'we' as Christians (eg, Hendriksen 1980, 1:120f). However, to identify the 'we' as Christians would be jarring in context. In addition, if this were Paul's intended meaning, it would seem that Barrett's assumption is correct when he remarks that 'there would probably have been an emphatic "we" (*ἡμεῖς*), or some other clear pointer' (Barrett 1957:68).

It must be noted that the above objections to understanding the verb *προεχόμεθα* as middle in form but active in meaning are not insurmountable. The objection that no other examples of an active connotation for the middle voice of this verb have been found has been adequately met with the rejoinder, 'when applicable examples are so few and far between, such a verdict has little, if any, value' (Hendriksen 1980, 1:119f, note 79). The evidence for and against this charge has been continually weighed, and to this

point has not proved fully determinative.¹⁵ Thus this issue must be decided on other grounds.

The idea that Paul is inconsistent or contradictory here is a problem only if one is constrained to treat the *περισσόν* of 3:1 as an equivalent expression to the *προεχόμεθα* of 3:9. But if the *περισσόν* speaks to the issue of revelatory *privilege*, and the *προεχόμεθα* indicates soteriological *priority*, this fits the context exactly. Paul has argued that sinful Jews are no better than sinful Gentiles (2:17-29), and in fact they, too, deserve God's righteous judgment, despite their otherwise *privileged status* as God's covenant people. Now, he shifts his argument to indicate that this privileged status of the Jews does nothing to change the reality of their sinful behavior, so that they are not *soteriologically superior*, that is, they do not have soteriological *priority* over the Gentiles (as Sanders correctly notes; cf *PPJ* 489f). They do not have an automatic 'in' with God solely on the basis of their national/ethnic heritage (cf Mt 3:9f; Jn 8:39-47). In fact, he says, 'we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin.' So, given all the factors affecting the interpretation of this verse, it seems best to understand it as translated above, making clear the concept of priority by using a phrase such as 'Are we preferred above them?' The answer Paul gives is 'Not at all, for we have already charged both Jews and Greeks to be alike under sin' ('already' - in Rm 1:18-2:29; cf Räisänen 1986:97ff).

Verses 10-18 serve to underscore Paul's claim. This catena of Scripture quotations may be Paul's use of preformed material,

such as a Jewish or Jewish-Christian written or oral catechesis, which he adapts for his particular needs here.¹⁶ There are linguistic parallels to this material in Jewish literature of the same general time period, and Paul could have adapted such written material readily enough (eg, CD 5:13-17; 1 QH 4:29f; 7:17; 9:14f; 12:31f; 4 Ezra 7:22-24). On the other hand it has been argued that this material may have been Paul's own production, his '*florilegium*' created here to lend force to his argument (cf Hanson 1974:21-29). In either case, the quotation of these passages is 'thoroughly apposite here' (Cranfield 1975, 1:192). It is 'apposite' because these Scripture portions, read correctly, indicate that Jews as well as Gentiles are 'under sin' (cf Westerholm 1988:156ff). As noted by Dunn,

it needs to be stressed that the point of the catena is not simply to demonstrate that [S]cripture condemns all humankind, but more precisely to demonstrate that [S]criptures which had been read from the presupposition of a clear distinction between the righteous and the unrighteous [Jew and Gentile, respectively]...in fact condemned all humankind as soon as that clear distinction was undermined (1988c, 1:149).

Paul utilizes this material, therefore, to lend an authoritative witness to his contention that Jews and Gentiles are both condemned in the same manner, due to their sin. The stress upon 'none' and 'all' in these passages is intended by Paul to manifest again the all-pervasive nature of sin. It is yet another way of his signifying that Jew and Gentile, ethnically speaking, are equally condemned. So there is no exegetical warrant for these passages to be construed pejoratively, as though this were

Paul's 'blanket condemnation' of each and every individual Jew or Gentile, as does Räsänen, who writes:

The syllogism suggested in verse 9 would only follow...on the impossible condition that Gentiles and Jews were, *without exception*, guilty of the vices described. It looks almost as if Paul were half conscious of the limited nature of his argument: in 3:3 he starts his next argument from the fact that *some* (τινές) have been unfaithfulto jump from this to the assertion that 'every human being is a liar' [Rm 3:4] let alone to the final consequence in 3:9, is a blatant non sequitur (Räsänen 1986:99; emphasis in original).

Such a misreading of Paul does not advance the understanding of his argument here. Paul's purpose in this section is to underscore his previous contention that Jews are as guilty as, and therefore equally condemned with, Gentiles. In support of this point, Paul quotes a series of Scripture passages which serve to confirm his judgment, that 'all' are guilty of sin, even Jews, and that 'all' who do sin are to be condemned. So then, the 'favored status' of the Jew is shown not to extend to soteriological categories.

In their original contexts these quotations contrast the righteous and the wicked, and are taken, with some modification, from the LXX of the Psalms, Isaiah and Ecclesiastes.¹⁷ Rightly understood, these passages make up a formidable reinforcement for Paul's previous argument.

Paul's line of argumentation is now advanced at 3:19. Here he writes

Οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι ὅσα ὁ νόμος λέγει τοῖς ἐν τῷ νόμῳ λαλεῖ, ἵνα πᾶν στόμα φραγῆ καὶ ὑπόδικος γένηται πᾶς ὁ κόσμος τῷ θεῷ.

Now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are within the law, in order that every mouth may be silenced, and all the world may become exposed to the judgment of God.

Paul's 'Now we know' (Οἴδαμεν δὲ) hearkens back to Galatians 2:16, and this argument amplifies the thought constructs present there.¹⁸ What Paul is suggesting here is that 'whatever' (ὅσα, emphatic) the law 'speaks,' it 'speaks' to this issue of condemnation he has previously discussed, and it 'speaks' to those 'within the law' (ἐν τῷ νόμῳ). That is, it 'speaks' to the Jew who is trusting in the law as his distinctive privilege from God.¹⁹ The 'favored status' of the Jewish nation (in the sense of 3:1ff) was in part tied to and distinguished through the giving of the law, and so they are identified as being 'within the law.'²⁰ Dunn is correct, therefore, to emphasize the social function of the law as the Jewish 'identity marker;' but it goes beyond that. Paul is again accentuating here that the law was not given for soteriological purposes, and therefore could not be claimed as a soteriological 'in' with God. In other words, he is speaking to those 'within the law,' those who should have known that the purpose of the law was not soteriological (cf Gl 2:16). They should have recognized and agreed that even those 'within the law' could not 'talk back' to God in his judgment, questioning his impartiality or his justice. Every mouth must be silenced before him.²¹ In this way, every human being, Jew or Gentile, would be 'exposed to the [righteous] judgment of God.'²²

Paul's discussion of the universal condemnation of humanity due to sin now comes to a head at 3:20. He writes,

διότι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιοθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ ἐνώπιον
αὐτοῦ, διὰ γὰρ νόμου ἐπίγνωσις ἁμαρτίας,

for by works of the law no [flesh] human
being will be justified before him, for
through the law comes knowledge of sin.

In a 'clear allusion' to Psalm 143:2 (Moo 1983:97; cf Hays 1980) Paul in this verse confirms his thesis regarding the accountability of the whole world, Jew as well as Gentile, to God.²³ The text of the Psalm as alluded to by Paul here is the same as that at Galatians 2:16 (but there leaving out the ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ).²⁴ This parallel is not evidence enough to say that Paul introduced the existing textual changes into the Psalm himself (from the LXX to G1 and Rm), as Dunn has indicated (1988, 1:153; though that is not to deny that Paul could have done so). Nevertheless, it does give sufficient evidence to say that Paul's train of thought in the two passages is analogous. That is, Paul continues building his argument here (as he did at 3:19) along the same conceptual constructs as he did in Galatians 2:16. So the understanding of ἔργα νόμου in this context must be guided by that same pattern of thought. What Paul is denying here, then, again has to do with the 'privileged status' of the Jews as God's covenant people (cf the context of 3:1-19). It is not 'by works of the law,' that is, by 'being Jewish' in a practical sense, that one is justified. In the context of Paul's argument here in Romans 3, the meaning of ἔργα νόμου also encompasses the 'thought and behavior of Judaism' as shaping the character of Christianity. Like the Galatians occurrences of this phrase, ἐξ ἔργων νόμου at Romans 3:20 is broad enough to embrace the *soteriological*

implications of the judaizers' argument (cf Moo 1991:212-218). So then, Paul's argument is that 'works of the law' are neither sufficient grounds for, or a necessary prerequisite to, justification, as claimed by both his Galatian opponents and the opposition to him as reflected here ('works of the law,' ἔργα νόμου; 'being Jewish,' 'behaving as a Jew,' in the sense of Ἰουδαΐζειν; cf Gl 2:14-16). And as in Galatians 2:16, 3:2, 5, and 10, here the phrase 'works of the law' refers to the *nomistic practices related to the Jewish law which the judaizers insisted were the means to satisfy God's salvific requirements, thus making up the warp and woof of what it means to be 'Christian'* (cf 6.1.2.1.2 and 6.1.2.1.3, above). Not only does being Jewish in this sense fail to deliver the sinful Jew from condemnation, in spite of the 'privileged status' of the Jewish nation. It is also insufficient to justify one before God. The discussion here again (as in Gl 2-3) is not over the law, as such, but over what the judaizers understood the function of that law to be. Paul, as opposed to those who contended against him, did not understand the function of the law to be salvific, but as revelatory and restraining. Hence, he says 'through the law comes knowledge of sin' (διὰ γὰρ νόμου ἐπίγνωσις ἁμαρτίας). The law was given by God to Israel, in part then, to arouse within humanity (through Judaism) the awareness of sin (cf Rm 5:20; Gl 3:19-29).²⁵ Here in Romans, of course, Paul does not fully spell out the revelatory character of the law, as he did in Galatians. He states the fact 'dogmatically' or 'axiomatically' (cf Robertson 1979:37). Sanders has suggested that this is possibly due to the fact that the connection between

sin and the law had become so 'customary' to Paul between the writing of Galatians and Romans, that by this time he could 'simply assert it without explanation' (1983:71).

In addition, as noted by Moo, the logic of Paul's argument at this point must be understood to include an assumed step. That step is the unspoken supposition that 'works of the law' cannot be done sufficiently to justify (Moo 1991:213). This is, as Moo points out, due in part to the human condition itself (cf Rm 8:3).²⁶ However, what Moo does not state is that Paul assumes that the law 'cannot be done sufficiently to justify' *precisely because the law was never intended to do so*. This was Paul's assumption in Galatians 2 and 3 (based at least in part upon his understanding of Psalm 143); this is what he believed Peter and the others 'knew' (Gl 2:14ff; Rm 3:19); and this is his assumption here at Romans 3 (also based in part upon Psalm 143). So then, for the Jew to insist upon inclusion in the Kingdom of God (and, conversely, exclusion from the eschatological judgment) based upon ethnicity and a nomistic lifestyle arising out of that ethnicity, was to misuse the law which was given by God as a temporary 'covenant privilege' to the nation of Israel.²⁷

In Romans 3:9-20, then, Paul has demonstrated that the Jewish nation is not soteriologically superior to Gentiles. Both Jewish and Gentile sinners are alike condemned before God, and both must stand 'close-mouthed' before him at his righteous judgment. In addition, on 'the other side of the coin,' being Jewish does not give one an automatic 'in' with God in terms of justification: the Jewish 'works of the law' are unnecessary as soteriological prerequisites to a right relationship to God. The implications

of this fact for Gentile converts to Christianity are significant to the Roman congregations (as for the Galatian), in that these Gentile converts need not proselytize to Judaism in order to relate to God and other Christians correctly. The law was given to show humanity its need for God, and as a means for an immature people to relate to God and to one another correctly. But now (vvv), in Christ, the believer is free to obey God and relate to him through the Spirit (as Paul will develop later, Rm 8).

9.1.2 Romans 3:21-31

At this point in the development of his argument Paul moves the focus of his discussion from that of centering on God's universal condemnation of sinners, to speak now of righteousness. He has just indicated that being Jewish and practicing Jewish ritual norms is not enough to avoid condemnation (2:17-3:8) or to assure justification (3:9-20). Now, he will explain who may be accepted before God and upon what basis they are accepted (3:21-26). And, he will once again remove any basis for claiming soteriological priority through the claim of 'covenant privilege' (3:27-31).

9.1.2.1 Romans 3:21-26

After having dealt with the universal unrighteousness of humanity and its attendant universal condemnation, Paul considers in this passage the eschatological justifying activity of God in bringing righteousness to sinful humanity (cf Moo 1991:219). In coming to this issue, he is bringing to the fore the exposition of his *propositio* (1:16-17). Here he writes,

Νυνὶ δὲ χωρὶς νόμου δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ πεφανερώται, μαρτυρούμενη ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν προφητῶν, δικαιοσύνη δὲ θεοῦ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας· οὐ γάρ ἐστὶν διαστολή· πάντες γὰρ ἥμαρτον καὶ ὑστεροῦνται τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ, δικαιούμενοι δωρεὰν τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρόσεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ· ὃν προέθετο ὁ θεὸς ἰλαστήριον διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι εἰς ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ διὰ τὴν πάρεσιν τῶν προγεγονότων ἀμαρτημάτων ἐν τῇ ἀνοχῇ τοῦ θεοῦ, πρὸς τὴν ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν δίκαιον καὶ δικαιούντα τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ.

But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been revealed, having been witnessed by the law and the prophets, that is, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ, for all those who believe; for there is no distinction. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. They are justified as a gift by his grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God publicly set forth as an atoning sacrifice, through faith in his blood, in proof of his righteousness because of the passing over of sins committed beforehand in the forbearance of God, that is, in proof of his righteousness at the present time, that he might be the just one, and the one who justifies the one having faith in Jesus.

Paul begins this section by means of an implied contrast between the 'now' period of *Heilsgeschichte* and 'then' (ποτέ), the time before the advent of the Messiah (Νυνὶ being taken as used in a temporal, rather than a logical, sense here). Now, 'apart from the law' (χωρὶς νόμου), God's righteousness has been revealed. Paul must not be misinterpreted here, as though he were speaking of a 'righteousness apart from the law.' The phrase 'apart from the law' should be associated with 'has been revealed' (πεφανερώται), not 'the righteousness of God' (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ). Paul is not discussing how righteousness is received, but how God's righteousness is revealed.²⁸ In that vein, therefore, he is not

speaking of two temporally distinct types of received righteousness, a 'prior' righteousness through the law, and righteousness 'now' coming through faith (righteousness has always been through faith in the promise and character of God). Rather, he is addressing the way God's righteousness is 'now' (Νῦν) being manifested.²⁹ In the *πρωτέ* period, believers expressed their trust and confidence in God by means of adherence to his law, and God's 'received' righteousness was made manifest in and through his people on the basis of that law (cf Dt 6:4-9, 20-25). 'Now,' as will be developed in this immediate context (3:22-26), since Christ has come and died as a sacrifice, God's righteousness is manifested through Christ's death and the faith of those who trust God on the basis of that death.³⁰

It is 'the righteousness of God' (*δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ*) which Paul here says is being revealed. As Hays has suggested (1980:111ff), in this context the phrase does not mean God's righteousness which is 'imputed' to humanity.³¹ What Paul is speaking to here, however, is God's attribute of righteousness which is shown forth in his saving activity (ie, God's righteousness as displayed in his actions in behalf of humanity, not 'righteousness' as a static property of God *per se*). In this context, then, this is intended to underscore the fact that it is humanity which is unrighteous, but God is righteous as he rectifies the sinful condition of humanity. As Hays has termed it, God has '[overcome] human unfaithfulness by his own power and proving himself faithful/just' (1980:113).

This righteousness of God, Paul says, was 'witnessed by the law and the prophets.' This is Paul's continued 'covenant-

lawsuit' imagery, indicating that the Scriptures 'witness' to God's righteousness as well as the continuity of God's purpose in redemptive history. This righteous purpose, he argues, is now realized through Jesus Christ, and in those who express this righteousness of God through faith in him (3:22; the 'human side' of the process).³² The genitive phrase διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is ambiguous, and may be interpreted either as 'Jesus Christ's faithfulness' (ie, his faithful obedience, as demonstrated here by his death on the cross) or 'faith in Jesus Christ.' Given the fact that the context clearly emphasizes the faith of those who are trusting in Jesus or God (3:26; cf 3:21-31, and 3:21-4:25 overall), however, it is likely that this genitive should be construed objectively rather than subjectively.³³ This righteousness is 'for all who believe,' because there 'is no distinction' (διαστολή). Paul here again, then, disabuses his readers of the notion that righteousness comes through being Jewish or acting in a Jewish manner. In soteriological terms, 'there is no difference,' because 'all' are guilty of sin and 'all' are in equal need of God's righteousness (3:23; here he reiterates the 'all' of 3:4, 9, 12, 19, 20).

Paul proceeds in his argument to explain that justification is the gift of God (3:24). This verse is difficult, and Paul's argument here has been variously interpreted.³⁴ Nonetheless, it seems clear that Paul is indicating here that it is those who 'have sinned and fall short of the glory of God' who are ultimately justified as God's gracious gift.³⁵ The word ἀπολυτρόσεως is probably best translated 'redemption,' as Cranfield

suggested (1985:71f), yet *contra* Cranfield's understanding at this point, the idea of 'ransom' is surely inherent to the intention of this word here, given the immediate context (ie, ἰλαστήριον, 3:25).³⁶

Verses 25 and 26 bring this portion of Paul's argument to a close. Here he indicates that God had 'publicly set forth' Jesus Christ at the cross to accomplish sinful humanity's redemption through his 'atoning' or 'propitiatory' sacrifice. The word ἰλαστήριον certainly must be understood here against its LXX usage as a cultic-sacrificial term, indicating Jesus' death as a sacrifice, particularly as Paul includes the phrase 'in his blood.' And in keeping with the double accusative construction, associating ἰλαστήριον with the verb προέθετο (ὃν προέθετο...ἰλαστήριον), Paul is indicating at this point in his argument the 'public nature' of God's 'display' of Jesus as the New Testament antitype of the Old Covenant type, the 'mercy seat,' the 'place of atoning sacrifice.'³⁷ God accomplishes all of this, Paul says, in order to maintain his grace along with his integrity. That is, Paul is discussing the means whereby God could continually suffer the unrighteousness of humanity, withholding his ultimate judgment against mankind until the appointed time. He could do this, Paul says, because he knew that his righteousness would at the proper time be effected through the death of Jesus Christ, and through those who place their faith in him. In this manner, he is both just (δίκαιον; thus his righteous integrity is safeguarded), and he is the one who justifies (δικαιοῦνται) all who place their faith in Jesus Christ.

In 3:21-26, then, Paul has shown that God's righteousness comes about through the person and work of Jesus Christ. This is in keeping with God's purpose and promises, as indicated in Scripture in the message of the law and the prophets. This righteousness of God is available to all, Gentile as well as Jew, through faith in Jesus Christ. Since all have sinned, Paul says, redemption and righteousness are available to all, without distinction, on the basis of Christ's atoning sacrifice. In this way, God is shown to be both a God of integrity, and the one who justifies human beings.

9.1.2.2 Romans 3:27-31

In this section Paul reiterates his negation of any soteriological 'privileged status' for the Jew based upon the Mosaic covenant. In these verses he demonstrates that this negation is due to the fact that God is the God of both Jew and Gentile. He writes,

Ποῦ οὖν ἡ καύχησις; ἐξεκλείσθη. διὰ ποίου νόμου; τῶν ἔργων; οὐχί, ἀλλὰ διὰ νόμου πίστεως. λογίζομεθα γὰρ δικαιούσθαι πίστει ἀνθρώπων χωρὶς ἔργων νόμου. ἢ Ἰουδαίων ὁ θεὸς μόνον; οὐχί καὶ ἐθνῶν; ναὶ καὶ ἐθνῶν, εἴπερ εἰς ὁ θεός, ὃς δικαιώσει περιτομὴν ἐκ πίστεως καὶ ἀκροβυστίαν διὰ τῆς πίστεως. νόμον οὖν καταργοῦμεν διὰ τῆς πίστεως; μὴ γένοιτο, ἀλλὰ νόμον ἰσχύνομεν.

Where is boasting, then? It has been excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but rather by the law of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith, apart from the works of the law. Is God the God of only the Jews? Is he not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, for 'God is one,' who will justify the circumcision by faith and the uncircumcision through faith. Do we therefore make the law void through faith? May it never be! No, through faith we establish the law.

Paul begins this section by immediately deflating the claim of the Jew who is confident of his or her soteriological privilege on the basis of ethnic identity and its accompanying ritual lifestyle (3:27). He is *not* speaking out against the 'godly Jew' whose piety is universally representative of the devout individual who self-confidently boasts of his or her ability to produce 'good works.'³⁸ Paul's argument against 'boasting,' in context, can only be against the gloating of the Jewish person who is errantly trusting in presumed soteriological 'special privileges' out of the covenant status as one of God's 'chosen people' (cf 3:1-18).³⁹ All such boasting, Paul says, has been 'excluded' (ἐξεκλείσθη, historical aorist).

Rhetorically, Paul asks what manner of 'law' it is that 'excludes' this type of boasting. He affirms that it is not a 'law' of 'works' which accomplishes this exclusion, but rather a 'law' of faith. As argued earlier (3.2.3.2), it is most likely that Paul intends his first use of 'law' in this verse to be understood in general terms of 'principle' or 'conventional rule' (taking νόμον here in a non-qualitative sense; cf Moo 1991:252). He is not referring here to some aspect of the Mosaic legislation. On the other hand, the second occurrence of 'law' is best understood here as Paul's *double entente*, an attempt to 'blend' or combine both the conventional (ie, principial) and the specific (ie, Mosaic) concepts of 'law' in such a way that one conception is created.⁴⁰ In this way, Paul condemns the Jew who trusts his 'special privileges' of covenant (because that 'law' was also founded upon faith), but also manages to keep the contextually equally-condemned Gentile in view, as well. The

'law' of faith, as Paul has already indicated (3:21f), directed all humanity to the person and promise of God: it was a 'law of faith,' which excluded boasting in presumed soteriological priority based upon special 'covenant privileges,' and thus served to silence every mouth before God.

Based upon the reality of this 'law of faith,' Paul maintains (λογιζόμεθα) that 'a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law' (δικαιοῦσθαι πίστει ἄνθρωπον χωρὶς ἔργων νόμου). As in 3:20, Paul's thought construct here is again parallel to Galatians 2:16 (there, εἰδότες ὅτι οὐ δικαιοῦται ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἐὰν μὴ διὰ πίστεως). It may be deduced, therefore, that the meaning of ἔργα νόμου at this point is similar to the meaning found in the previous passages. That is, Paul continues to argue against 'the works of the law' as the Jewish-Christian ideal of Gentile converts as 'proselytes' to a 'completed' Judaism. This is more than Jewish 'identity markers.' What Paul insists here, as he did above at 3:20 and in Galatians, is that Gentiles do not need to become 'practical' Jews to enter fully into a relationship with God. It is not by 'works of the law' (a Jewish lifestyle as a soteriological requisite) that a person is justified. Justification comes 'apart from' that covenantal framework. This is true, Paul goes on to assert, because God is the God of both Jew and Gentile, who will justify both the Jew (circumcised, περιτομήν) and the Gentile (uncircumcised, ἀκροβυστίαν) alike by means of faith. As already noted by Augustine (*SpirLit* 29.50), the use of these two synonymous prepositions here (ἐκ πίστεως, διὰ τῆς πίστεως) is undoubtedly for rhetorical effect.⁴¹ And as Dunn has noted, to

interpret Paul's use of these prepositions as anything other than such stylistic variation results in an improper continuing validity to the distinction between Jew and Gentile which is, in part, what Paul is combatting here. Dunn writes:

The characterization of humankind under the two catchwords 'circumcision' and 'uncircumcision' harks back to 2:25-27 by evoking the Jewish perspective and distinction, but only in order to show that it is no longer valid, no longer in accord with the perspective and purpose of the one God. The distinction between ἐκ and διὰ...is probably merely stylistic...: Paul would not want to imply a continuing distinction, since it is...the common ground and medium of faith which has rendered insignificant the distinction circumcision/uncircumcision so far as the relationship with the God who is one is concerned (1988c, 1:189).

So then, this variation serves primarily to underscore Paul's message of faith, as over against his opponents' message of Jewish soteriological priority. Both Jew and Gentile are justified by faith, as the one God of all humanity has planned. The law is thus shown through this argumentation to be unnecessary for salvation (as correctly but somewhat diffidently noted by Sanders, *PPJ* 489).

Paul concludes this section by rejecting the charge that his position 'nullifies' (καταργούμεν) the law (cf Gl 2:21). He asserts that, to the contrary, his position 'establishes' (ιστάνομεν) the law. Paul addresses this charge in what might again be considered an 'axiomatic' manner, the statement remaining undeveloped here. But Paul's position on this issue, as Sanders argues relative to the relationship of sin and the law, may also have become so 'customary' for him so as to alleviate the need for immediate

further development. In any case, Paul has argued that 'works of the law' are needless for a right relationship with God, a position which to some seemed to denigrate Judaism itself because of Judaism's close identity with nomistic service to God. So Paul is thought of as making the law, and by extension the people and religion of Judaism, of no consequence. However, as Paul has implied above, this perspective arose out of his opposition's basic misunderstanding over the place of the law in God's economy. Paul's position 'establishes' the law, precisely because this position puts the law in its rightful place, as a temporary covenantal mechanism which bound Jews (and submissive Gentiles) to God until the time of the coming of the Seed (cf Gl 2-3).

So then, in 3:27-31, Paul closes his argument regarding the righteousness of God coming to and through persons of faith. God's righteousness was revealed 'apart from the law,' and was revealed as a function of faith. The law and the prophets witnessed to this righteousness, and 'declared beforehand' the fact that God would reconcile the world to himself through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. Justification, then, is a gracious gift of God, not a result of covenant privileges, and is available to both Jew and Gentile on the basis of faith. Now (Nvvi), justification comes through the specific exercise of faith in the person and work of Christ, who is the fulfillment of the promise, according to God's sovereign purpose. This demonstrates both God's righteous integrity and the fact that he is the one who justifies sinful humanity.

Such a situation, Paul argues, excludes 'boasting' in one's covenant privileges, as the covenant does not extend to soterio-

logical categories. Being Jewish (and practicing the law as a soteriological requisite) cannot therefore justify. God intends that such justification come by means of faith. As the one God of Jew and Gentile, he has determined that salvation comes to all humankind through this exercise of faith in his person and promises. This, Paul says, is the proper understanding of the relationship between the law and faith.

9.1.3 Romans 4:1-25

The 'first proof' of Paul's *confirmatio* section of Romans ends with his illustrating his position with the life of Abraham (cf Gl 2-3). This illustration comes in two parts, the first showing that Abraham 'received' righteousness prior to his circumcision (Rm 4:1-12; cf Gl 3:5-8) and the second indicating that others of faith, specifically those whose faith replicates that of Abraham, inherit the promises God made previously to him (4:13-25). A brief exposition of these sections will indicate how the illustration of Abraham serves to complement Paul's earlier argumentation, by demonstrating the continuity of his reasoning throughout.

Abraham's justification, Paul says, came about as a result of his faith in God's promise, not as a result of his circumcision. He had no grounds, therefore, for 'boasting' in a relationship of 'covenant privileges' before God (4:1-3). The illustration of 'work and wages' (4:4-5) serves to emphasize further the implied relationship between faith and righteousness, and work and law. Thus, Paul demonstrates by means of this illustration that 'work' is in a category separate from 'faith.' That is, in the context

of his argumentation here, he is indicating that being Jewish (keeping covenant) is of a category other than the soteriological (this is a national/ethnic privilege, and does have 'advantage,' as he argued above). Therefore, the two categories must be kept separate if they are to be correctly understood. Again, Paul does not intend these statements relative to boasting and work to be construed as a warning against attempting to appease God through 'good works,' as has been commonly interpreted. Rather, the argument here continues as above, that is, that Abraham received righteousness outside the pale of the covenant of circumcision (the foundation of the later Mosaic covenant), and thus outside the identity of Jew or Gentile, by his expressed faith in the person and promise of God. Those who claimed Abraham as the prototypical circumcised Jew, then, would be encouraged by Paul's reasoning here to reconsider their understanding of the intended place of the law within Judaism, and of course now (in the *Novi* period) also to consider the faith-claims of Christianity. Paul reinforces this understanding by reminding his readers of David, who also correctly perceived the relationship between faith and forgiveness (4:6-9). This 'blessing,' Paul says, comes upon both the circumcised and uncircumcised (clearly, both Jews and Gentiles) by faith. By drawing this analogy between Abraham and all believers, Paul demonstrates again the continuity of salvation history. Abraham is held up not as the proto-typical Jew, but as the prototypical *believer*, whose faith represents for both circumcised and uncircumcised the type of wholehearted trust and confidence in God which results in justification (4:10-12; cf Gl 3).

What has been implicit in the first twelve verses Paul now makes explicit in verses 13-25: the promise of justification made to Abraham comes also to those whose faith is analagous to his own. This promise was originally given to Abraham and his descendants, Paul says, through faith, not law (the promise was made '430 years' before the law; cf Gl 3:17). Thus, inheritance of the promise and all that that entails must come in the category (or 'sphere,' 'realm') of faith, not that of law. In the realm of promise, there can be no judgment and condemnation (2:17-3:20), but only grace (3:21-31). This is so, because where there is promise, there is no law, and where there is no law, there is no violation of law. The promise is outside the province of law, belonging rather to that of grace (4:13-15).

4:16-25 further shows the relationship of grace to faith: because of God's grace, he included as his heirs both those 'within the law' and those who are 'outside the law' who exercise the faith which Abraham embodied. Through faith, both groups are included as seed of Abraham, gathered together through the greater Seed (4:16). Abraham's faith is detailed in 4:17-21, demonstrating that his confidence was in God, who was able to accomplish that which he had committed himself to. This confidence in God was attributed to Abraham as 'righteousness' (4:22).

All of this was 'written,' that is, contained in Scripture, for the sake of those who would follow after Abraham ('follow' both in a temporal sense and in terms of replicating his faith); that is, for the sake of those who trust that God will justify them on the basis of the person and work of Jesus Christ (4:23-25). These, too, place their trust and confidence in God. These

too, like Abraham, expect that God will accomplish in and through them, on the basis of their faith in Jesus Christ, what he has committed himself to.

9.2 Conclusion - The Meaning of ἔργα νόμου in the Argument of Romans

The meaning of ἔργα νόμου in Paul's Romans texts has been suggested above to be parallel to that of Galatians. That is, in Romans, Paul is combatting similar 'patterns of thought and of behavior of Judaism,' which are being forcefully presented as 'dominant and determinative for the nature of Christianity' (Wedderburn 1988:50). While the polemic of Romans is far less direct than Galatians, and it is arguable whether Paul faces any formal or organized 'opponents' in Rome, the issue remains a problem for Paul nonetheless. The similar agenda and message of the judaizers, if not their actual presence, are felt in the historical setting of this letter. Those who opposed Paul's gospel expected Gentile converts to Christianity to become 'practical' Jews, believing the nomistic regulations of the Mosaic covenant to be requisite for salvation. In that sense, they identified the Mosaic covenant as the 'completion' of the Abrahamic, and a natural concomitant to belief in Messiah Jesus.

Paul's argument relative to this issue begins at chapter 3. In the first eight verses Paul finds it necessary to explain his previous statements regarding the inclusion of the Jewish nation in God's impartial judgment (Rm 2:17-29). Recognizing the legitimacy of others' concern (expressed or potential) over the

faithfulness of God and his integrity in terms of his covenant with Israel if the Jews are indeed subject to this judgment, Paul works to resolve this tension from his theological perspective. The Jewish nation, he argues, is indeed 'privileged,' there are 'advantages' to being a Jew. There is 'profit' in identification as one of God's people (as typified by circumcision). That erstwhile advantage resided primarily in the fact that the Jewish nation was entrusted with the receiving of God's verbal self-revelation, the 'very words of God.' If 'some' who were entrusted with these words of God (specifically, words relative to the person and work of Jesus Christ) did not respond to that revelation in faith and are then subject to God's judgment, Paul argues, that does not prove God to be untrustworthy. In fact, even if every human individual failed to believe, God would in the end still be proved faithful to his word. In reality, the very fact that 'some' undergo judgment demonstrates God's righteousness. God's prerogative to establish his righteous judgment over the entire world of sinful humanity is based upon one constant standard, regardless if one is condemned to judgment by that standard as Jew or Gentile. His impartial judgment is meted out against sinful humanity as he sees fit.

Next Paul argues against the idea inherent in the above-mentioned objections to the inclusion of Jews in God's righteous judgment (3:9-20). That idea is that Jews should 'automatically' escape judgment, because of their 'covenant privileges' as God's chosen people. Paul confronts this implied 'superiority complex' with a powerful rhetorical question, stated in such a way as to disarm such an assumption by baring it to immediate scrutiny. He

asks, 'What then? Are we to be preferred above them?' This question, occurring as it does in the context of Jewish inclusion of universal judgment, can only indicate that 'some' Jews believed that this was indeed the case. That is, Paul's opponents assumed that, on the basis of their 'Jewishness' they were to be soteriologically preferred above Gentiles, and not enter into judgment. However, Paul indicates that such thinking is erroneous, and that on two fronts: (1) his prior argumentation served to have proved 'already' that all, Jew and Gentile alike, are found to be under sin; (2) Scripture gives more than adequate proof that sin is universal, that Jews *and* Gentiles are guilty of the actions and behavior of sin.

As he continues his argument from this point, Paul fashions his reasoning after that reflected in Galatians 2:16ff (Rm 3:19-20). He assumes that Jewish believers 'know' the truth of the statements he is about to make: the law speaks to those 'within the law,' that is, to the Jewish nation; and what the law speaks is that all humanity is accountable to God. God will judge, and every human must accede to that righteous judgment with a closed mouth. The Jew has no 'special claim' upon God, in a soteriological sense. No 'works of the law,' no 'living as a Jew,' will be enough to answer to the judgment of God. The law has no soteriological function, other than to show humanity the reality and character of sin. Jewish identity and behavior, then, does not keep one from judgment, nor does it provide one with an automatic soteriological access to God.

From this discussion Paul's argument proceeds to how God's active righteousness is demonstrated (3:21-31). This righteous-

ness does not come through the law, as the judaizers mistakenly thought and taught, but the 'law and the prophets' bear witness to this righteousness of God. Paul explains that this righteousness can only be made manifest through those who express faith in Jesus Christ. In a 'two-sided' proposition, Paul explains that those who express faith in Jesus Christ both demonstrate that God is righteous (ie, that he has integrity and is faithful to what he has committed himself to), and receive the righteousness of God into their lives. This 'two-sided' exchange is possible for both Jew and Gentile, Paul says, because there is no soteriological 'distinction' to be made. All are equally guilty of sin and thus equally condemned. All have the opportunity to express faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ and thus be made righteous. This 'justification' comes as God's gift, through the sacrificial blood-shedding death of Jesus Christ, Paul says, as the demonstration of God's righteousness. He is therefore proved to be just (thus answering the challenge of the earlier implied questions and accusations), and the one who justifies the believer in Jesus.

This is true, Paul contends, because God is one. The God of the Jew is also the God of the Gentile (3:27-31). So then, 'boasting,' that is, claiming soteriological 'covenant privileges' because of national/ethnic and/or ritual behavior patterns, is out of the question. Such a 'gloating' possibility is 'excluded.' It is excluded due to the fact that faith served as the underpinning of the law. Justification comes by faith, Paul insists here, and not by 'works of the law,' not through a Jewish behavior pattern relative to the law, thought to bring

soteriological privileges to the practitioner of that law. The one God of both Jew and Gentile justifies both on the same basis: faith. The law had a proper place in the life of God's people, but now (Now) God has brought to completion the intention of his promise, and the proper place of the law is established.

This is illustrated by Paul by means of the experience of Abraham (4:1-25). Abraham received righteousness by faith, before he was circumcised. Faith and work are separate categories which ought not to be confused. God's grace provides righteousness on account of faith, not on the basis of works (ie, legalistic observance as a soteriological prerequisite). Abraham, who believed God, became the recipient of God's gracious provision of righteousness and justification by faith, and he became the 'father' of all who likewise demonstrate faith and confidence in God. Paul describes Abraham's faith as a simple confidence in God, trusting that he will do what he has committed himself to do. The scriptural story of Abraham was given, Paul says, to encourage those who would replicate his faith in God by reminding them that God indeed was faithful to his promises.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 9

1. Cf Williams 1991:264; note also Donfried [1977] 1991:103ff, and in particular his 'methodological principle 1.'
2. Cf Jewett 1991:272. Schmithals (1975:92) has made the interesting note that in Rm 1:16 Paul is making express reference to his bold willingness to preach *this* specific gospel in Rome, ie, 'his' gospel, even though he knew of opposition to that gospel which would provoke confrontation. Schmithals writes, 'Ich scheue mich nicht, *dies* Evangelium auch in Rom zu predigen...ich fürchte mich nicht vor der Auseinandersetzung, die meine Predigt auch in Rom mit sich bringen wird' (emphasis in original).
3. But cf Bruce 1985:64; Cranfield 1975, 1:28; and Dunn 1988c, 1:viii. Each of these scholars understands the divisions of this section of Romans as Jewett does, though largely apart from rhetorical considerations.
4. C H Dodd's now infamous remark that according to his own argument Paul's answer to the question of advantage should have been 'None whatsoever!' misses the fact that Paul is not speaking here out of his 'ingrained Pharisaical background' or his 'patriotism,' but is rather addressing the issue of revelatory privilege (cf Dodd 1932:43).
5. This is not the first in an uncompleted series, contra the implication of Dunn 1988c, 1:130. Rather, Paul speaks here of the primacy of the privilege and blessing experienced by the Jewish nation as being representative recipients of God's verbal self-revelation.
6. Cf Williams 1980:267ff; on the 'predictive' function of the law, see Doeve 1953:121ff.
7. There is some question as to how to translate the different words of the $\mu\omicron\tau\epsilon\omega$ cluster in this verse, but Sanday and Headlam were probably correct in their assessment that the words $\eta\pi\iota\sigma\tau\eta\sigma\alpha\nu$ and $\acute{\alpha}\mu\omicron\sigma\iota\alpha$ should be understood as 'unbelief' as opposed to $\epsilon\mu\omicron\tau\epsilon\upsilon\theta\eta\sigma\alpha\nu$ ('entrusted') and $\mu\iota\sigma\tau\upsilon$ ('faithfulness'). S & H based this interpretation on the focus upon unbelief in the immediate context, in the context of Rm 9-11, and the

meaning of these words throughout the remainder of the NT (Sanday & Headlam 5th ed; 1902:71; cf Räisänen 1985:93-108). For a discussion of the various punctuation possibilities for this verse, cf Cranfield 1975, 1:179ff.

8. In the words of Käsemann, 'the faithfulness of God to Israel is a special instance of his faithfulness to all creation' (1980:82).
9. Dunn correctly perceives a 'Hebraic' connection between God's ἀλήθεια here and God's πίστις in verse 3, as underlying the covenant faithfulness of God; cf Dunn 1988c, 1:132f.
10. 'True' is to be understood here in the sense that God is faithful to his promises; this despite Barr's cautionary statements (1961:187-194, especially 191-193).
11. This discussion is resumptive of, and parallel to, the discussion of God's faithfulness in verse 3; so Sanders PPJ 491. Cf also Dunn 1988c, 1:134; Gaston 1987:121; Williams 1980:265-280; and, again as noted by Hays 1980:109ff, this concept includes the 'integrity' of God.
12. Variants include προεχόμεθα in A and L, προκατέχομεν περισσόν in D*, G, Y, 104, Origen (Latin), Ambrosiaster, and others; and προεχόμεθα with the deletion of οὐ πάντως in P, eth, Origen, and Ephraem; note the textual apparatus in UBS 3rd edition and the discussion in Metzger 1975:507f. Also, Cranfield 1975, 1:187ff includes discussion of several additional minor variants.
13. In this regard Dahl is followed substantially by Dunn (cf 1988c, 1:146ff).
14. So, for example, Lightfoot 1895:266f; Field 1899:153; Sanday & Headlam 1895:75.
15. Morris notes the grammarians' fluctuating understanding of the middle-active question in his discussion of this verse (1988:164f, and notes 54-60). Note also Blass-DeBrunner-Funk 1961:316; Robertson 1934:805; Moulton-Howard-Turner 1906, 1:158; Moule 1963:24; Moulton-Milligan 1930:539f.
16. So, for example, Keck 1977:141-157, especially 153f; Käsemann 1980:86ff; van der Minde 1976:54-58; and, with reservations, Dunn 1988c, 1:150.
17. Rm 3:11-12 is quoted from Ps 13:2-3; Rm 3:13 is from Ps 5:10 and 139:4; Rm 3:14 from Ps 9:28; Rm 3:18 from Ps 35:2; Rm 3:15-17 quotes Is 59:7-8; Rm 3:10 quotes

Ec 7:20; note Dunn's helpful chart of these quotations (1988c, 1:149).

18. Dunn correctly notes that Gl 2:16 and Rm 3:19 are 'very close,' and that the Romans passage is a further development of the Galatian argument; cf 1988c, 1:151.
19. This *contra* the popular contention that Paul includes Jews and Gentiles together here; cf, eg, Murray 1968:105f; Hendriksen 1980, 1:124f.
20. As Dunn observes, Paul's choice of prepositions is important here, and should be respected; cf 1988c, 1:152.
21. This is in terms of forensic courtroom language, as noted by Moo 1991:208. This serves to continue the 'covenant lawsuit' background imagery of this entire section, ie, chapters 2-3.
22. Sanders objects here that Paul 'offers no explanation of how what the law says to those under it (the Jews) also applies to "the whole world"' (1983:82f). Sanders misses the significant point that Paul's argument at 3:19 is built upon and is a continuation of what he has been discussing since 2:17; that is, he has 'already' shown both Jew and Gentile (ie, the 'whole world') to be equally condemned, but due to the concept of 'some' Jews as to what their 'privileged status' entailed (ie, soteriological privileges in addition to covenantal privileges), it is necessary for Paul to explain in greater detail what he means when he writes about 'Jewish condemnation.' From Paul's perspective, these Jews must be made to understand that they are included in the concept of 'every mouth' and 'all the world.' Cranfield (1975, 1:196), followed by Moo (1991:208) interprets this as an argument from the lesser to the greater (ie, 'if the Jews are condemned, how much more the Gentiles'). But this too seems to miss the overall contextual continuity of the passage, making Paul's argument here prove to the Jews that the Gentiles are equally guilty with them. This makes the Gentiles the focus of this verse, rather than the Jews; thus this understanding seems to be entirely backwards from Paul's intention at this point of his argument.
23. This understands $\delta\iota\omicron\nu\alpha$ in the sense of $\delta\iota$, translating it as 'for,' as suggested by Cranfield 1975, 1:197. Since his article on 'law, works of the law, and legalism in Paul' (1983) Moo has softened his perspective on Paul's use of Psalm 143. In the article (1983:97) he understands Paul to be making a 'clear allusion' to the Psalm; in his 1991 commentary, he is more reserved, saying only that 'Paul is, at best,

modeling his words after the OT verse' (1991:209). Dunn's initial assessment is perhaps more accurate, however, as he states, 'almost certainly intended here is an allusion to Ps 143:2' (though he, too, goes on to say 'or at least the thought is modeled on that verse;' 1988, 1:152).

24. Note the discussion of the text in Dunn 1988c, 1:153.
25. Note the discussion of Gl 2-3 in chapter 6. Räisänen (1986b:145) also notes the revelatory character of the law as a probable interpretation of Paul's intention here.
26. In this regard note also Thielman 1989; and Cranfield makes the statement that the Fall narrative of Genesis 2-3 is 'never far from his mind' as Paul 'depicts man's relationship to the Mosaic law' (1975, 1:343f). Cf also P K Jewett 1976.
27. Again, note the discussion of chapter 6, above. Note once more also Kaiser 1971:21ff; and Lohmeyer 1929, especially 200-206.
28. As Moo has termed it, as 'the divine side of this process by which people are put into the right with God' (1991:222).
29. Cf Cranfield 1975, 1:201; Moo 1991:222; *contra*, eg, Hendriksen 1980, 1:126f; Murray 1968, 1:109ff.
30. For additional discussion of the interpretive difficulties of this section (3:22-26), see the following: Lohse 1963:147-154; Whiteley 1964:145f; Reumann 1966:432-452; Talbert 1966:287-296; Kümmel 1967:1-13; Howard 1970:223-233; Davies [1948] 1981:237-242.
31. Though that is true elsewhere, eg, in the immediately following 3:22, which indicates the 'human side' of the process, 'the means by which God's justifying work becomes applicable to individuals' (Moo 1991:223); cf also Rm 4:3; 5:17.
32. Cf Moo 1991:223; Dunn 1988c, 1:166f.
33. Cf Cranfield 1975, 1:203; Dunn 1988c, 1:166; for the alternative view, cf Barth 1969; Gaston 1987:117, 172; Hays 1983:170-174; Howard 1967; Johnson 1982; Longenecker 1964:149-150; Williams 1980:272-278. In any case, both logically and theologically, the one placing his or her faith 'in Jesus Christ' of necessity recognizes Jesus' obedient 'faithfulness;' cf 6.1.2.1.4, above.

34. Sanday & Headlam (1895:85f) list four major interpretations relative to δικαιοῦμενοι in this verse; these possibilities are as follows:
- i) δικαιοῦμενοι marks a detail in, or assigns a proof of, the condition described by ὑστεροῦνται; thus, humanity is far from God's glory, because the state of righteousness must be given to mankind, humanity doing nothing for it.
 - ii) ὑστεροῦνται δικαιοῦμενοι is taken as equal to ὑστεροῦνται καὶ δικαιοῦνται or ὑστεροῦνται δικαιοῦνται; this, according to S & H, must be rejected as 'dubious Greek.'
 - iii) δικαιοῦμενοι is not taken with what precedes, but is made to begin a new clause. In that instance, an anacoluthon must be supposed, and another phrase must be supplied. S & H suggest πῶς καυχώμεθα as a possibility.
 - iv) 'Easier and more natural,' according to S & H, would be to make οὐ γάρ...ὑστεροῦνται 'practically a parenthesis.' This involves taking the nominative δικαιοῦμενοι 'as suggested by πάντες in verse 23, but as referring to the τοὺς πιστεύοντας of verse 22.' This is essentially equivalent to Cranfield's suggestion.
35. Cf Dunn 1988c, 1:168f; also Cranfield 1975, 1:205f, who understands this as a 'further explanation' of the 'lack of distinction' of verse 22.
36. Cf Morris 1955:1-52; 1988:179; Dunn 1988c, 1:169-171; note also, however, the clarifying comments of Marshall 1974b:153-154, note 4.
37. Cf Moo 1991:232f; Dunn 1988c, 1:170; and this in spite of the articulate comments of Cranfield 1975, 1:208-218. A great deal of material has been written on the question of the meaning of ἰλασθῆναι. In addition to Romans commentaries and materials referenced in the text of this study, the following should be noted: T W Manson 1945:1-10; Morris 1955-56:33-43; Lyonnet 1959:336-352; Hill 1967:40ff; Sabourin & Lyonnet 1970:157-166; Davies [1948] 1981: 237-242; Janowski 1982:360ff; Meyer 1983:206ff; Judisch 1984:230-231; Newton 1985: 75-77; Stuhlmacher 1986:94-109; and von Dobbler 1987:78-87.
38. As argued by Käsemann 1980:102; cf Bornkamm 1971:95; Hübner 1984:116; and many others.
39. This is correctly noted, though without this specific terminology, by Howard 1970:232; Sanders 1983:33-34; Räisänen 1986b:170f; Watson 1986:133-135; Dunn 1988c, 1:185; and Moxnes 1988a:71.

40. Note again Moo 1991:252f; note also, however, Cranfield 1975, 1:219f, and Dunn 1988c, 1:185f, for the view that this is specifically the Old Testament law.
41. Cf also Ambrosiaster *PL* col 81; Denney 1904:614; Cranfield 1975, 1:222f.

Conclusion - Implications for an Understanding of Paul

10. Paul and the Use of ἔργα νόμου

The focus of this study has been the investigation of Paul's meaning in Galatians and Romans for his phrase 'works of the law' (ἔργα νόμου). It was concluded that in both of these epistles, Paul is contending against what he considered to be the propagation by his opponents of 'another gospel,' a false doctrine of 'completion' through adherence to the Jewish law for Gentile converts. This 'completion' was espoused by Jewish Christians who believed and taught that the theological thought constructs and the nomistic behavior of Judaism must become the normative pattern for adherents to Christianity. The 'works of the law,' defined as nomistic observances related to the Jewish law which were said to be inseparable from what it meant to be 'Christian,' were thus understood by the judaizers to be necessary prerequisites to salvation. This understanding was based upon the judaizer's conviction that the Mosaic legislation was the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise. Gentiles, then, were expected to become 'practical' Jews through proselytization to Judaism. The acknowledgement of Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah by these Gentiles was only the starting point of a relationship to God, according to the judaizers. Belief in Jesus, the Jewish Messiah, must also naturally be followed by a commitment to pursue life as a practicing Jew (Ἰουδαΐζειν).

The presence of this judaizing opposition, or the spectre that such opposition would come, accounts for the overwhelming presence of polemic found in Galatians (which is almost entirely characterized by invective and denunciation of the opposition by Paul). It also accounts for those polemical elements which are present in Romans. Within the thought structure of these letters the phrase *ἔργα νόμου* plays a distinct role, both in Paul's polemical argumentation, and in his view of the law, which became the focus of much of that polemic. This chapter will therefore briefly discuss an understanding of Paul from each of these perspectives.

10.1 *ἔργα νόμου* as a Factor in Paul's Polemics

Paul's epistolary argumentation against his judaizing opponents made use of the commonplace rules and persuasive models of classical rhetoric which were part of the cultural background of his age. These patterns of classical rhetoric were not 'rigid templates' to be followed slavishly, but rather provided guidelines to enhance argumentative speech (cf Mack 1990:49). Paul, of course, merely accommodated certain of these rhetorical mechanisms to his specific purposes, adapting argumentative theory to meet his immediate polemical needs. And in the process of his adapting the rhetoric of his day to his own unique argumentative situation as he faced opposition to his gospel message, Paul spoke out against 'works of the law.'

In Galatians Paul faced what was almost certainly a direct challenge to his apostolic authority and his message of salvation through faith. This challenge was compounded by the hypocritical

actions of Peter, one of the 'pillar apostles,' who while present in Antioch withdrew from associating at table fellowship with Gentiles due to the arrival of judaizers from Judea. Paul condemned Peter's actions, which were tantamount to relegating believing Gentiles to the status of 'second-class' Christians ('sinners,' Gl 2:15), because they were not adhering to Jewish ritualistic purity norms. Paul censured Peter (and by implication his opponents in Galatia, as well) on the basis of their *common affirmation* of the truth that 'works of the law' were not intended to bring about salvation. In this immediate context, 'works of the law' represent the nomistic practice of dietary restrictions and separation from Gentiles which were part of the Jews' national identity (as per Dunn). But it goes beyond that for Paul: he immediately raises the issue of justification, as he understands the *soteriological implications* of Peter's actions. If the Gentiles were to be compelled to become 'practical Jews' in order to be 'acceptable,' it would mean that they were required to 'do' something in order to gain God's favor. And that which they would be required to 'do' is to 'judaize' in order to be 'made complete' in their relationship to God. That is, by their nomistic actions they were to identify with the Jewish nation as God's 'chosen,' in order to be justified. But, Paul insists, he, Peter, and the other Jewish Christians 'know' that justification does not come by 'works of the law' (they 'know' this, Paul implies, on the basis of Ps 143). Rather, justification comes only through faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Obedience to the law for Old Testament Israelites

was meant to be evidential of relationship, not instrumental (as is true of Christianity; cf Gundry 1986:12).

Paul illustrates his point regarding 'works of the law' for the Galatian believers out of their own background. He reminds them that their experience of receiving the Spirit and the evidential miracles which accompanied that phenomenon was the result of their faith, and not 'works of the law.' Their initiation into the people of God did not come through 'practical Judaism.' It came, instead, as a result of the Galatians' expression of trust and confidence in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Obviously, then, having begun by faith and not 'works of the law,' their Christianity can only continue on the same basis.

Paul's argument continues as he turns to Abraham as the exemplar of the type of faith-relationship to God he has in mind. Abraham was justified by God on the basis of faith, not because he was circumcised (the 'practical' identifying mark of Judaism). Thus, 'works of the law' played no part in the Jewish patriarch's salvific relationship to God. On the contrary, Paul says, anyone trusting in 'works of the law' for justification actually has a relationship to God which may be characterized as 'cursed.' The law is unable to accomplish that which it was never intended to accomplish.

In Romans the challenge to Paul and his gospel is muted somewhat. Nevertheless, the challenge is present, and again it revolves around the fact that 'some' were resistant to the idea that Paul's gospel implied the loss of soteriological 'covenant privileges' for Judaism. Paul's discussion of Jewish sin and its

consequent condemnation put sinful Jews on a level with sinful Gentiles. The Jews must understand, Paul argues, that they are not soteriologically 'better' than Gentiles simply by virtue of their Judaism. Justification does not come, Paul argues, by 'works of the law.' Again, in context this phrase must refer to the theological thought constructs and behavior patterns of Judaism, believed to form the basis for one's relationship to God. Paul's argument is that Jews are not soteriologically preferred above Gentiles simply on the basis of their national/ethnic covenant identity. 'All' have sinned, 'all' are accountable to God. Thus, human beings are justified by God's grace, through faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ, 'apart from the works of the law.'

In this way, the *ἔργα νόμου* phrase becomes a factor in Paul's polemics. As he argues against Jewish 'soteriological superiority,' Paul's focus is on 'works of the law' as an inadequate basis for one's proper relationship to God. That proper relationship comes only through faith, Paul says, and not by being Jewish, whether in an ethnic or a practical sense.

10.2 *ἔργα νόμου* as a Feature in Paul's View of the Law

Paul argued against the judaizers' position regarding the place of the law in the life of God's people. He spoke out, in this process of argumentation, against what he considered to be their misuse of the law. This caused his opponents to charge Paul with a gospel that was antinomian, at best, and destructive of Judaism if taken to the extreme. Paul's attitude toward the law, as has been noted throughout this study, has provoked many to

question his motives (eg, Hübner), his 'Jewishness' (eg, Sanders) or even his ability to argue consistently (eg, Räisänen). As has also been suggested here, however, Paul must be allowed to present his argumentation to diverse audiences from different perspectives, in order to meet the needs of each particular group he is addressing (respecting the 'occasional' nature of New Testament literature). And, it must be noted that differing emphases for polemical and/or pastoral reasons need not be interpreted as pauline inconsistency or deception.

The fact is that Paul's 'attitude toward the law' may be understood as totally honest and consistent. Paul makes negative statements about the law, to be sure (cf Rm 3:20; 4:13, 15; 5:20; 6:14; 7:4, 5, 6, 7, 9; 8:3, 7; 10:4; 1 Cor 15:56; Gl 2:19, 21; 3:10, 12, 13, 18, 19, 21; 5:3, 4; Eph 2:15; Phlp 3:9; 1 Tm 1:9). He also makes positive statements about that same law (cf Rm 3:31; 7:12, 14, 16, 25; 8:4; 13:8, 10; 1 Cor 9:20; Gl 3:21, 23, 24; 5:18; 1 Tm 1:8). In order correctly to understand how this can be so, and allow Paul the same benefit of the doubt relative to honesty and consistency other authors enjoy, careful note must be taken as to how these statements are used in Paul's argumentative process.

A decade ago D J Moo already recognized that Paul argues against the law *only in justification texts* (Moo 1983:97, note 77). These are texts wherein Paul is combatting thought constructs that are similar to the judaizers' position that the law must be imposed upon Gentile converts in order that they might be made 'complete' Christians, thereby obtaining justification, by becoming 'practical' Jews first. In these contexts, Paul

argues that the law is insufficient, unable to accomplish what comes through God's promise. The law was a temporary institution given by God (negatively) to reveal sin and (positively) to 'hedge in' the people of Israel until the arrival of the promised Seed of Abraham. The law was not for justification, but was intended to allow Jewish believers the means whereby they could be distinct as God's people in the midst of evil and idolatry. At the same time, the law was intended to have a beneficent purpose in allowing the believer an outlet for the expression of devotion to God. The believing Israelites (and proselyte Gentiles) who wished to obey God and demonstrate through that obedience that their circumcision was 'of the heart' (cf Jr 31; Ezk 36) had in the law an institution designed to be a vehicle for that demonstration of their faith (as Sanders insists).

For this reason Paul can also speak positively about the law. It was a divine institution, given to Israel to mark them out as God's covenant nation (ie, to separate them from the nations of Canaan), and as the means whereby, as a people and individually, they could worship and serve their God. Paul himself appreciated this dimension of the law, as he voluntarily expressed on several occasions even after he understood Jesus to be the Messiah (eg, Ac 21:15-26; 1 Cor 9:20). Far from being a behavioral or logical 'inconsistency,' this marks Paul out as a believing Jew who understood the proper function of the law. Paul recognized that in both the $\pi\alpha\tau\acute{\epsilon}$ and $\nu\acute{\omicron}\nu$ periods of salvation history, the one God graciously provided justification on the basis of faith. He also understood that the law functioned in the $\pi\alpha\tau\acute{\epsilon}$ period as the God-given expression of faith for the believer. However, in the $\nu\acute{\omicron}\nu$

period, with the coming of the promised Seed, faith is now to be directed toward God through the Messiah's person and work rather than through ritual observances. Faith in Jesus Christ, the Messiah, is 'now' to be expressed through sacrificial love, as an emulation of his work.

So in Galatians Paul argues against the law as the judaizers' 'tool' for incorporating Gentile converts into their variety of Judaism, or more accurately, their particular brand of Jewish Christianity. His difficulty in Galatians is not with the law, as such. He does not denigrate the law because it is 'law.' Rather, he counters the judaizers' misuse of the law as a soteriological instrument. The law was not intended for that purpose, Paul argues. Justification comes through faith in the promise of God, 'now' as specifically centered in the person and work of Jesus Christ. The one who is justified is the one (Jew or Gentile) who emulates the faith of Abraham, who was justified by faith apart from circumcision ('works of the law').

In Romans, Paul's discussion of the law follows along similar lines. There he disputes the notion that the Jews should escape the ultimate judgment of God, on the one hand, and enjoy an 'automatic' inclusion in the eschatological kingdom, on the other, all on the basis of their 'privileged status' as God's covenant people. The identity as God's covenant people had been centered in the law, and specifically in the *ἔργα νόμου*. This then became the focus of the judaizers' assurance of their inclusion in the kingdom of God. So Paul must speak out against that misuse of the law, even as he was forced to speak out against the judaizers' using the law as a soteriological tool for Gentile

converts. Again, he argues that the purpose of the law was not to function as a salvific instrument. Rather, salvation comes by means of faith in the promise of God, and 'now' particularly in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

So the ἔργα νόμου are a (negative) feature in Paul's view of the law. Identified as the nomistic observances related to the Jewish law that functioned as the pattern of thought and behavior of Judaism, and which were said by the judaizers to be necessary for Gentile salvation, these ἔργα νόμου represented for Paul an intolerable threat to the redemptive security of his converts, as well as for his fellow Jews who would forsake faith and return to ritual observance as necessary requirements for securing their salvific relationship to God. For that reason, Paul was forced to argue, sometimes vociferously, against the misuse of this divine institution.

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