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LIVERMORE, PAUL WEBSTER  
THE SETTING AND ARGUMENT OF ROMANS 1:18-3:20:  
THE EMPIRICAL VERIFICATION OF THE POWER OF  
SIN.

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, PH.D., 1978

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THE SETTING AND ARGUMENT OF ROMANS 1:18-3:20  
The Empirical Verification of the Power of Sin

by

PAUL WEBSTER LIVERMORE

A DISSERTATION

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## PREFACE

This dissertation, unless otherwise noted, uses the following English translations for primary sources: Revised Standard Version (OT, NT, and apocrypha); Charles, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, vol. 2 (pseudepigrapha); Loeb Classical Library (Philo of Alexandria and Josephus); Danby, Mishnah; Dupont-Sommer, (Dead Sea Scrolls); and the Socino editions (Babylonian Talmud and Midrash Rabba). The abbreviations used for the ancient sources are from the same translations (all the tractates of the Mishnah in the Talmud follow Danby's abbreviations). The Jerome Biblical Commentary provides the system of abbreviation for learned journals and several reference works of modern Biblical study.

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## INTRODUCTION

Since the Reformation scholars have usually and almost universally interpreted Romans 1-3 in systematic terms. The systematic viewpoint, they believed, explained the logic of Paul's argument. Accordingly, Paul demonstrates universal condemnation (1:18-3:20) to prove that justification comes only by faith in Christ (3:21-26). Thus, interpreters lifted the beginning section of Romans out of an historical situation because, they thought, it does not respond to a particular need. Rather, it resembles a theological treatise.

This method of exegesis, although still followed, is an anomaly in modern Pauline studies. Scientific research in the Bible claims as one of its major achievements the recovery of the appreciation of the historical situation of a given document and the particularity of the theological statements within that document. Although the structure may appear systematic, one sees, on closer inspection, controversy and argument which in no small degree have influenced the shape of the book. It does not give a system of theology. But strangely, a systematic approach has persisted with the exegesis of much of Romans.

This dissertation proposes that Romans is not a systematic treatise, and its argument is not universal. Rather, Paul responds in it to a particular situation. We can understand his logic and argument more fully when we appreciate the situation which he addresses.

We will argue that the situation which occasioned Romans has two foci: Romans 14:1-15:13 reveals a conflict between Gentile and Jewish Christians in Rome. And in 15:30f. Paul requests the Roman Christians to intercede for the success of his upcoming trip to Jerusalem. He prays that the saints there will accept the offering of the Gentile congregations and that he will be delivered from unbelievers. In other words, Paul still faces the old problem of the Jew and the Gentile which followed him as the apostle to the Gentiles.

The task of this dissertation, therefore, is twofold: to examine both the setting and the content of Romans 1:18-3:20. Traditional exegesis, as stated, separates these two tasks because it believes that Romans 1:18-3:20 can be understood without reference to a specific setting. But this method does not satisfactorily explain the passage.

The relationship of 1:18-32 to 2:1ff. has long perplexed students of Romans and thus can reveal the seriousness of the problem. Scholars have recognized in 1:18-32 the sound of Hellenistic Jewish polemic against



pagan idolatry (Grafe<sup>1</sup>). More recently they have observed the similarity of this passage to apocalyptic denunciations of pagan vice (Schulz<sup>2</sup>). Further, in 2:1ff. they have heard echoes of Jewish particularism and Paul's refutation of it (Nygren<sup>3</sup>). Thus, there has been progress in answering form- and tradition-critical questions.

But how do these genres and theological motifs function in Rom. 1-2? Almost without exception scholars understand Paul to be arguing systematically in the following order: condemnation of the Gentile and then of the Jew.<sup>4</sup> The emphasis on  $\pi\alpha\varsigma$  in chapters 1-3 seems to confirm this systematic unfolding of universal condemnation. The universal note appears first in 1:16 where Paul states that the gospel "is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith." Again, in 3:9 he claims that he has proved that "all . . . are under the power of sin."

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<sup>1</sup>Eduard Grafe, "Das Verhältniss der paulinischen Schriften zur Sapientia Salomonis," Theologische Abhandlungen (Carl von Weizsäcker zum 70. Geburtstag gewidmet; Freiburg: J. C. B. Mohr, 1892), pp. 260-264.

<sup>2</sup>Siegfried Schulz, "Die Anklage in Röm. 1:18-32," TZ, 14 (1958), pp. 165f.

<sup>3</sup>Anders Nygren, Commentary on Romans, ET (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1949), pp. 114-122.

<sup>4</sup>There are exceptions which will be discussed in the proper place below. E.g., M. Hooker sees 1:18ff. as dealing with all of humankind, beginning with Adam, "Adam in Romans 1," NTS 6 (1959/60), pp. 297-306. C. K. Barrett claims that 2:1ff. concerns the moral person, both Gentiles (as the Stoics) and the Jews, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans (New York et al.: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1957), pp. 42f.

Finally, 3:23 states, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Thus, Nygren suggests that Paul intends to describe two classes of humankind, the Gentile in unrighteousness and the Jew in his legal righteousness, to show that both are sinners and merit God's wrath.<sup>1</sup>

The universalistic interpretation, however, misunderstands the method in Paul's argument, and it stumbles decisively when explaining  $\delta\iota\omicron$  in 2:1. The particle  $\delta\iota\omicron$  usually introduces the conclusion of a logical discussion and is normally translated "therefore." But traditional exegesis does not see 1:18-32 as presenting the premise which Paul concludes in 2:1ff. Rather, 1:18-32 and 2:1ff. offer parallel cases of human sin and God's judgment. Consequently, scholars offer a variety of explanations for  $\delta\iota\omicron$  in 2:1. Fridrichsen<sup>2</sup> claims that it is a misspelling, and Paul originally wrote  $\delta\iota\varsigma$ . Bultmann<sup>3</sup> rearranges the verses so that 2:1 follows 2:3 (the original order would then be 1:32; 2:2f.; 2:1; 2:4ff.) and thus maintains the logical use of  $\delta\iota\omicron$  with respect to Paul's argument against the Jew. Lietzmann<sup>4</sup> suggests that  $\delta\iota\omicron$  in 2:1 has lost its

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<sup>1</sup>For example, Nygren, pp. 10-14.

<sup>2</sup>Anton Fridrichsen, "Quatre conjectures sur le texte du Nouveau Testament," RHPR, 3 (1923), p. 440.

<sup>3</sup>R. Bultmann, "Glossen im Römerbrief," TLZ 72 (1947), col. 200.

<sup>4</sup>H. Lietzmann, An die Römer (3rd ed., HNT 8; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1928), pp. 37f.

function as an inferential conjunction and serves only as a transition particle. Flückiger<sup>1</sup> thinks that the real transition is not at 2:1 but at 1:32 (which according to him concerns the Jew, not the Gentile). Therefore the premise of 2:1 is present in 1:32 but not in 1:18-31. In none of these explanations, then, is 2:1ff. the logical consequence of 1:18-32.

Nygren,<sup>2</sup> however, seeks to maintain the logical relationship of the two passages. He suggests that Paul argues against the Jewish attitude (reflected in Wis. Sol. 15:1-3) which admits committing similar sins but believes that through election the Jew is protected from final judgment. Paul keeps the logical use of  $\delta\iota\delta$  because he states that what is true of the Gentile is also true of the Jew. All of the above explanations, however, presume that Paul presents the case of the Gentile and the Jew as parallel.

Cranfield offers a slightly different approach. He points out that in 1:18-32 Paul never uses the form "Gentile" but rather "human."<sup>3</sup> While Paul may have the Gentile primarily in mind in these verses, he is also speaking of all humans. In 2:1ff., therefore, Paul does

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<sup>1</sup>Felix Flückiger, "Zur Unterscheidung von Heiden und Juden in Röm. 1:18-2:3," TZ, 10 (1954), pp. 155-157.

<sup>2</sup>Nygren, pp. 114-118.

<sup>3</sup>C. E. B. Cranfield, The Epistle to the Romans, vol. 1 (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975), p. 105.

not shift to a different class of people but narrows his challenge to the Jew who judges but commits the same sins. Thus, 8:6 presents no problem.<sup>1</sup>

In the proper place we will give a more detailed critique of these explanations and present our solution,<sup>2</sup> but a few remarks can be made here. (1) The sins discussed in 1:22-27 (idolatry and sexual perversion) are typically pagan vices. Paul cannot be here referring to the Jew as well as the Gentile unless we see the sin of 2:1ff. as judgmentalism, a desperate interpretation. (2) The change from the third to the second and first person forms at 2:1 signals the sharp turn from one group of people to another. This is true even if Paul employs in 2:1ff. the Cynic-Stoic diatribe. (3) Paul accuses the judge of committing the same sins, which he knows merit God's judgment, and "therefore" the critic is without excuse. But which sins are the "same sins"? Since they cannot be those of 1:22-27, they must be among those in 1:28-32. (4) Certainly Paul attacks Jewish particularism in 2:1ff. Did the Jew, however, actually believe that because he was among the elect the principle of retribution no longer applied to him? Was the Gentile judged according to his works, but the Jew according to his election?

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<sup>1</sup>Cranfield, vol. 1, pp. 140-142.

<sup>2</sup>See below, pp. 172-181.

Daxer (1914)<sup>1</sup> earlier offered the view that 1:18-32 does present the premise for 2:1ff. He gives some very fruitful suggestions which merit consideration.

Daxer observes, following Seeberg,<sup>2</sup> that in 1:18-2:10 Paul adopts a catechetical pattern used in both Judaism and primitive Christianity<sup>3</sup> which has three foci (on God, on morals, and on final judgment).<sup>4</sup> The pattern is widely found and fully adaptable for the individual situation according to the desires of the speaker or writer.<sup>5</sup> Daxer makes a crucial point when he examines 1:32. Here Paul talks about those who do such evil things as ἀξιοὶ θανάτου. Daxer believes that Paul knows and accepts the doctrine of the two-ways, and he here refers to ὁ ὁδὸς θανάτου. As in Did. 5:1 and Barn. 20:1, the practice of the vices catalogued identifies those on the way of death.<sup>6</sup> Thus, by using the catalogue of vices (1:29-31) and the doctrine of retribution (2:6-10) Paul relativizes the Jew's distinction of himself from the Gentile (1:32 and 2:1).

<sup>1</sup>H. Daxer, Römer 1:18-2:10 im Verhältnis zur spätjüdischen Lehrauffassung (Naumburg: G. Pätz, 1914).

<sup>2</sup>Alfred Seeberg, Die Didache des Judentums und der Urchristenheit (Leipzig: A. Diechert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung [Georg Böhme], 1908).

<sup>3</sup>Daxer, pp. 20f.

<sup>4</sup>The three chapters of Daxer's dissertation follow this division. The doctrine of God, he believes, is found in Romans 1:18-23, on morals in 1:24-32, and on judgment in 2:1-10.

<sup>5</sup>Daxer, pp. 21-23. <sup>6</sup>Daxer, p. 55.

Eschatological judgment threatens him since he undeniably belongs to the way of death.<sup>1</sup> Further, with the consistent use of the principle of retribution Paul negates the belief that election protects from God's wrath.<sup>2</sup>

We cannot give a full evaluation of Daxer's study here, and it is unnecessary for our purpose. But a few remarks concerning his contribution are appropriate:

(1) the consistency with which Paul uses Jewish thought is striking, especially when we observe that in 2:1ff. Paul uses it against the Jew. Notice that in Romans Paul speaks clearly of the impossibility of salvation according to the works of the law (3:20) and states that Christ is the end of the law (10:4). But in the same letter he also insists on the principle of retribution (2:6-10). (2) The belief that Paul relates the doctrines of the two-ways and retribution is probably correct. We will examine this issue below.<sup>3</sup> But many questions concerning it remain unanswered by Daxer. For example, Daxer says that, according to the doctrine of retribution, a person needs to commit only one sin and he will be on the way of death.<sup>4</sup> Are we to suppose that there is no such thing as forgiveness in Judaism? Further, does the two-ways doctrine always appear in descriptions or can it appear in exhortation?

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<sup>1</sup>Daxer, pp. 64-70.    <sup>2</sup>Daxer, p. 81.

<sup>3</sup>See below, pp. 183-191.    <sup>4</sup>Daxer, p. 67.

How does the doctrine of two-ways relate to the doctrine of retribution in the Jewish view? And what has belief in God's election of Israel to do with the doctrine of retribution? In other words, the function of these Jewish doctrines (the two-ways, retribution, and election) must be explored more thoroughly than Daxer has done. (3) Daxer did not carry his study through to place 1:18-2:10 within its context in Romans. He prematurely concluded his discussion, because Paul's negative argument with Judaism does not end at 2:10 but at 3:20. And a number of themes are introduced in 2:11ff. which bear on the way one understands 1:18-2:10. For example, in 2:12 the first mention of the law occurs, but from there on the law plays a large role. Paul, in fact, concludes 1:18-3:20 with the observation that there is no justification according to the works of the law (3:20). In 3:9 Paul charges that he has proved (where?) that all are under sin. This also is the introduction of a new motif-- sin as a power, not individual deeds. How do "the works of the law" or "the power of sin" relate to the doctrines of the two-ways, retribution, or the election of Israel?

(4) We must also consider the context of 1:18-2:10. Daxer assumes that in 1:18-2:10 Paul is preaching to non-believing Jews. The form of the passage certainly sounds that way. But 1:18-2:10 is found in a letter probably written to a predominantly Gentile congregation. What is the function of 1:18-2:10 in such a letter?

## 1. PROBLEMS TO BE EXPLORED

Romans 1:18-3:20 is an extremely complex passage in spite of its purpose which can be stated rather simply: to prove the negative side of Paul's thesis from 1:16f. One can point to the many motifs present in it. It is not, however, simply the individual theologoumena which create the problem in interpretation, but also the way they relate and function in our passage. Therefore, the major exegetical problem concerns the function of these motifs as Paul's thought moves forward. It is not enough, in other words, to state that certain themes appear in Rom. 1:18-3:20. How do these contribute to Paul's argument, and how are they related to one another? We raise several of the relevant issues here.

First, does Paul describe the pagan situation in 1:18-32 to inform the pagan of the inexcusability of his sin and therefore certain judgment in order to lead him to faith in Christ (perhaps in a missionary context)? Or is he establishing a premise by which to argue against the Jew? Except for Daxer we have found no one who accepts the latter opinion. But why should Paul try to prove that the pagans were sinners and under God's wrath? That was self-evident to a first century Jew and to a first century Christian, as Paul indicates in Gal. 2:15, "We ourselves, who are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners."



Second, why does Paul accuse the Jew (2:1-29) by pointing to specific acts of sin? Nygren, as already mentioned, asserts that Paul in Rom. 1:18-3:20 divides humankind into two categories and argues against the Gentile in his unrighteousness and the Jew in his legal righteousness.<sup>1</sup> Nygren then refers to Phil. 3:4-9 in which Paul claims that he once lived in a righteousness according to the law. But, Nygren goes on, this righteousness is nothing other than a human achievement and not the righteousness of God.<sup>2</sup> The interpretation which Nygren gives of Phil. 3 may be accurate, but must Paul argue in the same manner at all times? We may grant that Paul did not himself arrive at Christian faith through a profound sense of moral failure but from the power of God's righteousness in Christ to change his view of righteousness according to the law (as in Phil. 3:6f. and Gal. 2:15-17). But is it not possible that Paul could take a different approach and argue that the Jew is also a moral failure? If Paul points to empirical evidence which shows that the Jews are guilty of sins, what has he demonstrated?

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<sup>1</sup>Nygren, pp. 11-14.

<sup>2</sup>Nygren is not consistent in his view, for when he interprets 2:1ff. (pp. 113ff.) and 2:17ff. (pp. 130ff.), he assumes that Paul is exposing actual sins. Barrett (pp. 42ff.), however, feels compelled to uphold the legal righteousness of the Jew. Thus he contends that the Jew's sin is judgmentalism which is idolatry.

Third, in 3:9 Paul says that he has proved that Jews and Gentiles alike are under the power of sin. Where has he proved that, and what is its importance? Therefore, in 3:9 Paul turns suddenly from sins as transgressions or sin as guilt to sin as a power over everyone. We must explore our passage to see how Paul assumes that he has proved such a thesis.

Fourth, what is the relation of 1:18-3:20 to the remainder of the letter? This issue has several aspects. To begin, how does 1:18-3:20 relate to the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel (1:16)? Is God's wrath a part of the gospel or its opposite? Also, what is the relation of 1:18-3:20 to the entire letter? Therefore, at the appropriate point we will offer our outline of the argument of Romans and indicate the function of 1:18-3:20 in this larger context.

Fifth, on the surface it appears that 1:18-3:20 is an argument with Jews. It is, therefore, not surprising that many have adopted the view that there was a Jewish Christian majority in Rome. On the other hand, other sections of the letter suggest a Gentile Christian audience (e.g. 1:5f.; 11:13ff.; 15:14ff.). If this latter opinion is correct, what is the function of this apparently anti-Jewish argument in a letter for Gentile Christians? Thus, we must pursue more seriously than is usually done

the historical questions about Romans. What was the occasion for a letter with such an argument as the dogmatic section contains? Why was it sent to Rome?

Sixth, we must consider the relation of the theologoumena in 1:18-3:20 to Jewish thought. Paul's argument seems to operate largely within accepted principles of Judaism. Only at 2:28 (the Spirit creating the true Jew) and 3:4-8 (Paul's teaching on God's righteousness) does he introduce specifically Christian motifs. But Paul obviously reaches conclusions which would have been unconvincing to many Jews. Therefore, we must examine the place of this passage in Paul's controversy with Judaism. Precisely where does Paul disagree with Judaism (or portions of it) according to Rom. 1:18-3:20?

Traditional exegesis, informed by systematic theology, characterizes Judaism as a religion with a perfectionistic ethic which taught that the only way to salvation was by human achievement. Furthermore, scholars assume that Paul so understood Judaism on the basis of such statements as, "For no human being will be justified in his sight by the works of the law" (Rom. 3:20; cf. Gal. 2:16). Thus, in this view, Judaism was a religion without a notion of salvation for the sinner, and it fostered either despair, because of failures, or pride, because of successes. In either case, there was no fundamental dependence on God for grace. But is this view of Judaism correct?

Jewish scholars, and a few Christians, have vigorously protested such a reconstruction. In their protests most do not complain that Paul has been misinterpreted but Judaism. Some even try to account for Paul's opinion. According to Moore, Paul distorted Judaism because of his Christian bias.<sup>1</sup> According to Schechter, he simply misunderstood it.<sup>2</sup> And according to Montifiore, he knew only sectarian portions of it.<sup>3</sup> All of these scholars support their arguments against Paul and Christians who view Judaism as strictly a religion of works by describing the character of Judaism as they see it-- a religion which knows of repentance, forgiveness, and grace.

This controversy between Christians (who see Judaism as a religion of works not grace) and Jews and some Christians (who claim that Judaism knows grace) raises a serious methodological question: how are we to proceed in trying to understand Paul's argument in 1:18-3:20? The usual method is to refer to the parallel Jewish motifs as one examines each individual section of Paul. Thus, for

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<sup>1</sup>George Foot Moore, Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era: The Age of the Tannaim, (New York: Schocken Books, 1971, first in 1927), and notes, pp. 150f.

<sup>2</sup>Solomon Schechter, Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology (New York: Macmillan, 1909), p. 117.

<sup>3</sup>C. G. Montefiore, Judaism and St. Paul: Two Essays (New York: Dutton, 1915), pp. 85-100.

example, in studying 1:18-32 one would point to typical Jewish apologetics/polemics against paganism, when discussing 2:6-10 he might compare Jewish teaching on retribution, and when considering 2:25-29 one could find illustrations of Jewish certainty of life in the world to come based on election (circumcision). Thus, scholars atomize Jewish theologoumena used by Paul. It is doubtful whether this procedure lets the force of the Jewish views come through. Judaism, in fact, did not isolate such teachings as the distinction between pagan morals and those of the Jew, retribution, and election. E. P. Sanders has shown this with great clarity in his recent study which emphasizes the "pattern" in Judaism.<sup>1</sup> Sound methodology requires that we not only compare Paul's thoughts with Jewish notions, but also the "pattern" in Paul's argument with the comparable items in Judaism as they relate to one another. Further, if our goal is to interpret the argument of Paul, we ought to begin with Judaism. How, in other words, do the motifs which we find in Rom. 1:18-3:20, or related motifs, appear, function, and relate to one another in Judaism?

To anticipate what will be argued later, we can state at this point what we hope to show: Paul's movement in Rom. 1:18-3:20 is dictated by the Jewish pattern which

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism. A Comparison of Patterns of Religion (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977).

integrates a series of themes that Christians often think are disconnected. For example, teaching on retribution (that God will grant to everyone according to his works) and election (the guarantee of salvation to the Jew) were not considered contradictory. Furthermore, teaching on retribution in no way undercut the place of repentance and forgiveness in Jewish thought. Paul cannot, therefore, simply argue that the Jew sins and thus has no hope of salvation. Nor can Paul claim that most Jews seek to be justified without referring to God's gracious acts to Israel or his promise to be faithful to her. For Judaism, in fact, knew perfectly well that there was need for, and believed that she possessed, repentance, atonement, and forgiveness. Further, Judaism emphasized the faithfulness of God to Israel in spite of her sin. Finally, we hope to show that Paul does not, in fact, argue that the Jews do not know God's grace. His argument is much more complex and touches on such items as repentance and election, as well as upon retribution.

## 2. THE ARGUMENT OF ROMANS 1:18-3:20

The following is a preliminary description of Romans 1:18-3:20. We will necessarily anticipate some answers which will need to be confirmed in the dissertation. This preliminary discussion purposes to point out the theological motifs in the passage which must therefore be

examined. Thus, it will reveal the complexity of the passage in both theological and historical questions, a complexity which traditional exegesis has generally ignored.

Romans 1:16f. announces the theme of the letter. These verses declare that "the gospel . . . is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith," "for in it the righteousness of God is revealed." Not until 3:21, however, does Paul elaborate on the theme of salvation. Rather, 1:18-3:20 shows that "no human being will be justified in his sight by the works of the law" (3:20).

Rom. 1:18-3:20 thus stands apart from its context with the purpose of proving the negative side of Paul's thesis. It is, however, closely tied to its context. The clauses "the righteousness of God is revealed" (1:17) and "the righteousness of God has been manifested" (3:21) are parallel with "the wrath of God is revealed" (1:18). The universal extent of justification by faith, "to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (1:16), corresponds to the extent of God's judgment (2:9f.) and the power of sin (3:9). Romans 3:22-26 also echoes themes of 1:18-3:20. God makes no distinction (2:11/3:22). All fall short of God's glory (1:21-27; 2:23f., 29/3:23). And God has shown forbearance in former times (2:4/3:25). Besides these points there is the constant argument in 1:18-3:20 that all have sinned (3:23). Thus, 1:18-3:20 is thoroughly woven into its context. But exactly how it relates to that context demands further exploration.

In 1:18 Paul breaks into language which clearly echoes Jewish apocalyptic polemic against the pagan world. God's wrath is revealed against human evil. Through the remainder of the chapter Paul delineates the pagans' situation. First (1:19-21), he proves their inexcusability because of God's revelation in nature. Second, he describes in three paragraphs (1:22-31) how God has punished pagans according to the law of retribution (sin-God's judgment-punishment). The first two paragraphs (1:22-24, 25-27) contain the schema: pagan idolatry-God punishes by delivering them to their passions-sexual perversion. In the third paragraph (1:28-31) the peculiarities of paganism are not so much in view: failure to acknowledge God-surrender to a base mind-a catalogue of social vices. In the final verse (1:32), a transitional statement, Paul summarizes the foregoing indictment of the pagan but introduces these new elements: performance of such deeds merits death (final punishment), the pagans know God's decree (that is, his will), and they approve such sins as they commit. Thus the doctrine of retribution advances to a new stage, that of eschatological judgment (evil deeds-[judgment]-death).

The whole of 1:18-32 is descriptive. At 2:1 Paul turns directly to a new party and addresses him sharply. The form in 2:1-5 is that of direct address (as in the Cynic-Stoic diatribe). The judge has no grounds for



condemning since he does the same (2:1). For such deeds, he knows, merit God's judgment (2:2). In fact, the judge has been guilty of presumption. He had received the benefits of God's kindness (2:4), and he must therefore be someone who has enjoyed a covenantal relationship with God in history. Thus Paul is accusing the Jew who presumed that God would not exact eschatological judgment against him. Instead, argues Paul, God granted him mercy to lead him to repentance. Since the Jew has not repented, he is sealing up his destiny to be granted on the day of wrath (2:5).

To this accusation (2:1-5) Paul appends the doctrine of retribution (2:6-10) to secure his argument. The doctrine is stated in its classic form: "For he will render to every man according to his works" (2:6). Then in the form of the two-ways, he repeats the doctrine of retribution twice (2:7-10) as applying to "the Jew first and also the Greek." Implicitly the doctrine of retribution has been at work all through 1:18-2:5. At 1:32 and 2:2 the offending parties and Paul recognized it as the standard for judgment. In 2:6-10 Paul spells it out as the principle with which the Jew, as well as the Gentile, must come to terms.

Up to this point Paul has said nothing explicit of the law. Paul did mention that Gentiles know τὸ δίκαιωμα τοῦ θεοῦ (1:32), but this is certainly not the Torah of

Israel. Does not, then, the possession of the Torah grant a benefit to Israel which the pagan does not possess? From 2:12 the problem of the Torah receives discussion as it affects eschatological judgment?

God does not give preference to the Jew because he possesses the Torah (2:11, a transitional verse) for each will be judged according to the form of knowledge of God's will that he has (2:12). Not the hearers but the doers of the law will be justified (2:13). The Gentiles demonstrate through occasional acts which correspond to the Torah and through the activity of their conscience that they have knowledge of God's will (2:14f.). Thus, the Jew's knowledge of God's will is not an absolute distinction from the pagan. On the day of judgment God will reveal all secrets (2:16), even the inner conflicts of the pagan which reflect consciousness of sin against God's law.

From 2:6-16 Paul had returned to the third person and discussed doctrinal issues that buttressed his accusation: the judgment principle of retribution (2:6-10) and possession of the Torah did not affect God's impartiality in judgment (2:11-16). In 2:17-23 Paul again uses the confrontation form. Here, however, he names his opponent. Because the Jew possessed the Torah, he is educated in knowledge of God's will (2:17f.) and therefore the proper teacher of the Gentile who is blind, in darkness, or a child (2:19f.). In the lengthy anacolouthon (2:17-20)

Paul repeats some of the preferential titles that the Jew gives to himself. But in 2:21f. he accuses the Jew of committing the sins which the Jew carefully denounces in his ethical instruction to the Gentile: stealing (social vice), adultery, and idolatry. The difference in Paul's denunciation of the Jew (2:21f) and that of the Gentile (1:22-31) is clear. He softens the charge of immorality from the sexual perversion of the Gentile to adultery of the Jew and from the idolatry of the Gentile to robbery of temples by the Jew. Clearly, however, he seeks to indict the Jew of essentially the same sins (cf. 2:1) which the Jew taught as characteristic of the pagan. Such activity on the part of the Jew, rather than winning the Gentile's blessing of the God of Israel, causes him to blaspheme God (2:23f.; cf. Isa. 52:5). The Jew has failed to educate himself in ethics to the point where he ceases to commit sins. Of course, for Paul ethical education is not the problem.

Paul next turns to the sign of the covenant, circumcision (2:25-29). The benefit of circumcision, he argues, depends on performance of the law. Therefore, a Jew who breaks the law nullifies his circumcision (2:25), and the Gentile who keeps the law in effect is regarded as circumcision (2:26). Covenantal blessing, then, is lost or maintained not by circumcision but by performance of the law's requirements. Paul here distinguishes the performance of the law from circumcision, two items which

Judaism united. Further, he claims that the obedient Gentile will condemn the disobedient Jew (2:27). In 2:25-27, therefore, enjoying God's blessing is a judicial problem based on performance of the law. In 2:28f., however, Paul introduces a different argument which anticipates, although in cryptic language, his Christian solution to how one receives God's blessing. The circumcision which is real is not external but internal, because the Spirit effects it. And only the one who has internal circumcision receives God's praise (2:29).

The Jew perceives that the argument which Paul has advanced so far (1:18-2:29) questions Jewish theology at its root. He especially suspects Paul's attack upon the law and circumcision (2:11-29) which in form is an attack on the Jew. The Jew therefore challenges Paul (3:1-8) in two respects. First, his gospel appears to erode God's special relation to Israel (3:1) and hence questions God's faithfulness to his word (3:3). Second, his gospel of God's righteousness apart from works of the law appears (in the human view) morally irresponsible. For Paul's doctrine of God's righteousness has two sides. It will admit no human contribution but rather condemns each as a sinner and yet acts as saving power specifically for the sinner (cf. 11:32). In this saving process, therefore, God alone receives glory, and the unfaithfulness of the Jew brings this to light. But, queries the Jew, does this absolute

control of salvation not make God unjust in his use of the human (3:5 and 7)? Or, in a question meant to reduce Paul's theology to absurdity, should we not sin to increase good (3:8)?

Paul's answers in 3:1-8 are all incomplete, and therefore he returns to the issues raised in later sections of the letter, but he also gives preliminary answers in the present verses. The first question, concerning Israel and God's faithfulness, he discusses in chs. 9-11 affirming God's control of history, his past favor to Israel (3:2; cf. 9:4f.), and his faithfulness to his promises (3:3; 11:29f.). In fact, God alone is faithful, and this is the beginning point of a doctrine of salvation (3:4). To the second question concerning his doctrine of God's righteousness Paul retorts that God maintains his role as world judge (3:6). Further, one misrepresents his gospel when he charges that it leads to unrestrained sin (3:8). Paul explains his solution to this problem in 6:1ff.

In 3:1-8 the confrontation is direct, and thus the dialogical form (as in 2:1ff. and 2:17ff.) reappears. There is good reason, however, to believe that the arguments voiced here arose from actual controversies which Paul faced in the synagogue. Therefore the questions are not merely rhetorical, to anticipate possible misunderstanding, but represent abuse of his teaching. In 3:1-8 Paul claims that he has not denied Israel's special

place and God's faithfulness to her or proclaimed an irresponsible understanding of God's righteousness.

The question of 3:9 appears to restate the question of 3:1 but actually offers Paul's opinion of the Jew's situation. Is he any better off? In his negative answer Paul specifies what he anticipated in 2:1-3:8 by exposing the Jews' sinful deeds. Now he states that the Jews, as the Gentiles, are under the power of sin. The notion of sin as a cosmic force, exercising its power over all humans, hovered in the background in 1:18-3:8. In 3:9 it receives clear statement. Paul substantiates his charge by quoting a florilegium of verses from the Old Testament (3:10-18). In sum, the verses comprise a confession of universal unrighteousness. In 3:19 Paul declares that the law (he has just quoted from it) addresses specifically those who are under it--the Jews. Thus, the catena of OT passages did not condemn the "Jew" and the Gentile but the Jew along with the Gentile.

Paul concludes his negative argument in 3:20, but he introduces in it some new elements. First, he sums up his viewpoint that no human will be justified (apart from the grace of Christ). But now he addresses himself to Jewish piety and its relationship to the law. He acknowledges that in actual practice the Jew may achieve a certain conformity to the law (the works of the law). But the law as such has another purpose: to reveal the power

of sin. He discusses how the law does this in 7:7ff. In our passage Paul has tried to prove one thing: there can be no justification according to the law because the Jew as well as the Gentile is under the power of sin (and the law has no power to deliver from this predicament). The Jew is essentially in the same situation as the Gentile--in bondage to sin--verified empirically by his deeds of sin.

### 3. PROCEDURE

First, we will consider the doctrines and practices in Judaism relevant to our passage from Romans. This chapter (ch. I) presupposes that Paul is in dialogue with Jewish convictions. Ch. II, which offers an exegesis of Rom. 1:18-3:20 will show the degree to which this is the true. In any case, ch. I assumes that Paul's language reflects more than simply the remnant of Jewish conceptions which were not shed in his Christian days, but that he is taking these conceptions seriously.

We will examine how the various Jewish doctrines functioned in the religion. Thus, the details of a specific motif are not all that is important, but how it works. And we will consider the complexity of the Jewish view. Obviously that task in itself is far greater than can be undertaken in this dissertation and beyond the competence of the writer. There can be no attempt to do

extensive, original research on each subject. We therefore depend on the work of other scholars. Nevertheless, we constantly will make reference to original documents themselves and cite them when it seems appropriate.

Further, we must regularly come to terms with the rich varieties of thought in Judaism which, it is well known, existed in Judaism around the time of Paul. Caution must, therefore, be exercised in what we assume the use of a document shows about Paul's thought. This is true for at least two reasons: first, many of the written documents which we possess come from a time later than Paul. Thus, it is difficult to know whether a particular motif derives from the time of Paul or is a later product. This is especially true of rabbinic literature. Also, one must ask whether Christianity has influenced the documents written later than Paul. Such pertains, for example, to the Test. XII Patr. Second, we must observe the differences between so-called Palestinian and Hellenistic Judaism. This is the case, for example, when comparing Ben Sira and the Wisdom of Solomon.

This study, however, does not use Jewish sources to prove that Paul depends on a specific document for this or that motif. That indeed may have occurred, but it is beyond the present inquiry to demonstrate this. Rather, the present purpose is to show that Judaism around the time of Paul possessed common motifs and a common pattern with which Paul would have been familiar. Thus, our



inquiry is not primarily a source criticism but a tradition criticism. What are the basic traditions upon which Paul depends? Consequently, it is legitimate to use, with care, documents which come later than Paul (rabbinic thought)<sup>1</sup> or may show Christian influence (Text. XII Patr.). These documents also indicate how Jewish traditions could take concrete form and thus show tendencies in the motifs and pattern with which Paul is dealing.

The second chapter will consider Paul's argument in Rom. 1:18-3:20. This will be a study of the passage, section by section. In particular we will observe how the special theologoumena in each section, compared with the corresponding view (or views) found in Judaism, unfold to build Paul's argument. It is hoped that in this way the purpose of Paul can be discovered.

The third chapter will be exploratory in an attempt to integrate the results of our study with large issues involved in first century Christianity. Thus, we will seek to establish the purpose of the letter of Romans in its historical setting. It is believed that a careful study of the passage reveals more than simply a facet of Paul's theology. It reflects in particular Jewish Christian opposition to Paul's Gentile mission and Paul's response to

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<sup>1</sup>On rabbinic literature see Sanders, pp. 69-75.

that opposition. Therefore, we will consider the church at Rome and the situation of Paul at the time he wrote Romans. All of this will be used in order to try to illuminate the situation which compelled Paul to write to the Romans. Here we seek to show that the best interpretation of Romans sees it as an historical document, not a systematic treatise.

In the fourth chapter we will give a summary of Paul's argument in 1:18-3:20 and then its place in the dogmatic section of Romans, 1:16-11:36. Finally, we will offer a conclusion in which the results will be summarized.

## CHAPTER I

### JEWISH MOTIFS REFLECTED IN ROMANS 1:18-3:20

This chapter discusses Jewish views relevant to our passage from Romans. First, we will consider the problem of paganism, idolatry, and the vice it produces (cf. Rom. 1:18-32). Here we will observe that the Jew views himself as distant from the Gentile both in religion and morality. We will also examine in this regard the problem of natural law (cf. Rom. 2:14f.). Second, we will review the doctrine of judgment (cf. Rom. 2:1-10). We will also consider the bearing God's election of Israel supposedly has on the Jew's eschatological judgment (cf. Rom. 2:1-3:8). Finally, we will examine the conception of the evil impulse in its various forms (cf. Rom. 3:9-20). This section will be fuller than the previous two for the following reason: the two-ways doctrine, one form of the teaching on retribution, is given full significance when viewed in the light of the problem of the evil impulse. If evil influences a person, how is he to overcome the influence so that he may escape the way of death? In fact, Judaism in a variety of ways wrestled with this issue. Her solutions to this problem are not the only ones which gave her certainty of an

inheritance in the age to come. But they are a significant aspect of her thought and have special relevance to Paul's argument in Rom. 1-3.

#### 1. JEWISH DOCTRINE ON IDOLATRY AND ITS RESULTS

In Judaism of the Greek and Roman eras, the apologetics for the God of Israel or polemics against the idols presupposed one essential difference from those of the OT era: the threat of falling into idolatry was generally no longer serious for Israel.<sup>1</sup> Thus Jud. 8:18-20 says that while the fathers worshiped idols, the present generation does not (cf. bA. Zar. 17a; bYom. 69b).<sup>2</sup> This is, of course, a general statement, since there were Jews who apostatized and became idolators. But the arguments and observations concerning the pagan gods and idols which we find in Judaism were usually attempts to win the Gentiles to belief in the one, spiritual God or to demonstrate that the idolatry of the pagan is wholly evil and thus to dissuade wandering Jews. For this reason Jewish statements on idolatry often suggest that they did not clearly understand idolatry. It was seen from the viewpoint of an outsider.

We can for convenience break the Jewish viewpoint of pagan idolatry into the following parts: God can be

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<sup>1</sup>See Gerhard von Rad, Wisdom in Israel, trans. James D. Martin (London: SCM Press, LTD, 1970), pp. 183-185.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Str-B, vol. 4, pp. 110f.

known from creation, the worship of the gods and idols is folly, and idolatry leads to error and vice. We will follow these observations on idolatry with a short discussion of the Gentiles' natural knowledge of God's will.

#### a. GOD CAN BE KNOWN FROM CREATION

The argument from below to above, most common in works from Diaspora, is also found in rabbinic literature.<sup>1</sup> Wis. 13:1-9<sup>2</sup> develops it skillfully. It condemns Gentiles for ignoring the craftsman, τεχνίτης, while noting his work (v. 1) or delighting in beauty but failing to know the "author [γενεσιάρχης] of beauty" (v. 3). "For from the greatness and beauty of created things comes a corresponding perception of their Creator [γενεσιουργός]." Similarly,

<sup>1</sup>For parallels and comparison with Stoic teaching see Max Pohlenz, "Paulus und die Stoa," *ZNW*, 42 (1949), pp. 70-73; Wilfred L. Knox, *Some Hellenistic Elements in Primitive Christianity* (The Schweich Lectures, 1942; London: Oxford University Press, 1944), pp. 31-33.

<sup>2</sup>Most scholars date Wisdom in the first century B.C. and accept its provenance as Alexandria. See Addison Wright, *Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. Raymond E. Brown, et al., vol. 1 (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), p. 34; Samuel Holmes, *APOT*, vol. 1, pp. 520f.; and Otto Eissfeldt, *OTI*, p. 602. C. C. Torrey, *The Apocryphal Literature: A Brief Introduction* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1945), p. 102, wishes to date it in the early part of the second century and W. O. E. Oesterley, *An Introduction to the Books of the Apocrypha* (London: SPCK, 1935), pp. 207-209, as late as A.D. 40. Wisdom was probably written after the completion of the LXX translation of the Writings (compare Wis. 6:9-16 and Prov. 8:22ff.) and before Philo (Wis. shows no knowledge of a logos doctrine and Philo, of course, does).

Sib. Or. 3:8-28<sup>1</sup> faults Gentiles who are not "ever mindful of the eternal Creator [κτιστῆς]," (cf. frag. 1:25-35; 3:7-18; book 4:10-12). The argument from creation can take another line of development. Test. Naph. 3:2-4<sup>2</sup> states that an

<sup>1</sup>Books 3, 4, and 5 of the Sibylline Oracles are regarded as Jewish in origin. Book 3:97-819 with the exception of a few interpolations shows special interest in Egyptian history of the second century and the power of the Ptolemies. On the other hand, 3:46-92 is concerned with Roman rulers of the first century B.C. Book 4 reflects knowledge of the temple's destruction (A.D. 70, lines 125f.), the eruption of Vesuvius (A.D. 79, 130ff.), and the expectation of Nero's return (119-124). Book 4, therefore, is to be dated around A.D. 80. Book 5 indicates knowledge of Hadrian and his successors (although Lanchester claims 5:5f. et al. are interpolations). In any case Book 5 is to be dated around 130 or later, while Book 3 would be more composite in nature with the older section (that on Egypt) coming perhaps from the second century B.C. and the later section (that on Rome) coming from the late first century B.C. See Eissfeldt, OTI, pp. 616f.; H. C. O. Lanchester, APOT, vol. 2, pp. 371-374. The Jewish oracles thus derive from several centuries. They arose from Jewish use of the Greek and Roman practice of placing oracles in the mouth of a Sibyl for both missionary and apologetic purposes. Cf. Lanchester, APOT, vol. 2, pp. 368-370. The fragments are so brief that they are impossible to date.

<sup>2</sup>Dating the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs is complicated by statements in them which sound Christian and by discoveries from the ruins of Qumran. R. H. Charles developed the theory that an originally Hebrew document was translated into two basic Greek recensions. These Jewish documents were later expanded with Christian interpolations (cf. Test. Benjamin 10:8; Test. Levi 14:2; Test. Simeon 6:7). On the bases of Test. Levi 6:11; 8:14f. Charles dates the original work in 109-107 B.C. (see APOT, vol. 2, pp. 286-291). On the other hand, M. de Jonge, Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (Assen, 1953); idem, "Christian Influence in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," NovT, 4 (1960), pp. 182-235; idem, "Once More: Christian Influence in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," NovT, 5 (1962), pp. 311-319, argues that a Christian writer, with the use of two Jewish Testaments (Levi and Naphtali) which were originally unrelated, composed a unified document during the late second or early third century A.D. It should be added that

order has been built into the cosmos, and all heed it except the idolators (Gentiles). Even more clearly, the argument from below to above is expressed in the story of Abraham's conversation with Nimrod found in Gen. R. 38:12. Abraham gradually moves the argument by showing that the one to worship is the greater: not fire, nor water which extinguishes fire, nor the clouds which hold the water, nor the winds which move the clouds, but God who moves the winds.<sup>1</sup>

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fragments of an Aramaic Test. Levi and a Hebrew Test. Naphtali were found at Qumran, but these are not identical with either of the Greek recensions, cf. J. Milik, "Le Testament de Lévi en arameen. Fragment de la grotte 4 de Qumran," *RB*, 72 (1955), pp. 398-406. The differences in method and content which are clear from a comparison of all the testaments suggest that originally they were not from the same source. Cf. Raymond E. Brown, *Jerome*, vol. 2, pp. 539f. On the possible contribution of the Qumran community to the Testaments see M. Philonenko, "Les interpretations chrétiennes des Testaments des Douze Patriarches et les Manuscrits de Qumran," *RHPR*, 38 (1958), pp. 309-43; 39 (1959), pp. 14-38. If the theory of an essentially Hebrew original is correct, it is very difficult to distinguish the certain Christian interpolations from other statements which appear like those in the NT but may be Jewish in origin, as Test. Gad 6:3 (cf. Mt. 18:15). Therefore, the development of the traditions behind the present form of the Testaments, the dates and nature of the original Semitic documents, and the date and nature of the Christian interpolations or compositions are far from final solution. The Qumran scrolls, however, have entirely dispelled the notion that Christianity introduced its form of dualism in a manner totally unknown anywhere else within Judaism, and a similar dualism is found in the Testaments. With careful attention to the places where Christian thought may have influenced the text, it is possible to use the Testaments as representative of a form of Jewish thought which is very similar in many respects to that of Qumran. Cf. Eissfeldt, *OTI*, pp. 633-635.

<sup>1</sup>See W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (3rd ed.; London: SPCK, 1970), pp. 28f. and L. Wallach, "A Palestinian Polemic against Idolatry," *HUCA*, 19 (1945/6), pp. 389-404.

The subject is also found frequently in Philo of Alexandria. He sees the universe as a well-ordered city which points to its Maker (ποίητής) and Ruler (ἡγεμών). Of those who heed this order, he says, "They have . . . advanced from down to up by a sort of heavenly ladder and by reason and reflection happily inferred the Creator [δημιουργός] from his works" (Praem. 41-43).<sup>1</sup> And we can compare with this the statement of Josephus, "By His works and bounties He is plainly seen, indeed more manifest than ought else" (Ap. 2:190-192).

#### b. THE WORSHIP OF GODS AND IDOLS IS FOLLY

Another tactic in Jewish polemic is to argue that paganism is foolish. A document where the foolishness of idolatry is brought out with special force is the Letter of Jeremiah.<sup>2</sup> The author points out how the idols of the

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. also Spec. 1:34f.; L.A. 3:99.

<sup>2</sup>It is difficult to be certain of the date of the Letter of Jeremiah since it contains no clear indications on this matter. C. C. Torrey (pp. 66f.) believes that 2 Macc. 2:1f. depends on the Letter, and thus the date of 2 Macc. establishes the terminus ad quem. But Robert H. Pfeiffer, History of New Testament Times; With an Introduction to the Apocrypha (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949), p. 429, rejects the dependence of 2 Macc. on the Letter of Jeremiah. C. J. Ball, APOT, vol. 1, pp. 596f., argues from the "seven generations" of ch. 3 that it was written around 317 or 306 B.C. (7 generations times 40 years=280 years from the first or second deportation). But the dates are too obscure to take literally. See A. Fitzgerald, Jerome, vol. 1, p. 619. The polemic of the Letter of Jeremiah does seem to be against Babylonian idolatry, but the language is good Hellenistic Greek. Most, therefore, accept a third or second century B.C. date. It is impossible to be any more exact. See Pfeiffer, p. 430.



Babylonians are inanimate and helpless. Thus they are not gods and should not be feared (6, 16, 23, 29, 40, 44, 52, 56, 65, 69). The gold which they wear for beauty must be regularly wiped free of dust or it will not shine (v. 24). If one of the idols tips over, it cannot stand itself upright (v. 27).<sup>1</sup> We find similar ridicule of pagan cults in Bel and the Dragon 1-22<sup>2</sup> where Daniel tricks the attendants of Bel into revealing that the image did not eat or drink (vs. 7, 19). In the Sib. Or. there are comparable polemics. Idolators worship serpents, dogs, cats, stone images, and statues, while the temple cats steal the dishes set before the images and while cobwebs cover the moth-eaten images (frag. 3:22-33).<sup>3</sup>

There is, however, a tragic note to this side of the worship of idols and gods--the darkness which overshadows those who practice heathenism (cf. Rom. 1:21f.).

Wis. 13:1 reads, "For all who were ignorant of God [θεοῦ ἀγνοῦσα] were foolish [μῦτατοι] by nature" (cf. 11:15). For this reason "they were unable from the good things that are seen to know him who exists." Sib. Or. frag. 1:26

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Pfeiffer, pp. 428-432.

<sup>2</sup>Bel and the Dragon is one of the three additions to the canonical and older form of Daniel and presupposes, therefore, its existence. Most date it around the year 100 B.C. Cf. Pfeiffer, p. 456; Witton Davies, APOT, vol 1, p. 656.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Wis. 13:10-14:5; Sib. Or. Frag. 1:23-29; book 3:29-32, 723; 4:6-8; 5:75-85; Joseph and Aseneth 8:5; Arist. 134-137; Jub. 20:7f.; Philo, Cont. 3-9 (who makes fun of several types of pagan worship); Josephus, Ap. 1:224-226.

states that the Gentiles are "roaming in darkness [σκοτία] and in black murky night." The worship of idols by the pagans can be ludicrous, but it also reflects tragic error.

### c. IDOLATRY LEADS TO VICE

This introduces the third part of the Jewish propaganda concerning paganism and idolatry--it leads its worshipers to all manner of evil. Again, Wis. Sol. provides one of the clearest statements: "For the idea of making idols was the beginning of fornication, and the invention of them was the corruption of life" (14:12). Thus, the root of pagan vice lies in false worship. In the verses which follow 14:12 the author of Wis. Sol. works out his case in two steps. First, he shows how an idolatrous cultus could have arisen from a father's grief over the premature death of his child (14:15f.) or the revering of a monarch's image by subjects who have never seen him (14:17-21).<sup>1</sup> Second, having accepted a false religion and being ignorant of God (v. 22), the pagans practice all the evils of their cultus. This leads to "confusion over what is good" (v. 26) and complete moral disintegration (vs. 22-29).<sup>2</sup> Not surprisingly, the Jew, according to Wisdom, stands in a peculiar position. Knowledge of God and his

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<sup>1</sup>For the relation of this line of reasoning to some Greek arguments see Pfeiffer, pp. 347f.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Johannes Fichtner, Weisheit Salomos (HAT, Zweite Reihe, 6; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1938), p. 58.

power is "complete righteousness" (ὁλόκληρος δικαιοσύνη) and the "root of immortality" (ρίζα ἀθανασίας, 15:3).

A related notion is that pagan religion produces error (πλαν-) or wandering. "Ye do not worship nor fear God, but wander at haphazard" (ματαιῶς δὲ πλανάσθε, Sib. Or. 3:29). And, Chaldean astrologers "have taught deceits . . . from which come many evils . . ., so that they are led astray from good path and righteous acts" (Sib. Or. 3:221-233).<sup>1</sup> We should observe in this regard the comments by Philo in Virt. 181f. He states that "when God is honored, then follows immediately in the proselyte an entire company of virtues," and contrariwise, the apostate Jew who "rebels from the holy laws" develops Gentile vices.<sup>2</sup>

Not only can the leaders of pagan cults lead the devotees into error, but so can the spirits behind the idols. This gives a mythological explanation for idolatry. Thus in Jub. 11:3-6, "malignant spirits" sent forth by Mastema assisted in the corruption of the ancient world in the time between the flood and Abraham. And although God rules all people, "He placed spirits in authority to lead them [the pagans] astray from Him" (15:30-32).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See further on this, Wis. 11:15; 12:24; Sib. Or. frag. 1:19-25; book 3:29, 36-40, 548f., 721-723; Jub. 11:16; 12:3, 5, 22:16f.; 1 En. 19:1; Joseph & Aseneth 10:5f.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. W. Knox, p. 32, n. 2.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. 1 En. 19:1f.; 99:17f.

#### d. GENTILE REJECTION OF THE MORAL LAW

Not only did the Gentiles reject knowledge of God which was available in nature and hence plunge themselves into vice, but they also rejected knowledge of God's will which was morally binding. The form of teaching on this matter can vary greatly, but the central feature is the same: Gentiles have some knowledge of God's law.

First, Gentiles are responsible because they actually rejected God's law when it was offered to them. This is stated in 2 Bar. 48:38-40; 2 Esd. 7:37f., 72f.; and in rabbinic tradition. For example, 2 Esd. 7:72f. reads:

For this reason, therefore, those who dwell on earth shall be tormented, because though they had understanding they committed iniquity, and though they received the commandments they did not keep them, and though they obtained the law they dealt unfaithfully with what they received. What, then, will they have to say in the judgment, or how will they answer in the last times?

Rabbinic tradition states that the law was published in seventy languages, either from Sinai (bShab. 88b), the plains of Moab (Gen. R. 49:2), or Mount Ebal (Tos. Sotah 8:6). The peculiar joy of Israel was that she alone received the law.<sup>1</sup>

There are other traditions which state that the Gentiles have knowledge of God's will apart from Sinai, a

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<sup>1</sup>Pesikta, ed. Buber f. 200a, according to George Foot Moore, Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era: The Age of the Tannaim vol. 1 (New York: Schocken Books, 1971, first published in 1927), p. 278.

form of natural theology. Philo, for example, depends upon Greek philosophical thought in relating the Torah of Israel to the natural law as Greek philosophy related νόμος to φύσις. The Sophists discuss how far the existing society's νόμος corresponds or deviates from φύσις.<sup>1</sup> The Stoics, however, see νόμος growing out of φύσις commanding the individual (if he is considered a free agent) or compelling him (if he is determined).<sup>2</sup> Philo asserts that God is the creator of nature and the giver of Torah. Therefore, the two are in perfect agreement.<sup>3</sup>

We can also consider the notion of the Adamic and Noachic commandments. The rabbis believed that these commandments were universally available but only Israel had observed them. Six commandments were given to Adam according to R. Levi: on idolatry, blasphemy, cursing judges, murder, incest and adultery, and robbery (Gen. R. 16:6). To these was added a seventh from the commandment to Noah and his sons (Gen. R. 9:4), a prohibition against eating flesh with the blood still in it (Tos. A. Zar. 8:4).<sup>4</sup> Actually there was no consensus among the rabbis on what

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<sup>1</sup>Helmut Koester, ThDNT, vol. 9, pp. 260f.

<sup>2</sup>Helmut Koester, ThDNT, vol. 9, pp. 264-266.

<sup>3</sup>Helmut Koester, ThDNT, vol. 9, p. 269.

<sup>4</sup>See Moore, vol. 1, 00. 274f.

the Noachic commandments were.<sup>1</sup> But it was believed that through Adam and Noah knowledge of God's will with respect to basic moral issues had been distributed to humankind for all generations.<sup>2</sup>

All Gentiles, if they will, can know these commandments. But since Adam did not keep the six commandments given to him, how could he keep the 613 (248 requirements and 365 prohibitions) of the Torah (Gen. R. 24)? Similarly, the sons of Noah did not observe the commandments given to them, and so they were unfit for the Torah (Mekilta on Ex. 20:2).<sup>3</sup>

To summarize this brief examination of Jewish propaganda and polemics concerning paganism: first, the Jew found the Gentile guilty in not recognizing the one, true God but of worshiping gods and idols. This was inexcusable since God revealed himself through the cosmos. Second, since the gods and the idols were dead and powerless, the one who worshiped them was foolish. Third, pagan religions were the root of the pagan's evil conduct. If the Gentile was to transform, he had to do so through the

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<sup>1</sup>Bernard J. Bamberger, Proselytism in the Talmudic Period (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1939), p. 135. S. Krauss, "Les préceptes des Noachides," Revue des études juives, 47 (1903), p. 33, observes that Hellenistic Judaism knows of no list of seven commandments but only three. This can be compared with the Apostolic Decree of Acts 15. Cf. M. Simon, "The Apostolic Decree and its Setting in the Ancient Church," BJRyll, 52 (1969/70), pp. 437-460.

<sup>2</sup>Moore, vol. 1, p. 274.

<sup>3</sup>See Str-B, vol. 3, pp. 41f. for other examples.

Jewish religion. Finally, Gentile sin was inexcusable since the Gentile did have knowledge of God's will.

## 2. JEWISH DOCTRINE ON JUDGMENT

The second major category of Jewish teaching we will consider concerns the final judgment and reward or punishment after death. Josephus (Wars 2:165), the NT (Mk. 12:18-27 and parallels; Acts 23:6-9), and rabbinic sources (Mish. Sanh. 10:1; bSanh. 90b) tell us that the Sadducees did not share the belief in the after-life.<sup>1</sup> But other than the Sadducees Judaism embraced this conviction.

### a. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Apocalyptic literature is full of the discussion of the last judgment because it is its central dogma.<sup>2</sup> In our earliest apocalyptic document several visions and dreams show that this world and its rulers will be brought to account by God (Dan 2:44f.; 7:9-14; 12:1-3). Later descriptions of the final judgment are more detailed (cf. I Enoch 53-56 and Rev. 20:11-15).

Fundamental to judgment is the division made between the righteous and the wicked. To the one is promised

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<sup>1</sup>See Rudolf Meyer, ThDNT, vol. 7, pp. 46-56 for a fuller discussion of the Sadducees.

<sup>2</sup>See D. S. Russell, The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic (London: SCM Press, 1971), pp. 379-385.

eternal life and to the other torment. Generally this division is between Israel and the Gentiles who both oppress Israel and worship idols. For example, Ass. Mos. 10:7-10 states:

For the Most High will arise, the eternal God alone,  
 And He will appear to punish the Gentiles,  
 And He will destroy all their idols.  
 And thou, O Israel, shalt be happy,  
 And thou shalt mount upon the necks and wings of  
 the eagle,  
 And they shall be ended.  
 And God will exalt thee,  
 And He will cause thee to approach to the heaven of  
 the stars,  
 In the place of their habitation  
 And thou shalt look from on high and shalt see thy  
 enemies in Ge(henna),  
 And thou shalt recognize them and rejoice,  
 And thou shalt give thanks and confess the Creator.<sup>1</sup>

In other documents and traditions, however, the division is simply between Israel and the pagans. Apocalyptic literature in particular reflects the belief that many from Israel will not inherit future life. Thus, 2 Esd. 7:47f.:

And now I see that the world to come will bring delight to few, but torments to many. For an evil heart has grown up in us, which has alienated us from God, and has brought us into corruption and the ways of death, and has shown us the paths of perdition and removed us from life--and that not just a few of us but almost all who have been created!<sup>2</sup>

The general conviction is that Israel is the people of God

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Jub. 24:18; I En. 90:5, 18; Sib. Or. 3:601-623.

<sup>2</sup>A clearer statement on the division also being in Israel is found in Test. Ben. 10:8-10. The problem with using this passage as evidence, however, is the obvious presence of Christian polemics against Jewish unbelievers. Cf. Charles, APOT, vol. 2, p. 359.



and will receive life. The Gentiles with their idolatry, vices, and oppression will receive God's wrath. But some accept that certain from Israel will also fall under God's wrath.

The division within Israel is especially clear in the Qumran literature. In the documents from Qumran the characteristic word for the coming judgment is visitation (פקודה). The motif of God's visitation being a time of punishment (cf. Amos 3:2 et al.) or of salvation (cf. Ex. 13:19) was derived from the OT. For the sectaries this becomes the normal term for referring to the judgment at the end of human history. God, who designed, made, and controls all (IQS 3:15-18) appointed also the time of פקודה (3:18). At this event there will be a discerning of the spirits (3:14f.; 4:26) and a sentencing to eternal destiny. Thus, the righteous can look forward to bliss and glory (IQS 4:6-8; cf. IQM 13:10) and the wicked to stripes and wrath (IQS 4:12-13; cf. 2:6; CD 7:9; 8:1f.). At the present the spirits of Truth (אמת) and Falsehood (עוילה) are in conflict, but at the time of his visitation, God will destroy perversity (IQS 4:16-19).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Calvin J. Roetzel, Judgment in the Community: A Study of the Relationship Between Eschatology and Ecclesiology in Paul (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972), pp. 41-50.

## b. THE DOCTRINE OF RETRIBUTION

With these general considerations in view we turn now to some special problems with respect to the final judgment. Our first question concerns the doctrine of retribution. We are particularly interested in examining how the concept of merit works in Judaism in relation to belief in grace.

First, we can observe some places where the principle of retribution appears in its classic form. In Psalm 62 (LXX=61):12 we read, "For thou dost requite a man according to his work" (cf. Prov. 24:12). The same teaching appears in Sir. 35:19, "He repays man according to his deeds, and the works of man according to their devices" and in the NT (Mt. 16:27; Rom. 2:6; 2 Cor. 5:10; Eph. 6:8; Rov. 2:23; 22:12). A variant form says that the evil receive according to their works without any mention of the good. (Wis. 11:5, 15f.; 12:23; 18:4f.; 2 Macc. 5:9f.; 9:5; 13:6f.; 15:32; I En. 95:5; Jub 4:32; Test. Gad 5:10; Philo, Flac. 115, 125, 171-175; 189; Mos. 1:96).

The doctrine of retribution states that God will judge and requite each according to his deeds. The question is, does one earn merit for which God repays him, or is the relationship between the deed and the result (in judgment) to be understood in another way?

Klaus Koch has argued that in the OT, especially in the Wisdom tradition, the relation between what one does

and the final result is not artificial. The doer initiates by his deed the consequence which returns to him. It should not be thought, however, that the connection between the deed and its result arises solely from natural causes. Yahweh provides the power by which the deed returns and achieves its result on the original doer. Further, the power which the righteous has to do the right is granted to him through Yahweh (cf. Ps. 1:6; 32:10; Prov. 19:17; 22:4; 25:21f.; etc.).<sup>1</sup> We can schematize this as follows:

deed-action of Yahweh (judgment)-consequence

The question remains, however, if Judaism had such a view. Perhaps the relationship between deed and consequence was artificial. This is especially suggested by the characteristic term reward. The source material on this subject is so plentiful that we can do little more than cite a few examples and generalize from them.

In the apocrypha and pseudepigrapha, statements can be found which seem to support the notion that righteousness is solely a human achievement. Such, for example, is Sir. 27:8, "If you pursue justice [τὸ δίκαιον]<sup>2</sup> you will attain it and wear it as a glorious crown" (cf. I En. 41:1; 45:3; 61:3-8; 2 Bar. 14:12; 51:7; 2 Esd. 8:33). But other passages which promise reward also indicate that God's help is essential, as Sir. 2:7-11:

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<sup>1</sup>Klaus Koch, "Gibt es ein Vergeltungsdogma im Alten Testament?" ZTK, 52 (1955), pp. 2-10. See also Ernst Gunter Bauckmann, "Die Proverbien und die Sprüche des Jesus Sirach," ZAW, 72 (1962), pp. 52-58.

<sup>2</sup>W. O. E. Oesterley translates this as "righteousness" and refers to Zeph. 2:3, APOT, vol. 1, p. 406.

You who fear the Lord, wait for his mercy;  
 and turn not aside, lest you fall.  
 You who fear the Lord, trust in him,  
 and your reward will not fail;  
 You who fear the Lord, hope for good things,  
 for everlasting joy and mercy.  
 Consider the ancient generations and see:  
 who ever trusted in the Lord and was put to shame?  
 Or who ever persevered in the fear of the Lord and  
 was forsaken?  
 Or who ever called upon him and was overlooked?  
 For the Lord is compassionate and merciful;  
 he forgives sins and saves in the time of affliction.

Here, fear of God, mercy, trust, and God's compassion for  
 the repentant sinner are fundamental for the achievement  
 of the goal. The necessary help God must give may be  
 mediated through wisdom (2 Bar. 44:13-15; 2 Esd. 8:51-54)  
 or more directly from God himself (Wis. 5:16f.).<sup>1</sup>

It is incorrect to deduce, then, that the apocrypha  
 and pseudepigrapha can be characterized simply as a  
 religion of human achievement, though in instances this  
 might be correct. It is correct to call it synergistic,  
 particularly in those traditions where bondage to sin was  
 seen to affect seriously freedom of the will, as in  
 apocalypticism. For the righteous, the pattern in these  
 documents can be schematized as follows:

righteous deeds (with God's help)-judgment-reward

The wicked, of course, do not enjoy God's help nor attempt

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. on this subject Ralph Marcus, Law in the Apocrypha (New York: Columbia University Press, 1929), pp. 16-20; Klaus Koch, "Der Schatz im Himmel," Leben angesichts des Todes (Festschrift für Helmut Thielicke; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1968), pp. 54-58.

to do the right. Therefore, the inevitable consequence of their deeds is punishment (Judith 5:17f.; Let. Jer. 1; Sir. 27:25-29; I En. 50:2).<sup>1</sup> This is schematized:

evil deeds-judgment-punishment

The time and nature of the reward for the righteous is, of course, determined by the tradition from which a particular document derives. Ben Sira shows no interest in life after death, and thus the reward occurs in this world. Wisdom knows of the after-life as a disembodied one. Thus God cares for the souls of the righteous (3:1-4). The apocalyptic documents look forward to the life of God's elect in the resurrection. Nevertheless, the relationship between deed and consequence has not always been broken into that of an artificial reward which has no essential correspondence to the deed.

This judgment can apply even to the motif of a treasury of good works. Such is found in 2 Esd. 7:77; 2 Bar. 24:1; Test. Levi 13:5; Ps. Sol. 9:5; et al.; and also in the NT, Mk. 10:21 and parallels; Mt. 6:19f. Koch has shown that in these passages the forms אוצר or θησαυρός should not be understood as a treasure but as a storageroom, and that the good works themselves are what is stored, not some material good.<sup>2</sup> Thus, even when the consequence is delayed until after death, it is still the result of the

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Marcus, pp. 20-26.

<sup>2</sup>Koch, "Der Schatz im Himmel," pp. 48-52.

deed. For example, 2 Bar. 14:12 reads: "For the righteous justly hope for the end, and without fear depart from this habitation, because they have with Thee a store of works preserved in treasuries."

But does the same apply to rabbinic Judaism? We must consider briefly now rabbinic teaching on retribution (reward or punishment). Many studies find the beginning point for their discussion of this in God's character. For example, Cohen writes:<sup>1</sup>

Justice being an attribute of God, it follows that He deals justly with His creatures. That the righteous should be rewarded for their faithfulness to the divine will and the wicked punished for their rebelliousness is what one naturally expects of a Universe governed by a just Judge.

Thus, because God is just, he will render to everyone according to his works. This even takes the form of rendering measure for measure.

Mish. Ab. 4:11: R. Eliezer b. Jacob says: He that performs one precept gets for himself one advocate; but he that commits one transgression gets for himself one accuser.

Mish. Ab. 2:7: Moreover he (Hillel) saw a skull floating on the face of the water and he said unto it, Because thou drowndest they drowned thee and at the last they that drowned thee shall be drowned.

Here there is precise fulfillment of the ius talionis (cf. bSanh. 90a; bShab. 55a; bArak. 16a).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>A. Cohen, Everyman's Talmud (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1949), p. 110. See also K. Kohler, Jewish Theology (New York: Macmillan, 1923), p. 298; Marcus, p. 16; and George Foot Moore, vol. 2, p. 249.

<sup>2</sup>Cohen, pp. 111-113; Moore, vol. 2, p. 249.

This raises another issue, the motive for obedience to God's law. Preisker claims that the motive according to the rabbis was mercenary.<sup>1</sup> Admittedly, not all rabbinic statements can bear this meaning, but he feels that such is the direction of rabbinic thought. Three statements from the Mishnah illustrate the problem.<sup>2</sup>

Ab. 1:3: Antigonus of Soko received (the Law) from Simeon the Just. He used to say: Be not like slaves that minister to the master for the sake of receiving a bounty, but be like slaves that minister to the master not for the sake of receiving bounty; and let the fear of Heaven be upon you.

Ab. 2:8: Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai received (the Law) from Hillel and from Shammai. He used to say: If thou hast wrought much in the Law claim not merit for thyself, for to this end wast thou created.

Mikk. 3:16: R. Hananiah says: The Holy One, blessed be He, was minded to grant merit to Israel; therefore hath he multiplied for them the Law and the commandments.

The problem here involved is obviously greater than can be simply handled, and the debate will go on indefinitely. But a few remarks are pertinent. First, the rabbis did not accept obedience for only mercenary reasons. They attempted to persuade obedience for the sake of the law itself.<sup>3</sup> Second, part of rabbinic teaching on reward involved the

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<sup>1</sup>H. Preisker, ThDNT, vol. 4, pp. 712f.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. other passages referred to H. Preisker, ThDNT, vol. 4, pp. 713f.; Solomon Schechter, Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology (New York: Macmillan, 1909), pp. 159-169; Str-B, vol. 4, pp. 1166ff.

<sup>3</sup>See Martin Buber, Two Types of Faith, trans. Norman P. Goldhawk (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1951), pp. 92-94.

notion of retribution being exacted after, as well as before, death. And rabbinic teaching also connected the deed and the consequence which occurred after death. Hugo Odeberg writes in this regard:<sup>1</sup>

It may be noted that the Pharisees may use the word "reward" in connection with duties which had been accomplished or in connection with good works. "Reward," however, really means the necessary satisfying result of the deed.

Third, it is wrong to infer that, even for the rabbis, performance of a good deed is simply a human achievement. God's grace and mercy for Israel were fundamental. It was his electing purpose which set her apart for the study and observance of the Torah (cf. Mish. Ab. 6:1). And the Jewish liturgy of the ancient synagogue is replete with thanksgiving for this mercy shown to Israel.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, in discussing how the doctrine of retribution functioned in Judaism we will also have to consider her understanding of grace.<sup>3</sup>

To summarize this part of our study of retribution: In all forms of Judaism we see the teaching that there is a direct relationship between deed and consequence. At times, the term "reward" can be used to characterize the

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<sup>1</sup>Hugo Odeberg, Pharisaism and Christianity, trans. J. M. Moe (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing Company, 1964), p. 33. His whole discussion of this problem is very helpful, pp. 30-39.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. F. C. Grant, Ancient Judaism and the New Testament (Edinburg and London: Oliver & Boyd, 1960), pp. 46-51.

<sup>3</sup>See below, pp. 59-71.



good which the righteous will receive for their deeds. But it is incorrect to deduce from this that the performance of the good deed and the reaping of the good result is simply a human achievement. First, the mercy and grace of God precedes any activity, especially in his election of Israel. Second, God helps those who look to him. Finally, God guarantees that the deed will achieve its result.

c. THE TWO-WAYS DOCTRINE IN THE TESTAMENT  
OF ASHER 1:3 AND 1QS 3:13-13

We must now consider one more tradition on the doctrine of retribution--the two-ways doctrine. The underlying principles of the two-ways doctrine are: (1) if one follows a certain course of life, there will be inevitable results, and (2) there are two alternative paths from which to make the choice, good or evil. The OT origin for this tradition is found in these passages:

Deut. 11:26: "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse."

Deut. 30:19: "I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life that you and your descendants may live."

Jer. 21:8: "And to this people you shall say: 'Thus says the Lord: Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death'."

It is also given in a highly developed form in Ps. 1. In this Psalm it is clear that avoiding the way of death is possible through careful study of the Torah. But the motif of two-ways is considerably expanded in the two documents

from Judaism which we now examine.

Test. Asher 1:3, "Two ways hath God given to the sons of men, and two inclinations, and two kinds of action, and two modes (of action), and two issues" (δύο ὁδοῦ ἔδωκεν ὁ θεὸς τοῖς υἱοῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ δύο διαβούλια καὶ δύο πράξεις καὶ δύο τρόπους καὶ δύο τέλεα).

1QS 3:13-15, "For the man of understanding, that he may instruct and teach all the sons of light concerning the nature of all the sons of men: and all the spirits which they possess, with their distinctive characters; their works, with their classes; and the Visitation in which they are smitten, together with the times when they are blessed" (למשכיל הבין וללמד את כול בני אור בהולדות כול בני) (איש לכול מיני רוחתם באותותם למעשיהם בדורותם ולפקודם נגיעיהם עם קצי שלומם).

It is clear from these passages that there was a characteristic teaching of the two-ways common to apocalyptic Judaism from which the documents derive. In both we hear of teaching on human nature, human deeds, and their ultimate ends. The absence of the word  $\eta\eta$  in 1QS 3:13-15 (but see 1QS 3:20f.!) cannot suggest that the basic structure of the passage as well as the content did not reflect an established form of teaching.<sup>1</sup> To the contrary, the two passages represent the same form with slightly different emphases. In Test. Asher the power which determines the direction of life is in the two inclinations while in 1QS it is in the two spirits. We will examine the significance of this a little later, but we can say at this point that the motif of the two spirits gives a mythological explanation and that of the two inclinations gives an anthropological explanation of the

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<sup>1</sup>Against Wilhelm Michaelis, ThDNT, vol. 5, pp. 56-60.

duality in human nature. Again, while Test. Asher refers to the destiny as a more or less natural development (τέλεα). IQS refers to God's activity of judgment. But, as we have already seen, IQS teaches that in the πατρῶν, God will grant contrary destinies to the righteous (4:6-8) and the wicked (4:11-13) because of their works. And τὰ τέλη τῶν ἀνθρώπων according to Test. Ash. 6:4f. is given when they meet τοῖς ἀγγέλοις κυρίου καὶ βελίαρ. It is then revealed if they were righteous or served the evil spirits "in lusts and evil works."<sup>1</sup>

In this connection we can mention the vices and virtues listed in IQS 4:2-6, 9-11 and Test. Ash. 2 and 4. The catalogues offer examples of the works (ἔργα/πράξεις) which are done. The concrete deeds identify which power (πατρῶν/δυναστεία) rules in the life, and what will be the destiny. They, therefore, are constituent elements in the two-ways schema.<sup>2</sup> Both Kamlah and Wibbing explore the function of the catalogues in their present contexts. Kamlah believes that IQS 3:13ff. is descriptive, and that Test. Ash. 1:3ff. is parenetic and later in form than IQS 3:13ff. Thus, he sees a development from the descriptive form of IQS which reflects a deterministic view of each

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<sup>1</sup> Consider the excellent discussion of Ehrhard Kamlah. Die Form der katalogischen Paränese im Neuen Testament (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen z.N.T., 7; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1964), pp. 163-168, 171-175.

<sup>2</sup> See Str-B, vol. 1., pp. 460-462 for other examples in Judaism of the two-ways motif.

human being to a parenetic form in Test. Asher which allows the individual more freedom over his own deeds and consequently over his final destiny. In a broad sense, this judgment can be accepted, but it is wrong to assume that IQS 3:13ff. could not function parenetically.<sup>1</sup> The two-ways teaching in these documents can be schematized as follows:

IQS 3:13ff.

spirit of error-deeds (catalogued)-visitation-  
eternal damnation  
spirit of truth-deeds (catalogued)-visitation-  
eternal light

Test. Ash. 1:3ff.

evil inclination-deeds-(judgment implicit)-result  
good inclination-deeds-(judgment implicit)-result

The new element over the OT form of the two-ways is the notion of the ruling spirits or inclinations, the mythological or psychological explanations of the internal forces which influence human action. In neither IQS nor Test. Asher is the ruling force seen as the only power present in an individual. In IQS 3:21-24 the angel of darkness is the ultimate source of sin and iniquity committed by the sons of light. Thus, although the sons of light are ruled by the spirit of truth, and their deeds fundamentally reveal this, they also are influenced by the

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Siegfried Wibbing, Die Tugend- und Lasterkataloge im Neuen Testament (BZNW, 25; Berlin: Verlag Alfred Töpelmann, 1959), pp. 61-76.

spirit of error. We should further observe how the catalogues of vices and virtues can function. In a setting where the two-ways are used descriptively (IQS), by observing the vices or the virtues which the individual performs, the ruling spirit can be deduced. But if the setting of the two-ways is in parenthesis (Test. Ash.), one decides which impulse he will follow by the deeds he performs. Test. Judah 20:1-5 illustrates this:

Know, therefore, my children, that two spirits wait upon man--the spirit of truth and the spirit of deceit. And in the midst of the spirits is the spirit of understanding of the mind, to which it belongeth to turn withersoever it will.<sup>1</sup> And the works of truth and the works of deceit are written upon the hearts of men, and each one of them the Lord knoweth. And there is no time at which the works of men can be hid; for on the heart itself have they been written down before the Lord. And the spirit of truth testifieth all things, and accuseth all; and the sinner is burnt up by his own heart, and cannot raise his face to the judge.

We also find some forms of the two-ways doctrine in other Jewish traditions. In them, however, the notion of the ruling spirit or inclination is not so clear.<sup>2</sup> Philo, for example, allegorizing on the clean animals of the OT, suggests that the parted hoof refers to the human faculty to choose: "For the way of life is two-fold, one branch leading to vice, the other to virtue and we must turn away

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<sup>1</sup>The "spirit of the understanding of the mind" is the will of the individual who decides what he will do, that is, who chooses which of the two influences he will follow. See R. H. Charles, APOT, vol. 2, p. 322.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. W. Michaelis, ThDNT, vol. 5, pp. 58-65. Michaelis cites the data rather fully.

from the one and never forsake the other" (Spec. 4:104). The antitheses which Philo here indicates characterize the two-ways are virtue or vice (cf. also L.A. 2:98). But he can also refer to a contrast of passion or good feelings (Abr. 204), or the attachment to bodily and external things rather than to doctrines of virtue (Abr. 269). In Philo's passages on the two-ways we do not find the catalogues of vices and virtues which we saw in IQS and Test. Asher.<sup>1</sup> Rather the emphasis falls on the freedom of the will and the faculty of choice (Deus 50).

From rabbinic literature we can compare this statement from Mish. Ab. 2:9:

He [Rabban Johanan b. Zakkai] said to them: Go forth and see which is the good way to which a man should cleave. R. Eliezer said, A good eye. R. Joshua said, A good companion. R. Jose said, A good neighbour. R. Simeon said, One that sees what will be. R. Eleazar said, A good heart. He said to them: I approve the words of Eleazar b. Arak more than your words, for in his words are your words included. He said to them: Go forth and see which is the evil way which a man should shun. R. Eliezer said, An evil eye. R. Joshua said, An evil companion. R. Jose said, An evil neighbour. R. Simeon said, He that borrows and does not repay. He that borrows from man is as one that borrows from God, for it is written, "The wicked borroweth and payeth not again but the righteous dealeth graciously and giveth." R. Eleazar said, An evil heart. He said to them: I approve the words of Eleazar b. Arak more than your words for in his words are your words included.

According to the expanded form of this tradition in Aboth

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<sup>1</sup>So Michaelis, ThDNT, vol. 5, p. 61, n. 56.

de Rabbi Nathan 14,<sup>1</sup> R. Eleazar's two comments read:

Wholeheartedness toward Heaven (and wholeheartedness toward the commandments) and wholeheartedness toward mankind.

Mean heartedness toward Heaven and mean heartedness toward the commandments and mean heartedness toward mankind.

Further, the leading statement of R. Johanan is:

Go out and see which is the good way to which a man should cleave so that through it he might enter the world to come.

Go out and see which is the evil way a man should shun, so that he might enter the world to come.

The observations of R. Johanan that the inclusive concept is the heart approaches the motif in IQS and Test. Asher of the ruling force. The heart is basically a psychological description. The evidence from Philo and Mish. Ab. 2:9 can be schematized as follows:

Philo

virtue-life  
vice-(death, implied)

Aboth 2:9 and ARN 14

good heart-good character traits or deeds-  
life in the world to come  
evil heart-evil character traits or deeds-  
(death, implied)

We can add to this evidence from Judaism two examples of the two-ways schema from Galatians. In 5:19-23 Paul describes τα ἔργα τῆς σαρκός and ὁ καρπὸς τοῦ πνεύματος. Although he certainly changed the metaphor for the Christian

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<sup>1</sup>The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan, trans. Judah Goldin (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955).

by the use of καρπός, the thought corresponds to the πράξεις of Test. Ash. 1:3 and the משימ of IQS 3:14. Further, there is a parallel between the controlling or directing element. In Gal. it is either σάρξ or πνεῦμα. Finally, in the negative portion Paul indicates that those who do the works of the flesh will not inherit God's kingdom.

Gal. 6:7f. presents us with a comparable thought but under the metaphor of sowing and reaping (cf. Hos. 8:7; Job 4:8; et al.). Here, the natural relationship between deed and result dominates. The responsibility of the individual for the direction he takes is also prominent. But having acted, his destiny is fixed, either φθοράς or ζωὴ αἰώνιος.<sup>1</sup>

The two forms of the schema from Gal. can be outlined as follows:

5:18-23

flesh-works (catalogued)-will not inherit God's  
kingdom  
Spirit-fruit (catalogued)-(will inherit kingdom,  
implied)

6:7f.

deeds of flesh-corruption  
deeds of Spirit-eternal life

The similarity between Paul's and the Jewish forms of the two-ways doctrine is striking, especially in view of the clear Christian stamp which the Pauline form in Gal. bears. This stamp cannot obscure that Paul, to a

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. H. Schlier, Der Brief an die Galater (12th ed., Meyers Kommentar, 7; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962), pp. 278f.



large degree, shares the understanding of the Jewish doctrine of two-ways.

The two-ways doctrine in Judaism is a developed form of the teaching on retribution. It details the deeds and consequences of both the good and evil. And this form of the doctrine of retribution can be used in two settings, in description or in perenesis. It has antecedents in the OT but possesses one additional element in certain cases (IQS, Test. Ash., Aboth, and Paul) over the OT form: the dominating spirit (mythology) or inclination (psychology) to which one is in bondage or willingly follows. This form of the doctrine of retribution, thus, deals with the external or internal pressures which affect behavior.

#### d. THE NOTION OF GRACE IN JUDAISM

Although her particular understanding of grace differed at points from that of Christianity, Judaism in all its branches taught that God was gracious and forgiving. To begin, we find in both apocryphal and rabbinic literature, the coupling of God's mercy and justice. Wis. 12:15-18 reads:

Thou art righteous and rulest all things righteously,  
 deeming it alien to thy power  
 to condemn him who does not deserve to be punished.  
 . . . . .  
 Thou who art sovereign in strength dost judge with  
 mildness,  
 and with great forbearance thou dost govern us;  
 for thou hast power to act whenever thou dost choose.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See Tob. 3:2; Bar. 5:9; cf. Marcus, pp. 1-3

Rabbinic literature explained the two names, Yahweh and Elohim, alluding to the two aspects of God's mercy and justice (Gen. R. 12:5; 33:3). In fact, according to the rabbis, God's mercy was essential for the survival of the world: "When the Creator saw that man could not endure, if measured by the strict standard of justice, He joined His attribute of mercy to that of justice, and created man by the combined principle of both" (Gen R. 8:4).<sup>1</sup>

Judgment is not then, simply according to a strict accounting. There are passages which might seem to support such a notion,<sup>2</sup> but they do not stand alone. Mish. Ab. 3:16 reads: "All is foreseen, but freedom of choice is given; the world is judged by grace, yet all is according to excess that be good or evil." If the emphasis is placed on the phrase "by grace," judgment is affected by grace, not simply strict justice. But this is not true if the weight is placed on the final phrase, "according to the excess of works."<sup>3</sup> The general view is that mercy exceeds justice. For example, iniquity is visited on the third and fourth generations while mercy unto thousands (Hebrew plural, Ex. 20:5f.) because God's mercy exceeds his justice five-

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<sup>1</sup>Apud K. Kohler, p. 126. See Cohen, pp. 16ff. and Moore, vol. 1, pp. 382ff.

<sup>2</sup>See above, pp. 44-51.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. on this passage Schechter, pp. 15f.

hundredfold (Tos. Sota 4:1).<sup>1</sup> This necessarily includes God's forgiveness of the sinner.

Now we must consider Israel's special relation to God and the effect of this on judgment. The significance of Israel's election in judgment (leniency or judgment solely according to works) is not as clearly worked out as we might hope. For example, Mish. Sanh. 10:1 says plainly: "All Israelites have a share in the world to come" (cf. jSanh 27bff.; bSanh 90a).<sup>2</sup> Does this mean that there was a basic inconsistency in rabbinic thought: because the Jew is among the elect he is guaranteed a share in the world to come regardless of his conduct while the Gentile will be judged according to works?

The impression gained from reading the literature is that the rabbis sensed no contradiction between the benefits of God's election and the requirement of faithfulness. They do, of course, consider how one might depart from being a Jew, apostatize. But remaining faithful to the people of Israel is identical with remaining faithful to God and his will revealed in the law. And the obverse side of this is that God will remain faithful to his covenant people.

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<sup>1</sup>See Cohen, pp. 18f., for other rabbinical texts.

<sup>2</sup>What follows this saying in Mish. Sanh. 10:1 is a list of exceptions to the rule: those who deny the resurrection or that the law is from heaven, Epicureans, those who read heretical books or recite charms to heal, and those who pronounce the Tetragrammaton. These exceptions, however, prove the rule since their actions in effect amount to apostasy. Cf. Moore, vol. 2, pp. 94f.

The union of the notions of God's election of Israel and the requirement of obedience corresponds to the two points which in Jocz's view constitute the advantage of the Jew (cf. Rom. 3:1). The first advantage, he suggests, is the election of Israel by God and his nature as faithful (cf. Deut. 32:4; Ps. 89:5; Num. 23:19; Hos. 11:8).<sup>1</sup> Israel's election can be explained in two ways. First, God's love was free, not arising from the superior strength or goodness of Israel (Num. R. 3:2).<sup>2</sup> Second, it can be stated that the fathers earned merit. They accepted the Torah (Num. R. 14:10), the Israelite heroes were persecuted by the wicked (Lev. R. 27:6), and they were holy (Sifre 94a, cf. Sir. 44:1-49:16).<sup>3</sup> It is futile to try to determine

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<sup>1</sup>Jakob Jocz, "The 'Advantage' of the Jew," Jews and Christians: Preparation for Dialogue, ed. George A. F. Knight (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), pp. 81-84.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Moore, vol. 1, pp. 398f. and Schechter, pp. 59-63, for other references.

<sup>3</sup>Considerable mileage is made by Christian scholars from the statements in rabbinic literature on the merits of the fathers (זכות אבות), although its significance can be easily exaggerated. See Schechter, Aspects, pp. 170f. and pp. 170-189 for a discussion of the entire matter. Also Moore, vol. 1, pp. 536-545 and Erik Sjöberg, Gott und die Sünder im palästinischen Judentum (BWANT, 79; Stuttgart-Berlin: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1938), pp. 49-54. It is said that the world was created because of the fathers (Ex. R. 15:6), and that the Exodus was for their sake (Ex. R. 1:36). Moses had no success in interceding for the people after the sin of the gold calf until he mentioned God's promise to the fathers (bShab. 42a, bBer. 32a; cf. also 2 Macc. 8:15; Test. Levi 15:4; Rom. 11:28f.; and other places cited by Moore, vol. 1, pp. 541-543). Thus, the benefits which Israel enjoyed arose from the fathers' merits and God's promises to them. But this does not mean that the Jews accepted belief in a deposit of merits which would exempt the individual from responsibility for his own destiny. An

which view, free love or merit, is primary. Either or both can be assumed in order to fit the specific issue under discussion.<sup>1</sup> The crucial element is that Israel knows herself to be God's people. The following gives a good example of this theologoumenon:

The Holy, blessed be He, said to Israel, I am God over all who come into the world, but I have associated my name with you. I am not called the God of idolaters but the God of Israel. (Ex. R. 29:4).<sup>2</sup>

This peculiar relationship of Israel to God is witnessed to in the apocrypha as well as in the later rabbinic literature.

According to Sir. 17:7 the thesis of Deut. 32:8f. is still valid: "He appointed a ruler for every nation, but Israel

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unrepentant sinner could not rely on the merits of the fathers. Some rabbis, in fact, held the opinion that the merits of the fathers ceased at least by the time of Hezekiah (bShab. 55a; Lev. R. 39:6). While others objected that their merits never ceased (Lev. R. 39:6), it is clear that one must finally rely on his own merits and not on those of another (see Schechter, pp. 177-181). Thus, even Abraham could not save Ishmael (Sifre 139b). And it became axiomatic that a father could not save his rebellious son (bSanh. 104a; Schechter, pp. 183f.). Further, Moore (vol. 1, notes, p. 164) observes that *בזכות* should often be translated "for the sake of . . ." without the implication of merit. For example, it is said in Gen. R. 12:2 that the world was created *בזכות התורה*. It would be meaningless to infer that this meant on account of the merits or virtues of the Torah. Thus, *בזכות אבות* can refer to God's favor of Israel "for the sake of the fathers" to whom he gave his promises.

There are two sides, then, to the notion of the *זכות* of the fathers. It is clear, on the one hand, that the fathers were considered particularly meritorious and the Jews received benefits from them. Or it could be said that God maintained his love for Israel for their sake. On the other hand, there could be no reliance on the merits of the fathers by the unrepentant. Cf. also Odeberg, p. 29.

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Schechter, pp. 12f.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Cohen, pp. 58-60; Kohler, pp. 323-330.

is the Lord's portion." (cf. Wis. 18:13; Tob. 13:4; Judith 16:17; Bar. 3:36). The classic OT text is Ex. 34:6,

The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious,  
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and  
faithfulness [אל רחום וחנון ארך אפים ורב] אלא  
תאמי תת/ὁ θεὸς οἰκτιρῶν καὶ ἐλεήμων μακρόθυμος καὶ  
πολύελεος καὶ ἀληθινός] keeping steadfast love for  
thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and  
sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty,  
visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the  
children and the children's children, to the third  
and the fourth generation.

Patience and wrath are brought together, and God looks for obedience. To those who refuse, wrath will come with severity. But mercy exceeds wrath manyfold and governs God's relationship to Israel. This passage from Exodus receives explicit treatment in Wis. 15:1-3.<sup>1</sup>

But thou, our God, art kind and true,  
patient, and ruling all things in mercy.  
For even if we sin we are thine knowing thy power;  
but we will not sin, because we know that we are  
accounted thine.  
For to know thee is complete righteousness,  
and to know thy power is the root of immortality.

The relationship between God and Israel is found in the terms which reflect the covenant: "our God," "we are thine," "we are accounted thine," "to know thee," and "to know thy power." Reider, comments on Wis. 15:1-3, "Being accounted God's children they will strive for a perfect life, without the stain of sin."<sup>2</sup> But Fichter says, "Auch wenn Israel

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<sup>1</sup>So Joseph Reider, The Book of Wisdom (Dropsie College Edition. Jewish Apocryphal Literature; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), p. 178.

<sup>2</sup>Reider, p. 178.

sündigt, fällt es nicht völlig von Gott ab, es bleibt ein Eigentum, weil es Gottes κρᾶτος seine strafende und seine zur Busse leitende (Gnaden-) Kraft kennt."<sup>1</sup>

The presence of sin in Israel, therefore, does not negate or break the relationship automatically. In both the apocrypha (2 Macc. 6:12-16; Wis. 11:9-11; Tob. 13:5)<sup>2</sup> and rabbinic literature (bShab. 118b; bYoma 46a)<sup>3</sup> God chastizes his beloved to purify them from sin. Therefore, he does not forsake but mercifully deals with them to redeem them (cf. also CD 1:3-6; 3:13-19; IQH 18:23-25). And in those traditions in which belief in the world to come is specific, purification is the necessary requirement to share in the world to come, as bKidd. 46b (R. Eleazer b. R. Sadok): "God brings chastisement upon the righteous in this world in order that they may inherit the world to come, as it says in Job 8:7, 'And though thy beginning was small, yet thy end shall greatly increase'."<sup>4</sup>

The second advantage of the Jew, according to Jocz, is God's gift of the Torah and the traditions.<sup>5</sup> By fulfillment of the Torah and the commandments one is

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<sup>1</sup>Johannes Fichtner, Weisheit Salomos, p. 55.

<sup>2</sup>Marcus, pp. 29-31.

<sup>3</sup>See Adolf Büchler, Studies in Sin and Atonement (New York: Ktav, 1967, originally 1927), pp. 328-331.

<sup>4</sup>Apud Büchler, p. 330. <sup>5</sup>Jocz, pp. 89-92.

inevitably led to life. Thus, life can be understood as the natural outcome of obedience since the Creator is also the Lawgiver. Ben Sira identified the Wisdom through which God made the world (cf. Prov. 8:22ff.) with Torah (Sir. 24:23). Thus, the principles which operate in the natural world are the same as those revealed in Torah (cf. Wis. 9:9; Bar. 3:29-4:4; Mish. Ab. 3:14).<sup>1</sup> Of course, Jews had to wrestle with the meaning of the special commandments which are not obviously moral injunctions (cf., for example, Philo, Spec. 1:1-11 on circumcision; bYoma 67b). But this does not mean they doubted the validity of the Torah. The law is understood as a gracious gift. Certainly it imposes a responsibility, an obligation. Obedience is necessary to maintain covenant with God (Sir. 24:23; 28:7; I Macc. 2:50).<sup>2</sup> The rabbis could even speak of the yoke of the law or the commandments and of God's rule (Tos. B.K. 7:2; bB.K 79b, Sifre Deut. 33; Mish. Ber. 2:2).<sup>3</sup> But it would be wrong to infer that Torah is a burden which the Jews, as a whole, found impossible to carry. Such might be characteristic of the circle from which 2 Esd. derives (cf. 4:19-22, but this is by no means certain). Other traditions, however, witness to the graciousness of God's gift of Torah. In poetic language Ben Sira writes (15:1f., 6):

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<sup>1</sup>See below, pp. 120-122.

<sup>2</sup>Büchler, pp. 12-20.

<sup>3</sup>Büchler, pp. 53-63, 75-88.



The man who fears the Lord will do this,  
 and he who holds to the law will obtain wisdom.  
 She will come to meet him like a mother,  
 and like the wife of his youth she will welcome him.  
 . . . . .  
 He will find gladness and a crown of rejoicing,  
 and will acquire an everlasting name.

Even more specifically Bar. 4:4 reads:

Happy are we, O Israel,  
 for we know what is pleasing to God.

And especially significant is Mish. Ab. 3:15:

He (R. Akiba) used to say: Beloved is man for he was created in the image (of God); still greater was the love in that it was made known to him that he was created in the image of God, as it is written, "For in the image of God made he man." Beloved are Israel for they were called children of God; still greater was the love in that it was made known that they were called children of God. Beloved are Israel, for to them was given the precious instrument; still greater was the love, in that it was made known to them that to them was given the precious instrument by which the world was created, as it is written, "For I give you good doctrine; forsake ye not my law."<sup>1</sup>

To sum up this part of our study of the Jewish view of God's grace: God's justice and mercy are often juxtaposed, but his mercy exceeds his justice manyfold. This is true of God's relationship to all of humankind. On the other hand, Israel has been especially privileged. She is God's elect and through the patriarchs has received God's promises. God's faithfulness to her will not fail, even when threatened with her sin. God may chastize her, but ultimately she will be saved. Further, God has granted to

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. in this regard Schechter, "The Joy of the Law," Aspects, ch. 11, pp. 148-169 and Moore, vol. 1, pp. 397f.

her the Torah by which she maintains her covenant with God, is guided in life, and finds her joy.

We must now consider if the Jew felt that the Gentile had to proselytize, to become a Jew, before he could share in the world to come. The evidence for this issue is not as clear as we might wish, and it seems in part to reflect controversy. The basic problem concerns the future status of the so-called "God-fearer."<sup>1</sup> In sum, a God-fearer appears to have been a Gentile who (1) gave up pagan worship, (2) adopted the worship of the one true God, the God of Israel, and (3) adopted a high moral standard. Negatively, this means that the God-fearer gave up sexual sins (adultery and perversion) and social sins (characterized by murder and greed).<sup>2</sup> For Gentiles who would not take these steps there

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<sup>1</sup>There is an ongoing debate whether there was an actual class of Gentiles called God-fearers who were partial converts and accepted as such by Judaism. Some of those in favor of such a view are Bamberger, p. 135-138; W. Foerster, ThDNT, vol. 7, pp. 171f.; E. Haenchen, The Acts of the Apostles, trans. R. Mc L. Wilson (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), p. 346, n. 3 and p. 413, n. 5; K. G. Kuhn, ThDNT, vol. 6, pp. 743f.; and Ralph Marcus, Josephus, vol. 7 (LCL; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press), p. 505, n. a. And some of those who oppose this view are James E. Crouch, The Origin and Intention of the Colossian Haustafel (FRLANT, 109; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973), pp. 90-95; Kirsopp Lake, "Proselytes and God-fearers," Beginnings of Christianity, ed. F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, vol. 5 (London: Macmillan & Co., LTD, 1963), pp. 74-95; Moore, vol. 1, pp. 339-341. It is beside the task of this study to demonstrate the exact value to be placed on the terms גרים חושבים, יראי שמים, φοβούμενοι τὸν θεόν, or σεβόμενοι τὸν θεόν. It is clear that, although their exact relationship with the Jewish community is uncertain (that is, what is their relationship to the elect?), the God-fearers did forsake Gentile idolatry and vice and thus were not simply pagans.

<sup>2</sup>See, for example, bA. Zar. 64f. Cf. Moore, vol. 1, pp. 338-340.

was no hope and thus no question of their future status.<sup>1</sup> Those who did take these steps basically accepted monotheism and a high moral standard of conduct. But such Gentiles did not necessarily accept circumcision, kosher commandments, or the like which were distinctly Jewish. What was to be their status in the world to come?

Josephus recounts the conversion of Izates, King of Adiabene, during the reign of Claudius (Ant. 20:34-38). A certain Jewish merchant, Ananias, won the queen mother, Helena, to the Jewish laws, and through her influence Izates was converted. But reading the law convinced Izates that he should go further and be circumcised. Helena and Ananias discouraged him for fear that his circumcision would foment a revolt (that is, against a Jew ruling over Gentile subjects). Ananias argued that he could "worship God even without being circumcised if indeed he had fully decided to be a devoted adherent to Judaism, for it was this that counted more than circumcision." But later, a strict Jew from Galilee, Eleazar, persuaded the King that he should not only read the law but obey it. And so Izates delayed no longer and was circumcised.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. the indictments of the pagans in the catalogues of vices below, pp. 177-180.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Joseph Klausner, From Jesus To Paul, trans. William F. Stinespring (London: George Allen Unwin, LTD, 1946), pp. 38f., and Louis H. Feldman, Josephus, vol. 9 (LCL; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 410, n. a.

Ananias and Eleazar, obviously, represent differing opinions. It is impossible, however, to know how to assess this information. Does Ananias represent a sizeable group of Jews from Diaspora while Eleazar that of Judea,<sup>1</sup> or are their opinions exceptional?

Similarly, we can consider the evidence drawn from some rabbinic sayings that, since a Gentile might live as righteously as a priest, life in the world to come was promised without circumcision (R. Meir in bSanh. 59a; bB.K. 38a; bA. Zar. 3a; R. Jeremiah in Sifre on Lev. 18:5).<sup>2</sup> Both rabbis are discussing the text of Lev. 18:5. For example, in bSanh. 59a we read:<sup>3</sup>

R. Meir used to say, Whence do we know that even a heathen who studies the Torah is as a High Priest? From the verse, "(Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments;) which, if man do, he shall live in them." Priests, Levites, and Israelites are not mentioned, but אַיִם; hence thou mayest learn that even a heathen who studies the Torah is as a High Priest! That refers to their own seven laws.

We also know of a controversy between R. Joshua b. Hananiah and R. Eleazar b. Hyrcanus (scholars at Jamnia).<sup>4</sup> R. Joshua said that salvation would come to Israel, even if

<sup>1</sup>So Kuhn, ThDNT, vol. 6, pp. 731, 735.

<sup>2</sup>See Walter Schmithals, Der Römerbrief als historisches Problem (Studien zum Neuen Testament, 9; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlaghaus [Gerd Mohn], 1975, p. 73.

<sup>3</sup>See Moore, vol. 1, pp. 278f.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. in this regard, Benjamin W. Helfgott, The Doctrine of Election in Tannaitic Literature (New York: King's Crown, 1954), pp. 58-70.

she did not repent. R. Eleazar rejected this saying repentance was necessary (bSanh. 97b-98a):

R. Eleazar said: If Israel repent, they will be redeemed; if not, they will not be redeemed!  
R. Joshua said to him, If they do not repent, will they not be redeemed! But the Holy One, blessed be He, will set up a King over them, whose decrees shall be as cruel as Haman's, whereby Israel shall engage in repentance, and he will thus bring them back to the right path. (cf. also jTaan. 63d)

On the other hand R. Joshua was more open to Gentiles being received as proselytes and even held out for their salvation without circumcision. R. Eleazar claimed:

No Gentiles have a portion in the world to come, as it is said, "The wicked shall return to Sheol, all the Gentiles, who forget God" (Ps. 9:17). The first clause, those who "return to Sheol are the wicked of Israel; the second, "who forget God" includes all Gentiles. (Tos. Sanh. 13:2.)<sup>1</sup>

R. Joshua responded:

If the verse had said, "the wicked shall go into Sheol and all the nations," and had stopped there, I should have agreed with you (that non-Jews have no share in the world to come), but as it goes on to say, "who forget God," it means that there are righteous men among the nations who have a share in the world to come.

And:

Everyone (without distinction) who walks in blamelessness before his Creator in this world will escape the judgment of hell in the world to come. (Also Tos. Sanh. 13:2.)<sup>2</sup>

We do not know how many Diaspora Jews or rabbis held to the opinion that a Gentile without circumcision

<sup>1</sup>Apud Helfgott, p. 62.

<sup>2</sup>Apud Helfgott, pp. 68f. The same controversy is recorded in bSanh. 105a; Aboth de R. Nathan, ch. 36.

could share in the world to come. There were certainly some, if not many. But the other opinion was also strong in the Diaspora. Saul of Tarsus was zealous for the law and proud to be a Hebrew (cf. Phil. 3:4-6). Equally, the Judaizers with whom Paul struggled in Galatians presupposed the identity of obedience to the law and belonging to Israel through circumcision. And even R. Joshua, who advocates the possibility of salvation for the Gentile, also held to the advantage of the Jew. It is clear, then, that the Jew was in a better position with respect to the judgment than the Gentile. The differences in opinion concerned the degree to which a Jew had the advantage, many believing that it was absolute while others that it was relative.

#### e. THE DOCTRINE OF REPENTANCE

With respect to the notion of grace in Judaism, one other motif must be considered: there was forgiveness for the sinner who repented. The need for repentance and the promise of forgiveness are widely represented in Jewish literature. In Sir. 17:24, after a threat of judgment on the sinner, we find this promise, "Yet to those who repent he grants a return." The classic example of repentant sinners is Manasseh. The apocryphal book which describes his conversion calls God ὁ θεὸς τῶν μετανοούντων (v. 13). In the Test. Gad 5:7f. we read the following

statement, "For true repentance after a godly sort destroyeth ignorance, and driveth away the darkness, and enlighteneth the eyes, and giveth knowledge to the soul, and leadeth the mind to salvation. And those things which it hath not learned from man, it knoweth through repentance." The author of the Test. XII Patr. is perfectly aware of human weakness and that all men sin. But he claims that the righteous man repents quickly after he sins. (Test. Ash. 1:6).

Wis. Sol. mentions another part of the notion of repentance. At first God punishes the sinner lightly to lead him to repentance. "By judging them (the Canaanites) little by little thou givest them a chance to repent" (12:10). And, "But thou art merciful [ἐλεῖς] to all, for thou canst do all things, and thou dost overlook men's sins that they may repent" (11:23; cf. Aristeas 188 and Rom. 2:4).<sup>1</sup>

Philo also places high value on repentance. He refers to Enoch as a model of this virtue in Abr. 17-26 and Praem. 15-21. Philo means by repentance a complete change in life, "from ignorance to instruction, from folly to good sense, from cowardice to courage, from impiety to piety,

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. J. Behm, ThDNT, Vol. 5, pp. 991f.

from voluptuousness to self-control, from vaingloriousness to simplicity" (Abr. 24). Thus, repentance for Philo can have a distinctly ascetic flavor, although it can also refer to the conversion of a Gentile to Judaism (Virt. 175-186, especially 179).<sup>1</sup>

Finally, we turn to rabbinic literature. First, the rabbis believed that as long as there was life there was opportunity to repent (Tos. Kidd. 1:14f. and Eccl. R. on 8:1).<sup>2</sup> Second, they held out the possibility to all. Mish. Sanh. 10:2 reflects a debate concerning the fate of Manasseh. One side argued that to admit the possibility of eternal life to Manasseh was to make light of guilt. But Johanan (3rd century) stated that to deny Manasseh a place in the world to come was to discourage all penitents (cf. bSanh. 103a).<sup>3</sup>

The importance of repentance in Jewish piety is reflected in the following ways: it was believed to be one of the seven things which God designed before creating the world (bPesahim 54a; bNed. 39b; Gen. R. 1:4). The prayer of repentance is included in the fifth of the eighteen benedictions.<sup>4</sup> Third, Mish. Ab. 4:17 declares, "Better is one hour of repentance and good works in this

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<sup>1</sup>See J. Behm, ThDNT, vol. 5, pp. 993f:

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Moore, vol. 1, pp. 502f.

<sup>3</sup>See Moore, vol. 1, pp. 525f. and especially Schechter, Aspects, pp. 317-324.

<sup>4</sup>See Str-B, vol. 4, p. 211.



world than the whole life of the world to come; and better is one hour of bliss in the world to come than the whole life of this world."

The doctrine of repentance can easily be viewed as another form of human achievement when one places all the emphasis on the calls to repentance.<sup>1</sup> Such a deduction, however, is misleading. Schechter has shown that the rabbis hardly looked at repentance as a great achievement. He refers to Cant. R. 5:2 in which God says to Israel that what she does in repentance is comparable to opening a door as narrowly as a needle point, and he opens it widely enough to allow wagons and chariots to pass.<sup>2</sup> What is important is not the quantity of repentance in relation to the grace looked for, but its actual presence.

There are sins for which repentance is not allowed. But in effect they are sinning with impudence, relying on the expectation of forgiveness, and thus being unconcerned with sin. One who sins thus is not repentant (bYoma 87a; Lev. R. 2:12).<sup>3</sup>

This raises the question of the consciousness of sin experienced by a Jew of the first century. Did Paul believe that Judaism produced a sense of failure because it taught justification according to works? This has been

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<sup>1</sup>So Behm, ThDNT, vol. 5, pp. 997f.

<sup>2</sup>Schechter, Aspects, pp. 326f.

<sup>3</sup>See Schechter, Aspects, pp. 328-333. On repentance see also the excellent discussion and references to rabbinic literature in Sjöberg, ch. 7.

deduced from Rom. 7 and the expressions there which echo profound, inner turmoil and conflict.<sup>1</sup> But the confession of Paul in Phil. 3:6, "as to righteousness under the law blameless," suggests how Paul in his pre-Christian state estimated his case.<sup>2</sup> He did not become a Christian because of moral despair. But some incorrect deductions can be made from this. Did Paul as a Jew, and by implication a good Jew,<sup>3</sup> feel no sense of sin? The following is pertinent. First, Phil. 3:2ff. is a polemical statement in which Paul says that he has a better claim to boasting in the flesh than do the dogs and evil-workers (v. 2). He is not claiming that the average Jew, in his zeal for the law, is blameless. Second, the witness of Paul in Phil. 3:6 must be set in the context of other Jewish statements. The repeated emphasis on repentance absolutely confutes the notion that in Judaism δικαιοσύνη ἐν νόμῳ meant sinless perfection. In that case Paul does not represent the norm or even the ideal but a strange exception in Jewish piety.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>So argues, for example, Davies, pp. 23-27. With respect to Jewish sources see H. Preisker, ThDNT, vol. 4, pp. 713f.

<sup>2</sup>So Bultmann, TNT, vol. 1, pp. 188, 247.

<sup>3</sup>So Anders Nygren, Commentary on Romans, ET (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1949), pp. 12f.

<sup>4</sup>It is puzzling why Krister Stendahl slights this issue (p. 201, especially n.3) in his otherwise very helpful article, "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West," HarvTR, 56 (1963), pp. 199-215. Simply because the word "repentance" can be properly used of Jews does not mean it must be understood in the light of the penitential system of the medieval world, as Stendahl implies (pp. 202-204).

Jewish teaching thus emphasized the necessity of repentance. It did not teach a perfectionistic notion of merit by the average individual. Rather, it was perfectly aware of human weakness and the problem of sinning by the Jew. The issue was not, did they sin, but were they repentant? Forgiveness was promised to those who quickly turned to God, sought his help, and did not presume on his grace.

To sum up this part of our study on Judaism: while it is characteristic for God's justice and mercy to be coupled in statements on judgment, and in some cases judgment seems to follow from a strict accounting, the basic notion is that mercy exceeds justice. But mercy is granted primarily within the context of God's covenant with Israel. Thus, the election of Israel through the patriarchs (for their merits or through free love) forms the basis of God's relationship to Israel in the present. He is faithful to his covenant, and only in the case of apostasy (that is, to cut oneself out of the elect people) is a Jew eliminated from the hope of salvation. The Jew may sin, and for this there is punishment. But God's punishment is gracious, since it is educative; and it leads to repentance, reformation, and consequently a hopeful destiny. Also, God has shown his grace to Israel through the gift of the law, for in it the individual is granted knowledge of God's will and the way to life. Submission to the law is

not submission to an intolerable and irrational burden but to God's rulership. This means that the Jew has an advantage over the Gentile. Some, in fact, taught that the advantage was complete. Only within the covenant of Israel and in complete submission to the whole law was salvation to be gained. That is, for the Gentile to receive salvation he had to become a proselyte. Others taught that it was sufficient for the Gentile to become a God-fearer, to abandon pagan worship and life-style for those of Israel. The difference in opinion was one of degree, however, since all Jews believed that paganism, as such, reaped God's wrath, and Israel's covenant and ethic resulted in life.

### 3. JEWISH TEACHING ON THE EVIL IMPULSE

We have observed that in the schema of the two-ways the motif of a controlling element is significant. In IQS the spirits (3:18) control the individual, in Test. Asher 1:2 the impulses, and in Gal. 5:16 the flesh or the Spirit. Further, in each of these documents the problem of duality runs between both humans and within the individual. There is a sinful tendency within which must be mastered if one hopes to gain life. Judaism did not understand this sinful element in a simplistic fashion. Rather, in a rich variety of metaphors and expressions it showed great sensitivity to the complexity of human nature.

Our purpose in this section is to examine various representatives of Jewish thought as they deal with this issue. In the first place we intend to state as precisely as possible how the problem of the evil impulse is conceived by each author or document and in the second place how each believes that the problem is to be solved.

a. BEN SIRA

It is clear that by the time of Ben Sira there was precise teaching on the evil impulse. The central passage from his work concerning this is 15:14-17:

It was he [God] who created man in the beginning,  
and left him in the power of his own inclination  
[אלהים מבראשית ברא אדם ויקחו בידו  
καὶ ἀφῆκεν αὐτὸν ἐν χειρὶ διαβουλιῶν αὐτοῦ] <sup>1</sup>  
καὶ ἀφῆκεν αὐτὸν ἐν χειρὶ διαβουλιῶν αὐτοῦ] <sup>1</sup>  
If you will, you can keep the commandments,  
and to act faithfully is a matter of your own choice.  
He has placed before you fire and water:  
stretch out your hand for whichever you wish.  
Before a man are life and death,  
and whichever he chooses will be given to him.

In this passage Ben Sira refutes the notion that God is responsible for sin (cf. vs. 11-13).<sup>2</sup> He avers that in the beginning God made אדם, but the direction he follows is of

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<sup>1</sup>Note the phrase of v. 14 between lines 1 and 2, "And delivered him into the hand of him that spoils him." Since this is lacking in Greek and Syriac, and since it conflicts with its context, Box/Oesterley are to be followed in rejecting it as a gloss, added later for doctrinal reasons, APOT, vol. 1, p. 371.

<sup>2</sup>Martin Hengel, Judaism and Hellenism, trans. John Bowden, vol. 1 (London: SCM Press, LTD, 1974), p. 140, suggests that the determinism against which Ben Sira may have been arguing could have arisen from two sources, Qohelleth or astrology.

his own choosing since his  $\gamma\psi$  is in control. In various ways Ben Sira emphasizes that the decision belongs solely to the individual: "if you will," "of your own choice" (v. 15), "for whichever you wish" (v. 16), and "whichever he chooses" (v. 17). The alternatives placed before the yeşer are given in vs. 16f.: fire and water, or life and death. This is an unmistakable allusion to the two-ways. Destiny, either life or death, is not predetermined by God but is the consequence of one's choice. V. 15 states specifically how one can choose life by keeping the commandments and by acting faithfully. Ben Sira thus brings together the will and the activity of the individual. The external conduct issues from the internal yeşer. And the activity which results in life is adherence to the Torah.

What is the direction of the inclination? W. D. Davies assumes that Ben Sira in 15:14 describes what the rabbis later called the "evil impulse."<sup>1</sup> It is questionable, however, if this passage can be used to prove Davies' view.<sup>2</sup> The term  $\gamma\psi$  here means little more than the faculty of choice.

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<sup>1</sup>Davies, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup>So Box/Oesterley, APOT, vol. 1, p. 371; Frank Chamberlin Porter, "The Yecer Hara. A Study in the Jewish Doctrine of Sin," Biblical and Semitic Studies (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902), pp. 138f.

But we can compare 15:14 with other texts to see if they add to our knowledge of Ben Sira's view. We begin with 37:3a. The Hebrew appears to read, though the text is blurred, הוי יאמר מדוע נוצ רתי. "Woe to the evil one who says, 'Why was I created?'" The Syriac has, "Hatred and evil, why were they created?" Finally, the Greek offers, πονηρὸν ἔνθύμημα πόθεν ἔνεκλύσθης. If the Greek represents the original, then יצ' יר' may be emended to the Hebrew text.<sup>1</sup> The confusion of textual evidence denies us a certain reading. Therefore, 37:3a does not help us to know Ben Sira's view of the impulse.<sup>2</sup>

In 17:25-32 Ben Sira admonishes his reader to forsake sin and turn to God who has mercy and grants forgiveness (v. 29). Then, in acknowledging the weakness of humankind, he makes this comparison (v. 31): "What is brighter than the sun? Yet this faileth; And (how much more) man, who (hath) the inclination of flesh and blood."<sup>3</sup> The Greek of v. 31b reads, "so flesh and blood devise [ἔνθουμηθήσεται] evil," understanding יצ' as a verb. But the problem here is not the evil devising of the human, rather the problem is human weakness. Ben Sira, of course, does not excuse sin in this passage, for he has already argued vehemently against that. But his assessment of human nature here is more sober than that in 15:14. There

<sup>1</sup>So Box Oesterley, APOT, vol. 1, p. 443.

<sup>2</sup>So Porter, pp. 143f.

<sup>3</sup>Box/Oesterley, APOT, vol. 1, p. 378.

he charged those who excuse sin that the choice is in the power of the inclination. Here he encourages the one who has fallen to turn to God who will forgive him. Ben Sira knows that the human is subject to a weak inclination.<sup>1</sup>

Another relevant passage from Ben Sira is 21:11: "Whoever keeps the law controls his yeser" (Greek= ἐννοήματος, Syriac=yeşer, but lacking in Hebrew). In 21:11 as in 15:15, the goal is to keep to Torah. Only here, to do so is to overpower (κατακρατεῖ) the inclination. According to 21:11 the inclination is evil or leads to evil. It is something which needs to be overcome and controlled. The yeşer is thus a problem in human nature which must be mastered.

We must now draw some conclusions from this important document of the second century B.C.<sup>2</sup> Some within the Jewish community excused their sin. They believed that a power within them made resistance to sin impossible and that God had created them in this condition. It is probable that they used the term רצ' to describe this power, and it is not, therefore, a creation of Ben Sira. Rather, it was a theologoumenon, already developed, which accounted for the human tendency to sin. Ben Sira's response to

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<sup>1</sup>"Flesh and blood" do not mean sin but the human in his corporeal limitations, so correctly Porter, pp. 142f. See J. Jeremias, "Flesh and Blood Cannot Inherit the Kingdom of God' (I Cor. 15:50)," NTS, 2 (1955/6), pp. 151f.

<sup>2</sup>See Pfeiffer, pp. 364-367. The date can be set at about 180 B.C.



these Jews is complex. He can speak of the *יצר* as little more than the human faculty which chooses. But he can also describe it as a foreign element which wields its influence over the human.<sup>1</sup> That is, Ben Sira admits that there is a power in life which can lead to evil, but he denies that it is greater than the individual's power of choice. And there is one way that choice for life can be made--through obedience to the Torah.

The burden of Ben Sira's book is to fuse Torah and Wisdom (cf. 24:23) to show that by adherence to this way of wisdom one is kept from sin and its results (6:23-28; 18:21, 27; 21:1-2a; 24:22). He accepts that certain acts can atone for sin (3:3, 14) or gain a reward (2:8). The human is not a helpless victim of his nature. He is given, in the law and the teaching of the school, the means for both knowing and guiding himself into life (1:26; 6:37; 15:1; 33:2f.; 39:1-6). He is free to choose the way of life by learning the Torah and wisdom and by observing the revealed will of God. Further, there are definite results which God will cause to happen, either to the sinner or the righteous (5:1-6; 16:17-23; 35:11). Thus, for Ben Sira, unlike Job or Qoheleth, the doctrine of retribution is upheld as

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<sup>1</sup>Hengel (vol. 1, p. 141) writes in this regard: "From all this it becomes clear how with the help of his wisdom terminology Sirach is developing the basic concepts of a theological anthropology" (his italics).

inviolable.<sup>1</sup> Finally, when one sins, he can gain forgiveness by turning to God who knows human weakness. (17:25-32).

b. QUMRAN

Second, we examine the writings found at Qumran. Here the optimism of Ben Sira is absent. Rather we find a pessimism concerning the human and his sin. Further, the sectaries' thinking is more deterministic. This is reflected in the teaching on the two spirits. According to this the world is divided into two camps, each controlled by its respective spirit, of truth or perversity. The fate of the individual is determined by his lot (גורל).<sup>2</sup> K. G. Kuhn sees this viewpoint as thoroughgoing predestination, foreign to the OT and dependent upon older Parsiism.<sup>3</sup> To test this interpretation would take us beyond our present task. It is obvious, however, that the views of the sectaries of Qumran go in a different direction from those of Ben Sira. With this in mind we first consider the word יצר in the Qumran documents.

In a number of places we find that yeşer means simply "creature." This is close to the use found in the OT. For

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Hengel, vol. 1, pp. 141-143.

<sup>2</sup>See J. Philip Hyatt, "The View of Man in the Qumran 'Hadayot'," NTS, 2 (1955/6), p. 280.

<sup>3</sup>Karl Georg Kuhn, "New Light on Temptation, Sin, and Flesh in the New Testament," The Scrolls and the New Testament, ed. Krister Stendahl (New York: Harper and Brother Publishers, 1957), p. 98.

example IQH 1:21 reads, "Yet I am but a יצר of clay and a thing kneaded with water." There are a number of instances, however, where the yesser clearly refers to an impulse or inclination. The evidence from the Psalms supports the belief that God determined the direction of the impulse. This is plainly stated in IQH 15:12f.

And I, because of Thine understanding I know  
that [the righteousness of man] is not in the hand  
of flesh  
[and] that man [is not] master of his way  
and that mankind cannot strengthen its step.  
And I know that יצר כול רוח is in Thy hand  
[and that] Thou has ordained the way of every man.

Since the yesser is in God's hand and ordained by him, God also knows the yesser of his servant (IQH 7:16). On the other hand, the yesser of the evil is revealed in violent acts against the righteous (7:3). The Psalmist can also say that God's saving work is to form the yesser for righteousness. For example we read in 10:22:

For it is Thou who has formed the inc[lination of  
Thy servant.]<sup>1</sup>  
and has established [according to] Thy [will.]

All of these passages suggest that the yesser is determined by God. But we must set against them the admonition found in IQS 5:4-6:

Let no man walk in the stubbornness of his heart  
to stray by following his heart and eyes and the  
thought of his (evil) inclination [מחשבה יצריו]  
But in the Community they shall circumcise the  
foreskin of the (evil) inclination and disobedience  
in order to lay a foundation of truth for Israel,  
for the Community of the everlasting covenant.

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<sup>1</sup>  
The Hebrew is partially lost here. It reads,  
[יצר] יצרה כי אתה יצרה. Cf. IQH 2:36.

There is also the exhortation given in CD 2:14-16:

Therefore hear me now, O sons,  
 and I will uncover your eyes that you may see  
 and that you may understand the works of God;  
 and that you may choose that which He desires  
 and reject that which he hates;  
 that you may walk in perfection in all His ways;  
 and that you may not be drawn by the thoughts of  
 the guilty inclination [ מחשבת יצר אשמה ]  
 and by lustful eyes.

On the surface the evidence from the Psalms appears to contradict that from IQS and CD on the determination of the yeṣer. The one suggests that the yeṣer of each is in God's control, and he shapes and knows it. The others admonish the human not to follow the thoughts of his yeṣer but to circumcise its foreskin. The metaphor of circumcision in the sectaries varies from that of Jer. 4:4; 9:26; Deut. 10:16 (to circumcise the heart). The yeṣer, not the heart itself, is described as the faculty of choice. But the yeṣer in these passages is only one. The human does not have two yeseṣim.

We turn now to the passage on the two spirits in IQS 3:13-4:26. The discourse concerns that which the מַשְׁכִּיל teaches the "sons of light." It contains formal characteristics, and thus appears to be a dogmatic statement on human history. It is particularly concerned with the relation of God's sovereignty to the struggle of evil and good within humankind.<sup>1</sup> The content of the passage is

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<sup>1</sup>See Hengel, vol. 1, pp. 219f.

the following: God determined all from the beginning (3:15-17). In particular, he made two spirits (רוח ורוח) <sup>1</sup> which guide humans in their conduct, both in righteousness and evil (3:18-21). But the angel of darkness causes errors and suffering also among the sons of righteousness. They are, however, finally protected by God's love (3:24-4:1). Next, the ways and destinies of the spirit of truth are enumerated (4:2-8) and those of the spirit of evil (4:9-14). These two classes account for all human activity and involve a continuing struggle (4:15-18). But God has set a limit to this struggle. At the time of his appointment he will conquer evil, establish truth (4:19f.), and purify the elect (4:20-23). Thus, although the struggle continues now, it is under God's control (4:23-26).

Several questions must be asked. First, where is the division within humankind? Some passages suggest that there are two classes of humans, but others suggest that the division is within the individual.<sup>2</sup> For example, IQS 3:20f. reads:

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<sup>1</sup>For an excellent discussion of the problems concerning the two spirits see A. R. C. Leaney, The Rule of Qumran and its Meaning (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1966), pp. 37-56, especially the charts on pp. 51f.

<sup>2</sup>See Leaney, pp. 37f.

And in the hand of the prince of lights is the rule over all the sons of righteousness, and in the ways of light they walk. In the hand of the angel of darkness is all the rule over the sons of deceit, and in the ways of darkness they walk.<sup>1</sup>

But 3:24 reads:

By the angel of darkness (comes) the aberration of all the sons of righteousness, all their sins, their offences, their guilt, and their iniquitous deeds (are caused) by his reign.

The terms *בני עול* and *בני צדק* show a division between humans. But it is also true that *מלאך חושך* exercises power over the sons of righteousness. Thus, in IQS both the division between and that within humans are acknowledged.

This raises another question: how are the two classes to be distinguished? It appears superficially that determination could be made according to the catalogues given in 4:2-8 and 9-14. But this is true only in part. The concluding remarks on the catalogue of virtues state that the virtues belong to the spirit of the sons of truth (4:6). There is, however, no corresponding reference to the sons of evil following the catalogue of vices. Rather, it is simply stated that those who walk in it (the way of the spirit of evil) will be punished (4:11f.). The catalogues, therefore, do not simply compare two classes of humankind but two manners of living determined by the

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<sup>1</sup>The translation is that of P. Wernberg-Møller, The Manual of Discipline: Translated and Annotated with an Introduction (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957).

spirit that is followed (cf. כול הולכי בה in 4:6, 12).<sup>1</sup> They are laid before the בני אור as an imperative. They challenge the hearers to obedience in this moment when the impending eschaton augments its significance.<sup>2</sup>

This raises a further question: can a covenantor later become a son of perdition, and is the individual responsible for his own destiny? The emphasis on predestination might seem to rule out this possibility (IQS 3:15f., 18f.). But Kuhn, who emphasizes the role of predestination in the thought of Qumran,<sup>3</sup> admits that 3:22-25 discusses temptation for the believer in this life.<sup>4</sup> There is no security which lessens the imperative.

But the earnestness of the imperative does not deny dependence on divine grace. The sectaries confess that they have been, and will continue to be, sinners whose only ground for hope is in God's justification of the sinner. And knowledge of this has been granted to the community. The knowledge itself, in fact, constitutes a factor in the

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<sup>1</sup>This point was noticed by P. Wernberg-Møller in "A Reconsideration of the Two Spirits in the Rule of the Community (IQS 3:13-4:26)," RevQum, 3 (1961/2), pp. 429-431.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Eduard Schweizer, "Gegenwart des Geistes und eschatologische Hoffnung bei Zarathusthra, spätjüdischen Gruppen, Gnostikern und den Zeugen des Neuen Testaments," The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology, ed. W. D. Davies and D. Daube (in honor of C. H. Dodd; Cambridge: University Press, 1956), pp. 490f.

<sup>3</sup>Kuhn, "New Light," pp. 97-99.

<sup>4</sup>Kuhn, "New Light," pp. 99f.

way of salvation.<sup>1</sup>

For to God belongs my justification [משפט]  
 and the perfection of my way [תום דרכי]  
 and the uprightness of my heart  
 are in his hand:  
 By His righteousness [נצוקותו] are my rebellions  
 blotted out.

For He has poured forth from the fount of His  
 knowledge  
 the light that enlightens me,  
 and my eye has beheld His marvels  
 and the light of my heart pierces the Mystery  
 to come. (IQS 11:4-6)

As for me, I belong to wicked humanity,  
 to the assembly of perverse flesh;  
 my iniquities and rebellion and sin  
 together with the iniquity of my heart  
 (belong to) the assembly doomed to worms,  
 (the assembly) of men who walk in darkness.

For is man the master of his way?  
 No, men cannot establish their steps,  
 for their justification belongs to God,  
 and from His hand comes perfection of way. (11:9-11)

Security, however, is found only by submission  
 and obedience to the council (סוד) of the community  
 (IQS 3:6-12). Further, the study of the Torah forms the  
 center of the community's piety. The sectaries are  
 divided into groups, and within a group of ten there must  
 always be one searching the Torah (6:6f.). For those,  
 however, who are stubborn and will not yield to the council

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Hengel, vol. 1, p. 221.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Hyatt, p. 284.



there will be no atonement (2:25-3:6). Thus, a covenantor who disobeys can depart from grace.<sup>1</sup>

We can ask further whether the influence of the two spirits is the covenantors' way of referring to the two impulses. Schweizer says that this is not the case since the notion of the two spirits in Qumran is so heavily indebted to Persian dualism.<sup>2</sup> But Wernberg-Møller believes that the two spirits are comparable to the two impulses. While the division between humans rests on God's election and not on a "constitutional difference," there is also a continuing struggle of the two spirits in the human.<sup>3</sup> The crucial passage is 4:23: "Until now the spirits of truth and deceit struggle in the heart of man." Though the term *nr* admits a more mythological understanding of the conflict, in this passage the struggle is taken out of the cosmos and placed within the human.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, as we shall see, Test. XII Patr. (Jud. 20:1-5; Ash. 1:3-9) juxtapose the teaching on the two spirits and the two impulses. Consequently, Wernberg-Møller is correct that the two spirits in

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<sup>1</sup>Hengel, vol. 1, p. 224.

<sup>2</sup>Schweizer, pp. 487, 490f.

<sup>3</sup>Wernberg-Møller, "Reconsideration," pp. 424-428.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Hengel, vol. 1, p. 220.

IQS 3:13-4:26 are similar to the two impulses. The sectaries' teaching on the evil spirit accounts for the problem of sin, both in temptation and falling, which affects even the most sincere member of the community.<sup>1</sup>

To summarize our brief examination of the documents from Qumran: predestination is a dominant theme. God has determined the צר' of each individual. The term צר' in these instances indicates the inclination of the human in making ethical choices. But the covenantor is also challenged to shape his inclination (circumcise it) in conformity to God's will. Thus, the indicative of divine predestination does not swallow up the imperative. With respect to the duality in the human, the covenantors preferred mythological language--the two spirits. Here again determinism by God is emphasized. He ordained that the spirit of truth control the righteous and the spirit of deceit the wicked. But the covenantors also described the powerful influence which the spirit of deceit exercised over the sons of light, so much so that they were characterized as helpless sinners except for God's grace. This influence of evil, however, was limited. Final justification was in God's hand, and he would soon end the time within which the spirit of deceit could influence the sons of light. The eschatological moment in which

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<sup>1</sup>For the notion that flesh (בשר) in the scrolls can equal Paul's use of σαρξ, e.g. in Rom. 7:14ff., see

the problem of evil would be solved was imminent, and knowledge of this impending hour was granted to the covenantors for their assurance. The mythological language of the "spirits" seems in some passages to be cosmic while in others it is psychological.<sup>1</sup> Dependence on God's mercy and help can reach a high level (e.g. 1QH 18). He alone is the source of salvation. This does not, however, negate the urgency of right piety. While the covenantors were convinced of determinism, they were also legalistic. The study of the law formed the center of their piety.

c. THE TESTAMENTS OF THE  
TWELVE PATRIARCHS

Jean Hadot<sup>2</sup> correctly observes that in the Test. XII Patr. there are two explanations for sin, a mythological one and a psychological one. They are not, however, referring to different things. The term for the mythological explanation is πνεύματα τῆς πλάνης and reflects an angelology and demonology similar to that of the covenantors

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W. D. Davies, "Paul and the Dead Sea Scrolls: Flesh and Spirit," Christian Origins and Judaism (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1962), pp. 151-155.

<sup>1</sup>Hengel (vol. 1, p. 220) writes: "Thus an exclusively psychological and anthropological interpretation of the two spirits is unjustified, though it is unmistakable that the struggle of the two 'powers' finds its climax and its decision over and in man: the apocalyptic drama concentrates on anthropology, without the cosmic aspect being lost."

<sup>2</sup>Jean Hadot, Penchant mauvais et volonté libre dans la Sagesse de Ben Sira (L'Ecclesiastique) (Bruxelles: Presses Universitaires, 1970), p. 56.

of Qumran.<sup>1</sup> According to Test. Reub. 2:1; 3:2-7 the "spirits of deceit" are those of fornication, insatiableness, fighting, flattery and trickery, pride, lying, and injustice. Their most important function is to tempt one to sin, especially during one's youth. "Seven spirits therefore are appointed against man, and they are the leaders in the works of youth" (Test Reub. 2:2; cf. Test. Judah 13:2).

Judah 20:1-5 describes two opposing spirits that wait upon the individual's own choice, the spirits of truth (πνεύματα τῆς ἀληθείας) and the spirits of deceit. The opposing spirits strive to fix the ultimate destiny of the individual. "For the spirit of hatred worketh together with Satan, through hastiness in spirit, in all things to men's death; but the spirit of love worketh together with the law of God in long-suffering unto the salvation of men" (Test. Gad 4:7; cf. Test. Dan 2:1). Thus, while the choice of which spirit he will follow appears to remain with the human, he is by no means absolutely free. In fact, it appears that the only reason one will choose the good and thus be delivered from the power of the evil spirit(s) is because the good spirit assists him. "The inclination of the good man is not in the power of the deceit of the spirit

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<sup>1</sup>See R. H. Charles' note for Test. Reuben 2:1, APOT, vol. 2, pp. 296f.

of Beliar, for the angel of peace guideth his soul" (Test. Ben. 6:1).

The other explanation of sin found in Test. XII Patr. is that there are two impulses in the human. In fact, Test. XII Patr. is the first Jewish document to mention explicitly the two impulses. In Ben Sira and Qumran we only found one. The statement we must examine is that of Test. Asher 1:3-9:

Two ways hath God given to the sons of men, and two inclinations, and two kinds of action, and two modes (of action), and two issues. Therefore all things are by twos, one over against the other. For there are two ways of good and evil, and with these are the two inclinations in our breasts discriminating them. Therefore if the soul take pleasure in the good (inclination), all its actions are in righteousness, and if it sin it straightway repenteth. For, having its thoughts set upon righteousness and casting away wickedness, it straightway overthroweth the evil, and uprooteth the sin. But if it incline to the evil inclination, all its actions are in wickedness, and it driveth away the good, and cleaveth to the evil, and is ruled by Beliar; even though it work what is good, he perverteth it to evil. For whenever it beginneth to do good, he forceth the issue of the action into evil for him, seeing that the treasure of the inclination is filled with an evil spirit.

Several things can be observed about this statement: First, there is a strong emphasis on the two opposing forces. Second, the overall inclination and not isolated deeds determines judgment of one's actions. If one repents of an evil act and takes pleasure only in the good, he is characterized as following the good.<sup>1</sup> Third, one inclined to evil is judged to be ruled by Beliar. This identification

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<sup>1</sup>This theme is developed at length in Test. Asher, chs. 2-6.

of the evil inclination and subjection to Beliar shows that the view of human freedom is not simplistic. At the root of human sin is an irrational element, a foreign but dominating force, that compels one to follow evil.

Once the evil impulse gains a foothold, it has real power. Judah complains that, even though he knew the Canaanites were wicked (referring to Tamar), "The impulse [ διαβούλιον ] of youth blinded" his mind so that with the intoxication of wine he took her (Test. Judah 11:1f.). But the author also says that a sin will blind the impulse: "Beware, therefore, my children, of fornication and the love of money, and hearken to Jacob your father. For these things withdraw you from the law of God, and blind the inclination of the soul" (Test. Judah 18:2f.). Thus, there is no single understanding of how the impulse gains control. It can blind one so he will sin, or an act of sin can blind the inclination of the soul. The complexity of language shows that terminology is not as significant as the testimony to the individual wrestling with the problem of the evil impulse.

We must now consider the form διαβούλιον. Charles translates it by "impulse." This translation sees צר' behind the Greek form. Others use a term which follows

more closely the Greek root, such as "decision."<sup>1</sup> The word *διαβούλιον* is used for the Greek translation of *רצ* in Sir. 15:14 only there the form is singular. But Test. XII Patr. can use the singular and the plural. Test. Judah 13:8 reads, "And the Lord rewarded me according to the *διαβούλιον* of my heart;"<sup>2</sup> and Test. Gad 5:3, "For he that is just and humble is ashamed to do what is unjust, being reprov'd not of another, but of his own heart, because the Lord looketh on his *διαβούλιον*."<sup>3</sup> Test. Gad 5:7 also reads, "For true repentance after a godly sort destroyeth ignorance and driveth away the darkness, and enlighteneth the eyes, and giveth knowledge to the soul, and leadeth the *διαβούλιον* to salvation."<sup>4</sup> In these instances *διαβούλιον* refers to the faculty which makes an ethical decision and is thus responsible for one's actions. Similarly we read in Test. Jos. 2:6 that God tried the *διαβούλιον* of Joseph's soul by making him endure the overtures of Potiphar's wife. By examination of the *διαβούλιον* its inclination is revealed.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ratschluss by F. Schnapp, Die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen des Alten Testaments. ed. E. Kautzsch (Tübingen et al.: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1900), vol. 2, p. 495.

<sup>2</sup>Schnapp, Rat; Charles, imagination.

<sup>3</sup>Schnapp, Ratschluss; Charles, inclination.

<sup>4</sup>Schnapp, Ratschluss; Charles, mind. See Hadot, p. 62.

<sup>5</sup>We find a comparable use for *διανοία* in Test. Ben. 6:5f.: "The good *διανοία* hath not two tongues, of blessing and of cursing, of contumely and of honour, of sorrow and of joy, of questions and of confusion, of

Thus, the διαβούλιον in Test. XII Patr. refers to both the faculty which chooses the direction of the life (when in the singular) and the inner impulses that are contrary (when in the plural). Corresponding to the two impulses are the spirits which deceive or guide. The evil inclination is ruled by the evil spirit and the good is guided by the angel of peace.

We turn now to consider whether the Testaments suggest how one is to gain life. Or is one only the victim of his impulses or the spirits? There is considerable emphasis in Test. XII Patr. on choosing the good. In this way one finds salvation. Thus, the ethical imperative is not at all slighted by a mythology of spirits that control or a psychology which rationalizes the proclivities of the individual.

Make your hearts good before the Lord,  
 And your ways straight before men,  
 And ye shall find grace before the Lord and men.  
 (Test. Sim. 5:2)

And now, my children, I command you:  
 Fear the Lord your God with your whole heart,  
 And walk in simplicity according to all His law.  
 And do ye also teach your children letters,  
 That they may have understanding all their life,  
 Reading increasingly in the law of God.  
 (Test. Levi 13:1f.)

And now, my children, ye have heard all; choose,  
 therefore, for yourselves either the light or the  
 darkness, either the law of the Lord or the works  
 of Beliar.  
 (Test. Levi 19:1)

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hypocrisy and of truth, of poverty and of wealth; but it hath one disposition, uncorrupt and pure, concerning all men. It hath no double sight, nor double hearing; for in everything which he doeth, or speaketh, or seeth, he knoweth that the Lord looketh on his soul."



Observe, therefore, my children, the commandments  
of the Lord,  
And keep His law;  
Depart from wrath,  
And hate lying,  
That the Lord may dwell among you,  
And Beliar may flee from you. (Test. Dan 5:1)

And now, my children, I exhort you, love ye each one  
his brother, and put away hatred from your hearts,  
love one another in deed, and in word, and in the  
inclination [ διανοία ] of the soul.  
(Test. Gad 6:1)

But do not ye, my children, wear two faces like  
unto them, of goodness and of wickedness; but cleave  
unto goodness only, for God hath his habitation  
therein, and men desire it. But from wickedness  
flee away, destroying the (evil) inclination  
[ ἀναιρούντε τὸ διαβούλιον ] by your good works.  
(Test. Asher 3:1f.)

In all these passages the imperative note predominates.  
The children of the patriarchs are to escape the power of  
the evil impulse (or spirit) by putting away its works and  
by hearing and doing the law. Such activity does not  
extinguish (except possibly, Test. Asher 3:2), but it does  
control, the evil impulse. Further, when God tests the soul  
and it proves good, there is assurance of favorable  
judgment. The need for divine help is also emphasized.  
One abstains from evil "because the Spirit of God resteth  
upon him" (Test. Ben. 8:12). Further, in the age to come  
God himself will transform the nation so that she will do  
his will better than the angels (Test. Dan 6:3-6).

Thus, the psychology and theology of Test. XII  
Patr. are complex. The power of evil is both external and  
internal to human nature. The individual is subject to

powers over which he has no control, but he sets the direction of his life by his choices. Again, he has assurance of life only through the mediation and help of God, but he must study the law and obey its commands. The author does not see idolatry as a real problem, but he constantly warns of the sins of the flesh (especially fornication, greed, and hatred). Thus, he certainly has the temptations of the Jew in mind. It is to avoid such sins that one must resist the evil impulse, obey the law, and encourage the good impulse. Retribution is directly related to one's handling of his impulse: "And the Lord rewarded me according to the διαβούλιον of my heart." (Test. Judah 13:8).

#### d. SECOND ESDRAS<sup>1</sup>

Second Esdras has long attracted the attention of scholars because its pessimism is more pronounced than that of other Jewish documents, and its hope of justification

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<sup>1</sup>The date of 2 Esd. is difficult to determine. Chs. 1f. and 15f. are clearly Christian additions. The remaining portion (chs. 3-14) begins (3:1f.) with the note that Salathiel received his vision in the thirtieth year after the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon (that is, the fall to Rome in A.D. 70), thus A.D. 100. But this may be figurative (so Eissfeldt). Chs. 11f., however, unmistakably refer to the reigns of Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian (A.D. 69-79, 79-81, 81-96). Box argues for the final redaction of chs. 3-14 being a composition made up of several older visions, but this is disputed (see Rowley). Thus, chs. 3-14 came into their present written form ca. A.D. 100. See G. H. Box, APOT, vol. 2, pp. 542-554; R. E. Brown, Jerome, vol. 2, p. 542; Eissfeldt, OTI, pp. 526f.; H. H. Rowley, The Relevance of Apocalyptic (3rd ed.; New York: Association Press, 1963), pp. 156f.

by the law is dim. The author views the cor malignum<sup>1</sup> as so powerful that even the gift of the law cannot overcome it. Thus, many scholars believe that 2 Esd. is closer in spirit to Paul than any other Jewish document is.

We begin with the statements which describe how Adam's sin brought tragic results into human life: death (3:7), hardships (7:11f.), and the transmission of the evil heart (3:21f.).<sup>2</sup>

Yet thou didst not take away from them [the descendants of Jacob after the giving of the law] their evil heart [cor malignum], so that thy law might bring forth fruit in them. For the first Adam, burdened with an evil heart, transgressed and was overcome, as were also all who were descended from him. Thus the disease became permanent; the law was in the people's heart along with the evil root [cum malignitate radicis], but what was good departed, and the evil remained. (3:20-22)

For a grain of evil seed [granum seminis mali] was sown in Adam's heart from the beginning, and how much ungodliness it has produced until now, and will produce until the time of threshing comes! (4:30)

I answered and said: "O sovereign Lord, I said then and I say now: Blessed are those who are alive and keep thy commandments! But what of those for whom I pray? For who among the living is there that had not sinned, or who among men that has not transgressed thy covenant? And now I see that the world to come

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<sup>1</sup>On the one hand G. H. Box finds the apocalypticist's teaching on the cor malignum the virtual equivalent of the yeser hara in rabbinic literature (pp. xlf.). On the other hand in one point there is a clear deviation from the teaching of the rabbis. Second Esd. holds that the impulse has gained so much strength that no one can keep the law (p. xli), or that the law can aid in the control of the impulse (p. 16, n. t.), The Ezra-Apocalypse (London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, LTD, 1912).

<sup>2</sup>Porter's observation that 2 Esd. does not support the view of an inherited tendency to sin is puzzling. One can hardly, as he has done (pp. 147f.), ignore the plain meaning of such texts as 3:21.

will bring delight to few, but torments to many. For an evil heart has grown up in us, which alienated us from God, and has brought us into corruption and the ways of death, and has shown us the paths of perdition and removed us far from life--and not just a few of us but almost all who have been created!" (7:45-48)

The first order [of the righteous will rejoice at seeing God], because they have striven with great effort to overcome the evil thought [cogitamentum malum] which was formed with them, that it might not lead them astray from life into death. (7:92)

I answered and said, "This is my first and last word, that it would have been better if the earth had not produced Adam, or else, when it had produced him, had restrained him from sinning. For what good is it to all that they live in sorrow now and expect punishment after death? O Adam, what have you done? For though it was you who sinned, the fall was not yours alone, but ours also who are your descendants. For what good is it to us, if an eternal age has been promised to us, but we have done deeds that bring death?" (7:116-119)

A number of observations should be made concerning these passages. First, with the possible exception of 7:92, 2 Esd. does not support sinless perfection. Second Esdras 8:35 states: "For in truth there is no one among those who have been born who has not acted wickedly, and among those who have existed there is no one who has not transgressed" (cf. 7:68). Except for the mercy of God only a few would gain life, in 7:138 one in ten thousand (cf. 7:47; 8:1, 3). In fact, God's willingness to accept the repentants shows his graciousness: "He is gracious to those who turn in repentance to his law: (conversionem faciunt in lege eius, 7:133). Thus, the righteous are those who repent from sin and turn to the law. The author is here within the orbit

of typical Jewish piety. Second, however, the author states that the evil heart has made fulfillment of the law nearly impossible. In distinction from the view that one can obey the law and thus overcome the impulse to evil (as Sir. 15:14 and Test. Asher 3:1), 2 Esd. does not believe that the balance between good and evil is at all even. Rather, the evil heart is so strong that the command is helpless. Second Esd. 3:17ff. particularly suggests this. Here the author narrates the Sinai story. He lauds ironically what God did in giving the law to the sons of Jacob (3:19). But then he complains of what God failed to do, for he did not take away the evil heart (3:20). The latter also was necessary "ut faceret lex tua in eis fructum" (3:20). He does not blame God for human sin on account of this failure. But the dilemma is one among others of the riddle of Israel's history which he finds hard to understand. Second Esd. alludes to the two-ways (7:119) but despairs of the promise that the way of life offers since all have done those deeds which bring death. As Paul in Rom. 7:12, 2 Esd. cannot speak ill of the law. It is immortal and maintains its glory (9:37). Yet it cannot preserve those who have received it yet sinned (9:36).

In distinction from Ben Sir., Test. XII Patr., and Wis., exhortation plays only a minor role in 2 Esd. The author's pessimism and description of human bondage to evil are much more like that of Qumran. Second Esd. does

not, however, use the mythological language of the two spirits but prefers the more psychological term of the evil heart. He does not explain how the evil heart first became a part of human nature, although he indicates that it began with Adam and was transmitted to each of his descendants. Thus, the situation of each human is determined. But the author's analysis of the human dilemma does not arise so much from an attempt to understand human nature as to explain the recent tragedy in Israel (cf. 3:27, the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70). He is dismayed on the basis of the law of retribution and God's justice that this should have occurred, since the sins of the Romans far exceeded those of the Jews (3:28-36).

#### e. APOCALYPSE OF BARUCH

Second Baruch reveals complex thinking with respect to the origin and power of evil. It seems in part to agree with the sentiment in 2 Esd. 3:21f. that with Adam a terrible burden fell on humankind.<sup>1</sup> But the language in 2 Bar. 48:42f. is so cryptic that it is hard to know what the exact relation of Adam to his descendants is supposed to be.

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<sup>1</sup>It is impossible for us to enter into the complex question of the relation of 2 Bar. to 2 Esd. The general opinion is that 2 Bar. depends on 2 Esd. and thus must be dated after it, A.D. 100-120. See Charles, APOT, vol. 2, pp. 476f.; Torrey, p. 124; Brown, Jerome, vol. 2, p. 542; Eissfeldt, OTI, pp. 627-630.

And I answered and said:  
 "O Adam, what hast thou done to all those who  
 are born from thee?  
 And what will be said to the first Eve who  
 hearkened to the serpent?

"For all this multitude are going to corruption,  
 Nor is there any numbering of those whom the fire  
 devours."

It is, however, explicitly stated that each is  
 responsible for his own sin and cannot blame Adam  
 (54:14f., 19).<sup>1</sup> This passage reads like a challenge to  
 those who excuse their sin because of Adam's guilt:

And justly do they perish who have not loved Thy  
 law,  
 And the torment of judgment shall await those who  
 have not submitted themselves to Thy power.  
 For though Adam first sinned  
 And brought untimely death upon all,  
 Yet of those who were born from him  
 Each one of them has prepared for his own soul  
 torment to come,  
 And again each one of them has chosen for himself  
 glories to come.

Adam is not therefore the cause, save only of his  
 own soul,  
 But each of us has been the Adam of his own soul.

The judgment that God will make against the wicked  
 will be just since the wicked have understanding of God's  
 will and yet have disobeyed it (15:5f.; 19:1-3; 51:3-5).

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<sup>1</sup>Louis Genzberg, JE, vol. 2, p. 553 argues that  
 the apparent contradictions in 2 Bar. which have troubled  
 scholars and urged theories of composite authorship (e.g.,  
 Charles, APOT, vol. 2, pp.474-476) are commonplace in  
 rabbinic discussions. The double way of explaining the  
 origin of sin and its results, through Adam or through the  
 individual, does not represent a contradiction which  
 requires composite authorship, according to him.

The wicked cannot argue that they sinned in ignorance. Further, the author(s) believes that there are those who fulfill the law. In his address concerning the respective destinies of the righteous and the wicked (48:1-52:7), the writer comments about those "who have now been justified in my law" (51:3). There is thus in 2 Bar. none of the profound insight into the human dilemma which we saw in 2 Esd. For him the defective will and heart are strictly the individual's responsibility. Adam certainly introduced a sad situation, but he neither can be held responsible for any one's personal sin, nor has the damage been so severe that disobedience is anything but the wrong choice by a free person. If one will, he can obey the law, and he will be granted life for doing so.<sup>1</sup>

#### f. WISDOM OF SOLOMON

Since the Wisdom of Solomon betrays Greek influence, we are not surprised to find that the author believes in the pre-existence of the soul (8:19).<sup>2</sup> But he claims that this soul entered an undefiled body (8:20). He admits that the perishable body weighs down the soul, and the earthly tent burdens the thoughtful mind (9:15), but does he believe that matter is the source of evil? The author, in fact, affirms that the creation is good and that death

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<sup>1</sup>Similarly Martin Reist, IDB, vol. 1, p. 361.

<sup>2</sup>See R. H. Pfeiffer, pp. 328f.; Samuel Holmes, APOT, vol. 1, pp. 531-533; Joseph Reider, pp. 29-38.



has come from ungodly words and deeds (1:14-16):

For he created all things that they might exist,  
 And the generative forces of the world are  
 wholesome,  
 And there is no destructive poison in them,  
 And the dominion of Hades is not on earth,  
 For righteousness is immortal.  
 But ungodly men by their words and deeds  
 summoned death.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, the problem of evil is not in human nature but in moral failure. In two other passages Wis. deals with the origin of evil. The first (2:23f.) probably gives us a midrash on the story of the fall:

For God created man for incorruption.  
 And made him in the image of his own eternity,  
 but through the devil's envy death entered the  
 world,  
 and those who belong to his party experience it.

Here again Wisdom refers to God's intention in creation and the change brought by sin. It is interesting, however, that participation in the death is not automatically the lot of all. Rather, it is experienced by those who belong to his party (οἱ τῆς ἐκείνου μερίδος ὄντες). This suggests that there are two classes in humankind.

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<sup>1</sup>Reider (pp. 57f.) writes of these verses:  
 "The general sense is that the physical world in which men are placed is perfect and without blemish, but that the moral evil within men poisons everything."

<sup>2</sup>The identification of the devil and the serpent of Gen. 3 is suggested in 1 En. 69:6 and Rev. 20:2. See Reider, p. 70.

The author also develops the notion that idolatry is the cause of sin.<sup>1</sup> Pagan idolatry is discussed in chapters 13-15 which concern the folly, the origin, and the characteristics of the cultus. Two verses spell out the viewpoint that idolatry leads to other evils (14:12, 27):

For the idea of making idols was the beginning of fornication and the invention of them was the corruption of life.

For the worship of idols not to be named is the beginning and cause and end of every evil.

The sin of idolatry involves a dishonoring of God (Wis. 14:30, "They thought wickedly of God in devoting themselves to idols."), and this catapults the idolater into all types of evil.

Afterward it was not enough for them to err about the knowledge of God, but they live in great strife due to ignorance, and they call such great evils peace. (14:22)

From idolatry flow the vices of the pagan cultus and life: child sacrifice, frenzied revels (14:23), marital infidelity, sexual perversity (14:24-26), violence (14:24f.), and falsehood (14:25, 28f.).

According to the author, the life abandoned to idolatry and evil derives from false reasoning. The words λογισμός and ἐπίνοια have an evil tone in Wis. Sol.<sup>2</sup> The ungodly (apostate Jews) who reject the ethical code of Alexandrian Judaism because they believe life to be too

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<sup>1</sup>See above, pp. 36f.

<sup>2</sup>See Hadot, pp. 35-39.

short and sorrowful reason unsoundly (λογισάμενοι οὐκ ὀρθῶς). Only God's intervention can correct the tendency to false reasoning.

For what man can learn the counsel of God?  
 Or who can discern what the Lord wills?  
 For the reasoning [ λογισμοί ] of mortals is worthless,  
 and our designs [ ἐπίνοιαι ] are likely to fail,  
 for a perishable body weighs down the soul,  
 and this earthly tent burdens the thoughtful mind.  
 We can hardly guess at what is on earth,  
 and what is at hand we find with labor;  
 but who has traced out what is in the heavens?  
 Who has learned thy counsel,  
 unless thou hast given wisdom  
 and sent thy Holy Spirit from on high?  
 And thus the paths of those on earth were set right,  
 and men were taught what pleases thee,  
 and were saved by wisdom. (9:13-18)

Here, as in 7:22, σοφία and πνεῦμα are brought into relationship. And 9:18 introduces the historical survey of chs. 10ff,<sup>1</sup> which describes Wisdom as the savior of the ancients. Reason, uninformed by God's Spirit/Wisdom, brought humankind into evil. But God graciously delivered the ancient worthies from the inevitable death to which false reasoning would lead. In this historical sketch from Adam to the Exodus, the author shows how Wisdom guided them, especially the Israelites.

The author, however, also places responsibility on the individual. He says that the necessary change from false reasoning to wisdom is a result of human activity.

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<sup>1</sup>Reider, p. 131.

For they will be made holy who observe holy  
 things in holiness  
 and those who have been taught them will find a  
 defense.  
 Therefore set your desire on my words;  
 long for them and you will be instructed. (6:10f.)

The beginning of wisdom is the most sincere desire  
 for instruction,  
 and concern for instruction is love for her,  
 and love for her is the keeping of her laws,  
 and giving heed to her laws is assurance of  
 immortality,<sup>1</sup>  
 and immortality brings one near to God;  
 So the desire for wisdom leads to a kingdom. (6:17-20)

To obey God's revealed will as the way of salvation, so  
 important in the Jewish tradition, is underlined in our  
 passage. That is, the path to life is not only something  
 to learn, but also something to do. In this respect Wis.  
 Sol. is much closer to traditional Judaism than is often  
 assumed.

One other theme important to Wis. Sol. which must  
 again be mentioned is that of repentance. He teaches that  
 God judges or chastizes to bring to repentance. The  
 Israelites learned and repented while the Egyptians (ch. 11)  
 and the Canaanites (ch. 12) did not. But God's treatment  
 of the Israelites and the pagans was not identical, for  
 he disciplined the Israelites as sons, but the pagans he  
 condemned in wrath.

For when they [the Israelites in the wilderness]  
 were tried, though they were being disciplined  
 in mercy,  
 they learned how the ungodly were tormented when  
 judged in wrath.

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<sup>1</sup>For other means to immortality, see 1:15;  
 8:17; 15:3.

For thou didst test them as a father does in  
warning,  
but thou didst examine the ungodly as a stern king  
does in condemnation (11:9f.).

But thou art merciful to all, for thou canst do  
all things,  
and thou dost overlook men's sins, that they may  
repent. (11:23)

But judging little by little thou gavest them a  
chance to repent,  
though thou wast not unaware that their origin was  
evil  
and their wickedness inborn,  
and that their way of thinking would never change.  
For they were an accursed race from the beginning.  
(12:10-11a)

Through such works thou hast taught thy people  
that the righteous man must be kind,  
and thou has filled thy sons with good hope,  
because thou givest repentance for sins. (12:19)

The third passage is especially important. Superficially there is a contradiction here with 1:12ff. which affirms that all of God's creation is good. But 12:11a is an allusion to the curse of Canaan in Gen. 9:25. Thus, v. 10 is not a reference to the natural human but to the state of the pagan. His ancestors were evil, and thus his origin was evil. Therefore he will not change, even when opportunity to repent is given.<sup>1</sup>

To summarize the views of Wis. Sol. with respect to evil and how it is to be overcome: although matter weighs down the soul, it is not inherently the source of evil since it is a part of God's creation. Death and evil entered originally through the devil's envy in connection with the story of the fall. In the history of the pagan

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<sup>1</sup>See Reider, p. 153.

world, however, all manner of evil began with the introduction of idolatry. There is a progression, then, in the author's mind. Death entered through the devil, and those who belong to him (and practice his works) experience it. In world history the pagan reveals that he does not belong to God by his dishonoring of God in idolatry and his evil life. Idolatry and evil can be explained rationally since the faculty of the pagan or the apostate Jew to know the truth (λογισμὸς) is unsound. But wisdom from God teaches one the truth and sets him on the path of righteousness. In one sense gaining wisdom is an unmerited gift through the Spirit. In another sense it is received when one has longed for her and obeyed her laws. The question of where the initiative lies is not really solved. The clear distinction between the pagan and the true Jew is revealed in repentance. God grants the opportunity for all to repent. The pagan, however, reveals his perverse nature and the justice of God's judgment when he fails to use the educative chastisement. The Jew learns of God's mercy and thereby truly repents of his sin.

#### g. FOURTH MACCABEES

Fourth Maccabees<sup>1</sup> is similar to Wis. Sol. in its understanding of sin and how it is overcome. Evil, our

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<sup>1</sup>Fourth Macc. clearly depends on 2 Macc. Beyond that there is no specific datum which will help with dating. Therefore, dates from the late second century B.C. to the early second century A.D. have been given. The dressing of Hebrew practices in Hellenistic language suggests that it derives from Diaspora, most say from Alexandria, but Antioch

author states in a manner reflecting Stoic influence, can be summed up under the rubric of the passions (πάθη, 1:5). The comprehensive sources of the passions are two: pleasure and pain (1:20-30). The only way to bring these passions under control is by reason, in this document, "pious reason" (εὐσεβῆς λογισμὸς). The author adopts the four virtues of the Stoics: prudence (φρόνησις), courage (ἀνδρεία), justice (δικαιοσύνη), and temperance (σωφροσύνη).<sup>1</sup> The adoption of Stoic motifs, however, does not mean he has moved outside of the sphere of Jewish piety. Rather, the virtues are acquired by the observance of the law. Such is implied in the phrase, "the culture acquired by the law" (1:17, παιδεία τοῦ νόμου).<sup>2</sup> To see how the law and reason work together in his thinking, his discussion of temperance (1:30b-35) gives an examples:

Observe, now, in the first place, that Reason becomes supreme over the passions in virtue of the inhibitory action of temperance. Temperance, I take it, is the repression of the desires; but of the desires some are mental and some physical, and both kinds are clearly controlled by Reason; when we are tempted towards forbidden meats, how do we come to relinquish the pleasures to be derived from them? Is it not that Reason has power to repress

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of Syria has been suggested. See R. E. Brown, *Jerome*, vol. 2, p. 541; Eissfeldt, pp. 614f.; Torrey, 103-106; R. B. Townshend, *APOT*, vol. 2, p. 654.

<sup>1</sup>See the discussion of Townshend, *APOT*, vol. 2, pp. 662-664.

<sup>2</sup>See Hengel, vol. 1, p. 167.

the appetites? In my opinion it is so. Accordingly when we feel a desire to eat water-animals and birds and beasts and meats of every description forbidden to us under the Law, we abstain through the predominance of Reason. For the propensions of our appetites are checked and inhibited by the temperate mind, and all the movements of the body obey the bridle of Reason.

Therefore, the law gives the requirement, and reason provides the power to observe it. Reason, however, does not contradict or anticipate the law. In his narrative the author describes the story of the 2 Macc. 6:18-7:42 about Eleazar, the seven brothers, and their widowed mother. Threatened for not eating unclean meat on command, Eleazar responds to the king (5:16): "We, O Antiochus, having accepted the Divine Law as the Law of our country, do not believe any stronger necessity is laid upon us than that of our obedience to the Law." The principle that reason and self-control are the result of obeying the law is explained in the author's statement of his purpose for writing and his thesis (1:13-17):

Our enquiry, then, is whether the Reason is supreme master over the passions. But we must define what the Reason is and what passion is, and how many forms of passion there are, and whether the Reason is supreme over all of them. Reason I take to be the mind preferring with clear deliberation the life of wisdom. Wisdom I take to be the knowledge of things, divine and human, and their causes. This I take to be the culture acquired under the Law, through which we learn with due reverence the things of God and for our worldly profit the things of man.

Thus we have in 4 Macc. a marriage of Greek rationalization with a conservative code of living. Commandments are observed because they are given in the



divine law. Their statutory character is sufficient to compel obedience. They do not require rationalization to be obligatory. But rationalization inevitably follows the acceptance of the commandments. The anthropology of 4 Macc., however, is more Greek than Jewish. The result of obedience to the Law is the control of the passions, not adherence to covenantal requirements. Thus, the understanding of evil and sin is more Greek, but the understanding of its cure and control is typically Jewish.<sup>1</sup>

#### h. PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA

Philo describes the cause of human sin as both the passions and as ignorance of the truth. His interpretation of the story of Gen. 14 provides an example. The four kings represent the four passions (πάθη) which have inward power (pleasure, desire, fear, and grief), and the five kings correspond to the five senses. Together the passions and senses form the source of corruption in human life (Abr. 236-238). "The nine overlords, the four passions and the five senses, are corruptible and the sources of corruption" (Abr. 244).<sup>2</sup> How are these nine to be overcome? "When reason puts on its panoply of the virtues and the doctrines and the lord which embody them" or when "the truly divine and holy word, whose stronghold is in the virtues . . . comes to the contest and with the help of the mightier

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<sup>1</sup>See C.C. Torrey, p. 104.

<sup>2</sup>On the power of the passions see also Dec. 142-146.

power of God wins an easy victory over the said overlords" (Abr. 243f.).<sup>1</sup> Thus, Philo sees the cure for corruption to be twofold: the inculcation of virtues and knowledge of the truth.

Similarly, Philo speaks of the weak soul ( $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$ ) which is near death because of her many children of passions and vices. When she ceases to produce such children and instead, "receiving the divine seed" bears new forms of virtues, her destiny is hopeful (Praem. 159f.).

Philo characterizes circumcision as "excision of pleasure and all passions, and the putting away of the impious conceit, under which the mind supposed that it was capable of begetting by its own power" (Mig. 92; cf. QE 2:2). Here, again, he understands evil as the passions of the senses. But while circumcision can reflect the excision of sensual passions, the Sabbath "is meant to teach the power of the unoriginate and the non-action of created beings" (Mig. 91), that is, knowledge of spiritual truth.

In one sense, then, the problem of sin arises from the passions of the flesh, but in another the problem is more subtle. Since the mind is that which rules the soul (Op. 69),<sup>2</sup> if one chooses vice rather than virtue, it is because his mind has so directed him. "Mind and reason are

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<sup>1</sup>On the opposition of the reason and the passions see L.A. 116f.; Sac. 80.

<sup>2</sup>On the characteristic of the  $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$  see Som. 2:30-37.

as it were the dwelling-place of vice and virtue, which are by nature constricted to make their abode in them" (Op. 73).<sup>1</sup> In analyzing the account of the creation<sup>2</sup> Philo explains how the human shares in both virtues and vices:

To make those of mixed nature was in one respect proper to Him, in another not so; proper, so far as the better principle which forms an ingredient in them is concerned, alien, in virtue of the contrary and worse principle . . . . When man orders his course aright, when his thoughts and deeds are blameless, God the universal Ruler may be owned as their Source; while others from the number of His subordinates are held responsible for thoughts and deeds of a contrary sort. (Op. 74f.)<sup>3</sup>

Philo is perfectly aware, then, that one does not follow vice simply because of the passions of the flesh. Rather, the mind, with two tendencies, has chosen the way of vice rather than virtue. In agreement with Ben Sira and in distinction from rabbinic thinking, Philo cannot make God the creator of the evil impulse. But it is clear that Philo tends to a Hellenistic understanding of evil. Although the mind must take responsibility for sin, evil manifests itself largely in the passions of the flesh.

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<sup>1</sup>In Conf. 111 Philo shows how the mind can be in charge of an evil person.

<sup>2</sup>It is impossible to give a full discussion of Philo's view of Adam. See the excellent and succinct account by J. W. Earp in Philo, vol. 10, ed. F. H. Colson and Earp (LCL; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1962), pp. 280-286.

<sup>3</sup>Philo accounts here for the first person plural of Gen. 2:7, "Let us make man after our image and likeness."

How is the evil impulse brought under control? Philo describes two ways to the goal of life (to see God). First, there is the "higher mystery," but very few can follow it. Moses and Isaac are the two classic examples. Those of the higher mystery are νόμος ἔμψυχος and do not need discipline and education to achieve their goal.<sup>1</sup>

But the masses follow the way of the "lower mystery." Even ancient worthies had to follow this way. For example, Abraham can serve as a case of how Philo uses a patriarch to provide a model. The story of Abraham's migration begins with him leaving his kinsfolk and country at the bidding of the oracle (Gen. 12:1). Philo explains that it is hardest of all to leave those among whom we were born and have grown up (Abr. 62f.). Yet in doing just that, Abraham showed that he "was one of soul rather than body, for heavenly love overpowered his desire for mortal things" (Abr. 66). In his migration from Chaldea to Haran and Haran to Canaan (Gen. 11:31; 12:5), according to the allegorical interpretation, Abraham was a "virtue-loving soul in its search for the true God" (Abr. 68). Unsatisfied with attributing deity to the heavenly creatures, as the Chaldeans (Abr. 69), when the eye of his soul was opened, "he followed the ray and discerned what he had not beheld before, a charioteer and pilot presiding over the world" (Abr. 70). Here, Philo

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<sup>1</sup>They can, however, be examples or guides of the lower mystery, cf. Mig. 151-154. For a fuller discussion see E. R. Goodenough, By Light, Light: The Mystic Gospel of Hellenistic Judaism (New Haven: Yale University Press,

weaves together the themes of virtue and knowledge in opposition to vice and ignorance.

Another illuminating passage is found in L.A. 3:18ff. where Philo expounds on the story of Jacob leaving Laban (Gen. 31:17ff.):

Now (let us ask) why, as though Jacob were not aware that Laban was a Syrian, does he say "Jacob kept Laban the Syrian in the dark"? In this likewise there is a point not without pertinence. For "Syria" means "Highlands." Jacob, therefore, the mind in training, when he sees passion grovelling low before him, awaits its onset calculating that he will master it by force, but when it is seen to be lofty, stately, weighty, the first to run away is the mind in training, followed by all his belongings, being portions of his discipline, readings, ponderings, acts of worship, and remembrance of noble souls, self-control, discharge of daily duties; he crosses the river of objects of sense, that swamps and drowns the soul under the flood of passions, and, when he has crossed it, sets his face for the lofty high-land, the principle of perfect virtue: "for he set his face towards the mountain of Gilead." The meaning of this name is "migration of witness"; for God caused the soul to migrate from the passions that are represented by Laban, and bore witness to it how greatly to its advantage and benefit its removal was, and led it on away from the evil things that render the soul low and grovelling up to the height and greatness of virtue.

Thus, the ancient narratives with the aid of allegory become illustrations of the values Philo wants his readers to adopt. In one way or another the details reveal how one is to forsake the passions of the flesh and to adopt virtuous characteristics or to reject false and pagan

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1935), pp. 95ff. Goodenough believes that the lower mystery is intended only for the Jew to follow literally. It is explained to the Gentile in order that he can understand it, but he is invited to the higher mystery (pp. 114-116). Goodenough means by this that the Gentile is not expected to keep all the special laws of Israel. When, however, they convert to become Jews, they of course keep the laws.

conceptions of deity and to accept the true and spiritual doctrine of the One God.

Philo saw in the Biblical text the genius of the lawgiver in making his will knowable to the common person. For example, he claims that the order of subjects in the Torah is: (1) creation, (2) history, and (3) legislation.<sup>1</sup> The purpose in following this order is clear. First, it shows that the law of Moses and the law of nature (cf. Abr. 5) do not contradict one another, and that the Creator and Author is the same for both (Mos. 2:48). Second, by giving many examples of the two ways of life, Moses does not arbitrarily impose commands, but he exhorts and illustrates what he later commands (Praem. 2; Decal. 1). There is a sense, in fact, in which the historical is a truer representation of God's will than the legislative.<sup>2</sup> For example, Abr. 3-5 explains:

Since it is necessary to carry out our examination of the law in regular sequence, let us postpone consideration of particular laws, which are, so to speak, copies, and examine first those which are more general and may be called originals of those copies. These are such men as lived good and blameless lives, whose virtues stand permanently recorded in the most holy scriptures, not merely to sound their praises but for the instruction of the reader and as an inducement to him to aspire to the same; for in these men we have laws endowed

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<sup>1</sup>According to Mos. 2:45-48 the order is in two basic parts, the first of which has two subdivisions: (1) history (a) creation and (b) particular persons (2) legislation. In Praem. 1f. the order is (1) creation (2) history (3) legislation (a) general laws and (b) specific laws.

<sup>2</sup>See Goodenough, p. 121.

with life and reason. . . . The first generations before any at all of the particular statutes was set in writing followed the unwritten law with perfect ease, so that one might properly say that the enacted laws are nothing else than memorials of the life of the ancients, preserving to a later generation their actual words and deeds.

The particular laws of Moses, therefore, have universal significance because they correspond precisely to the laws of nature. Philo shows this by establishing the credentials of Moses. If he acted as the true legislator, then his law is binding on all. The true lawgiver "is both king who can command the right and forbid the wrong and just" so that the "king is a living law, and the law is a just king" (Mos. 2:4, 12-65).<sup>1</sup> He also must not only know human things but divine, so he needs to be the chief high priest (Mos. 2:5, 66-186). But it is as a prophet that he really sees beyond that which the mind can reach (Mos. 2:6, 187-287). For Philo, then, Moses contains in his person all the qualities which the lawgiver must have. The event on Sinai was especially important in qualifying Moses as the lawgiver.<sup>2</sup> He did not see God, but he did see the "invisible and immaterial nature" (Mut. 7-10). He became incorporeal since he failed to eat for the forty days (Som. 1:36). Here Moses heard the mystic harmony of virtues and actions (Immut. 23-26). In view of

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<sup>1</sup>See Goodenough, pp. 212-229.

<sup>2</sup>See F.H. Colson, Philo, vol. 6 (LCL; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 605.

his perfect initiation, Moses became the true hierophant and teacher (Gig. 54f.). In the allegory on the Exodus, Moses is seen as the guide for the Gentile as well as the Jew. He leads the soul from the lower bodily mind

to see the Existent if they may, but, if they cannot, to see at any rate his image, the most holy Word, and after the Word its most perfect work of all that our senses know, even this world. (Conf. 88-97)<sup>1</sup>

In summary: Philo of Alexandria understands evil in two forms characteristic of Hellenism, the passions of the flesh and ignorance. The antidote for these was the taming of bodily passions and the acquisition of virtues and the knowledge of truth. But as a faithful Jew, Philo finds the source for this cure in the law. Here was given knowledge of the creation and its Creator, the exemplary lives of ancients which perfectly reflected the laws of the Creator written into the creation where they read them, and the legislation of Moses which corresponded precisely to the law of nature. By study of the law and its allegorical meaning and by careful adherence to the commands one could be led, step by step, toward the goal of the vision of God. Philo also places high value on repentance.<sup>2</sup> He thus expects his readers to improve gradually by control of the passions, enlightening of the mind, and the help of God.

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<sup>1</sup>See Goodenough, Light, pp. 205-207.

<sup>2</sup>See above, pp. 72-77.



## i. RABBINIC LITERATURE

Last in the investigation of the problem of the evil impulse is the rabbis' teaching. In brief, they taught that there are two impulses or inclinations. If one inclines to the good impulse, he does what is right, and the reverse is true for the evil impulse. If the evil impulse is followed without confession and repentance, it will lead to idolatry, apostasy, and finally death. Thus the individual maintains liberty and has to choose which impulse to follow.

The exegetical bases for the yeşerim were the two yodhs in Gen. 2:7 (וייצר, bBer. 61a) and the two beths in Deut. 6:5 (לבוך, Mish. Ber. 9:5). It was standard teaching, however, that there were two impulses. BBer 61a reads:

Our rabbis taught: Man has two kidneys, one of which prompts him to good, the other to evil.

It has been taught: R. Jose the Galilean says, The righteous are swayed by their good inclination, as it says, "My heart is slain within me" [Ps. 109:22]. The wicked are swayed by their evil inclination, as it says, "Transgression speaketh to the wicked, methinks, there is no fear of God before his eyes" [Ps. 36:2]. Average people are swayed by both inclinations, as it says, "Because He standeth at the right hand of the needy, to save him from them that judge his soul" [Ps. 109:31].<sup>1</sup>

The reference from bBer. 61a implies that God was the creator of the evil impulse. In one sense this could

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<sup>1</sup>See also Gen. R. 14:4.

create a theological dilemma. How could God be the source of that which is evil? It was possible, in fact, for the rabbis to declare that God regretted the creation of the evil impulse (Gen. R. 27:4 on Gen. 6:6).<sup>1</sup> But in other statements, although God is acknowledged as the creator of the evil impulse, the question of his being the source of sin is not raised. Rather, there is the simple observation of the human's sad state due to the influence of the evil impulse (Gen. R. 34:10; bKidd. 30b; bBer. 61a). But other statements argue that the evil impulse is useful since certain necessary features of life would never be achieved without it. There would be no children except for sexual desire, no building of homes except for the desire to acquire, and no excellence except for rivalry (Gen. R. 9:7 on Gen. 1:31; Eccl. R. on 3:11). The same impulse which, if unchecked, causes one to sin, is essential for the maintenance of civilization. It is called evil because, if it is solely followed, it will always result in the committing of evil.

The rabbis located the two impulses in various places. They could be located in the kidneys (bBer. 61a) or on the two sides of the human (bBer. 61a; Num. R. 22:9 on Eccl. 10:2). Generally, however, they were located in or identified with the heart (Mish. Ber. 9:5; bBer. 17a;

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Tanhuma ed. Buber, par. 4, cited by Moore, Judaism, vol. 1, p. 480.

Gen. R. 34:10).<sup>1</sup> As such, the inclination was seen as the faculty that determined one's action. A midrash on Num. 15:39 ("not to follow after your own heart and your own eyes") says, "It shows that the eyes follow the heart. Perhaps the heart follows the eyes? But think! Are there not blind who commit all sorts of abominations?"<sup>2</sup> What the heart agreed to do with the impulse issued into a concrete deed. The rabbis understood the psychology of temptation in almost the exact fashion as that found in James 1:14: "Each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire."<sup>3</sup>

While the evil imagination could be identified with the heart or be allied with it in tempting to sin, on the other hand the evil impulse could be a foreign element, an external power, almost a mythological power. In bB.B. 17a Satan (Job 1:7), the evil impulse (Gen. 6:5), and the Angel of death (Job 2:6) were identified. The evil impulse was over all humankind, although he did not have equal control over the righteous and the wicked (see bBer. 61a quoted above). Generally speaking, however, the evil impulse was described psychologically; i.e., it was part of human nature with which one must daily struggle.

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<sup>1</sup>See Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, pp. 21f.

<sup>2</sup>Midrash Sifre on Numbers, par. 115, trans. Paul D. Levertoff (London: SPCK, 1926).

<sup>3</sup>See Moore, vol. 1, pp. 481f.

The impulses become active at different ages. The evil impulse is formed in one at the time of his birth ("Gen. R. 34:10 and bSanh. 91b), but the good impulse becomes active at the Bar Misvah of the youth (Eccl. R. 4:13; 9:15). Thus, the evil impulse has a decided advantage. With this advantage it continually gains strength and daily engages in conflict to defeat the individual. In bKidd. 30b we read:

Our Rabbis taught: The Evil Desire is hard [to bear], since even his Creator called him evil, as it is written, "for the desire of man's heart is evil from his youth" [Gen. 8:21]. Rabbi Isaac said: Man's Evil Desire renews itself daily against him, as it is said "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil everyday" [Gen. 6:5]. And R. Simeon b. Levi said: Man's Evil Desire gathers strength against him daily and seeks to slay him, for it is said, "The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him" [Ps. 37:32]: and were not the Holy One, blessed be He, to help him [man], he would not be able to prevail against him, for it is said, "The Lord will not leave him in his hand" [Ps. 37:33].

The evil impulse is the persistent enemy of the human. Even if it cannot slay him at first, it continues its attacks into old age. R. Joshua b. Levi said: "This one [the Tempter] grows with man from his youth until old age, and yet if he can, he strikes him down even in his seventies or in his eighties" (Gen. R. 54:1).<sup>1</sup> And then at the end, when the evil impulse has succeeded in bringing a

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<sup>1</sup>See Moore, vol. 1, p. 482, who cites from Pesikta, ed. Buber f. 80a-b, which tells of the tragedy of John Hyrcanus who became a Sadducee after he had filled the office of high priest for 80 years. Also cf. Eccl. R. 4:13, bSukkah 52a.

person down, it testifies against him in the world to come (b Sukk. 52b).

Generally speaking, the rabbis taught that the impulse first lured one to sins of the flesh. For one thing it was believed, that during the second temple period the problem of idolatry had been rooted out of Israel (Judith 8:18).<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the evil impulse was frequently connected with sins of the body, especially adultery.<sup>2</sup>

There could, however, be no sins of the flesh without the consent of the soul. Mention was made of the remark in Sifre on Numbers, 115 that the eyes follow the heart. Again, bSanhedrin 91a-b has this parable of the judgment. A blind man and a lame man are both found guilty, although neither was capable of taking the forbidden fruit by himself. They had assisted one another. Even so, the whole man, the soul and the body, is guilty since it is only as a whole person that he can sin.<sup>3</sup>

The evil impulse is not only a Gentile problem. The Jew, also, is in danger of not suppressing the impulse and thus being led into apostasy. Thus, the consequences of the

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Str-B, vol. 3, pp. 111f.; W. Hirsch, Rabbinic Psychology (London: Edward Goldstow, 1947), pp. 216f.

<sup>2</sup>BKidd. 81a and bSukkah 51b-52a describe minute regulations for the protection of sexual purity. In fact, when, R. Amrain, the pious, adjured the temptation, he saw it go forth from him "in the shape of a fiery column (bKidd. 81a). That is, the rabbis believed that a learned, aged, and pious scholar had to struggle with the impulse to sins of the flesh (especially adultery) as a youth did.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. b Sanh. 91a-b and Moore, vol. 1, pp. 468-488.

unchecked impulse can be ultimate danger. For example, bShab. 105b reads:

He who rends his garments in his anger, he who breaks his vessels in his anger, and he who scatters his money in his anger, regard him as an idolater, because such are the wiles of the Tempter. To-day he says to him, "Do this", tomorrow he tells him "Do that", until he bids him "Go and serve idols", and he goes and serves [them].

In this regard, there is a marked difference from Wis. In that document idolatry was described as the first step on the way to a life filled with vice (14:12ff.). But Wis. was describing the pagan. In rabbinic literature, when discussing the Jew, idolatry is the last step and amounts to apostasy.<sup>1</sup> It is the impulse which makes the Jew agree with the Gentile that the requirements of the Torah can be irrational (cf. Sifre Deut. 86a).<sup>2</sup> It can lead him so far from Israel's faith, in fact, that he will deny life beyond the grave and the judgment. Thus he falsely believes that he is secure in death from condemnation (Mish. Ab. 4:22).

This growing power of the evil impulse and the threat it holds to bring about apostasy raised the question why God allowed it to survive at all. The only answer which the rabbis could give was the one already mentioned, for the maintenance of society (cf. bYoma 69b).

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<sup>1</sup>See Büchler, p. 97.

<sup>2</sup>Porter, p. 114. In bYoma 67b it is Satan who convinces the Jew of the irrationality of Israel's special laws, cf. Moore, vol. 1, pl 482.

How was the evil impulse to be controlled according to the rabbis? First, there are a number of statements which simply admonish suppression of the impulse. According to Ben Zoma he is mighty who "subdues his evil nature, as it is written, 'He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city'" (Prov. 16:32 in Mish. Ab. 4:1). And bBer. 5a records the following which sounds like pastoral advice on temptation:

R. Levi b Hama says in the name of R. Simeon b. Lakish: A man should always incite the good impulse in his soul to fight against the evil impulse. For it is written: "Tremble and sin not" [Ps. 4:4]. If he subdues it, well and good. If not, let him study the Torah. For it is written: "Commune with your own heart" [Ex. 24:12]. If he subdues it, well and good. If not, let him recite the Shema. For it is written: "Upon your bed." If he subdues it, well and good. If not, let him remind himself of the day of death. For it is written: "And be still, Selah!"

In the main, this suppression of the evil impulse is achieved by study of the law. For example, bKidd. 30b reads:

The School of R. Ishmael taught: My son, if this repulsive wretch assail thee, lead him to the school house; if he is of stone, he will dissolve; if iron, he will shiver into fragments, for it is said, "Is not my word like as fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh in pieces?" [Jer. 23:29]<sup>1</sup>

In a midrash on Deut. 11:18 ("You shall therefore lay up [we-samtem] these words of mine in your heart") the rabbis read for we-samtem, sam tam, a perfect remedy, and explained

<sup>1</sup>Similarly bSukkah 52b.

it as follows:

This can be compared to a man who struck his son a strong blow, and then put a plaster on his wound, saying to him, "My son! As long as this plaster is on your wound you can eat and drink at will, and bathe in hot or cold water, without fear. But if you remove it, it will break out into sores." Even so did the Holy One, blessed be He, speak unto Israel: "My children! I created the Evil Desire, but I [also] created the Torah, as its antidote; if you occupy yourselves with the Torah, you will not be delivered into his hands; for it is said, 'If thou doest well, shalt thou not be exalted?' [Gen. 4:7]. But if ye do not occupy yourselves with the Torah, ye shall be delivered into his hands, for it is written, 'sin croucheth at the door' [Gen. 4:7]. (bKidd. 30b)

Similar statements are found elsewhere, as bB.B. 16a, "If God created the evil inclination, He also created the Torah as its antidote" (cf. bBer. 5a; Gen. R. 70:8).

At the same time, God's help is necessary in the struggle against the evil impulse. The rabbis encourage the tempted to pray (b Sanh. 64a), and this suggests that divine strength can be gained. According to bBer. 60b the evening prayer includes these words:

And may it be Thy will, O Lord, my God, to habituate me to Thy law and make me cleave to Thy commandments, and to not bring me into sin, or into iniquity, or into temptation, or into contempt, and bend my inclination to be subservient unto Thee, and remove me far from a bad man and a bad companion, and . . . make me cleave to the good inclination and to a good companion.<sup>1</sup>

There is also this portion of the R. Alexandri's prayer

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Str-B, vol. 1, p. 422, who relate this to the petition in the Lord's prayer, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" (Mt. 6:13; cf. Lk. 11:4).



(bBer. 17a):

Sovereign of the Universe, it is known full well to Thee that our will is to perform Thy will, and what prevents us? The yeast in the dough (the evil impulse) and the subjection to the Foreign Powers. May it be Thy will to deliver us from their hand, so that we may return to perform the statutes of Thy will with a perfect heart.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, there is a future hope with respect to the evil impulse. The rabbis believed that in the world to come the impulse would have no power over the righteous since God would slay it (bSukk. 52a).<sup>2</sup> For example, R. Simeon b Yoḥai said of the story in which Moses remonstrated with God after the sin of the golden calf:

Moses never left off praying until God yielded to him. And God said, In this world, because the evil impulse exists in you, ye have sinned against me; but in the world to come I will eradicate it from you, as it is said, 'I will take away the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh' [Ezek. 36:26].<sup>3</sup>

One other item must be mentioned concerning the rabbis' teaching on what one is to do when he yields to the evil impulse. First, Judaism had no conception of sinless

<sup>1</sup>Some other prayers relevant to our subject are in bSukk. 52a; bKidd. 81a. See also Büchler, pp. 309-311; Porter, pp. 129f.; and Schechter, Aspects, pp. 265f., 278-280.

<sup>2</sup>To the righteous it will appear as a towering hill, and they will be amazed that they overcame it. To the wicked it will be as a thread, and they will be ashamed that it overcame them.

<sup>3</sup>Cited in Moore, vol. 1, p. 493 from Tanḥuma, ed. Buber Ki tissa par. 13, end.

perfection for the average person.<sup>1</sup> Second, the emphasis which Judaism gave to repentance must be recalled. No sinner, however grievous his sin, was exempt from the possibility of forgiveness. In fact, repentance was the sine qua non of atonement. While statements can be found which suggest the automatic value of sacrifice on the day of atonement, the rabbinic view saw repentance as essential (cf. Mish. Yoma 8:8, 9; bR. Sh. 16b).<sup>2</sup>

To summarize our brief examination of rabbinic literature: first, the teaching that there are two impulses is widely represented and fundamental. There is, however, considerably more discussion on the evil impulse than on the good. Second, while many of the statements appear to objectify the impulse so that it appears almost as an external power, the doctrine is not used to excuse sin and say that the individual has no control over it, or explain the committing of sin as 2 Esd. Rather, through powerful imagery the rabbis objectified their knowledge of internal struggles and the tools they learned to use in winning their conflicts. Third, Porter's judgment on the purpose of the rabbis' teaching is useful: "The important question to a Jew was not how it came to be, but how men are to master

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Moore, vol. 1, pp. 494f.

<sup>2</sup>Moore, vol. 1, pp.499f., 508.

it, and how God is at the end to destroy it."<sup>1</sup> The rabbis' aim is primarily practical, not speculative. The difficulties which their teaching involve, such as making God the creator of the evil impulse, do not appear insurmountable since he provided a means for the control of the impulse. Fourth, the evil impulse for the Jew is first an attraction to the sins of the flesh, especially adultery. The final end, however, is to idolatry and apostasy. The evil impulse is the internal ally of sin. If it remains unchecked, it will convert a Jew into a pagan. The rabbis are very conscious of the patient way in which the evil impulse would work away at one's strength until it finally conquered. Fifth, means are provided for its control. In the time of temptation there are (1) simple resistance, (2) prayer, and (3) study of the law. Actually, the latter two give strength to the first. Finally, it is taught that in the eschaton God will eradicate the evil impulse.

#### j. CONCLUSIONS

Every form of Judaism which we have considered conceived human nature to be under the influence of an evil impulse, although defined in various ways. This impulse could be the external (mythological) or internal (psychological) influence which caused one to sin. In the

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<sup>1</sup>Porter, p. 123.

deed-consequence schema it is the predisposition which leads to ultimate death:

evil impulse-sin (as transgression)-judgment-death

The various descriptions of the evil impulse reflected the cultural and historical milieu from which the document derived, the strength the impulse was supposed to have, and how it was to be mastered.

In Ben Sira of Palestinian Judaism, the impulse, although inclined to evil, is still within the individual's control, so much so that the term yeşer can sometimes signify the faculty of choice. Here, optimism concerning human action prevails, and admonition of each to follow wisdom and the law in order to gain life is simply stated. But such admonition is stated within the context of Israel's election, acknowledgement of sin and the consequent need for repentance, and the promise of forgiveness.

In the documents of Qumran, determinism and pessimism become pronounced. The sectaries, who believe themselves as those of Israel who alone are faithful to God, declare that there is a division within humankind, and the division is manifested by the works done. These works indicate which spirit rules the individual. Further, this division is determined by God. Thus, those within the community know themselves as the objects of God's electing grace. But even over them the spirit of evil exercises influence so that, during the present aeon, they also sin. Thus, their

ultimate salvation also will be a divine accomplishment. This last element might seem to set off the covenantors from the rest of Jewish faith. The community of Qumran, however, strongly emphasizes the imperative, for to be secure one must remain faithful to the covenant through the discipline of the community.

The Test. XII Patr. do not seem so sectarian as the Qumran documents, and the situation of the individual does not seem so determined in them. Further, the emphasis on the impulses appears to be more psychologically oriented. But the analysis of the human situation is comparable. Both good and evil people, according to the Testaments, are influenced by two impulses. The distinction among humans is made by noting which impulse generally prevails and if one repents after sinning. There is in these documents, then, an awareness of the complexity of human nature. Through exhortation, the good are admonished to check the evil impulse, encourage the good, obey the law, and so gain their reward.

Second Esdras comes after the disaster of A.D. 70 and discusses why, since the Romans were more sinful than the Jews, they should prevail over them. Thus, the question of theodicy is raised. While reflections of traditional theology are present (Israel's election, the gift of the law, and forgiveness and life for the repentant), the "evil heart" is viewed as so strong that very few will

ever find life. Thus, 2 Esd. describes the psychological influence of evil, and it does so in the most pessimistic terms of all the Jewish documents considered.

In contrast to the pessimism of 2 Esd. about the evil heart derived from Adam, 2 Bar. denies that the influence of evil is sufficient to compel the individual to sin. Rather, each is responsible for his own sin, because he acts out of free choice. And one can obey the law if he will and thereby be justified.

Wis. Sol. derives from a Greek atmosphere where the problem of the human is described as "false reasoning." Such false reasoning afflicts apostate Jews, but more generally pagans whose idolatry leads them to all manner of vice. The way to gain life, then, is through wisdom which is gained by God's free gift of the Spirit or by aspiring and longing for her. The Jews are those who know God and have received his wisdom. Hence, although they may sin, there is for them effective opportunity for repentance through educative punishment. On the other hand, while opportunity is granted for the pagans to repent, they do not use it.

Fourth Macc. describes the influence of evil as the power of the passions which is cured by "pious reason," "the culture gained by the law." Though the dilemma of humankind is described in Stoic fashion, the solution is that of faithfully remaining within Jewish piety.

Philo combines two themes of Hellenistic Judaism which were found in Wis. Sol. and 4 Macc. The source of evil influence is both the passions and false use of the mind. And the cure is knowledge of the truth and the inculcation of virtues, achieved for most people through obedience to the law. For the laws of creation and the laws of Moses come from the same author. Further, Philo places high value upon repentance and reformation.

In their teaching, the rabbis emphasized both the influence of the evil impulse and the freedom of the individual to master it. But mastery could come only through the practice of a specific piety: restraint, prayer, and study of the law. If one failed to master the evil impulse, he could be led eventually into apostasy and death.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS AND PROBLEMS

Jews distinguished themselves from Gentiles by pointing to the failures of paganism (idolatry and sexual perversion). Such failures were inexcusable since God made himself known through creation and his will was also known to the Gentile world (cf. Noachic law.)

But the Jew was also distinguished from the Gentile in another respect; he was a member of the elect. Through the patriarchs, God had chosen Israel; and through the revelation of the Torah, he had made his will known. Israel

was God's people; and, as long as one remained within the covenant, he was guaranteed life. Remaining in the covenant also involved God's faithfulness to Israel, in spite of sin. For through educative punishment, God led the errant to repentance with the promise of forgiveness.

The teaching on retribution was also involved in this matter. God punishes sin and rewards righteousness. But such teaching does not imply that in Judaism there was no place for divine grace. Nor does the emphasis on the teaching of Israel's election suggest that Judaism was morally irresponsible. The destiny of the individual (punishment or reward) is the legitimate result of his deed. There was a complex and interlocking system of grace and works. First, through election the Jew was within the orbit of salvation. And election did not result from individual merit. Second, through the law God had given Israel knowledge of his will. Third, there was forgiveness and atonement for one who sinned but was repentant. Fourth, the only way one put himself outside of the orbit of salvation was through apostasy (except in 2 Esd. which at points taught a perfectionistic ethic).

The relevance of the special privileges of the Jew with respect to the Gentile is by no means simple. While many felt that the Gentiles had to convert fully (to become proselytes), others were satisfied with only partial conversion (to become God-fearers). Nevertheless, there



was an advantage to the Jews, and the arguments in favor of full conversion convinced many Gentiles.

The problem of sin must be understood, as far as Judaism is concerned, within the context of the covenant. All forms of Judaism which we have examined dealt with both sins as transgressions and the impulse to evil. There were variations in the views on the nature of the evil impulse and its strength. The differences between the documents are to be expected in view of the historical and cultural milieux from which they arise. But the presentations have fundamental similarities: there is a predisposition to transgress God's will; and, if this remains unchecked, one will apostatize. As far as the possession of an evil impulse is concerned, the Jew cannot be distinguished from the Gentile. The impulse to evil is a human problem. Nor is the fact of sin as transgression peculiar to the Gentile. The Jew also confesses that he can be influenced to evil so that he transgresses (although not by idolatry and in many cases by sexual perversion).

The difference between the Jew and the Gentile is that the Jew lives within the covenant. He both enjoys election and the promises of God, and he also knows the law through whose guidance he can remain in relationship with God. The evil impulse can lead him from one sin to another until he might apostatize. It, therefore, presents a serious threat and is the means through which he can be

lost. But transgression, by itself, is not the cause of condemnation. Nor is the evil impulse a sign of spiritual "lostness."<sup>1</sup> There is atonement for sin and mastery of the evil impulse (not total mastery, but sufficient to protect from apostasy and to lead a pious life) if one lives faithfully within the covenant.

It is clear, then, that in dealing with Jewish opposition to his Gospel the problems which Paul faces are considerably more complex than is often recognized. He must deal first and foremost with the election of Israel and the implications of this election. He must indicate not only how the Jew sins and is subject to the influence of sin, but how the covenant does not solve the problems of sins and sin. He must also show how election and the possession of the law do not provide the context within which salvation is guaranteed.

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<sup>1</sup>I agree, for the most part, with E. P. Sanders' discussion of this problem in Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977). He writes in this regard (pp. 278f.), including the covenantors of Qumran: "Although there is a sphere in which sin is dominant (the sphere outside the covenant), the terminology which states man's plight and the solution to it is not that he is 'in' sin and is transferred 'from it,' but that he sins and is forgiven for it and cleansed from it. The plight from which one is saved by forgiveness and cleansing is not that one is 'in sin' in the Pauline sense, but that one has transgressed the covenant." Cf. also pp. 273-282, 546f. The one document which seems to differ, that is, in which the covenant plays a less decisive role with respect to the power of sin and transgressions is 2 Esd. (p. 418). I do not think, however, that Sanders has sufficiently appreciated the statements in the various Jewish documents which deal with the problem of the evil impulse, the role it plays in leading to transgressions and apostasy, and the way in which it is to be mastered.

## CHAPTER II

### PAUL'S ARGUMENT IN ROMANS 1:18-3:20

The first chapter examined Jewish views relevant to the motifs found in Romans 1:18-3:20. The purpose was to show not only that Paul deals with common themes but to ask how these themes relate to one another within Judaism. Thus, how do such motifs as election and retribution function within the Jewish community? The conclusion was that the themes not only are related to one another but that such relationships are fundamental to their function in Judaism.

This chapter purposes to raise similar questions of Romans 1:18-3:20. Is Paul's logic consistent, unified, and deliberate? Or is Paul raising a series of motifs which are not closely related? It also purposes to ask whether the Romans' argument actually deals with Jewish motifs not only individually but also in their relationships. To put the question in another form: does the argument of Romans 1:18-3:20 reflect the character of actual controversy with Judaism, or is its Jewish character essentially a heritage which Paul has integrated into his Christian theology in systematic form?

The best way to answer these questions is to follow Paul's argument, section by section, asking the proper questions: how do the motifs in the passage compare with their form in Jewish documents? Is Paul sensitive to related themes which the Jew would have considered relevant? Precisely where does Paul agree or disagree with Judaism?

#### 1. THE SETTING OF ROMANS 1:18-32

Many scholars have observed that in Rom. 1:18-32 Paul employs language common to other Jewish documents. The language is also evident in Acts 14:15ff. and 17:22ff.<sup>1</sup> Both passages from Acts report Paul preaching to a pagan audience. In the former he challenges those of Lycaonian Lystra to turn from idolatry to worship the Creator, the living God, who has not left himself without witness, providentially caring for them in the past (14:15-17). Acts 17 tells of Paul's encounter with Epicurean and Stoic philosophers in Athens. His argument here is more elaborate than that in ch. 14. Pagan idolatry arises from ignorance (17:22f.). But the Creator does not depend upon sanctuaries or gifts of his devotees (vs. 24-25a), indeed, he is the author and director of human life (vs. 25b-26) and intends that men should seek and find him with whom they have a spiritual kinship (vs. 27f.). Paul quotes Gentile poets to

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. the recent article of H. P. Owen, "The Scope of Natural Revelation in Rom. 1 and Acts 17," NTS, 5 (1958/9), pp. 133-144.

support this last point (Epimenides of Crete and Aratus of Cilicia).<sup>1</sup> God has overlooked sins of former times but now commands repentance in preparation for the judgment to be executed by the resurrected One (vs. 30f.). The problem whether the speeches of Acts represent Paul's language or are merely reconstructions by the author need not detain us,<sup>2</sup> for the central motif found in the Jewish documents reappears: paganism is inexcusable since God has provided witness for himself in creation. In Acts 17, however, Paul accounts for idolatry on the basis of Gentile ignorance.

The attempt to prove Paul's dependence upon a particular Jewish document was made first by Eichhorn.<sup>3</sup> He offered the view that Paul's thought depended upon Wisdom but the language was different. Gunkel overturned this thesis by stating that, while the form and language of Paul showed dependence on Wis., the thought was

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<sup>1</sup>See the information on this in F. F. Bruce, Commentary on the Book of the Acts (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1955), pp. 359f.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. the discussion of this by Eduard Schweizer, "Concerning the Speeches in Acts," Studies in Luke-Acts, ed. Leander E. Keck and J. Louis Martyn (Essays presented in honor of Paul Schubert; Nashville and New York: Abingdon Press, 1966), pp. 208-216 and the articles to which he refers in notes 1 and 25; Ernst Haenchen, The Acts of the Apostles, trans. R. McL. Wilson (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1971), ad loc.

<sup>3</sup>J. G. Eichhorn, Einleitung in die apokryphischen Schriften des Alten Testaments (Leipzig: Weidmann, 1795), pp. 202f.

different.<sup>1</sup> Grafe then made the most vigorous attempt to prove indisputably Paul's use of Wis.<sup>2</sup>

Grafe's thesis met with varying reactions. Sanday and Headlam were convinced and, in fact, found additional evidence to support his viewpoint. They concluded:<sup>3</sup>

While on the one hand there can be no question of direct quotation, on the other hand the resemblance is so strong both as to the main arguments . . . and in the details of thought and to some extent of expressions as to make it clear that at some time in his life St. Paul must have bestowed upon the Book of Wisdom a considerable amount of study.

Holmes agreed with Sanday-Headlam and in even stronger language said, "It seems perverse to deny connexion."<sup>4</sup> Holmes was prepared also to extend the parallels of Wis. and Romans into Rom. 2.

Focke, however, challenged the opinion of Grafe. He argued that the relationship between Paul and Wis. cannot be direct, since there are too many differences.<sup>5</sup> At the points where they are similar, we must posit a

<sup>1</sup>H. Gunkel, Die Wirkungen des heiligen Geistes (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprechts Verlag, 1888), p. 86.

<sup>2</sup>Eduard Grafe, "Das Verhältnis der paulinischen Schriften zur Sapientia Salomonis," Theologische Abhandlungen (Carl von Weizacker zum 70. Geburtstag gewidmet; Freiburg: J. C. B. Mohr, 1892), pp. 260-264.

<sup>3</sup>W. Sanday and A. C. Headlam, The Epistle to the Romans (ICC; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899), pp. 51f.

<sup>4</sup>Samuel Holmes, APOT, vol. 1, p. 526.

<sup>5</sup>Friedrich Focke, Die Entstehung der Weisheit Salomos (FRLANT, 22; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1913), pp. 115-119.

common tradition.<sup>1</sup> Focke suggested that the correct solution was not to find Paul's documentary source, but the tradition from which his thought derives. Even before he wrote, Seeberg and Daxer presented their studies which approached the issue with the same concern: what is the relationship of Rom. 1:18ff. to Jewish catechetical patterns? In their viewpoint, the parallels between Rom. 1:18ff. and the Jewish documents do not show dependence upon this or that document but upon common teaching.<sup>2</sup>

Observing that Paul uses a Jewish catechetical pattern, however, does not explain how that tradition is used. Bornkamm believes that in Rom. 1f. Paul utilizes a pattern established in the Jewish-Hellenistic synagogue of Diaspora in its missionary efforts.<sup>3</sup> He shows how this preaching of the synagogue draws on popular Hellenistic philosophy and the Stoic doctrine of the Logos. Here the deity is identified with the order that pervades the cosmos. Bornkamm finds four points at which this thought finds parallels in Rom. 1:18-32: (1) The creator can be inferred

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<sup>1</sup>Friedrich Focke, p. 123. The history of the treatment of the literary relationship of Paul and Wisdom is discussed thoroughly by C. Larcher, O.P., Études sur le Livre de la Sagesse (Paris: Libraire Lecoffre, 1969), pp. 14-20.

<sup>2</sup>See above, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup>Günther Bornkamm, "Faith and Reason in Paul's Epistles," NTS, 4 (1958/9), pp. 94-97.

from the beauty and order of the world by human reason (cf. Rom. 1:19f.). (2) This knowledge of the creator is not only theoretical but includes knowledge of his will (cf. 1:32). (3) Disobedience, then, is to dishonor God (cf. 1:22ff., 28). (4) In refusing to honor and obey, one is led into idolatry and vice (cf. 1:23ff.).<sup>1</sup> Bornkamm observes, however, that in two crucial points Paul deviates from the apologetics of the Jewish Hellenistic synagogue. First, Rom. 1:18-32 is not an apology but an accusation. Second, Paul does not attempt to enlighten those in ignorance by an argument from "below to above." The problem, as Paul states it, is the suppression of truth and the non-observance of what is known.<sup>2</sup>

Schulz argues that Bornkamm failed to find the proper setting for the form which Paul uses. The form is not Jewish-Wisdom-apologetics, but apocalyptic. This accounts for the fact, already acknowledged by Bornkamm, that Paul accuses rather than gives an apology.<sup>3</sup> In Schulz's thinking, Paul's dependence upon apocalyptic thinking is confirmed especially by his use of the catalogue of vices (vs. 29-31). Such lists, he says, do

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<sup>1</sup>Günther Bornkamm, "The Revelation of God's Wrath (Romans 1-3)," Early Christian Experience, trans. Paul L. Hammer (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1969), pp. 50-52.

<sup>2</sup>Bornkamm, "Revelation," pp. 55-57.

<sup>3</sup>Siegfried Schulz, "Die Anklage in Röm. 1:18-32," TZ, 14 (1958), pp. 165f.



not serve a moralistic purpose (to urge to better behavior) but reflect dualistic thinking. Those who sin are under the power of sin and darkness and cannot be helped.<sup>1</sup> Apocalypticism does not hope to persuade the Gentile to accept the God of Israel but believes that it explains the reason for God's wrath falling on him.<sup>2</sup> The function is internal rather than outward-directed.

Schulz then attempts to establish the setting in which Paul would have found the theologoumena he uses in 1:18-32. Paul's missionary interest came through Hellenistic Christianity which in turn had derived from the synagogues of Diaspora. But the accusations against the wicked had been absorbed into Jewish Christianity from Jewish apocalypticism. The two streams of missionary concern and apocalyptic judgment had merged before Paul in Hellenistic Christianity, and it was here that Paul learned and accepted the theologoumena found in Rom. 1:18-32.<sup>3</sup>

We must now assess the studies on 1:18-32. First, it is impossible to prove Paul's dependence on any specific document. Many of the motifs present in this passage are widely represented in Jewish thought (Wis., Bel and the Dragon, Let. Jer., Sib. Or., Test. XII Patr., Philo, and to

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<sup>1</sup>Schulz, pp. 167f.

<sup>2</sup>Schulz, p. 172.

<sup>3</sup>Schulz, pp. 172f.

some extent in rabbinic literature). Wis. 13-15 might parallel most closely the thought and sequence in Rom. 1:18ff. Perhaps Paul had the outline of Wis. in mind when he wrote, but that cannot be demonstrated.<sup>1</sup> Rather, Paul wrote with the awareness that he was using tradition theologoumena. Second, both Bornkamm and Schulz are correct concerning the situation from which the theologoumena present in Rom. 1:18-32 could have arisen. Hellenistic Judaism spoke especially of the inexcusability and tragedy of pagan idolatry since God was so clearly revealed in nature. Apocalyptic Judaism emphasized God's wrath which would soon break out on those who commit the sins of the pagan world. But a confluence of the streams of apologetics and apocalypticism could occur in Judaism, as is clearly the case in the Sibylline Oracles. For example, book 3:8-41 deals with the foolishness of idolatry in the light of God's revelation in nature and the resulting vices, and 3:46ff. describes the imminent, chaotic end of history by God's judgment. Thus, the theologoumena of both Hellenistic-Jewish-apologetics and Jewish apocalypticism were flexible and could be adapted to the use of a particular situation. When addressing a Gentile audience, the emphasis could be

<sup>1</sup>Paul J. Achtemeier, "St. Paul, Accommodation or Confrontation," (unpublished Th.D. dissertation, Union Theological Seminary, New York, 1957), pp. 125-129, believes that Paul most closely follows Sib. Or. frag. 3:3-31 and book 3:8-41.

that the God of Israel was the true and only God--to whom even creation witnessed. Consequently, to deny or be in ignorance of the God of Israel was to live in foolish idolatry and pagan vice. In times of tension with the surrounding Gentile community, however, the same theologoumena could be used to reinforce the Jews' belief in their unique position, i.e., God had chosen them and they were morally superior. Or again, within the Jewish community the same arguments would be effective in teaching the young or weak, especially to warn those tempted with the allurements of apostasy. It may be that all three situations are reflected in Wis. Sol. In its present form it appears that chs. 1-5 are particularly addressed to Jews and protest the penetration in the Jewish community of pagan ideas.<sup>1</sup> Chs. 13-15, as a whole, ridicule pagan idolatry (cf. 13:8f.) and declare God's well-deserved judgment (cf. 15:18ff.). The argument in 13:1-7, however, is clearly more sympathetic with the pagan's plight and seeks to inform and lead him from nature to the Creator. It may very well contain, in fact, an apologia which in a different setting was used not to show the perversity of the Gentile but to convert him.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Joseph Reider, The Book of Wisdom (Dropsie College Edition. Jewish Apocryphal Literature; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), p. 111. But see Robert Pfeiffer, History of New Testament Times (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1949), p. 326.

<sup>2</sup>Pfeiffer, pp. 342-348, has trouble deciding if the argument in chs. 13-15 contains apologetics or polemics.

It is inadequate, then, to point to a theologoumenon and argue that this reveals the purpose of the document or the way in which the doctrine is used within it. Rather, we must examine its function in context. The situation determines how the doctrine is used. Both Paul and Hellenistic Christianity were familiar with the theologoumena he uses in Rom. 1:18-32 from a variety of settings. It is, in fact, the familiarity with these theologoumena which provides the key to understanding what Paul intends to do with them here. He is not teaching new doctrine but using familiar doctrine to achieve a specific purpose.

## 2. THE MOVEMENT AND CONTENT OF 1:18-32

The beginning and end of the passage are easy enough to determine. Rom. 1:18 forms the introduction to all of 1:18-3:20 with its sweeping language: God's wrath is revealed against all human ungodliness and unrighteousness.<sup>1</sup> The universal note is struck with  $\pi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$  and thus a motif of 1:16 reappears, only this time with reference to the plight of humankind. The apocalyptic theme of God's judgment is presented with the initial clause, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven." Thus, three motifs are introduced: human evil, its universality, and God's judgment of it.

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<sup>1</sup>We will examine below how 1:18-3:20 relates to its context. See pp. 257-261.

V. 32 is a key verse in the movement of Paul's argument. With special reference to the catalogue of vices in vs. 29-31 it concludes the polemic of 1:18-32. But at the same time, it functions as a transitional verse to ch. 2. This we will have to consider at the appropriate point below.

The structure of the movement within 1:19-31 has created controversy. The normal procedure is to divide at the three repetitions of παρέδωκεν . . . ὁ θεός (vs. 24, 26, 28).<sup>1</sup> Klostermann has shown, however, that this method of dividing fails to account for Paul's logic which follows the Jewish schema of ius talionis, crime-judgment-punishment.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the sections on ius talionis are to be divided as follows: vs. 22-24, 25-27, 28-31.<sup>3</sup> This leaves vs. 19-21 which explain how ἄνθρωποι are ἀναπολόγητοι (v. 20). The major theme in v. 18 is the revelation of God's wrath. What does Paul mean by wrath? Dodd<sup>4</sup> argues that in Paul the

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<sup>1</sup>So Otto Michel, Der Brief an die Römer (Meyer; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1955), ad loc.

<sup>2</sup>E. Klostermann, "Die adäquate Vergeltung in Röm. 1:22-31," ZNW, 32 (1933), pp. 2f.

<sup>3</sup>Klostermann, p. 6. He has been followed in this by J. Jeremias, "Zu Röm. 1:22-32," ZNW, 45 (1954), pp. 119-121 and Ernst Käsemann, An die Römer (HNT, 8a; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1973), p. 40. The same analysis was given by M. Hooker, "A Further Note on Romans 1," NTS, 13 (1966/7), pp. 181f. She apparently wrote without any knowledge of the articles by Klostermann and Jeremias.

<sup>4</sup>C. H. Dodd, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans (New York: Ray Long and Richard R. Smith, Inc., 1932), pp. 20-24.

notion of wrath can be misunderstood to suggest that God is personally angry and punishes the sinner. Such an interpretation, he believes, is unacceptable. Rather, the relationship between sin and judgment is that of cause and effect. This argument is supported, he believes, by the fact that while Paul frequently says that God loves, a personal act, he never uses the verb to say that God is angry.<sup>1</sup>

Dodd's thesis has not met with wide approval.<sup>2</sup> For one thing, he ignores the plain meaning of the three occurrences of παρέδωκεν . . . ὁ θεός.<sup>3</sup> The repetition is emphatic and clear. For another, Dodd does not consider the role God plays in retribution according to both the OT and Judaism. While the natural relationship between deed and consequence is not broken, the role of God as guarantor of the consequence and as the judge is important. This is particularly so in apocalypticism.<sup>4</sup> The expression

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<sup>1</sup>The closest parallel to Dodd's view found in Jewish literature is in Arist. 254, "It is necessary to recognize that God rules the whole world in the spirit of kindness and without wrath at all."

<sup>2</sup>Although consider G. H. C. MacGregor, "The Concept of the Wrath of God in the New Testament," NTS, 7 (1961/2), pp. 101-109.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Dodd's comments on p. 29 (1), and Käsemann p. 33.

<sup>4</sup>Scholarship on the whole has decided against Dodd. Cf. C. K. Barrett, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans (New York et al: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1957), p. 33; Käsemann, p. 33, among others.

ὀργὴ θεοῦ retains in Paul the meaning of God's personal judgment.

In the OT God's wrath describes an inward reaction against human sin that finds outward expression in destruction.<sup>1</sup> Especially significant in the development of the apocalyptic use of wrath is the transformation of the day of Yahweh in certain prophetic traditions (Am. 5: 18-20; Isa. 2:6-21; Zeph. 1:15, 18).<sup>2</sup> Also, according to post-biblical literature God's wrath can occur within history (cf. Sir. 44:17; CD 2:21; I En. 89:33) or in the eschaton. "Wrath" becomes a technical term for punishment to be executed at the final judgment. God's wrath is mercifully restrained now (2 Bar. 59:6), but it will finally be unleashed against unrepentant sinners (I En. 62:12; 91:7; Wis. 5:17-23; 2 En. 50:5 A; Sifre Deut. on 32:22; cf. Mt. 3:7; Eph. 5:6; Col. 3:6; I Thess. 1:10).<sup>3</sup> The apocalyptic tradition, in particular, emphasizes that God's delayed punishment of the sinner will be given at the last judgment, whether the term "wrath" occurs or not (e.g. 2 Esd. 7:36ff.). Thus, the wrath of God from heaven in Rom. 1:18 refers to God's personal, eschatological punishment for sin.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. W. Eichrodt, Theology, vol. 1, pp. 258f.

<sup>2</sup>On the entire subject of wrath in the OT see Johannes Fichtner, ThDNT, vol. 5, pp. 395-409.

<sup>3</sup>See other examples cited by G. Stählin and E. Sjöberg in ThDNT, vol. 5, pp. 412-419.

In 1:18, however, there is a special note concerning God's wrath: it is revealed, ἀποκαλύπτεται. The present tense form stands in obvious contrast to the future note in "the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed" of 2:5. What is the proleptic revelation of God's wrath, and what is the relation between the present and future revelation of it? Further, does the proleptic revelation of God's righteousness in the Gospel (1:16f.) contain or oppose the revelation of God's righteousness? These questions cannot be answered until the content of 1:18-3:20 is more thoroughly examined and is thus set in context.

This present revelation of God's wrath counters, as in all Jewish thought, human evil. It is tantalizing to interpret ἀσέβεια and ἀδικία as religious and moral evil respectively (so Schlatter),<sup>1</sup> but it is not demonstrable. The character of the evil against which God's wrath is manifested is defined by the last of the sentence, "of men who in wickedness suppress the truth." Therefore, the root sin is religious, a rebellion against God's truth.<sup>2</sup> Paul describes human rebellion by defining his responsibility in 1:19-21. This is shown in two parallel statements introduced

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<sup>1</sup>See A. Schlatter, Gottes Gerechtigkeit (Stuttgart: Calwer Vereinsbuchhandlung, 1935), pp. 51f. Käsemann is correct that this is far-fetched, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup>See Käsemann, p. 34.



by the emphatic, causal conjunction διότι (vs. 19-20b, v. 21).<sup>1</sup> The first accusation contains only one half of the indictment, that God has revealed his unseen nature, and fails to mention the response to this revelation. The second member of the parallelism (v. 21) contains both the fact of human knowledge of God and the response of dishonor and ingratitude toward him. Both the members of this parallelism, however, set off in bold relief the verdict of 1:20c that ἄνθρωποι are ἀναπολόγητοι.<sup>2</sup>

What is it that humankind has rejected? First, we consider the phrase τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ. In the LXX it can refer both to what is known (Isa. 19:21) and to what is knowable (Gen. 2:9 and probably Sir. 21:7).<sup>3</sup> Most scholars correctly believe that the latter meaning is the one here,<sup>4</sup> since the other meaning would make the word φανερός tautologous.<sup>5</sup> But it is equally clear from the

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. B1-Deb-F, par. 456 (1).

<sup>2</sup>This is so whether εἰς τὸ εἶναι is understood as cause or result. Actually, it is one of those cases where the exact meaning is blurred. Perhaps we can use such a term as "intended result" (!), B1-Deb-F, par. 391 (3).

<sup>3</sup>See AG, p. 163 and Bultmann, ThDNT, vol. 1, pp. 718f.

<sup>4</sup>So e.g. Bultmann, ThDNT, vol. 1, p. 719, and most commentators.

<sup>5</sup>J. Fitzmyer, Jerome Biblical Commentary, ed. Raymond E. Brown, et al., vol. 2 (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1968), p. 296.

context that Paul does not blame them simply for failing to reach possible knowledge of God (the argument from below to above) but for rejecting what was known. Three factors support this: first, what could be known was φανερόν ἐν αὐτοῖς (1:19). Second, it is explicitly stated that they knew God: γινόντες τὸν θεόν (v. 21). Finally, in v. 28 in a comment similar to that in v. 21, Paul says, οὐκ ἔδοκίμασαν τὸν θεόν ἔχειν ἐν ἐπιγνώσει.

This, then, raises a second issue: where is this revelation of God given? In the phrase ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου the word "revelation" does not give the locus but the time from which the revelation has been knowable. The natural world, however, still seems to be the locus of revelation for the following reasons: first, there is a deliberate paradox in Paul's statement that the invisible aspects of God are perceived: τὰ ἄόρατα . . . καθοράται.<sup>1</sup> These invisible aspects are God's eternal power and deity. Second, the place where these aspects of God make contact with human knowledge is τοῖς ποιήμασιν.<sup>2</sup> It is incorrect to suggest that this term refers to God's acts in salvation-

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Michel, Römer (10th ed.), p. 54.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Max Pohlenz, "Paulus und die Stoa," ZNW, 42; (1949), p. 71, who refers to Philo, Mut. 8f. Philo is discussing Moses who could not see the essential nature (ἐκείνου μη πεφυκότος δράσθαι) of the Existent (τὸ ὄν). But he was allowed to see what was behind him (τὸ ὀπίσω μου, Ex. 33:23) since those things after him (μετὰ τὸ ὄν), material or deeds (σωμάτων τε δμοῦ καὶ πραγμάτων) are given to apprehension.

history, for we would have to ask how the Gentiles were supposed to know of them.<sup>1</sup> Paul clearly believes, then, that nature is capable of revealing God's power and deity. If the invisible aspects of God which are inherently imperceptible are made perceptible, they must be made so through the mediation of what is inherently perceptible.

Since Paul, however, does not argue for a deduction of God's existence but uses this revelation to prove the inexcusability of human sin; the goal of his argument is not to persuade but to condemn.<sup>2</sup> Paul does presuppose that God's power and deity can be inferred from what he has made.<sup>3</sup> God's creation of nature was so transparent to Paul that the only way to deny it was to rebel against known truth. Consequently in v. 21, Paul specifically states what the Gentiles have not done. They failed to honor him and thank him as God. This is clearly different from the problem of ignorance as conceived in Wis. Sol. or Acts 17. In Rom. 1:19-21 it is an error of rebellion against God and ingratitude towards him. At the very point where God makes his claims inescapable, even to those who have not

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<sup>1</sup>Against Michel, Römer (10th ed.), p. 54. For parallels with pagan writers see Hans Lietzmann, An die Römer, (3rd ed., HNT, 8; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1928), p. 324.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Bornkamm, "Faith," p. 96.

<sup>3</sup>As J. Behm correctly notes, "The paradox τὰ ἀόρατα . . . καθοράται is removed by νοούμενα," ThDNT, vol. 4, p. 950.

known the history of his dealings with Israel, they have refused to acknowledge his claims.<sup>1</sup> The result of this sin--to dishonor and not to thank God--is to plunge themselves into senseless use of their intellectual faculties (v. 21b).

In 1:22-31 we find three instances of the ius talionis. They are not identical but have some definite points of comparison. It is important to remember that Judaism, by and large, characterized the sin of the pagan world under three cardinal rubrics: idolatry, sexual immorality, and murder or greed.<sup>2</sup>

(1) In the first instances of the ius talionis, idolatry and sexual perversion come into clear view, although from various angles.

Sin: (vs. 22f.) They worshiped idols, substituting for the glory of the immortal God idols made in the likeness of mortal beings.

Judgment: (v. 24) God surrenders them to the lust of their hearts.

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<sup>1</sup>Sanday-Headlam, pp. 39f.; Franz-J. Leenhardt, L'Épître de Saint Paul aux Romains (CNT, 6; Neuchâtel: Delachaux et Niestle, 1957), p. 38, n. 5; Käsemann, pp. 37-39.

<sup>2</sup>See Moore, Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era: The Age of the Tannaim, vol. 1 (New York: Schocken Books, 1971, first published 1927), pp. 466f. and Eduard Schweizer, "Gottes Gerechtigkeit und Lasterkatologe bei Paulus (inkl. Kol un Eph.)," Rechtfertigung, ed. J. Friedrich, (Käsemann Festschrift; Tübingen/Göttingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976), pp. 462f. The last category (murder or greed) deals with social sins and is often accompanied with a catalogue of vices as we will see to be true of Rom. 1:28ff.

Punishment: (v. 24) When the impulses and desires of the heart take control, they dishonor themselves. In rabbinic terms, the "evil impulse" is allowed to rule unchecked. Its most patent manifestation is impurity, sexual perversion. The connection between sexual perversion and idolatry is the same as that in Wis. 14:12f.; Sib. Or. 3:29ff.

(2) Sin: (v. 25) They worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator and thus substituted a lie for the truth about God. Here the practice of the pagan cultus, rather than the articles of it, comes more sharply into view. In a manner typical of Judaism, Paul revolts against this abuse of God and declares a berakhah of God which corresponds to the rabbis' reverential, "The Holy One, blessed be He."<sup>1</sup>

Judgment: (v. 26) God surrenders them to dishonorable passions.

Punishment: (vs. 26f.) Controlled by dishonorable passions they are directed into expressions which are *παρὰ φύσιν*. The common Jewish disgust at homosexual practices of the pagan are transparent in Paul's statement.<sup>2</sup>

(3) The third example of the ius talionis presents some changes. First, the pagan cultus is not mentioned; and second, that to which God surrenders them is not explicitly

<sup>1</sup>Str-B, vol. 3, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup>Str-B, vol. 3, pp. 68-71. But they also cite passages where instances are given of such practices in Israel.

sexual perversion. In fact, in a manner which sets this instance of the ius talionis off from the other two, Paul follows the general statement of the sin with a catalogue of vices.

Sin: (v. 28) They did not see fit to acknowledge God.

The root problem here concerns what Paul means by τὸν θεὸν εἶχειν ἐν ἐπίγνωσει. There is a clear parallel with vs. 19-21 where forms of γνωσ- are used to indicate what has been given to the human. Actually, ἐπίγνωσις of v. 28 clarifies what Paul intended in vs. 19-21. It is not simply the knowledge that the God of Israel is the true, spiritual God, but the consequences of such knowledge. To acknowledge God is to be faithful in worship of him and to obey him.<sup>1</sup> The shift in v. 28 from vs. 22f. and 25, however, is significant since it allows the dishonoring of God to be placed on a broader base than that of concrete manifestations of idolatry.

Judgment: (v. 28) God surrenders them to an unfit mind.

Punishment: (vs. 28-31) There is a clear play on the root δοκιμ-. Because they do not approve (οὐκ ἐδδκιμασαν) to keep God in acknowledgement, they are given a mind without norm (ἀδδκιμον νοον)<sup>2</sup> which issues in practice (ποιεῖν)

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<sup>1</sup>See Bultmann, ThDNT, vol. 1, 00. 704-707.

<sup>2</sup>Michel, Römer (10th ed.), p. 60.

of the unseemly. Bultmann correctly states that *voûs* here corresponds to the frequent OT usage of *לֵב* which refers to both the "intellectual and volitional processes" of the human.<sup>1</sup> The relation between the inner direction of the life and its outward manifestations is explicitly mentioned, as in v. 24, Only here, Paul fails to observe that its activities are those of the flesh (namely, sexual perversion). That is implicit and was probably the immediate inference of the reader. Such a notion is found in Judaism. The phrase *τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα*, which is the negative form of the Stoic characterization of good behavior,<sup>2</sup> is found in 2 Macc. 6:14; 3 Macc. 4:16 referring to pagan idolatry and sexual debauchery. But in Romans 1:29-31, specifically pagan sins are left out. This raises the serious question concerning Paul's purpose in these verses. This problem will be taken up more fully below when we consider the question of whom Paul is speaking in the two passages, 1:18-32 and 2:1ff. At this point, however, it is possible to support our observation by a brief comparison of Wis. Sol. 14:25-27 and Paul. In both Wis. 13f. and Rom. 1:22-31 pagan idolatry

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<sup>1</sup>Bultmann, TNT, vol. 1, p. 221; the quotation is from Eichrodt, Theology, vol. 2, p. 143.

<sup>2</sup>See Heinrich Schlier, ThDNT, vol. 3, pp. 438-440.

leads to vice. And both passages climax in their discussions of paganism when they catalogue the vices.

Wis. 14:25-27: Blood, murder (φόνος), theft, deceit (δδλος), corruption, faithlessness (ἀπιστία), tumult, perjury, confusion over what is good, forgetfulness of favors, pollution of souls, sex perversion, disorder in marriage, adultery, debauchery.

Rom. 1:29-31: Wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice, envy, murder (φόνος), strife, deceit (δδλος), malignity, gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless (ἄσύνθετος), heartless, ruthless.

The catalogues have only two words in common, and there is a clear difference in the type of vices that are being enumerated. In fact, while comparisons can be made with the lists in Hellenistic Judaism,<sup>1</sup> or Stoicism,<sup>2</sup> they do not explain why Paul picked out these particular vices for Rom. 1. Käsemann correctly observes that social vices, not religious ones, predominate.<sup>3</sup> If we are to understand what Paul intends to achieve by using this catalogue, we

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<sup>1</sup>See A. Seeberg, Der Katechismus der Urchristentum (Leipzig: A. Deichert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung Nachf. [Georg Böhme], 1908), pp. 24-40; Siegfried Wibbing, Die Tugend- und Lasterkataloge im Neuen Testament (BZNW, 25; Berlin: Verlag Alfred Töpelmann, 1959); Ehrhard Kamlah, Die Form der katalogischen Paränese im Neuen Testament (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, 7; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1964); Burton Scott Easton, "New Testament Ethical Lists," JBL, 51 (1932), pp. 1-12.

<sup>2</sup>See Fr. M.-J. Lagrange, "Le catalogue des vices dans l'Épître aux Romains (1:28-31)," RB, n. s. 8 (1911), pp. 534-549.

<sup>3</sup>Käsemann, pp. 45f.



must first ask why he emphasizes sins of this kind. That issue we will take up in more detail below.<sup>1</sup>

The conclusion (v. 32) introduces several new elements. First, it states that those whom Paul has been discussing (οἵτινες) know the will of God (ἐπιγινώσκουσιν).<sup>2</sup> We find a clarification of that suggested in vs. 19-21 and v. 28 concerning knowledge. There the issue began with knowledge of God, and it was only implicit that this included obedience to his will. Here it is explicit that in knowing God there is knowledge of his will. The moral tone of this passage is unmistakable: knowledge of God brings with it specific requirement for human behavior.

The second new item concerns the shift from present to future judgment. With the motif of deserving to die (ἀξιολογῆσαι θανάτου) the thought of final judgment is introduced. Those described are swept up in an inescapable current. God surrendered them because of their refusal to honor and thank him into the power of their evil impulses. And the very sins which these impulses bring to expression are those which merit eschatological wrath.

Finally, they not only do, but also approve of others committing, these sins. Why does Paul mention this? First, there is a contrast in this verse to 2:1. Those in

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<sup>1</sup>See below, pp. 177-181.

<sup>2</sup>We will discuss below, p. 199, in connection with 2:14f. exactly what the Gentiles know and how they know it. Here the emphasis is still on the fact that they know.

1:32 know God's decree but approve (συνευδοκέω) this evil behavior. Those in 2:1ff. condemn (κρίνω) it. Paul is discussing, therefore, two types of people whose distinction is not in behavior, but in attitude toward behavior, which deviates from God's will. In the summary statement of 1:32, Paul describes the Gentiles who not only sin against knowledge of God's decree and the consequences of such sin and also those who approve this sinful rebellion.<sup>1</sup>

To summarize 1:18-32: in 1:18 Paul gives a heading for all of 1:18-3:20. God's eschatological wrath is proleptically revealed against human sin which arises from rebellion against truth.

In 1:19-21 Paul applies this judgment to those without special revelation of God in history to show that they are without excuse. God's spiritual nature and power are perceptible in nature, but they have not honored him or thanked him, hence their intellectual confusion.

In 1:22-24 and 25-27 two parallel forms of the doctrine of retribution describe the pagan situation clearly:

idolatry-God surrendered them to lusts-sexual  
perversion

In 1:28-31 there is a more general form of the doctrine of retribution which does not so clearly apply to the pagans:

did not see fit to acknowledge God-God surrendered  
them to a base mind-improper conduct (social vices  
catalogued)

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<sup>1</sup>See below for fuller discussion concerning whom 1:18-32 describes, pp. 165-181.

A conclusion is given in 1:32, although new elements are also introduced. Especially significant are the notions of final punishment (death) and that the class of people Paul now describes approve the evil behavior:

done things against God's decrees- (judgment implied)-death

### 3. THE GENTILE IN 1:18-32 AND THE JEW IN 2:1ff.

We now raise a question fundamental to Paul's arguing as he does in 1:18ff.: to whom does he refer in 1:18-32 and 2:1ff.? If he is talking of the same group in all of 1:18-2:16, why the shift from the third to the second person at 2:1? If he is talking of two different groups, how is the indictment against the first group related to that of the second? Thus, is the thought in 2:1ff. a logical development from 1:18-32 (γάρ), or is it a parallel case? Scholars generally agree that 1:18-32 describes the Gentiles and 2:1ff. the Jew.<sup>1</sup> But there are two basic deviations from this viewpoint: the first is that 1:18-32 describes all of humankind. The second is that 2:1-16 is an attack on homo religiosus.

In discussing the subject of 1:18-32 Hyldahl focuses on Rom. 1:23 ("and exchanged the glory of the immortal God

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<sup>1</sup>So Paul Althaus, Der Brief an die Römer (5th ed., NTD; Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1935), p. 17; Dodd, p. 32; Joseph Huby, Épître aux Romains (Verbum Salutis; Paris, 1940), p. 106, Käsemann, pp. 48f., Michel, Römer (10th ed.), pp. 63f.; Sanday-Headlam, p. 53.

for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles") and discusses the OT passages upon which Paul might have depended. Ps. 106(LXX=105):20 ("They exchanged the glory of God for the image") and Jer. 2:11 ("Has a nation changed its gods . . .? But my people have changed their glory") are generally accepted as giving some background to the verse. For the idols mentioned in Rom. 1:23, a parallel is generally found in Deut. 4:15-18. Hyldahl believes the latter is an error. Rather, he suggests, by drawing on the creation story we can account for Paul's use of ὁμοίωμα and εἰκόν (Gen. 1:26), the models for the idols listed (Gen. 1:20-27),<sup>1</sup> and Paul's statement about the Creator (Rom. 1:25).<sup>2</sup>

M. D. Hooker drew the logical deduction from Hyldahl's observations--the figure behind the apostasy and sin in Rom. 1 is Adam. She put particular weight on the sequence of events which, she said, were similar.<sup>3</sup>

Of Adam it is supremely true that God manifested to him that which can be known of him (v. 19); that from the creation onwards, God's attributes were clearly discernible to him in the things which had been made, and that he was thus without excuse (v. 20). Adam, above and before all men, knew God, but failed to honour him as God, and grew vain in his thinking and allowed his heart to be darkened (v. 21).

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<sup>1</sup>Niels Hyldahl, "A Reminiscence of the Old Testament at Romans 1:23," NTS, 2 (1955/6), pp. 286f.

<sup>2</sup>Hyldahl, p. 288.

<sup>3</sup>M. D. Hooker, "Adam in Romans 1," NTS, 6 (1959/60), pp. 300f.

Adam's fall was the result of his claiming to be wise, he in fact became a fool (v. 22). Thus he not only failed to give glory to God but, according to rabbinic tradition, himself lost the glory of God which was reflected in his face (v. 23). In believing the serpent's lie that his action would not lead to death (Gen. 3:4) he turned his back on the truth of God, and he obeyed, and thus gave his allegiance to a creature, the serpent, rather than to the Creator (v. 25). Adam, certainly, knew God's δικαίωμα (cf. Rom. 5:12-14); by eating the forbidden fruit he not only broke that δικαίωμα, but also consented with the action of Eve, who had already taken the fruit (v. 32).

Of course, there are some superficial differences: Gen. 1-3 says nothing explicitly of idolatry (Rom. 1:23), sexual perversion (Rom. 1:26f.), or general wickedness (Rom 1:29-31). But later stories in Genesis (sexual perversion, 6:1-4; widespread evil, 6:4) and rabbinic and pseudepigraphic documents impute all of these sins to the primal parents.<sup>1</sup> And, just as in 5:12ff., Paul alludes here to the solidarity of everyone to the original parents.

The evidence, however, is not so convincing as Hooker believes. First, while it is true that Jewish tradition read into the Adam and Eve's story that Eve's temptation, for example, was to unchastity,<sup>2</sup> this could be nothing more than an attempt to show that various manifestations of sin could be traced to the original parents of humankind. It does not prove that in every

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<sup>1</sup>Hooker, pp. 302f.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. bSota 9b; bShab. 156a et al. which Hooker lists, p. 301, n. 2.

instance this was done or was even presupposed. The genesis of the same sin could be described without reference to Adam. Wis. 10:1 states that Wisdom protected Adam from transgression and adultery that arose from the pagan cultus (14:24ff.). Further, the absence of idolatry in the Gen. story presents conclusive evidence against Hooker's thesis. The relation of idolatry and sexual perversion in Rom. 1:18-32 follows a Jewish schema of Paul's day with reference specifically to its pagan form, not to a generalized form that could have universal application. This does not deny that there may be echoes of Gen. 1-3 in the language of Rom. 1:18ff., but such echoes cannot demand that Paul is universalizing human sin in every respect.

Käsemann makes a different deduction from the evidence presented by Paul's use of the OT, Ps. 106:20; Jer. 2:11. Both texts are found in accounts of Israel's idolatry in the desert. He suggests, then, that Paul includes Israel's history along with that of the Gentile world, in fact, as the key to understanding all human history.<sup>1</sup> The OT passages referred to above probably do account for Paul's language. But two points must be made against Käsemann's thesis. First, it inverts the Jew's understanding of the relation between ancient Israel's lapses into idolatry and pagan idolatry. Israel's idolatry did not present a model which explained pagan idolatry.

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<sup>1</sup>Käsemann, pp. 41f.

Rather, when she became idolatrous, she was merely following the nations who did not know Yahweh. Second, and more decisive, Judaism in the second commonwealth assumed that the problem of idolatry had been solved.<sup>1</sup> To attempt to bring judgment on the Jew as on the Gentile by mentioning her past lapses into idolatry would have completely failed, since this problem had been solved in the post-exilic period. The most that could be said for Käsemann's view is the following: by alluding to Israel's past idolatry, Paul suggests that she is not as distinct from paganism as she often imagines.

The second argument against the generally accepted view is that 2:lff. does not refer to the Jew in particular but to homo religiosus. Barrett, for example, believes that Paul's use of the form ὁ ἀνοήτως indicates not only the diatribe style, but the wide audience he is addressing. "It is by no means impossible," he writes, "that some of the arguments in Romans first took shape in this way, in the course of debate in the synagogue or market place."<sup>2</sup> Leenhardt also believes that the addressee in 2:lff. is not specifically the Jew. He argues as follows: if Paul went from the Gentile (1:18-32) to the Jew (2:1-11) to the Gentile (2:12-16), the movement of his thought would be broken.

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<sup>1</sup>See above, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup>Barrett, p. 43.

Instead, Paul shows in 2:1ff. the solidarity of the individual with humankind (1:18-32) whose sin he has already condemned with Paul.<sup>1</sup>

The arguments of Barrett and Leenhardt break down, however, when we consider v. 4. Paul's accusation against the critic has two points: his supposed ethical superiority is not well-founded (vs. 1f.), and his reliance on special favor from God is a misunderstanding (vs. 3-5). God's kindness, forbearance, and patience were given to lead him to repentance (v. 4), but the critic has presumed on this grace supposing that he would escape final judgment (v. 3). This is the same as the Jew's belief in particularism. The clear parallel to Wis. 15:1-3 has been observed by more than one scholar.<sup>2</sup>

But thou, our God [ὁ θεὸς ὑμῶν] art kind and true  
 [χρησιτὸς καὶ ἀληθής],  
 patient, and ruling all things in mercy  
 [μακροθύμος . . . ἐλέει].  
 For even if we sin we are thine, knowing thy power;  
 but we will not sin, because we know that we are  
 accounted thine [σοῖ λογιόμεθα].  
 For to know thee is complete righteousness  
 and to know thy power is the root of immortality.

The position which Paul attacks, then, is one which presumes on God's special treatment in judgment. In v. 11 he asserts that there is no προσωποληψία with God. The Jew is not exempt

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<sup>1</sup>Franz-T. Leenhardt, L'Épître aux Romains (Commentaire du Nouveau Testament, 6; Neuchâtel: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1957), pp. 42f.

<sup>2</sup>For example, Nygren, pp. 114-118, correctly observes that the parallels between Wisdom and Paul are decisive proof that Paul is responding to a Jewish viewpoint.



from judgment. He is favored ( $\pi\rho\acute{\omega}\tau\omicron\nu$ ), but first in opportunity for blessing (v. 10) means first for judgment (v.9). Thus, it is the Jew to whom Paul is speaking in Rom. 2:1ff. Since Paul is speaking of the Gentile in 1:18-32 and of the Jew in 2:1ff., what is the relation between the two passages? From 1:18 to 2:16 Paul nowhere specifically mentions a class of people. Rather, scholars have arrived at their opinions only by deduction from the descriptions. The universal note constantly hovers in the background and occasionally comes forward in Paul's argument. To achieve universal condemnation is obviously his goal (cf. 1:18, 2:9f.; 3:4, 9, 12, 19, 20, 22f.). But it totally obscures the movement of the argument to say, as Achtemeier does, that every man is in mind during the whole discussion.<sup>1</sup> And such a viewpoint collapses when considering the shift at 2:1. In 1:18-32 not one example of a second person form appears. But in 2:1-5 fifteen forms show direct address (eight verbs, five pronouns, two nouns in the vocative). Many scholars claim that Paul's style here is that of the diatribe, and that may be true.<sup>2</sup> But this should not cause us to miss the radical shift. While Paul speaks of the Gentiles, he confronts the Jew.

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<sup>1</sup>Paul J. Achtemeier, pp. 129-136.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. almost any recent commentary ad loc.

How does Paul use  $\delta\iota\delta$  in 2:1? The word  $\delta\iota\delta$  is normally used as an inferential particle.<sup>1</sup> But is this the case in 2:1? The views on this matter are the following: (1) Fridrichsen<sup>2</sup> believes that Paul originally wrote  $\delta\iota\varsigma$ , and we have a transcriptional error in our manuscripts. (2) Bultmann<sup>3</sup> suggests that with rearrangement of the verses, the normal use of  $\delta\iota\delta$  can be maintained (thus the original order would be 1:32; 2:2f.; 2:1; 2:4ff.). (3) Lietzmann<sup>4</sup> argues that, since there is no logical connection between 1:32 and 2:1,  $\delta\iota\delta$  is only a transitional conjunction and does not introduce a conclusion. (4) Cranfield<sup>5</sup> says that 1:18-32 deals with humans universally, not Gentiles in particular, and Paul is only narrowing the charge in 2:1ff. against the self-righteous judge. (5) Flückiger<sup>6</sup> claims that Paul begins his discussion of the Jew at 1:32. Consequently, in 2:1 Paul is drawing a conclusion, not bringing a new indictment. (6) Nygren<sup>7</sup> says that the logical use of  $\delta\iota\delta$  must be maintained. Paul is arguing that because

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<sup>1</sup>AG, p. 167.

<sup>2</sup>Anton Fridrichsen, "Quatre conjectures sur le texte du Nouveau Testament," RHPR, 3; (1923), p. 439.

<sup>3</sup>Bultmann, "Glossen im Römerbrief," TLZ, 72; (1947), col. 200. Käsemann, pp. 49f. follows Bultmann.

<sup>4</sup>Hans Lietzmann, pp. 32f.

<sup>5</sup>C. E. B. Cranfield, The Epistle to the Romans, vol. 1 (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975), p. 105.

<sup>6</sup>Felix Flückiger, "Zur Unterscheidung von Heiden und Juden in Rom. 1:18-2:3," TZ, 10; (1954), pp. 155-157.

<sup>7</sup>Anders Nygren, Commentary on Romans, ET (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1949), pp. 114-118.

the Jew commits the same sins as the Gentile; he is "therefore" unprotected against judgment regardless of his election.

Fridrichsen and Lietzmann's suggestions follow from the view that 2:1ff. cannot give a logical conclusion to 1:18-32. While a misspelling could occur or a particle could have weakened value, these suggestions should be accepted only when a more natural use of  $\delta\iota\omicron$  fails. Bultmann's solution has the advantage of retaining the normal, semantic value of the term. Further, there is a sense in which 2:1 could logically follow 2:3. But Bultmann's rearrangement breaks the relation of 2:3 and 2:4, two questions in sequence ( $\tilde{\eta}$ ) which build to the climax of the accusation in 2:5.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the thesis of Bultmann creates a new problem in explaining Paul's logic. Cranfield's suggestion fails since he ignores the clear shift at 2:1 from one group of people to another. Further, 1:18-32 refers to typical Gentile vices.

Flückiger's suggestion is impossible because he also ignores the transition from the third to the second person at 2:1. But one of his observations merits consideration. In 1:18-31 there is no explicit statement that the Gentiles sinned against knowledge of God's commandments but rather against knowledge of God: "For what can be known about God is plain to them" (v. 19), "his invisible nature . . . has been clearly perceived" (v. 20), "for although they knew God"

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<sup>1</sup>So correctly Michel, Römer (10th ed.), p. 74.

(v. 21), and "since they did not see fit to acknowledge God" (v. 28). But in 1:32 it is a sin against knowledge of God's will: "though they knew God's decree." From here onward the problem which Paul discusses is the distinction of knowing but not doing God's will. This distinction is clearly implied in 2:1 where Paul refers to the Jew who judges. In fact, in the act of judging, the Jew condemns himself, since he does the same things. By judging he shows that he also knows God's will.<sup>1</sup>

But there is a difference between the Gentile and the Jew in these two verses. The Gentile knows the will of God, and that those who do such things deserve to die, yet he does them and approves those who do them. The Jew does the same things but does not approve it, since he judges those who do them. R. H. Charles has correctly pointed to the striking parallel of Test. Asher 6:2 to Rom. 1:32: "For they that are double-faced are guilty of a two-fold sin for they both do the evil thing and they have pleasure in them that do it" (καὶ πράσσουσι τὸ κακὸν καὶ συνευδόκουσι τοῖς πρασσοσιν).<sup>2</sup> The author here distinguishes good persons from evil. When the good sin, they immediately repent, since they desire to do well (ἡ ψυχὴ θέλει καλῶς πορευθῆσαι, 1:6). The good, therefore, are weak and fail;

<sup>1</sup>So correctly Barrett, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup>R. H. Charles, The Greek Versions of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908), p. 178 n.6.

but their will is to do the good. The evil, however, do not will differently from that which they do. A comparable, though by no means identical, distinction is maintained between the Gentile and the Jew in 1:32-2:1.

The ground, however, for judgment has shifted. Idolatry, which introduced other sins, was the source of the Gentile's condemnation in 1:22-27. In 1:32ff. the ground for judgment is disobedience to the known will of God. Rom. 1:28ff. thus seems to be a transitional passage.

This relates to the suggestion of Nygren. He believes that Paul rejects the claim that election will protect the Jew from judgment, since the Jew commits the same sins. Nygren does not really deal with the problem of which sins are the "same sins." Therefore, we must consider this before we can conclude the discussion of the meaning of  $\delta\iota\omicron$  at 2:1.

Some hold the view that Paul is here speaking out against judgmentalism. Thus, he does not castigate moral failure but the pride of the homo religiosus. For example, Barrett writes:<sup>1</sup>

The judge is without excuse if he does wrong, because ex hypothesi he knows the law--he of all men cannot plead ignorance. In fact, says Paul, he does the same thing as the man he judges. This cannot mean that the critic also practices homosexual perversions and the like. The moral purity of the Jews was their legitimate boast, and moral philosophers as Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius may have been prigs but were certainly not hypocrites. Paul's point is that in the very

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<sup>1</sup>Barrett, pp. 43f.

act of judging (ἐν ᾧ κρίνεις) the judge is involved in the same conduct as the man he condemns. Behind all the sins of 1:29ff. lies the sin of idolatry, which reveals man's ambition to put himself in the place of God and so to be his own Lord. But this is precisely what the judge does; when he assumes the right to condemn his fellow-creatures.

The connection Barrett draws between judgmentalism and idolatry may be true, but is Paul making such a connection here? This viewpoint cannot stand for three reasons: first, Paul is making a moral argument and condemning the Jew for being a hypocrite (cf. Jesus' remarks in Mt. 7:1; Lk. 6:37).<sup>1</sup> This is shown unmistakably by the repeated emphasis on deed (πρασσω-, ποιε-, and εργ-) in 2:1-16 and excludes any attempt to absorb the moral character of Paul's argument into a condemnation of religious pride.<sup>2</sup> Second, Barrett obscures the issue when he says that if Paul accuses them of committing the same sins, he is referring to sexual perversion. On that mark Paul would have missed. But it remains to be asked what Paul means by the same sins. Finally, v. 2 explicitly indicates that Paul agrees with the Jew's judgment, "We know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who do such things."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See Michel, Römer, (10th ed.), p. 65.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Ulrich Wilckens, "Was heisst Paulus: 'Aus Werken des Gesetzes wird kein Mensch gerecht'?", Evang. Katol. Kommentar zum N. Test., Vorarbeiten I (Zürich: Benziger, 1969), pp. 54f.

<sup>3</sup>Käsemann, p. 50.

The next question concerns the sins which Paul says that the Jews have done. The weight of his argument rests on the validity of his charge. Obviously, he is referring to Gentile sins which he has previously enumerated, but does he mean all or part of them?

The relative pronouns from v. 1 (αὐτά) and v. 3 (τοιαῦτα) refer to those sins of 1:32 which merited death since 1:32 and 2:1 give parallel cases of the Gentiles' and Jews' knowing but not doing God's will. But in 1:32 there is also a relative pronoun. As noted earlier, in the period of the second commonwealth Judaism believed idolatry had been rooted out, and the same applies to sexual perversion (cf. Sib. Or. 3:594-596; Arist. 152; but not adultery).<sup>1</sup> Thus, the entire list of items in 1:19-32 could not apply. A Jew who committed these sins by definition apostatized.

But the matter is different in the catalogue of vices in vs. 29-31. Note that the sins of the catalogue are generally abstract and not concrete. A comparison of this catalogue with others will support this.<sup>2</sup>

Wis. 14:25f.: Blood, murder, theft, deceit, corruption, faithlessness, tumult, perjury, confusion over what is good, forgetfulness of favors, pollution of souls, sex perversion, disorder in marriage, adultery, debauchery.

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<sup>1</sup>See Str-B, vol. 3, pp. 70-74, for many references; also Achtemeier, pp. 101-110.

<sup>2</sup>This was pointed out by B. S. Easton, "New Testament Ethical Lists," JBL, 51; (1932), pp. 3f.

2 Enoch 10:4-6: Child-corruption, magic-making, enchantments, witchcrafts, boasters of wicked deeds, stealing, calumnies, envy, rancor, fornication, murder, stealing from the poor to become rich, injuring another's goods, depriving the needy of food and clothing, idolaters, builders of idols.

I Cor. 6:9f.: immoral, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers.

Gal. 5:19-21: immorality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing.

Col. 3:5, 8: immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, covetousness (which is idolatry), anger, wrath, malice, slander, foul talk.

I Tim. 1:9f.: lawless, disobedient, ungodly, sinners, unholy, profane, murderers of fathers and mothers, immoral, sodomites, kidnappers, liars, perjurers.

I Tim. 6:4f.: conceited, know-nothings, craving for controversy, producers of envy, dissension, slander, suspicious, wrangling among the depraved, bereft of truth.

2 Tim. 3:2-4: lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, inhuman, implacable, slanderers, profligate, fierce, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasures.

I Pet. 4:3: licentiousness, passions, drunkenness, revels, carousing, idolatry.

Rev. 9:21: murders, sorceries, immorality, thefts.

Rev. 21:8: cowardly, faithless, polluted, murderers, fornicators, sorcerers, idolaters, liars.

Rev. 22:15: dogs, sorcerers, fornicators, murderers, idolaters, those who love and do falsehood.

IQS 4:9-12: cupidity, slackness in serving righteousness, impiety, falsehood, pride, haughtiness, falsity, cruelty, wickedness, impatience, folly, insolence, deeds done in lust, defilement, blasphemy, stubbornness, and malignant cunning.



Rom. 1:29-31: wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice, envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity, gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

Of the three Jewish documents, IQS 4:9-12 clearly has a special character since the Gentile vices of idolatry and sexual perversion are not present in it. This indicates that the community of Qumran stood against the religious establishment of Judaism as much as it stood against the Gentile world. Consequently, it spiritualized the sins which revealed the spirit of perversity. A similar tendency to spiritualization is found in Col. 3:5, 8<sup>1</sup> and the Pastorals comment about those who would be troublesome within the Church (especially I Tim. 6:4f.). In 2 Enoch 10:4-6; I Cor. 6:9f.; Gal. 5:19-21 I Pet. 4:3; Rev. 9:21; 21:8; 22:15 the apocalyptic motif of coming judgment against typically Gentile vices prevails. This is spelled out in I Pet. 4:3-5:

Let the time that is past suffice for doing what the Gentiles like to do, living in. . . . They are surprised that you do not now join them in the same wild profligacy, and they abuse you; but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

The catalogue of vices in those documents where the eschatological judgment is emphatic shows that Israel (for

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. especially, "covetousness, which is idolatry!" See Easton, p. 6, who remarks that Paul was citing a catalogue which had "covetousness and idolatry" but modified it since idolatry, as such, was not a problem for the Jew.

the most part) is righteous and the Gentile world is evil, and that the judgment of God will fall on the Gentiles for this evil. Consequently, the vices which Paul catalogues in Rom. 1:29-31 are not, except for murder, the gross acts of the Gentile world, but sins of attitude and social divisiveness. A comparison of this catalogue with the two others from Paul's chief letters (I Cor. 6:9f; Gal. 5:19-21), written to Gentile Christians, is telling. In these two, but absent from Rom. 1, are idolatry, sexual perversion, drunkenness. But in Rom. 1:29-31 and absent from the others are such sins as malice, deceit, haughtiness, faithlessness, heartlessness. There is a good deal of overlapping, but the general character of each of the lists reveals that Rom. 1:29-31 is aiming at a special purpose. Thus, Easton is correct: "Paul, who is about to castigate the Jews as relentlessly as he does the Greeks, may deliberately have chosen moral defects acknowledgedly common to all mankind."<sup>1</sup>

To summarize our investigation of the relation between 1:18-32 and 2:1ff.: the majority of the scholars are correct: 1:18-32 deals with Gentiles and 2:1ff. with the Jews. The specific sins of the Gentiles, however, are

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<sup>1</sup>Easton, p. 3. Lagrange, pp. 547f., observes the same characteristics of the catalogue in Rom. 1:29-31. Only he believes that Paul addresses the Romans who are proud that they unite the world in peace. Paul, according to him, wants to show that Gentile mores destroy stability and social order. Anton Fridrichsen shows that four of the vices have to do with family relationships: disobedient to parents, foolish (ἄσυνετούς), self-willed (ἄσυνθέτους) and loveless, "Ἀσύνθετος," ConNeot, 9; (1944), pp. 47f.

enumerated in 1:19-27. The catalogue of vices in 1:29-31 could also apply to the Jews since it does not include the specifically Gentile vices of idolatry and sexual perversion and does include sins of a more social character. And the word  $\delta\iota\omicron$  functions as an inferential conjunction. The argument is as follows:

Premise: Judgment falls on those who sin against God's will (1:32; 2:1.).

Conclusion 1: Gentiles commit sins and thus merit God's wrath (1:32)

Conclusion 2: Jews commit the same sins and "therefore" are condemned (2:1).

#### 4. THE JEW'S MORAL FAILURE, 2:1-5

In this section Paul places the Jew under the same judgment which the Jew makes against the Gentile. The Jew therefore is also without excuse (2:1). The entire argument turns on Paul's charge of what the Jew does. Thus, the emphasis falls on performance,<sup>1</sup> not on condition. The Jew is not simply a sinner but he sins. Paul works out consistently the implications of this fact in the steps which lead to the ius talionis of 2:6-10.

In 2:1 the Jew condemns the Gentile because he sins, while he knows God's will. The Gentile may not possess the full knowledge of the Torah but that does not excuse him.

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<sup>1</sup>Michel, Römer, (12th ed.), p. 74.

The Jew, however, is also condemned and without excuse. Knowledge of God's will makes one responsible for its performance.

In v. 2 Paul strengthens his argument against the Jew.<sup>1</sup> God's judgment *κατὰ ἀλήθειαν* falls on those who do such things.<sup>2</sup>

One part of the accusation in v. 3 is identical to that of v. 1: the judge does the same things which he condemns. But Paul then goes on to claim that the Jew who judges the Gentile presumes that he will escape God's eschatological judgment. This is an inference on Paul's part. Some Jewish traditions state that the sinner will not escape (cf. I En. 52:7; 102:1; Ps. Sol. 15:8), and Paul identifies the Jew with the sinner. John similarly criticizes the Pharisees and Sadducees in Mt. 3:7-10(=Lk. 3:7-9).<sup>3</sup> There the question is raised whether they expect to flee (*φυγεῖν*) from the coming wrath. And the false presumption of safety is based on the privilege of being Abraham's children. Both John and Paul undercut the sense of safety. Only John goes on to say that there is safety only for those who bring forth works worthy of repentance.

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<sup>1</sup>Michel, Römer, (12th ed.), p. 74.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. 2 Esd. 7:32; Mish. Aboth 3:16; and others in Str-B, vol. 3, p. 76.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Michel, Römer, (12th ed.), p. 65.

In v. 4, Paul alludes to Jewish privilege based on God's previous treatment of the Jew. It was observed above<sup>1</sup> that there is a complex relation between the teaching on retribution and that on election of the Jew. Apparently some thought that election guaranteed a share in the world to come regardless of behavior, as long as one did not apostatize. But this was not the only opinion held in Judaism. Some also believed that for a Gentile to share in the world to come he must become a proselyte. Others thought that adherence to the Adamic or Noachic laws was sufficient. The differences in opinion, however, were of degree. There was an advantage to being a Jew, both because Israel was the covenant people and because she possessed the law, and it was to the Gentile's advantage to become a proselyte.

In Rom. 2:4f. Paul refers to God's past dealings with the Jew, and his gracious treatment in not exacting retribution immediately (ἀνοχῆ, χρηστότης, and μακροθυμία). According to him, this gracious treatment of the Jew was given to lead him to repentance. But that is nothing new to the Jew. Jews did not reject Paul's gospel because it was a gospel of repentance, since, as already shown, repentance was a constituent element in Jewish thinking. It is, however, rare in Paul's thinking occurring only here and in 2 Cor. 7:9f. and 12:21 (cf. 2 Tim. 2:25). In 2 Cor., Paul's pastoral advice to sinning and careless Christians is to repent, a use which is strikingly similar to that

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<sup>1</sup>See above, pp. 59-72.

within Judaism. When referring, however, to those who turn from paganism to salvation in Christ, the notion of repentance is absorbed into that of  $\pi\iota\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$ .<sup>1</sup>

The rareness of the motif of repentance in Paul, and the perfect agreement of its usage in 2:4 with Jewish thought, makes Paul's accusation surprising. If he would say that they have not believed in Christ, then the uniqueness of his charge is clear. But he uses their own teaching and claims that they have not followed it: "But by your hard and impenitent heart" (v. 5). Perhaps Paul believes that his success depends on convincing them of their impenitence, since Judaism accepted that this put one outside the orbit of salvation. Paul then turns the motif of the treasury of merits from its normally positive into a negative form.<sup>2</sup> This is because in his logic the Jew is impenitent. Thus, the day of judgment will be a day of wrath and not of vindication.

##### 5. THE DOCTRINE OF RETRIBUTION, 2:6-10

Before concluding our consideration of Paul's accusation that the Jews are unrepentant, we turn to vs. 6-10 and the doctrine of retribution. Paul drops the dialogical form of the diatribe at 2:6 and returns to the discussion form. Here he speaks in language which echoes

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<sup>1</sup>J. Behm, ThDNT, vol. 4, p. 1005; Käsemann, p. 50.

<sup>2</sup>See the discussion above, pp. 47f. -

the Jewish understanding of this doctrine. God gives in accordance to one's works (v. 6). Either in doing well one seeks glory, honor, and immortality and receives eternal life (v. 7); or he is factious, disobeying the truth and obeying wickedness, and so receives wrath and fury (v.8). In chiastic form Paul inverts his explication of the two-ways. To those who do evil is tribulation and distress (v. 9); but for those who do good is glory, honor, and peace (v. 10). Both promises apply to the Jew first and then to the Greek (vs. 9f.).

The problem raised from these verses can be focused on v. 6. Here Paul states the doctrine of retribution exactly as Judaism did: ὅς ἀποδώσει ἑκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ (also 2:13). Does this not, however, contradict his doctrine of justification by faith apart from the works of the law (Rom. 1:17; 3:21; 9:30; 10:4; Gal. 2:16; 3:11; 3:21f.)?

Lietzmann says that the argument of 2:5ff. is hypothetical, to show what would be the case if there were no gospel and salvation depended on fulfillment of the law. Thus, Paul reduces to absurdity the doctrine of salvation by works. Romans 2:6-10 does not contradict justification by faith since Paul is not seriously presenting another way of salvation.<sup>1</sup> The tone of the passage, however, is serious.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Lietzmann, p. 388.

<sup>2</sup>Althaus, p. 19; Käsemann, p. 52.

Dodd's view is similar to that of Lietzmann. Rom. 2 aims at those without the gospel. Christians, so Paul would argue, need not be concerned with it.<sup>1</sup> But, as Huby states,<sup>2</sup> it would be rather awkward of Paul to grant to Christians what he now refuses to the Jew, that there is no partiality in God's judgment (2:11) and that to presume on God's graciousness with impenitence is to store up wrath for oneself (2:4f.).

Barrett sees in ὑπομονή (v. 7) a code word for hope and in ἐπιθειά one for self-achievement.<sup>3</sup> Thus Paul is only saying in other words what he means by justification by faith. Barrett points out, correctly, that ἐπιθειά is not from ἐπίς, strife; but from ἐπιθεῖω, to work for wages. But it does not follow that Paul is referring to achievement of salvation by works. In the other instances where Paul uses ἐπιθειά he is thinking either of party spirit or selfishness (2 Cor. 12:20; Gal. 5:20; Phil. 1:17; 2:23).<sup>4</sup>

Mattern suggests that in Rom. 2:6-10 Paul does not offer a way of salvation but a test to reveal if the

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<sup>1</sup>Dodd, p. 30.   <sup>2</sup>Huby, p. 110.

<sup>3</sup>Barrett, 46-48.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Friedrich Büchsel, ThDNT, vol. 2, pp. 660f.



Christian really is a Christian.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the issue is not how one becomes justified but how he allows the gift-power granted in justification to work in his life. In this regard, Käsemann points out that the sin of the Gentile in 1:22ff. (to forget one's creatureliness with respect to the Creator), the sin which is condemned in Jas. 2:14ff. (to live out of a dogmatic, ecclesiastical faith), and the sin of the Jew in Rom. 2:6ff. partake of the same error: not to live under the lordship of Christ. This sin brings the wrath of God.<sup>2</sup> Mattern and Käsemann, thus, refuse to subordinate retribution to justification by faith to the point that it, in effect, means nothing. Further, Käsemann rejects the claim that the judgment principle as expressed in Rom. 2:6-10 is carried over from Paul's Jewish past without being incorporated into his Christian thought. Paul has thought deeply on the subject.<sup>3</sup>

At this point we consider some Pauline texts concerning the principle of judgment which bear on the issue at hand. Donfried recently has written on this subject, and the evidence he assembles provides a useful outline.<sup>4</sup> First, judgment is universal:

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Lieselotte Mattern, Das Verständnis des Gerichtes bei Paulus (AbhTANT, 47; Zürich/Stuttgart: Zwingli Verlag, 1966), pp. 131-133, 136f. Similarly Sanday-Headlam, pp. 56f.

<sup>2</sup>Käsemann, p. 53.      <sup>3</sup>Käsemann, p. 52.

<sup>4</sup>Karl Paul Donfried, "Justification and Last Judgment in Paul," ZNW, 67 (1976), pp. 90-110, especially 103-109.

2 Cor. 5:10: For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body.

Second, salvation is promised to Christians obedient through God's help:

I Cor. 1:8: . . . who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Phil. 1:10: . . . so that you may approve what is excellent, and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ. (Cf. I Thess. 5:6-10)

Third, the apostle's work will be judged:

I Cor. 3:8: He who plants and he who waters shall receive his wages according to his labor. (Cf. all of I Cor. 3:1-15)

Fourth, disobedient Christians will be judged and condemned:

I Cor. 6:9f. Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the immoral . . . will inherit the kingdom of God.

I Cor. 11:27, 32: Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. . . . But when we are judged by the Lord, we are chastened so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

Gal. 6:7f.: Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption; but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

For Paul, the Christian is in a unique situation due to his justification and the gift of the Spirit (cf. I Cor. 6:11; Gal. 5:18ff.).<sup>1</sup> But the change in situation does not

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Leander Keck, "Justification of the Ungodly and Ethics," Rechtfertigung (Käsemann Festschrift), pp. 204f., 208.

eliminate the doctrine of retribution. The relationship between deed and consequence is maintained. The deed of the Christian, however, is not grounded in his own effort, but is a concrete manifestation of God's gift.<sup>1</sup>

The problem, however, with the solution of Käsemann is that here Paul says nothing on justification by faith, and it cannot be assumed, as it can in I Cor. 3:8; 6:9-11; 2 Cor. 5:10. In Paul's mind, of course, it is in the background and informs him how to solve the issue. But Paul is in argument with Judaism. Since Jews rejected justification by faith in Christ but accepted judgment according to works, Paul argues from the judgment principle to show its results. We already observed that Judaism did not believe that judgment according to works stood alone. On the one hand, there was the belief that God's mercy exceeds his justice. On the other hand, there was the possibility of repentance for those who sinned. Paul refers in Rom 2:4f. to repentance. But does he actually believe that Jews did not repent? A quotation from Moore sharpens the issue.<sup>2</sup>

Paul's argument rests on two premises equally alien to Jewish thought and repugnant to its spirit. First, as we have seen, that the righteousness which is under the Law the condition of salvation in us is nothing less than perfect conformity to the Law, e. g. Gal. 3:10-12. Second, that God in his righteousness, cannot freely forgive the penitent sinner and bestow upon him a salvation that is of grace, not of desert.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Donfried, p.99.

<sup>2</sup>Moore, notes to vol. 1, p. 150, n. 209.

Also,

How a Jew of Paul's antecedents could ignore, and by implication deny, the great prophetic doctrine of repentance, which, individualized and interiorized, was a cardinal doctrine of Judaism, namely, that God, out of love, freely forgives the sincerely penitent sinner and restores him to favor--that seems from the Jewish point of view inexplicable.

From that point of view it is in fact inexplicable. The two propositions we are dealing with are not given premises from which Paul draws his conclusions; they are the postulates which the predetermined conclusion demands. His thesis is that there is no salvation but by faith in the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The Jews were equally positive that the only way of salvation was the religion which God had revealed to them in Scripture and tradition, with all its teaching and observances, and they were diligent to make proselytes even among Gentiles who embraced Christianity. Paul had therefore to prove that Judaism is not a way of salvation at all, neither by man's merit in the works of the Law nor by God's grace forgiving the penitent.

Moore is incorrect, as already shown, in asserting that Paul does not consider repentance. Paul states that the Jew's unrepentant heart is hardened (2:5). The problem of hardening also appears in other Pauline passages (Rom. 9-11 and 2 Cor. 3:1ff.). In these, hardening clearly centers on Jewish rejection of the gospel and does not explain their immoral behavior. In fact, there is a sense in which precisely the opposite is the case, since, according to Paul, the reason they reject the gospel is their zeal for righteousness according to the law, and Christ is the end of the law to those who believe (Rom. 10:2-4).

But must Paul always argue in that way? In Rom. 2:1ff. Paul charges the Jew with moral failure and

unrepentance. They do the same things which the Gentiles do, and they also remain insensitive through unrepentance to God's grace. Since, according to the doctrine of retribution, such a life ends in damnation, the result is that the Jews are in no better position than the Gentiles. According to his argument in 2:1ff., then, Paul does not claim that the Jews are under judgment because of rejection of the Gospel but because they are unrepentant sinners. This is a thoroughly Jewish argument. A comparable argument appears in Rom. 9:30-32:

What shall we say then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, righteousness through faith; but that Israel who pursued (διώκων) the righteousness which is based on the law, did not succeed in fulfilling the law (οὐκ ἔφθασεν). Why? Because they did not pursue it through faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone.

Here the Jews' rejection of Christ and the zeal for the law are brought into relation to one another. But it is also stated that the Jews have failed to reach their own goal (9:31). Obviously, Paul's argument in 2:1ff. is not complete. It is partial and adapted for a specific purpose. Paul is discussing the issue within the limits of Jewish theology, as he understands it, to prove that the Jews' case before God is inadequate without God's righteousness through faith in Christ.

6. THE GENTILE'S KNOWLEDGE  
OF GOD'S WILL, 2:11-16

Rom. 2:11 forms a transition from the statements in which Paul finds the Jew guilty according to retribution (2:6-10) and possessing no advantage through his hearing of the Torah (2:12ff.). It does this by providing a theological reason ( $\gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho$ ) for the Jews' historical benefits (election and possession of the Torah) not giving them advantage in judgment. God shows no partiality. There are parallels to this theme in Judaism (Sir. 35:13 [Hebrew=35:15]; Jub. 5:16; Ps. Sol. 2:18; Mish. Ab. 4:22).

Paul has already discussed one of the Jew's advantages, God's gracious dealings in history. But how does this relate to his other advantage, possession of the law? Paul takes up this problem in 2:12ff. Actually, here is the first occurrence of  $\nu\acute{\omicron}\mu\omicron\varsigma$  in Romans. Now Paul applies retribution in accordance to a norm. But the form of this norm is not the same for the Jew and the Gentile. In the discussion of 2:1ff. Paul's argument depended on actual deeds. The Jew's claim of moral superiority collapsed under the evidence of his sins. The norm for judgment appeared to be the same for the Jew and the Gentile. In 2:12ff., however, Paul sharpens his argument. He does not deviate from what he has previously said, for Jewish performance is fundamentally the same as that of the Gentile. The form of the norm, however, is different. In fact, the Jew did

possess in the Torah a relative advantage, for it revealed God's will and gave guidance (Paul does not discuss this advantage of the Torah here). But it is from performance alone that judgment follows, and the Gentile does have some knowledge of God's will.

Whom does the argument in 2:12-16 concern? Barrett suggests that it is written against Gentiles.<sup>1</sup>

In 1:19ff. Paul showed that the Gentile was guilty of a responsible act of rebellion against the Creator, lack of special revelation did not excuse him. In the same way, lack of a revealed law is now seen not to open a way of escape from judgment.

Such a viewpoint, naturally, arises from vs. 14f. which focus on the Gentile without the Torah and show that he also possesses a form of the law.

There are, however, objections to this viewpoint. How do vs. 14f. relate to vs. 12f? To begin with, γάρ joins them and explains the validity of the foregoing material. How do vs. 14f., which refer to Gentiles (who do not possess the Torah), explain that not the hearers of the law but the doers will be justified (v. 13, obviously Jews)?<sup>2</sup> They do so by sharpening the significance of the Jews' possession of the Torah.<sup>3</sup> Paul sets against the Jew,

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<sup>1</sup>Barrett, Romans, p. 49.

<sup>2</sup>G. Bornkamm, "Gesetz und Natur (Röm. 2:14-16)," Studien zu Antike und Urchristentum: Gesammelte Aufsätze. II (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1959), p.99.

<sup>3</sup>So Käsemann, Römer, p. 57.

who possesses the law, the Gentile who possesses a form of the law and who on occasion obeys it. This positive statement about the Gentile jeopardizes the Jew's claim of superiority based on possession of the Torah. Thus, the thrust of the passage is not to say that the Gentile with only a natural form of the law may be justified by works (he also faces certain judgment, vs. 12, 16). Rather, the Jew's advantage through possession of the Torah is only relative and final judgment rests solely on deeds.

In order to show, however, that the Jew and the Gentile both face judgment according to a norm, Paul also discusses the form of the law which the Gentile possesses. This raises the whole complex of questions concerning the possible reflection of lex naturalis in Rom. 2:14f.<sup>1</sup>

We have already considered the relation of νόμος and φύσις (cf. Rom. 2:14) in Judaism.<sup>2</sup> In Philo's thought, nature's law and Israel's Torah correspond precisely. Thus, if Paul's line of thinking follows that of Hellenistic Judaism, the Gentile in Rom. 2:14 is one who follows the law of nature.<sup>3</sup> This would be the case especially if the

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Felix Flückiger, "Die Werke des Gesetzes bei den Heiden nach Röm. 2:14ff.," TZ, 8 (1952), pp. 17-42; Wilhelm Mundle, "Zur Auslegung von Röm. 2:13ff.," Theologische Blätter, 13 (1934), pp. 249-256.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. above, pp. 38-41.

<sup>3</sup>Bornkamm, "Gesetz," pp. 102-105; Koester, p. 274 with reservations.



emphasis is placed on εἰς αὐτοὺς εἰσὶν νόμος. But the distance between φύσει and εἰς αὐτοὺς εἰσὶν νόμος makes the supposition of natural law questionable. It is simpler to relate φύσει to τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα, those who are naturally (by birth) Gentiles without the Torah. Paul uses φύσις similarly in Gal. 2:15 (cf. also Rom. 2:26; Gal. 4:8; but Rom. 1:26; I Cor. 11:14).<sup>1</sup>

Soucek (following Barth) uses the phrase τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου γραπτὸν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν (Rom. 2:14) and claims that Paul is thinking of Gentile Christians since it echoes Jer. 31:33(LXX=38:33), δώσω νόμους μου εἰς τὴν διάνοιαν αὐτῶν καὶ ἐπὶ καρδίαις αὐτῶν γράψω αὐτούς.<sup>2</sup> But other motifs which would clarify that Paul is speaking of Christians, such as πνεῦμα or καινὴ κτίσις, are absent. The contrast in Rom. 2:14 is not (cf. 2 Cor. 3:3-6) between the tablets of stone and tablets of human hearts but between those who do not have the Torah and those who do, between Gentiles and Jews.

Many scholars believe that Paul accepted the term συναίσθησις (v. 15) from Hellenistic Judaism which in turn had accepted it from the Gentile world.<sup>3</sup> The verbal form occurs in the Greek of Prov. 27:6 and the nominal form in

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<sup>1</sup>Flückiger, "Werke," pp. 29-31.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Josef B. Soucek, "Zur Exegese von Röm. 2:14ff.," Antwort (Karl Barth Festschrift; Zollikon-Zürich: Evangelischen Verlag Ag., 1956), pp. 109f.

<sup>3</sup>For example, Christian Maurer, ThDNT, vol. 7, pp. 916f; Bultmann, TNT, vol. 1, p. 216; Bornkamm, "Gesetz," pp. 112-114.

Wis. 17:10, but the function of the conscience in both cases is unclear. On the other hand Test. Reub. 4:3 describes Reuben's regret for taking Bilhah: καὶ ἔως νῦν ἡ συνείδησίς μου συνέχει με περὶ τῆς ἀσεβείας μου. The conscience performs the task of self-judgment.

The use of συνείδησις is more complex in Philo of Alexandria. Here it functions as a guide through the process of conversion from sin.<sup>1</sup> For example Det. 23 reads:<sup>2</sup>

This "man," dwelling in the soul of us, is discovered at one time as king and governor, at another as judge and umpire of life's contests. Sometimes he assumes the part of witness or accuser [μάρτυρος ἢ κατηγορος], and, all unseen, convicts us from within, not allowing so much as to open our mouth, but, holding in and curbing the tongue with the reins of conscience [συνείδησις] checks its wilful and rebellious course.

Paul's use of συνείδησις reflects one value which is the same as Philo's.<sup>3</sup> It can function as a judge of both past (Rom. 9:1; I Cor. 1:12; cf. also σνοιδα in I Cor. 4:4) and future action (Rom. 13:5; I Cor. 8:7, 10, 12; 10:25, 27, 28, 29). Especially with reference to the judgment of an action that lies in the future, the conscience serves as a guide. At the same time, the conscience is not the true norm. The Christian who has γνώσις and thus knows that the

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<sup>1</sup>See Maurer, vol. 7, p. 911; E. R. Goodenough, By Light, Light: The Mystic Gospel of Hellenistic Judaism (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1935), pp. 395f.

<sup>2</sup>See also, Decal. 87; Deus 134f. and other examples referred to by Maurer, pp. 911-913.

<sup>3</sup>For Paul's use cf. Maurer, pp. 914-917.

judgment of another's conscience is in error refrains from eating the food offered to idols simply because the conscience of his weaker brother would be defiled (I Cor. 8:7), and he in turn would be destroyed (v. 11). And in I Cor. 10:25-29 the conscience of which Paul is speaking belongs to the unbeliever. But in I Cor. 4:4 Paul says that even his self-knowledge must submit to the judgment of Christ:

I am not aware[σθνοῖδα] of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then every man will receive his commendation from God.

Primary, then, in Paul's use of *συνείδησις* is its task of self-judgment. This corresponds to the use in Rom. 2:15.

To summarize our consideration of the lex naturalis in Hellenistic Judaism and its relation to Rom. 2:14f.: the word *συνείδησις* is the only form which Paul certainly borrowed from Hellenistic Judaism. The words *φύσις* and τὰ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου γραπτὸν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν can be explained otherwise. But the question remains whether Hellenistic Jewish thought did not inform Paul's thinking reflected in Rom. 2:14f.

Other Jewish statements are also relevant to the question of natural law. For example, the Gentile is guilty not only for the sins which he commits but also for his attitude toward the law of God (cf. Rom. 1:32). This is expressed, as already seen from Test. Asher 6:2, in the

pleasure which the sinner takes in his and in another's sin. It is also found in the notion that the Gentile actually rejects the law. The rabbis discussed Gentile responsibility for knowledge of the law in two respects. First, they believed that the Gentiles, as well as Israel, were offered the Torah, but only Israel accepted. Second, they taught that basic moral laws had been given universally through Adam and Noah.

Would Paul have known of the Noachic commandments as found in rabbinic sources? Davies is certain that he did.<sup>1</sup> But nothing in Rom. 1f. demonstrates that the speculation of the rabbis was familiar to Paul. The basic question, however, which the motifs of the Adamic and Noachic commandments answered (Do the Gentiles without the Torah have some knowledge of God's will?) is familiar to Paul. It is also familiar to Hellenistic Judaism. The various ways in which the same motif is discussed makes any certainty on Paul's source impossible. But the use of *σοφειδης* suggests that his thought forms here are closer to those of Hellenistic Judaism than to those of later rabbinic speculations (but see 2 Bar. 57:2).

Returning now to the primary question: what is Paul trying to prove in 2:12-16? We have already accepted

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<sup>1</sup>W. D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism (3rd ed.; London: SPCK, 1970), p. 117.

the thesis that v. 13 gives the central thrust (that not the hearers but doers of the law will be justified) and vs. 14f. sharpen this thesis.<sup>1</sup> Paul achieves his purpose in the following manner: he breaks down the distinction between Jews and Gentiles by arguing that the Gentiles also know God's will. He does not deny that the Jews possess in the Torah the true norm. The Gentiles' form of the law is valid in fact because it corresponds to the Torah. Consequently, when the Gentiles obey, they do not obey the Torah itself but τὰ τοῦ νόμου and thus they are a νόμος to themselves (v. 14). They show that τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου is written on their hearts (v. 15).<sup>2</sup> The anarthrous use of νόμος in v. 14 does not mean, then, that the Gentiles possess a law--in a generic sense. Rather, they are the Torah to themselves, for they show that the work of the Torah (τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου) is written on their hearts.<sup>3</sup> They do not have another norm which stands alongside the Torah and is its equal. Rather, what they have is τὰ τοῦ νόμου or τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου. But it is the Jews who are the hearers of the Torah itself (v. 12), and thus possess it in clarity and fulness. Thus, judgment falls on the Jews in fulness.

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<sup>1</sup>Käsemann, p. 57.

<sup>2</sup>Compare the singular use here with the plural, see below, p.

<sup>3</sup>W. Gutbrot, ThDNT, vol. 4, p. 1070.

The distinction which Paul makes between hearing and doing is decisive. It is the same distinction found in James 1:22, "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves." But would Judaism have accepted such a distinction? Rabbinic tradition contains discussions on the problem. For example Mish. Ab. 1:17<sup>1</sup> reads:

Simeon his son said: All my days have I grown up among the Sages and I have found naught better for a man than silence; and not the expounding [of the Law] is the chief thing but the doing [of it ]; and he that multiplies words occasions sin.

The weight of such an argument as Simeon's depends on a clear distinction being made between hearing and doing. Judaism did concern itself, then, with the threat that study of the Torah might take precedence over obedience to it. It is incorrect, however, to infer from texts such as Mish. Ab. 1:17 that Jews, by and large, became morally careless. Rather, these texts reflect Jewish attempts to give balance. Nor should we assume from Paul's accusation in 2:13 that the Jew was insensitive to the need to obey the law. In fact, Paul has already alluded to the Jew's positive will toward the law in 2:1 and clearly argues from this fact in 2:18 and 7:13ff. The split between hearing and doing is an absolute one in Paul's mind because, so 7:13ff. and 8:4, the Torah (and hearing or study

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<sup>1</sup>On the identification of this Simeon see Travers Herford, APOT, vol. 2, p. 694 n.

of the Torah) is helpless against the power of sin. This is, in part, where rabbinic Judaism differed from Paul, for in their teaching the Torah was not helpless. The discussion of the rabbis at Lydda following Hadrian's edict (A.D. 132) illustrates this. The question was considered if the study or the performance of the law was superior. R. Tarfon said it was performance and R. Akiba study. The majority favored R. Akiba because "study leads to doing" and "doing is dependent on learning, not learning on doing."<sup>1</sup> Moore's observation on this decision is telling:<sup>2</sup>

It is obvious that in the complexity of life no such simple rule will always meet the case; but those who framed it at least understood that, in the logic of it, right doing depends on knowing what to do and how to do it.

Paul's knowledge that this is a function of the law in Judaism is shown by his phrase τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου (subjective genitive).<sup>3</sup> When the Gentile obeys what the law requires, he shows that the interiorizing work of the law has occurred even though he does not hear the law. He is not thereby vindicated for final judgment awaits the

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<sup>1</sup>BKidd. 40b apud Moore, vol. 2, p. 246.

<sup>2</sup>Moore, vol. 2, pp. 246f.

<sup>3</sup>Barrett, pp. 52f.

eschaton (v. 16).<sup>1</sup> The Jew's peculiar privilege of hearing the Torah and thus having it interiorized is shattered, for the same can occur to the Gentile who does not have the Torah.

7. THE TEACHER OF THE LAW BRINGS  
DISHONOR ON GOD, 2:17-24

The passage divides into three sections: The Jew professes to be the teacher of the Gentile since he knows the Torah (vs. 17-20). The Jew does not follow that which he teaches (vs. 21f.). This results in Gentile blasphemy of Israel's God (vs. 23f.).

Vs. 17-20 form an anacoluthon marked with intense feeling. Paul recounts here a series of claims which the Jew makes. This series breaks into two natural units. The first (vs. 17f.) deals especially with the claim that through instruction in the Torah, the Jew is distinguishable from the Gentile. The second unit (vs. 19f) is the obverse

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<sup>1</sup>Bultmann, "Glossen im Römerbrief," TLZ, 72 (1947), cols. 200f., believes that v. 16 is a gloss. He gives the following reasons: First and decisive is the conflict between the present tense in vs. 14f. and the future in v. 16 which is not introduced with any transitional thought. Second, Bultmann does not find good support for the phrase to be expressed by Paul, "according to my gospel." Bultmann is followed in this judgment by Bornkamm, "Gesetz," pp. 117f. Käsemann, however, correctly observes that the motif of future judgment is indispensable to Paul's thought. The context of vs. 14f. would be a torso without it, pp. 62f. See also Helmut Saake, "Echtheitskritische Überlieferungen zur Interpolationshypothese von Röm. 2:16," NTS, 19 (1972/3), pp. 486-489, who points out that subtle shifting from present to future judgment constantly reoccurs in 1:18ff.



side of the same claim. Since he knows the law, he alone is fit to be the teacher of the Gentile. A structural analysis of this anacoluthon is the following:<sup>1</sup>

But if you call yourself a Jew  
and rely upon the law  
and boast in God  
and know his will  
and approve what is excellent,  
because you are instructed in the law;  
and if you are sure that you are a guide to the blind,  
a light to those who are in darkness,  
a corrector of the foolish,  
a teacher of children,  
having in the law the embodiment of knowledge  
and truth--

Paul breaks into the dialogue form (diatribe) last seen in 2:5 by referring to the Jew's self-identification. Actually, this is the first time that he names the Jew, as such, in Romans. "Jew" was the term used in Diaspora to distinguish from a Gentile and was employed by both Jews and non-Jews. Generally, the religious meaning of the word cannot be differentiated from the racial.<sup>2</sup> In Paul, the term "Jew" does not designate specific individuals, but a religious type. Thus, the Jew is identified with the law, as in I Cor. 9:20,<sup>3</sup> "to the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews; to those under the law I became as one under

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<sup>1</sup>Our analysis is similar to that of Günther Bornkamm, "Paulinische Anakoluthe in Römerbrief," Das Ende des Gestzes (Beiträge zur evangelische Theologie, 16; München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1952), p. 77.

<sup>2</sup>Walter Gutbrod, ThDNT, vol. 3, pp. 370f.

<sup>3</sup>Gutbrod, pp. 380f.

the law--though not being myself under the law--that I might win those under the law."

On the basis of his name (and thus distinguished from the Gentile) and relying on the law, the Jew boasts in God. Paul uses the theme of boasting in both a positive and a negative sense. Its positive use ("boasting in the Lord") derives from Jer. 9:23 (cf. I Cor. 1:31). But Paul refers negatively to boasting in criticism of the Jewish posture based on the law and performance of its commands, especially in Romans.

You who boast in the law. (2:23)

Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded.  
On what principle: On the principle of works?  
No, but on the principle of faith. (3:27)

For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. (4:2)

The motif of boasting also appears in Sir. 39:8. In ch. 39 Ben Sira outlines the education of the prospective scribe. If he is diligent, and if the Lord is willing, the scribe will be successful in his work, and "he will reveal instruction in his teaching [παιδείαν διδασκαλίας αὐτοῦ] and will glory [καυχῆσεται] in the law of the Lord's covenant." The connection between guidance from the informed teacher and personal glory gained from the law, occurs in Rom. 2:17-20 and in the advice of the Jewish sage.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>This does not mean that Judaism had no warnings against pride in one's achievements. One of the eight evil spirits of which Reuben warns his sons is that of pride which leads to arrogance and boasting, Test. Reub. 3:5. Cf. Bultmann, ThDNT, vol. 3, p. 647; Moore, vol. 2, pp. 240, 273-275, on the dangers of pride to which the scholar was tempted.

From the general remarks in v. 17, Paul moves to more specific ones in v. 18. Here he describes why the law provides an advantage to the Jew. "To do God's will" was a stock phrase in Jewish piety (as R. Gamaliel III in Mish. Ab. 2:4).<sup>1</sup> Schrenk suggests that in Rom. 2:18 Paul disputes the claim of the Jew that he knows God's will, since in the NT knowledge of God's will comes to the Christian by knowing the Lord's will, as in Lk. 12:47f.<sup>2</sup> It is clear enough from Rom. 7:7ff. that, in part, the problem is not that the law teaches something other than God's will, or that the Jew does not know God's will in spite of his claim. Rather, the problem is that the power of sin prevents this knowledge from leading to obedience but incites to disobedience.

The claim of the Jew is extended in the succeeding phrase to the approval of that which is excellent. The notion that approval grows from knowledge and is one step to a blameless life also appears in Paul. He writes to the Gentile Christians of Philippi (1:9f.):

And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge [ἐν ἐπιγνώσει] and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent [εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς τὰ διαφέροντα], and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ.

This clearly contrasts with the Gentile, as viewed by the Jews, and their opinion was endorsed by Paul in 1:28, 32.

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<sup>1</sup>See Gottlob Schrenk, ThDNT, vol. 3, p. 54 for other references.

<sup>2</sup>So Schrenk, p. 57.

Just as in Phil. 1:9f., the power to approve the excellent and gain life grows from knowledge, but for the Jews strictly from the law:

He [God] found the whole way to knowledge,  
 and gave her to Jacob his servant  
 and to Israel whom he loved.  
 Afterward she appeared upon earth  
 and lived among men.  
 She is the book of the commandments of God,  
 and the law that endures for ever.  
 All who hold her fast will live,  
 and those who forsake her will die.  
 Turn, O Jacob, and take her;  
 walk toward the shining of her light.  
 Do not give your glory to another,  
 or your advantages to an alien people.  
 Happy are we, O Israel,  
 for we know what is pleasing to God.  
 (Bar. 3:36-4:4)<sup>1</sup>

As Käsemann observes,<sup>2</sup> v. 18c forms a transition to vs. 19f. which discuss the Jew as the teacher of the Gentile. But it also summarizes the thrust of vs. 17-18b. The key word in v. 18c is *κατηξέω*. In Paul it always means "to instruct." In I Cor. 14:19 he advises on the matter of ecstatic speaking within the church. Five words with the mind, in order to instruct, are better than a thousand in a tongue. A nearly technical meaning appears in Gal. 6:6.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Str-B, Vol. 3, p. 98.

<sup>2</sup>Käsemann, p. 67. See Hermann Wolfgang Beyer, *ThDNT*, vol. 3, p. 638. It makes little difference if we follow the RSV in translating *κατηξέω* in Lk. 1:4 as "to inform" (but see Arndt-Gingrich, p. 425). In Acts 18:24 the RSV gives "to instruct," and the same translation is used in all the occurrences in Paul.

<sup>3</sup>So rightly Beyer, p. 639.

The verbal form occurs two times here, in the active and passive. Paul outlines the policy for both the catechist and the catechumen, "Let him who is taught [κατηχοόμενος] the word share all things with him who teaches [κατηχοοῦντι]." Thus, in Paul the verbal form is close in meaning to διδάσκω.<sup>1</sup>

In Rom. 2:18c Paul emphasizes that the Jewish boast is grounded in thorough instruction in the law. The widespread practice of Judaism was to educate children thoroughly in the Torah, and the solid basis this made for their religion and personal morality was no idle claim.<sup>2</sup> At this point in his argument Paul is referring to a characteristic of Judaism in both Palestine and Diaspora.

Since the Gentile had none of the advantages spelled out in vs. 17f., he is dependent upon the Jew. And the best description of the Jew in his relation to the Gentile can be found under the titles: guide, light, corrector, and teacher.

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<sup>1</sup>But Beyer (p. 639) asserts that Paul uses the term κατηχέω to distinguish Christian teaching from Jewish teaching (διδάσκω) and Judaism itself. Beyer writes: "He desires thereby to emphasize the peculiar nature of instruction on the basis of the Gospel." This is impossible. Even if we cannot find κατηχέω used in Jewish writings, Paul uses it in Rom. 2:18 for Jewish teaching!

<sup>2</sup>Moore, Judaism, vol. 1, p. 281, writes in this regard: "A consequence of the idea of revealed religion which was of utmost moment in all the subsequent history of Judaism was the endeavor to educate the whole people in its religion. Such an undertaking has no parallel in the ancient Mediterranean world."

The motif of the "blind" appears in the Gospel tradition where Jesus criticizes the Pharisees and scribes (Mt. 15:14=Lk. 6:39; cf. Mt. 23:16f., 24). They are the blind leading the blind. In Rom. 2:19 Paul, however, merely echoes their claim, that they are guides to the blind. Similarly, the frankly apologetic statement of Sib. Or. 3:194f. says of the Jews "And then the nation of the Mighty God shall be again powerful, that nation shall be to all mortals the guide of life [βίου καθοδηγός]." <sup>1</sup>

The next claim, φῶς τῶν ἐν σκοτίαι, has a parallel in IQH 4:27. The psalmist declares that he has been a source of enlightenment to many, וְנִי הָאִירוֹתָה פְּנֵי רַבִּים . According to Ex. R. 36, Israel is a light to the world as light arises from oil. <sup>2</sup> On the other hand, Jewish tradition also states that the Torah itself is that which enlightens (Sir. 45:17; Bar. 4:2f.; 2 Esd. 14:20f.; 2 Bar. 59:2; Test. Lev. 14:4; Sifre Num. 6:25). <sup>3</sup>

The official teacher of the Qumran community (מַשְׁכִּיל, IQS 3:13ff.) is similar to the παιδευτῆς ἀφροδων, διδάσκαλος νεπίων (Rom. 2:20). He instructs both the community and the novitiates (9:12f.). There is not much

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Str-B, vol. 3, p. 105, for other examples.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Meyer Waxman, Handbook of Judaism (Chicago, Illinois: Stein, 1953), p. 149.

<sup>3</sup>Martin Hengel, Judaism and Hellenism, trans. John Bowden, vol. 2 (London: SCM Press, LTD, 1974), p. 112, n. 424.

difference between παιδευτής and διδάσκαλος as used here by Paul.<sup>1</sup> The language of 2:20 is that of the school, whether one thinks of instruction given to the young Jew or to the proselyte. The terms derived from the Wisdom tradition (teacher/student, parent/child) profoundly influenced descriptions of Torah instruction.<sup>2</sup> The development of the beth-hammidrash in later Judaism is significant in this regard. For example, Sir. 51:23 (which probably does not belong to the original text<sup>3</sup>) admonishes:

Draw near to me, you who are untaught [נסכלים/  
 ἀπαιδευτοί]  
 and lodge in my school [ובית מדרשי/  
 ἐν οἴκῳ παιδείας].

\* Why do you say you are lacking in these things,  
 and why are your souls very thirsty?

By the time Paul wrote the beth-hammidrash was becoming an important institution in Jewish piety, but it is difficult to be certain how important.<sup>4</sup> It became the practice for the sabbath afternoon to be spent in the study of Torah at the school.<sup>5</sup> With reference to this practice bBer. 64a reads:<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> So Michel, Römer (10th ed.), p. 73

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Gerhard von Rad, Wisdom in Israel, trans. James D. Martin (London: SCM Press, LTD, 1970), p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> See C. Kearns in A New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scriptures, ed. Reginal Fuller et al. (London et al.: Nelson, 1969), pp. 542f.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the traditions given by Kaufmann Kohler, JE, vol. 3, p. 116.

<sup>5</sup> See Moore, vol. 1, p. 314. <sup>6</sup> Apud Kohler, p. 117.

One who on leaving the synagogue goes into the House of Study and studies the Torah is deemed worthy to welcome the Divine Presence, as it says, "They go from strength to strength, everyone of them appeareth before God in Zion" (Ps. 84:8).

It is also difficult to know the relation of the schools to the synagogues in Diaspora, but a similar system was probably developing there.<sup>1</sup> Kohler conjectures that the *σκολή* of Tyrannus (Acts 19:9), in which Paul and his followers carried on their disputations after the Jews of Corinth rejected the Gospel, was a form of the beth-hammidrash.<sup>2</sup> Since nothing precise is said about the school, it is impossible to be definite whether this was the case.

Wisdom 18:4 expresses the belief that Israel was to teach the nations as well as her own children, "For their enemies [the Egyptians] deserved to be deprived of light and imprisoned in darkness, those who had kept thy sons imprisoned, through whom the imperishable light of the law was to be given to the nations."

Last, the fascinating statement of v. 20c, as v. 18c, serves as a summary, "having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth." Lietzmann conjectures that Paul refers in this phrase to the title of a Jewish writing designed for proselytes.<sup>3</sup> It would be difficult to prove such an hypothesis, but it appropriately characterizes the posture of the Jew toward the Gentile as Paul pictures him here.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Moore, vol. 1, p. 314.      <sup>2</sup>So Kohler, p. 117.

<sup>3</sup>Lietzmann, p. 43.



The form  $\mu\rho\rho\phi\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma$  appears only here and in 2 Tim. 3:5 in the NT. There it describes false teachers, "holding the form of religion, but denying the power of it." But this use does not apply to Rom. 2:20.<sup>1</sup> Neither is Paul merely representing the Jew's view which he would sharply distinguish from his own.<sup>2</sup> Rather, the claim which the Jew must surrender is that by possession of the law he has the advantage. What advantage was the law supposed to give? Some apparently believed that study of the truth found in the law gave sufficient interior illumination to master one's life. Murphy-O'Connor has pointed out a clear example of this from Qumran, IQS 1:11f.:<sup>3</sup>

All those who devote themselves to His truth [לְאִמְתּוֹ], all their discernment [וְיָעִתָּם] and their strength [וְיָכוֹנָם] and their property [וְיָחִוּנָם] shall come into God's community, so that they can clarify their discernment by the truth of God's ordinances [בְּאִמְתּוֹ חֻקֵי אֱלֹהִים] and examine their strength according to his perfect ways, and all their property according to His righteous counsel.

This is the ideal which the Jew claimed in virtue of his possession and instruction in the law.

Paul follows this characterization of the Jew as the one who has the advantage of the law with five questions (2:21f.).

<sup>1</sup>Contra Adolf Schlatter, Gottes Gerechtigkeit, pp. 103.

<sup>2</sup>Contra J. Behm, ThDNT, vol. 4, pp. 754f.

<sup>3</sup>Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "Truth: Paul and Qumran," Paul and Qumran (Chicago, Illinois: The Priory Press, 1968), pp. 190-192. The translation is that of Wernberg-Møller.

The first is introductory, "You then who teach others, will you not teach yourself?" Therefore, Paul addresses the question to the Jew as a teacher of the Gentiles. The next three questions are: "Do you steal?" "Do you commit adultery?" "Do you rob temples?"

Barrett feels that Paul's accusations are unsound if we must take him literally.<sup>1</sup> The high moral standards of the Jews, in fact, were among the important features of the synagogues which attracted the Gentiles. It is hardly possible, however, to follow Barrett's explanation and accept that Paul was accusing the Jews of committing sins only in a spiritual sense, as Jesus in Mt. 5.<sup>2</sup> These are examples of Jews breaking the law by these sins. The Pss. Sol. bitterly accuse the Hasmoneans and the powerful in Jerusalem of similar evil. The author sees Pompey's interference as God's judgment against their sins. They were guilty of incest, adultery (8:10), and desecration of the temple (8:11f.). In his summation of the accusation he says, in fact, "They left no sin undone, wherein they surpassed not the heathen" (8:14).<sup>3</sup> Similarly, CD 4:15-18

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<sup>1</sup>Barrett, p. 56.

<sup>2</sup>Barrett, pp. 56f. and Leonhard Goppelt, "Der Missionar des Gesetzes (zu Röm. 2:21f.)," Basileia, ed. Jan Hermelink and Hans Jochen Margull (W. Freytag Festschrift; Stuttgart; Evang. Missionsverlag GMBH, 1959), p. 204.

<sup>3</sup>The translation is that of G. Buchanan Gray, APOT, vol. 2.

accuses Jacob of committing the sins of Belial: fornication, riches, and profanation of the temple. Finally, during the persecution of Hadrian, a conference of rabbis in Lydda relaxed certain rules. If his life was threatened, a Jew could yield on all points but the three cardinal sins: heathenism, unchastity, and homicide (jSanh. 21b).<sup>1</sup> This suggests that under the pressure of terrible persecution, there were many who chose to surrender their standards to save their lives.

The question remains, however, if these cases of relaxed moral standards were not the exceptions instead of the rule and therefore do not apply to Paul's situation. In order to answer this question, it is necessary to observe an important fact that is almost universally ignored in consideration of Rom. 2:21f. The three vices which Paul mentions in Rom. 2:21f. represent precisely those which the Jew believed were the cardinal sins of the pagan world: idolatry, inhumanity (often murder or greed, but other social vices could be mentioned, cf. Philo Conf. 163), and adultery. Paul's purpose in identifying these particular vices is, thus, not to catch the Jew where he is most likely to be guilty but to make his charge directly on those points where the Jew distinguished his moral life most sharply from that of the Gentile. Thus, the rhetorical effect: "You

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<sup>1</sup>See Moore, vol. 1, pp. 466f.

who teach against . . . , do you . . . ?"<sup>1</sup> Further, in one of the three which he mentions, Paul blunts the accusation, "You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?" The Jew's disgust and repudiation of the pagan cultus is accurately represented, and it was hardly a temptation to a Jew. Therefore, when Paul mentions the vice of idolatry, he cannot charge the Jew with the same act that the Jew abhors in the Gentile. Rather, to make a corresponding charge he asks whether they have stolen from those objects which they abhor. Schrenk correctly suggests that the prohibition of Deut. 7:25f. is echoed in Paul's question. According to the OT, pagan cult objects were not to be used for the personal profit of the Israelite, even though he repudiated heathenism. They were to be exterminated.<sup>2</sup> *BSanh.* 53b, 84a; *Mish. A. Zar.* 4:2, 4, 5 indicate that the rabbis discussed the punishment for Jews who stole from pagan temples. The problem is also mentioned in *Ap.* 1:249 (also 310, 318) where Josephus answers the charge of Manetho that Jews are temple-robbers,<sup>3</sup> although Manetho's bitter hatred and misrepresentation of the Jews makes his evidence questionable.

It is impossible, therefore, to assume that Jews regularly stole, committed adultery, or robbed from pagan temples. Paul is certainly trying to show that the precise

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<sup>1</sup>For rabbinic parallels see *Str-B*, vol. 3, p. 167.

<sup>2</sup>Gottlob Schrenk, *ThDNT*, vol. 3, pp. 255f.

<sup>3</sup>See also Acts 19:37 where the more abstract use may be in mind, namely sacrilege; cf. Schrenk, *ThDNT*, vol. 3, p. 257.

vices which the Jews said represented the decadence of the pagan world, but not the Jewish, were in fact present within the Jewish community, in spite of instruction in the Torah. But the cases Paul refers to might have been exceptional Jews. It is doubtful if a non-Christian Jew would have found Paul's charge sufficient to reject the belief that Torah instruction built moral character. The argument thus stated is inadequate.

Paul's argument reaches full turn in the questions and answers of vs. 23f. He first echoes in summary<sup>1</sup> the claims of the Jew from vs. 17-20, "You who boast in the law." He then points out what the Jew has done, a summary of vs. 21f., "do you dishonor God by breaking the law?" In the OT there is also warning which shows the relationship between obedience to the law and its effect on the glory of God,<sup>2</sup> as in Lev. 22:31f.:

So you shall keep my commandments and do them; I am the Lord. And you shall not profane my holy name  
 [יִשְׂרָאֵל אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְלֹא יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה אֱלֹהֵי אֲחֵרִים/καὶ οὐ βεβηλώσετε τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ ἁγίου], but I will be hallowed among the people of Israel; I am the Lord who sanctify you.

Paul contends that precisely the opposite has occurred due to the Jews' transgression of the law. Thus, rather than the nations being brought to honor Israel's God, they blaspheme him. Paul supports his contention with

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<sup>1</sup>Michel, Römer, (10th ed.), p. 75.

<sup>2</sup>Str-B, vol. 1, pp. 406-418.

a direct scriptural citation, the first one in his argument from 1:18ff. which he introduces with the formula, καθὼς γέγραπται. The quotation is taken from Isa. 52:5b and concerns the humiliation of Yahweh because his people were taken away by the Egyptians and Assyrians, "all the day my name is despised." The LXX adds to the original so that it reads, δι' ὑμᾶς διὰ παντὸς τὸ ὄνομα μου βλασφημεῖται ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν. Paul clearly changes the meaning so that the Jews now become the cause of the blasphemy.

Rom. 2:17-24, thus, argues that the Jews as teachers to the Gentile are failures since, rather than being drawn to the God of Israel and accepting him, the Gentiles have repudiated Israel's faith and her God. The Jew's boast in the law before the Gentile collapses because of the contradiction in his moral life which even the pagan could easily see. The very sins which the Jew says mostly characterized the pagans are, in fact, present in the Jewish community.

#### 8. GOD'S PRAISE DOES NOT GO TO THE CIRCUMCISED, 2:25-29

Paul next discusses circumcision, the sign of the covenant. Here he states that a Gentile can keep the precepts of the law (vs. 26f.) or be a Jew inwardly (v. 29). Is Paul talking about a Gentile Christian? Against this view Kuss and Nygren point out that the context (1:18-3:20) has only a negative purpose. Since Paul's discussion is so tight,

they contend, no positive elements can be present. The possibilities available in faith are introduced only at 3:21.<sup>1</sup> Such an argument, however, begs the question and should not be taken seriously.<sup>2</sup>

The real difficulty with accepting that the Gentiles in this discussion are Christians is that Paul does not say so specifically. If he is talking of Christians, his language is cryptic.

Vs. 25-27 set before the Jew the possibility of the Gentile obeying the law while the Jew may disobey it. By breaking the law, the Jew negates his circumcision, while by keeping its precepts the Gentile is reckoned as circumcised. In v. 27 a new antithesis arises for here the Gentile who keeps the law condemns the Jew who breaks it.

There are some key concepts in these verses. The term δικαίωμα is used three times in Romans with respect to the Gentiles.<sup>3</sup>

Though they know God's δικαίωμα that those who do such things deserve to die, they not only do them but approve those who practice them. (1:32)

So, if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the δικαιώματα of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? (2:26)

<sup>1</sup>Nygren, p. 134; Otto Kuss, "Die Heiden und die Werke des Gesetzes (nach Röm. 2:14-16)," MÜTZ, 5 (1954), p. 79.

<sup>2</sup>Similarly, Käsemann, p. 70.

<sup>3</sup>It also appears twice in ch. 5 (vs. 16, 18) for the righteous act of Christ which justifies and thus reverses the effect of Adam's transgression.

. . . in order that the δικαίωμα of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. (8:4)

In 1:32, the use of δικαίωμα is negative, but in 2:26 and 8:4 it is positive. In 1:32 Paul is clearly describing the Gentile as a sinner, while 8:4 concerns the one "in Christ Jesus." It is not made explicit, however, if a Christian is in mind in 2:26.<sup>1</sup>

The words φυλάσσω (v. 26) and τελέω (v. 27) are paralleled in 8:4 with πληροῶ, only there it is in the passive. No precise meaning can be given to these terms, but the sense is close to "observe."<sup>2</sup> They are used in contrast to πράσσω with the negative (v. 25) which describes the Jew's disobedience.<sup>3</sup>

"Reckoning," λογισθήσεται, a technical term in Pauline theology, is used in v. 26. Elsewhere "reckoning" is a possibility open only to faith, whether God is the subject or it is a view that the Christian must take of himself in

<sup>1</sup>Schrenk, ThDNT, vol. 2, p. 221, thinks that the plural δικαιώματα in 2:26 refers to specific demands and not a general attitude (as in 1:32 and 8:4). This cannot be since the parallel statement in v. 27 has to involve a broad look. Does Schrenk intend to introduce the notion of only an occasional observance of the law, as in 2:14 with ὅταν? Cf. Deut. 30:16 and Käsemann, p. 67.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Georg Betram, ThDNT, vol. 9, pp. 240f.

<sup>3</sup>It should be observed also that in Gal. 6:13 Paul remarks of those who are circumcised and demand the same of the Galatian Christians that they do not observe (φυλάσσουσιν) the law.



the light of his baptism into Christ (6:11).<sup>1</sup> The statement in 2:26, however, is peculiar since the reckoning seems to follow from obedience to the law, an apparent contradiction to 4:3-5.

Paul's use of κρίνω (v. 27) is surprising in view of his sharp criticism of the Jew (2:13) for condemning the Gentile. V. 27 might be parallel to v. 24 where the Gentile observes the Jew breaking the law which he teaches and so blasphemes the God of Israel. But it is probably more correct to say that Paul employs here a Jewish notion: eschatological judgment will be based on comparison in which the better will condemn the worse by his superior life.<sup>2</sup>

The hypothetical nature of v. 26 is suggested by εἰν and the subjunctive of the verb.<sup>3</sup> We should probably see v. 27 as hypothetical as well. Since no one fully keeps the law, is the possibility of reckoning uncircumcision as circumcision real? Paul's apparent purpose in vs. 25-27 is to dismantle the security the Jew has in circumcision. But does he really hope to buttress this by reference to the moral superiority of the Gentile?

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<sup>1</sup>See H. W. Heiland, ThDNT, vol. 2, pp. 287-292.

<sup>2</sup>See Wis. 4:16; Mt. 12:42=Lk. 11:32. Examples of those who hold this view are Dodd, pp. 40f.; Käsemann, p. 68. See Str-B, vol. 1, pp. 650f.; vol. 3, p. 124.

<sup>3</sup>So Ernst Kühl, Der Brief Paulus an die Römer (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1913), p. 42.

The results of the examination of vs. 25-27 can be summarized as follows: the value of circumcision depends strictly upon observance of the law. If there is transgression of the law, circumcision becomes uncircumcision. If there is obedience, uncircumcision is reckoned as circumcision. Further, the obeying Gentile will condemn the Jew.

The line of thought is considerably different in vs. 28f. The presupposition in vs. 25-27 was that circumcision was finally a judicial matter, did one obey the law? In vs. 28f. it becomes a matter of transformation. Again, the Jew and the Gentile are set opposite one another in antithetical statements. Two motifs from v. 29 merit discussion: what does Paul mean by "circumcision of the heart" and the contrast of spirit and letter?

The first occurrence of the circumcision of the heart is in Jer. 4:4,<sup>1</sup> "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, remove the foreskin of your hearts." Philo rationalizes the act of circumcision so that it signifies "to prune away from the ruling mind the superfluous overgrowth sown and raised by the immoderate appetites of the passions planted by folly, the evil husbandman of the soul" (Mig. 92; cf. Spec. 1:1-11). The sectaries of Qumran also spiritualized circumcision (IQS 5:5):<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Jer. 9:26; Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Lev. 26:41; Ezek. 44:7, 9.

<sup>2</sup>Translation is that of Wernberg-Møller.

No one shall walk in the stubbornness of his heart, in order to go astray after his heart and his eyes and the thought of his guilty mind. They shall circumcise in the community the foreskin of the mind and a stiff neck.

In these passages from the OT and Judaism, to circumcise the heart means to remove the obstacle to full obedience (as the abominations in Jer. 4:1, although stubbornness is seen as its spiritual root). The Israelites are to perform the act on themselves. But in Deut. 30:6, God will circumcise them, again making obedience possible: "And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live."<sup>1</sup>

It is, however, incorrect to understand these traditions, OT or Jewish, as advocating the cessation of the physical act itself. Rather, they attempt to interiorize the external act in order to achieve obedience. Similarly, the rabbis also discussed the problem of the uncircumcised heart. It is one of the seven names for the evil impulse (bSukkah 52a, so also is the heart of stone, cf. Ezek. 36:26). The evil-impulse, therefore, rules over the uncircumcised heart. If the sinner repents, however, his uncircumcised heart will be humbled (Sifra Lev. 26:41). Further, in the

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<sup>1</sup>God is the subject of the circumcision of the heart also in Jub. 1:23 (in clear dependence on Deut. 30:6). In the Odes of Solomon 11:1f. the Holy Spirit is his instrument in circumcision.

world to come, God will remove the evil impulse, and thus solve the problem of the uncircumcised heart (bSukk. 52a).<sup>1</sup> Thus, there is discussion in the OT and Judaism which anticipates Paul's thought in Rom. 2:29. But the difference is still great, since Paul is not thinking merely of the interiorizing of the act but also of the contrast between the external and the internal circumcision.

Next we consider the contrast of πνεῦμα and γράμμα. This contrast is found three times in the NT, all in Paul.

. . . who has qualified us to be ministers of a new covenant, not in a written code but in the Spirit; for the written code kills, but the Spirit gives life. (2 Cor. 3:6)

He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart, ἐν πνεύματι οὐ γράμματι. His praise is not from men but from God. (Rom. 2:29)

But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we serve not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit. (Rom. 7:6)

Two interpretations are given the terms: (1) the formalistic sense, literal or spiritual; and (2) the realistic sense, the Mosaic law or the Spirit.<sup>2</sup> There is no consensus on which interpretation applies to Rom. 2:29.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See Str-B, vol. 3, p. 126.

<sup>2</sup>See Bernadin Schneider, "The Meaning of St. Paul's Antithesis 'The Letter and the Spirit'," CBQ, 15 (1953), p. 164.

<sup>3</sup>Schneider tabulates the evidence on pp. 186f.

In 2 Cor. 3:6 the γράμμα kills, but the πνεῦμα gives life.<sup>1</sup> There can be no doubt that πνεῦμα here is the Holy Spirit since in v. 3 Paul calls him πνεῦμα θεοῦ ζῶντος. The context of Rom 7:6 makes it equally clear the πνεῦμα refers to the Spirit of God. As in 2 Cor. 3:6, the old γράμμα becomes a minister of death (cf. Rom. 7:9), and life comes through the Spirit (8:10). Thus, πνεῦμα and γράμμα in Rom. 7:6 and 2 Cor. 3:6 stand in polarity. The law is unable to produce life since it is only γράμμα and belongs to the old aeon.<sup>2</sup> The language of Rom. 2:29 is cryptic. The helplessness of the γράμμα is clearly stated in v. 27. We should, however, see the ground for the obedience of the Gentile in vs. 25-27 in the circumcision of the heart (cf. γὰρ, v. 28) accomplished by the Spirit. The Gentiles in Rom. 2:25-29 are Christians.

There are other questions which 2:25-29 raises. What is the true circumcision? The rabbis debated this issue to distinguish the true from the false Jew.<sup>3</sup> For example, the Pharisees said that the Sadducees (?) were not of Isaac's seed since they did not believe in the world to come (Gen. R. 53). There are also passages where the proselyte is praised over the native Jew because he had to

<sup>1</sup>See Gottlob Schrenk, ThDNT, vol. 1, pp. 765-768.

<sup>2</sup>Käsemann, pp. 70-72.

<sup>3</sup>See Str-B, vol. 3, pp. 125f.

be converted.<sup>1</sup> But these evaluations within Judaism are different from that in Rom. 2:25-29. Paul's conflict with Jewish Christianity raised the question whether the uncircumcised Gentile could be the true circumcision. Why does Paul speak in that way?

Nygren points out that in Gal. 5:14 Paul says neither circumcision nor uncircumcision count for anything. Thus,<sup>2</sup>

it would be impossible (despite Phil. 3:3) for Paul to say of the Christian that he is regarded by God as circumcision. The statement that the uncircumcised is reckoned by God as circumcised can have meaning only for him who still belongs to the old aeon.

To the contrary, that uncircumcision is regarded as circumcision is an impossibility and therefore a meaningless statement to one of the old aeon. Barrett correctly observes that the Jew would have been puzzled by Paul setting obedience to the law against circumcision.<sup>3</sup> It is true that a circumcised person could break the law by apostasy and thereby disinherit himself, but he was hardly faithful if he was uncircumcised. Paul thus shows his distance from the thinking of the synagogue.<sup>4</sup> The themes of 2:25-29, then, grow from Paul's controversy over the uncircumcised Gentile

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<sup>1</sup>See William G. Braude, Jewish Proselyting in the First Five Centuries of the Common Era: The Age of the Tannaim and Amoraim (Providence, R.I.: Brown University, 1940), pp. 22-24.

<sup>2</sup>Nygren, p. 134.      <sup>3</sup>Barrett, pp. 57f.

<sup>4</sup>Käsemann, p. 67.

inheriting the covenantal benefits. Our passage shows how thoroughly the discussion could revolve around the covenant. Here circumcision (the sign of the covenant) and Jews (the people of the covenant) are the constants in Paul's argument. But the meaning of circumcision and Jew is pushed to the limits. Circumcision is now uncircumcision, and Jew is hidden Jew. The only person to whom such an argument could be addressed is the Jew.

Paul concludes his argument with a response to the Jew's boast of vs. 17, 23, "His praise is not from men but from God. For boasting is nothing if God in the end does not approve. The word ἐπαινος in this context, as in I Cor. 4:5 and I Pet. 1:7, refers to the praise which God bestows in the eschatological judgment on those who have proved faithful. It is a judgment which only God can give, for although other humans can approve (pagan rulers, Rom. 13:3; I Pet. 2:14; but better, fellow Christians, I Cor. 11:2; 2 Cor. 8:18), still there is the hidden (τὰ κρύπτα, I Cor. 4:5) which God alone will bring to light.<sup>1</sup> And in the final sense, he alone is judge. This conclusion by Paul in Rom. 2:29 is remarkable for it clearly shows the direction which his argument has taken. The goal no longer seems to be that the Jew should turn from sins and seek the grace of God (Jews already accepted that, so it would be nothing new). Rather, he has attempted to shatter the Jewish understanding

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<sup>1</sup>Herbert Preisker, ThDNT, vol. 2, p. 588.

of the Jew and the Gentile with respect to knowledge of God's will, God's covenant with a special people, and God's eschatological judgment.

In 2:25-29, then, Paul has turned the argument directly to the question of covenantal privilege. Is the possession of the heritage of Israel (signified by circumcision) maintained inviolable (except through apostasy)? No, covenantal privilege is maintained by obedience to the law. But, and here Paul's argument takes a new turn, it is granted to the Gentile for obedience to the law and through transformation by the Spirit.

#### 9. THE OBJECTIONS OF THE JEWS, 3:1-8

How does 3:1-8 connect with the foregoing material? Best claims that it is a digression given to answer the Jewish objection to Paul's comment on circumcision.<sup>1</sup> Bornkamm, however, says that, because in 1:18-2:29 Paul has proved the inexcusability of both the Jew and the Gentile, in 3:1-8 he seeks to strengthen this argument by emphasizing God's role as judge.<sup>2</sup> But if Paul's goal in 1:18-2:29 was merely to show that both Jews and Gentiles were sinners, he would have stopped at 2:10, for 2:11ff. adds nothing

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<sup>1</sup>Ernest Best, The Letter of Paul to the Romans (Cambridge: University Press, 1967), p. 34.

<sup>2</sup>Günther Bornkamm, "Theologie als Teufelskunst," Geschichte und Glaube. Zweiter Teil (Beiträge zur evangelischen Theologie, 53; München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1971), pp. 144-146.



substantially new to that point. Rather, the argument in 2:11-29 erodes the distinction between the Jew and the Gentile with respect to Law and covenant, while 2:1-10 shows that the Jew is threatened with eschatological judgment as the Gentile according to the principle of retribution for his actual sin, in spite of God's past favor.

Thus, the issue<sup>1</sup> of the Jew's advantage (3:1) is raised in the form of two questions in response (τὶ ὄδῳ)<sup>2</sup> to Paul's argument of 2:11-29.<sup>3</sup> What does the Jew have that the Gentile does not (τὸ περισσῶν)?<sup>4</sup> And what benefit (ἄφελεια) is there in being of the circumcision?<sup>5</sup>

Why is the issue raised at this point in the argument of Romans? Jeremias contends that the structure of the letter to Romans in the first eleven chapters arose from actual encounters with Jews when Paul preached the Gospel to them:<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Anton Fridrichsen, "Exegetisches zu den Paulusbriefen," ThStKr, 102 (1930), pp. 291-294.

<sup>2</sup>Bornkamm, "Theologie," p. 141, observes that τὶ ὄδῳ is sometimes used in Romans to answer questions which might have arisen from a false understanding of Paul's discussion (cf. 6:1, 15; 7:7; 9:14).

<sup>3</sup>So correctly Käsemann, p. 72.

<sup>4</sup>See Friedrich Hauck, ThDNT, vol. 6, pp. 61f.

<sup>5</sup>AG, p. 908.

<sup>6</sup>J. Jeremias, "Zur Gedankenführung in den paulinischen Briefen," Studia paulina. In honorem de J. de Zwaan Septuagenarii (Haarlem: De Erven F. Bohn N.V., 1953), pp. 146-149. The quotation is from p. 147.

Wir erleben mit diesen Einwänden [ especially 3:1-8 ] ein Stück lebendige Missionerfahrung des Apostels mit. Er predigt vor Juden. Zuerst hört man ihn zu. Aber bald kommt eine Stelle, an der man ihn nicht weiterreden lässt. Er wird unterbrochen. Einwänden und Proteste kommen von allen Seiten. Wir sind 3:1-8 Zeugen der Diskussion und spüren ihren heissen Atem.

While the problem is greater than that of the Jews rejecting the Gospel, Jeremias has made an acute observation: actual encounters with the Jews is altogether possible.<sup>1</sup> It hardly needs extensive proof to show that Jewish sentiment did not allow Paul to take Gentile converts from the synagogues without vigorous protest, counter arguments, and even violence (cf. Gal. 2:4, 11; 6:3; etc.). Two fundamental objections raised against Paul's gospel to the Gentiles are present here: (1) by removing the requirement of circumcision, Paul appeared to negate the place of Israel as God's special people and thus to raise the question of God's faithfulness to his covenant (3:1-4). (2) From another side, Paul's understanding of God's righteousness apart from the works of the law could be interpreted as irresponsible (3:5-8).

In 3:1f. Paul affirms Israel's special place in salvation-history (cf. 1:17; 2:9f.; 9:44; 11:11-16, 25-29). But the affirmation is modified:  $\mu\omicron\lambda\delta$  κατὰ πάντα τρόπον .

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<sup>1</sup>Both Käsemann, p. 73, and Bornkamm, "Theologie," p. 141f., try to explain the character of the questions by reference to the diatribe style. But later in his article Bornkamm forgets what he said and writes: "So oder so sind Einwände Paulus sicherlich mehr also einmal in Synagogen-- oder Gemeindedebatten begegnet," p. 146.

In certain respects the Jew can look positively on his heritage. But other issues relativize what this means. First, we look at what the heritage is.

What does Paul mean by τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ? Lietzmann believes that it refers to the promises of the OT.<sup>1</sup> Kittel states that it must include salvation-history in both the OT and NT.<sup>2</sup> Dodd claims all of the scriptures.<sup>3</sup>

The suggestion that Paul is here referring to the promises of God naturally arises from comparison with those places where he sets ὁ νόμος and ἡ ἐπαγγελία in polarity (especially Rom. 4:13f.; Gal. 3:17-19, 21). But there is nothing in the expression τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ to warrant a restricted sense. Further, Paul can say that the law is holy and the commandment good (7:12), although the Jew would have found his exposition of this inadequate. Kittel is reading more into this text than can be supported. But the parallel passage in 9:4f. indicates that Paul places high value on all of God's historical dealings with Israel and saw this culminating in Christ, "of their race, according to the flesh." Dodd's view that Paul is referring to the revelation of God given in scripture is the most acceptable. Naturally, the root λογ- connotes the spoken,

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<sup>1</sup>Lietzmann, *Römer*, p. 45; also J.W. Doeve, "Some Notes with Reference to τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ in Romans 3:2," *Studia paulina. In honorem de J. de Zwaan Septuagenarii*, pp. 116-122.

<sup>2</sup>G. Kittel *ThDNT*, vol. 4, p. 138.

<sup>3</sup>Dodd, p. 43; similarly Käsemann, p. 73.

not the written, word. But Paul's emphasis lies in the fact that it was to Israel, not to the Gentiles, that God spoke.<sup>1</sup>

How did Israel respond to her gift from God (3:3)? There are several forms of πιστ- in 3:3f. The Jews were entrusted (ἐπιστεόθησαν) with the oracles of God. Some (τινες) of them were unfaithful (ἄπιστησαν, ἄπιστία). But their unfaithfulness does not negate the faithfulness (πιστις) of God (v. 3). While Paul uses the root πιστ- generally to connote commitment and trust in God through Christ (e.g. 3:22-26) which excludes reliance on works for justification, he also uses the OT concept (cf. Deut. 7:9f.) that God can be the subject of πιστ-. Thus, in Rom. 3:3 God's faithfulness meets with ἄπιστία and remains unchanged.

What is the ἄπιστία of some in Israel (3:3)? Rom. 3:1ff. anticipates the issues Paul takes up again in chs. 9-11. In ch. 10, Israel's ἄπιστία is clearly rejection of Christ. Paul argues there that the righteousness of God is granted to the believer (ὁ πιστεῶν, 10:4; cf. 10:9f., 14). But (except for the remnant, 11:1-10) Israel does not believe (10:16=Isa. 53:13; 10:21=Isa. 65:2), and the unbelievers are broken off (11:20). Thus, the motif of unbelief certainly lies behind Paul's thought in Rom. 3:3a, but it is not primary. The notion of Israel's ἄπιστία in 3:3 is paralleled with her ψευσ- (vs. 4, 7) and ἄδικία (v. 5) and

<sup>1</sup>Kittel, p. 138.

contrasted with God's πίστις (v. 3), ἀληθ- (vs. 4, 7), and δικαιοσύνη (v. 5). Thus, Paul is thinking primarily of covenant fidelity which Israel has not kept, but God has. The context further supports this unless we suppose that the connection with the foregoing passage (2:1-29) is now completely broken. In 2:1-29, Paul discussed the moral failure of the Jew (the human side of the covenant) and the consequent judgment which threatened him.

But the other side to the maintenance of the covenant, God's faithfulness, is the motif which Paul takes up in 3:3. Both the OT and Judaism wrestled with the problem of God's faithfulness in the face of Israel's sin (cf. Deut. 7:10f. but Ex. 34:6; Deut. 32:4; and especially Hos. 11:8; Wis. 15:1-3).<sup>1</sup> And often both the OT and Judaism taught that God maintained his covenant with Israel, although often with severe punishment to purge. There was, of course, the question of individuals who apostatized, but what constituted apostasy could be variously understood from the more conservative sectaries of Qumran to a more liberal view such as in Wisdom. Thus, the reaction to Paul's charges and deductions is the following: if Israel is unfaithful to the covenant, and the people are thereby threatened with wrath and regarded as uncircumcised, does this not nullify (κατεργέω) God's faithfulness? Therefore, Paul's theology is perceived not only to say something offensive about

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<sup>1</sup>See above, p. 65.

Israel but, more important, to overturn her understanding of God as ὁ πιστός.<sup>1</sup> The question arising from Paul's teaching on Gentile Christianity is a reaction to the implication that the prerogatives of Israel have been transferred to the Church.<sup>2</sup>

In v. 4, Paul shifts to speak in universal language. Thus, he says that the context within which God's covenant with Israel must be understood is not that of special faithfulness to her, but universal faithfulness. Israel's privileges are a part of the whole, and so also is her sin. God's faithfulness is towards all. God's faithfulness, however, has a negative side, since it stands opposite the human situation. Paul supports his thesis by alluding to Ps. 116:11(LXX=115:2), "Let God be true though every man be false," contrasting ἀληθείας and ψευσίνας, and quoting Ps. 51:4(LXX=50:6).

That thou mayest be justified in thy words,  
and prevail when thou art judged.

Paul's answer in v. 4 presupposes the theme of God's righteousness which is explicitly mentioned in v. 5. But, in turn, his doctrine of God's righteousness which saves

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<sup>1</sup>See Barrett, p. 62.

<sup>2</sup>See Benjamin W. Helfgott, The Doctrine of Election in Tannaitic Literature (New York: King's Crown, 1954), pp. 13-18. Helfgott claims in regard to Paul's preaching in the synagogues: "In all probability, his sermons in the synagogues were not offensive." It was not his Jewish but his Gentile gospel which bothered the Jews because it seemed (1) to abrogate the privileges of the Jews and (2) to transfer the OT promises to Gentile Christians (p. 13).

apart from the works of the law grows from the fundamental conviction voiced in 3:4, God is ἀληθής.<sup>1</sup> Paul has at this point universalized the implications of God's faithfulness with respect to human sin. The emphatic form of Paul's declaration in v. 4, in fact, reveals that the belief of God as ὁ ἀληθής (or ὁ πιστός and ὁ δίκαιος) is the theological root from which he understands God's solution of the human problem.

To deal with the passage (3:5-8) adequately we must consider the meaning of God's righteousness in 3:5. The well-known controversy of Bultmann and Käsemann concerning God's righteousness is relevant. It is unnecessary to rehearse the details here except to state their conclusions. Bultmann sees God's righteousness in Paul as primarily a forensic-eschatological term. Thus, it functions with a judicial setting in mind, and for the believer it is a present, imputed gift, a relationship to God through Christ.<sup>2</sup> Käsemann, on the other hand, argues that God's righteousness in Paul is both gift and power; and he compares Paul's use of the motif to that in the OT and certain Jewish

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<sup>1</sup>Shown forcefully by Käsemann, pp. 75f.; cf. Michel, Römer, (10th ed.), pp. 79f.

<sup>2</sup>Bultmann, TNT, pp. 270-279; idem, "ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣΥΝΗ ΘΕΟΥ," JBL, 82 (1964), pp. 12-16.

traditions.<sup>1</sup> In these cases, two sides to God's righteousness are brought out: the negative side is that of punishment of the oppressor or sinner (Ps. 97:2f., 6f.; Dan. 9:13f.). But the positive side predominates, and in it God's destruction of evil or the oppressor means salvation and forgiveness for the covenant people and redemption of the world (Ps. 18:24; 85:10f.; 98:1f.; Isa. 9:6; 11:4; 42:6f.; 45:22f.; 46:13; 51:5-8; Mic. 7:9; IQS 11:2, 12; Test. Dan 6:10). Rom. 1:17; 10:3ff. confirm that God's righteousness, according to Paul, is not only gift but also power, as Käsemann shows.<sup>2</sup>

It would be incorrect, however, to infer that the judicial element is completely lost in favor of the salvific. Rom. 3:5-7 claims that God is judge of all men and finds them guilty. But the question remains if God's judgment in these verses is primarily the impartial judgment of human conduct or is a part of God's historical dealing with men as he brings them to salvation. In other words, is God's righteousness in Rom. 3:5 distributive justice or salvific righteousness seen from its negative side?

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<sup>1</sup>Ernest Käsemann, "'The Righteousness of God' in Paul," New Testament Questions Today, trans. W. J. Montague (London: SCM, 1969), pp. 172f.; idem, Römer, p. 77; cf. among others J. H. Ropes, "'Righteousness' and 'the Righteousness of God' in the Old Testament and in St. Paul," JBL, 22 (1903), pp. 211-227; S. Schulz, "Zur Rechtfertigung aus Gnaden in Qumran und bei Paulus," ZKT, 56 (1959), pp. 155-185; Joseph Fitzmyer, Jerome, vol. 2, pp. 391, 808, and 817; and Lester J. Kuyper, "Righteousness and Salvation," ScotJT, 30 (1977), pp. 233-252.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Käsemann, "'The Righteousness of God' in Paul," p. 169.



The questions of 3:5 and 7 are similar to questions voiced in ch. 9, and thus can be profitably examined together:

3:5: But if our wickedness serves to show θεοῦ δικαιοσύνη, what shall we say? That God is unjust to inflict wrath on us?

3:7: But if through my falsehood God's truthfulness abounds to his glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner?

9:14: What shall we say then? Is there ἀδικία on God's part?

9:19: You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?"

In ch. 9, Paul discusses the true Israel, that according to election and promise, not according to the flesh (9:6-13). While the Jew would argue that such election is ἀδικία on God's part (9:14), the goal of God's determination of the Jew according to Paul, whether seen from the positive or the negative (e.g. Pharaoh) side, is to show (ἐνδεικνυμι) God's power (9:17). Or if this seems to deny human responsibility (9:19), Paul argues that God is free to make vessels of wrath in order to make known (γνωρίζω) the riches of his glory to vessels of mercy (9:22f.). Therefore, God can use Israel for his own purpose, to bring salvation to the Gentiles who are not his people (9:24-26). The situation of Israel in ch. 9, then, is one of being hardened and being vessels of wrath to show God's glory in granting salvation to the Gentiles. But does this apply to 3:5-8?

First, two alternative solutions to the meaning of 3:5ff. have been given. Barrett suggests that in the

question in v. 5 Paul is thinking of the unquoted portion of Ps. 51:4 (cf. Rom. 3:4b), "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in thy sight?" Thus, because man's sin shows more clearly the glory of God, God should not punish the one who performs such a useful function.<sup>1</sup> But the justification of God for the punishment of the sinner, no matter how his sin might magnify God's righteousness, is a common theme in Judaism and would hardly provoke reaction (cf. on this Ps. Sol. 2:15-19; 8:7-9, 23, 25; 9:3f.; 2 Bar. 78:5; I En. 108:3; IQS 1:26).<sup>2</sup> Moore might suggest that the problem arises over differing opinions of what God expects. According to Moore, Paul's view of legal righteousness is perfect moral behavior, and any deviation from God's will merits eternal wrath without recourse to forgiveness (except, according to Paul, through Christ).<sup>3</sup> But in Rom. 2:4 Paul alludes to repentance and forgiveness, and therefore the problem is not the Jew's failure to attain a standard of absolute perfection.

The interpretations of both Barrett and Moore presuppose that God's righteousness in Rom. 3:5 must be distributive justice. Käsemann claims that the primary

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<sup>1</sup>Barrett, pp. 63f.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. James L. Price, Interpreting the New Testament (2nd ed.; New York et al.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. 1971), pp. 432f.

<sup>3</sup>Moore, notes to vol. 1, pp. 150f. and vol. 1, p. 207. He bases his argument on Gal. 3:10.

meaning here is God's salvific righteousness, and the objections thus contain Jewish reaction to Paul's teaching on God's righteousness.<sup>1</sup>

The Jewish reaction to Paul's teaching on God's righteousness would arise in part from a rejection of Paul's understanding of Israel's present place in salvation history. The questions of 3:5 and 7 would then deal with some of the same themes found in ch. 9. These presuppose God's sovereign use of Israel in execution of his saving work. There it is argued, on the one hand, that Israel's sin which merits wrath derives from her hardening by God but, on the other hand, that this sin and rebellion work for good in manifesting God's glory.<sup>2</sup> Paul in 3:5-7 does not speak of God's sovereign use of Israel, but it is implicit in his reference to the effect of Israel's ἀδικία and ψεσσμα.<sup>3</sup> For in 3:5 the opponent repeats Paul's thought that unrighteousness demonstrates God's righteousness and in 3:7 that God's truthfulness increases through human untruthfulness. Thus, the Jew's infidelity brings to light the fact that salvation is solely God's work apart from the works of the law. The complaint against Paul is

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<sup>1</sup>Käsemann, pp. 77f.

<sup>2</sup>See below, pp. 317-319.

<sup>3</sup>In Paul συνίστημι has basically two meanings: (1) "to commend" (Rom. 16:1; 2 Cor. 3:1; 4:2; 5:12; 6:4; 10:12, 18; 12:11; and (2) "to demonstrate" (Rom. 3:5; 5:8). Cf. AG, p. 798; Wilhelm Kasch, ThDNT, vol. 7, pp. 897f.

that if this is so then Paul's declaration that the Jew is threatened with wrath (3:5; cf. 2:6-10) or stands condemned (2:1) makes God the author of unrighteousness and therefore himself unrighteous.

Paul does not answer the questions completely in ch. 3. In a certain sense, his answers seem inadequate. To the first form of the question (3:5), Paul merely reaffirms the role of God as world judge. This answer is hardly revolutionary<sup>1</sup> since it is a fundamental point in Jewish theology. Paul is not seeking in v. 6 to affirm something which the Jews denied but seeks rather to refute the accusation against him (v. 5b) by agreeing with this fundamental theologoumenon (cf. 2:2). The question as found in 3:7 is not even answered. For there the complaint of the Jew is allowed to evolve into another question.

The final forms of the Jew's objection in 3:7f. show the double-sided aspect of Paul's gospel, that it includes all men as condemned sinners (v. 7) and yet victoriously works good out of evil for the sinner (v. 8). Thus, the charge in v. 8 assumes a new direction and suggests that a certain implication could be drawn from Paul's teaching of justification apart from the works of the law which would be embarrassing--namely, antinomianism. Was this a conclusion which some of Paul's converts drew (cf. I Cor. 5:1-6, so Barrett), and therefore he is writing as

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<sup>1</sup>Against Bornkamm, "Theologie als Teufelskunst," pp. 145f.

a corrective?<sup>1</sup> Or is this an inference which Jewish Christians drew (so Käsemann)?<sup>2</sup> The statement καθὼς βλασφημοῦμεθα καὶ καθὼς φασὶν τινες ἡμῶς λέγειν would seem to support the latter since Paul does not charge that some have misunderstood his gospel but that a false deduction has been maliciously placed on it. In any case, Paul takes up the issue again in 6:1ff. where he carefully shows that a Christian is not to continue in sin. The discussion in ch. 6 grows naturally out of Paul's teaching in ch. 5 where he declares that grace exceeds sin (v. 21). In ch. 6, thus, we find an elaborate statement in which Paul shows that his gospel is not at all a license to sin but in fact deals decisively with that problem. But the fact that twice in ch. 6 (vs. 1 and 15) and once in ch. 3 (v. 8) Paul responds to the possibility of antinomianism suggests that he is dealing with more than a rhetorical question. The vehemence with which Paul responds to the accusation (Rom. 3:8b) is telling. Such opposition to Paul is not an error of ignorance but a willful distortion. The curse, "their condemnation is just," corresponds to his bitter words concerning the Judaizers in Gal. 1:8f. who deliberately perverted the gospel.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. I Cor. 5:1-6; Barrett states this as a possibility, p. 65.

<sup>2</sup>Käsemann, p. 78.

In 3:1f., Paul answers the Jewish objection to what he has said in 2:11-29, the Jew's advantage in possession of the law and the covenant. But the discussion quickly goes out from this to encompass a larger area: God's faithfulness, his righteousness, and the charge of antinomianism. The scope of these eight verses indicates that the motifs here mentioned deal with fundamental questions which Paul has faced time and again. Paul affirms that Israel's unfaithfulness to the covenant does not negate the faithfulness of God (vs. 2f.). In fact, over against the falsehood of all men, God alone is true (v. 4). Nor is the Jew exempt from wrath because his wickedness has been used by God to manifest his righteousness and truthfulness (vs. 5 and 7). God remains the judge of all (3:6). And lastly, it is a malicious and condemnable thing to accuse Paul of advocating the practice of evil to bring good. (v. 8).

#### 10. THE POWER OF SIN, 3:9-20

These verses provide two interrelated conclusions to Paul's foregoing argument (1:18ff.) and indicate precisely what he believes he has proved. Further, they contain lengthy scriptural support for Paul's conclusions. But the verses also possess new themes which will require clarification from later parts of his discussion in Romans.

The transitional statement is in v. 9, τὴ οὖν; προεχόμεθα; οὐ πάντως. First, what is the meaning of

προεχόμεθα? The form can be either middle or passive, and so the decision must be determined from the context. The middle use of προέχω can be either transitive ("to hold up before one") or intransitive ("to stand out"). Since there is no accusative, if the form is intransitive, Rom. 3:9 questions, "Is the Jew in a higher position (than the Gentile)?" If the form is transitive and therefore passive, the meaning is, "Is the Jew excelled?"<sup>1</sup> But in the latter use a question is raised which has nothing to do with Paul's discussion (especially vs. 19f.).<sup>2</sup> Therefore, Paul inquires whether the Jew is in a better situation.<sup>3</sup>

Second, what is the meaning of Paul's answer? The phrase οὐ πάντως can mean either "not at all" or "not altogether." The use of the form in I Cor. 5:10 does not help since the same two meanings could apply there. If Paul intends to say "not at all," notice that he contradicts his affirmation of 3:2. But this one reason is not sufficient to overrule the completely negative meaning. In the first place, Paul is not asking whether the Jew has advantages, but whether his situation is superior to that of the Gentile. The answer "not at all" is in complete agreement with the substance of 3:3ff. Second, vs. 9b-20

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<sup>1</sup>So Sanday-Headlam, p. 76.

<sup>2</sup>So Cranfield, p. 189.

<sup>3</sup>This is thoroughly discussed by Barrett, pp. 65f., and Christian Maurer in ThDNT, vol. 6, pp. 692f.

have a completely negative tone in affirming universal sinfulness.

Finally, with what does 3:9a connect? Paul can use the phrase  $\tau\acute{\iota}\ \sigma\acute{\iota}\nu$  to advance an argument while considering relevant data that he has just supplied (cf. Rom. 8:31; 11:7; I Cor. 10:19; Gal. 3:19).<sup>1</sup> Such a use is certainly present here. Paul has in 3:1-8 affirmed the advantage of the Jews and yet also charged them with unfaithfulness. He has also discussed God's universal faithfulness and his sovereign use of human evil for good while denying that either of these divine acts exempts one from judgment or gives license to sin. The question of 3:9a, then, sharpens the issue at which Paul is driving in his accusation of 1:18-3:20.

The analysis of the universal situation (3:9b) Paul gives as a proof ( $\gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho$ ). He alludes in it to what he has already argued. In this reference to his previous argument ( $\pi\rho\omicron\tau\eta\rho\iota\alpha\sigma\acute{\theta}\mu\epsilon\theta\alpha$ ) however, Paul adds a new element which is of great importance--the conception of sin as a power. This applies to the Jew and the Greek, just as the Gospel (1:16) and the principle of retribution (2:9f.)

A brief comparison with the Jewish viewpoint should begin the examination of the notion of sin in 3:9. There is nothing unique in Paul saying that all are sinners.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. AG, p. 597.

<sup>2</sup>The evidence from rabbinic materials parallel to the thought of Rom. 3:9 is cited in Str-B, vol. 3, pp. 155-157.



Except for apocalypticism (as Qumran), however, Judaism maintained that there was essential freedom from sin's power so one would not have to sin. For example, Mish. Ab. 4:2 reads:

Ben Azzai said: Run to fulfill the lightest duty even as the weightiest, and flee from transgression; for one duty draws another duty in its train, and one transgression draws another transgression in its train; for the reward of a duty [done] is a duty [to be done], and the reward of one transgression is [another] transgression.

The statement of Ben Azzai echoes the two-ways teaching used parenetically. The attention, however, is not on the final goal (life or death), but on the establishment of character (to use a psychological term).

transgression-transgression (by habit)  
duty-duty (by habit)

This does not mean that rabbinic Judaism failed to understand the complex forces in the human. The fact that all have sinned is directly related to the influence of the inner impulse to evil. The presence of this impulse is no different with respect to the Jew or the Gentile, the pious or the wicked, the scholar or the commoner. That which distinguishes one person from another is strictly this: the degree to which the evil impulse has gained control in the life. A wicked person is one who is mastered by his evil impulse, while a righteous person is mastered by the good impulse (bBer. 61b). The goal with respect to the problem of sin, then, is to control the evil impulse. And this is done, as we have seen expressed in so many ways, by

the study of the Torah and the practice of it. Thus, the schema according to rabbinic Judaism could be:

good impulse-good deed-good character-good deeds-  
judgment-life  
evil impulse-evil deed-evil character-evil deeds-  
judgment-death

A schematic outline as the above, of course, is a generalization. It attempts to show, however, the complex relationship in rabbinic thought between inner impulse, individual deeds, formed character, regular conduct, and ultimate destiny. With their characteristic variations in expression, the same conceptions are found in Ben Sir., Test. XII Patr., Wis., Philo, 4 Macc., and 2 Bar.

But the conception is different in apocalyptic Judaism as represented in Qumran and 2 Esd. Here the deterministic note is stronger, and the freedom of the individual with respect to which spirit rules (the mythological language of IQS 3:13ff.) or the evil heart (the psychological term of 2 Esd.) plays no role. Thus, in IQS, for example, the two-ways schema functions descriptively. This does not mean that the law or the study of it have disappeared. The discipline of Qumran was not exceeded by other groups in Judaism. Rather, self-determination of the individual with respect to the law is theoretically denied. Further, the sectaries confessed that the spirit of error caused iniquity and sins even among the sons of light.

Clearly, Paul's thought in Rom. 1:18-3:20 is much closer to, but not identical with, that of apocalypticism

than to other portions of Judaism. He summarizes and concludes his argument in 3:9, πάντας ὑφ' ἁμαρτίαν. This judgment would be accepted by the sectaries to the degree that all are influenced by the spirit of error so that they sin. Their understanding, however, of salvation differed from his since it did not involve a Christological solution. But their understanding of the existential situation of men comes very close to that of Paul.

Thus, in Rom. 3:9, Paul deviates from the more common Jewish viewpoint in one decisive respect: the evil impulse controls all. The universal aspect here, πᾶς, is used specifically to include the Jew in the condition which he knows to be true of the Gentile or the sinful Jew.<sup>1</sup>

Rom. 3:9 is the first time in the letter where Paul discusses the problem of sin by using ἁμαρτία as a power. Before now he has referred to specific acts of sin or generalizations of these acts: ἄσεβεια (1:18), ἄδικία (1:18; 3:5), ἁμαρτίαν (2:12). The one exception is in Paul's description of the Gentile and the triple use of παρέδωκεν . . . θεός. Here the pagan is described in a manner which is in perfect agreement with Jewish sentiment: because of his idolatry and repudiation of the God of Israel, the Gentile has fallen into perversion and general vice. The notion of sin as a power, however, is explicitly mentioned at 3:9 and finds prolific use in the remainder of the letter, especially

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<sup>1</sup>So correctly G. Harder, "Der konkrete Anlass des Römerbriefes," Theologia Viatorum, 8 (1954), pp. 20f.

in 5:12-8:10 (occurring 39 times). The shift from individual acts of sin to the use of sin as a power at 3:9 is of crucial significance in the method of Paul's argument. A comparison of our view with that of Grundmann shows the significance of Paul's use of ἁμαρτία.<sup>1</sup> Grundmann places considerable weight on the fact that Paul's most frequent use of sin occurs in chs. 5-8.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, he ignores how this relates to the argument of chs. 1-3. Therefore, he can write:<sup>3</sup>

What Paul has to say about sin is oriented to the revelation of God in Christ. Hence it is not an empirical doctrine of sin based on pessimism. It is the judgment of God on man without God as this is ascertained from the revelation of Christ and revealed in full seriousness in the cross of Christ.

In one sense Grundmann is correct.<sup>4</sup> Paul's understanding of sin gained completely new dimensions through his revelation of Christ. But the argument of Rom. 1-3 seeks to prove its case first from empirical evidence. This is especially so for the Jews, for in order to convince them

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<sup>1</sup>Walter Grundmann, ThDNT, vol. 1, pp. 308-313.

<sup>2</sup>Grundmann, p. 309.      <sup>3</sup>Grundmann, p. 308.

<sup>4</sup>The line of thought which Grundmann sees is much more clearly found in Gal. 2:17, "But if, in our endeavor to be justified by faith in Christ, we ourselves were found to be sinners, is Christ then an agent of sin?" This is written in contrast to the more common view expressed in 2:15f. that they, Cephas and Paul, were Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners and yet know that one is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ.

that they stand under equal threat of judgment (2:10f.), Paul accuses them of essentially the same sins which characterize the Gentile (2:1-3). And to show the Jew that the Gentile may be regarded as one of the covenant while he may be disinherited, Paul suggests that the Gentile may keep the law and the Jew break it (2:25f.). Up to this point, then, Paul finds the Jew guilty of committing particular acts of sin. At 3:9, he draws the deduction, which in part follows Jewish (both rabbinic and apocalyptic) thinking: concrete acts demonstrate the power to which one is subject. According to Paul, since the Jew commits acts of sin, he thereby is shown to be under the power of sin. Why does Paul argue as he does in 1:18ff.? Why does he not simply affirm that there is an inner impulse and that it has gained control of all men? Why, in other words, does he employ the empirical argument?

Paul's teaching both agrees with and deviates from rabbinic thought. Both emphasize that there is an inner impulse to evil with which the human struggles. On the other hand, Paul consistently names the impulse *ἁμαρτία* (chs. 5-7).<sup>1</sup> Therefore, it is not for him a tendency which

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Moore, vol. 1, p. 482, who observes that while the rabbis on occasion could call the "evil impulse" "sin," "it is hardly necessary to say that the interchangeability of the terms does not imply that the impulse is identified with sin. It is, to use the language of the Schoolmen about the surviving concupiscentia in the baptized, fomes peccati, not peccatum as Luther would have it."

drives one in the direction of sin but represents the actual dominion of sin. The inner impulse does not offer the possibility that if one commits sin he will become enslaved to sin but is that slavery already in effect. His viewpoint, as stated, would agree with the sectaries of Qumran or 2 Esd. But how would Jewish Christians who had influence on Paul's missionary work think on these matters? His viewpoint would certainly be denied by the Judaizers of Galatians (cf. Gal. 5:4), the kind of thought alluded to in 2 Cor. 3, or the Jews who pursued legal righteousness according to Rom. 9:30ff. It would not convince them to point to the inner conflict since in much of Judaism the law was given precisely to deal with that problem. It would not do to point to spiritual pride based on achievement of righteousness through obedience to the law, since the law itself warned of this danger.<sup>1</sup> And even in those sects of Judaism where the strength of the evil impulse was emphasized (e.g. in Qumran), rather than rejecting the law, the study of the Torah and the discipline of life was even more rigidly controlled. Therefore, in order to prove his case, Paul begins with what he believes is the one inescapable fact of the Jew: he sins as the Gentile and thus has shown himself to be under the power of sin, just as the Gentile. If the Jew's situation is one of bondage to sin, then the consequence is predetermined: death.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Moore, vol. 2, pp. 273-275.

While the two-ways schema may be cited for dogmatic purposes (cf. 2:6-10), the application of it to the non-Christian individual, according to Paul, cannot be in parenthesis, but only in description. For the one outside of God's righteousness by faith in Christ, Jew and Gentile, there is only the way of death.

sin-sins-judgment-death

The fact that Paul has argued from deeds of evil (catalogued) to the situation (the power which rules) shows his contact with apocalypticism and its use of a catalogue of vices for descriptive purposes.

To the empirical argument, Paul now adds the proof of scripture (3:10-18). The special form of this catena of OT passages has raised discussion, and Michel has made some observations which deserve mention.<sup>1</sup> There are three strophes in 3:1-18, and each one emphasizes a special form of sin. In vs. 10-12 every person is found unrighteous because he disregards God. In vs. 13f. he is guilty in word and in vs. 15-18 through inhumanity. The closeness of the thought and the cadence indicate that the entire passage (3:10ff.) was a pre-Pauline lamentation. Michel suggests that it was a primitive Christian psalm, perhaps used as a prayer of confession. Other scholars grant that Paul may have used a pre-Pauline florilegium, although they are unwilling to pronounce on the situation from which it could have

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<sup>1</sup>Michel, Römer, (12th ed.), pp. 99f.

arisen.<sup>1</sup> It is impossible to prove that it comes from primitive Christianity.<sup>2</sup> The confession is similar in thought to those from Qumran (cf. IQH 1:22-27; 3:23ff.), although Jews normally imputed such radical sinfulness to others.<sup>3</sup>

Another significant feature which Michel observes is the six repetitions of οὐκ ἔστιν. Five of these occur in the first strophe (vs. 10-12) and the last one in the summarizing indictment of v. 18. The passage, therefore, has the tone of a denial, not merely a description of a condition. The repeated mention of what is not the case punctuates Paul's accusation that the Jew is in no different position than is the Gentile.<sup>4</sup> The beginning of the citation (3:10-18), therefore, reflects Paul's own concern in Romans with the problem of δίκαι-.<sup>5</sup> It is given to deny the attribute to the Jew and does not depend on a particular OT passage. The remainder of the verses are clear adaptations from the OT: Rom 3:10b-12=Ps. 14(LXX=13):1-3 (cf. 53 [LXX=52]:1-4); Rom. 3:1a-b=Ps. 5:9(LXX=10); Rom. 3:13c=Ps. 140:3(LXX=139:4); Rom. 3:14=Ps. 10:7a (LXX=9:28a); Rom. 3:15-17=Isa. 59:7f.; Rom. 3:18=Ps. 36:1(LXX=35:2). As a

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<sup>1</sup>See Hans-Martin Schenke, "Aporien im Römerbrief," TLZ, 92 (1967), pp. 886f.; Barrett, p. 69.

<sup>2</sup>So correctly Käsemann, p. 80.

<sup>3</sup>See Str-B, vol. 3, pp. 57f.

<sup>4</sup>Michel, Römer, (12th ed.), p. 100.

<sup>5</sup>Michel, Römer, (12th ed.), p. 100.



whole, then, the cento of OT passages supports Paul's argument (καθὼς γέγραπται).

With vs. 19f., Paul shows what he believes he has proved with his lengthy quotation, "Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law." There are several points concerning Paul's meaning here which must be discussed. First, by the use of οἶδαμεν is Paul appealing to a commonly accepted formula (Michel),<sup>1</sup> or is he only making a deduction (Käsemann) from his foregoing discussion? The former opinion labors under the difficulty that it really contradicts Jewish sentiment since Paul's use of the law here is negative: to bring condemnation.<sup>3</sup> The statement, however, does not in itself carry a negative meaning. Because Israel alone listened to the law, it is not hard to understand how the Jew would think it spoke especially to him. Of course, Paul is making a deduction from what he has said before, but he only confronts the Jewish viewpoint in 3:19 from ἵνα onward. Therefore, Michel is closer to the state of affairs. Second, Paul's use of νόμος includes more than the Pentateuch since he has just quoted from the Prophets and the Writings. This is not outside of Jewish practice by any means.<sup>4</sup> Finally, 3:19 is

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<sup>1</sup>Michel, Römer, (12th ed.), p. 100.

<sup>2</sup>Käsemann, p. 81.

<sup>3</sup>Str-B, vol. 3, pp. 159f., mention only one parallel, Pes. Rabbati 21, and it is questionable.

<sup>4</sup>See Str-B, vol. 3, p. 159

aimed specifically at the Jew, ἐν τῷ νόμῳ (cf. 2:12).<sup>1</sup> Barrett argues that the sentence which follows, "so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God," excludes the possibility that Paul's intention is to prove that the Jew also was guilty.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the emphasis is on universal condemnation. But Barrett's view can hardly be correct. There is, of course, no doubt that a universal aspect is present in 3:19f., πᾶς στόμα, πᾶς ὁ κόσμος, πᾶσα σὰρξ. But each reference to universalism specifically denies that the Jew possessed means to escape eschatological condemnation which the pagan did not possess. Thus, the law speaks to those under the law so that (ἵνα) every mouth may be stopped and the whole world held accountable (3:19). For from the works of the law no one will be justified (3:20).

The partial quotation in 3:20 from Ps. 143 (LXX=142):2 must now be considered. The two passages follow:<sup>3</sup>

Ps. 143:2, ὅτι οὐ δικαιωθήσεται ἐνώπιόν σου πᾶς ζῶν  
 Rom. 3:20, διότι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιωθήσεται  
 πᾶσα σὰρξ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ

It is clear from comparing the two texts that Paul adds over

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Ulrich Wilckens, "Über Abfassungszweck und Aufbau des Römerbriefs," Rechtfertigung als Freiheit: Paulusstudien (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1974), p. 146.

<sup>2</sup>Barrett, Romans, p. 70.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Gal. 2:16, ὅτι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιωθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ and IQH 16:11.

the Psalm the important phrase, "by the works of the law." This addition gives not only a material change to the sentence but also narrows the perspective. For the issue under debate is not the fact of judgment itself but if the law provides a means of vindication, as was the case in the Jewish view. This is stated explicitly in 2 Bar. 51:3, 7, where the seer tells of the fortunes of the righteous in the final judgment:

Also (as for) the glory of those who have been justified in My law, who have had understanding in their life, and who have planted in their heart the root of wisdom, then their splendour shall be glorified in changes. . . . But those who have been saved by their works, And to whom the law has been a hope, And understanding an expectation, And wisdom a confidence, shall wonders appear in their time.

This statement from 2 Bar. implies that possession and study of the law result in the performance of its works. This obviously is the presupposition of Jewish piety, and Paul consistently denies the connection. For him, the tension between hearing and doing (Rom. 2:12), teaching and doing (2:17-22), and possessing and doing (3:2f.) remains unrelieved.

But in 3:20, the argument with Judaism also takes a new shape when Paul refers to ἔργα νόμου. Up to this point, he has maintained a negative judgment on the Jews' activity, claiming it everywhere involves acts of sin in contradiction to the law. Now he admits that the Jews may perform works of the law. The phrase ἔργα νόμου occurs

elsewhere in Paul (Gal. 3:2, 5, 10; Rom. 3:28).<sup>1</sup> In these passages, it refers to individual acts of obedience to the Torah which were supposed to benefit the doer. The phrase מעשה תורה does not seem to occur in rabbinic Judaism,<sup>2</sup> but the substance is still found. For example, in Mish. Ab. 3:12 in a negative statement R. Eleazar of Modiim denies a share in the world to come to apostatizers in the following terms:

If a man profanes the Hallowed Things and despises the set feasts and puts his fellow to shame publicly and makes void the covenant of Abraham our father, and discloses meanings in the Law which are not according to the Halakah, even though a knowledge of the Law and good works are his, he has no share in the world to come.

Putting aside the fact that there is no benefit for one who apostatizes, observe the positive value implied from doing good works. Second Bar. 57:2 claims that Abraham, knowing only the "unwritten law," fulfilled "the works of the commandments," and so "hope of the world that was to be renewed was then built up, and the promise of life should come hereafter was implanted," Interestingly enough, the phrase מעשי תורה does occur in Qumran (4QFlor. 1:7; cf. IQS 6:18; IQpHab. 7:11),<sup>3</sup> where God promises to build his sanctuary in the place where his works are done.

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<sup>1</sup>The singular form in Rom. 2:15 was discussed above, p. 199.

<sup>2</sup>Str-B, vol. 3, p. 160, says that the plural form, "the works of the law," does not occur in rabbinic literature.

<sup>3</sup>See Josephy Fitzmyer, Jerome, vol. 2, p. 240; J. M. Allegro, "Fragments of a Qumran Scroll of Eschatological Midrashim," JBL, 77 (1958), p. 352.

Why does Paul now change to admit that the Jew may perform the works of the law? Käsemann suggests that in 3:20 Paul describes the problem of boasting by the Jew: obedience to the law causes the Jew to boast before God, and this in itself constitutes his primary sin, spiritual pride, not moral failure.<sup>1</sup> But this cannot explain Paul's purpose in 3:20. In the first place, the relationship of 3:20 to 3:19 (δέ, unless this is merely a transition conjunction) is broken by such a view. For in 3:19, the law is not a cause of boasting but witnesses against the Jew in God's judgment. Second, Paul maintains the motif that empirical evidence of sinning brings the Jew into judgment in the next part of his argument where he shows that the righteousness of God comes through faith in Jesus Christ and not through the law: "For there is no distinction; since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (3:22f.). Finally, the concluding clause of 3:20 shows what Paul proved in 1:18ff., "through the law comes knowledge of sin."<sup>2</sup> The meaning of ἀμαρτία in 3:20 must be identical with that in 3:9, the inner power of evil which holds the Jew as well as the Gentile in bondage. Thus, the law reveals what is already a fact. It does not create something which did not

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<sup>1</sup>Käsemann, pp. 82-84, similarly Bornkamm, "Theologie," p. 147

<sup>2</sup>See Michel, Römer, (12th ed.), p. 102.

exist before (bondage to sin) but brings this into  
ἐπίγνωσις.

The fact that Paul has here, for the first time, stated the principle of Jewish piety in its positive aspect, ἔργα νόμου, is a telling indication of his purpose in 1:18-3:20. For he has argued precisely to show that the piety of the law has not worked, in spite of possible achievement, because the Jew is under the bondage of sin.

In 3:9-20, Paul reaches two conclusions regarding his previous argument. First, he claims that he has proved that all are under the power of sin. Here (3:9) he introduces the concept of sin as a power for the first time explicitly. But it was anticipated in his previous argument. The two-ways doctrine in apocalypticism can function descriptively: deeds performed indicate the power to which one is subject. Thus, in Paul's logic the Jews' sins of transgression prove that they are in bondage to sin as a power. He supports this argument by quoting from the law (3:10-18). Second, Paul claims that since all are in bondage to sin, there is no justification according to the "works of the law"--that form of piety which the Jew might practice. For the first time, Paul makes a positive comment about the Jew. He may perform some works in conformity to law. But this cannot save him since the law cannot rescue him from his situation in bondage to sin. The law, in fact, brings this bondage to sin into knowledge, as he explains more fully in ch. 7.

## 11. THE CONTEXT OF ROMANS 1:18-3:20

The question to be asked now concerns the relation of 1:18-3:20 to its context. How does the wrath of God (1:18) relate to the  $\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iota\omicron\sigma\sigma\acute{\upsilon}\nu\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\omicron\theta$ ? We begin with the use of  $\gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho$  in 1:18. In 1:16-18, there are four occurrences of  $\gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho$ . The first three, without any question, retain the normal value of the word, introducing an explanation or cause: Paul is eager to preach in Rome, for he is not ashamed of the gospel, since it is the power of God unto salvation. And this is so for the righteousness of God is revealed in it. But how can the  $\gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho$  of 1:18 relate to 1:17? Dodd suggests that the relationship between the two sentences is one of contrast, and  $\gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho$  must be an adversative conjunction.<sup>1</sup> This judgment proceeds from the correct observation that wrath and salvation are opposites (cf. 5:9f.). But it can be objected that we would expect another conjunction, such as  $\delta\epsilon$ . Lietzmann<sup>2</sup> makes a suggestion similar to that of Dodd but more precise: 1:18-3:20 only offers the condition of humankind outside of Christ. But this also requires that  $\gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho$  lose its normal semantic value.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Dodd, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup>Lietzmann, p. 31.

<sup>3</sup>This opinion is, however, accepted by Arndt and Gingrich, p. 151, use 4.

Another possibility is that the wrath of God is a part of the gospel.<sup>1</sup> The preaching of the cross contains both condemnation and salvation. The serious argument against this is that such a use does not appear in 1:18-3:20. The judgment and wrath which are described here stand almost completely within the orbit of Jewish thinking and outside any peculiar Christian thought. One exception to this is 2:16, if accepted as original, but this confirms that Paul's discussion is in Jewish terms since here he merely identifies Jesus as the eschatological judge. In another passage (3:5) where Paul alludes to the doctrine of justification by faith with the use of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, the notion of judgment immediately follows (3:6).

But we turn now to another issue which may add some light to the use of γὰρ in 1:18.<sup>2</sup> The theme of revelation appears twice in 1:17-3:21 with a present tense verb: "for in it the righteousness of God ἀποκαλύπτεται through faith for faith" (1:17), "for the wrath of God ἀποκαλύπτεται from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men" (1:18), and once with a perfect "νοῦν δέ the righteousness of God πεφάνερωται apart from law" (3:21). Do the three forms refer to exactly the same time? The phrase νοῦν δέ of 3:21 possesses a clear adversative character, which was

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<sup>1</sup>C. E. B. Cranfield, "Romans 1:18," ScotJT, 21 (1968), pp. 334f.

<sup>2</sup>This is discussed thoroughly by Bornkamm, "Revelation," pp. 62-64.



lacking in the γάρ of 1:18, and sets off the occurrence of this revelation of God's righteousness in the eschatological present.<sup>1</sup> But is this a logical separation from what goes before or a temporal one? Bornkamm denies the possibility of a temporal separation arguing that ἀνοχη (3:25) excludes the time prior to the gospel as one of wrath.<sup>2</sup> He admits that in 1:24, 26, 28 Paul affirms that God's judgment has always been present, while he also maintains the future note (2:5ff.). But, Bornkamm argues, if we make the revelation of God's wrath in 1:18 a continuing present with an eye to the future, final judgment, we negate its character as an event parallel to the revelation of God's righteousness in Jesus Christ.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the meaning of revelation in 1:17 and 1:18 would be totally different. This is impossible, Bornkamm contends, since such contradictions within such a short space place too great a strain on Paul's language.

There are, however, several decisive arguments against Bornkamm's view. First, like Cranfield, he neglects the character of the argument in 1:18-3:20 which depends upon the strict application of the ius talionis. Second, the judgment Paul describes in 1:18-3:20 has not all been reserved for the eschatological present or the eschatological

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<sup>1</sup>Bornkamm, "Revelation," p. 63.

<sup>2</sup>Bornkamm, "Revelation," p. 49.

<sup>3</sup>Bornkamm, "Revelation," p. 62.

future. Bornkamm admits that the Gentiles' evil (1:24, 26, 28) is a form of God's judgment, his wrath. And the same applies to the Jews, for their sins (2:1-3, 21-23) are evidence that they are under the power of sin (3:9). But the question remains if this judgment is revealed. That is precisely what Paul has argued in 1:19-21 (for the Gentile) and 2:1-3 (for the Jew). Both are without excuse for they know. We can show the same thing by placing the transitional sentences in parallel:

1:17, For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, "He through faith is righteous shall live."

3:21f., But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.

Notice the similar themes and even phrases in these two verses. But a comparison of 1:18 to 3:20 shows some striking differences:

1:18, For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth.

3:20, For no human being will be justified in his sight by works of the law since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

These differences, however, reveal the purpose of 1:18-3:20. The parallel themes are: ἀποκαλύπτεται/ἐπίγνωσις, ὁργὴ θεοῦ/ἁμαρτία. Knowledge of sin in 1:18-3:20, however, does not arise from the preaching of the gospel but through the law. God's wrath is present in human bondage to sin.

Knowledge of God's will reveals the inexcusability of humankind and God's judgment. Thus, while Paul sets in opposition revelations of God's righteousness and God's wrath, both are not revealed in the Gospel (in 1:18-3:20).

We have now considered how the wrath of God and the righteousness of God relate in Rom. 1:18-3:20 to its immediate context. We have also pointed out that the comparison of 3:20 to 3:21 indicates that Paul denied that the piety of the law could relieve the threat of impending judgment. This movement from the threat of impending judgment to the impossibility of avoiding it through the law marks the purpose of Paul in 1:18-3:20. The tragic situation of the Gentile and the principle of retribution were commonplace in Judaism. Therefore, if Paul had stopped by pointing out these two features, he would hardly have proved that God's righteousness for the Gentiles was revealed solely in Jesus Christ. For it is precisely on these two presuppositions that the Jew found the ἐργα νόμου so effective: through the piety of the Torah the pagan life-style was broken and the acts were performed which would result in life. That Paul operates so thoroughly within the orbit of Jewish presuppositions in 1:18-3:20 shows how seriously he took the position of his opponents.

## CHAPTER III

### THE SITUATION OF ROMANS

The first two chapters discussed motifs found both in Judiasm (ch. I) and in Romans 1:18-3:20 (ch. II). They attempted to show that the complexity of Paul's argument corresponds to the complexity of Jewish themes with which he is dealing and thus that his logic does not arise from a systematic concern but from a controversy with Judaism.

We can, however, go an additional step in seeking the historical nature of Romans. Does the dogmatic argument, and in particular 1:18-3:20, respond to an historical situation which we can discover? The present chapter (III) endeavors to answer that question. The purpose here is not as extensive as that in chapters I and II. Rather, our investigation is exploratory and supportive of our previous considerations. The procedure will be as follows: first, we will investigate the history of Roman Judaism, then the Christian church in Rome, and last the letter itself.

#### 1. THE EXTERNAL EVIDENCE

##### a. ROMAN JUDAISM

The first solid evidence for a substantial Jewish community in Rome comes from the defense of Lucius Valerius

Flaccus by the orator Marcus Tullius Cicero (Pro Flacco 66-69; 59 B.C.).<sup>1</sup> Flaccus was accused of confiscating funds collected for the temple in Jerusalem, and Cicero's words indicate that even at that time the Jewish community in Rome was populous and influential, since he states, "You know how large a group they [the Jews] are, how unanimously they stick together, how influential they are in politics."<sup>2</sup>

It was under Julius Caesar, however, and no doubt in return for the support given him in his campaign against Pompey, that the Jews acquired the privilege that determined the relation of the Roman government and the Jewish people for the next three centuries (Josephus, Ant. 14:185-216).<sup>3</sup> The privilege of the Jew was that he was allowed to become a Roman citizen and yet to maintain his own religion. In two areas this created problems. With respect to emperor worship the Jew was treated leniently: daily sacrifice at the temple on the emperor's behalf substituted for the Jews' actual participation in the imperial cult.<sup>4</sup> A second issue

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<sup>1</sup>For the expulsion in 139 B.C. see Harry Leon, The Jews of Ancient Rome (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1960), pp. 2-4.

<sup>2</sup>The translation is that of Leon, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup>Leon, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup>George La Piana, "Foreign Groups in Rome during the First Three Centuries of the Empire," HarvTR, 20 (1927), pp. 375-378, offers a history of this issue during the reigns of Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, and Claudius. Our statement is, of course, a generalization. The ambitions of Caligula to deification are well known. He was prevented, however, from achieving his desire in Palestine by a premature death.

involving the making of proselytes was not so easily solved. What aroused Roman suspicion were the political aspirations of Judaism since Judaism, as Rome, claimed to be universal. Thus, the concern was to keep the Jews within their racial boundaries. The armies of the Jews did not frighten the emperors so much as the fact that large numbers of converts could undermine Rome's authority and the obedience of the masses.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, it is not surprising that Gentile converts were denied the privileges which Rome allowed for born Jews.<sup>2</sup>

Next we turn to the exceptions to this general policy of Rome tolerating the Jews and their religion. Twice after Julius Caesar and before Paul's letter to the Church at Rome conflict arose between the State and the Jews. Augustus had maintained the favorable treatment begun by Caesar.<sup>3</sup> But trouble arose during the reign of Tiberius. Josephus reports (Ant. 18:81-84) that four Jews urged a certain Fulvia, a proselyte of high, civil rank, to contribute funds for the temple in Jerusalem. They then embezzled these funds. When the matter came to Tiberius' attention, punishment was extended into the Jewish community beyond the guilty four. According to Tacitus (Annals II, 85:4) 4000 freedmen (not citizens) were conscripted to do police work in Sardinia.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>La Piana, pp. 383-385.      <sup>2</sup>La Piana, p. 387.

<sup>3</sup>Leon, pp. 10f.

<sup>4</sup>This is also reported in less detailed form in Suetonius, Life of Tiberius 36.

The incident probably reveals reaction by the State, when the opportunity arose, to check the rising number of proselytes which Roman Judaism was gaining.<sup>1</sup> In any case, it shows that Judaism could fall under governmental suspicion and punishment. When, however, Aelius Sejanus, the notorious praetorian prefect who probably was responsible for the expulsion of the 4000, fell from power and died (A.D. 31), the Roman Jews were again treated favorably by Tiberius.<sup>2</sup>

The second incident of friction between the State and Roman Judaism is more widely known but the details make certainty difficult. It is reported in Suetonius' *Life of Claudius* (25:4), "Iudaeos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultantes Roma expulit" ("He expelled the Jews from Rome, since they were continually making disturbances with Chrestus as the instigator"). Leon<sup>3</sup> has explicated the basic questions concerning this report: first, was there an expulsion? Both Acts 18:2 and Suetonius report an expulsion. Cassius Dio (60, 6:6), however, states that the punishment was to forbid Jews from holding public worship while they were allowed to maintain their traditions. There were simply too many Jews in Rome to expel them all. Josephus and Tacitus, however, say nothing of the incident.

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<sup>1</sup>See Louis H. Feldman's comment in *Josephus*, vol. 9 (LCL; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 60, n. a.

<sup>2</sup>Leon, pp. 17-20.    <sup>3</sup>Leon, pp. 23-28.

Second, if there was an expulsion, how extensive was it? Luke's statement that all (πάντες) the Jews were expelled<sup>1</sup> is hard to reconcile with the report of Cassius Dio. Further, Josephus and Tacitus would surely have known of such an enormous undertaking as a general exodus would have involved (explicitly mentioned as a problem by Cassius Dio). We must presume, then, that if there was an expulsion, it was to a limited number, probably to those who caused the trouble.<sup>2</sup>

Third, when in Claudius' reign did this occur? The question centers on the reliability of the fifth century Christian writer, Orosius (Against the Pagans 7, 6:15f.) who dates the expulsion in A.D. 49. Leon mentions Orosius' notorious inaccuracy<sup>3</sup> which creates doubt concerning his dating. The comment of Luke, however, that Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:2) had lately arrived from Italy supports the date of A.D. 49 since Paul's visit to Corinth probably occurred in A.D. 51/2.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, does the report of Suetonius refer to Jesus the Christ or some other individual name Chrestus? Benko,

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<sup>1</sup>See Ernst Haenchen, The Acts of the Apostles, trans. R. McL. Wilson (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1971), p. 538. He says Luke's comment is an exaggeration.

<sup>2</sup>F. F. Bruce suggests that the expelled Jews were not citizens, The Book of Acts (The New International Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1954), p. 368.

<sup>3</sup>Leon, p. 25.

<sup>4</sup>See W. G. Kümmel, Introduction to the New Testament, trans. A. J. Mattill, Jr. (London: SCM Press, LTD, 1965), p. 180.



for example, suggests that Chrestus was the name of a zealot leader in Rome.<sup>1</sup> Some contend, however, that if Suetonius had been thinking of some unknown person in Rome he would have written a "certain Chrestus" (quodam Chresto).<sup>2</sup> Most accept, then, that the uproar was caused by the disturbance that Christian preaching produced within one of the Jewish synagogues in Rome.<sup>3</sup>

The expulsion mentioned in Suetonius, thus, is the first witness to the presence of Christianity in Rome. It tells us that at least by A.D. 49 Christianity had made contact with the Jewish community in the imperial capital. Further, there was conflict between the non-Christian and Christian segments of the synagogue sufficient for action to be taken by civil authorities. Obviously, Gentiles who were related to the synagogue as proselytes and God-fearers might also have been influenced by the Christian preaching.<sup>4</sup> It does not appear that the expulsion involved large numbers of people, since Tacitus and Josephus say nothing of it, and Cassius Dio indicates that the Jews were too populous for a general expulsion.

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<sup>1</sup>S. Benko, "The Edict of Claudius of A.D. 49 and the Instigator Chrestus," TZ, 25 (1969), p. 418.

<sup>2</sup>So Henri Janne, "Impulsore Chresto," Mélanges Bidez (Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales II, 1934), p. 540 apud Leon, p. 25.

<sup>3</sup>So W. G. Kümmel, pp. 217f.; Willi Marxsen, Introduction to the New Testament, trans. G. Buswell (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), pp. 98f.; Haenchen, pp. 533, 538; Bruce, p. 368.

<sup>4</sup>See G. Harder, "Der konkrete Anlass des Römerbriefes," Theologia Viatorum, 8 (1954), pp. 15-17.

We turn now briefly to some other problems connected with the Jewish community in Rome. The first concerns the number of Jews that would have resided there. One historical witness is a hint found in Josephus (Wars 2:80; Ant. 17:300). Josephus says that in 4 B.C. 50 representatives from Palestine came to Rome to request of Augustus that Archelaus be removed from rule in Palestine and that the nation be granted autonomy. In support of the deputies, 8000 Jews in Rome turned out. Again, there is the report of Tacitus (Annals 2, 85:4), already mentioned, that in A.D. 19, 4000 men of military age were sent to Sardinia from Roman Jewry. From these figures, which are the only ones that we possess, estimations of the population of Roman Judaism during the first century A.D. range from 14,000 to 60,000, with most scholars putting the figure between 40,000 and 50,000.<sup>1</sup>

Next we consider the organization of the Jewish community in Rome.<sup>2</sup> According to Leon<sup>3</sup> the remains of eleven synagogues in the city have been uncovered. But it is impossible to know how many of these existed during the first century A.D. A related questions concerns the unity

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<sup>1</sup>See Leon, pp. 135f. Jean-Baptist Frey, "Les communautés juives à Rome aux premiers temps de l'Eglise," RScRel, 20 (1930), p. 282 puts the figures at 14,000-15,000 during A.D. 1-30. Jean Juster, Les Juifs dans l'Empire romain: Leur condition juridique, économique et sociale, vol. 1 (Paris: Libraire Paul Geuthner, 1914), p. 209, says that there could have been as many as 60,000.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Frey, pp. 269f.; La Piana, pp. 341-393.

<sup>3</sup>Leon, pp. 140-159.

of Roman Judaism. La Piana, on the one hand, assumes that all of the synagogues were subject to a central sanhedrin.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the situation in Roman Judaism would be analogous to, though not identical with, that in Alexandria, since there is no mention of an ethnarch (a single individual who presided over the sanhedrin and the Jewish affairs) in Rome. Frey, on the other hand, states that La Piana's view is not adequately supported by the evidence.<sup>2</sup> The one item which may support the view of a central gerousia in Rome is the inscription<sup>3</sup> referring to an archon alti ordinis. Since, however, there is no evidence to explain the meaning of this inscription, it is hazardous, according to Frey, to deduce from this one inscription that Roman Judaism possessed a central gerousia. There are numerous examples from the inscriptions in Rome of titles carried by Jews (archisynagogus, archon, gerousiarches, grammateus, and possibly presbyterus), but the offices they refer to can be only those of individual synagogues.<sup>4</sup> Since, however, 8000 turned out to support the 50 deputies from Palestine against Archelaus (Wars 2:80; Ant. 17:300), it is clear that Romans Jews could unite in common cause.

Finally, we mention the inscriptions. Of the 733 inscriptions given by Leon, mostly from burial sites, only

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<sup>1</sup>La Piana, pp. 349f., 361-368.

<sup>2</sup>Frey, pp. 295-297. See Leon, pp. 167-170 for the history of the treatment of this problem.

<sup>3</sup>Leon, pp. 333f.    <sup>4</sup>Leon, pp. 171-186.

seven mention that the person named was a proselyte. Further, of these five are females. This evidence may reflect both the greater freedom of women in experimenting with religions<sup>1</sup> and the fact that the requirement of circumcision probably kept many men from becoming proselytes when they would otherwise have been interested. But the numbers are too few to draw any decisive conclusions. There are, of course, no examples of God-fearers since they were not considered Jews.

We now summarize our results from this brief survey of the history of Roman Judaism up to the time of Nero. The beginnings of the Jewish population in Rome are obscure, but we are certain that there were many there by the time of Cicero's defense of Flaccus (59 B.C.). During the first century A.D. the population of the Jewish community there was probably between 40,000 and 50,000. The Jews had several synagogues in the city, though we cannot be certain how many. There was perhaps some influence in the Gentile community, but the proselytes do not appear to have made up a significant part of the Jewish community.

The character of the relationship between the Jewish community and the state varied. Beginning with Julius Caesar, the Jews obtained the right to practice their religion and yet remain citizens. This meant that they were exempted from participation in the imperial cult. But

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<sup>1</sup>Leon, pp. 253-256.

the same privilege was not granted to proselytes. Thus, the government deliberately attempted to keep Judaism within her racial boundaries. Twice, however, the hand of the State fell on the Jewish people of Rome: under Tiberius in A.D. 19 and under Claudius in A.D. 49. The latter instance appears to have arisen over a conflict in the Jewish community caused by the introduction of Christian preaching. The exact nature of that preaching cannot be determined. Those who participated in it, however, were expelled from the city. With the rise of Nero, the Jews were again in imperial favor. Perhaps some of those expelled returned at that time.

The Jewish community in Rome does not appear to have been so united as that in Alexandria. There is no solid evidence for a city gerousia or an ethnarch. The synagogues probably ran their own affairs. But the Jews of Rome could unite, as in 4 B.C. to support the Jerusalem deputies against Archelaus. Although not structurally unified, Roman Judaism was unified in purpose.

#### b. ROMAN CHRISTIANITY

The New Testament nowhere comments on the founding of the Church at Rome. The letter to the Romans presupposes its existence if the letter was actually sent to Rome, as is probable.<sup>1</sup> Some suggest that among the Jews and proselytes

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<sup>1</sup>There is textual evidence to support the omission of ἐν <Ρώμῃ in 1:7 (G 1739<sup>m</sup> 1908<sup>m</sup> it<sup>g</sup> Origen) and τοῖς ἐν <Ρώμῃ in 1:15 (G it<sup>g</sup> Origen), but most of the manuscripts have

of Rome who might have been converted on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:10) some returned to Rome and started the Church there.<sup>1</sup> No statement, however, specific or implied, supports such a view. We have already mentioned the exodus of Aquila and Priscilla from Italy (Acts 18:2). This is probably to be identified with the expulsion reported by Suetonius (Life of Claudius 25:4) which in turn was due to the turmoil which the preaching of the Church created in the Jewish community. If this is the case, this report is the earliest evidence of the Church in Rome, but it tells us nothing concerning the founding of the Church there.

The report of Luke in Acts 28 raises other problems. In reply to Paul's self-introduction, the Jews of Rome said (vs. 21f.):

We have received no letter from Judea about you, and none of the brethren coming here has reported or spoken any evil about you. But we desire to hear from you what your views are; for with regard to this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against,

On the appointed day, then, Paul spoke again to them, arguing from the Law and the Prophets concerning Jesus (v. 23). Some believed and others did not (v. 24). Paul cited Isaiah 6:9f. to explain their hardening (vs. 24-27) and declared that the gospel henceforth would go to the Gentiles who would believe (v. 28).

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these readings (p<sup>26</sup>vid  $\kappa$  A B C K P et al.). Further, the early acceptance of the view that Romans is a general and not a particular letter could account for the omissions noted above. See B. M. Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament (London, New York: United Bible Societies, 1971), pp. 505f.

<sup>1</sup>See F. W. Beare, IDB, vol. 4, p. 122.

The substance of Paul's comments in vs. 21f. may be summed up as follows: first, the Jews in Rome (at least those who met Paul) had no first hand knowledge of Christianity, although Luke indicates that there were Christians there (28:15). Roman Jews knew of Christianity only from reports. Second, Paul was unknown to Roman Judaism. Third, the information they had was not favorable to Christianity. The first item, that the Jews of Rome had no personal knowledge of Christianity, seems to conflict with Acts 18:2 and Suetonius.<sup>1</sup> With respect to the second item, we cannot know why they had not heard of Paul. The third item, that Christianity had a poor reputation, tallies with Suetonius' report to a degree. Luke therefore does not tell us anything about the origins of Roman Christianity or its relationship to the Jewish community in Acts 28 which is of any help in understanding the situation of the letter to the Romans.<sup>2</sup>

From here, we turn to Ambrosiaster (fourth century Latin Father). He writes concerning the origin of the church at Rome (Works 3:373): "It is established that there were

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<sup>1</sup>E. A. Judge and G. S. R. Thomas, "The Origin of the Church at Rome," The Reformed Theological Review, 25 (1966), pp. 88f., use Acts 28:17-22 as one of the bases upon which to argue that Paul was the founder of Roman Christianity. Bruce, pp. 530f., suggests that the Jews of Rome showed diplomacy. Since ten years earlier a vigorous reaction to Christian preaching had brought the wrath of the government, they now acted in a more rational manner.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Jacob Jervell, "The Divided People of God," Luke and the People of God (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1972), pp. 41-43.

Jews living in Rome in the times of the apostles, and that those Jews who believed passed on to the Romans the tradition that they ought to profess Christ but keep the law."<sup>1</sup> Several deductions should be made from this report concerning Ambrosiaster's opinion: First, the Church at Rome was not founded by apostles but by those living in Rome at the time of the apostles. Second, Jewish Christians of Rome witnessed to Gentiles. Third, the Gentiles who became Christians were taught to keep the law, probably to live as Jews and become proselytes.<sup>2</sup> The evidence from Ambrosiaster agrees with the report of Suetonius that at an early date Christianity made contact with the Jewish synagogue. We have no way of proving that it started there, but the suggestion is likely. The characterization however, of Roman Christianity as bound to the Jewish law might be little more than a deduction from the letter to the Romans.

Next, we turn to the years following the episode of A.D. 49. We know from Suetonius (Life of Nero 16) and Tacitus (Annals 15:44) that by the time of the Neronian persecution (A.D. 64) the Jews and the Christians were clearly distinguished, and it was the Christian community that the imperial government did not favor. If we have

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<sup>1</sup>Cited according to the translation given by John Knox in IB, vol. 9, p. 362.

<sup>2</sup>This evidence from Ambrosiaster is accepted as generally accurate by Knox, IB, vol. 9, p. 362; and Otto Michel, Der Brief an die Römer (10th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1955), p. 8.



correctly interpreted the edict of Claudius (A.D. 49), within a fifteen year period the Christian Church took on sufficient distinction from the synagogue to be noticed by the State. One of two things occurred. Either the Christian community could have been originally a Gentile Christian community and the incident reported in Suetonius did not occur in connection with the founding of the Church there. Thus, the expulsion of Jewish Christians from Rome left Gentile Christians untouched. Or, if the report of Suetonius does refer to the introduction of Christianity into the city, after the expulsion of the Jewish Christians, the Church there developed in independence of the synagogue.

In summary and conclusion to the survey of the external evidence the following concerning Roman Christianity seems a possible background to the letter of Romans: Suetonius' report is sufficient for us to be certain that Christianity was in Rome by A.D. 49. We cannot be certain if the disturbance reported occurred at the introduction of Christianity into the city, but it is altogether possible. The report of Ambrosiaster in answering this question is of no help since it is so late. Perhaps Christianity did arise from within the Jewish synagogue. By the time Paul writes, however, it was certainly more than just a Jewish sect. By A.D. 64, the Jewish community and the Christian Church were distinguished even by the State. Thus, we know from external evidence

that, prior to Paul's writing, the Christian Church and the Jewish community in Rome had contact, that Jewish Christians were expelled from the city in A.D. 49 and that the Christian Church after A.D. 49 was separated from the synagogue.

## 2. THE INTERNAL EVIDENCE

In order to understand the purpose of the letter to the Romans, consideration will now be given to the internal evidence. Such an inquiry presupposes that Romans itself should reflect an historical occasion sufficient to account for its argument. Traditional exegesis, as already indicated does not take the historical nature of Romans seriously. Our examination here implies that traditional exegesis is inconsistent not only with the exegesis of other Biblical documents but also with the evidence Romans gives of itself. Thus, we assume that Romans does suggest its purpose. It will be noticed as we proceed that several basic questions will be asked constantly: whom is Paul addressing? What is Paul's relationship to those whom he addresses? What do the individual passages try to prove or admonish to? And do the various passages fit together to give some united purpose(s)?

The letter opens with Paul presenting himself as a servant and apostle (1:1) of God's Gospel (1:2-4)

to the Gentiles (1:5f.). The Christians whom he addresses at Rome are among the Gentiles (1:5-7), that is, they are primarily Gentiles.<sup>1</sup> Paul then thanks God for their spiritual progress (1:8). He also prays for the fulfillment of the long delayed visit to impart to them some spiritual gift to strengthen them, that is, to be mutually encouraged by them (1:11f.). The language in 1:11f. could imply that Paul feels he must speak carefully since he is not the founder of this congregation (so Barrett).<sup>2</sup> Or it could reflect the complexity of the situation, that he writes to a congregation which has mature Christians but over whom he is the apostle.<sup>3</sup> Paul goes on to state that he hopes to reap among the Romans spiritual fruit, and this means converts from the pagan world (1:13-15).<sup>4</sup> He is not ashamed to preach the Gospel there, since it is God's power unto salvation (1:16f.).

The first seventeen verses yield the following information concerning the situation of Romans: Paul introduces himself as the apostle to the Gentiles

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<sup>1</sup>See below, p. 294, on the problem of how to translate ἔθνεσιν.

<sup>2</sup>C. K. Barrett, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans (New York et al.: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1957), p. 25.

<sup>3</sup>A. Fridrichsen, "The Apostle and His Message," Inbjudning till Theologie Doktorspromotionen (Uppsala: Almquist & Wiksell's Boktryckeri AB, 1947), pp. 7f.

<sup>4</sup>Barrett, p. 26.

including those at Rome. He has prayed for a long time that he might visit Rome to strengthen them, to be mutually encouraged by them, and to evangelize among them. But there is no special problem in the Roman Church which comes into our view.

The details of 1:18-3:20, as we have shown, suggest an argument with Judaism. While there is discussion of the situation of the Gentile (1:18-32; 2:14f., 26-29), Paul is not here contending with the pagan. First, the sinfulness of the pagan and his consequent jeopardy before God's wrath (1:18-32) hardly needed proof (cf. Gal. 2:15). Second, in 1:18-32 Paul speaks indirectly of the Gentile but confronts the Jew. Third, Paul's treatment of the Jews is consistent and unfolding. The matter is not so simple with the Gentile. In one place he condemns the Gentile (1:18-32), in another he states that on occasion he may do what the law requires (2:14), and in yet another he claims that the Gentile who keeps the precepts of the law is recognized as circumcision and the true Jew (2:26-29). This shows that the Jew is the constant and the Gentile is the variable by which his logic progresses. And the Gentile is clearly a foil against which Paul can break down Jewish confidence or protection from wrath based on election (2:1-10) or possession of the law (2:12ff.). The Jews whom Paul castigates in these verses are guilty of unrepentance (2:5), unfaithfulness (3:3), unrighteousness (3:5), falsehood (3:4, 7), and specific

acts of sin for which the Jew judges the Gentile (2:1, 3) or teaches the Gentile to forsake (2:21-23). The argument of 1:18-3:20, then, erodes the belief of the better situation of the Jew because of election and possession of the law. The Jew, as well as the Gentile, is under the power of sin, and consequently there is no justification through the works of the law but only knowledge of sin.

But if 1:18-3:20 is against the Jew, we must ask how such an argument is supposed to function in a letter addressed to Gentile Christians? The answer to this question must wait until we consider more of the letter.

At 3:21 there is a sharp turn. Whereas in 1:18-3:20 there is almost no dependence on a specifically Christian solution to the problem, in 3:21ff. the presuppositions become totally Christian. God's eschatological righteousness, as his eschatological wrath, is proleptically revealed. Through the blood of Jesus Christ, God has provided redemption and expiation to all who believe. This had been witnessed to in the law and the prophets, although it was not manifested in the law. While, then, there is an overtone of the argument with the Jews continuing (the polemic against the law is still echoed), 3:21-26 is basically an

affirmation of Christian theologoumena concerning the redemption inaugurated through Christ's death.<sup>1</sup>

But with 3:27ff. we return again to an argument with the Jewish viewpoint. Faith is set opposite boasting (the first time this has been mentioned in Romans) and the works of the law (3:27f.). Since God is one, he is God also of the uncircumcised Gentiles (3:29-30). This is supported by the law since Abraham was justified by faith, not by works (4:1-8), before he was circumcised (4:9-11a) and thus became the father of two nations of believers, the circumcised and the uncircumcised (4:11b-22). Thus, in 3:27ff. Paul again seems to address Jews. The same is true in ch. 4, where he refers to Abraham, the Jews' forefather according to the flesh. But at 4:23-25, Paul turns directly to a Christian audience. Thus, the question is raised, when Paul refers to "Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh" (4:1), is he addressing Jewish Christians who might have insisted

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<sup>1</sup>Rudolf Bultmann, TNT, vol. 1, p. 46, offers the opinion that Paul depends on a Jewish Christian tradition in 3:24f. Ernst Käsemann supports and sharpens this thesis by pointing to phrases he thinks are not characteristic of Paul, An die Römer (HNT, 8a; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr Paul Siebeck, 1973), pp. 88-90. C. E. B. Cranfield, The Epistle of the Romans, vol. 1 (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975), p. 200, n. 1, rejects this view saying that Paul would not depend on other traditions for a motif that is so central to his argument. Such an objection, however, does not account for the origin of Paul's language. Everything which Paul thinks is central does not have to be original with him.

that justification was only possible to the Gentile who became circumcised?

The argument of chs. 5-8 seems to be for Gentiles. It necessarily presupposes that the readers are Christians. While the argument that the Gentile Christian is a legitimate fulfillment of Abraham's promise (4:11, 16f.) drops out of sight, the confessional, first person plural predominates in 5:1-11. Also, Paul characterizes "all" as "helpless" and "sinners" (v. 8) for whom Christ died. The universal note also applies to those who through faith enjoy grace, reconciliation, and the hope of salvation from wrath. In 5:12-21, the first person is replaced by the third, but universalism again is clear. Here the fate of humankind falls under the cosmic roles of Adam and Christ. But there is a distinction between Jew and Gentile (some have sinned without the law and in such instances sin is not counted, v. 13). In ch. 6 Paul again speaks universally of those "baptized into Christ." They were once "slaves of sin" (vs. 17, 20) and also "under the law" (vs. 14f.). But a Jewish objection to Paul's gospel again (cf. 3:8) surfaces: "Are we to continue in 'sin' that grace may abound?" (6:1, cf. v. 15). Thus, although the language is general and refers to all Christians, Paul is responding to Jewish accusations.

Ch. 7 addresses "those who know the law" (v. 1). In fact, the word νόμος occurs nineteen times in the chapter. Thus, it seems to have Jews in mind. It is also obvious that 7:1-6 thinks of Christians because Paul says they have "died to the law through the body of Christ" (v. 4). On the other hand, it is certain that the person described in 7:7ff. cannot be a Christian.<sup>1</sup> It could be a description of a Jew, especially in the light of vs. 9f. Here Paul says, in rhetorical style, that he was alive apart from the law; but, when the commandment which promised life came, it proved to be death to him. Paul, however, does not blame the law for this failure (cf. vs. 12f.) but sin which dwells in him (cf. vs. 13f., 17, 20, 23). Thus, Paul responds to the Jewish charge that his logic reduces the law to sin (7:7) or makes it the instrument of death (7:13). The substance of Paul's argument in ch. 7 is to show what "the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do" (ch. 8:3).

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<sup>1</sup>The attempts of Anders Nygren, Commentary on Romans, ET (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1949), pp. 290-292, and Barrett, pp. 150f., to defend the older view that Rom. 7 describes the Christian have not met with wide approval. One should consider in this regard the definitive study of W. G. Kümmel (first published in 1929) "Römer 7 und die Bekehrung des Paulus," Römer 7 und das Bild des Menschen im Neuen Testament. Zwei Studien (Theologische Bucherei, Neues Testament, 53; München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1974), pp. 87-108.



Ch. 8 is aimed at the Gentile reader, but Jewish issues are not ignored (cf. vs. 4, 7). The discussion of the law from ch. 7 drops into the background, and Paul here expands on Christian theologoumena: God's sending of his son (v. 3), the resurrection of Jesus (v. 11), the Spirit (passim), and eschatological redemption.<sup>1</sup> The themes of ch. 8 grow naturally from the issues raised in the preceding chapters. For example, Paul contrasts the new life of the Spirit and the walk according to the Spirit (8:1-12) with serving under the letter (7:6) and the bondage to sin in the flesh (7:7ff.). He also expands (8:18-39) the hope of salvation based on Christ's death and present reconciliation (5:1-11).<sup>2</sup>

The destiny of Israel would be a poignant issue for a Jew, as it was for Paul (cf. 9:2; 10:1). And obviously the questions of 9:14 and 19 arise from Jewish opponents. But in 11:13 Paul specifically identifies his readers, or at least a portion of them, as Gentiles.

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<sup>1</sup>Paul W. Minear, The Obedience of Faith: The Purpose of Paul in the Epistle to the Romans (SBT, 2nd Series, 19; London: SCM Press, LTD, 1971), pp. 69-71, suggests that this chapter is written to a group he calls "doubters," Gentile Christians who are afraid that they must follow the Jewish law or miss salvation but are influenced by the "strong" of chs. 14f. to think that faith excludes reliance on works. Certainly, the themes of ch. 8 could address such "doubters" as Minear envisions, but there is nothing in Romans to indicate that Paul sees such a group in the Roman Church (including 14:23).

<sup>2</sup>See further on this, N. A. Dahl, "Two Notes on Romans 5," ST, 5 (1952), pp. 37-48.

From here on, he warns the wild branches that they too can be cut off for unbelief. Is he, thus, in chs. 9-11 discussing the problem of Jewish unbelief with Gentile Christian readers, or is he speaking first to Jews and then to Gentiles?

Chs. 12 and 13 begin the parenetic section of Romans. They are so general in character that it would not be safe to attempt an identification of the readers or to assume that the reason for letter can be gained from here.<sup>1</sup>

If there is a portion of Romans which reflects an actual problem in the Roman Church, it must be the controversy between the weak and the strong (14:1-15:13). This viewpoint is supported by many scholars (Minear, Kümmel, Wilckens, et al.)<sup>2</sup> Karris objects that these are not actual groups in Roman Christianity. Rather, in ch. 14f. Paul is merely giving an example of his ethical views. Support for this objection is thought to be found in the similarities between Romans 14:1-15:7 and 1 Cor. 8; 10:23-11:1. To a large degree, the principles

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<sup>1</sup>Marcus Borg, "A New Context for Rom 13," NTS, 19 (1972/3), pp. 205-218, finds in 13:1-7 the goal of Paul's argument in Romans. The connection of 13:1-7 with the rest of Paul's discussion do not warrant such a thesis. It is merely a short section in the parenthesis. Willi Marxsen is on more cautious grounds when he claims that Paul is concerned that the Christians of Rome not make an uproar which would cause a repeat of Claudius' edict, p. 100.

<sup>2</sup>Minear, pp. 69-71, W. G. Kümmel, p. 221; Ulrich Wilckens, "Über Abfassungszweck und Aufbau des Römerbriefs," Rechtfertigung als Freiheit: Paulusstudien (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1974), pp. 120-124; Willi Marxsen, pp. 96-101.

by which Paul solves the problems agree not only in general but in detail in the two letters.<sup>1</sup> There are, however, some differences.<sup>2</sup> The most serious one is that in I Corinthians the conflict arises over meat offered to idols while in Romans it is vegetarianism (asceticism). Karris suggests that when Paul refers to vegetarianism, he is merely generalizing from the problem of meat offered to idols. There is also a parallel to Rom. 14:5f. in Gal. 4:10 which refers to observance of days, months, seasons, and years (cf. Col. 2:16-23). Here again it could be argued that in Romans Paul is generalizing on the influence which Jewish scruples might have on a Gentile congregation.

The question is: does Rom. 14:1-15:13 present an example of a Pauline solution to a conflict or does he address an actual situation in Rome? It can be noticed that the direct address form (cf. 2:1 et passim) reappears. Paul rebukes the strong for not considering the weak. They are to welcome and not dispute with them (14:1; 15:7). They are not to despise the weak (14:3, 10). Neither are they to put a stumbling block in their way (14:13) but are to bear with their failings (15:1). But Paul also exhorts the weak not to judge the strong (14:3, 13). Thus, while Paul identifies himself with the strong (15:1) and writes

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<sup>1</sup>Robert J. Karris, "Rom. 14-15:13 and the Occasion of Romans," CBQ, 35 (1973), pp. 165-167.

<sup>2</sup>Karris, pp. 167f.

most pointedly to them (14:13-15:13), he also admonishes the weak. But is it possible to prove simply from the direct address form that these parties existed in Roman Christianity?

Second, we consider if the weak in Rom. 14:1-15:13 are Jewish Christians. The weak had scruples which centered on vegetarianism (14:2f.), fast days (14:5f.), and the drinking of wine (14:21). Karris contends that we do not know of a form of Judaism which made vegetarianism and abstinence from wine decisive in obedience to the law (although the holidays can clearly be of Jewish origin).<sup>1</sup> Against this objection, we can consider the following evidence: the weak, ἀσθενεῖς in Paul's discussion are weak in faith (14:1). They suppose that failure to observe their scruples merits judgment, even of one who is a Christian (14:3, 10). Paul does not here argue that the weak ought to accept the opinion of the strong (although Paul obviously thinks that the strong are right). Rather, he contends that the weak must cease from judgmentalism. The strong are Christians whose faith has freed them from the fear that non-observance of the weak's scruples will involve sin (cf. 14:23). Also, Karris' view that the weak in Rom. 14f. are not necessarily Jewish obscures the relation of 15:7-13 to 14:1-15:6.<sup>2</sup> The themes in the

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<sup>1</sup>Karris, p. 158, n. 6, and especially Max Rauer, Die "Schwachen" in Korinth und Rom (Biblische Studien, 21:2; Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder & Co., 1923), pp. 128-163.

<sup>2</sup>Notwithstanding Karris' subtle attempt to escape the obvious, pp. 172-174.

conclusion of the parenthesis (welcoming one another, Christ was a servant to the circumcised, the fulfillment of the promise to the patriarchs was that the Gentiles would praise the God of Israel) are pointless if there is no Jewish-Gentile conflict in mind.

If the weak are primarily Jewish Christians, the strong must be primarily Gentile Christians who accept the law-free Gospel, perhaps through Pauline thought. But that they represent groups in Roman Christianity cannot be proved simply by pointing to the dialogical form in 14:1-15:13, as already stated. We would have to find support from elsewhere in Romans for that.

We now turn to the conclusion, 15:14ff. The question which the initial passage (15:14-16) raises is, did Paul believe that the Church at Rome was under his authority? We quote the passage at length because of its significance:

I myself am satisfied about you, my brethren, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another. But on some points I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by God to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Many scholars are inclined to interpret these verses with the weight on Paul's remarks of the accomplishments of the Roman Christians. He mentions their present goodness, knowledge, and teaching. Thus, his purpose in writing would

not be to correct error but to remind them of what they had learned as catechumen,<sup>1</sup> since he does not consider them as beginners.<sup>2</sup> Paul states, however, that he has written very boldly, *τολμηροτερον*. Why should the letter be considered bold if all that he does is repeat what was already known, and he exercises no special authority over the Christians at Rome? Paul acknowledges in vs. 15f. that the Roman Christians have genuine faith and knowledge so that they have teachers among their numbers, but he has written to them precisely because of the grace given him to be a minister to the Gentiles. Therefore, Paul writes as the apostle to the Gentiles whose gospel is normative for the Roman Church, but he also writes cautiously.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Michel, *Römer*, (10th ed.), pp. 326f.

<sup>2</sup>Paul Althaus, *Der Brief an die Römer* (6th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1935), p. 125; Barrett, p. 275.

<sup>3</sup>Fridrichsen, pp. 7f. Günther Klein, "Der Abfassung des Römerbriefes," *Rekonstruktion und Interpretation. Gesammelte Aufsätze zum Neuen Testament (Beiträge zur EvT, 50; München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1969)*, pp. 138-144, offers the interesting but unlikely suggestion that *θεμελιον* (v. 20) refers only to a congregation which has apostolic foundation, and thus Paul is not intruding on another's territory. Since the Roman Christians have no apostle, he is becoming their apostle. Paul, however, explains that to build on another's foundation is to preach where Christ has been named (see Michel, *Römer* [10th ed.], p. 50), and that certainly was the case in Rome. But it is incorrect to use 15:20 with reference to the situation at Rome. Paul is not speaking here of his personal hesitance toward working in Rome, but is explaining why he has been so long delayed in reaching there, thus *διε* in v. 22 (see Wilckens, p. 117). There is no way, however, in which it can be denied that Paul intends to do missionary work in Rome even if he plans to hurry on to Spain with their assistance (15:24). The words *ευαγγελισθε* (1:15) and especially *ἵνα τινὰ καρπὸν σχῶ* (1:13) can mean nothing else but that Paul hopes to win some converts in Rome.

Beginning with 15:18 Paul indicates that, since his work in the East is done, he is turning to a new field in the West. But before he commences this work, he must deliver the collection of the Gentile churches to Jerusalem (15:25-27). From Jerusalem Paul plans to visit Rome on the way to Spain (15:23f., 28f., 32). Then Paul requests of the Church their assistance in the second παρακαλέω sentence of Romans (15:30f.; cf. 12:1f.).<sup>1</sup> He appeals for them to strive with him in prayers for the upcoming trip to Jerusalem, that he would be delivered from unbelievers and that the saints there would accept the collection. Thus, Paul in 15:18ff. indicates these aspects of his future plans and the role the church at Rome can play in them: first, he is going to Jerusalem, and he appeals for their intercession for the success of this mission. Second, he intends to visit them in Rome. Third, he plans to open up a new work in Spain and hopes for their support.<sup>2</sup>

We turn now to ch. 16. In it are special problems which merit more detailed attention. It contains a list of twenty-six names and a warning against false teaching. Several objections are made against accepting this chapter as a part of Paul's letter to Rome. In, however, the

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Carl J. Bjerkelund, Parakalo (Oslo, Norway: Universitetstorlaget, 1967), pp. 109-116, 188-190.

<sup>2</sup>On the basis of 15:23 most scholars date Romans during Paul's last three month stay in Corinth (Acts 20:2f.), cf. Kümmel, Introduction, pp. 179-181 and 200.

chapter does belong to the letter, it bears witness to Paul's personal relationship with at least part of the Church there. The objections are these: (1) The long doxology (16:25-27) is found in various places in the letter. Several major witnesses put it after 16:23 (p<sup>61</sup> \* B C D et al.). Others include it after both 16:23 and 14:23 (A P). P<sup>46</sup> places it after 15:33 and then adds 16:1-23. A few authorities, including Marcion according to Origen, exclude it altogether (F G).<sup>1</sup> Thus, there were traditions in which Romans ended at 14:23 or 15:33 as well as at 16:23. (2) Another problem concerns the likelihood of Paul knowing such a large number of persons in the Roman Church.<sup>2</sup> This would be surprising since he had never visited the city. Further, this problem is increased when we consider that he mentions individual house-churches in Rome (vs. 5, 14f.). (3) Finally, the warning concerning trouble-makers which Paul gives in vs. 17-20 finds no parallel in the first fifteen chapters. What kind of teaching are they propagating, and who are they?

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<sup>1</sup>See the evidence cited in The Greek New Testament, ed. Kurt Aland et al. (Stuttgart, West Germany: United Bible Societies, 1966, 1968), p. 577 and Kümmel, Introduction, pp. 222f.

<sup>2</sup>Such a long list is paralleled only in Col. 4:7-17 and 2 Tim. 4:19-21.



T. W. Manson<sup>1</sup> has attempted to solve the problem by adopting the view that Rom. 1-15 constitutes an encyclical letter addressed first to Rome. Ch. 16 is added as an appendix in a copy of this letter sent to Ephesus. Thus, in ch. 16, Paul writes to a congregation with which he is well acquainted, and it can say nothing concerning the character of Paul's relationship to the Church at Rome.

The objections to accepting ch. 16 as a genuine part of Romans are not convincing. Concerning the textual evidence, there is no good reason to believe that the letter stops at 14:23 since 15:1 connects well with the foregoing material. On the other hand, Marcion's theological prejudice against the themes of 15:1-13 could account for his excision of chs. 15 and 16. He may very well be the first to have placed the doxology at a variant point.<sup>2</sup> The evidence from p<sup>46</sup>, although it is, of course, an important witness, is not enough to prove that the letter should conclude with 15:33. That proof would have to come from other considerations. And if the doxology is not Pauline,<sup>3</sup> its placing is secondary and irrelevant. There is insufficient reason to accept from the textual evidence, then, that the letter does not conclude with 16:23. (2) The list of acquaintances presents

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<sup>1</sup>T. W. Manson, "St. Paul's Letter to the Romans-- and others," BJRy1L, 31 (1948), pp. 236-238.

<sup>2</sup>So Kummel, Introduction, p. 223.

<sup>3</sup>Barrett, 286f.

a more serious difficulty. How well Paul knew those listed is not clear from their mention. Certain of them he clearly knew from his work in the East, but they may be only a few of the twenty-six named (Prisca, Aquila, Epaenetus, Andronicus, Junias, Ampliatus, possibly Urbanus, Stachys, Rufus, and his mother). That they could have migrated to Rome (especially the Jewish Christians after the relaxation of Jewish-State relations with the accession of Nero) is not so unreasonable.<sup>1</sup> But it is not necessary to assume that all those named are returning Jewish Christians.<sup>2</sup> Further, Paul could have mentioned so many names for the very reason that he had never visited the church and thus wanted to make the contact with Roman Christianity as close as possible.<sup>3</sup> (3) Little can be known from the warnings in 16:17-19. Paul does not describe the trouble makers in sufficient detail to know the content of their teaching or who they were.<sup>4</sup> What we have, then, in ch. 16 is a closing to his letter to Rome made as personal as possible by greetings to those in the city whom he knows or of whom he knows.

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<sup>1</sup>See Kümmel, Introduction, p. 225.

<sup>2</sup>Wilckens, pp. 124-127.

<sup>3</sup>So Barrett, p. 281 and especially Wilckens, pp. 124f.

<sup>4</sup>See W. Schmithals, "Die Irrlehrer vom Röm. 16:17-20," ST, 13 (1959), pp. 51-69, who tries to prove that the passage refers to gnostics.

It is now time to assess the evidence concerning the purpose of Romans. If it is presumed that Romans is a historical document and not a speculative, dogmatic treatise, then a situation or several situations must be adequate to account for a letter being sent to Rome and for the character of its argument. Beginning with F. C. Baur, scholars have tried vigorously to find the historical situation.<sup>1</sup>

The problem which has constantly evaded solution concerns the possibly different addressees.<sup>2</sup> Clearly, the congregation in Rome was composed largely of Gentiles (1:5f., 14-16; 11:13ff.; 15:15-17; and ch. 16 passim), although some Jewish Christians were certainly there (14:2 et al.; 16:3, 7, 11). However, the dogmatic section, 1:18-11:36, deals mostly with questions and challenges which Judaism would have made against Paul's Gospel for the Gentiles. Does the situation in Roman Christianity account for this

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<sup>1</sup>On this see Walter Schmithals, Der Römerbrief al historisches Problem (Studien zum Neuen Testament, 9; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlaghaus [Gerd Mohn], 1975), pp. 25f.

<sup>2</sup>This problem has been stated succinctly by Paul Feine long ago in Der Römerbrief. Eine exegetische Studie (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1903), p. 1: "Auf den allgemeinsten Ausdruck gebracht, besteht das Problem de Römerbriefes in dem Doppelcharakter dieses Sendschreibens. Der Brief enthält im dogmatischen und religionsgeschichtlichen Teil (Kap. 1-11) in der Hauptsache eine Auseinandersetzung zwischen den paulinischen Evangelium und dem Judentum, und doch hat es der Apostel in dem Brief auf unzweideutige Weise zum Ausdruck gebracht, dass er die christlichen Römer zu den Heiden rechne."

complexity concerning the addressees and the character of the argument in the dogmatic section? With emphasis on one element or another, scholars have often read into the situation of Rome a problem which called for Paul's dogmatic discourse.

Because of the anti-Jewish character of Paul's argument in 1:18-11:36, Baur suggests that Roman Christianity was dominated by Jewish Christians. Consequently, those passages which suggest that Roman Christianity was predominately Gentile receive a forced reinterpretation.<sup>1</sup> Baur's thesis cannot be accepted for explaining the situation of Romans. He must, for example, translate ἔθνη in 1:5 and elsewhere as simply "nations," Gentiles and Jews alike.

Bartsch correctly rejects such an interpretation of ἔθνη and in turn argues that, while there were Jews in Roman Christianity, the stronger element was anti-Semitic Gentile Christians.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the purpose of Romans

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<sup>1</sup>F. C. Baur, Paul, trans. E. Zeller, vol. 1 (2nd ed.; London and Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1973), pp. 327-332 and 350-356. Others who have argued in more recent times that the Roman church was predominately Jewish are T. Fahy, "St. Paul's Romans were Jewish Christians," IrTQ, 26 (1959), pp. 182-191; Harder, pp. 13f.; J. Jeremias, "Zur Gedankenführung in den paulinischen Briefen," Studia paulina. In honorem de J. de Zwaan Septuagenarii (Haarlem: De Erven F. Bohn N. V., 1953), pp. 146-154; Norbert Krieger, "Zum Römerbrief," NovT, 3 (1959), pp. 146-148; William Manson, The Epistle to the Hebrews (London: Hodder and Stoughton, LTD, 1951), pp. 172-184.

<sup>2</sup>H.-W. Bartsch, "Die Empfänger des Römerbriefes," ST, 25 (1971), p. 84. Cf. also Schmithals, Römerbrief, p. 28 and Alfred Suhl, "Der konkrete Anlass des Römerbriefes," Kairos, 13 (1971), p. 121.

is to persuade these Gentile Christians to accept Jewish Christians. To support this view, however, Bartsch claims that in 2:1ff. Paul disputes the conviction of those who believe that they know God on the basis of natural theology, not salvation history.<sup>1</sup> That is, Bartsch cannot let the obviously anti-Jewish character of Paul's argument maintain its natural meaning.

Miner, on the other hand, tries to find a balance on passages which address Jewish and then Gentile Christians. He is particularly impressed with the conflict reflected in

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<sup>1</sup>Bartsch, p. 84. W. Lütgert, Der Römerbrief als historisches Problem (Beiträge zur Forderung christlichen Theologie, 17:2; Gütersloh: C. Bertlesmann, 1913), states the thesis of a Gentile majority in stronger terms than does Bartsch. He argues that Romans was written primarily against libertarians in Roman Christianity (especially chs. 6-8, pp. 26f.). Paul was interested in being reconciled with Jewish Christianity. The key, says Lütgert, to understanding this is that there is a change in Paul's attitude to the law from that expressed in Galatians. This change must have occurred during the Corinthian period and was the result of a failure on Paul's part to win over Jewish Christianity to his viewpoint (pp. 31-34). Heinrich Pachali, "Der Römerbrief als historisches Problem," ThStKr, 87 (1914), pp. 481-505, takes Lütgert's thesis into debate, not always with success. He oversimplifies the matter by trying to show that Paul's attitude toward the law was exactly the same in both Galatians and Romans. He does, however, point out the excesses in Lütgert's discussion.

Johannes Munck, Paul and the Salvation of Mankind, trans. Frank Clarke (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1959), ch. 3, believes that the church in Rome was entirely Gentile and that the addresses to the Jews in the letter are only apparent. He, however, makes it difficult for us to understand the admonitions in chs. 14f. What is to be made of the admonition to welcome one another in 15:7 (so correctly Kümmel, Introduction, p. 219)? Cf. also John Wood, "The Purpose of Romans," EvQ, 40 (1968), pp. 211-219.

14:1-15:13 and deduces that Paul writes the letter in order to reconcile fighting factions.<sup>1</sup> But does the argument of chs. 1-11 really anticipate what Paul wants to argue in chs. 14f.? Minear, for example, claims that in 2:1ff. Paul rebukes the Jewish Christian of judgmentalism.<sup>2</sup> But we have already seen that the sin of the Jew here is not judgmentalism (as a self-righteous critic) but the social vices which the Jew commits just as the pagan.

A subtler interpretation is offered by Trocmé. He suggests that, while Paul knew little of the situation in Roman Christianity, he read into it that which he had encountered in his missionary churches of Asia Minor and Greece,<sup>3</sup> the difficulty Gentile Christianity experienced in separating itself from the synagogue. Such a separation presented a theological problem in two regards: first, since Israel was historically God's people, for the Gentile Church to develop a separate existence would raise the question of Israel's place within salvation history. Second, the ethical code of the Church was by and large that of the synagogue. A rupture with Judaism might have invited antinomianism.<sup>4</sup> Thus, Trocmé tries to account for the

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<sup>1</sup>Minear, pp. 8-16.    <sup>2</sup>Minear, pp. 47-48.

<sup>3</sup>Étienne Trocmé, "L'Épître aux Romains et la methode missionnaire de l'Apôtre Paul," NTS, 7 (1960/1), p. 149.

<sup>4</sup>Trocme, p. 152.

double character of Romans. The church in Rome is Gentile for the most part. But the argument of Paul in the dogmatic section is addressed to the Gentile congregation as it fashions a new existence separate from the synagogue. Trocmé's thesis has the advantage over the former theses of coming to terms with the fact that the dogmatic section does not deal with a problem of Roman Christianity as we can uncover it from the introduction, the conclusion, or the parenthesis. Further, it correctly points to two of the main concerns which are present in the dogmatic section, Israel's place in salvation history and the Gentile Christian and sin. We must grant that one reason why Paul probably wrote to Rome was because he saw the integrity of the gospel threatened. We can go beyond Trocmé, in fact, and argue that the conflict of the weak and the strong of 14:1-15:13 supports Paul's fears. Thus, Trocme incorrectly conjectures that the main body of Romans (1:16-15:13) is an encyclical letter which has an existence separate from the Roman situation.<sup>1</sup> Romans 1:16-15:13 is also addressed to Rome.

It is possible to draw in external evidence in the attempt to support a view similar to those of Minear or Trocmé. As indicated above, the conflict reported in Suetonius appears to have occurred over the introduction of Christianity into the city. Thus, the church and

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<sup>1</sup>Trocmé, pp. 150f.

the synagogue made contact. Marxsen contends on the basis of this that after A.D. 49 the Jewish Christians were driven from the city and hence the Gentile Christians began to dominate the Roman congregation. But in A.D. 54, at the death of Claudius, the door was again open for Jewish Christians to return to the city. When they did return, they attempted to regain their former prominence in the church, and conflict inevitably arose. This is the problem which Romans, according to Marxsen, addresses.<sup>1</sup> Marxsen's view is interesting, and it may even be true that some Jewish Christians returned to Rome. But as a general background to the problems of Roman Christianity in A.D. 55/6, it is too hypothetical, and as an explanation of the argument of chs. 1-11 it is too monolithic.

The solutions which we have reviewed in brief and rejected all attempt to account for the letter as addressing primarily a situation in Rome. There have been two other proposals which see the situation not in Roman Christianity but in Paul's plans. First, there is the missionary hypothesis. Taking 15:23f., 28f. as the basis, some have argued that Paul announces his plans for the coming work in Spain because he sees the Roman church as "an indispensable

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<sup>1</sup>Marxsen, pp. 95f. and similarly Wolfgang Wiefel, "Die jüdische Gemeinschaft im antiken Rom und die Anfänge des römischen Christentums," Jud, 26 (1970), pp. 77-81.



base"<sup>1</sup> for this mission. He has no ambition to work in Rome, and that is why he takes pains to allay any misunderstanding over the authority he hopes to exercise there. But through the letter, he gives an example of his missionary preaching and his theology hoping to win the support of this important congregation.

Emil Weber applies the missionary hypothesis to chs. 1-3. He claims that these chapters give us something which is found nowhere else in Paul's correspondence, what Paul would say to non-Christians.<sup>2</sup> How in other words, would Paul prepare them for the word of the cross (I Cor. 2:2)?<sup>3</sup> Such a message, he believes, is found in Rom. 1:18-3:20. He characterizes this section as propaedeutic, since its purpose is not to expound on Christian teaching but to produce the situation in which the need for salvation would be felt.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Barrett, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup>Emil Weber, Die Beziehungen von Röm. 1-3 zur Missionspraxis des Paulus (Beiträge zur Forderung christlichen Theologie, 9:4; Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1905), pp. 9f. Cf. also the development of this thesis by Gottlob Schrenk, "Der Römerbrief als Missionsdocument," Studien zu Paulus (AbhTANT, 26; Zürich: Zwingli Verlag, 1954), pp. 81-105.

<sup>3</sup>Weber, pp. 10f.

<sup>4</sup>Weber is followed in this analysis of Rom. 1-3 by Albrecht Oepke, Die Missionspredigt des Apostels Paulus (Missionswissenschaftliche Forschungen, 2; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1920), p. 102.

The missionary hypothesis, however, is subject to decisive objections. With respect to Weber's presentation, the following can be said: why should Paul argue at such length concerning Jewish sins, bondage to sin, and the coming wrath of God, and so tersely of the crucifixion? Are we to suppose that the cross of Christ, which in I Cor. 2:2 is claimed to be the substance of his evangelistic preaching (cf. also Gal. 3:1), in fact received no fuller treatment than it does in Romans when Paul was evangelizing? Equally, the missionary hypothesis does not account for the way in which Paul handles the Gentile and Jewish question in these chapters (e.g. 3:1-8) and certainly not chs. 9-11.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, we must reject the missionary hypothesis as satisfactorily explaining Romans.

The second proposal for the situation of the letter not being in Roman Christianity but in Paul's plans is that the dogmatic section anticipates what Paul will argue in Jerusalem. Jervell has recently taken up this thesis with respect to 15:30f. where Paul appeals for the Roman Christians to strive together with him in prayer that the saints in Jerusalem would accept the collection and that he would be delivered from the unbelievers.<sup>2</sup> Paul wanted the Roman Christians to know how he would defend before Jewish

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<sup>1</sup>Wilckens, p. 114.

<sup>2</sup>J. Jervell, "Der Brief nach Jerusalem," ST, 25 (1971), p. 65.

authorities the gospel as it applied to the Gentiles, and how he would demonstrate the proper relationship of Israel and the Church. They would have an interest in his mission to Jerusalem, since he went as the apostle of all the Gentiles (1:14f.; 15:15ff.).<sup>1</sup> The trip to Jerusalem would raise in a new and perhaps decisive way the questions raised earlier in his conflicts with Judaizers and discussed in Galatians, Phil. 3, and 2 Cor. 3-6.<sup>2</sup>

Jervell's thesis takes up a view expressed by others (Fuchs, Marxsen, and Bornkamm), that the trip to Jerusalem was in Paul's mind when he wrote to Rome. It has the advantage over their discussions, however, of giving a reason for Paul sending the letter to Rome: to gain the support of the Romans in intercession for his mission. Otherwise, we are perplexed why the letter went to Rome and not elsewhere.<sup>3</sup> But all the writers who emphasize the

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<sup>1</sup>Jervell, "Der Brief nach Jerusalem," p. 66.

<sup>2</sup>Jervell, "Der Brief nach Jerusalem," pp. 68f.

<sup>3</sup>Those who have suggested that the argument of Romans is shaped by Paul's thoughts on the upcoming debate in Jerusalem are: Ernst Fuchs, *Hermeneutik* (Bad Comstatt: R. Müllerschön, 1954), p. 191; Willi Marxsen, pp. 94f.; and Günther Bornkamm, *Paul*, trans. D. G. Stalker (New York & Evanston: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1971), pp. 94-96. Fuchs says that the letter to the Romans was misdirected from its real destination, Jerusalem. Marxsen criticizes this explanation, but he does admit that "it is quite possible, of course, that in writing this letter Paul has in certain respects the problems at Jerusalem in mind." Bornkamm writes (p. 95): "Romans, too, is throughout polemical. However, in it Paul's opponent is not this or that section in a particular church, but the Jews and their understanding of salvation, which was still influential in the early Jewish Christian church, particularly at Jerusalem."

importance of the trip to Jerusalem behind the writing of Romans have drawn our attention to a significant feature of the letter: the argument continually deals with Jewish questions and objections to Paul's gospel for the Gentile.

This view of the purpose of Romans accounts for a number of features which otherwise defy explanation. First, we now have a reason for the double character of the addressees. Romans was sent to a congregation that was predominately Gentile, but it dealt with issues that Paul would argue before Jews. Second, the problem of the covenant of God with Israel is vigorously discussed. The priority of the Jew is maintained, in both salvation and condemnation (1:16; 2:9f.; 11:13ff.), and Paul states that God remains faithful to his covenant people (3:1-4; 9:1-6; 11:1-12). Paul also must defend his Gospel of God's righteousness which, it is charged, makes God unrighteous in his use of Israel (3:5-7, 26; 9:14ff.). Even though circumcision is relativized (2:25-29), the believing Jews are not dissolved into Gentile Christianity (4:11f.). Third, the Jerusalem-argument hypothesis also explains Paul's vehement repudiation of antinomianism (*μὴ γένοιτο*, 6:1, 15; cf. 3:8). Fourth, with respect to our passage in 1:18-3:20, Jervell's thesis accounts for the following points: Paul speaks indirectly of the Gentiles but challenges the Jew. He accuses the Jew of sins which are essentially the same as the Gentiles (except for idolatry and sexual perversion). He supports

the doctrine of retribution. He is sensitive to Israel's election and its benefits. He responds vigorously to the accusations concerning his understanding of God's righteousness. He discusses the problem of sin as a power and the Jew's, as well as the Gentile's, bondage to it. He claims that the law reveals this bondage to sin but cannot be the means of justification. Thus, the almost totally Jewish character of Paul's argument in Rom. 1:18-3:20 is most satisfactorily explained if we assume that Paul was responding in terms which would persuade the Jewish Christian Church centered in Jerusalem that his Gospel for the Gentiles was not a violation of God's covenant with Israel or lacked the moral seriousness of Jewish Christianity.

The weakness of Jervell's thesis is that it minimizes the situation in Rome. The conflict of the weak and the strong in 14:1-15:13 certainly reflects an actual Roman problem which Paul addresses. The community there is composed of both former God-fearers and former Jews, and the old conflict between Jews and Gentiles has not been resolved, even in the Christian community. Paul writes to Rome concerning the significance of the gospel for this issue.

In summary, the situation of Romans involves two fundamental elements: the time in Paul's life and the situation in the Roman church. In both Jewish objections to the Gentile gospel appear. The Jerusalem-argument hypothesis most satisfactorily explains the character of the dogmatic argument. Here Paul responds to the objection that the Gospel erodes God's covenant faithfulness to Israel or lacks moral seriousness. But these chapters also, although less directly, answer questions which support Paul's admonition of 14:1-15:13. The convergence of these two situational elements answers the most important but troublesome data Romans gives: an anti-Jewish argument in a letter addressed to a church composed primarily of Gentile Christians.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE ARGUMENT OF ROMANS 1-11

The last chapter attempted to show that in the dogmatic section of Romans Paul presents his Jerusalem argument. This chapter's discussion was, admittedly, exploratory and not exhaustive. But especially in the light of the investigation of 1:18-3:20 (chapter II), and then the setting of this argument in the context of the entire letter (chapter III), it seems that the Jewish-argument hypothesis best accounts for the character of Romans. This hypothesis concludes that Romans is an historical document, that the discussion even in the dogmatic section responds to a particular situation-- a controversy, and that when one considers the precise nature of that controversy he will appreciate more fully the logic of Paul's argument.

The present chapter (IV) seeks to unfold the argument of Paul in the light of the Jewish-argument hypothesis. That is, how would Romans work in this situation? We will do this in two parts: first, we will offer a summary of our study of 1:18-3:20 and its interpretation according to the Jewish-argument hypothesis. Second, we will try to fit the argument of

1:18-3:20 into the whole dogmatic section of the letter. This chapter, especially the second part, will also be exploratory.

#### 1. ROMANS 1:18-3:20

Opposite the revelation of God's saving righteousness in Jesus Christ is the revelation of his wrath. (1:18-3:20). This passage describes the human predicament without God's grace in Jesus Christ as bondage to sin which the special privileges of the Jew, God's historical election and the possession of the law, do not alter. The situation of the Gentiles and the Jews are compared and contrasted to show that, however real the differences, bondage of both to sin and the judgment of death is irrefutably demonstrated through concrete acts of sin.

The Gentile situation (1:18-32) is characterized most clearly by its idolatry which leads to sexual perversion (1:22-27). This idolatry is inexcusable since knowledge of God is available and is rejected by the Gentile (1:19-21). Also, Gentile rebellion against knowledge of God leads to all manner of social vices (1:28-31). Finally, the Gentile not only commits, but approves the committing of such sins which he knows merit death (1:32). In 1:18-32 Paul has used traditional Jewish theologoumena to describe the tragic situation of the pagan world.



The recitation of Gentile failures might have seemed to have exonerated the Jew, for the Jew does not practice idolatry or sexual perversion, nor does he approve such sins. While Paul, however, only discussed the Gentile situation, he charges the Jew (2:1-5) with the "same sins" (social vices of 1:29-31) and claims that the Jew has thereby condemned himself, since he knows that these sins merit God's wrath. Further, the Jew falsely presumes that God's historical acts of graciousness to Israel (election and blessing) protect him from judgment. Rather, God's mercy was granted to lead to repentance. Israel's election is not absolute but relative to the principle of retribution which Paul states in the form of the two-ways doctrine (2:6-10). All, the Jew first and also the Greek, are subject to this principle.

Thus, God shows no partiality in judgment. Each one's deeds will be judged according to his knowledge of God's will. The Gentile, in fact, is not devoid of all knowledge of God's will, even if he does not possess Torah (2:11-16). Paul admits that, in contrast with the Gentile, the Jew has instruction in Torah. But Gentiles blaspheme Israel's God because Jewish deeds contradict their teaching (2:17-24). Equally, circumcision, the sign of the covenant, is negated by disobedience or reckoned by obedience to Torah (2:25-27). The true Jew is one internally through the work of the Spirit (2:28f.).

Paul has thus made relative the Jew's position which was thought to be superior through possession of the law and election. He has even claimed that knowledge of God's will does not depend solely on knowledge of Torah (2:14f.) and that possession of covenant does not depend on circumcision (2:25-29). This obviously raises a new question: what then is the advantage of the Jew? In dialogical form Paul raises the question in 3:1 and then proceeds to deal with the issues involved. He affirms the advantage of the historical gifts of God to Israel, as the scripture (3:2; cf. 9:1ff.). He affirms God's fidelity to Israel in spite of sin (3:3). But, and here his argument begins to expand, the faithfulness of God corresponds in extent to the unfaithfulness of humankind; both are universal (3:4).

Romans 3:4, however, encloses not only a response of Paul to a charge made against him but also the fundamental assertion of his Gospel, that God remains true to humankind; and this forms the theological basis from which he understands his doctrine of salvation. The dialogue, thus, leaps ahead and anticipates what Paul will later discuss in detail (chs. 9-11), that Israel's wickedness and falsehood serve to demonstrate God's righteousness. Such determinism, it is argued against Paul, shows God to be unrighteous when he judges (3:7, 9). But, retorts Paul, if this were the case, how could God judge the world (3:6)?

Or, in turning the accusation in another direction, the opponent charges Paul with advocating antinomianism (3:8). Paul declares that one who thinks along this line deserves condemnation for obscuring his teaching.

The objections raised in 3:1-8 arise naturally from Paul's discussion in 2:11-29 where he has denied that possession of Torah or covenant aided the Jew before God. But Paul had not reached the conclusion of his argument. While, on the one hand, he affirms the advantage of the Jew (3:1f.); on the other hand, he denies that the Jew is in a better position because of his advantage (3:9). This is so, he claims, because of what he has already proved, that all (Jews as well as Gentiles) are in bondage to the power of sin (3:9). Paul has not up to this point talked of the power of sin. With respect to the Gentile he did mention that God delivered them up to their lusts or passions (1:22-31). Other than that he has described only sinful deeds. But now he draws the logical deduction of the situation for both the Jews and the Gentiles. We can schematize Paul's argument as follows:

Present situation of the Gentiles:

1:22-27, idolatry-God delivering them to passions-  
sexual perversion

1:28-31, not holding God in knowledge-God delivering  
them to a base mind-improper conduct  
(social vices)

Future situation of the Gentiles:

1:32, committing such things-death

Future situation of the Jews:

2:1-5, doing same things (in spite of mercy)-  
judgment-wrath

Two-ways doctrine applied to Jews first and also to the Greeks, 2:6-10:

Good: seeking glory . . . -eternal life . . .  
 Evil: being factious . . . -wrath . . .

The two-ways doctrine, as observed, can be used for two purposes in Jewish literature. On the one hand, it is found in exhortation to suggest the kinds of deeds which one ought to perform in order to gain life or to shun in order to avoid death. On the other hand, it can be used descriptively. Especially according to apocalyptic literature those who belong to the way of death perform evil deeds not simply from moral failure but because of bondage to evil (or the evil spirit). It is in this manner that Paul describes the situation in Rom. 3:9 where he universalizes this bondage to sin. In spite of his possession of covenant and Torah, then, the Jew's bondage to sin determines his destiny. Paul substantiates this charge by quoting from the OT, possibly a pre-Pauline confession, which admits that all participate in deeds of sin (3:10-18).

Paul concludes the negative argument (3:19f.) by directing it specifically to the Jew, "Whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law." The law, in fact, reveals knowledge of sin, as Paul more fully shows in 7:7ff.; and hence it does not provide a basis for justification. So far Paul has not discussed the works of the law, the particular form of piety which the Jew

practiced. He has, however, implicitly alluded to it in his reference to the Jew's possession of the law. Whatever successes the Jew might gain in his piety, these do not alter the final judgment, for the possession and practice of the law has no bearing on the situation in which the Jew finds himself. He is in bondage to the cosmic (5:12ff.) and internal (7:7ff.) power of sin, and the law only reveals this predicament (3:30) and aggravates it (5:20; 7:8-11).

How is the argument of Rom. 1:18-3:20 supposed to contribute to Paul's Jerusalem discussion? According to 15:31 there are two concerns of Paul with respect to his Jerusalem trip, to be delivered from unbelievers and for the saints to accept the contribution of the Gentile churches. It is not stated in 2:1ff. whom Paul is supposed to be addressing. If they are non-believers, Paul's preaching here intends to show the failure of the Jewish way and thus the need of justification by faith in Jesus Christ (in a manner similar to the missionary hypothesis of Weber). But if 2:1ff. is addressed to Jewish Christians the argument is a basic support of his Gospel for the Gentiles which he is defending. The answer to our question is found in 3:1-8 where it is clear that we have Jewish Christian opposition to Paul's Gentile Gospel. The Jew protests in 3:1 that the argument of 2:11-29 denies the privileges of the Jew. In 3:3 the protest is that by implication Paul also denies the faithfulness of God to his covenant. In

3:5 and 7 the thesis that Israel's unfaithfulness is used by God to show his righteousness (through the Gentile mission) is bitterly rejected as unrighteousness on God's part. And in 3:8 the Pauline teaching about God's sovereign use of evil for good is trivialized as implying antinomianism. There is reflected in these verses (3:1-8), then, the prejudice of the Jewish Christian against Paul's preaching in two respects. It negates, according to them, God's election of Israel and it is morally irresponsible. The two theologoumena, Israel's election and the law of retribution, according to Jewish thought, are not contradictory. The election of Israel did not mean that God would ignore sin, but that through the gracious gift of the law he gave Israel guidance to obtain life; and, when she did sin, he was faithful (often through educative punishment) to lead her to repentance and forgiveness. Thus, election (the sign of the covenant), the law, the principle of retribution, and moral seriousness were all accepted in an interlocking, theological pattern. Paul's Gospel was seen to disturb this pattern at decisive points. By rejecting circumcision for the Gentile, covenantal requirements were ignored and God's election of Israel was broken. By teaching that the works of the law were not to be observed by the Gentile Christian, Paul seemed to advocate moral carelessness.

These theologoumena, as they find expression in the Jewish Christian argument against Paul, presuppose the older form found in Jewish polemic against the pagan. The continuity of Israel and the Christian community in the theology of Jewish Christianity is such that, however important the death and resurrection of Christ were to Jewish Christians, the Gentile still must be converted fully to being a Jew if he was to participate fully in eschatological blessing. Therefore, Paul does not seek to prove simply that atonement and hope is found in Christ's death and resurrection, but what these theologoumena imply with respect to the Jew and Gentile issue. The Jew outside of Christ is not in the orbit of salvation. Rather, in spite of possessing the covenant and the law, he practices sin and hence is doomed to death. Later in Romans Paul argues more fully that the Gentile believer is in the orbit of salvation. He has been justified freely by faith, sin's power has been broken, and he has been given the Spirit in whom he is to walk.

Thus, the way in which Paul attempts to dismantle Jewish belief in Rom. 1-3 diverges clearly from his approach in any other place. For here he seeks to show, not from a positive argument that Christ is the end of the law, but from a negative argument that the claimed difference between the Jew and the Gentile is not real. While the Jew may claim to be homo religiosus, he is in fact impius, proved empirically from his deeds of sin, and as such his

destiny according to the ius talionis is certain death. His possession of Torah and circumcision does not alter his basic condition as a sinner. He, just as the Gentile, is in bondage to sin. The works of the law will not bring justification. The law will only show that the Jew is also under the power of sin.

## 2. ROMANS 1:16-11:36

We will now attempt to fit Rom. 1:18-3:20 into the entire dogmatic section of Romans. To Jewish Christians who rejected or were suspicious of his Gentile mission, Paul argues concerning the power of the Gospel for the believer that in it God's righteousness is revealed for the Jew first and also for the Greek (1:16f.). First, the supposed distinction between Jew and Gentile is not decisive (chs. 1-4). Apart from faith, all are under God's wrath (1:18-3:20). True, the Gentile is involved in idolatry and vice (1:18-32), but the Jew also is condemned since he commits the social sins of the Gentile (2:1-5). And each will be judged according to the law of retribution (2:6-10). The Jew's knowledge of God's will is only relatively superior (2:11-16), and his violation of the law wins Gentile blasphemy (2:17-24) and negates his share in the covenant under the obedient and transformed Gentile (2:25-29). Such does not deny the Jew's advantage or God's faithfulness (3:1-4). Nor does God's execution of his plan



of salvation mean that he is unrighteous or gives license to sin (3:5-8). For the Jew, as well as the Gentile, shows himself to be under the power of sin by deeds of sin. And the law does not provide a way to righteousness but rather reveals this bondage to sin (3:9-20). But now the righteousness of God is revealed apart from the law for the believer, both the Jew and the Gentile (3:21-4:25). This righteousness is found in Christ Jesus through whose death God has granted redemption and expiation (3:21-26). The truth that righteousness comes by faith excludes boasting in works or the particularism of Israel (3:27-30). Paul then hears another charge made against him: the effect of his teaching is to overthrow the law (a gift from God, 3:31). Again Paul responds with his emphatic negative, by no means. It does not overthrow but upholds the law (3:31). But Paul then goes on to explain carefully what he means. The law itself is a witness to justification by faith apart from works and apart from becoming a Jew through circumcision (ch. 4). Such was true of the Jews' forefather according to the flesh, Abraham. He was justified by faith apart from works (4:1-8) even before his circumcision (4:9f.), and hence became the father of both the circumcised and the uncircumcised who believe (4:11f.). His faith was a faith in the promise of God who created and raises the dead (4:13-25).

Second, in 5:1-8:39 Paul shifts to the confessional language of the Christian community. He explains how those justified by faith can look forward to ultimate salvation. The foundation for this hope is grounded in the death of Christ (5:1-11). For while Adam's one transgression cast the world into the old aeon of sin and death, Christ's righteous act will cause righteousness and life to abound in the new age which is begun (5:12-21). But the overabundance of grace to sin does not excuse sin, as Paul was accused of implying (6:1). Rather, through baptism into Christ, the Christian has been liberated from the power of sin so that his conduct now might conform to righteousness, a life of obedience (ch. 6). Freedom from sin cannot come about through the way of the law, as many Jews thought (ch. 7). For just as the Christian is freed from sin through the body of Christ, so he is freed from the law (7:1-6). This does not mean that the law is evil or the cause of death (7:7, 15). The law itself is holy and the mind agrees with its commandments. But the power of sin, which lives in the flesh and takes opportunity in the commandment, brings about sin as transgression and death through the law (7:7-25). There is, however, deliverance from this tragic situation, as already stated. This deliverance comes through the Holy Spirit (8:1-17). Paul had already talked of deliverance in ch. 6. Here the Christian was freed from sin by baptism with Christ. Ch. 8 gives a somewhat

parallel theme, only here the Spirit of Christ grants the liberty and is contrasted with law of sin and death. Thus, while the old condition from which the law could not deliver is described as the walk of the flesh, the new situation into which the Christian is placed is to be in the Spirit. Through the sending of Christ, God condemned the power of sin in the flesh (8:1-4). Hence, the Christian is admonished to walk according to the Spirit, the Spirit of adoption which he has received (8:12-17). The ultimate inheritance of the Christian is future, but he is certain of possessing it (8:18-39). His sufferings in the present (and also the world is subject to decay) does not dim his hope (8:18-25). For the Spirit intercedes through him in prayer (8:26f.), and he believes that God who predestined his beloved will also glorify them (8:28-30). Nothing can separate us from the love of God manifested in Christ Jesus our Lord (8:31-39).

Third, Paul takes up the problem of Israel's unbelief (chs. 9-11). For the Gentile mission arose in one sense as a result of Israel's rejection of the Gospel. This rejection is to Paul a cause of sorrow, since the historical benefits of God's salvation were granted to her (9:1-5). Israel's unbelief is, on the one hand, the work of God in bringing salvation to the Gentile (9:6-29). Not all of Israel according to the flesh is Israel according to God's election (9:6-13). Such determinism is not unrighteousness on God's part, for he has mercy or hardens whom he will to

show his power (9:14-18). Nor does it exempt the evil people from fault since God has endured them to make known his mercy to those who are his people, both of the remnant of Israel and of the Gentiles (9:19-29). On the other hand, Israel's failure is simple stubbornness in the way of righteousness by works of the law not by faith (9:30-10:21). The Jews stumbled over the stumbling stone, rejecting God's righteousness in Christ for the righteousness of the law (9:30-10:3). For Christ is the end of the law for the believer (10:4). The righteousness of faith is simply this, to confess and believe in the crucified and resurrected Christ of the Gospel. Whoever does so will be saved (10:5-13). Faith in Christ comes from hearing the Gospel, and it has been preached to the Jews (10:14-21). Is Israel's rejection of the Gospel, then, the end of Israel? Has God now broken off his relationship with her (ch. 11)? No, for there is a remnant in Israel, chosen by grace (11:1-10), and the Jews' stumbling is temporary. The success of the Gentile mission, even Paul's mission, will make the Jews jealous to believe (11:11-16). There is, however, no cause for the Gentile Christian to be proud over the Jew. God can cut him off because of unbelief and graft the Jew on because of faith (11:17-24). Indeed, Israel's hardening is according to the mystery, God's plan of salvation. It is for the Gentile mission. But Israel is beloved of God for the fathers, and his promise

to them is irrevocable. His purpose in universal condemnation is so that he can grant universal mercy (11:25-32). This is according to God's inscrutable ways which finally are not to be understood as praised (11:33-36).

## CONCLUSION

In our conclusion we will offer the results of our study in answer to the problems which we listed in the introduction.

First, why does Paul describe the situation of the Gentile as he does in 1:18-32? Paul's purpose is to establish a premise by which he can argue against the Jew. Therefore, the Jew is like the Gentile--whom the Jew accused of idolatry, moral debauchery, and deserving of God's wrath. The Gentile's situation, which the Jew described as outside of the orbit of salvation, is the foil against which Paul sets the Jew's situation.

Second, why does Paul accuse the Jew of specific acts of transgression? The doctrine of retribution requires that guilt and judgment follow from actual deeds. It cannot apply simply to the will. In Romans, Paul argues that the Jew's will may conform to God's law while his performance does not (2:1-3; cf. 7:15ff.). Therefore, Paul depends on a fixed doctrine which states that final destiny follows from God's judgment for human deeds, and thus the Jew is in jeopardy: sins-judgment-death.

Third, where does Paul prove that all are under the power of sin (3:9), and what is the significance of this assertion? The two-ways doctrine, a form of the

doctrine of retribution, can use specific acts (a catalogue of vices or virtues) to discover to which way an individual belongs. This descriptive use of the two-ways is especially common in apocalypticism and through the use of the two-ways doctrine in its full form, as in IQS 3:13-15 (ruling spirit-deeds-judgment-consequence), Paul shows the situation of the Jew. He proves that the Jew is under the power of sin by pointing to specific sins. It also follows from this that the situation is determined and unchangeable. A will to conform to God's law cannot alter the situation under the power of sin: sin-sins-judgment-death.

Fourth, what is the relation of 1:18-3:20 to the remainder of the letter? We have tried to show that our passage discusses the situation of humankind outside of God's righteousness by proving in particular that the way of Judaism, being a Jew or living faithfully as a Jew by the works of the law, does not resolve the problems of sin as power, sins as transgressions, and consequently deliverance from wrath. Paul's negative argument leads into his positive argument (3:21ff.), that only in God's righteousness in Christ is a solution found for these problems. Thus, Paul claims that his gospel for the Gentile is legitimate by showing negatively that the locus of salvation is not within Judaism. The entire dogmatic section (1:16-11:36) responds to the charges of Jewish Christians made against Paul concerning his gospel.

They claimed that in his relaxation of the requirements for Gentile converts to join Israel and to remain faithful to her law Paul neglected the character of God's covenant with Israel and lacked moral seriousness. In chs. 9-11 Paul responds more fully concerning God's covenant with Israel. In chs. 6-8 he deals more fully with the issue of the Christian and moral seriousness. But in 1:18-3:20 Paul takes the offensive by asserting that, however fully the Jew may differentiate himself from the pagan or claim to possess in the law and commitment to it a moral seriousness, the problems of sin as power and sins as transgressions is still unresolved.

Fifth, why is this anti-Jewish argument sent to Rome which has a predominantly Gentile congregation? There seem to be two reasons: there is a conflict within the Roman congregation between Jewish and Gentile Christians. Paul responds to this problem in 14:1-15:13. But the situation in the life of Paul is also important. He is soon to go to Jerusalem and he requests the intercession of the Roman Christians for the success of this trip (15:30f.) At Jerusalem he will again meet with the Jewish Christian community and will seek a concrete manifestation of Christian unity by offering the contribution of his Gentile churches. He will also argue there for the legitimacy of his Gospel for the Gentiles. Thus, the dogmatic section (chs. 1-11) in particular rehearses Paul's



Jerusalem argument so that the Roman Christian can effectively join him in prayer for his mission.

Sixth, what does Romans 1:18-3:20 tell us about Paul's controversy with Judaism? Thus, precisely where does Paul disagree with Judaism as seen from our passage? We must begin by a brief restatement of the relevant theologoumena from Judaism.

Within Judaism there is a rich complex of themes. These motifs must be seen both alone and in relationship to one another. The Jew distinguishes himself from the Gentile because of the latter's idolatry and moral debauchery. While the Gentile does not have the Torah, however, the Jew claims that his idolatry is inexcusable because of nature's revelation of God and his vice is inexcusable because the Gentile has knowledge of God's will through the Noachic laws (rabbinic Judaism) or the conscience (Hellenistic Judaism). The Jew believes, however, that he has an advantage because God's covenant is with Israel. God promised salvation to Israel and exclusion from this benefit, generally speaking, happens only to apostatizers. Of course, there is the problem of transgressions. But God maintains his promise through educative punishment which leads to repentance and forgiveness and by providing means of atonement. Further, the Jew has to wrestle with the impulse to evil, as the Gentile. But God has provided prayer and the Torah which most Jews believe are sufficient

to enable the devout to suppress temptation. The principle of retribution does not conflict with belief in Israel's election. God does render to each according to his deeds, but this doctrine should not be understood in a mechanical sense (that it depends on the excess of good or evil deeds) or in a perfectionistic sense (that there is no room for atonement). Rather, the relationship between deed and consequence is natural so that consequence follows the deeds performed and corresponds to the direction of the doer.

Of course, we must readily admit the rich varieties within Judaism which would modify what we have just said at this or that point. But it can still be asserted that within each form which Paul might have met, the Jew would have argued that there was an advantage to the Gentile becoming a Jew since it was with Israel that God made his covenant and that salvation was to be found by joining and living faithfully according to the commandments.

How, then, does Paul differ from Judaism according to Rom. 1:18-3:20? Both admit that Jews and Gentiles alike commit sins and are under the influence of an evil impulse. But Jews reject that their sins are essentially the same as the pagans or that the evil impulse necessarily dominates them. That is precisely what Paul claims. The more pessimistic traditions (apocalypticism) might accept his understanding on the evil impulse, but most Jews would

argue that there is at least some freedom of the will. And one should also note that apocalypticism (as Qumran) does not abandon legalism because it has a more pessimistic view of human nature than most branches of Judaism. Both Paul and Judaism accept the principle of retribution. For Paul, however, since all are guilty of sins and under sin's dominion, possession of the law, possession of the covenant, and God's gracious acts in the past do not change the outcome for the Jew. Thus, Paul admits the advantage of the Jew but denies that this puts him in a better position than the Gentile. Faithful living within the traditions of Israel and performance of the works of the law do not alter the situation of the Jew.

There is, however, another side to the covenant: how does God respond to Israel's unfaithfulness? Paul indicates that from God's side there is no breaking of the covenant, indeed, there cannot be. The faithfulness of God is absolute. In fact, it is a faithfulness which stands opposite universal unfaithfulness. Consequently, just as in his description of sin as power and sins as transgressions, Paul universalizes the scope of God's faithfulness. At this point Paul seems to his Jewish opponent to have denied God's faithfulness to Israel. For Paul proclaims that in the manifestation of God's saving righteousness he has used Israel's evil. Paul's opponent would say that in Paul's thought God has violated his

saving intention with Israel, has manipulated a people, and has lost the grounds to judge them legitimately. This charge is certainly the most serious one which is levelled against Paul in our passage. But it shows the thrust of Paul's argument. He has claimed that the final covenantal blessing, salvation, is not gained or maintained by becoming a member of the covenant people, and claims that some Gentiles possess God's approval through obedience and through the Spirit. Some have argued that Paul here shows contact with the more liberal side of Judaism which taught that the God-fearer could enjoy life in the world to come. But that is insufficient to account for Paul's thought. For it seems that even those Jews still consider that there is an advantage within the covenant. While Paul certainly accepts that the Jew has an advantage (3:1f.) and also believes that in his covenant faithfulness God will save Israel (11:28-32), he denies that the Jew is in a better position simply because he is a Jew (3:9). The Jew sins and is under sin's bondage. Thus, he and the Gentile are in the same situation. Salvation is revealed only in God's righteousness in Christ through faith.

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