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JUDGMENT ACCORDING TO WORKS
IN THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Kevin William McFadden

May 2011

APPROVAL SHEET

JUDGMENT ACCORDING TO WORKS
IN THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

Kevin William McFadden

Read and Approved by:

Thomas R. Schreiner (Chair)

Mark A. Seifrid

Brian Vickers

Date _____

To Mom and Dad,
for their constant love and support

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
<i>BBR</i>	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BDAG	Walter Bauer, Frederick William Danker, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilber Gingrich, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i>
BDB	F. Brown, S. Driver, and C. Briggs, <i>Hebrew and English Lexicon</i>
BDF	F. Blass, A. Debrunner, and Robert W. Funk, <i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament</i>
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>CTJ</i>	<i>Calvin Theological Journal</i>
<i>DGE</i>	<i>Diccionario Grieg-Español</i>
<i>EMQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Missions Quarterly</i>
<i>EvQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
Muraoka	T. Muraoka, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>JAAR</i>	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>

<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
L&N	Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains</i>
LW	<i>Luther's Works</i>
MM	James H. Moulton and George Milligan, <i>The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-Literary Sources</i>
MNTC	Moffatt New Testament Commentary
NA27	<i>Novum Testamentum Graece</i> , 27th edition
NCCS	New Covenant Commentary Series
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>OED</i>	<i>The Oxford English Dictionary</i>
<i>OTP</i>	<i>The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i>
PFES	Publications of the Finish Exegetical Society
<i>SBET</i>	<i>Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology</i>
<i>SBJT</i>	<i>The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology</i>

SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLSP	Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers
SBLSS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
TLG	Thesaurus Linguae Graecae
<i>TLZ</i>	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
<i>TZ</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

PREFACE

Many have contributed to this study both intellectually and personally. My interest in the topic began with Jon Pratt's class on Galatians and Bill Combs's class on Romans. It was stimulated at Southern Seminary by my courses and personal interaction with Tom Schreiner and Mark Seifrid. Thanks to all of my former teachers for their contribution to this project. Special thanks to Tom for his labor of reading the rough drafts of this dissertation and helping me steer a proper course. Thanks also to Mark Seifrid, Brian Vickers, Kent Yinger, and Marsha Omanson for carefully reading and critiquing the defense draft. Two libraries and their staffs have made this work possible—the Boyce Centennial Library at Southern Seminary and the Detroit Seminary library. Special thanks go to Hannah Wymer for joyfully fielding constant requests for inter-library loans, and to John Aloisi for hospitably offering the resources of the Detroit Seminary library during the summer of 2010. Finally, thanks to my family and to my friends at Clifton Baptist Church, who have prayed for me and contributed to my understanding of Scripture. Special thanks to my parents for the constant love and support which they have both expressed in their own unique ways. This dissertation is dedicated in memory to my mom, who has always encouraged me in my work. It is also dedicated to my dad, whose financial support has given me the time needed to finish it. Finally, thanks to my stepmom, Beth, who proofread the entire work. *Soli deo gloria.*

Kevin William McFadden

Louisville, Kentucky

May 2011

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Need for the Study

The theme of divine judgment according to works in Paul's letters has been the subject of over ten monographs in the twentieth century.¹ Indeed, if I had known when I became interested in this topic how of many of these were written in German, I may have been tempted to find a quieter cove of Pauline theology where the water is less turbulent. Why has so much been written on one topic? Because Paul's teaching about the final judgment is important—important for the study of Paul's letters, for the study of Christian theology, and for the study of Christian ethics. It is important for the study of Paul's letters because it is a common theme in his writings, mentioned in many of his letters and developed extensively within the arguments of 1 Corinthians and Romans. It is important for the study of Christian theology because of the theme's relationship with justification, a doctrine which is at the heart of the rift between the Roman Catholic and Protestant traditions. Finally, it is important for the study of Christian ethics because it informs Christians on how they should think about their behavior in view of the day of the Lord.

But why write *another* study of judgment according to works in Paul? First, a study of the judgment motif in Romans will complement recent works which have examined at length the rhetorical purpose or "function" of the motif in 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians. Whereas older studies focused primarily on the tension between the

¹This dissertation will use the words "judgment" and "recompense" interchangeably. Although a distinction can be made between the verdict ("judgment") and its execution ("recompense"), the two are basically synonymous in Romans (compare Rom 2:5 with 2:6).

themes of justification by faith and judgment according to works in Paul, recent studies by Kuck and by Konradt have sought to move beyond these questions by focusing upon the function of the judgment motif within Paul's individual letters.² This new focus rightly emphasizes the particular contexts which shape the meaning of the judgment motif in Paul. The previous focus, however, rightly attempted to explain the motif coherently within Pauline theology. A study of judgment in Romans will be able to accomplish both goals—it will examine at length the rhetorical purpose of the motif within the particular argument of Romans, and it will explain the theme's coherence with justification by faith since the latter theme figures so prominently in the letter. In fact a careful examination of judgment in Romans will perform an even more foundational task, the task of pinpointing the exact nature of the tension between justification and judgment in Paul. Is the tension merely a concern of western theology, as Roetzel has suggested?³ Or is it a tension which exists in Paul's own theology?⁴ A study of judgment according to works in Romans will give a clearer answer to this question.

This leads to the second reason why a study of judgment in Romans is needed:

²Kuck wanted to move beyond systematic theological questions and discuss the function of judgment statements in their own contexts (David W. Kuck, *Judgment and Community Conflict: Paul's Use of Apocalyptic Judgment Language in 1 Corinthians 3:5-4:5*, NovTSup 66 [Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992], 7). He studied only 1 Cor 3:5–4:5 in Paul and offered no explanation for the tension with justification. Konradt saw a lack of detailed analysis of the function of judgment sayings in the history of research and too much of a focus upon the individual, soteriological focus of the theme (Matthias Konradt, *Gericht und Gemeinde: Eine Studie zur Bedeutung und Funktion von Gerichtsaussagen im Rahmen der paulinischen Ekklesiologie und Ethik im 1 Thess und 1 Kor* [Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003], 19). He sought to remedy this lack with his study of the meaning and function of judgment in 1 Corinthians and 1 Thessalonians.

³Roetzel argued that the focus of judgment is corporate and Paul often speaks of judgment without mentioning justification by faith. Thus, "it is a distortion of Paul's thought to view justification by faith and judgment in a dialectical relationship. Any attempt to reconcile these motifs may be more of a concern of the western theologian for consistency than a concern of Paul's" (Calvin J. Roetzel, *Judgement in the Community: A Study of the Relationship Between Eschatology and Ecclesiology in Paul* [Leiden: Brill, 1972], 177–78. No doubt Roetzel's suggestion was influenced by his dependence on Schweitzer and Davies who relegate justification by faith to the periphery of Paul's thought (ibid., 10).

⁴So Watson, who observes that "the problem cannot be dismissed as a Protestant one," for it also exists in Paul (Nigel M. Watson, "Justified by Faith; Judged by Works—an Antinomy?" *NTS* 29 [1983]: 209).

Although most scholars agree that there is a tension between justification by faith and judgment according to works in Pauline theology, there has been no consensus explanation for how these themes cohere. The need for a clear explanation has become more apparent in the wake of the debates over justification arising from the new perspective on Paul. Summarizing the current state of Pauline studies, Dunn observes that

one key issue that has emerged is the need to clarify how the present and future tenses of justification hold together, how justification by faith and not works correlates with final judgment ‘according to works’ both in Israel’s story and in Paul’s gospel. A lively debate is thus under way and will run well into the twenty-first century.⁵

Gathercole’s critique of the new perspective flags the same issue:

The relationship between final justification (Rom. 2:13) and present-past justification (Rom. 4:3) has still not been satisfactorily discussed in the secondary literature on Paul. A simple waving of the ‘now/not yet/’ wand over the texts is not quite satisfactory, especially if it is correct to describe Paul as viewing the criteria for past and future justifications slightly differently.⁶

Gathercole’s last line represents an important question in Pauline theology, particularly in light of the Protestant understanding of justification by faith alone. Does Paul view the criteria or the ground of present and final justification differently? Several Pauline scholars now explain Paul in this way. For example, Wright often speaks about justification in Paul as the verdict of the present on the basis of faith (Rom 3:21–4:25) which corresponds with the verdict of the future on the basis of the whole life lived.⁷ Similarly, Rainbow argues that the Protestant understanding of justification should be refined by the biblical data. Justification “unfolds for an individual in two phases, marked

⁵James D. G. Dunn, “Paul’s Theology,” in *The Face of New Testament Studies: A Survey of Recent Research*, ed. Scot McKnight and Grant R. Osborne (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic 2004), 337.

⁶Simon J. Gathercole, *Where Is Boasting: Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul’s Response in Romans 1–5* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 266.

⁷E.g., N. T. Wright, “New Perspectives on Paul,” in *Justification in Perspective*, ed. Bruce L. McCormack (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 253–55; idem, *Justification: God’s Plan & Paul’s Vision* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 190, 224.

by conversion and the last judgment. While faith alone is required to inaugurate it, evangelical obedience becomes a subordinate part of the basis for its culmination.”⁸

The lack of a consensus after so much has been written indicates that it is difficult to explain how justification by faith coheres with the final judgment according to works in Paul’s theology. A study of how the two themes relate to each other in the argument of one letter will shed light on this question. Romans is the ideal letter for such a study because it is Paul’s only letter in which the themes of judgment and justification are both prominent. The study of judgment in Romans will provide leverage to evaluate former solutions to the tension in Pauline theology and suggest a way forward in the justification debates. To begin, of course, former solutions to the tension between justification by faith and judgment according to works must be clearly understood. What follows is a brief history of research of the topic of judgment in Paul. It is classified according to common solutions to the tension between justification and judgment, because this problem has driven most of the research.⁹

History of Research

The history of research must begin with the Protestant understanding of justification by faith and judgment according to works, for the tension between the two themes typically arises from the Protestant reading of justification in Paul.¹⁰ This

⁸Paul A. Rainbow, *The Way of Salvation: The Role of Christian Obedience in Justification*, (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster Press), 2005. See Rainbow’s similar conclusions in Paul A. Rainbow, “Justification according to Paul’s Thessalonian Correspondence,” *BBR* 19 (2009): 273–74.

⁹This history of research focuses on works devoted specifically to the topic of judgment in Paul. Readers interested in how Pauline scholars generally have solved the tension between justification by faith and judgment according to works should consult Ortlund’s encyclopedic taxonomy (Dane C. Ortlund, “Justified by Faith, Judged according to Works: Another Look at a Pauline Paradox,” *JETS* 52 [2009]: 323–39).

¹⁰Devor calls the theme “one of the perennial problems in Protestant theology” (Richard Campbell Devor, “The Concept of Judgment in the Epistles of Paul” [Ph.D. diss., Drew University, 1959], 95). Roetzel observes that the theme is not a problem within Roman Catholic theology (*Judgment in the Community*, 1).

theological context is important for later exegetical works because they stand in its train. It is no accident that most studies of judgment in Paul have been undertaken by German scholars who stand in the Lutheran theological tradition. After explaining justification and judgment within Protestant theology, the history will survey the proposals of various scholars for a solution to tension between justification and judgment in Paul.

The Context of Protestant Theology

The Protestant formulation of justification was not monolithic, but there were common features. McGrath identifies three: First, “justification is defined as the forensic *declaration* that believers are righteous, rather than the process by which they are *made* righteous, involving a change in their *status* rather than in their *nature*.” Second, “a deliberate and systematic distinction is made between *justification* (the external act by which God declares the sinner to be righteous) and *sanctification* or *regeneration* (the internal process of renewal within humans). Although the two are treated as inseparable, a notional distinction is thus drawn where none was conceded before.” Third, the formal cause of justification “is defined as the alien righteousness of Christ, external to humans and imputed to them, rather than a righteousness which is inherent to them, located within them, or which in any sense may be said to belong to them.”¹¹ O’Kelley argues that the distinguishing mark of the Protestant view of justification is this final feature, the doctrine of an alien righteousness—“the location of the legal basis of right standing with God outside of, rather than intrinsic to, the believer.”¹² Luther, for example, did not make a systematic distinction between justification and sanctification as later Protestants did, but he understood the legal basis of a right standing before God to be the alien

¹¹Alister McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*, 3rd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 212–13.

¹²Aaron Thomas O’Kelley, “A Historical-Theological Critique of the New Perspective on Paul” (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010), 69.

righteousness of Christ alone.¹³ A crucial aspect of the understanding of justification promoted by Luther and the other Reformers was a distinction between the law and gospel, in contrast with the Roman Catholic synthesis of the two. O’Kelley explains:

The law demands perfect obedience, and without the hope of offering such to God, the sinner’s only recourse is to the gospel. God does not offer eternal life as a reward for grace-wrought merit. He gives it freely and unconditionally through his Son, whose righteousness belongs to the sinner by faith.¹⁴

This understanding of justification created a tension with the concept of a final judgment according to works, for if believers do not stand before God’s judgment on the basis of their works, then how can they be judged according to works at the final judgment? Full-blown explanations of the tension awaited twentieth century scholars, but the Protestant theologians did address the topic of Christian good works and the final judgment.

In general, Protestant theologians affirmed that the final judgment is according to works but explained these good works as something other than the ground of justification. For example, Calvin, like Luther and Melancthon, argues that Romans 2:6–11 describes Christians to whom God will repay eternal life for doing what is good.¹⁵ However, in his *Institutes*, he explains that passages which speak of salvation as recompense do not refer to works as the ground of justification. The expression “God will render to every man according to his works,” does not contradict justification by faith because “the expression indicates an order of sequence rather than the cause” of salvation.¹⁶ After being called into fellowship with Christ, God begins a good work in believers, which must then be made perfect until the day of the Lord Jesus. It is “made perfect when, resembling their Heavenly Father in righteousness and holiness, they prove

¹³Ibid., 93–94.

¹⁴Ibid., 95.

¹⁵John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*, trans. and ed. John Owen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 89–94.

¹⁶John Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.18.1.

themselves sons true to their nature.”¹⁷ Thus, the Kingdom of Heaven is a son’s inheritance, not a servant’s wages (Eph 1:18).¹⁸ Again, “holiness of life [is] the way, not indeed that gives access to the glory of the Heavenly Kingdom, but by which those chosen by their God are led to its disclosure.”¹⁹

The Westminster Confession of Faith (1647) contains one of the clearest affirmations of judgment according to works in Protestant theology:

God hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ. . . all persons, that have lived upon the earth, shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their deeds; and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil. The end of God’s appointing this day is for the manifestation of the glory of his mercy in the eternal salvation of the elect; and of his justice in the damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient.²⁰

This statement affected subsequent confessions like the Congregationalist Savoy Declaration (article 32), the Baptist Confession of 1689 (article 32), and eventually the confession of my own alma mater: “God hath appointed a day, wherein He will judge the world by Jesus Christ, when every one shall receive according to his deeds; the wicked shall go into everlasting punishment; the righteous, into everlasting life.”²¹ However, the Westminster Confession also explains that good works cannot be the basis of a standing at the divine judgment: Good works are the “fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith.” “They are defiled and mixed with so much weakness and imperfection that they can not endure the severity of God’s judgment”; “yet notwithstanding, the persons of believers being accepted through Christ, their good works also are accepted in him.” On this point, the Westminster confession sounds similar to the earlier Thirty-Nine Articles

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid., 3.18.2.

¹⁹Ibid., 3.18.4.

²⁰Westminster Confession of Faith, XXXIII, *Of the Last Judgment*.

²¹Abstract of Principles of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, XX, *The Judgment*.

of Religion of the Church of England (1571). This confession speaks of good works as the “fruits of Faith” that “follow after Justification.” These works cannot “endure the severity of God’s judgment; yet they are pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ.” Furthermore, “by them a lively [vs. dead] Faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit.”²² Thus good works are the evidence of faith but they cannot be the ground of justification at the divine judgment. While the Westminster confession affirms that the judgment is according to works, it argues that the good works which bring the positive recompense cannot be the basis of the verdict.

The Lutheran Confessions do not directly speak of good works at the final judgment, but they do affirm the necessity of good works for Christians. The Augsburg Confession (1530) speaks of the necessity of good works “because it is the will of God that we should do them.”²³ The faith that justifies “should bring forth good fruits.”²⁴ However, these works are not the ground of justification for they cannot be done “on any confidence of meriting justification before God by their works.”²⁵ The Formula of Concord (1576) was born out of controversy, and one controversial point was Professor Georg Major’s declaration that good works are necessary for salvation. The Formula affirms that good works are “necessary” for the Christian: “Good works must certainly and without all doubt follow a true faith. . . as fruits of a good tree.” Again, “all men, indeed, but chiefly those who through the Holy Spirit are regenerated and renewed, are debtors to do good works,” so that “those words—‘necessary,’ ‘ought,’ it behooves’—are rightly used even of regenerate men.”²⁶ However, following Melanchthon’s suggestion, it

²²Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, XII, *Of Good Works*.

²³Augsburg Confession, Part I, Article XX, *Of Good Works*.

²⁴Augsburg Confession, Part I, Art. VI, *Of New Obedience*.

²⁵Augsburg Confession, Part I, Article XX, *Of Good Works*.

²⁶Formula of Concord, Article IV, *Of Good Works*.

denies that good works are “necessary *for salvation*.”²⁷ Thus Lutheran confessions affirm the necessity of good works for Christians, but they qualify that these good works cannot be the ground of salvation.

Later Protestant orthodoxy continued to affirm the concept of a divine judgment according to works. They used the theme as an incentive for Christians to do what is good,²⁸ although they argued that Christian good works are not the ground of justification.²⁹ Martin explains that these theologians saw no contradiction between justification by faith and the judgment according to works because good works were considered the “free acts of justified persons” which spring from faith working through love.³⁰ The modern period, however, led the heirs of Protestant theology in different directions. In theology, developments in German philosophy culminated in the rejection of the idea of God’s wrath and the final judgment in the theology of Ritschl.³¹ In New Testament studies, the tension between justification by faith and judgment according to works in the letters of Paul became a topic of research for scholars who sought for a solution to the problem.

²⁷Formula of Concord, Article IV, *Of Good Works*. On the controversy see Philip Schaff, ed., *The Creeds of Christendom: With a History and Critical Notes* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 1: 274–77.

²⁸James Perry Martin, *The Last Judgment in Protestant Theology from Orthodoxy to Ritschl* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), 8–9.

²⁹See, e.g., Hermann Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*. vol. 4, *Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 176–229; Charles Hodge Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4: 176–229; Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 3: 114–212 (see especially the section entitled “Works not the Ground of Justification,” *ibid.*, 3: 134–40).

³⁰Martin, *Last Judgment in Protestant Theology*, 14.

³¹*Ibid.*, 196–208. See, e.g., Albrecht Ritschl, *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation: The Positive Development of the Doctrine*, trans. and ed. H. R. Mackintosh and A. B. Macaulay (Clifton, NJ: Reference Book Publishers, 1966), 350–67.

Proposed Solutions to the Tension

New Testament scholars have attempted to explain the problem in roughly three ways. First, many have suggested that the tension arises because Paul retains Jewish words and ideas about judgment which interfere with the content of his own theology. Second, several have suggested that Paul actually teaches a separate judgment for Christians, a judgment for rewards rather than salvation. Finally, some have suggested that the problem lies in the Protestant understanding of justification, a theology which does not match Paul's own view of justification.

A remnant of Jewish theology. Wetter wrote what appears to be the first monograph on recompense in Paul, a book which became foundational to the discussion. He stressed the importance of background study, examining Paul against his own world and time. In the context of Hellenistic ideas like fate, late Judaism had reduced the idea of divine recompense to a mechanical, impersonal power.³² Paul, a student of the Pharisees, overtakes the language and theology of Judaism and speaks of recompense as a mechanical power operating in the world which causes a penalty to always follow from sin.³³ Although Paul sometimes associates recompense with God, his words in these contexts are only Jewish formulas (e.g., Rom 2:6, 16),³⁴ the husk of an outer form which is blown up by the content of Paul's own religion of grace.³⁵ To Wetter, then, Paul does not actually believe in a *divine* recompense or judgment. The passages which seem to associate judgment with God are simply a remnant of early Jewish theology. Since Paul

³²Gillis P. Wetter, *Der Vergeltungsgedanke bei Paulus: Eine Studie zur Religion des Apostles* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1912), 10–12.

³³*Ibid.*, 18–46.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 46, 128.

³⁵“Ja eigentlich gibt es bei ihm nur die äußere Form desselben; sobald wir mehr auf den Inhalt sehen, können wir beobachten, daß er dessen Schale sprengt und uns, oft mitten durch die alte Ausdrucksweise hindurch, etwas Neues fühlen läßt” (*ibid.*, 161).

does not overcome these old concepts and words, there is an element of inconsistency between his language of recompense and his religion of grace. Thus, a solution to the tension between justification and judgment in Paul is irresolvable.³⁶

Braun critiqued Wetter for arguing that Paul does not actually believe in the Jewish theology of judgment and that the concept is only loosely associated with God in Paul's letters.³⁷ To Braun, Paul's theology actually takes up the late Jewish understanding of divine judgment and *radicalizes* it. Specifically, it radicalizes Jewish theology in terms of the object of judgment (i.e., the strict carrying out of impartiality on both Jews and Gentiles), the height of the demand (i.e., perfection, a demand which Paul does not lighten for God's people), and the nature of the divine gift (i.e., eternal life).³⁸ But although Braun disagreed with Wetter's thesis, his conclusion conceded that certain aspects of Paul's conception of judgment are simply a relapse into Jewish theology, particularly within the paraenesis of Paul's letters.³⁹ Thus he explained the tension between justification and judgment in the same way as Wetter.

Synofzik followed Braun's critique of Wetter—judgment is not simply a “Jewish remnant” which Paul fails to overcome. Further, Synofzik questioned Braun's concession that some of these Jewish remnants remain in Paul's paraenesis.⁴⁰ To Synofzik Paul can *seem* to have these remnants because he absorbs traditional material, but Paul also integrates and interprets that material.⁴¹ Synofzik proposed a new method

³⁶Ibid., 128.

³⁷Herbert Braun, *Gerichtsgedanke und Rechtfertigungslehre bei Paulus* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche, 1930), 41, 89. This is the published form of Braun's dissertation from the Universität Halle-Wittenburg.

³⁸Ibid., 59, 94.

³⁹Ibid., 95, 97.

⁴⁰Ernst Synofzik, *Die Gerichts- und Vergeltungsaussagen bei Paulus: Eine traditions-geschichtliche Untersuchung*, Göttinger Theologische Arbeiten (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977), 9–10.

for studying the problem: a *traditionsgeschichtliche* approach. His study examined all of the Pauline judgment texts and sorted them into *formgeschichtliche* categories.⁴² Much of the work was simply descriptive exegesis of Paul's letters in which he constantly pointed out the traditional nature of Paul's statements. Synofzik concluded that Paul takes up the judgment and recompense sayings not as an individual theme of his theology but as an *Argumentationsmittel*, i.e., as a rhetorical statement.⁴³ This was Synofzik's solution to the tension between justification and judgment in Paul: The apostle speaks of judgment to make certain arguments but does not take up the theme as a part of his own theology.

When one compares Wetter, Braun, and Synofzik, their respective solutions seem very close. Although Braun and Synofzik distanced themselves from their predecessors, all three argued for traditional material as an explanation for the tension between justification and judgment. Wetter argued that the judgment motif was entirely a remnant of Jewish theology. Braun conceded that the motif was a relapse to Jewish theology only in certain paraenetic places in Paul's letters. And Synofzik argued that Paul does not have his own theology of judgment but simply uses this traditional motif for certain rhetorical purposes. This line of inquiry, then, suggested that the tension between justification by faith and judgment according to works in Paul is simply a product of the residue of Jewish theology which Paul continues to express, even though it is inconsistent with his own theology of justification.⁴⁴

A judgment for rewards. An alternative solution to the tension between

⁴¹Ibid., 106.

⁴²Ibid., 12.

⁴³Ibid., 105.

⁴⁴The work of Travis stands somewhat outside the history of research. His thesis is that the New Testament authors use the *language* of retributive justice, but they do not have a *theology* of retributive justice (Stephen Travis, *Christ and the Judgement of God: The Limits of Divine Retribution in New Testament Thought*, 2nd ed. [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2009], 4). Thus, like Wetter, Braun, and Synofzik, he argues that Paul does not really have a theology of divine judgment. Overall, Travis seems to have forced his thesis on the material (see my evaluation on pp. 30–31 of this dissertation).

justification and judgment was suggested by Devor in his Drew University dissertation. Devor argued that the solution was not to relegate judgment to the residue of Judaism but to see the good works of believers at the judgment as that which determines their degree of eternal reward. To Paul, a person is justified by faith, but his or her particular place in glory is determined their works.⁴⁵ The scope of Devor's dissertation was very broad, and his proposed solution lacked a tight argument from the text of Paul's letters. However, this solution received a firmer exegetical grounding by Mattern.

Mattern investigated Paul's understanding of judgment in two parts: First, she asked whether Paul understands judgment to be possible for Christians. She answered negatively because of Paul's teaching about the Christian's freedom from ὀργή and κατόκριμα.⁴⁶ When Paul speaks about the possibility of Christians falling, he means a falling from faith: "Christians are freed from the judgment-of-destruction; this freedom is certainly theirs, however it is not assuredly theirs, because they can fall away from faith."⁴⁷ Second, Mattern considered the judgment for Christians in Paul. The judgment in Romans 2 is not merely a background for Paul's message of grace but a real judgment for Christians which separates Christians and non-Christians. This judgment determines whether someone stands fundamentally in obedience to God and proves whether faith is actually faith.⁴⁸ Moreover, for Christians the judgment not only determines *whether* someone was a Christian; it also determines *how* the Christian was a Christian—i.e., Paul

⁴⁵Richard Campbell Devor, "The Concept of Judgment in the Epistles of Paul" (Ph.D. diss., Drew University, 1959), 418–19, 496. "The judgment, hence, had nothing to do with his admission into the kingdom" (ibid., 497). Note that Devor does understand the judgment of Christians to be entirely disconnected from the question of their salvation, for he suggests that there is a possibility of the loss of salvation in Paul because of a loss of faith (ibid., 498–99).

⁴⁶Lieselotte Mattern, *Das Verständnis des Gerichtes bei Paulus* (Zürich: Zwingli Verlag, 1966), 96.

⁴⁷"Die Christen sind vom Vernichtungsgericht befreit, diese Freiheit ist ihnen gewiss, aber sie ist ihnen nicht sicher, denn sie können vom Glauben abfallen" (ibid., 118).

⁴⁸Ibid., 137–39.

speaks of a judgment for degrees of reward.⁴⁹ Paul therefore speaks of judgment in a narrower sense for the Christian, a judgment without grace, and a judgment for rewards.⁵⁰ This judgment for rewards was Mattern's solution to the tension between justification and judgment. However, her understanding of Romans 2 did not fit this pattern, a point I will return to below.

Kuck focused on judgment in the Corinthian correspondence.⁵¹ His was also the only thorough study of judgment in the Greco-Roman traditions. He concluded that judgment in these traditions has no divine agent and is not eschatological but takes place immediately after the death of each person.⁵² Thus the background for the theme of judgment in Paul is essentially Jewish. Kuck distanced his conclusions about Paul from the conclusions of Mattern, because he thought she drew an "unnecessarily rigid distinction between two levels of judgment."⁵³ However, his discussion fell along similar lines. There are two functions of divine judgment in Paul—judgment can either "encourage corporate confidence in a distinctive Christian identity based on a separate destiny" (i.e., a judgment for salvation),⁵⁴ or it can address specific individuals or groups

⁴⁹Mattern explains the judgment for degrees of reward from 2 Cor 5:10; Rom 14:10; 2 Cor 9:6ff.; Phil 4:17; 1 Cor 3:5ff.; and 1 Cor 4:4ff. (ibid., 151–92).

⁵⁰Ibid., 214.

⁵¹His goal was "to shed light on the disputed question of the nature of the problems in the Corinthian congregation and on Paul's response to the situation" (Kuck, *Judgment*, xii). This is the published form of his Yale dissertation.

⁵²Ibid., 148–49. Braun briefly discussed judgment in the Greco-Roman context but only to establish that the tension between justification and judgment did not grow from that context (Braun, *Gerichtsgedanke und Rechtfertigungslehre*, 2–5). Note also the helpful excursus on Greco-Roman backgrounds in Yinger, who basically follows Kuck (Kent L. Yinger, *Paul, Judaism, and Judgment According to Deeds* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999], 139–40).

⁵³Kuck, *Judgment*, 229, n. 26. Kuck preferred to speak of two aspects of one judgment: "It should not be concluded that Paul conceived of two separate judgments, one to divide the saved from the condemned, the other to apportion rewards to believers. Rather, Paul looks at one final judgment from two aspects, depending on the emphasis of his argument" (ibid., 229).

⁵⁴Ibid., 223–25.

within the Christian community, a judgment described more in terms of loss of reward rather than salvation (i.e., a judgment for rewards).⁵⁵ Thus, although Kuck never offered a clear explanation of the tension between justification and judgment in Paul, he implicitly endorsed this solution by describing the final judgment for Christians in terms of for rewards instead of salvation.⁵⁶

Revised views of justification. Scholars who endorsed the two previous solutions generally assumed that the Protestant reading of justification by faith in Paul was correct. From this assumption, they sought to explain how the theme of judgment according to works cohered with such a view of justification. However, several scholars have suggested that the tension arises from the Protestant reading of Paul rather than from Paul's theology itself.

Filson, following the suggestion of Wernle, argued that justification by faith in Paul only referred to forgiveness for pre-baptismal sins.⁵⁷ The concept of divine recompense was not merely a remnant of Jewish theology but persists in Paul's own theology in three ways: First, the recompense principle persists for unbelievers, who will be condemned according to their works. Second, the recompense principle persists in Paul's teaching about the atonement in that "Jesus has accepted the punishment which

⁵⁵Ibid., 225–29.

⁵⁶The solution of a judgment for rewards was anticipated by the lecture of Kühl (D. Ernst Kühl, *Rechtfertigung auf Grund Glaubens und Gericht nach den Werken bei Paulus* [Königsberg i. Pr.: Wilh. Koch, 1904]). It is sometimes mentioned in popular level biblical studies. See, e.g., the note on 2 Cor 5:10 in the Scofield Study Bible (1917 ed.): "The judgment of the believer's works, not sins, is in question here. These have been atoned for, and are 'remembered no more forever' . . . but every work must come into judgment . . . The result is 'reward' or 'loss' (of the reward), 'but he himself shall be saved' . . . This judgment occurs at the return of Christ."

⁵⁷Paul Wernle, *Der Christ und die Sünde bei Paulus* (Freiburg: Mohr Siebeck, 1897). For a concise summary of Wernle's argument, see T. L. Carter, *Paul and the Power of Sin: Redefining 'Beyond the Pale,'* SNTSMS 115 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 7–8. Wernle argued that after baptism, Paul expects sinless perfection among his Christian communities, but Filson did not follow Wernle on this point. Note that Wetter, Braun, and Mattern had all considered and rejected Wernle's approach (Wetter, *Vergeltungsgedanke bei Paulus*, 102; Braun, *Gerichtsgedanke und Rechtfertigungslehre*, 27–28, 64, 85–87; Mattern, *Gerichtes bei Paulus*, 97, 121).

according to the recompense principle men deserved.” Third, the recompense principle persists in Paul for believers, because Paul “never states that the benefits of the death of Christ avail for sins committed after baptism.”⁵⁸ This third point explains the tension between justification and judgment in Paul: Justification by faith only applies to the Christian’s life before conversion, and judgment according to works applies to the Christian’s life after conversion.⁵⁹

In the most recent monograph on judgment in Paul, VanLandingham has offered a solution to the tension which is similar to Filson.⁶⁰ His book was written as a critique of the thesis of Sanders who argued that the pattern of Jewish religion was one of grace—one entered the covenant through election, and obedience to the law functioned only as a means of staying within the covenant. VanLandingham argued against Sanders that patterns of religion should be defined by the end point of final judgment. From this perspective, Second Temple Judaism understood behavior to determine one’s eternal destiny. In Jewish thought, obedience was not only the condition of salvation but the cause of salvation.⁶¹ Similarly, Paul “believes that deeds not only affect one’s eternal destiny, but form the ultimate criterion for determining one’s eternal destiny at the Last Judgment.”⁶² To VanLandingham, justification by faith is a mistranslated phrase and a misunderstood concept—it does not mean “to declare righteous” but “to make righteous,” and it is not an anticipation of the verdict of the final judgment but a making righteous at

⁵⁸Floyd Filson, *St. Paul's Conception of Recompense* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche, 1931), 14–16.

⁵⁹One should note, however, that eternal life according to Filson is both grace *and* recompense, for he argues that God’s grace continues after baptism in that Christ is the Christian’s intercessor (Rom 8:34; cf. 5:10) (ibid., 17). Filson also argued for the idea of degrees of reward at the judgment (ibid., 115), but this was not his solution to the tension.

⁶⁰Chris VanLandingham, *Judgment & Justification in Early Judaism and the Apostle Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006). This is the published form of his University of Iowa dissertation.

⁶¹Ibid., 66–67.

⁶²Ibid., 175.

the time of conversion. Like Filson, VanLandingham argues that the death of Christ avails only for pre-conversion sins.

In contrast with VanLandingham, many scholars have adopted the insights of Sanders on Judaism and developed what is known as the new perspective on Paul. This perspective offers a revision of the Protestant understanding of justification by faith apart from works of the law. To these scholars, works of the law focus on Jewish boundary markers which separate Jews from Gentiles. Paul's critique of Judaism is not that it is legalistic, that Jews tried to earn their salvation through obedience to the law. Rather, his critique of Judaism is that it is ethnocentric, that only Jews who possess the Mosaic law may be justified.⁶³

Yinger was the first to thoroughly apply the insights of Sanders to the problem of judgment in Paul.⁶⁴ His work was also the first thorough examination of the judgment motif in pre-Pauline Jewish sources, surveying the motif in the Jewish Scriptures, intertestamental literature, and then in Paul. Yinger found that the theme of judgment according to works is widespread in Judaism.⁶⁵ He concluded that Paul's soteriological framework is very similar to Judaism—both have a unitary view of human deeds rather than an atomistic view of works; both were concerned with one's "way," not with perfect obedience.⁶⁶ Differences include the replacement of Torah with Christ as the "defining event of electing grace," and a greater emphasis on the Spirit's work in enabling

⁶³The contours of the new perspective on Paul are now well known. For an excellent summary, see Stephen Westerholm, "The 'New Perspective' at Twenty-Five," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, ed. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 1–38.

⁶⁴Travis had earlier adopted the proposal of Sanders, but this perspective did not really have bearing upon his basic thesis (see Stephen H. Travis, *Christ and the Judgment of God: Divine Retribution in the New Testament* [Basingstoke, Hants, England: Marshall Pickering, 1986], 14, 61).

⁶⁵For a helpful summary, see the appendix listing every occurrence of the motif (Yinger, *Judgment According to Deeds*, 295–98).

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 284–85, 288.

obedience.⁶⁷ Regarding the problem of justification and judgment, Yinger found no theological tension between justification and judgment in Paul. The only tension is an existential tension when Christians encounter Paul's warnings.⁶⁸

Yinger's finding of no theological tension between the themes in Paul was based upon the revised view of justification adopted by other new perspective scholars. He explained this view of justification in his examination of judgment in Romans 2:6–11 and 4:4–5: To Yinger, Paul does not speak of perfect obedience to the law in either Romans or Galatians. The phrase “works of the law” in Paul does not refer to an obedience which earns righteousness but an obedience which distinguishes Jews from Gentiles. Paul does not make a hypothetical argument in Romans 2.⁶⁹ Most fundamentally, Paul does not argue against Jewish presumption or works righteousness in Romans 2, but rather against Jewish reliance on covenantal privileges.⁷⁰ Finally, Yinger argued that Paul's “rather shocking language of belief in ‘the one who justifies the ungodly’ was not meant by Paul to overturn a fundamental biblical axiom, but to hint at Abraham's lack of crucial law-works at the time of his believing in Genesis 15:6.” By “law-works” he meant “works crucial to Jewish identity.”⁷¹ Thus, Yinger's explanation of the tension built upon the revised view of justification suggested by the new perspective on Paul, a perspective which alleviates the tension between justification by faith and judgment according to works.

⁶⁷Ibid., 288–89.

⁶⁸Ibid., 291.

⁶⁹The hypothetical reading of the positive recompense in Rom 2 seems to have originated in the comments of Melancthon and Calvin on Rom 2:13 (see pp. 150–52 of this dissertation). It is adopted by many but not all scholars who follow the traditional Protestant understanding of justification.

⁷⁰Yinger, *Judgment according to Deeds*, 166–81.

⁷¹Ibid., 185–86.

Toward a consensus?

An interesting feature cuts across the various solutions to tension between justification and judgment in Paul. Many scholars continued to appeal to the traditional language of Protestant theology to explain the role of Christian good works and the final judgment. For example, Synofzik concluded the last page of his study by arguing that judgment and justification are integrated in Paul because faith manifests itself in works.⁷² This conclusion was really an alternate solution to his own solution to the problem. Watson, who built upon the work of Synofzik, critiqued his study at this very point: Although Synofzik claimed that justification and judgment are incoherent in Paul's thought because judgment is only a *Argumentationsmittel*, his conclusion just a few pages later argued that they are actually coherent and integrated by the relationship of faith and works.⁷³ This was an appeal to the explanations offered by earlier Protestant theologians.

Mattern similarly appealed to the relationship between faith and works in order to solve the tension between justification and judgment. She distinguished Romans 2 from other judgment texts addressed to Christians. Although most of Paul's judgment texts speak of a judgment over *how* the Christian was a Christian (degrees of reward), Romans 2 speaks of a judgment over *whether* the Christian was a Christian. The bad

⁷²“Doch handelt es sich hier um einen Glauben, der sich durch die Liebe als wirksam erweist (Gal 5, 6) und der die Verantwortlichkeit des Christen für sein Leben in der Rechenschaft vor dem künftigen Richter nicht überflüssig macht” (ibid., 109).

⁷³Watson, “Justified by Faith; Judged by Works,” 212. In response, Watson suggested that the way forward was to understand that the tension between different types of discourse in Paul are due to different audiences. The warnings of a judgment according to works address only one kind of audience—“Christians whose faith has degenerated to a false security. . . those who are presuming on God's grace” (ibid., 220). Watson explained these different types of address through the dialectical nature of Christian preaching: “After the gospel the law speaks once more, but after the law the gospel speaks again anew.” (This is Watson's translation of Wilfried Joest, *Gesetz und Freiheit: Das Problem des Tertius Usus Legis*, 4th ed. [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck u. Ruprecht, 1968], 185, in Watson, “Justified by Faith; Judged by Works,” 219.) Watson did not conclude with Joest that the unity of justification and judgment remain a mystery of God (i.e., we cannot explain its coherence). Still, it seems difficult to maintain a coherent Pauline theology with Watson's dialectical approach. A similar dialectical approach is found in Pregeant who uses a process hermeneutic to explain the tension through an ongoing dialectic (Russell Pregeant, “Grace and Recompense: Reflections on a Pauline Paradox,” *JAAR* 47 [1979]: 73–96).

works in the judgment for degrees of reward do not lead to condemnation. However, the bad work in Romans 2 does lead to condemnation.⁷⁴ This condemnation is rooted in a loss of faith, for “if the good work is absent, then faith is also absent.”⁷⁵ Thus Mattern explained the tension between justification and judgment in Romans 2, not by appealing to degrees of reward, but by appealing to the relationship between faith and works. The one who is justified by faith will do the good work. Similarly the end of her monograph speaks of the “judgment over the Christian-being of the Christian.”⁷⁶ She observed that the Christian community has broken away from sin and grows in doing good, a good which is connected with Paul’s expectation of blamelessness on the last day. This blamelessness, however, is not the ground of the final judgment.⁷⁷

Finally, Yinger drew upon the thesis of Heiligenthal that “works in the New Testament possess above all the character of a sign; that is, they reveal the inner reality of the person to others and to God. Functioning thus, they are assessed more positively in the New Testament than the traditional Protestant rejection of ‘works righteousness’ would lead one to assume.”⁷⁸ He concludes that obedience is a condition for final justification in that it is “the *necessary manifestation* of that which has already been obtained and assured through faith.”⁷⁹ While Yinger’s understanding of justification was different than the traditional Protestant view, his description of works as the necessary manifestation of faith was very similar to traditional view. Thus, like Synofzik and

⁷⁴Mattern, *Gerichtes bei Paulus*, 156–57; 179.

⁷⁵“ . . . fehlt das gute Werk, dann fehlt auch der Glaube” (ibid., 179).

⁷⁶Ibid., 193–211. Interestingly Synofzik criticizes Mattern for giving up on the justification of the ungodly and proposing a synergistic solution (*Gerichts- und Vergeltungsaussagen*, 11–12).

⁷⁷Mattern, *Gerichtes bei Paulus*, 210.

⁷⁸Translated by Yinger, *Judgment According to Deeds*, 160–61. For the original, see Roman Heiligenthal, *Werke als Zeichen: Untersuchungen zur Bedeutung der menschlichen Taten im Frühjudentum, Neuen Testament und Frühchristentum* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983), preface.

⁷⁹Yinger, *Judgment According to Deeds*, 289–90.

Mattern, Yinger essentially adopted the traditional Protestant explanation that works are the fruit and evidence of justifying faith.

Method for the Study

This study will use historical, grammatical, and theological exegesis in order to explore the meaning and function of the theme of divine judgment according to works in the epistle to the Romans.⁸⁰ Two units of discourse in Romans develop the theme extensively—1:18–3:20 and, to a lesser extent, 14:1–23. This dissertation will devote four chapters to an examination of the motif in 1:18–32 (chap. 2), 2:1–29 (chap. 3), 3:1–8 (chap. 4), and 14:1–23 (chap. 8). First, it will examine the meaning of judgment in these passages along the lines of four elements of the motif—the agent of judgment, the action of judgment, the ground of judgment, and the object of judgment. Yinger used these elements as criteria to isolate the motif in Jewish literature and Paul:

(a) God functions explicitly or implicitly as the *subject* of the recompensing activity. . . . (b) A *verbal component* expresses the divine *recompensing activity*, whereby a considerable variety in terminology is present. (c) Reference is made to human *deeds*. . . . (d) In most instances there is also reference to the *person* or *group to whom* or *upon whom* the divine recompense is directed (e.g., God brought his evil deeds *upon his head*).⁸¹

These elements of the motif can also be found in Romans 2:6, the clearest statement of judgment according to works in Romans: (a) God is the agent (ὁς), (b) of a recompensing activity (ἀποδώσει), (c) according to deeds (κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ), (d) for all human beings (ἐκάστῳ). For the purposes of this dissertation, the four elements will serve as heuristic guidelines for the examination of the meaning of judgment in Romans.

Second, this study will examine the rhetorical purpose or function of the

⁸⁰My exegesis will interact extensively with scholarship on Romans, as well as scholarship on judgment in Paul. I should note that I have made a point of understanding the classic readings of Romans through the commentaries of Origin, Aquinas, and Calvin before diving into the current discussions. Many thanks to Ron Huggins for directing me to an English translation of Aquinas's commentary on Romans.

⁸¹Yinger, *Judgment According to Deeds*, 21.

judgment motif. In a series of lectures at Oxford and Harvard, Austin observed that words can function as deeds in themselves.⁸² This insight developed into what is now known as speech-act theory. Vanhoozer explains:

the great discovery of the twentieth-century philosophy of language... is precisely the *speech-act*. After a century or so of detailed analysis of sense, predication, and reference, Anglo-American philosophers discovered the ‘illocution,’ namely, the notion that we *do* something in speaking. To speak is not simply to utter words but to ask questions, issue commands, make statements, express feelings, request help, and so forth. Sometimes simply saying something makes it so: “I now pronounce you man and wife.”⁸³

My examination will follow this fundamental insight, but it will not be a technical application of speech-act theory.⁸⁴ Instead, I will take a more common sense approach to the function of judgment by attempting to simply answer the question, “what is Paul trying to *do* when he speaks of divine judgment in a given passage?” In answering this question, I will attempt to find indications from the text of Romans itself.

Three other chapters will summarize Paul’s accusation in 1:18–3:20 (chap. 5), explain how it lays a foundation for justification by faith (chap. 6), and address the exegetical difficulties of Romans 2 (chap. 7). The final chapter will summarize the findings of the dissertation, evaluate previous solutions to the tension, and draw conclusions.

A hint of what is to come: This study has convinced me that the traditional Protestant reading of justification and judgment in Paul is essentially correct. Following the apparent consensus observed above, I will suggest that the good works of Christians at the final judgment can be rightly explained as the fruit and evidence of a justifying

⁸²The William James Lectures delivered by Austin at Harvard in 1955 have been reproduced in J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, ed. J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbisa, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975).

⁸³Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 63.

⁸⁴Not all agree about how to develop the details of Austin’s argument. See David Gorman, “The Use and Abuse of Speech-Act Theory in Criticism,” *Poetics Today* 20 (1999): 93–119.

faith in Christ. However, I will also suggest some new interpretive moves in the letter in light of the history of interpretation of Romans. In particular, I believe the hypothetical reading of Romans 2:13, which originated in the commentaries of Melancthon and Calvin, must be combined with the Gentile Christian view of Romans 2 in order to make sense of Paul's argument. On the one hand, Paul's accusation in 1:18–3:20 renders the doers of the law to be an empty set (2:7, 10, 13; 3:20). But on the other hand, Paul sees a close analogy between the obedience required by the Mosaic law and the fulfillment of the law in the new covenant (2:15, 26–29).

CHAPTER 2

JUDGMENT IN ROMANS 1:18–32

Introduction

Previous treatments of judgment in Paul only briefly discuss the presence of the motif in Romans 1:18–32.¹ The initial task of this chapter will therefore be to establish that the passage is the first sustained explanation of the theme of divine judgment according to works in the epistle to the Romans. Next, the chapter will examine the meaning of judgment in 1:18–32, following the elements of the motif as outlined in the introduction. Finally, it will examine the function of judgment in 1:18–32, arguing that Paul employs the motif in order to level an accusation against the Gentile world.

Romans 1:18–32 as a Judgment Text

Romans 1:18–32 opens with an announcement of the judgment of God: “for the wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth with unrighteousness” (1:18). Divine wrath should be understood as divine judgment, for Paul speaks of the two almost

¹Synofzik, Konradt, and Travis discuss the passage only briefly (Ernst Synofzik, *Die Gerichts- und Vergeltungsaussagen bei Paulus: Eine traditions-geschichtliche Untersuchung*, Göttinger Theologische Arbeiten [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977], 78–79; Matthias Konradt, *Gericht und Gemeinde: Eine Studie zur Bedeutung und Funktion von Gerichtsaussagen im Rahmen der paulinischen Ekklesiologie und Ethik im 1 Thess und 1 Kor* [Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003], 497–500; Stephen H. Travis, *Christ and the Judgement of God: The Limits of Divine Retribution in New Testament Thought*, 2nd ed. [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2009], 60–62). Earlier scholars touch on the passage through words studies of ὀργή (Gillis P. Wetter, *Der Vergeltungsgedanke bei Paulus: Eine Studie zur Religion des Apostles* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1912], 18–55; Floyd Filson, *St. Paul's Conception of Recompense* [Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche, 1931], 38–45; Lieselotte Mattern, *Das Verständnis des Gerichtes bei Paulus* [Zürich: Zwingli Verlag, 1966], 59–61, Calvin J. Roetzel, *Judgement in the Community: A Study of the Relationship Between Eschatology and Ecclesiology in Paul* [Leiden: Brill, 1972], 79–83).

synonymously in his description of the “day of wrath and of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God” (2:5). Scholars question, however, whether 1:18 means that God’s wrath is being revealed within the events described in 1:19–32, or whether it means that God’s wrath will be revealed on the final day of judgment because of these events. If Paul means the former, then 1:19–32 describes the divine judgment itself. If he means the latter, then the passage only provides the ground for God’s future judgment. In my view, the passage describes the divine judgment itself, making Romans 1:18–32 the first sustained explanation of the judgment motif in the letter to the Romans.

Interpreters since the patristic period have argued that Romans 1:18 refers to the final judgment and not the action of God described in 1:19–32.² Bell recounts the arguments in favor of this position: First, ἀποκαλύπτεται and ὀργή θεοῦ refer to eschatological events.³ As Wilckens argues, “Paul never speaks of the ὀργή of God as an act of God within history but throughout as an end-time [act]... therefore one cannot simply refer to 1:24, 26, 28 for the elucidation of 1:18.”⁴ Second, ἀποκαλύπτεται is used as a futuristic present in 1:18 and should be translated, “the wrath of God will be revealed.”⁵ Eckstein has argued most cogently for this position, noting several parallel uses of ἀποκαλύπτεται (1 Cor 3:13; Luke 17:30), the use of the futuristic present of ἔρχομαι in reference to eschaton (John 14:3; Col 3:6; Eph 5:6), and a supposed futuristic

²Eckstein observes this interpretation in many of the Fathers (e.g., Chrysostom), late nineteenth-century interpreters (e.g., F. A. Philippi), and twentieth-century interpreters (e.g., U. Wilckens) (Hans-Joachim Eckstein, “‘Den Gottes Zorn wird vom Himmel her offenbar werden’ Exegetische Erwägungen zu Röm 1₁₈,” 74, 75, 78). Konradt also holds this view (*Gericht und Gemeinde*, 498).

³Note that I have combined Bell’s first two points (Richard H. Bell, *No One Seeks for God: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans 1.18–3.20*, WUNT 106 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998], 17).

⁴“Von der ὀργή Gottes spricht Paulus nie als einem innergeschichtlichen Handeln Gottes, sonder durchweg als von einem endzeitlichen. . . . Darum kann man zur Erläuterung von 1₁₈ nicht einfach auf 1_{24.26.28} verweisen” (Ulrich Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer*, EKK [Zürich: Benziger/Neukirchener-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1980], 1: 101 n. 155).

⁵Bell, *No One Seeks for God*, 15–16.

use of the present participle ὁ ἐπιφέρων τὴν ὀργήν in Romans 3:5.⁶ Third, Paul describes human history as the time of God’s forbearance from wrath not his revelation of wrath (Rom 2:4; 9:22).⁷

In response, it is true that ὀργή typically refers to the final day of wrath in Romans. Outside of 1:18, Paul uses ὀργή 11 times in the letter, and in all but 2 cases the word is used in the context of the eschatological judgment:⁸ In 2:5 Paul builds upon 1:18–32 and warns his imaginary dialogue partner of storing up ὀργή which will be revealed on the “day of ὀργή and of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God.” On that day, God will repay those who disobey the truth with “ὀργή and fury” (2:8). In 3:5–6, Paul argues that it must be right for God to bring his ὀργή in order for God to judge of the world, referring to the day of judgment. In 4:15 Paul says that the law brings ὀργή, which seems to refer to God’s punishment for transgression at the final judgment.⁹ Christians, Paul is sure, will be saved from this future ὀργή because they have been justified by Christ’s blood (5:9). On the other hand, Paul speaks of unbelievers as “objects of ὀργή” whom God is patiently enduring in the present and against whom he will show his ὀργή in the future (9:22). Finally, in 12:19, Paul urges the Roman Christians not to avenge themselves but to “give place to ὀργή,” referring again to the

⁶Eckstein, “Den Gottes Zorn,” 82–86.

⁷Bell, *No One Seeks for God*, 17. So Theodore of Mopsuestia (see Charles David Gregory, “Theodore of Mopsuestia’s Commentary on Romans: An Annotated Translation” [Ph.D. diss, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1992], 25).

⁸Paul uses ὀργή two times in the letter to refer to God’s wrath executed through human government (Rom 13:4, 5). Dunn explains these references well: “ὀργή denotes divine wrath (as ‘avenger’ he is ‘God’s servant’), but not the final eschatological wrath of 2:5 (James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, WBC, vol. 38a [Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1988], 65). The other letters attributed to Paul use ὀργή 9 times (1 Thess 1:10; 2:16; 5:9; Eph 2:3; 4:31; 5:6; Col 3:6; 3:8; 1 Tim 2:8). Two of these refer to human anger, but 6 refer to the divine eschatological judgment. One use in 1 Thess 2:16 refers to divine wrath revealed in human history—this difficult text need not be addressed here.

⁹So John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (old series) (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 143; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 385; Robert Jewett, *Romans*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 327.

final judgment.¹⁰

However, it is false to infer from Paul's typical usage that he *cannot* use ὀργή in Romans 1:18 to refer to God's judgment within human history. After all, the very question being asked is whether Paul uses ὀργή in this verse in a different sense than he normally does. This question can only be answered by examining Romans 1:19–32 and deciding whether these verses explain the revelation of God's wrath in 1:18, or whether they only explain the ground of the future judgment of God. In 1:19–32, Paul says three times that "God handed them over" (1:24, 26, 28).¹¹ This handing over is a response to the human exchange of the glory of God for idols (see 1:23, 25, 26), and even Bell describes it as a "divine retribution."¹² Thus, Romans 1:19–32 does not merely depict human unrighteousness as the ground for the future judgment of God; it depicts God's retributive judgment of human unrighteousness, the revelation of God's wrath which is announced in 1:18.

Second, the futuristic use of the present tense ἀποκαλύπτεται is unlikely in Romans 1:18. Many commentators have observed that the revelation of God's wrath in 1:18 parallels the revelation of God's righteousness in 1:17. Since ἀποκαλύπτεται in 1:17 speaks of a revelation within human history, it is likely that its counterpart in 1:18 also speaks of a revelation within human history.¹³ Further, Eckstein's parallels are

¹⁰Tasker notes that "the presence of the definite article in this verse before the word 'wrath,' and the fact that Paul follows his injunction in the quotation from Deuteronomy xxxii. 35, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, saith the Lord,' would seem to place this interpretation beyond dispute" (R. V. G. Tasker, *The Biblical Doctrine of the Wrath of God* [London: The Tyndale Press, 1951], 47).

¹¹Several manuscripts do not have ὁ θεὸς in Rom 1:28 (⊗* A 1242 1735 0172*) (Reuben Swanson, *New Testament Greek Manuscripts: Romans* [Wheaton: Tyndale House, 2001], 16). However, this makes no difference in interpretation since God is clearly the subject of παρέδωκεν in 1:28.

¹²Bell, *No One Seeks for God*, 54.

¹³So Anders Nygren, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. Carl C. Rasmussen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1949), 100; Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 35; Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 101.

questionable, because ἀποκαλύπτεται in 1 Cor 3:13 and Luke 17:30 can be understood as present time verbs. Third, Paul’s description of human history as the time of God’s forbearance from wrath (Rom 2:4; 9:22) should not rule out the revelation of God’s wrath within that history but instead should qualify its revelation: God’s wrath is being revealed, but it is not being revealed in its full measure as it will be at the final judgment.¹⁴

Therefore, Romans 1:18 refers to the revelation of God’s judgment in the events described in 1:19–32.¹⁵ Bell rightly observes the eschatological nature of God’s wrath, but Paul’s point is that the final judgment is already being revealed within human history. This makes 1:18–32 the first sustained explanation of the judgment motif in Romans. Moreover, since the opening verse announces this theme of judgment which is then explained in the rest of the passage, judgment is the primary theme of 1:18–32. As Wright observes, “The first major section of the letter is a courtroom scene.”¹⁶

The Meaning of Judgment in Romans 1:18–32

The examination of judgment in Romans 1:18–32 will begin with a consideration of the meaning of the judgment motif. The theme will be analyzed along four lines—the agent of judgment, the action of judgment, the ground of judgment, and the object of judgment.

¹⁴Jewish literature can also speak of both God’s judgment and forbearance within human history: “But judging them little by little you gave them an opportunity to repent” (Wis 12:10).

¹⁵So Anthony Tyrrell Hanson, *The Wrath of the Lamb* (London: SPCK, 1957), 83.

¹⁶N. T. Wright, *Romans*, in volume 10 of *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 428. So Popkes: “Rom 1:18–32 is thus written in the style of a judgment-speech” (“ist Röm 1.18–32 also im Stil einer Gerichtsrede verfasst”) (Wiard Popkes, “Zum Aufbau und Charakter von Römer 1.18–32,” *NTS* 28 [1982]: 498–99). Campbell similarly notes that “1:18–32 are no more than an extended judgment, a κατάκριμα, that condemns the pagans as ‘without excuse’ in view of their catalogue of heinous sins” (Douglas A. Campbell, *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009], 548).

The Agent of Judgment

In Romans 1:18–32, God is the agent who brings his wrath. Some scholars have been hesitant to speak of divine agency in 1:18–32. In the first half of the 20th century several argued that ὀργή in Paul had been depersonalized, so that it was an impersonal wrath or at least a semi-personal wrath. Wetter argues that the concept of divine wrath developed into an impersonal mechanical power in the thought of late-Judaism, a concept Paul overtook when he speaks of the ὀργή θεοῦ in 1:18.¹⁷ Similarly, Dodd, in his commentary on Romans, argues for progression in the idea of wrath, so that Paul retains it “not to describe the attitude of God to man, but to describe an inevitable process of cause and effect in a moral universe.”¹⁸ To support this claim, Dodd notes that “Paul never uses the verb ‘to be angry’ with God as the subject,” and that he only uses the expression “wrath of God” three times.¹⁹ Others have followed Dodd’s position, notably Hanson and MacGregor.²⁰

However, the religio-historical reconstructions of Wetter and Dodd are called into question by the text of Romans 1:18–32. First, in 1:18, Paul makes God the agent of wrath with the phrase ὀργή θεοῦ, a subjective genitive which could be transformed into the sentence “God exercises wrath.” Second, Paul explains this wrath in personal terms.

¹⁷Gillus P. Wetter, *Der Vergeltungsgedanke bei Paulus: Eine Studie zur Religion des Apostles* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1912), 46.

¹⁸C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, MNTC (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1932), 23.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 21.

²⁰Hanson’s book adds no further argument but applies Dodd’s findings to every use of ὀργή in Paul. He concludes that in Paul “the wrath of God is wholly impersonal and does not describe an attitude of God but a condition of men” (*Wrath of the Lamb*, 110). MacGregor’s published SNTS address is more cautious than Dodd: he qualifies that he is not a Marcionite, and he calls wrath “semi-personal” rather than impersonal; however, he follows Dodd in arguing that “wrath of God” is only seen three times and all other uses are impersonal, and he concludes that “when the N.T. speaks of the ‘wrath’ of God, we must not think of this divine anger as if, to put it crudely, God personally reacted against the sinner with explosive ire and ‘took it out on him’ in punishment” (G. H. C. MacGregor, “The Concept of the Wrath of God in the New Testament,” *NTS* 7 [1960–61]: 105).

Morris observes that here “Paul might well say that the sins of the heathen produced inevitable results, or might make use of some similar impersonal expression,” but “he seems to go out of his way to lay stress upon the divine activity.”²¹ *God* delivered people over to dishonorable passions and an unfit mind (1:24, 26, 28).²² Third, Paul says that this wrath is revealed “from heaven,” indicating its divine origin.²³ Concepts do undergo progression, and external sources can illuminate the meaning of a word or of a concept in Paul. However, Paul’s letters must be allowed to speak for themselves rather than being forced into a reconstructed progression of the concept of wrath.

Moreover, Dodd skews the evidence in his arguments about ὀργή and its cognates in Paul. He is formally correct that Paul never uses a verb meaning “to be angry” with God as the subject. But the only use of a verb meaning “to be angry” in a letter attributed to Paul is in the citation of Psalm 4:4 (4:5 in LXX) found in Ephesians 4:26: “be angry (ὀργίζεσθε) and do not sin.” Of course Paul never uses such a verb with God as the subject, for Paul never uses a verb meaning “to be angry” at all outside of this citation.²⁴ Dodd is also formally correct to note that Paul rarely speaks of the ὀργή θεοῦ, but one cannot assume that his other uses of ὀργή are impersonal. In Romans, most of these clearly have a divine agent in context. In 2:5–6 Paul speaks of ὀργή in the context of the day of the “righteous judgment of God.”²⁵ The recompense of

²¹Morris, *Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 184.

²²On the textual variant in Rom 1:28, see n. 11 on p. 26 of this dissertation.

²³The divine origin of wrath remains whether ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ modifies ἀποκαλύπτεται or ὀργή θεοῦ. Cf. Enoch’s words to Methuselah, where he defines the plague “from heaven” in terms of the Lord emerging with wrath: “When sin. . . and injustice increase, crime, iniquity, and uncleanness shall be committed and increase. . . . Then a great plague shall take place *from heaven* upon all these; the holy Lord shall emerge with wrath and plague in order that he may execute judgment upon the earth” (*1 Enoch* 91:7, my emphasis) (*OTP* 1:72).

²⁴Note that Paul uses a verb meaning “to make angry” one time: In Rom 10:19 he cites the song of Moses (Deut 32:21) where God says he will make Israel angry with a foolish nation.

²⁵MacGregor argues that wrath in Paul is conceived of in less personal terms because it is usually eschatological (“Wrath of God,” 103). But if anything, the eschatological judgment of God seems

ὀργή καὶ θυμός in 2:8 is the logical object of 2:6—God will repay wrath and anger.²⁶ In 3:5, Paul calls God “the one who brings ὀργή,” specifying the divine agent. In 4:15 the law is the agent which brings wrath but since the law comes from God it seems likely that Paul understands this wrath to be divine wrath.²⁷ In 5:9 ὀργῆς refers to the divine wrath announced in 1:18–32 and 2:5, and most English versions rightly translate it “God’s wrath.”²⁸ In 9:22 God is the agent who demonstrates ὀργή. And in 12:19, Paul’s citation clearly demonstrates that the ὀργή to which Christians are to give place is the wrath of the God who will repay. In summary, whenever ὀργή is used to refer to the final judgment in Romans, the context indicates divine agency, with the possible exception of 4:15. The idea that wrath is impersonal in Romans 1:18–32, then, is a difficult thesis to sustain.²⁹

More recently, the debate has not been over the personal nature of God’s wrath in Romans 1:18–32, but over the related question of emotion. Is ὀργή an emotion of God

to be more personal, which is confirmed by the references to divine agency in the context of the final judgment in Romans.

²⁶Paul switches to the nominative in describing the negative recompense ὀργή καὶ θυμός in 2:8, but these nominatives clearly parallel the accusative ζῶντι αἰώνιον in 2:7. Since there is no verb in 2:8, readers must supply the future passive of ἀποδίδωμι, and the verb clearly has a divine agent in light of 2:5–6, which says that *God* will replay to each according to his works.

²⁷So Murray, *Romans*, 143; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 385; Jewett, *Romans*, 327.

²⁸So Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 258.

²⁹In German scholarship, Wickens makes an argument similar to Dodd’s in an excursus in his commentary on Romans, concluding that one should not speak of human sin being responded to actively by divine punishment but that Paul envisions a “Tat-Ergehen-Zusammenhang” (*Römer*, 127–31). Gathercole responds to Wilckens by arguing that “in the two treatments of divine judgment in Romans 1–2 . . . it is notable that Paul does not use the immanentist language of cause-and-effect at all, but rather—with great frequency—the *ab extra* language of divine retribution. This is the case both in his description of the present wrath of God and of the wrath to come. Thus, contra Dodd and Wilckens, Romans 1:18–32 presents a transcendent model of divine wrath active in the present, and Romans 2 offers a similar picture in the eschatological sphere” (Simon J. Gathercole, “Justified by Faith, Justified by his Blood: The Evidence of Romans 3:21–4:25,” in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, vol. 2, *The Paradoxes of Paul*, ed. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O’Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004], 170; see 169–75 for his entire argument).

(an affect), or simply an action of God (an effect)?³⁰ Travis argues that wrath is God's personal judgment against sin, but it is not an emotion or affect of God.³¹ Travis's distinction between effect and affect is rooted in his larger thesis that the New Testament does not have a theology of retributive justice: Although its authors use the language of retributive justice, this language is best understood in relation to a non-retributive theology of judgment.³² At first glance, this argument sounds like special pleading, unless Travis can give warrant for his claim. He attempts to do this by asserting that retribution cannot exist in the context of a personal relationship.³³ But he never proves this assertion, and I see no reason why retribution cannot exist in the context of a personal relationship. In Romans Paul links God's judgment with retribution (2:5–6), and this concept of judgment should color our understanding of 1:18–32 since the judgment within history anticipates the final judgment.

Bell follows Wetter in seeing development in the concept of wrath, so that in the New Testament wrath is devoid of emotion—it is not an emotion but an objective entity.³⁴ In response, the thesis of a progression in the history of this religious concept should not control the definition of ὀργή. One must determine the meaning in context given the range of lexical options. The lexicons give definitions of ὀργή which allow for the idea of emotion.³⁵ In context, it is not surprising that God would be angry since

³⁰The relevance of this question is indicated by debates over the word at the Pauline Soteriology section in the 2009 meeting of the SBL.

³¹Travis, *Christ and the Judgement*, 69–70.

³²*Ibid.*, 4.

³³*Ibid.*, 9.

³⁴Bell, *No One Seeks for God*, 28–33.

³⁵LSJ lists two basic glosses: (I) natural impulse or propensity, hence temperament, disposition, mood; (II) anger, wrath (s.v., “ὀργή”). BDAG lists the glosses (1) anger; (2) wrath (s.v., “ὀργή”). While they note that the second definition may exclude the idea of emotion, the first certainly includes it.

people have rejected him and turned to idols. Moreover, this wrath of the final judgment which is being revealed within human history is explicitly linked with the term θυμός which indicates an intense emotion (Rom 2:8).³⁶ This is not to say that ὀργή primarily refers to an emotion but that emotion is one aspect of God’s wrath. Louw and Nida’s advice to translators is instructive:

Though the focal semantic element in ὀργή is punishment, at the same time there is an implication of God’s anger because of evil. Therefore, it is possible in some languages to translate this expression in Ro 3.5 as ‘God does not do wrong when he is angry and punishes us, does he?’³⁷

Finally, to say that ὀργή involves emotion in Romans 1:18 is not to say that Paul is ascribing a capricious or wicked anger to God’s judgment.³⁸

In conclusion, the impersonal view and the non-emotional view do not adequately explain the judgment envisioned in Romans 1:18–32. The judgment revealed within human history has a divine agent—it is *God’s* wrath. And there is no reason to suppose that his wrath is devoid of emotion. It is God’s anger against the unrighteousness of men which prompts his action within human history. However, this anger is not capricious, for the judgment is an *adäquate Vergeltung* (“appropriate recompense”).³⁹

The Action of Judgment

Paul highlights the correspondence between human sin and divine

³⁶BDAG, s.v., “θυμός.”

³⁷L&N, 38.10, p. 490.

³⁸BDAG, under its second definition of ὀργή suggests that it may not involve emotion, following Origen’s argument that ὀργή does not involve πάθος (s.v., “ὀργή,” use 2). To Origen God’s ὀργή and θυμός cannot mean πάθος because Scripture instructs mankind to refrain from these things. He cites Ps 37:8 [36:8 in LXX] and Col 3:8 which prohibit both ὀργή and θυμός. And he concludes: “therefore, we [Christians] do not attribute human passion (πάθος) to God” (Origen, *Contra Celsum* 72, my translation). If one follows Origen here, then one must also see no anger in God’s θυμός, which BDAG does not do. In my view, Origen fails to separate between sinful ὀργή and righteous ὀργή.

³⁹See the classic essay by E. Klostermann, “Die adäquate Vergeltung in Rm 1₂₂₋₃₁,” *ZNW* 32 (1933): 1–6.

retribution—the judgment is a recompense appropriate to human sin. Klostermann and Hooker both argue that Paul envisions a three-fold recompense, highlighting Paul’s play on words:⁴⁰ (1) People forsake the *glory* of God (1:23), and he hands them over to the *dishonoring* of their bodies (1:24). (2) They *exchange* the truth of God for a lie (1:25), and he hands them over to an unnatural sexual *exchange* (1:26–27). (3) And they do not consider it *fitting* to have God in their knowledge (1:28a), which results in God’s handing them over to an *unfit* mind to do what is not *fitting* (1:28b). Only the last two, however, are actual word plays,⁴¹ and there is good reason to see a major break in the passage between 1:23 and 1:24, for Romans 1:24 begins describing God’s response to human idolatry: “*Therefore* God gave them over”⁴² Thus, Paul begins his description of the action of judgment in 1:24.

Paul develops two ways in which the judgment is expressed, with the repetition of the verb παρέδωκεν (1:24, 26, 28). First, the judgment of God is expressed as God hands people over to homosexuality:⁴³ “God handed them over, in the desires of their hearts, to uncleanness so that their bodies are dishonored among them” (1:24). The second παρέδωκεν continues this recompense of dishonorable desires: “God handed them over to dishonorable passions; for the women from them exchanged the natural use

⁴⁰Klostermann, “Die adäquate Vergeltung,” 1–6; M. D. Hooker, “A Further Note on Romans I,” *New Testament Studies* 13 (1966–67): 181–83; so Moo, *Romans*, 96.

⁴¹Hooker notes that Paul regularly opposes δόξα and ἀτιμία (cf. 1 Cor 11:14; 15:43; 2 Cor 6:8) (“Further Note,” 182), but it is not clear to me that this is a word play in Rom 1:23 and 1:24.

⁴²So Nestle-Aland (27th ed.) and Schreiner (Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998], 83). See Popkes for a list of commentators who see a division between 1:23 and 1:24 (Popkes, “Röm 1.18–32,” 490–91). Popkes rightly observes that Rom 1:24 is in one sense both the closure of 1:18–24 and also a part of the following train of thought in 1:24–31 (*ibid.*, 496–98). However, in my estimation 1:24 seems more closely related to what follows, and thus begins a new section (cf. 2:1 where διό begins a new section).

⁴³On the question of homosexuality in these verses, see Keener’s excursus (Craig S. Keener, *Romans*, NCCS [Eugene, OR: Cascade Books], 2009). Keener notes that the majority of scholars recognize that “Paul condemns homosexual behavior generally” (*ibid.*, 35), and that “Paul’s rejection of homosexual behavior belongs to his larger Jewish sexual ethic, which rejects all sexual behavior outside heterosexual marriage” (*ibid.*, 39). See also Jewett, who sees homosexual behavior in view (*Romans*, 172–81).

for the use against nature; in the same way also the men, abandoning the natural use of women, were inflamed in their desire for one another—men doing what is shameful with men and receiving among themselves the penalty which was fitting for their error” (1:26–27).⁴⁴ This “exchange” corresponds to their “exchange” of the truth of God (1:25). Second, more broadly, the judgment is expressed in God handing them over “to an unfit mind, so that they do what is not fitting” (1:28b). The unfit things which they do are then listed in 1:28–31.⁴⁵ These things correspond to their sin, for “they did not consider it *fitting* to have God in [their] knowledge” (1:28a). Thus, God’s judgment within human history is a two-fold appropriate recompense of homosexuality and an unfit mind.⁴⁶

Similar ideas are common in Jewish literature. For example, the Wisdom of Solomon speaks of an appropriate recompense for the Egyptians:

And in the place of their foolish thoughts of unrighteousness, by which they were led astray and worshipped irrational serpents and worthless animals, you sent against them a multitude of irrational creatures in order to punish them, so that they might learn that one is punished by the very things by which one sins (Wis 11:15–16, my translation).

And the *Testament of Naphtali* shows how sexual perversion follows religious perversion:

The gentiles, because they wandered astray and forsook the Lord have changed the order, and have devoted themselves to stones and sticks... But you, my children,

⁴⁴Note that Paul also depicts an appropriate recompense when he speaks of men receiving “the penalty” (τὴν ἀντιμισθίαν) fitting for their error (1:27), a word which falls into the semantic range of Punish, Reward (L&N 38.15). Interpreters are divided over what this verse means: Some argue that it refers to the divine judgment within history envisioned in the rest of the passage, with the penalty being the sexual perversion itself (C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, ICC, new series [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975], 1:126–27). Others see the penalty as some result of homosexual activity (Jewett, *Romans*, 179–80). Still others argue that the penalty of the final judgment is in view (Moo, *Romans*, 116).

⁴⁵For an explanation of the structure and meaning of this list, see the critical commentaries (e.g., Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:129–33; Jewett, *Romans*, 183–90).

⁴⁶After observing this two-fold expression of judgment in which 1:24 and 26 repeat the same idea, I read Jeremias’ article which notes the same phenomenon and describes the three-fold use of παρέδωκεν as an “a || b + c” schema (Joachim Jeremias, “Zu Rm 1₂₂₋₃₂,” *ZNW* 45 [1954]: 120).

shall not be like that: In the firmament, in the earth, and in the sea, in all the products of his workmanship discern the Lord who made all things, so that you do not become like Sodom, which departed from the order of nature (*T. Naph* 3:3–4).⁴⁷

However, Paul goes beyond this statement when he says that human sin not only follows idolatry but is itself the penalty of God’s judgment against idolatry.

Finally, the very sin by which God judges them leads to the penalty of the final judgment, for it is “worthy of death” (1:32). The obvious meaning of the word θάνατος, like the English word “death,” is the cessation of physical life.⁴⁸ But this meaning is often given an extended meaning in Hebrew and Christian Scripture and other religious writings.⁴⁹ The concept of death becomes prominent in Romans 5–8. In 5:12–21 Paul argues that death entered the world through the sin of Adam (5:12), spread to all people (5:12), and reigned over all people (5:14, 17; cf. 5:21; 8:2). Physical death is certainly in view here, although death is pictured as a power ruling over humanity. Death is the result of human sin (6:16, 21, 23; 7:5; 8:13) and because of sin, the commandment of the law also led to death (7:9–11). Human bodily existence in this age, in fact, is characterized by death (7:24; 8:6, 10), but those who belong to Christ and have the Spirit of Christ will have their bodies made alive at the resurrection through the Spirit who dwells in them (8:11). This is because of the death and resurrection of Christ (4:25–5:11), with whom Christians have died and will be raised with (6:1–11), and through whom Christians have been given the Spirit (7:1–6; 8:1–4). Thus, death in Romans 5–8 focuses on the physical death that rules over human beings in this age as the result of sin. But death is also given an extended meaning in Romans 5–8 which goes beyond the cessation of physical life, for Paul contrasts it with “eternal life” (6:23) or resurrection life (8:11), i.e., life in the

⁴⁷*OTP* 1: 812. I am indebted to Jeremias for this reference (“Zu Rm 1_{22–32},” 120). See Klostermann (“Die adequate Vergeltung,” 1–6), and Schulz (“Die Anklage,” 166) for many other parallels.

⁴⁸BDAG, s.v., “θάνατος,” use 1.

⁴⁹BDAG, s.v., “θάνατος,” use 2. Bultmann notes that Philo can use ζωή and θάνατος in several senses, e.g., speaking of Cain as dying continually in his bodily life, or speaking of the wicked as ἔτι ζῶντες νεκροί (*TDNT*, s.v., “θάνατος,” 3:13).

age to come. Thus, while Käsemann rightly reads 1:32 in light of the sentence of death reigning over fallen creation (cf. 8:19), he wrongly concludes that it does not look ahead to the final judgment.⁵⁰ Death should be viewed holistically in Romans.⁵¹ The sentence of death reigning over creation extends to the next age. And Paul seems to have in mind the final judgment here, for the verse is connected with Romans 2. In order for Paul's argument to work in 2:1–5, there must be an element of parallelism: Just as the one who practices such things is worthy of death (1:32), so the one who judges them but actually practices the same things is storing up wrath for the day of judgment (2:1–5). Therefore θάνατος must refer to the penalty of the final judgment.⁵²

In conclusion, Paul envisions the judgment within human history as an appropriate recompense for human sin. It is expressed through God handing people over to homosexuality and an unfit mind. It also leads to the penalty of the final judgment, since the very things to which God hands people over are worthy of death. *The action of judgment is thus entirely negative in Romans 1:18–32.* Judgment is not simply an evaluative judgment—only the condemning judgment is in view. God's action within human history is a negative recompense leading to the final condemning judgment.

⁵⁰Käsemann, *Romans*, 52.

⁵¹Barrosse concludes that Paul conceives of death in Romans as “total death”: “whenever Paul speaks of death as the result of sin, it is of total death that he is speaking—a single reality that he considers now in one phase now in another [i.e., physical, spiritual, and eternal death], but always one same reality whose various stages naturally and necessarily follow and are always implied whenever death is mentioned” (Thomas Barrosse, “Death and Sin in Saint Paul’s Epistle to the Romans,” *CBQ* 15 [1953]: 456).

⁵²So Daxer, who compares it with the Two Ways theology of the Didache (Heinrich Daxer, *Römer 1,18–2:10 in Verhältnis zur spätjüdischen Lehrauffassung* [Naumburg, Germany: Lippert & Co., 1914], 36–37). Konradt notes that death “markiert hier nicht nur das Ende der irdischen, physischen Existenz, sondern steht für das ewige Verderben” (*Gericht und Gemeinde*, 500). Dunn argues that Paul is thinking of Genesis 2–3 and the “primeval sentence of death” (*Romans 1–8*, 69). Surely this interpretation is also correct, for Paul views the penalty of death within the framework of the Hebrew Bible and will later speak of judgment coming from Adam’s sin (5:12–21).

The Ground of Judgment

Paul explains the ground of God’s judgment in Romans 1:19–23: God’s wrath is being revealed *because* they did not glorify God or give thanks (1:21a), they became futile in their thinking and their hearts were darkened (1:21b), they claimed to be wise but became fools (1:22), and they exchanged God’s glory for idols (1:23). In other words, the fundamental reason for God’s judgment within human history is idolatry, or the rejection of God.⁵³ Paul again says that idolatry is the ground of the judgment when he speaks of God’s handing them over in 1:24–32. God delivered them over “because⁵⁴ they exchanged the truth about God for the lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever” (1:25). As Schreiner rightly emphasizes, this verse is the ground of God’s judgment in both 1:24 and 1:26.⁵⁵ Finally, God handed them over “because⁵⁶ they did not consider it fitting to have God in their knowledge” (1:28).

The judgment within human history is a judgment according to works. Paul focuses on internal thoughts as the ground of the judgment and not external actions—they became futile in their *reasoning* and their foolish *hearts* were darkened (1:21). But he also depicts human actions as the ground of God’s recompense, including actions which they failed to do such as glorifying God and giving him thanks, and actions which they did such as worshipping and serving idols. Thus, Paul does not make a clear distinction between human thoughts and actions in Romans 1:18–32.

By what standard are human thoughts and actions judged? First, “they are

⁵³Many have noted that the guiding theme of this passage is that human beings have rejected God (e.g., Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 166; Jewett, *Romans*, 181). However, it is more accurate to say that God’s judgment against this rejection is the guiding theme, as Paul states in Rom 1:18.

⁵⁴Ὅστις can be translated “since” or “because” when it emphasizes “a characteristic quality, by which a preceding statement is to be confirmed” (BDAG, s.v., “Ὅστις,” use 2.b).

⁵⁵Schreiner, *Romans*, 90.

⁵⁶When introducing a sentence καθὼς often has a causal meaning (BDF §453[2]; BDAG, s.v., “καθὼς,” use 3, p. 494; so Käsemann, *Romans*, 49).

without excuse” for idolatry because God has manifested certain things about himself in creation—namely “his eternal power and divine nature” (1:20). Thus, the standard of judgment is God’s revelation about himself in the created order. Second, they are without excuse because they know “the righteous ordinance of God” (1:32). The content of this “righteous ordinance” is explained with a ὅτι clause: “those who do such things are worthy of death” (1:32). It is unclear how people know this ordinance of God. Dunn sees a reference to Genesis 2–3 and the “primeval sentence of death,”⁵⁷ but the ordinance is certainly broader since it decrees death for the “things not fitting” in 1:29–31, not merely for eating the fruit in the garden. Other scholars argue that Paul refers to the death penalty in Jewish or Greco-Roman law.⁵⁸ This is possible for some of the vices, but not all of those listed in 1:29–31 are worthy of the death-penalty in the law codes of ancient society.⁵⁹ Flückiger makes the interesting suggestion that the ordinance refers to the Mosaic law: In the preceding verses he refers to Gentiles whose problem was idolatry, but in 1:32 Paul begins to speak of the Jews, whose problem was transgression of the law.⁶⁰ This view, however, fails to account for the fact that 1:32 describes the same people discussed in 1:28–31.⁶¹ And Paul will go on to make a distinction between those who will be condemned by the law and those who will perish “without the law” (2:12). Thus, Paul does not refer directly to the Mosaic law but to an innate knowledge that the divine penalty for works which “are not fitting” is death. This knowledge, however, is not

⁵⁷Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 69.

⁵⁸Jewett notes that some of the vices could be considered capital offenses in Greco-Roman law (*Romans*, 191, n. 315).

⁵⁹Noted by Cranfield, *Romans*, 134.

⁶⁰Felix Flückiger, “Zur Unterscheidung von Heiden und Juden in Röm. 1,18–2,3,” *TZ* 10 (1954): 154–57.

⁶¹The relative pronoun οἵτινες relates back to the people whom God delivers over to do what is not fitting. So Jewett who notes that Flückiger misses the continuity of 1:32 with the preceding verses, (*Romans*, 190).

unconnected from the Mosaic law, as Paul explains in 2:14–15.⁶²

In summary, the ground of the divine judgment within human history is idolatry. This is a judgment according to works, for Paul roots the recompense in evil thinking and actions. The standard for the judgment within human history is God’s revelation of himself in the things that are made, and the standard for the final condemning judgment is the righteous ordinance of God that those who practice evil works are worthy of death.

The Object of Judgment

The object of divine judgment in Romans 1:18–32 is human unrighteousness: “the wrath of God is being revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men” (1:18). Although there are subtle allusions to the narratives of Adam’s fall⁶³ and the history of the Jewish idolatry,⁶⁴ Paul is essentially sketching a portrait of the idolatry and homosexuality seen in the Greco-Roman Gentile world. Such overt idolatry was not a characteristic description of the Jewish people after the exile. Even Paul, who accuses his

⁶²As Bell observes, Paul shows in 1:18–32 that Gentiles deserve death, but he does not explicitly speak of “the criteria by which the Gentiles will be judged,” for this explanation awaits 2:12–16 (Richard H. Bell, “Extra ecclesiam nulla salus? Is there a salvation other than through faith in Christ according to Romans 2.12–16?” in *Evangelium Schriftauslegung Kirche*, ed. Jostein Ådna, Scott J. Hafemann, and Otfried Hofius [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997], 33).

⁶³Hooker argues that Paul deliberately writes the account of man’s wickedness in Rom 1:18–32 “in terms of the Biblical narrative of Adam’s fall” (M. D. Hooker, “Adam in Romans I,” *NTS* 6 [1959–60]: 301; so Dunn, *Romans 1–8*). This view is probably correct in view of the allusion to Gen 1 in Rom 1:23 (see Niels Hyldahl, “A Reminiscence of the Old Testament at Romans 1.23,” *NTS* 2 [1955–6]: 285–88) and the later argument of Rom 5:12–21. However, 1:18–32 refers directly to idolatry *within the course of human history*. Wedderburn offers a measured conclusion: “we may therefore say that what we have in *Rom.* 1:18ff. seems to be a synthetic description in which the ideas of *Gen.* 3 have played a part, along with other Old Testament passages describing Israel’s fall into idolatry and later experience of idolatry. . . . This story is not timeless. . . but it is not to be pinned down to any particular point in the Old Testament story; the essence of Israel’s history and man’s history as a history of turning ever further away from God is summed up vividly in this account” (A. J. M. Wedderburn, “Adam in Paul’s Letter to the Romans,” in *Studia Biblica 1978*, vol. 3, *Papers on Paul and Other New Testament Authors*, ed. E. A. Livingston [Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980], 419).

⁶⁴Note the allusion to Ps 106:20 (105:20 in the LXX) in Rom 1:23, a psalm which recounts the history of Israel’s idolatry from the perspective of God’s judgment of exile (see Ps 106:40–47).

Jewish dialogue partner of hypocrisy in the matters of stealing and adultery, refrains from accusing him of overt idolatry: “You, the one who preaches ‘do not steal,’ do you steal? You, the one who says ‘do not commit adultery,’ do you commit adultery? You, the one who despises idols, do you rob temples?” (Rom 2:21b–22).⁶⁵ But idolatry was the characteristic description of the Gentile world in Jewish texts of the Second Temple period like Wisdom of Solomon 11–15. Note the similar descriptions in Wisdom and Romans:

For all men were futile by nature with whom ignorance of God was present; and from the good things which are seen they were not able to know the one who exists, neither by paying attention to his works were they able to know the craftsman (Wis 13:1, my translation).

For the unseen things about [God] are clearly seen, being perceived in the things that are made since the creation of the world, both his eternal power and divine nature, so that they are without excuse; because although they knew God, they did not glorify him as God nor give thanks, but they became futile in their reasoning and their foolish hearts were darkened (Rom 1:20–21).

And again they are not to be pardoned (Wis 13:8, my translation)

So that they are without excuse (Rom 1:20).

It is not clear that Romans and Wisdom are dependent upon each other,⁶⁶ because there are not exact parallels in wording like the Synoptic Gospels and the reasoning of the passages is different. Wisdom argues Gentiles ought to have known God in creation but were unable to (Wis 13:1–9). Paul argues that they knew God through creation yet suppressed this truth (Rom 1:19–23). What is evident, however, is that both texts offer similar descriptions of idolatry, and in Wisdom this is a description of the idolatry of

⁶⁵It is unlikely that ἱεροσυλέω refers to the sacrilege of the Jew’s idolatry of worshiping the law over Christ (Donald Garlington, *Faith, Obedience, and Perseverance*, WUNT 79 [Mohr Siebeck, 1994], 34–43). The literal definition “to rob temples” makes sense in light of contemporary Jewish texts which speak of Jewish temple robbers (e.g., 2 Macc 4:30–33; *Jos Ant.* 18.81–84).

⁶⁶Contra Sanday and Headlam who overstate the facts when they argue that “there are clear indications of the use by the Apostle of the Book of Wisdom” in Rom 1 and 9 (*ibid.*, 51).

Gentiles. Thus it seems likely that Paul also refers primarily to the divine judgment of Gentiles in 1:18–32.

A description of Gentiles in Romans 1:18–32 also fits the passage well into the literary context of Paul’s argument. One of the most striking features of the passage is the prominent use of the third person plural person pronoun—God’s judgment is against “them.”⁶⁷ Such a general description suggests that the judgment is against all of unrighteous humanity,⁶⁸ but as the argument of Romans develops it indicates that the referent is more specific—God’s judgment against “them” not “us.” In Romans 2 Paul turns to address a dialogue partner who is judging the person who practices the evil works of 1:18–32. I will argue in the next chapter that this dialogue partner represents the Jewish people who judge the rest of the world for their evil works but think they will escape God’s judgment even though they practice the same things. Therefore, within the argument of Romans, “them” in 1:18–32 refers primarily to the Gentile world as the object of God’s judgment which is being revealed within human history.

In conclusion, it should be observed that Paul is speaking in general terms. There is no reason to suppose that he means God has handed over every Gentile idolater to homosexuality or to all of the vices mentioned in Romans 1:29–31. Rather, he is describing Greco-Roman society as a whole, which was characterized by idolatry, dishonorable passions, and practices which were not fitting. Paul follows this pattern of speaking in general terms throughout 1:18–3:20, a passage which I will now argue primarily functions as an accusation.

⁶⁷See Rom 1:19 (2x), 20, 21, 24 (4x), 26 (2x), 27 (2x), 28. Also, the subjects of numerous third person plural verbs in 1:18–32 have an assumed αὐτοί for a subject. Finally, the relative pronoun οἵτινες (1:25, 32) refers to “them,” as does θήλειαι and ἄρσενες (1:26–27) since Paul qualifies θήλειαι as a subset of αὐτῶν (taking αὐτῶν as a partitive genitive).

⁶⁸So Cranfield, *Romans*, 105–06.

The Function of Judgment in Romans 1:18–32

Romans 1:18–32 and its primary theme functions as an accusation against the Gentile world. Paul speaks of divine wrath in order to accuse the Gentiles of being without excuse before the condemning judgment of God. This rhetorical purpose for the theme of judgment in 1:18–32 is established by Paul’s summaries of the passage. He summarizes the argument of 1:18–2:29 as an “accusation” in 3:9, a point which will be explained more fully in chapter 5. He also summarizes the argument of 1:18–32 as a “judgment” in 2:1: “Therefore, you are without excuse, O man, whoever judges, for when you judge the other person, you condemn yourself, because you, the one judging, practice the same things.” Here κρίνω does not refer to the official judicial process of a court but to one person’s finding fault with another.⁶⁹ In context, this fault finding or judgment in 2:1 refers to the argument of 1:18–32. A few interpreters have now observed this phenomenon and suggested that 1:18–32 is the argument of Paul’s dialogue partner and not of Paul himself.⁷⁰ But the point of 2:1 is that the dialogue partner agrees with Paul’s own judgment in 1:18–32. He is shaking his head in confirmation of Paul’s condemnation of the Gentile world, and thus Paul must turn to the interlocutor and accuse him of being without excuse as well. Romans 3:9 and 2:1, then, establish that the judgment motif in 1:18–32 functions as an accusation.

This function of the judgment motif is an expression of Paul’s calling as an apostle to preach the gospel. In its literary context, Romans 1:18–32 begins an explanation of the letter’s thesis statement (1:16–17).⁷¹ Some have argued that the γάρ in

⁶⁹See BDAG, s.v., “κρίνω,” use 2.b.

⁷⁰Porter, for example, observes that “the shift to direct address, the second person singular, along with the coordinating conjunction, δὲ, indicates that the reader who agrees with or is responsible for 1:18–32 is now the person addressed” (Calvin L. Porter, “Romans 1:18–32: Its Role in Developing Argument,” *NTS* 40 [1994]: 223). He believes that the ideas in Rom 1:18–32 are not Paul’s and that Paul refutes this passage in 2:1–16 (*ibid.*, 215). So Campbell (*Deliverance of God*, 526–28).

⁷¹Achtemeier questions the consensus that 1:16–17 is the thesis of Paul’s letter (Paul J. Achtemeier, *Romans*, Interpretation [Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1985], 35–36) because 1:16–17 are

1:18 is simply a transitional particle or even an adversative particle.⁷² However, as Seifrid rightly notes, the meaning of γάρ is clearly explanatory.⁷³ Thus, Romans 1:18 introduces an explanation of Paul's gospel which in turn supports his sense of obligation to proclaim this gospel among the Gentiles (1:13–15). In other words, the verse places 1:18–32 within the historical context of Paul's ministry of the gospel.⁷⁴ For Paul, the entire letter to the Romans is an expression of the grace God had given him as an apostle to proclaim the gospel to the Gentiles (1:1, 5; 15:15; cf. 12:3). Therefore, Romans 1:18–32 should not be read as an intellectual treatise about God's judgment. Rather, Paul employs the judgment motif with the rhetorical purpose of a preacher—as he says in 3:9, he is making an accusation.⁷⁵

grammatically subordinate to Paul's statement about his obligation to proclaim the gospel to the Gentiles. Schreiner rightly responds, "Achte-meier is formally correct. Paul's primary aim is to preach the gospel in Rome. By doing so he will build a base for his Spanish mission. Nonetheless, his desire to preach the gospel in Rome is based on the content of his gospel, for in the gospel the saving power of God is revealed. In the bulk of the letter Paul fills in the content of this gospel. . . . The letter as a whole focuses on the content of the gospel because this is what gives Paul boldness to proclaim it in places where Christ is not named (Rom. 15:20–21). Thus even though verses 16–17 are subordinate to verse 15, the thematic centrality of verses 16–17 cannot be denied since the desire to preach is closely tied with what is preached" (Schreiner, *Romans*, 59).

⁷²Respectively Lietzmann (Hans Lietzmann, *An die Römer* [Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 1919], 30) and Dodd (*Romans*, 18). Morris rightly calls Dodd's suggestion of an adversative reading "one of the curiosities of modern scholarship," because Dodd bases his exegesis on Moffat's English translation which begins 1:18 with "but" (Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 3rd ed. [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965], 199 n. 1).

⁷³Thus the real question which divides interpreters is *how* does 1:18 introduce an explanation of 1:17? (Mark A. Seifrid, "Unrighteous by Faith: Apostolic Proclamation in Romans 1:18–3:20," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, vol. 2, *The Paradoxes of Paul*, ed. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004], 109). My answer to this question can be found in chap. 6 of this dissertation.

⁷⁴Bussmann suggests that 1:18–32 was typical of Paul's mission preaching (C. Bussmann, *Themen der paulinischen Missionspredigt auf dem Hintergrund der spätjüdisch-hellenistischen Missionsliteratur* [Bern and Frankfurt: H. Lang, 1971], 108–22). This suggestion cannot be verified, but it makes a certain sense since the passage is an explanation of Paul's gospel.

⁷⁵Schulz rightly characterizes 1:18–32 as an indictment rather than an apology (Siegfried Schulz, "Die Anklage in Röm. 1,18–32," *TZ* 14 [1958]: 161–73). Bornkamm is similar: "Therefore, Rom. 1.18ff. is not an apologetic and pedagogical discussion, because *the intention of the Apostle is not to infer God's being from the world, but to uncover the being of the world from God's revelation; not to prove the revelation of God before the judgment of the world, but to unveil the judgment of God over the world in the law*" (Günther Bornkamm, *Early Christian Experience* [New York: Harper & Row, 1969], 59).

Conclusion

Romans 1:18–32 is the first sustained explanation of the theme of divine judgment according to works in the epistle to the Romans. According to this passage, God’s judgment is being revealed within human history as the appropriate recompense for the idolatry of the Gentile world. The meaning of judgment is negative in 1:18–32—only God’s condemning judgment is in view, a judgment which leads to the negative recompense of the final judgment, death. This negative meaning supports the negative function of judgment 1:18–32. Paul speaks of judgment in order to make an accusation against the Gentile world, an accusation which is foundational to Romans 2:1–16, the passage to be examined in the next chapter.

Excursus: Romans 1:18–32 as Another Gospel?

Douglas Campbell has recently written a massive polemic against “Justification Theory” (JT), whose textual basis, according to Campbell, is the conventional reading of Romans 1:16–4:25. He observes many problems with the conventional reading, both elements of JT which are missing in the text (“textual underdeterminations”) and elements of the text which cannot be accounted for in the reading of JT (“textual overdeterminations”). He then offers a rereading of 1:16–4:25 in which 1:18–32 does not actually represent Paul’s own indictment but the alternative gospel of an opponent coming to Rome whom Campbell calls “the Teacher.” Paul includes “the Teacher’s rhetorical opening” in 1:18–32 in order to reduce this gospel to absurdity in the rest of 2:1–3:20. If Campbell is correct, then the description of God’s judgment revealed within human history is not an explanation of Paul’s gospel and does not contribute to the judgment motif in Romans. If it is the gospel of an opponent which Paul reduces to absurdity, then the theme of judgment according to works is a false gospel which Paul rejects and his purpose for employing the motif is simply to show the absurdity of the concept.

It is important, then, for this study to interact with Campbell's rereading of Romans 1:18–32. I will not defend JT which Campbell opposes, so I will not address the elements of JT supposedly missing in the text (“underdeterminations”). I am however defending the conventional reading of 1:18–32, so I will address the elements of the text which supposedly cannot be accounted for in the conventional reading (Campbell's first five “overdeterminations”). I will argue that most of these supposed problems with the text are easily answered by the conventional reading. Then I will discuss problems with Campbell's own reading of 1:18–32.

First, Romans 1:18–32 has a distinctive style, with alliteration, alpha-privatives, a concentration of third-person plurals (as noted), wordplays, and a carefully constructed vice list. Thus, Paul composed the passage with a deliberate style which is different from his regular prose, and this would have been obvious to the “competent ancient auditor.”⁷⁶ In response, there is no reason to think that these distinctive stylistic marks indicate a deliberate style different from his regular prose. The use of third person plurals is required by his subject matter; and the alliteration, alpha-privatives, wordplays, and vice list simply reflect careful composition—compare, e.g., the many -μῶν nouns in Romans 5:12–21.

Second, there is a temporal clash between 1:18 and 1:19–32, because the present tense ἀποκαλύπτεται “*makes no sense in relation to the argument that immediately follows.*” In particular, he argues that there is no signal within 1:19–32 “that the sinful activity described *is* the wrath of God; on the contrary, it is this activity that *elicits* the wrath of God.”⁷⁷ In response, I have argued above that the wrath of God announced in 1:18 is then explained as God's appropriate recompense for human sin in 1:19–32. There is thus no temporal clash.

⁷⁶Ibid., 356–58.

⁷⁷Ibid., 358–59.

Third, Romans 1:18–32 emphasizes a collective decline and fall rather than an individualistic decline and fall.⁷⁸ In response, this is true, but it does not undermine the discourse as Paul’s own. Further, there is no reason to pit the collective against the individual, since all groups are made up of individuals.⁷⁹

Fourth, Romans has an intertextual relationship with the Wisdom of Solomon, particularly in 1:18–32. Campbell admits that this is not technically a problem in the conventional reading, but that traditionalists still have difficulty explaining why Paul is engaging and undermining Wisdom.⁸⁰ In response, to argue that Paul is undermining the argument of 1:18–32 is assuming what Campbell is trying to prove—that this passage represents an alternative gospel to Paul’s own gospel.

Fifth, Campbell argues that the conventional reading cannot account for the argumentative turn in Romans 2:1. With the conventional reading, he suggests there are only two possible explanations of Paul’s dialogue partner in Romans 2. First, Paul may be addressing a faction in the church at Rome which becomes clear in Romans 14. He rightly dismisses this interpretation because of the differences between the two passages. Second, Paul may be addressing Judaism through “the Jew.” This reading, however, would mean Paul depicts Judaism as “not merely contractual, conditional, perfectionistic, monolithic, and ahistorical, *but innately judgmental and hypocritical!*”⁸¹ This reading, Campbell argues, cannot be correct. In response, Sanders has rightly warned against characterizations of Judaism by earlier *New Testamenters*, and no critique of Judaism from

⁷⁸Ibid., 359–60. Popkes similarly argues there is no individual character of judgment here (Popkes, “Römer 1.18–32,” 496).

⁷⁹Käsemann’s note on πάντι τῷ πιστεύοντι in Rom 1:16 is applicable here: “universalism and the most radical individuation are here two sides of the same coin” (contra early history-of-religions research which said Paul never has the individual in mind—e.g., Wrede on Paul) (*Romans*, 22).

⁸⁰Ibid., 359–62. See these pages for an extensive list of parallels, some of which are correct, although some seem a little farfetched.

⁸¹Campbell, *Deliverance of God*, 364.

the New Testament or any other source should ever be used to justify violent actions like the Holocaust. However, one can make a legitimate critique of Judaism without endorsing the pejorative terminology of Campbell. In particular, *Paul is clearly accusing his Jewish dialogue partner of hypocrisy in Romans 2*. Exposing hypocrisy is the exact point of the rhetorical questions in 2:21–23: “you, the one who teaches others, do you not teach yourself?” (2:21a). In summary, none of Campbell’s “overdeterminations” suggest that Romans 1:18–32 needs a radical new rereading.

More important, Campbell’s rereading of the passage cannot be justified from the text. He summarizes his rereading of Romans 1:18–32 in this way:

Romans 1:18–32 reproduces compactly the opening rhetorical gambit of the Teacher. . . . So technically Romans 1:18–32 is an instance of προσωποποιία or “speech in character”—what we might call more colloquially a brief moment of “playacting” or “mimicry” or even “impersonation.” Paul does not speak here in his own voice but in the voice of the Teacher.⁸²

Campbell defends the possibility of this rhetorical move with several points: First, he suggests the reading is possible because the letter would have been *performed* by Pheobe, and nonverbal cues would have been included.⁸³ Second, he argues that ancient hearers of Romans would have expected the use of προσωποποιία or speech in character, a device which Stowers has demonstrated exists in Romans 7:7–25.⁸⁴ Third, he argues that “Greek readers were trained to detect shifts in authorial voice (διαφωνία) and to read accordingly.”⁸⁵ Fourth, “Romans is strongly reminiscent of the ancient Greco-Roman diatribe and. . . when the conventions of the diatribe are fully grasped, it again becomes difficult to object in advance that 1:18–32 could not have been an instance of

⁸²Ibid., 528–29.

⁸³Ibid., 531–32.

⁸⁴Ibid., 532–33.

⁸⁵Ibid., 533.

προσωποποιία.”⁸⁶ Fifth, he explains the lack of specific recognition of the target of his opposition as a diplomatic postponement. Paul presents a firm opposition “*without actually engaging in either direct polemics or an aggressive frontal assault on that figure in person.*”⁸⁷ Sixth, Campbell notes that Paul quotes from other people in his letters and that he does not always signal these quotes with overt written cues, particularly in 1 Corinthians.

Most of Campbell’s points are correct. Presumably Romans would have been read aloud or “performed” by Phoebe to the Roman Christians. Romans 7:7–25 may be an example of προσωποποιία in Romans. Perhaps the ancient audience would better be able to recognize shifts in the author. And Romans certainly contains elements of diatribe.⁸⁸ The only point which seems unlikely to me is the suggestion that Paul would address an opponent diplomatically—when Paul addresses opponents in other letters, particularly Galatians and 2 Corinthians, he is anything but diplomatic. But it is correct that Paul quotes from others in his letter to the Corinthians without overt written cues. However, these points merely establish the *possibility* that 1:18–32 is speech-in-character. They do not make it a plausible reading of the text. Campbell himself makes an important point: “the key question cannot be whether Paul used προσωποποιία, because plainly he did so; it must be *whether he did so at this particular point.*”⁸⁹ This is the heart of my critique of Campbell’s rereading: It is simply unlikely that Paul employs speech-in-character in 1:18–32, because the text gives no indication of such a rhetorical device.

In Campbell’s suggested parallels, there is textual warrant to suggest that a

⁸⁶Ibid., 535.

⁸⁷Ibid., 538.

⁸⁸See especially Stanley Kent Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, SBLDS 57 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press), 1981.

⁸⁹Ibid., 537.

person other than Paul is speaking. In Romans 7, Paul may be using speech-in-character, but he indicates this rhetorical device by a shift in person to the first person singular.⁹⁰ In 1 Corinthians, Paul quotes short lines from the Corinthians, but he indicates this practice with introductions throughout the letter, which Campbell fails to mention.⁹¹ For example, Paul says that he heard a report in 1 Corinthians 1:11 and then proceeds to explain the report in 1 Corinthians 1:12. Later, he introduces a quotation with “now concerning the things you wrote. . .” (1 Cor 7:1). In some cases, it is not clear if Paul is quoting (e.g., 1 Cor 6:12–13), but the the character of the letter itself, a letter which responds point by point to the Corinthian situation, gives warrant for a possible quotation.

The text of Romans 1:18–32, however, offers no indication that a person other than Paul is speaking.⁹² In fact, Romans 1:17 and 1:18 demonstrate a continuity in the speaker by giving parallel statements about the revelation of God’s righteousness and the revelation of his wrath. Further, it seems odd to say that Paul argues that the revelation of God’s wrath is “another gospel,” when later he speaks of the Christ saving Christians from this wrath (5:9). Campbell suggests that Phoebe would have provided nonverbal indicators of a shift in speaker at 1:18. But this does not solve this problem, for no modern readers know what these indicators were. The only thing we have is the text, and Campbell has failed to prove that 1:18 indicates any shift in speaker.

⁹⁰See Stanley K. Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 264–72.

⁹¹Campbell, *Deliverance of God*, 540.

⁹²At the 2009 SBL session dedicated to Campbell’s book, both Michael Gorman and Douglas Moo criticized Campbell for the flip-side of my critique: Campbell, they argued, offers no formal criteria by which to identify a change in speaker. So Gavanta: “Even if we grant Campbell his scenario, how were the Romans, to most of whom Paul was unknown, to identify which lines were the Teachers’ and which were Paul’s? Of course, there are brief passages in which Paul anticipates an objection (as in 6:1 and 6:15), and it is surely correct that the congregations gathered to hear Phoebe read the letter would have been adept at decoding verbal signals and conventional rhetorical gestures. Yet the confidence with which Campbell divides the Teachers’ lines from those of Paul can strain even the most sympathetic reader” (Beverly Roberts Gavanta, review of *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* by Douglas Campbell, *The Christian Century* 127, no. 10 [May 18, 2010]: 36).

In conclusion, Campbell's rereading of Romans 1:18–32 is incorrect. Since the first extant commentary on Romans, the interpretive consensus has been that this passage is a part of Paul's argument in the letter.⁹³ It is unlikely that Campbell has discovered what virtually all other readers have missed.

⁹³A few interpolation theories have sprung up in the twentieth century—namely, in O'Neil's commentary (J. C. O'Neil, *Paul's Letter to the Romans* [Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1975], 40–56) and in Walker's article (William O. Walker, "Romans 1.18–2.29: A Non-Pauline Interpolation?" *NTS* 45 [1999]: 533–52). But Fitzmyer is surely correct that "short shrift" has to be given to these kinds of proposals (Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, AB [New York: Doubleday, 1993], 65).

CHAPTER 3

JUDGMENT IN ROMANS 2:1–29

Introduction

Romans 2 gives “one of the fullest descriptions of the final judgment in all early Christian writing,” as N. T. Wright has observed.¹ The chapter has also generated a good bit of interpretive debate, due in large part to what I call the “riddle of Romans 2.” This riddle is Paul’s description of certain Gentiles who complete the law and receive the positive recompense at the final judgment (2:15, 26–29), a description which seems to contradict the universal accusation of 1:18–3:20 which claims that all Jews and Gentiles are liable to the condemning judgment of God (3:9, 19–20). In addressing this riddle, both Stowers and Wright have recently warned scholars of focusing so much on the conclusion of 1:18–3:20 that they neglect the details of the passage.² However, interpreters must also avoid missing the forest for the trees, particularly when a few details of the text catch scholarly attention because of their difficulty. In light of this, I will postpone my explanation of the riddle of Romans 2 until chapter 7. The present chapter will address the Jews first, Paul’s primary target in Romans 2. It will examine the meaning and function of the judgment motif in 2:1–29, arguing that Paul employs the motif in order to make an accusation against the Jewish people. Then chapter 7 will

¹Wright is speaking particularly of Rom 2:1–16 (N. Thomas Wright, *Romans*, in vol. 10 of *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002], 438).

²Stowers warns that “commentators are so clear about their destination at 3:9 (‘all are sinners in need of Christ’) that they tend to fly over chapter 2 quickly and at a high altitude, seeing only the message of 3:9 being worked out (Stanley K. Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994], 126). So also Wright who calls Rom 2 “the joker in the pack” because its details have been neglected by scholars (N. T. Wright, “The Law in Romans 2,” in *Paul and the Mosaic Law*, ed. James D. G. Dunn [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996], 131).

address the Gentiles who complete the law.

The Meaning of Judgment in Romans 2:1–29

The theme of God’s impartial judgment according to works is the *Leitmotif* of Romans 2:1–16.³ And Paul returns to this theme in the end of the chapter, as he turns the tables on his dialogue partner by arguing that the Gentile who completes the law will judge the Jew who is a transgressor of the law (2:27; cf. 2:1). The motif will be analyzed along four lines—the agent of judgment, the action of judgment, the ground of judgment, and the object of judgment.

The Agent of Judgment

Paul’s description of judgment in Romans 2:1–16 “can only be understood in terms of transcendent divine judgment,” as Gathercole rightly observes.⁴ In 2:5, Paul speaks of the “righteous judgment of God,” a subjective genitive which can be transformed into the sentence “God judges righteously.” This God is the one “who will repay each according to his works,” for the relative pronoun ὃς in 2:6 clearly relates back to θεός in 2:5. Further, the main clause of 2:6 (divine agent + ἀποδίδωμι) controls the rest of 2:7–10, verses which simply supply the objects of ἀποδίδωμι and assume divine agency throughout.⁵ In 2:11, Paul grounds the universality of the final judgment in *divine*

³So Mark A. Seifrid, “Unrighteous by Faith: Apostolic Proclamation in Romans 1:18–3:20,” in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, vol. 2, *The Paradoxes of Paul*, ed. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O’Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 123.

⁴Gathercole, “Justified by Faith,” 174. This is the conclusion of Gathercole’s critique of Wilckens, who argues that the concept of judgment in Romans 2 is not rooted in the background of the *talio* principle but in the Tat-Ergehen-Zusammenhang (see Ulrich Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer*, EKK [Zürich: Benziger/Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1980], 1:127–31). In personal conversation, Mark Seifrid has explained to me that Wilckens’s interpretation still holds to a divine agent in judgment.

⁵Grammatically, only ζῶντων αἰώνιον (Rom 2:7) supplies an accusative object for ἀποδώσει (2:6). But logically, ὀργή καὶ θυμός (2:8), θλίψις καὶ στενοχωρία (2:9), and δόξα καὶ τιμὴ καὶ εἰρήνη (2:10) also supply objects to ἀποδώσει (2:6). The objects are transposed into the nominative case and should be understood with an assumed future passive form of the verb ἀποδίδωμι.

impartiality, which presupposes that the impartial God is the one acting in judgment. In 2:16, he speaks of the agency of both God and Jesus Christ at the final judgment: “when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Jesus Christ” (2:16). Finally, if one takes ἔπαινος as the positive recompense of the final judgment,⁶ God is clearly the agent of this recompense for it is οὐκ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλ’ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ. Thus divine agency is present throughout the entire passage.

One of the most striking elements of Romans 2:1–16 is the agency of Jesus Christ at the final judgment of God: “God will judge the secrets of men *through Christ Jesus*” (2:16).⁷ This accords with the high Christology of the judgment motif in 14:1–23, which I will explain in chapter 8.

The Action of Judgment

The action of judgment is primarily described in Romans 2:6–11. Most fundamentally the final judgment will be a recompense according to works. Paul speaks of judgment and recompense almost synonymously: In 2:5 he introduces the concept of the final judgment, “the day of wrath and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God.”⁸ And in 2:6 he explains God’s judgment with a Jewish axiom about divine recompense: ὃς ἀποδώσει ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ. Many follow Nestle-Aland and suggest that this statement is a quotation from either Proverbs 24:12 or Psalm 62:12, the only texts in the LXX which approach the exact wording of Romans 2:6:

ὃς ἀποδώσει ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ (Rom 2:6)

⁶So, e.g., Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 144. Note that Paul uses ἔπαινος in 1 Cor 4:5 to describe the positive recompense of the final judgment.

⁷Bultmann’s suggestion that Rom 2:16 is a gloss is highly unlikely. As Walker observes, there is no textual evidence, and the verse is essential in order to make sense of 2:12–16 (Rolf Walker, “Die Heiden und das Gericht. Zur Auslegung von Römer 2,12–16,” *EvT* 20 [1960]: 314).

⁸The possible addition of καὶ between ἀποκαλύψεως and δικαιοκρισίας found in many manuscripts makes no difference in the meaning of the verse.

ὃς ἀποδίδωσιν ἑκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ (Prov 24:12)

σὺ ἀποδώσεις ἑκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ (Ps 62:12; LXX: 61:13)

While a quotation is possible, Paul does not introduce the verse with a citation formula, and the theme of divine recompense according to works is pervasive throughout Jewish and Christian literature. Yinger has thoroughly examined the judgment motif in the Old Testament and in Second Temple Jewish literature, finding the motif to be pervasive. He suggests that when early Christian authors spoke of divine judgment according to deeds they were simply employing a fundamental Jewish axiom.⁹ For example,

For the Son of Man will come in the glory of his father, with his angels, and then he will repay each person according to his practice (Matt 16:27).

And if you call “Father” the one who judges impartially according to the work of each person, conduct yourself with fear during the time of your sojourn (1 Pet 1:17).

And all the churches will know that I am the one who searches the kidneys and the heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works (Rev 2:23).

It is more likely, then, that Romans 2:6 simply employs this fundamental axiom rather than cites a specific Old Testament text.¹⁰ When Paul speaks of divine judgment or recompense according to works he is in continuity with Jewish and Christian literature.

The final judgment in Romans 2:1–29 is described as an evaluative judgment which will result in either a positive or a negative recompense. In 2:7–11, Paul begins and ends with the positive recompense: ζῶντων αἰώνιον (2:7), and δόξα καὶ τιμὴ καὶ εἰρήνη (2:10). The reward of “eternal life” refers to the resurrection life of the age to come, following the first occurrence of the phrase ζῶν αἰώνιος in Daniel 12:2. Paul uses the phrase only three more times in the letter: In 5:12–21 he speaks of eternal life as the result of justification through Jesus Christ (5:21; cf. 5:17, 18), and in 6:22 and 23 he

⁹Kent L. Yinger, *Paul, Judaism, and Judgment According to Deeds* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 283.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 157.

speaks of eternal life as the end of freedom from sin and the free gift of God. However, the theme of resurrection life is pervasive in Romans.¹¹ Those baptized in Christ Jesus have died and will be raised with him (6:1–11). And the “Spirit of life” who now dwells in believers guarantees the future resurrection of those in Christ (8:1–11).¹² The rewards of δόξα καὶ τιμὴ καὶ εἰρήνη in 2:10 should also be associated with the resurrection, since they are the rewards sought by the recipients of eternal life in 2:7.¹³ The focus on resurrection life is clearer in 2:7 than in 2:10 because the third word in Paul’s triad is ἀφθαρσία, a word which refers to the resurrection in 1 Corinthians (1 Cor 15:42, 50, 53, 54). In 2:10, however, Paul replaces ἀφθαρσία with εἰρήνη, perhaps in order to draw a contrast with the στενοχωρία which will be repaid to evildoers. Finally, in 2:13 Paul describes the positive recompense as justification or being declared to be righteous at the judgment, and in 2:29 he describes it as “praise” (ἔπαινος) from God. In summary, the positive recompense of the final judgment is the resurrection life of the age to come, God’s justifying judgment of life.

The negative recompense of the final judgment is described in Romans 2:8–9 as ὀργὴ καὶ θυμὸς (2:8), and θλίψις καὶ στενοχωρία (2:9). The punishment of “wrath”

¹¹Kirk has now demonstrated just how pervasive the theme of resurrection is in the letter (J. R. Daniel Kirk, *Unlocking Romans: Resurrection and the Justification of God* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008]).

¹²Note especially “if Christ is in you . . . then the Spirit *is* life” in 8:10. Bultmann rightly observes that in Paul, eternal life sometimes “means the future blessing, sometimes it means the present life . . . and often it means both in an inseparable relationship (Rudolf Bultmann, *TDNT*, s.v., “ζάω,” 869). On the relationship between redemption and resurrection in Paul, see Richard B. Gaffin, *The Centrality of the Resurrection: A Study in Paul’s Soteriology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978).

¹³The syntax of Rom 2:7 is difficult, and there is an alternate grammatical construal. Moo’s explanation of this alternate translation is worth repeating here: “An alternate translation of the verse would run, ‘to those who are seeking eternal life, [he will render] glory, honor, and immortality.’ On this reading δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν are objects of the understood verb ἀποδώσει, while ζῶν αἰώνιον is the object of ζητοῦσιν (see Zahn). In favor of this rendering is the fact that ‘glory and honor’ describe what God gives to those who do good in the parallel v. 10. But the syntax, with δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν enclosed by the article τοῖς and the participle ζητοῦσιν, strongly favors the reading that we adopt above (which is reflected also in the major English translations)” (Douglas Moo, *Romans*, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996], 137 n. 9).

corresponds with God's wrath being revealed already against Gentile idolatry (1:18–32). This wrath, however, will be revealed at the final judgment when God will repay those who, like Paul's dialogue partner, are storing up wrath for themselves (2:5). The word θυμός is essentially a synonym of ὀργή, meaning "anger" or "wrath."¹⁴ The two words are often used together of divine wrath in the LXX,¹⁵ and this speech pattern is echoed in Revelation (Rev 14:10; 16:19; 19:15), but Romans 2:8 is the only other time the pattern is found in the New Testament. The two words both carry the connotation God's emotion in judgment (the affect), although they focus in this context upon God's action of judgment (the effect).

"Tribulation" (θλίψις) and "distress" (στενοχωρία) speak of the effects of God's judgment and the emotional experience of the ones being judged. Some have suggested a distinction between the words,¹⁶ but they are very similar, both referring to distress caused by difficult circumstances. The words are brought together in two contexts in LXX to describe God's judgment against the Jewish people. In the covenant curses of the Mosaic law, the words refer to the distress of being besieged by enemies, forcing the people to eat their own children (Deut 28:53, 55, 57). And in Isaiah's oracles of judgment against Judah, they refer to the distress of a famished land, God's judgment

¹⁴BDAG defines θυμός as "a state of intense displeasure, *anger, wrath, rage, indignation*" (BDAG, s.v., "θυμός," use 2).

¹⁵The following list represents every verse in the LXX which contains ὀργή and θυμός in reference to divine wrath: Exod 32:12; Num 12:9; 14:34; 25:4; 32:14; Deut. 9:19; 13:18; 29:22, 23, 27; Josh 7:26; 1 Sam 28:18; 2 Kgs 23:26; 2 Chr 28:11, 13; 29:10; 30:8; 35:19; Ezra 10:14; Pss 2:5; 6:2; 29:6; 36:8; 37:2; 68:25; 77:38, 49; 84:4; 89:7, 11; 101:11; 20:23; 37:2; Wis 16:5; Sir 5:6; 36:6; 45:19; 48:10; Hos 11:9; 13:11; Mic 5:14; Jonah 3:9; Nah 1:6; Zeph 2:2; 3:8; Isa 5:25; 9:18; 10:5, 25; 13:9, 13; 30:27, 30; 34:2; 42:25; 59:19; Jer 4:26; 7:20; 21:5; 25:17; 32:37; 37:24; 39:31, 37; 40:5; 43:7; 51:6; Bar 1:13; 2:20; Lam 1:12; 2:3; 4:11; Ezek 5:13; 7:5; 13:13; 20:8, 21; 22:31; 23:25; 25:14; Dan 9:16 (so Theodocian's translation).

¹⁶For example, Aquinas, Calvin, and Barth define θλίψις as outward affliction and στενοχωρία as inward distress (see C. E. B. Cranfield, who thinks this is plausible, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, ICC, new series [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975], 1:149).

against his people for looking away from him for help (Isa 8:22; 30:6).¹⁷ Paul thus appropriately applies “tribulation and distress” to the judgment of God.¹⁸ Finally, in 2:12 he describes the negative recompense as perishing or being condemned at the judgment. In summary, the negative recompense of the final judgment may be described from the divine perspective as God’s wrath and from the human experience as tribulation and distress. It is God’s condemning judgment.

Unlike Romans 1:18–32, in which judgment only refers to the negative recompense, in 2:1–16 Paul describes both the negative and the positive recompense of the final judgment. The evidence suggests, however, that Paul’s emphasis is upon the negative or condemning judgment of God in 2:1–16. First, the chiasmic structure of 2:7–10 emphasizes the negative recompense. Many have observed the chiasmic pattern in these verses:

- a Eternal life to those who, by perseverance in good work, seek for glory and honor and immortality. (2:7)
- b But wrath and anger to those [who live] by selfish ambition and do not obey the truth but obey unrighteousness (2:8)
- b’ Tribulation and distress to every soul of man who works what is evil, of both the Jew first and of the Greek. (2:9)
- a’ But glory and honor and peace to everyone who works what is good, both to the Jews first and to the Greek (2:10)¹⁹

Scholars generally agree that a chiasm draws the reader’s focus to the center,²⁰ and the

¹⁷The terminology is also picked up in two places in the Greek additions to Esther, describing the distress of the Jewish people (using the NRSV versification: Esth 11:8 and 14:2).

¹⁸It is interesting that he also uses *θλίψις* and *στενοχωρία* to speak of Christian suffering in this age (Rom 8:35; 2 Cor 6:4).

¹⁹See especially Kendrick Grobel, “A Chiasmic Retribution-Formula in Romans 2,” in *Zeit und Geschichte*, ed. Erich Dinkler (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1964), 255–61. Grobel includes 2:6 and 11 in the chiasm (*ibid.*, 257), but Schreiner rightly observes that divine impartiality (2:11) is the ground of the judgment according to works (2:6) rather than a repetition of the same idea (Schreiner, *Romans*, 111).

center of this chiasm is the negative recompense.²¹

Second, 2:12–16 also emphasizes the condemning judgment. Paul grounds the universality of judgment (2:6, 9–10) in the divine attribute of impartiality (2:11). And he explains God’s impartiality in terms of the condemning judgment: “For whoever has sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and whoever has sinned with the law will be condemned through the law” (2:12). Although he may hint at certain Gentiles who do the law and have a defense at the judgment in the following verses (2:14–15), these verses support the primary point found in 2:12—those who have sinned, even Jews who possess the law, will be condemned. Thus, Cranfield has rightly observed that “the accent in vv. 7–10 [and, as I have noted, in 2:12–16] is on the negative side, on the warning these verses contain for the Jew in his complacency.”²² The emphasis falls upon the negative judgment in these verses because they support a negative function of the judgment motif—an accusation against the Jewish people.

The Ground of Judgment

Both the positive and negative recompense rest upon the ground of good and evil works in Romans 2:1–29. At the final judgment, God will repay each person κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ (Rom 2:6). The preposition κατὰ indicates the criterion according to which God’s judgment is rendered. In light of the theology of the letter as a whole, it is important to observe that this preposition leaves room for a variety of ways in which works function as the norm of the final verdict. But within Paul’s immediate argument,

²⁰Lund’s classic study spoke of the center as the “turning point” (Nils Wilhelm Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament: A Study in Formgeschichte* [Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1942], 40–41).

²¹Jewett also suggests that the emphasis is on the center of the chiasm (Robert Jewett, *Romans, Hermeneia* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007], 194). Moo says that the main point is at the beginning and end, but this is in part because he wrongly includes 2:6 and 11 within the chiasm (see n. 42) (*Romans*, 136).

²² Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:152–53.

good and evil works are the only thing in view at the final judgment. Thus, this criterion is rightly described as the ground of both the justifying and condemning judgments in 2:6–10.²³

The ground of the positive recompense is the doing of good works. Resurrection life will be repaid “to those who seek for glory and honor and immortality by perseverance in the good work” (2:7).²⁴ Paul’s language contrasts with the Gentile world’s exchange of “the *glory* of the immortal God” (1:23) and the “*dishonor*” to which God handed them over (1:24). It is also the language of the final reward which will be repaid to “everyone who works what is good” (2:10). Mattern attempts to distinguish between this singular “work” which is the ground of the positive recompense (ἔργον ἀγαθός in 2:7, and τὸ ἀγαθόν in 2:10) and the plural “works” which Paul says will not bring the justifying judgment (ἔργα νόμου in 3:20).²⁵ But this distinction cannot be pressed, for Romans 2:7 and 10 explain the plural ἔργα found in 2:6: he “will repay to each person according to his works.”²⁶ Paul follows the pattern of the Old Testament in which there is an “easy interchange between singular and plural ‘deeds,’” which is “grounded in a holistic view of human deeds,” as Yinger has demonstrated.²⁷ Finally, the ground of the positive recompense is also described as doing the law (2:13b), keeping the righteous requirements of the law (2:26), and completing the law (2:27).

The ground of the negative recompense is the doing of evil works. Wrath and

²³BDAG notes that often “*in accordance with* and *because of* are merged” (s.v., “κατά,” use B.5.a.δ).

²⁴BDF describes ὑπομονὴν ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ as a type of objective genitive (BDF §163). The idea seems to be perseverance in doing what is good.

²⁵Lieselotte Mattern, *Das Verständnis des Gerichtes bei Paulus* (Zürich: Zwingli Verlag, 1966), 141–51. Note also singular τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου in Rom 2:15.

²⁶So Schreiner, *Romans*, 112 n. 3; Yinger, *Judgment According to Deeds*, 158–59.

²⁷Yinger, *Judgment According to Deeds*, 25. *Ibid.*, 24–26.

fury will be repaid to those who act out of selfish ambition,²⁸ disobey the truth, and obey unrighteousness (Rom 2:8). Paul’s language here echoes the ground of the condemning judgment in 1:18–32, where God’s wrath is being revealed against the *unrighteousness* of men who suppress the truth in *unrighteousness* (1:18). Tribulation and distress will be repaid to “every soul of man who works what is evil” (2:9). Paul again speaks of the ground of judgment in the singular (τὸ κακόν), describing human works in a holistic way. At the final judgment, one has either done what is good or done what is evil. Finally, Paul speaks of the ground of judgment as sin (2:12) and as transgression of the law (2:23, 25, 27).

Like Romans 1:18–32, the ground of the final judgment in 2:1–29 includes both external actions and the thoughts of the heart. The dialogue partner will receive wrath because of his “hard and unrepentant heart” (2:5). Certain uncircumcised Gentiles will be accounted as circumcised because their hearts were circumcised by the Spirit leading to the completion of the law (2:26–29). On the final day God will judge “*the secrets* of men through Jesus Christ” (2:16). Thus, Paul does not make a clear distinction between human thoughts and actions as the ground of judgment in 2:1–29.²⁹

By what standard will works be judged as good and evil? In Romans 2:12–16 Paul introduces the category of the law as he explains the impartiality of God’s judgment. Most scholars agree that νόμος in Romans generally refers to the Mosaic law.³⁰ Here

²⁸Scholars have debated whether the rare word ἐπιθεία means “strife” (so Hans Lietzmann, *An die Römer* [Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 1919], 34; cf. the Vulgate’s “ex contentione”) or “selfish ambition.” Most now settle on the latter sense (so Büschel, *TDNT*, s.v., “ἐπιθεία,” 2: 660–61; BDAG, s.v., “ἐπιθεία”).

²⁹This pattern can also be found in Rev 2:23 which echoes Jer 17:10: “I, the LORD, am one who searches the heart, one who tests the kidneys, to give to a man according to his way, according to his deeds.”

³⁰Thomas R. Schreiner, *The Law and Its Fulfillment: A Pauline Theology of Law* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 33–34; N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 86. There are exceptions where Paul plays on the word νόμος by using it in a metaphorical sense (note especially ἔτερον νόμον in Rom 7:23; see also Rom 3:27; 7:21, 25; 8:2).

Paul argues that one must be a doer of this law, not merely a hearer, in order to be justified (2:13). Thus, the Mosaic law is the standard which one must obey in order to receive the positive recompense. Paul makes a distinction of course between Jews who possess this law (ἐν νόμῳ, 2:12b) and Gentiles who do not possess this law naturally (ἀνόμως, 2:12a; cf. ἔθνη τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα φύσει, 2:14).³¹ However, he still argues that Gentiles who have sinned without the law will receive the negative recompense (2:12a). It is likely that Romans 2:14–15 speak of an analogy to the Mosaic law written upon the hearts of all Gentiles:

For when Gentiles, who do not have the law by nature, do the things of the law, these who do not have the law are a law to themselves, who demonstrate that the work of the law is written on their hearts

Scholars are divided over what Paul means by the work of the law written on the hearts of Gentiles. Some believe Paul speaks of Gentiles who follow the requirements of the law and are a kind of natural law to themselves, showing that the requirement or “work” of the Mosaic law is actually written on their hearts.³² Others think Paul speaks of Christian Gentiles who do the law because of the fulfillment of the new covenant in which God promises to write his laws upon the hearts of his people (Jer 31:33; 38:33 in LXX).³³ The

³¹There is debate over whether φύσει should be taken with τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα or with the following words τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν. In my view the parallel with ἡ ἐκ φύσεως ἀκροβυστία τὸν νόμον τελοῦσα in 2:27 decisively favors the former view—Paul is speaking in Rom 2 about the natural identity of Gentiles as uncircumcised and not having the law, not of their natural ability to obey the law (for more arguments supporting this position, see Simon J. Gathercole, “A Law unto Themselves: The Gentiles in Romans 2.14–15 Revisited,” *JSNT* 85 [2002]: 35–37).

³²E.g., Friedrich Kuhr, “Römer 2^{14f.} und die Verheissung bei Jeremias 31^{31ff.},” *ZNW* 55 (1964): 243–61; Thomas R. Schreiner, “Did Paul Believe in Justification by Works? Another Look at Romans 2,” *BBR* 3 [1993]: 131–58; Moo, *Romans*, 151–52.

³³E.g., Felix Flückiger, “Die Werke des Gesetzes bei den Heiden (nach Röm. 2,14ff.),” *TZ* 8 (1952): 17–42; Cranfield, *Romans*, 1: 151; N. T. Wright, “The Law in Romans 2,” in *Paul and the Mosaic Law*, ed. James D. G. Dunn (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 131–50; Gathercole, “A Law unto Themselves,” 27–49. The view that Paul gives hope for Gentile salvation outside of Christ can be safely discarded in light of Paul’s accusation against the Gentile world in Rom 1:18–32 (contra Molly Truman Marshall, *No Salvation Outside the Church? A Critical Inquiry*, NABPR Dissertation Series 9 [Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1993], 225).

verses are notoriously difficult—even N. T. Wright admits that “after years of studying the question, I often find myself unsure which way to read it.”³⁴ I am increasingly convinced that Paul refers to Gentiles in general who at times (ὅταν) do what the Mosaic law requires (τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν).³⁵ The allusion to Jeremiah 31:33 is not clear for Paul does not speak of the law itself written on the hearts but the τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου written on the hearts. In context this likely refers to the good work which the law requires people to do, again putting in singular terms (cf. ἔργον ἀγαθός in 2:7, and τὸ ἀγαθόν in 2:10).³⁶ This requirement is demonstrated to be written on the hearts of these Gentiles *when* they do what is good, and thus they show that they are a kind of “law for themselves”—they also know what God requires of them. There is a striking resemblance between this reading of 2:14–15 and 1:32 which says that the Gentiles know “the righteous requirement of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death.” Both speak of an innate knowledge of the divine requirement. However, if this reading is incorrect and Paul in fact refers to the fulfillment of the new covenant in 2:14–15, he still heads up the paragraph with the statement that Gentiles who have sinned without the law will perish without the law. Both Gentiles and Jews are held to the righteous requirement of God whether they possess the law or not.

Is the standard of judgment a perfect obedience to the law? To Braun, Paul radicalizes the Jewish conception of judgment by envisioning a requirement of

³⁴N. T. Wright, *Romans*, pt. 1, *Chapters 1–8*, Paul for Everyone (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 34.

³⁵Gathercole argues that the comprehensive nature of the “τὰ τοῦ X” phrase supports the new covenant view (“A Law unto Themselves,” 34), but the Gentile obedience is qualified temporally by ὅταν and need not refer to comprehensive obedience to the law. This is true despite the lexical connection of ποιητὰ in 2:13 and ποιῶσιν in 2:14 (ibid., 32–34). In my view, this connection is the strongest argument in favor of the new covenant view—Paul says “the doers of the law will be justified” then goes on to speak of Gentiles who “do the things of the law.” However, Paul does not conclude that these Gentiles are justified, and he even says their thoughts accuse them (2:15), making it more likely in my view that he is speaking of an occasional obedience to the law.

³⁶So Wilckens, *Römer*, 1: 134 n. 315; Moo, *Romans*, 151; Schreiner, *Romans*, 122.

perfection.³⁷ But to Yinger, Paul views human works in a holistic or unitary way that does not fragment or atomize deeds. Obedience to the law does not imply sinless perfection but godly, faithful obedience and the intention to obey.³⁸ In my view, Yinger correctly observes a holistic view of human works in Paul's description of the final judgment. Works are not broken apart and weighed at the judgment. Instead, Paul speaks of the ground of judgment without nuance and in binary terms: One either seeks immortality (2:7), or obeys unrighteousness (2:8). One either does what is evil (2:9), or does what is good (2:10). One is either a sinner (2:12), or obedient to the law (2:13). This description is similar to the Two Ways tradition rooted in Old Testament (e.g., Lev 26; Deut 28; Ps 1; many of the Proverbs) and found within early Christian moral instruction (e.g., *Did.* 1.1–6.2; *Barn.* 18–20).

However, a unitary view of human works in Romans 2:1–29 is not mutually exclusive with the concept of perfect or comprehensive obedience to the law. First, Paul argues in Galatians that the Mosaic law must be obeyed entirely in order to avoid its curse: “All who live by the works of the law are under a curse, for ‘cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the book of the law’” (Gal 3:10). This is a reference to the curse of the law in Deuteronomy 27–28, quoting 27:26 to show that the whole law must be kept.³⁹ He also warns “every man who is circumcised that he is obligated to do the entire law” (Gal 5:3). According to Yinger, “the point of the language about ‘the whole law’ is not flawless obedience, but wholehearted and thoroughgoing

³⁷Herbert Braun, *Gerichtsgedanke und Rechtfertigungslehre bei Paulus* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche, 1930), 95.

³⁸Yinger, *Judgment According to Deeds*, 166–75, 288.

³⁹Paul conflates Deut 27:26 with 28:58. Hays rightly notes that “the conflation simply shows that Paul thinks of Deuteronomy 27 and 28 as a unit, setting forth the conditional blessings and curses of the Law” (*Echoes of Scripture in the Letter's of Paul* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989], 43). Yinger argues that Paul is merely proof-texting this verse because of lexical connections (Yinger, *Judgment According to Deeds*, 167), but it is more likely that Paul is making an argument as he usually does when he quotes Scripture.

(versus selective) obedience.”⁴⁰ But this interpretation fails to explain how Galatians 5:3 is a warning against adopting circumcision. Would not Paul have expected the Galatian Christians to obey the law wholeheartedly whether they adopted the circumcision or not? Why then would he warn them about being obligated to do the whole law if they accept circumcision? The warning about circumcision can be explained only if doing the whole law is an impossible requirement for his audience, a requirement of perfect obedience.⁴¹ It is likely that Paul in Romans has the same view of the curse of the law and the law’s requirement, because he speaks of the Mosaic law as the standard of judgment and even echoes the curses of the covenant in his description of the negative recompense.

Second, Paul argues in Romans that sin and death entered the world and reigned over all people through only one transgression of Adam (5:12, 14, 21).⁴² This one transgression led to “judgment” (κρίμα) and “condemnation” (κατάκριμα) for all people (5:16, 18). This is not to say that the ground of the final condemning judgment is merely Adam’s one transgression, because it is based upon the many sins of Jews and Gentiles who are under the power of sin (2:12; 3:9). But it is to say that in Paul’s theology of judgment, condemnation can come about through only one transgression. Paul’s unitary view of works at the judgment does not rule out the requirement of perfect obedience to the law. Those who do the whole law will be justified (2:13), but those who have sinned will be condemned (2:12).⁴³

⁴⁰Yinger, *Judgment According to Deeds*, 169.

⁴¹For arguments in favor of perfect obedience in these texts, see Thomas R. Schreiner, “Is Perfect Obedience to the Law Possible? A Re-examination of Galatians 3:10,” *JETS* 27 (1984): 151–60; idem, “Paul and Perfect Obedience to the Law: An Evaluation of the View of E. P. Sanders,” *WTJ* 47 (1985): 245–78; A. Andrew Das, *Paul, the Law, and the Covenant* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2001), 145–70.

⁴²Grundmann rightly observes that “there is an indissoluble connection between the act of Adam, the fate of death and the general state of sin” (*TDNT*, s.v., “ἁμαρτάνω,” 1:310)

⁴³So Bell who argues that Rom 2:13 speaks of perfect obedience to the law corresponding to Gal 3:10 and 5:3 (Richard H. Bell, “Extra ecclesiam nulla salus? Is there a salvation other than through

The Object of Judgment

The object of judgment in Romans 2:1–29 is every human being: God will repay *each person* according to their deeds (2:6). This emphasis on the universality of judgment is explained in the second half of the chiasm where Paul says that both the positive recompense and negative recompense will come upon “all,” to “the Jew first and the Greek” (2:9, 10). Paul grounds the universality of this judgment in the Jewish axiom of divine impartiality (2:11).⁴⁴ God’s impartiality at the judgment does not mean that the outcome will be the same for every person, for Paul envisions two very different outcomes.⁴⁵ Rather, it means that the final judgment will be according to works for each person. Specifically, God will not give preference to the Jew over the Gentile in the matter of their deeds—he will judge both impartially according to works.⁴⁶ Paul does not argue that God’s impartial judgment completely eliminates Jewish privilege, for he also speaks of the advantage of the Jews (3:1–2; 9:4–5).⁴⁷ Instead, Paul turns Jewish privilege on its head. The priority of the Jews is that they will be *judged* first, receiving according

faith in Christ according to Romans 2.12–16?” in *Evangelisum Schriftauslegung Kirche*, ed. Jostein Ådna, Scott J. Hafemann, and Otfried Hofius [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997], 32).

⁴⁴Contra Bassler, both Moo and Schreiner rightly note that divine impartiality is a supporting argument rather than the theme of the entire passage (Moo, *Romans*, 93; Schreiner, *Romans*, 113 n. 5).

⁴⁵Bassler notes that the motif of divine impartiality is never absolute but always qualified in some way (J. M. Bassler, *Divine Impartiality: Paul and a Theological Axiom*, SBLDS 59 [Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982], 186).

⁴⁶Bassler has thoroughly examined the widespread use of the motif of divine impartiality in Jewish literature and observed two aspects: a disregard for group distinctions, and the fact that God rewards according to deeds (*Divine Impartiality*, 135–36). She notes that in the Hebrew Bible the disregard for group distinctions typically referred to the rich and poor, although Deut 10:17 introduces an ethical component (*ibid.*, 256 n 53). Paul, however, employs the motif to undermine distinctions between Jews and Gentiles. A similar phenomenon can be observed in Paul’s use of the Shema: “God is one” is never used for Gentile inclusion in Jewish texts, except in Zechariah 14:9. But Paul uses the Shema in Rom 3:30 to argue that God is the God of both Jew and Gentile and will justify both through faith (thanks to Chris Bruno for this observation). Thus, Paul often employs Jewish motifs (e.g., judgment according to works, divine impartiality, God is one) to argue that Jew and Gentile are equal before God.

⁴⁷Note also Rom 11:29 where Paul says the Jewish people are beloved because of the fathers, for “the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable!”

to what they have done (2:9, 10). This priority of the Jews at the final judgment leads to my discussion of the function of the judgment motif in Romans 2:1–29.

The Function of Judgment in Romans 2:1–29

Several scholars have suggested possible functions of the judgment motif in Romans 2:1–29. Konradt suggests that the motif functions to undermine Jewish precedence and show the strong impartiality of divine judgment.⁴⁸ But Paul’s description of God as the one who will impartially judge both Jews and Gentiles (2:6–11) provides the ground for a more fundamental point: “according to your hard and unrepentant heart you are storing up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God” (2:5).⁴⁹ Thus, Yinger rightly sees the motif as a “theological warrant for the charge made in v. 5.”⁵⁰ However, he wrongly identifies the function of the motif as a merely warning or a summons to repentance,⁵¹ because 2:5 pronounces a sentence upon the disobedient.⁵² Following the language of Paul’s summary statement in 3:9, the theme of judgment according to works in 2:1–29 is fundamentally employed to make an *accusation* against Paul’s dialogue partner. This negative function of the motif explains why Paul emphasizes the negative meaning of judgment in the passage.

The Dialogue Partner

In Romans 2:1, Paul turns to accuse a dialogue partner of being “without

⁴⁸Matthias Konradt, *Gericht und Gemeinde: Eine Studie zur Bedeutung und Funktion von Gerichtsaussagen im Rahmen der paulinischen Ekklesiologie und Ethik im 1 Thess und 1 Kor* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), 514–15.

⁴⁹Grammatically, ὅς in 2:6 explains who God is. But logically, Paul introduces this explanation in order to give a reason the dialogue partner is storing up wrath for himself—because God will judge each person according to his works (so Schreiner, *Romans*, 111).

⁵⁰Yinger, *Judgment According to Deeds*, 162.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²See Yinger’s functional typology (ibid., 29).

excuse” (ἀναπολόγητος) along with the Gentile world (cf. 1:20). Here readers discover that 1:18–32 has set up, in the memorable words of Richard Hays, a “sting operation”:

Romans 1:18–32 sets up a homiletical sting operation. The passage builds a crescendo of condemnation, declaring God’s wrath upon human unrighteousness, using rhetorical characteristic of Jewish polemic against Gentile immorality. It whips the reader into a frenzy of indignation against others: those unbelievers, those idol-worshippers, those immoral enemies of God. But then, in Romans 2:1, the sting strikes: “Therefore you have no excuse, whoever you are, when you judge others; for in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, are doing the very same things.” The reader who gleefully joins in the condemnation of the unrighteousness is “without excuse” (*anapologētos*) before God (2:1), just as those who refuse to acknowledge God are *anapologētos* (1:20).⁵³

This sting is not simply for any reader but for Paul’s dialogue partner, and this dialogue partner is not simply condemned for his judgment of the Gentiles but for his practice of the very same things. Thus the accusation in 1:18–32 establishes the common ground that God condemns those who practice such things, common ground which then forms the basis of an accusation against the dialogue partner: “therefore, you are without excuse.”⁵⁴

To whom is Paul speaking in Romans 2:1–16? It is clear that he addresses a Jewish man in 2:17–29, because this person goes by the name “Jew” (2:17) and is claiming an advantage in circumcision (2:25, 27–29).⁵⁵ But many have argued for a

⁵³Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1996), 389.

⁵⁴Thus δὲ should be understood with its typical inferential force. So William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, ICC, old series (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1902), 55; Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:141; Schreiner, *Romans*, 106; Jewett, *Romans*, 196. Contra Lietzmann who labeled it a “colorless transition particle” (*farblose Übergangspartikel*) in 2:1 (*Römer*, 37); contra Bultmann who claimed 2:1 must be a gloss (Rudolf Bultmann, “Glossen in der Römerbrief,” *TLZ* 72 [1947]: 200); and contra Käsemann who says that whatever the explanation, the particle δὲ is certainly not inferential (Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980], 54). Bassler rightly sees a connection between what precedes and follows Rom 2:1, although I am not convinced that 1:16–2:11 is the first unit of the letter (J. M. Bassler, *Divine Impartiality: Paul and a Theological Axiom*, SBLDS 59 [Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982], 123–37), because Paul’s turn to the diatribe partner in 2:1 opens up a new stage in his argument.

⁵⁵Thornsteinsson suggests that the person going by the name “Jew” in Rom 2:17–29 is actually a Gentile who wants to call himself a Jew (Rune M. Thornsteinsson, *Paul’s Interlocutor in Romans 2: Function and Identity in the Context of Ancient Epistolography*, CBNTS 40 [Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2003], 165–200). This innovative thesis cannot be correct because Rom 3:1–8

different dialogue partner in 2:1–16. Some early interpreters understood Paul to be speaking with a civil ruler or judge,⁵⁶ or a ruler within the church.⁵⁷ Many others see the dialogue partner as a hypocrite in general or perhaps a morally superior Gentile.⁵⁸ However, most commentators see a distinctly Jewish dialogue partner in 2:1–16, and there are several reasons why this view is correct.⁵⁹ First, it is unlikely that Paul turns to a *different* dialogue partner in 2:17–29, because 2:27 is the reversal of 2:1. The dialogue partner currently judges the other person for doing the evil deeds of the Gentiles (2:1), but on the last day the tables will be turned—the Gentile who completes the law will judge the Jewish dialogue partner who is a transgressor of the law (2:27). Second, Paul argues that God will judge *the Jew first* (2:9, 10), and he argues that the Mosaic law presents no advantage at the judgment (2:12–16). Third, since 1:18–32 offers a description of Gentile idolatry similar to other Jewish documents, it makes sense that this passage would conclude with a turn to a Jewish dialogue partner in 2:1.

Most agree that the dialogue partner is a rhetorical device—Paul employs the technique of diatribe in Romans 2:1–29.⁶⁰ Jewett argues that 2:1–16 is a “rhetorical trap”

answers objections to the accusation of 2:1–29, and these objections clearly deal with the Jews, the people who “were entrusted with the oracles of God” (3:2).

⁵⁶E.g., Pelagius (Theodore DeBruyn, *Pelagius’s Commentary on St Paul’s Epistle to the Romans* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993], 69), and Chrysostom (Gerald Bray, ed. *Romans*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998], 52).

⁵⁷Origen rejects the civil ruler interpretation and suggests the dialogue partner is instead a ruler in the church (*Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 1–5*, trans. Thomas P. Schneck [Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2001], 104).

⁵⁸Calvin says that “this reproof is directed against hypocrites” (John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*, trans. and ed. John Owen [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948], 83). Some see a moral Gentile in view (e.g., Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 37; Thorsteinsson, *Paul’s Interlocutor*, 165–200; Ben Witherington III with Darlene Hyatt, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004], 76).

⁵⁹Schreiner notes that most commentators hold this position (Schreiner *Romans*, 103) (e.g., Wilckens, *Römer 1–5*, 121; Dunn, *Romans*, 1:90; Wright, *Romans*, 437).

⁶⁰For a definition of this device, see Stanley Kent Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, SBLDS 57 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981), 76–77. Note also the classic study by Bultmann

for Paul's Christian audience in Rome. The passage

sustains Paul's doctrine of impartial judgment that overturns the widespread assumptions of exceptionalism held by most of the groups in the Greco-Roman world. The imaginary interlocutor that Paul invents for this discussion is a bigot who claims exemption from divine judgment for himself passing judgment on others for doing what he is doing. This depiction is meant to evoke the contempt of his audience for such hypocrisy and to establish the premise that divine judgment is impartial; only in the fourth proof with the argument concerning the weak and the strong in 14:1–15:13 does it become clear that the groups in Rome are behaving like the despised interlocutor.⁶¹

This view, however, cannot be sustained because of the differences between Romans 2 and 14. Both passages employ the judgment motif, and both address the issue of one person judging another (2:1; 14:13). But the passages are also very different: In 2:1–29 the problem with human judgment is hypocrisy—the dialogue partner practices the same evil actions as those whom he is judging (2:1, 21–24). Paul is convinced that he will therefore be condemned for his “hard and unrepentant heart” (2:1, 5, 27), employing the judgment motif in order to make an accusation against the dialogue partner.⁶² In 14:1–23, however, the problem with human judgment is not hypocrisy but leveling judgment upon one whom the Lord has already welcomed. Paul is convinced that the one whom God has received will stand at the last judgment: “for the Lord is able to make him or her stand” (14:4). Thus, Paul does not employ the judgment motif in 14:1–23 to make an accusation. Romans 2:1–16 is not a rhetorical trap for Paul's Christian audience. Instead, interpreters

(Rudolf Bultmann, *Der Stil der paulinische Predigt und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910]), and now the study by Song (Changwon Song, *Reading Romans as Diatribe* [New York: Peter Lang, 2004]).

⁶¹Jewett, *Romans*, 26. *Ibid.*, 197, 200, 203, 211, 217. See Minear for a similar view (Paul S. Minear, *The Obedience of Faith: The Purposes of Paul in the Epistle to the Romans*, SBT 19 [second series] [London: SCM Press, 1971], 46–56).

⁶²Paul sometimes warns Christians with the theme of judgment according to works (e.g., Gal 6:7–8; 1 Cor 3:16–17; 11:27–29; Col 3:24–25), but he never accuses a Christian audience of storing up wrath for the day of judgment. Gathercole similarly observes that the “Jew” in 2:17 is not a Christian because of “the description of the person as heading for condemnation at judgment, which would be unlikely were Paul addressing one who believed the gospel” (Simon J. Gathercole, *Where Is Boasting: Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul's Response in Romans 1–5* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002], 197).

must distinguish between the audience of the letter, the Christian churches at Rome likely composed of Jews and Gentiles, and the rhetorical target of Paul's accusation, a non-Christian Jewish man.⁶³ This person stands for the Jewish people as a whole, because when Paul accuses him of transgressing the law he quotes Isaiah 52:5: "for because of you [plural] the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles" (Rom 2:24).⁶⁴ Paul's accusation in 2:1–29, then, is against the Jewish people.⁶⁵

The Accusation

Paul's accusation is that the Jewish dialogue partner, like the Gentile world, is "without excuse": "Therefore, you are without excuse, O man, everyone who judges, for when you judge the other person, you condemn yourself, for you, the one judging, practice the same things" (2:1). The major premise of the accusation is the common ground stated in 1:32: "those who practice such [evil] things are worthy of death." Paul restates this common ground in 2:2: "now we know that the judgment of God comes rightly against those who practice such things."⁶⁶ The minor premise is stated up front:

⁶³I borrow the terms "audience" and "target" from Yinger, who nicely distinguishes between the *audience* of the mixed Christian congregation at Rome and the *target* of the diatribe, who is a Jew (*Judgment According to Deeds*, 149). With this distinction, the target of Paul's accusation can be a Jew even if the church of Rome consisted entirely of Gentile Christians (contra Thorsteinsson, *Paul's Interlocutor*, 121–22). The content of Rom 2:1–29 does not simply arise from the historical situation of Paul's audience but from the historical context of Paul's preaching of the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles (*pace* Elliott who argues that Rom 1–8 is not a theological exposition of the Christian gospel in opposition to Judaism, Neil Elliott, *The Rhetoric of Romans: Argumentative Constraint and Strategy and Paul's Dialogue with Judaism*, JSNTSup 45 [Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990], 59).

⁶⁴The wording is very similar to the LXX, except for the word order, the omission of the adverbial διὰ παντός, and the substitution of τοῦ θεοῦ (Paul) for μου (LXX).

⁶⁵The fact that Paul is accusing the Jewish people does not rule out the application of this text more broadly to anyone who hypocritically judges other people. Seifrid rightly notes this is a human fault, (Mark A. Seifrid, "Unrighteous by Faith," 120–21).

⁶⁶I have translated the adverbial phrase κατὰ ἀλήθειαν with the English adverb "rightly" because in English "truly" sounds as if it should modify "we know" rather than the action of judgment. In Rom "truth" and "righteousness" are often used in parallel. See particularly Rom 3:5 and 7, where human unrighteousness commends God's righteousness just as the human lie causes God's truth to abound. Cf. 1 Cor 13:6 where Paul speaks of ἀδικία and ἀλήθεια as antonyms.

“you, the one judging, practice the same things” (2:1). This point is important for Paul because he repeats it in an aside: “do you suppose, O man (the one who judges those who practice such things and yet does them), that you will escape the judgment of God?” (2:3). The conclusion of the accusation is also stated up front: “you are without excuse . . . for when⁶⁷ you judge the other, you condemn yourself” (2:1). But it becomes more pointed at the end of the initial accusation: “according to your hard and unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God” (2:5). Thus, the logic of the accusation can be laid out in the following syllogism:

Major premise: God rightly condemns those who practice such things (2:2; cf. 1:32).
 Minor premise: You practice such things (2:1, 3).
 Conclusion: Therefore, God will rightly condemn you (2:1, 5).⁶⁸

Paul’s dialogue partner, however, thinks he will escape the condemning judgment of God: “But do you think this . . . that you will escape the judgment of God?” (2:3). Why does he think this? First, he is not currently experiencing God’s wrath in the same way as the Gentiles. Instead, he is experiencing God’s forbearance from wrath: “Or do you despise the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience . . .” (2:4a). He mistakes God’s forbearance in the present with his favor in the future. Paul says he is “ignorant that the kindness of God is his attempt to lead you to repentance” (2:4).⁶⁹ This ignorance is the reason that he *despises* God’s forbearance,⁷⁰ a statement which in context

⁶⁷I am reading ἐν ᾧ temporally because I think Paul would have used a plural pronoun if he were referring specifically to the deeds for which this person is judging the other (cf. τὰ τοιαῦτα in 1:32 and τὰ αὐτὰ in 2:1) (so NRSV).

⁶⁸For a similar approach to Paul’s logic here, see John D. Moores, *Wrestling with Rationality in Paul: Romans 1–8 in a New Perspective*, SNTSMS 82 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 47–48.

⁶⁹I am translating ἄγει as a conative present. The point is not that God *is* leading the interlocutor to repentance but that he is *attempting* to lead him to repentance (so Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 534 n. 59; Jewett, *Romans*, 202).

⁷⁰The participle ἀγνοῶν likely indicates a causal relationship.

must refer his refusal to repent of the evil works he practices. In response, Paul argues that God's present kindness will not guarantee an escape from God's future judgment. In fact the dialogue partner is "storing up wrath" for that judgment (2:5).

Second, as a Jewish man, he thinks that the gifts of the Mosaic covenant, the law and circumcision, will give him an advantage at the judgment (2:12, 17–24, 25–29). A major question in New Testament studies is *why* the Jewish people thought the law would give them an advantage before God. Scholars who endorse the new perspective on Paul argue that Jews did not try to be justified by their obedience to the Mosaic law. Instead, in the words of Wright, they attempted to "legitimize their covenant status by appealing to possession of Torah."⁷¹ The Jewish interlocutor thinks his *possession* of the law and circumcision will give him an advantage at the judgment, not his *practice* of the law. Wright observes that the problem in Romans 2 is not that the Jewish interlocutor is trying to keep the law but actually the opposite—the problem is that he transgresses the law.⁷² These two problems, however, are not mutually exclusive, for as Romans 7:7–25 explains one may try to keep the law and transgress it at the same time.

Further, there are several reasons to believe that the dialogue partner thinks of possessing and keeping the law as one and the same thing. First, the dialogue partner agrees with the major premise of Paul's accusation—those who practice the evil works of the Gentiles will be condemned. This is the basis of his own judgment of the other in 2:1, and it is the common ground from which Paul begins the accusation in 2:2. Thus, he must think that he does not practice such things if he believes he will escape God's judgment. He is a circumcised Jewish law keeper, not a Gentile sinner (cf. Gal 2:15). Second, Gathercole argues that many Jewish texts understand both possession of the law (election) and obedience to the law to be the basis of final justification, a pattern which

⁷¹Wright, *Romans*, 461.

⁷²Wright, *Romans*, 455, 459.

fits well here.⁷³ Third, as Garlington argues, Jewish texts generally understand hearing the law (possession) and obedience to the law to be the same thing.⁷⁴ In the Hebrew Bible “to hear” also means “to obey,” thus the people promise “we will hear/obey” (שמע ושמר) the law in Exodus 24:7. To be a hearer of the law is to be one who obeys the law, and the dialogue partner “has been taught by the law” (2:18). Therefore it is more likely that the dialogue partner thinks of possessing the law and practicing the law as one and the same thing. He is a circumcised Jewish law-keeper, and this gives him an advantage at the judgment.

Interpreters must allow for the element of self-deception in the dialogue partner.⁷⁵ He thinks of himself as a Jewish law keeper even though he is a transgressor of the law. Deception is bound up with sin throughout Romans 1:18–3:20, for sin is described as the suppression the truth (1:18), the exchange of the truth about God for a lie (1:24), disobedience to the truth (2:8), and “my lie” (3:7). The concept of self-deception fits particularly well with Paul’s indictment, because Paul accuses him of hypocrisy—he does the very things he teaches others not to do (2:21–23).

In response to Jewish advantage at the judgment Paul drives a wedge between the hearing of the law and the doing of the law “For the hearers of the law are not righteous before God, but the doers of the law will be justified” (2:13). Therefore, Paul reasons, everyone who has sinned will be condemned,⁷⁶ both Gentiles who are “without

⁷³See the summary of his study: Gathercole, *Where Is Boasting*, 194.

⁷⁴Donald Garlington, *Faith, Obedience, and Perseverance*, WUNT 79 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 59.

⁷⁵Greg Bahnsen observes that self deception is a familiar topic in every discipline which considers anthropology— religion (Daniel Dyke; Bishop Butler), philosophy (Plato, Rousseau, Goethe, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche), literature (Sophocles; Shakespeare; Dickens; Dostoevsky; Tolstoy), sociology (Marx; Mannheim), and psychology (Freud) (Greg L. Bahnsen, “The Crucial Concept of Self-Deception in Presuppositional Apologetics,” *WJT* 57 [1995]: 10–12). This article summarizes his dissertation which offers a model in order to explain the apparent paradox of self-deception.

⁷⁶κρίνω means “to condemn” in 2:12b, since it is used in parallel with ἀπόλλυμι.

the law” and Jews who are “with the law” (2:12).⁷⁷ Paul makes this distinction between hearing and doing in order to expose the hypocrisy of the dialogue partner,⁷⁸ for he concludes that the dialogue partner is in fact not a doer of the law but a transgressor of the law (2:21–24, 27). The Jewish people have dishonored God through their transgression of the law and are liable to condemnation at the final judgment. Whereas the Jew is judging the Gentile for his practice of evil deeds, at the judgment the Gentile who has completed the law will judge the Jew who is a transgressor of the law. In chapter 7 I will discuss the identity of this Gentile in more detail, but the main point of Paul’s argument is that the Jewish dialogue partner is a transgressor of the law. In other words, the judgment motif in Romans 2:1–29 primarily functions as an accusation that the Jewish people are liable to the condemning judgment of God.⁷⁹

Conclusion

In Romans 2:1 Paul turns to a dialogue partner and accuses him of being liable to the final condemning judgment of God. The dialogue partner represents the Jewish people, and the judgment motif functions as an accusation against the Jews. They will face the condemning judgment of God because they do the same works as the Gentiles, (2:1, 3), they have sinned (2:12), and they have dishonored God by their transgression of

⁷⁷Note that ἀνόμως should be translated “without the law” not “wickedly” (contra Stowers, *Rereading*, 136–37). While the word means this in other contexts, in Rom 2:12–16 Paul is clearly contrasting “Gentiles who do not have the law by nature” (2:14) with Jews who have the law but do not obey the law (so most commentators). Further, if the word means “wickedly,” then it is difficult to understand what Paul could mean by “they will perish ἀνόμως.” In this context, then, the word carries the basic meaning “without the law.”

⁷⁸Garlington suggests that Paul drives a wedge between hearing and doing because he has a different kind of “doing the law” in mind, namely “the obedience of faith” (Garlington, *Faith, Obedience, and Perseverance*, 59). But faith is not in view in Rom 2:13. Rather, I think Paul distinguishes between hearing and doing in order to expose the hypocrisy of his dialogue partner.

⁷⁹Note Westerholm: “Whatever Paul may say about Gentiles in this chapter, his real purpose is clearly to show that, in spite of undeniable advantages, the Jew no less than the Gentile stands ‘under sin’, an object of divine wrath (3.9; cf. 3.19) (Stephen Westerholm, “Letter and Spirit: The Foundation of Pauline *Ethics*,” *NTS* 30 [1984]: 233).

the law (2:23, 27). Thus the judgment motif in Romans 2:1–29 functions as an accusation against the Jewish people. Just as the Gentiles are experiencing divine judgment, so the Jews are storing up wrath for the day of judgment. As I will establish in chapter 5, Paul rightly summarizes his argument as an accusation that “all Jews and Greeks are under the power of sin” (3:9). First, however, I must discuss the judgment motif in Romans 3:1–8.

CHAPTER 4

JUDGMENT IN ROMANS 3:1–8

Introduction

I have argued that judgment functions as an accusation against the Gentile world in Romans 1:18–32 and as an accusation against the Jewish people in 2:1–29. Paul draws his accusation to a close in 3:9–20, but first he answers several objections. Romans 3:1–8 is a digression,¹ thus my discussion of judgment in the passage may strike readers as a digression from the larger thesis of the dissertation. However, just as Romans 3:1–8 is integral to the argument which both precedes and follows it,² so this chapter will both support my previous points and anticipate the discussion to come. First, it will implicitly confirm my argument that Paul employs judgment as an accusation against the Jewish people in 2:1–29, because 3:1–8 presents objections to that accusation. Second, it will demonstrate that divine judgment is one component of the righteousness of God in Romans, a point which will be significant in my discussion of justification in chapter 6. The meaning of this passage is notoriously difficult and has challenged interpreters since Origen.³ My goal, therefore, must be stated modestly: This chapter will examine the

¹So Käsemann: “As if taking a breath before stating his conclusion, Paul finds a place for two objections” (Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980], 78). To say that the passage is a digression, however, is not to say that it strays from the main argument of the letter (*pace* Stanley Kent Stowers, “Paul’s Dialogue with a Fellow Jew in Romans 3:1–9,” *CBQ* 46 [1984]: 707–08).

²Dunn observes that the text “is something of a bridge between earlier and later parts of the letter, or like a railway junction through which many of the key ideas and themes of the epistle pass” (James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, WBC, vol. 38a [Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1988], 130).

³Origen was the first to note the confusion in Paul’s sequence of thought in 3:1–8 (*Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans: Books 1–5*, trans. Thomas P. Schneck [Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2001], 179). Dodd says “the whole argument of iii.1–8 is obscure and feeble” and suggests that “the argument of the epistle would go much better if this whole section were

meaning and function of the judgment motif in Romans 3:1–8. In order to provide a context for my argument that the motif functions as a defense of the righteousness of God, it will begin with an introduction to the debate surrounding δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in Romans.

The Righteousness of God in Romans

The “righteousness of God” in Paul has been the subject of much debate in the epistle to the Romans, where the phrase occurs seven times (1:17; 3:5; 3:21, 22, 25, 26; 10:3 [2x]).⁴ Historically, the phrase received attention through Martin Luther’s “discovery” about the righteousness of God in Romans. Luther first read δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in Romans 1:17 as the *iustitia distributiva* of God, the distributive justice by which God would render a righteous judgment and punish sinners. This understanding led Luther to hate the phrase because of his own sin and the prospect of divine judgment.⁵ However, as Luther labored to understand 1:17 and paid attention to its context, he realized that his interpretation was incorrect. Rather than the righteousness by which God

omitted” (!) (C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, MNTC [New York: Harper and Brothers, 1932], 46). Hall calls 3:1–8 “one of the most puzzling passages in the epistle” (David R. Hall, “Romans 3.1–8 Reconsidered,” *NTS* 29 [1983]: 183). So Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 147.

⁴Outside of Romans the phrase occurs only in 2 Cor 5:21. Cf. also τὴν ἐκ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην in Phil 3:9 and δικαιοσύνην in 1 Cor 1:30 which may be modified by ἀπὸ θεοῦ. For older histories of interpretation of “the righteousness of God” in Romans, see M. T. Brauch (appendix written for E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1977], 523–42), Sam K. Williams (“The ‘Righteousness of God’ in Romans,” *JBL* 99 [1980]: 241–90), P. T. O’Brien (“Justification in Paul and Some Crucial Issues of the Last Two Decades,” in *Right with God: Justification in the Bible and the World*, ed. D. A. Carson [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992], 70–78), and N. T. Wright (*What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997], 100–11). For a newer survey, see Jouette M. Bassler (*Navigating Paul: An Introduction to Key Theological Concepts* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007], 49–70).

⁵“I had indeed been captivated with an extraordinary ardor for understanding Paul in the Epistle to the Romans. But up till then it was . . . a single word in Chapter 1 [1:17], ‘In it the righteousness of God is revealed,’ that had stood in my way. For I hated that word ‘righteousness of God,’ which, according to the use and custom of all the teachers, I had been taught to understand philosophically regarding the formal or active righteousness, as they called it, with which God is righteous and punishes the unrighteous sinner” (LW 34:336) (Luther recorded this account in the preface to his Latin writings a year before he died).

judges human sin, Luther discovered that δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ referred to the righteousness which God gives as a gift:

There I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous lives by a gift of God, namely by faith. And this is the meaning: the righteousness of God is revealed by the gospel, namely, the passive righteousness with which merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written, “He who through faith is righteous shall live.”⁶

With this new understanding Luther famously translated δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in 1:17 as “die Gerechtigkeit die vor Gott gilt,” the righteousness which counts before God.

Luther’s discovery, then, was that δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in 1:17 refers not to the judging righteousness of God but to his saving righteousness, the righteousness which God gives as a gift to the ungodly.

In his lectures on Romans, Luther consistently applies his discovery of saving righteousness to all of the other uses of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in Romans.⁷ Important for this chapter, Luther reads δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in 3:5 along the same lines as 1:17. He comments that

some people say that the righteousness of God is commended by our unrighteousness when He punishes it, for then He shows Himself to be righteous in not allowing the unrighteous to go unpunished. And this is a true statement. But it does not pertain in any way to what the apostle is discussing at this point, for he is not talking about the righteousness of God by which he himself is righteous.... Hence, he is not speaking here of the righteousness by which he is righteous himself, but of that by which He who is righteous makes us righteous.⁸

Like 1:17, Luther argues that δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in 3:5 does not refer to the distributive

⁶LW 34:337. See McGrath for an explanation of Luther’s understanding of *iustitia Dei* in the context of the *via moderna* (Alistair E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*, 3rd ed. [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005], 218–23).

⁷This point is evident throughout both the glosses and scholia of his 1515–16 lectures (see LW 25).

⁸LW 25: 200–201. Melancthon similarly reads saving righteousness in 3:5 when he paraphrases the objection: “*If the mercy of God is enlarged through this . . . then why is God angry at those who sin, if indeed our sins amplify the glory of his mercy*” (my emphasis) (Philip Melancthon, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. Fred Kramer [St. Louis: Concordia, 1992], 95).

righteousness of God by which he punishes sinners but to the gift of righteousness by which he he makes sinners righteous. He argues, in other words, that the righteousness of God refers to the righteousness by which he saves sinners rather than the righteousness of his judgment. Although Luther acknowledges the truth that God is righteous in judging sinners, he argues that this judging righteousness is not a component of the phrase δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in 3:5.

Many modern scholars likewise explain δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in terms of salvation rather than judgment, even though interpretations of the phrase have struck out in a number of directions. Käsemann changed the tide of interpretation by arguing that δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ must refer to both God's gift of righteousness *and his saving power*.⁹ He argued this position in response to his teacher Bultmann, who argued for a form of Luther's gift righteousness in Paul. Käsemann was concerned that Bultmann's interpretation was too anthropocentric and threatened to remove the gift of righteousness from the Giver. In response, Käsemann suggested that δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ refers to God's saving power by which he exercises his lordship over the world and was a technical term which Paul derived from apocalyptic Judaism.¹⁰ Most now have rejected the idea that the phrase was a previously existing technical term,¹¹ but Käsemann has convinced many *Neutestamentlern* that the righteousness of God in Paul involves both the gift of God and

⁹See Käsemann's chapter entitled "'The Righteousness of God' In Paul" (Ernst Käsemann, *New Testament Questions of Today* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969], 168–82). This chapter originated as a lecture given at the Oxford Congress on "The New Testament Today" in 1961 and was first published in *ZTK* in 1961. For Bultmann's response to the initial lecture which outlines his own position, see Rudolf Bultmann, "δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ," *JBL* 83 (1964): 12–16.

¹⁰"All that we have been saying amounts to this: δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is for Paul God's sovereignty over the world revealing itself eschatologically in Jesus" (Käsemann, *New Testament Questions*, 180).

¹¹See Soards, who questions Käsemann's proof texts because Deut 33:21 is not apocalyptic. Also, δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in *T. Dan* 6:10 is questionable textually and, if original, does not refer to the saving activity of God (Marion L. Soards, "Käsemann's 'Righteousness' Reexamined," *CBQ* 49 [1987]: 264–67). See also Mark A. Seifrid, *Justification by Faith: The Origin and Development of a Central Pauline Theme*, *NovTSup* 68 (New York: Brill, 1992), 42–46, 78–135.

his own saving power.¹² Thus Käsemann, unlike Luther, emphasized the righteousness by which God acts rather than the passive righteousness which counts before God. Like Luther, however, he emphasized the saving righteousness of God rather than his judging righteousness. On Romans 3:5 he comments that δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ “does not speak of distributive justice but of the power which establishes its right to the creature.”¹³

The exclusion of divine judgment from the definition of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is also apparent among the many scholars who now define God’s righteousness as his faithfulness to the covenant. The roots of this reading go back to Hermann Cremer, who studied righteousness language in the Old Testament in the late 19th century and argued that “in the whole Old Testament the righteousness of God is and remains *iustitia salutifera*” and not *iustitia distributiva*.¹⁴ This saving righteousness did not mean adherence to a norm in Hebrew thought but the fulfillment of claims in the context of a relationship, God’s faithfulness to his covenant.¹⁵ Many Pauline scholars now adopt this view, arguing that the righteousness of God means his faithfulness to the covenant. For example Dunn considers Cremer’s work to be the foundational study of the righteousness

¹²E.g., Christian Müller, *Gottes Gerechtigkeit und Gottes Volk: Eine Untersuchung zu Römer 9–11*, Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des AT und NT 86 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964); Peter Stuhlmacher, *Gerechtigkeit Gottes bei Paulus*, Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des AT und NT 87 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965); J. A. Zeisler, *The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul: A Linguistic and Theological Enquiry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972); Karl Kertelge, “*Rechtfertigung*” bei Paulus, 2nd ed. (Münster: Aschendorff, 1967); so also the early Schreiner (*Romans*, 63–67), although he no longer follows Käsemann (idem, *Paul: Apostle of God’s Glory in Christ* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001], 206–08).

¹³Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 84.

¹⁴Im ganzen Alten Testament ist und bleibt die Gerechtigkeit Gottes *justitia salutifera* (Hermann Cremer, *Die paulinische Rechtfertigungslehre im Zusammenhange ihrer geschichtlichen Voraussetzung* [Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1899], 3). I am indebted to Seifrid for this reference, who notes that Cremer sees punitive righteousness in several passages in the Hebrew Bible but argues that this righteousness always prepares for Israel’s salvation (Mark A. Seifrid, “Righteousness Language in the Hebrew Scriptures and Early Judaism,” in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, vol. 1, *The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism*, ed. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O’Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001], 417 n. 10).

¹⁵Cremer, *Rechtfertigungslehre*, 53.

of God, and he stresses God's faithfulness to the covenant throughout his commentary.¹⁶ Wright similarly argues that the righteousness of God must refer to God's own righteousness, specifically his moral quality and saving acts of covenant faithfulness.¹⁷ He rules out the old idea of distributive righteousness as "a Latin irrelevance." Similar to Wright is Williams who argues that δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in Romans refers not to gift righteousness or God's saving power but to his own faithfulness to the Abrahamic promise.¹⁸ Judging righteousness is noticeably absent in Williams's formulation of the concept.

In the prevailing winds of biblical scholarship, then, δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is explained without reference to divine judgment. In his survey of "righteousness of God" in New Testament scholarship, Alistar McGrath notes that "there is a general consensus on one point of major importance, which needs to be emphasized. *The 'righteousness of God' is not a moral concept.* Rather it represents a profound statement about the relevance of God for the human situation." By this McGrath means that New Testament scholars are agreed that the phrase refers to God's saving righteousness and not the moral rigor of his judgment.¹⁹ Some scholars do still emphasize divine judgment as one expression of the righteousness of God in Romans.²⁰ The majority, however, either overtly exclude the idea of judgment from the definition of God's righteousness, or

¹⁶Dunn, *Romans*, 341–44.

¹⁷Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said*, 100–103. Idem, *Romans*, in vol. 10 of *The New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 396–406.

¹⁸Williams, "Righteousness of God," 241–90.

¹⁹These statements are from the second edition (Alistar McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*, 2nd ed. [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998], 383). In the third edition McGrath has excised this section and shortened his discussion of New Testament scholarship to only three pages about the New Perspective of Paul.

²⁰E.g., John Piper, *The Justification of God: An Exegetical & Theological Study of Romans 9:1–23*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 103–50; Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 83; Schreiner, *Romans*, 155–7; idem, *Paul*, 199.

simply overlook any reference to it. Perhaps some exclude or overlook any reference to divine judgment because they are seeking to explain the *Grundbegriff* of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, the definition which explains its every use. Since the phrase typically refers to God’s saving righteousness in Romans, scholars are right to emphasize this idea. However, if certain texts include some reference to judgment, these texts must be allowed to influence the fundamental definition of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in Romans.²¹ One goal of this chapter is to demonstrate that distributive justice (i.e., judgment according to works) is one expression of the righteousness of God in Romans. In 3:1–8, there is a fundamental connection between God’s judgment and his righteousness—God’s judgment vindicates or defends his righteousness. In order to demonstrate this thesis, I will first describe the elements of the judgment motif in 3:1–8 and then show how Paul employs the motif in order to make a defense of the righteousness of God.

The Meaning of Judgment in Romans 3:1–8

The judgment motif continues to be pronounced in Romans 3:1–8. Judgment terminology appears in 3:4 and throughout 3:5–8. Synofzik, in the only sustained discussion of 3:1–8 among previous studies of judgment, suggests that judgment is a secondary theme in the passage, subordinated to the theme of the salvation historical preference of the Jews—the “advantage of the Jew,” or the “benefit of circumcision” (3:1).²² It is more accurate, however, to say that Jewish privilege and divine judgment are

²¹It is interesting that several scholars who exclude distributive justice from the definition of the righteousness of God still notice reference to divine judgment in their exegesis of the phrase. E.g., Dunn asks whether righteousness of God includes the thought of judgment and notes that “righteousness” is used occasionally for God’s punitive action against offending Israel, but he is vague about the connection of these two ideas in Romans (*Romans*, 42). Similarly, in his Pauline theology Dunn observes that “strictly speaking, ‘God’s righteousness’ includes God’s wrath, since wrath is the appropriate response to human sin,” but this does not affect Dunn’s definition of the phrase (*Theology of Paul*, 343 n. 34). Wright also speaks quite clearly of God’s punishment of sin in Rom 3:25 as an aspect of God’s righteousness (*Romans*, 473, 476). And even Käsemann admits that God’s righteousness is linked to judgment in the clause μὴ ἄδικος ὁ θεὸς ὁ ἐπιφέρων τὴν ὀργήν (*Romans*, 83).

²²Ernst Synofzik, *Die Gerichts- und Vergeltungs-Aussagen bei Paulus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht, 1977), 85.

both major themes in 3:1–8, because the passage wrestles with the relationship between the two. This relationship will be explored in my examination of the function of judgment. But first I must explain the meaning of the judgment motif in 3:1–8.

The Agent of Judgment

The meaning of judgment is consistent with Romans 1:18–2:29. First, God is the agent of judgment. Divine agency in judgment is clear throughout 3:5–8. God is ὁ ἐπιφέρων τὴν ὀργήν (3:5b), and he will judge the world (3:6). In light of these verses, divine agency is assumed in the following question “why am I still being judged as a sinner?” (3:7). God’s judgment may also appear in 3:4b and 3:5a, although scholars debate the interpretation of key phrases in both verses. Romans 3:4b introduces the judgment motif into 3:1–8 through a citation of Psalm 51:4 [LXX 50:6]: “Just as it is written, ‘That you may be justified in your words and will conquer ἐν τῷ κρίνεσθαί σε’” (Rom 3:4b). God may be the subject or the object of κρίνεσθαί—thus he may be the agent or object of judgment in 3:4b. In the MT, the Qal infinitive **כִּרְפָּשׁ** is active with God as the subject, but in the LXX the verb is either middle or passive, so God may be either the subject or the object. It is difficult to know which voice the translator intended. Perhaps the translator used the middle of κρίνω to mean “when you go to law.”²³ Or perhaps the translator read the consonants of **כִּרְפָּשׁ** as a Niphal and rendered it with a passive Greek infinitive: “when you are judged.” No matter what the translator intended, however, the crucial question is how Paul reads κρίνεσθαί. Some argue that Paul reads the verb as a passive—when God is judged by human beings he is justified.²⁴ However, it

²³See BDAG, s.v., “κρίνω,” use 5.a.β. Note that Albert Pietersma reads the middle in his translation of the Septuagint: “and be victorious when you go to law” (NETS).

²⁴Calvin, *Romans*, 117; Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 72; Käsemann, *Romans*, 81; Dunn, *Romans*, 134; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 328–29. So KJV, NASB, ESV, NET Bible. This position tends to be adopted by those, like Sanday and Headlam, Käsemann, Dunn, and Fitzmyer, who emphasize God’s saving righteousness in 3:5 and throughout the passage.

is more likely that Paul reads the verb as a middle that refers to divine judgment of human sin,²⁵ for several reasons:

First, it allows the verse to have poetic parallelism. In the first line God is the one who makes the accusation (ἐν τοῖς λόγοις σου),²⁶ so in the second line the reader expects God to be the one who judges (ἐν τῷ κρίνεσθαί σε), not the one who is judged.²⁷ Second, this reading interprets the citation in light of the original context of the psalm which is a plea for mercy from the divine judge (Ps 51:1–3). Paul even includes the initial conjunction ὅπως in his citation of Psalm 51:4 which may be intended to link the verse to its original context.²⁸ Third, God as the agent of judgment fits within the larger context of Romans, because *God is never the object of judgment in the letter*. Even when he himself is said to be justified in 3:4b and 3:25–26, this is not the result of another person’s judgment. In 3:4b God is justified through his own accusation of human guilt, and in 3:25–26 God’s righteousness is demonstrated through his own action of putting forward Christ Jesus as an atoning sacrifice (3:25).²⁹ In other words, God

²⁵So Godet, *Romans*, 135; Michel, *Römer*, 96; Bruce, *Romans*, 96; Piper, *Justification of God*, 127; Moo, *Romans*, 188 n. 53; Schreiner, *Romans*, 152 n. 9; Jewett, *Romans*, 246. So NRSV, NIV.

²⁶The word λόγοις refers to God’s words of judgment or accusation (so Calvin, *Romans*, 117; Piper, *Justification of God*, 127; see L&N, domain 56.7).

²⁷Noted by Michel (*Römer*, 96) and Piper (*Justification of God*, 127).

²⁸According to the superscription of the psalm, the plea is from David in the context of his adultery with Bathsheba and Nathan’s accusation (see 2 Sam 11–12). In quoting Ps 51:4, Paul may be evoking this story as a parallel to his own accusation of the Jewish people. As Nathan aroused David’s ire against the ruthless rich man in order to accuse David of his transgression, so Paul stirs up his Jewish dialogue partner against the Gentiles in order to accuse the Jews of practicing the same things (see Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 48–50; on the comparison between 2 Sam 11–12 and Rom 1:18–2:29, see Wiard Popkes, “Zum Aufbau und Charakter von Römer 1.18–32,” *NTS* 28 [1982]: 497–500). Note that the particle ὅπως normally indicates purpose, i.e., intended result, but it seems clear that the particle must indicate result in this verse because it is unlikely that David has sinned for the purpose that God might be justified and conquer in judgment. Muraoka rightly lists result as a possible definition of ὅπως (s.v., “ὅπως,” use 2), even though most other Greek dictionaries fail to mention the possibility. Similarly, the Hebrew particle לְמַעַן which lies behind ὅπως may be used in some cases to indicate result (see Marvin A. Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, WBC, vol. 20 [Dallas: Word Books, 1990], 18).

²⁹See chap. 6 for ἰλαστήριον as a satisfaction of judgment.

experiences the justifying judgment through his own judgment of human sin and not through the judgment of another. God can be justified by his own judgment because there are only two parties envisioned in the divine lawcourt, unlike modern courtrooms which typically have three parties (judge, plaintiff, and defendant). In the biblical vision of the divine lawcourt God is both the judge and the plaintiff, and human beings are the defendants. Therefore, when God acts as a judge against human sin, he himself is also declared to be in the right as the plaintiff.³⁰ Since Paul, then, often speaks of God as the agent of judgment and never as the object of judgment in Romans, it seems likely that 3:4 follows this pattern.³¹

Romans 3:5a may also speak of divine agency in judgment. Virtually all scholars now agree that δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in 3:5a does not refer to Luther’s gift righteousness—the righteousness from God which counts before God—but to an attribute or activity of God himself (taking θεοῦ as a subjective genitive).³² It is debated, however, whether the phrase means God’s saving righteousness or his judging righteousness. If Paul does refer to judgment, as I will consider below, then divine agency is indicated by the subjective genitive θεοῦ.

³⁰As Seifrid puts it, “The justification of God entails our condemnation” (Seifrid, “Unrighteous by Faith: Apostolic Proclamation in Romans 1:18–3:20,” in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, vol. 2, *The Paradoxes of Paul*, ed. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O’Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004], 138). Idem, *Christ our Righteousness: Paul’s Theology of Justification*. NSBT 9 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 56–60. Perhaps more than anyone else, Seifrid has reminded *Neutestamentlern* of the two-party nature of judgment in biblical thought. Note, however, that Seifrid disagrees with my reading of Rom 3:4, because he sees God as the object of judgment or the defendant in this verse, following a pattern which is common in the Prophets, especially Isa 40–55.

³¹Some who argue for the passive reading in Rom 3:4b note the passive reading of κρίνω in 3:7: “why am I still being judged as a sinner?” (Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 72; Käsemann, *Romans*, 81). But this verse actually supports the middle reading in 3:4b because God is the agent of judgment in 3:7.

³²Even Cranfield, who strongly defends Luther’s reading throughout Romans, recognizes this: “That in 3.5 θεοῦ is a subjective genitive is hardly to be doubted” (*Romans*, 1:96). Schlatter observes the clear antithesis between ἀδικία ἡμῶν and θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην in which both genitives are subjective (Adolf Schlatter, *Romans: The Righteousness of God*, trans. Siegfried S. Schatzmann [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995], 78).

The Action of Judgment

The other elements of the judgment motif in Romans 3:1–8 are also consistent with 1:18–2:29. The action of judgment is depicted primarily as a negative recompense of wrath against human sin. God conquers in his condemning judgment (3:4b), and he rightly brings his wrath against sin (3:5; cf. 3:7). In 3:6, κρίνω refers to the general evaluative judgment of the world. But the emphasis of 3:6 is upon the condemning judgment of the world, because Paul uses this Jewish conviction as common ground to support his argument that God is right to bring his wrath against Jewish transgression.³³ Finally, Paul’s accusation against those who slander his gospel in 3:8 clearly refers to the condemning judgment, which is why most English translations translate κρίμα “condemnation.” Like 1:18–2:29, then, the action of judgment in 3:1–8 primarily refers to the condemning judgment of God.

This judgment will take place on the final day. In his citation of Psalm 51:4 Paul makes one change, replacing the subjunctive νικήσης in the LXX with the future νικήσεις. This change should not be over-read since the future tense can be used for the subjunctive,³⁴ yet it may suggest a reference to the future judgment. More clear is 3:6—Paul uses the future κρινεῖ which in context clearly refers to the final judgment of the world.³⁵ The other references to judgment in 3:5, 7, and 8 do not clearly speak of the final judgment and may blend God’s judgment within human history together with the final

³³On this conviction in Jewish writings, see chap. 2. On Paul’s establishing common ground with his Jewish interlocutor, see Rom 2:3 and 3:19.

³⁴“The future indicative is used, especially in poetry, after ὅπως . . . in the same sense as the subjunctive” (Smyth §2203). Note that the Käsemann school argues that Paul changes the tense to emphasize the certainty of God’s victory (Jewett, *Romans*, 246).

³⁵The earliest manuscripts have no accents (B*, A, **N**, et al.; note that 3:6–7 are missing in the extant papyri), but the majority of later copiers rightly accented κρινεῖ as a future (κρινεῖ) rather than a present (κρίνει) (see Reuben Swanson, ed., *New Testament Greek Manuscripts: Variant Readings Arranged in Horizontal Lines against Codex Vaticanus: Romans* [Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001], 37). So Cranfield, *Romans*, 1: 184, n. 6; Schreiner, *Romans*, 160.

day. Although the judgment within human history is envisioned against Gentiles in 1:18–32, Paul also depicts God’s judgment revealed within history against the Jewish people in Romans 9–11, as will be observed in chapter 8.

The Object of Judgment

The object of judgment in Romans 3:1–8 is the Jewish people, because the passage consists of a series of objections which arise from Paul’s accusation of the Jews (2:1–29), not his vision of God’s wrath being revealed against the Gentile world (1:18–32).³⁶ The questions which begin the train of thought respond specifically to Paul’s diatribe with the Jewish interlocutor and the other questions follow in tow. First, “What then is the advantage (ὠφέλεια) of the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision?” (3:1). Paul has argued that circumcision is of no advantage (ὠφέλει) for one who does not practice the law (2:25), and he has accused his Jewish interlocutor of transgressing the law (2:23, 27). Thus he has argued that external circumcision is of no saving advantage at the judgment for the Jewish interlocutor and the Jewish people whom he represents (cf. 2:28).³⁷ Romans 3:1 is the natural response to his accusation: Then what is the saving advantage of being a Jew or of being circumcised? The following questions continue in this line of thought and represent essentially Jewish objections to Paul’s gospel, likely objections Paul heard when he preached his gospel in the Jewish synagogues.³⁸ When Paul speaks of “their unfaithfulness” (3:3), “our unrighteousness”

³⁶Contra Stowers who sees Rom 3:1–8 as an objection rising from Paul’s indictment in all of 1:18–2:29 (*The Diatribe*, 149). Jewett is on track when he notes that Paul is dealing with “logical objections to the impartial judgment of God” (Jewett, *Romans*, 240). More precisely, Paul is dealing with objections to the accusation against the Jewish people which is rooted in the impartial judgment of God.

³⁷Schreiner rightly notes that Paul speaks of saving advantage in Rom 2:25 and 3:1 because the issue is whether one will receive praise from God at the judgment (cf. 2:6–11, 29) (Schreiner, *Romans*, 148).

³⁸So Schreiner, *Romans*, 153; Jewett, *Romans*, 252. On Paul preaching in the synagogues, see chap. 4 n. 25. Most commentators think the diatribe continues in Rom 3:1–8. Hall rejects this identification because “according to this theory, the questions raised by the imaginary objector are philosophical quibbles, which are not essential to the main argument” (Hall, “Romans 3.1–8,” 195). Stowers, however,

(3:5), and “my lie” (3:7), he is referring specifically to the Jewish people first as an observer, then as fellow kinsman, and finally as a representative ἐγώ anticipating his discussion of the Mosaic law in 7:7–25. At one point in 3:1–8 Paul speaks of “the world” as the object of divine judgment (3:6), but this exception proves the point: God’s judgment of the world is the common ground which Paul has with the Jews and by which he defends the righteousness of God’s judgment of the Jewish people in 3:1–8. Therefore, judgment is primarily against the Jewish people in 3:1–8, and the passage clarifies the accusation of 2:1–29.³⁹

The Ground of Judgment

The ground of judgment in 3:1–8 is unfaithfulness to the oracles of God. Paul says that certain ones ἠπίστησάν (3:3) (cf. ἀπιστία αὐτῶν in the same verse). The words ἀπιστέω and ἀπιστία are ambiguous and could refer to either unbelief or to the unfaithfulness. The first meaning, “unbelief,” refers to the failure to trust in something. The second, “unfaithfulness,” refers to the failure to be worthy of someone else’s trust. Because the object of trust is different in the two meanings, I suggest that the two meanings reflect what linguists call “polysemy,” and interpreters must choose one or the other.⁴⁰ It is possible that Paul refers to the unbelief of the Jewish people in the “oracles

thinks that the section fits within the parameters of the genre (Stanley Kent Stowers, “Paul’s Dialogue with a Fellow Jew in Romans 3:1–9,” *CBQ* 46 [1984]: 707–22). Ultimately, the question of genre should not control the discussion of 3:1–8. Each interpretive proposal should be evaluated by whether it explains the text. Stowers’s reconstruction, for example, is unconvincing because he suggests that some of the *answers* to the objections should be read in the mouth of the interlocutor (“Paul’s Dialogue,” 715; for the same reason, Campbell’s reconstruction is unconvincing, *Deliverance of God*, 573). Some level of common sense must guide interpreters here. Paul is providing answers to questions which represent actual objections to his gospel (indicated clearly in 3:8). He raises these objections in his own words in order to answer them and move the discussion forward.

³⁹This is not to say that 3:1–8 has no reference to those outside of the Jewish people. E.g., when Paul confesses “let God be true and *every man* a liar!” (3:4a, my emphasis), the principle is comprehensive of all humanity. The principle, however, supports Paul’s discussion about the Jews, *pace* the interpretation of the Käsemann school which sees in 3:1–8 God’s trial with the entire world (see Käsemann, *Romans*, 81).

of God” and particularly in the Messiah.⁴¹ However, the context indicates that Paul speaks of the unfaithfulness of these Jews, because he uses synonyms for ἀπιστία which are closer to the definition “unfaithfulness” than they are to “unbelief”: “liar” (3:4), “unrighteousness” (3:5), “lie” (3:7), “sinner” (3:7), and “what is evil” (3:8). Moreover, he uses these words together to form a contrast between human beings and God, as noted by many interpreters:

God	Humans
πίστις (3:3)	ἀπιστία (3:3)
ἀληθείς (3:4)	ψεύστης (3:4, cf. 3:7)
δικαιοσύνη (3:5)	ἀδικία (3:5)

Since πίστις clearly means “faithful” in reference to God, it is more likely that ἀπιστία means “unfaithful” in reference to the Jewish people.⁴²

Finally, the definition “unfaithful” corresponds with Paul’s accusation of the Jews in 2:1–29, where the ground of God’s judgment is transgression of the law. Because of this correspondence, I part ways with Wright’s understanding of Jewish unfaithfulness in 3:1–8. He argues that Israel’s unfaithfulness was the failure to carry out their duty to dispense the law to the nations and be the means of the world’s salvation. There is an element of truth in this interpretation, because Paul says the Jews were “entrusted” with

⁴⁰To speak of unbelief/unfaithfulness, then, is to fall into the fallacy of illegitimate totality transfer. On polysemy and illegitimate totality transfer, see David Alan Back, *Linguistics for Students of New Testament Greek: A Survey of Basic Concepts and Applications*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 124–25.

⁴¹So Cranfield, *Romans*, 1: 180. Doubtful is the position of Cosgrove and Räisänen, who argue that Paul is speaking of certain Jews who have been faithful to the Mosaic law but have failed to believe in the Messiah (Charles H. Cosgrove, “What If Some Have Not Believed? The Occasion and Thrust of Romans 3:1–8” *ZNW* 78 [1987]: 92; Heikki Räisänen, “Zum Verständnis von Röm 3,1–8,” in *The Torah and Christ: Essays in German and English on the Problem of the Law in Early Christianity*, Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society 45 [Helsinki, 1986], 185–205). This view seems unlikely because the context of 2:17–29 emphasizes Jewish transgression of the law and, more importantly, because Paul identifies the Jews in 3:1–8 with words like “unrighteous” (3:5) and “sinner” (3:7) (so Schreiner, *Romans*, 150).

⁴²“The natural contrast to the ‘faithfulness’ of God (the only meaning which πίστις can have here) is the ‘unfaithfulness’ of Israel” (J. Gwyn Griffiths, “Romans iii.3,” *ExpTim* 53 [1941–42]: 118). Cf. 2 Tim 2:13.

the oracles of God, presumably in order to preserve and dispense them.⁴³ However, Wright wrongly downplays Paul's concern with Jewish sinfulness, which is the emphasis of the larger argument. Paul continues to speak of Jewish transgression of the law as he highlights their unfaithfulness and unrighteousness in 3:1–8. Therefore the ground of judgment is the same as the accusation of 2:1–29. By doing evil actions the Jewish people as a whole have been unfaithful to the oracles of God and will be judged.⁴⁴ This judgment is a judgment according to works.

Although I have argued that Paul uses the *word* ἀπιστία to mean unfaithfulness rather than unbelief, the two *concepts* should not be absolutely distinguished. One may be unfaithful to the oracles by failing to believe in them. In 3:8 Paul speaks of unbelief as the ground of judgment for certain slanderous opponents, because he ties their judgment to a misrepresentation and thus rejection of his gospel. These people suggest that “we should do evil in order that good make come.” They do not advocate this position themselves but attribute it to Paul's gospel: “just as we are being slandered and as certain people say that we say” (3:8). Paul's response rejects their misrepresentation and brings an accusation: “Their judgment is righteous.” Therefore, the ground of the judgment of these opponents is their rejection of Paul's gospel, and within the context of 3:1–8 this is one expression of Jewish unfaithfulness to the oracles of God.

In light of the ground of judgment, one can say that the standard of judgment in Romans 3:1–8 is the “oracles of God,” the Hebrew Scriptures which contain the law and testify to the gospel (cf. 1:2; 3:21). These “oracles” are a new element introduced

⁴³Wright, *Romans*, 452. So Calvin, *Romans*, 114.

⁴⁴Although Paul only speaks of τινες who have been unfaithful in Rom 3:3, he is referring to the majority of the Jewish people since he speaks of “our unrighteousness” (3:5) and of “my lie” as a representative of the nation (3:7) (so most scholars according to Schreiner, *Romans*, 149). Similarly, Paul says that τινες of the branches were broken off in Rom 11:17, though he clearly refers to the majority of Jews according to 11:7–10. Godet rightly notes that τινς “denotes a part of the whole irrespectively of the proportion” (*Romans*, 133).

into Paul's argument, and their introduction leads Paul into a defense of God's righteousness. Since this apology is the primary function of judgment in 3:1–8, I will explain the meaning of λόγια within my larger discussion of the function of judgment.

The Function of Judgment in Romans 3:1–8

The judgment motif in Romans 3:1–8 functions as a defense of the righteousness of God. The theme supports Paul's larger accusation by answering objections to the accusation in 2:1–29. However, when one asks what Paul is doing with the motif in 3:1–8, it is clear that he employs judgment with a different function than he does in 1:18–2:29. To explain this function of judgment, I must first carefully examine Paul's argument in the passage, specifically the relationship between salvation, judgment, and God's righteousness. Then I will explain the function of the motif as an apology for the righteousness of God and demonstrate that divine judgment is one expression of God's righteousness in Romans.

Throughout Romans 3:1–8 the promises of God's salvation and the prospect of his judgment are closely related to each other and to the faithfulness (3:3), truthfulness (3:4, 7), and righteousness of God (3:5). This close relation makes it difficult to discern what Paul is referring to when he speaks of God's faithfulness, truthfulness, or righteousness. I suggest that the passage is best understood when interpreters make a distinction between the actions of God (salvation and judgment) and the attribute of God which underlies both of these actions (his righteousness). Some have suggested that God's righteousness in Romans cannot refer to a divine attribute in distinction from his action.⁴⁵ This view rightly highlights the close relationship between God's attribute of

⁴⁵Ziesler claims that “unless we are to remove Paul altogether from the Jewish tradition, we cannot talk about righteousness as an attribute of God. In the Hebrew tradition, early and late, God's righteousness is the way he acts, and notably the way he acts in maintaining the covenant” (J. A. Ziesler, *Meaning of Righteousness in Paul: A Linguistic and Theological Enquiry* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972], 186). Similar is Campbell who suggests that God's being and action are indistinguishable when Paul speaks of the righteousness of God (Campbell, *Deliverance of God*, 680, 684, 688).

righteousness and the action through which it is expressed.⁴⁶ But such a view simply cannot make sense of Paul's argument in 3:1–8 because the righteousness of God is expressed in two different actions. Interpreters, then, must understand the righteousness of God as the divine attribute which is expressed through both salvation and judgment. Romans 3:1–8 wrestles with the relationship between God's salvation and judgment of the Jews. Paul does not fully explain this relationship until Romans 9–11, but in 3:1–8 he adamantly defends the righteousness of God which undergirds both of these actions.

The need for a defense of God's righteousness arises from the new element in Paul's argument—God's promises of salvation for the Jewish people. In 3:2, Paul says that the Jewish people have the advantage of being entrusted with τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ. There is some debate over the meaning of λόγια here. Clearly, Paul refers to the Scriptures which were entrusted to the Jews.⁴⁷ But many rightly see an emphasis on God's promises of salvation for Israel found within those Scriptures, for several reasons: First, Paul speaks of the λόγια as an advantage. Second, he defends God's faithfulness in the following verses, and the notion of God's faithfulness assumes a promise to which he is faithful (3:3).⁴⁸ Third, he argues that Jewish unfaithfulness does not nullify the faithfulness of God. This again assumes an emphasis on God's promises of salvation, for

⁴⁶Correctly Wright: "Since, for Paul, God is the creator, always active within his world, we should expect, in the nature of the case, to find his attributes and his actions belonging extremely closely together" (*What Saint Paul Really Said*, 103).

⁴⁷Hans Leitzmann, *An die Römer* (Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 1919), 43; Dodd, *Romans*, 42–43; Cranfield, *Romans*, 179. Piper, *Justification of God*, 125; Schreiner, *Romans*, 149. Some are more specific: Godet argues that λόγια in Rom 3:5 refers the messianic prophesies (*Romans*, 133), and Williams speaks of God's promises to Abraham ("Righteousness of God," 266–67, 270). Kittel suggests the possibility of a reference to both the Old and New Testaments (TDNT, 4: 138–39), but Doeve rightly observes that Paul's readers would hardly have thought of Christian writings when they saw an undefined reference to τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ entrusted to the Jews (J. W. Doeve, "Some notes with reference to τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ in Romans 3.2," in *Studia Paulina in honorem Johannis de Zwann* [Haarlem: De Erven F. Bohn N. V., 1953], 121). Note that Paul clearly understood the salvation offered in his gospel to be promised in the Scriptures (Rom 1:2; 3:21b; 16:25–27; noted by Käsemann, *Romans*, 79).

⁴⁸Noted by Piper, *Justification of God*, 125. Paul uses λόγια similarly to λόγος in 9:6 where he says that the λόγος of God has not failed, meaning that God's promises of salvation have not failed. I am indebted to Leitzmann for this parallel (*Römer*, 43).

only these could be threatened by the unfaithfulness of the Jews. Paul's mention of Jewish unfaithfulness, however, also indicates that the meaning of λόγια must also encompass the law of God, for in context they are unfaithful *to the λόγια*.⁴⁹ Thus the reference to God's faithfulness shows that Paul must speak of God's promises, and the reference to Jewish unfaithfulness indicates that Paul must also speak of the law. Paul uses the term λόγια to refer to the Jewish Scriptures which include both warnings of judgment and promises of salvation, two concepts which are closely related in the Hebrew Bible and in Romans.⁵⁰ But his focus is upon the divine promises of salvation, for he introduces the λόγια as an advantage.

When God's promises of salvation are viewed in light of Paul's accusation, it calls into question the righteousness of God: "For what then? If certain ones have been unfaithful, their unfaithfulness does not nullify the faithfulness of God, does it?" (3:3).⁵¹ In other words, it would seem that the transgression of the Jewish people threatens to invalidate or abolish⁵² God's righteousness in upholding his promises of salvation. How can God be faithful to his promises of salvation if they are liable to his judgment? Paul answers that their transgression actually upholds the faithfulness of God to save, and he defends the righteousness of God in salvation with a statement about the righteousness of

⁴⁹Thus Stuhlmacher rightly sees a reference to the commandments (Peter Stuhlmacher, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary*, trans. Scott J. Hafemann [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995], 52), although λόγια must also refer to the promises of salvation.

⁵⁰Seifrid suggests that τὰ λόγια should be glossed "divine revelation of hidden matters" and refers to Israel's advantage in having "the revelation of its subjection to sin and the divine promise of salvation that accompanies that revelation" ("Unrighteous by Faith," 136). Similarly, Sanday and Headlman speak of "the Law as given from Sinai and the promises relating to the Messiah" (*Romans*, 70). So Moo, *Romans*, 188.

⁵¹I am following the NA27 punctuation of the questions. See Cranfield for other options (*Romans*, 1: 179–80). The essential meaning of the objection remains the same no matter which punctuation is chosen.

⁵²The idea of καταργέω here could be "to cause something to lose its power or effectiveness, invalidate, make powerless" or "to cause something to come to an end or to be no longer in existence, abolish, wipe out, set aside" (BDAG, s.v., "καταργέω," uses 2 and 3).

God in judgment. This element of the argument is confusing, so I will offer an overview and then explain the details. As mentioned, the righteousness (or faithfulness) of God is the divine attribute which undergirds both God's salvation and judgment. It is the middle term between both actions of God, which is why Paul transitions fluidly in the passage from a discussion of salvation to a discussion of judgment. The same righteousness by which God saves is the same righteousness by which he judges. Now for the details:

Paul answers the question about whether God's faithfulness to save is invalidated by Jewish unfaithfulness with a strong negative (μη γένοιτο) and a corresponding confession: "But let God be true and every human a liar!" (3:4a). This confession of divine truthfulness supports God's faithfulness to save because it answers the questioning of God's faithfulness to his promises of salvation.⁵³ However the confession is given support by a citation Psalm 51:4 which refers to God's righteousness in judgment.⁵⁴ I suggest, then, that the statement "let God be true" is a confession about the truthful character of God which underlies both his faithfulness in salvation (3:3) and his righteousness in judgment (3:4b). Paul defends God's faithfulness in salvation with his righteousness in judgment because the same divine character undergirds both actions. If God is truthful in the one, Paul reasons, he will be truthful in the other.

In summary, in Romans 3:1–8 God's righteousness is expressed in both salvation and judgment. The flow of thought begins with a discussion of God's promises of salvation which are threatened by Jewish unfaithfulness. In order to defend God's faithfulness in salvation, Paul speaks of God's righteousness in judgment through a citation of Psalm 51:4 and in so doing introduces the judgment motif into Romans 3:1–8. The righteousness of God in judgment is the same righteousness by which he will uphold

⁵³E.g., Calvin, *Romans*, 115–16; Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 72; John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT, old series (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 95; Käsemann, *Romans*, 80; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 328; Moo, *Romans*, 185–86; Schreiner, *Romans*, 151; Jewett, *Romans*, 245–46.

⁵⁴While some argue that 3:4b actually speaks of God's salvation, I have argued that the context of the citation and the parallelism of the verse make it clear that Paul is referring to God's judgment.

his promises to save. This close relationship between divine judgment and salvation reflects the original context of the Psalm 51:4, because it declares the righteousness of God's judgment within a plea for God's salvation.⁵⁵ In what follows, I will explain how the judgment motif introduced through Paul's citation functions as an apology for the righteousness of God.

First, Paul employs the judgment motif in order to make an apology for God's righteousness in salvation (3:4a). In the original context of Psalm 51:4 the psalmist speaks of judgment as a confession of divine righteousness. He confesses both his own guilt and the righteousness of God's judgment: "Against you alone I have sinned and done what is evil before you, so that you may be justified in your words and may conquer in your judgment" (Ps 51:4a).⁵⁶ The dual confession makes the citation particularly appropriate for Paul's use, because Paul also confesses both God's truthfulness and human deceit in 3:4a: "Let God be true, and every man a liar!" If the statement functions as a confession of God's righteousness in Psalm 51, in the context of Romans 3:1–8 it becomes a *defense* of God's righteousness, a defense against the objection in 3:3 and a defense of his own confession of God's truthfulness in 3:4a. The statement of judgment defends God's righteous character in order to defend his faithfulness to the promises of salvation.

How does God's judgment defend his righteous character in Romans 3:4b? I observed above that the divine courtroom envisioned in 3:1–8 has only two parties—God as the judge and plaintiff, and the Jewish people as defendants. When God condemns Jewish sin as judge, he also experiences the justifying judgment as plaintiff. By his own

⁵⁵Note the themes associated with God's salvation: a plea for mercy (51:1), cleansing (51:7), forgiveness (51:9), a clean heart (51:10), the Holy Spirit (51:11), and the joy of God's salvation (51:12).

⁵⁶My translation is from the LXX, since Paul is likely citing this version. The LXX in this verse is a literal rendering of the Hebrew with a few dynamic translations: ἐνώπιόν σου for בְּעֵינַיִךְ; and ἐν τοῖς λόγοις σου for the infinitive construct בְּדַבְּרֶיךָ.

judgment he is justified or declared to be in the right—his judgment defends his righteousness. The psalmist makes this point clear in both parallel lines: God is justified by his words of accusation against human sin; and God will conquer when he judges human sin. The verb νικήσεις (νικήσης in the LXX) is the only significant difference in the citation from the Hebrew Bible. In the MT the psalmist says God will be morally pure when he judges (תִּזְכֶּה).⁵⁷ Although the imagery is different, the meaning is essentially the same. When God judges he is in the right because the psalmist has sinned. Thus, God’s judgment against sin demonstrates his righteousness and defends the character of God. Paul appropriately quotes this verse in order to defend his own confession that God is truthful and will be faithful to his promises.

Second, although Paul introduces the judgment motif in Romans 3:4b to defend the righteousness of God in salvation, in 3:5–8 he employs the motif to defend God’s righteousness in judgment. Two objections in the passage question divine judgment. First, “God, who brings his wrath, is not unrighteous, is he?” (3:5b). In context the objection questions God’s righteousness in bringing his wrath specifically against the Jewish people. Paul responds by recognizing the foolishness of the question (“I speak as a man”), answering with a strong negative (μὴ γένοιτο), and offering a defense: “since how will God judge the world?” His argument builds upon the common Jewish conviction that God would judge the world, and presumably that he will be righteous to do so. If this is true, Paul argues, then God must also be righteous to bring his wrath against the Jews. Thus the judgment motif functions in 3:5b as a defense of God’s righteousness in bringing judgment against the Jewish people. The second objection is essentially a restatement of the first:⁵⁸ “why am I still being judged as a sinner?” (3:7).

⁵⁷The verb זָכָה means “to be clean, pure” in the Qal and can speak of moral purity. BDB lists the definition “to be clear, be justified = be regarded as just, righteous” and references Ps 51:4 and Mic 6:11 (BDB, s.v., “זָכָה,” use 2).

⁵⁸So Räisänen, “Röm 3,1–8,” 198; Schreiner, *Romans*, 157.

This objection implicitly questions the righteousness of God’s judgment of the ἐγώ, since it asks why the judgment should rightly happen. Paul’s answer is left implicit, but it is clear in context that the implied answer is “because it is right for God to judge you as a sinner.” Thus, Paul asks and answers questions about divine judgment in 3:5–8 in order to defend the righteousness of God’s judgment against the Jewish people.

Since Paul employs the judgment motif to defend the righteousness of God in both salvation and judgment, there is clearly a fundamental connection between God’s judgment and God’s righteousness in Romans 3:1–8. Here I return to the debate over δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in order to demonstrate that divine judgment is one expression of the righteousness of God in Romans. My goal is not to give a *Grundbegriff* of the phrase but to argue that any such definition must be flexible enough to account for divine judgment as one component of God’s righteousness.

On the lexical level, Romans 3:5 demonstrates that judgment is one expression of the righteousness of God. The question “God is not unrighteous who brings his wrath, is he?” expects a negative answer (note the particle μή). The positive assertion may then be formulated, “God is righteous who brings his wrath.” Thus the righteousness of God is expressed through his condemning judgment. This verse was a key text for Bultmann who argued in response to his pupil Käsemann that Paul like the Old Testament understood God’s righteousness to embrace both saving righteousness and judging righteousness.⁵⁹

On the conceptual level, the idea that God’s righteousness is expressed through judgment of sin runs throughout Romans 3:1–8. I have observed that God’s righteousness is parallel with his faithfulness and truthfulness in these verses. Therefore, scholars must

⁵⁹Bultmann, “Δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ,” 13. Seifrid observes that 15 out of 79 references to God’s righteousness in the Hebrew Bible speak of judging righteousness: Exod 9:27; Ps 7:10; 7:12; 11:5–7; 50:6; Isa 1:27; 5:15–16; 10:22; 28:17; Lam 1:18; 2 Chr 12:1–6; Neh 9:33; Dan 9:7, 14, 16 (Seifrid, “Righteousness Language,” 429 n. 70).

take into account these parallel statements in order to explain the righteousness of God. The passage initially speaks of God's faithfulness to his promises of salvation, and Paul's confession about God's truthfulness supports this statement. However, Paul defends the truthfulness of God with the judgment motif in 3:4b. Therefore, I have concluded that the divine attribute of truthfulness in 3:4a is expressed in both God's upholding of his promises of salvation (3:3) and in his righteous judgment of sin (3:4b). One must distinguish between God's attribute and the two actions which are expressed by that attribute. This distinction also helps readers make sense of Paul's difficult reference to δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in 3:5.

Scholars have debated whether δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in 3:5 refers to God's saving righteousness or his judging righteousness. Schreiner and Piper are representative. Schreiner argues for a reference to judging righteousness because Paul likely continues to develop the theme of judgment spoken of in 3:4b.⁶⁰ The statement "our righteousness demonstrates⁶¹ God's righteousness" summarizes the point established in 3:4b: God is declared to be righteous when he rightly judges human sin. But Piper argues that such a statement about God's judgment makes the following objection nonsensical—Paul's opponent would not suggest that God is unjust to bring judgment if he has just conceded the righteousness of God's judgment.⁶² Piper suggests, then, that δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ refers to saving righteousness.⁶³ In this view, the statement "our righteousness demonstrates God's righteousness" means that the increase of human sin causes God's grace to abound

⁶⁰Schreiner, *Romans*, 155.

⁶¹Here συνίστημι means "to provide evidence of a personal characteristic or claim through action, *demonstrate, show, bring out*" (BDAG, s.v., "συνίστημι," use 3).

⁶²Piper, *Justification of God*, 128. Note that Piper makes a strong distinction between Paul's argument and the argument of his opponents throughout. I agree that Paul is addressing real objections (see 3:8), but it seems that he is formulating these objections in his own words in order to move his argument along.

⁶³*Ibid.*, 129. So Käsemann, who argues that Rom 3:5 "does not speak of distributive justice but of the power which establishes its right to the creature" (*Romans*, 84).

(cf. 5:20).

I suggest that a third view offers the most plausible explanation: δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in Romans 3:5 refers to the attribute of God which is expressed in both his salvation and judgment.⁶⁴ This view draws 3:1–8 together, because it suggests that God’s character underlies both his salvation and judgment throughout the passage. I have argued that the truthfulness of God confessed by Paul in 3:4a is expressed in both salvation (3:3) and judgment (3:4b). If this is correct, then ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ θεοῦ in 3:7 should be understood in the same way, for Paul’s confession in 3:4b is echoed in the objection stated in 3:7: “if the truth of God abounds in my lie for his glory, why am I still being judged as a sinner?” (3:7). It is likely, then, that Paul refers to God’s attribute of truth which is expressed in both salvation and judgment. Getting around to the point, 3:7 repeats the objection of 3:5, making it likely again, that the righteousness of God is a divine attribute expressed in both salvation and judgment.

This view embraces the observations of both Schreiner and Piper. It shows the connection between 3:4b and 3:5 in that God’s righteousness is demonstrated through his judgment of human sin. It also avoids the problem of a nonsensical objection, because the objection that God’s judgment is unjust responds not only to God’s righteousness in judgment but also his righteousness in salvation—i.e., it responds to tensions created by the whole argument of 3:3–4 that God will be faithful to his promises of salvation despite human sin and that God’s truth is upheld by his judgment of human sin. At this point in the argument the reason for the objection seems opaque, because in 3:1–8 Paul has not yet fully developed his robust view of God’s salvation which abounds over human sin.

⁶⁴For similar views, see Ziesler: “The context therefore requires both the general meaning of covenant loyalty and also that of divine justice in the narrower sense. While we may generally be wary of adding significances, here the two seem to be demanded” (Ziesler, *Righteousness in Paul*, 190); Hall: “Discussion of the biblical understanding of the righteousness of God has often distinguished between God’s ‘saving righteousness’ and his ‘distributive righteousness’ as though these were two different meanings of the word. But in fact God’s righteousness is a consistent whole” (“Romans 3.1–8,” 187); and Timo Laato, “‘God’s Righteousness’—Once Again,” in *The Nordic Paul: Finnish Approaches to Pauline Theology*, ed. Lars Aejmelaeus and Antti Mustakallio (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 52.

Later in the letter, Paul's teaching of divine grace abounding over sin leads to the false conclusion of antinomianism (5:20–6:2), the same objection found in 3:8.⁶⁵ And Paul's teaching of predestination leads to an objection about God's righteousness: "there is not unrighteousness with God, is there?" (9:10–14; cf. 3:5b). It is this robust view of God's salvation abounding over human sin which seems to be in conflict with God's judgment of human sin in 3:5–8. The objection responds to the tensions created by the righteousness of God expressed in both salvation and judgment.⁶⁶

The argument of Romans 3:1–8 is difficult, but the point I have sought to establish is that Paul understands divine judgment to be one expression of the righteousness of God in 3:1–8. This is clear in the wording of 3:5b (cf. 2:5). It is also likely that the judgment of God in 3:4b both upholds his truthfulness (3:4a) and demonstrates his righteousness (3:5a). Luther and other scholars have rightly emphasized the saving righteousness of God in Romans, but in 3:1–8 Paul argues that the same righteousness by which God is faithful to his promises is the same righteousness by which he condemns human sin. Any basic definition of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in Romans, then, must account for the component of divine judgment.⁶⁷

⁶⁵Fitch suggests that ὧν in 3:8 is a subjective genitive so that Paul is saying something like "their suggestion [κρίμα] has merit" (W. O. Fitch, "Note on Romans iii.8b," *ExpT* 59 [1947–48]: 26). But it is hard to believe Paul would concede merit to a suggestion to which he later responds μὴ γένοιτο (6:1–2). Canales suggests that Paul opposes two different groups in 3:8 and 6:1—Judaizers and Gentile-Christian antinomians, respectively (Isaac J. Canales, "Paul's Accusers in Romans 3:8 and 6:1," *EvQ* 57 [1985]: 239). But rather than reading specific opponents it is better to see antinomianism as a common misrepresentation of Paul's gospel.

⁶⁶Thanks to Tom Schreiner for helping me to understand the reason behind the objections in 3:5–8, both in his commentary (Schreiner, *Romans*, 156) and in personal conversation. Any faults in my explanation, of course, remain my own.

⁶⁷Frank Theilman, in an unpublished essay, now argues that the righteousness of God in Rom 1:17 must include not only the idea of God's gift of righteousness and his saving activity, but also the idea of God's fairness or equity in bringing salvation to all kinds of people. I suggest that in Rom 3:1–8 Paul also speaks of the righteousness of God as God's equity in both judgment and salvation.

Conclusion

In Romans 3:1–8, Paul responds to objections to his accusation of the Jewish people in 2:1–29. The meaning of the judgment motif in this passage is similar to 1:18–2:29, but the function of the motif changes. Paul speaks of judgment in order to make a defense for the righteousness of God in both salvation and judgment. Paul adamantly affirms that God will be faithful to his oracles: He is righteous to uphold his promises to save, and he is righteous in judging the unfaithfulness of his people. In this passage it also becomes clear that divine judgment is one expression of the righteousness of God. I will return to this insight in chapter 6 of this dissertation. Finally, it should be noted that the function of judgment in 3:8, the last verse of the passage, differs from the function of the motif in the rest of passage. In this last verse Paul employs the motif to accuse certain people who slanderously misrepresent his gospel: “Their judgment is righteous!” Those who reject and misrepresent Paul’s gospel are in the dock with the rest of humanity as his larger accusation states. Paul concludes this accusation and with it the theme of judgment according to works in 3:9–20, the passage to which I turn in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

JUDGMENT AS AN ACCUSATION

Introduction

This chapter will tie chapters 2 through 5 together, establishing the first thesis of the dissertation. Romans 3:9 offers an authorial perspective on Paul’s previous argument, summarizing it as a universal accusation: “I have previously accused all Jews and Greeks to be under sin.” Since judgment is the major theme of 1:18–3:9, Paul’s summary statement is significant for my study because it identifies what Paul intends the previous discourse to *do*—it functions as an accusation against all Jews and Greeks.¹ Paul supports his accusation with Scripture in 3:10–18, and then draws it to a conclusion in 3:19–20. A growing number of scholars now argue 1:18–3:20 does not make a universal accusation. In part this is because of the Gentiles who complete the law in Romans 2, a riddle I will explore in chapter 7 of this dissertation. First however, in this chapter I will argue that Romans 3:9–20 draws to a conclusion the accusation of 1:18–3:8—all Jews and Gentiles and under the power of sin and liable to the condemning judgment of God.

Προητιασάμεθα

Paul uses προαιτιάομαι to summarize his previous argument as an accusation. The word exists in no extant Greek literature before Paul,² but according to

¹N. T. Wright observes that in 3:9 “Paul now begins a lawcourt metaphor, which he will develop further in vv. 19–20” (*Romans*, in vol. 10 of *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002], 457). More precisely, Paul *continues* the lawcourt metaphor he has been developing since Rom 1:18, and which he will conclude in 3:19–20.

etymology it means “to accuse beforehand.”³ The verb αἰτιόμαι means “to blame, accuse,”⁴ and the preposition πρό means “before,” indicating precedence in space, time, or rank.⁵ Prepositions compounded with verbs in the New Testament may intensify the verb, create a new meaning, or retain their own original meaning.⁶ But in the case of a rare compound like προαιτιόμαι, it is likely that the preposition πρό retains its original meaning, since Paul expects his readers to recognize the meaning of the word. Thus, προαιτιόμαι likely means “to accuse beforehand,” and since Paul uses the first person plural form of the verb to refer to himself (i.e., the authorial plural, cf. 1:5), “beforehand” likely refers to precedence in space of Paul’s letter or precedence in time of Paul’s argument. In other words, it refers to the previous discourse. Paul may have even coined the term in order to point his audience back to the previous accusation in 1:18–2:29.

Since the beginning of Christian commentary, almost all interpreters have read Romans 3:9 as a summary of the previous accusation, often noting Paul’s dual accusation of the Gentiles (1:18–32) and Jews (2:1–29). Commenting on προητιασάμεθα, Origen observes, “he accused certain Greeks, i.e., the Gentiles, of being under sin when he says, ‘For claiming to be wise, they become fools and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of the image of corruptible man and birds and four-footed animals and reptiles. Therefore God handed them over to a base mind’ [Rom 1:23–24], and so

²TLG search on May 26, 2010. The verb appears 15 times. One of these instances is in Rom 3:9, and 9 are in Christian commentaries on Rom 3:9 (Origen [2x], Chrysostom, Severianus [3x], Photius, Theodoretus, and John of Damascus); the other 5 are in Christian documents later than Paul.

³So LSJ, s.v., “προαιτιόμαι.” BDAG, s.v., “προαιτιόμαι.”

⁴BDAG, s.v., “αἰτιόμαι.”

⁵BDAG, s.v., “πρό.”

⁶C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek*, 2nd ed. (London: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 87–90. Moule suggests that verbs “tend to retain their original *adverbial* nature” and thus their own meaning (ibid., 87).

forth. But he accuses the Jews when he says, ‘But if you call yourself a Jew and rest in the law’ [Rom 2:17], and so on.’⁷ Ambrosiaster likewise sees a reference in 3:9 to the previous accusation.⁸ Aquinas observes a dual accusation against Gentiles and then Jews in the previous discourse: “For he showed, first of all, that the Gentiles suppressed the truth they knew by their wickedness and unrighteousness; secondly, that the Jews, after receiving the Law, dishonored God by transgressing it.”⁹ Melancthon notes that in 3:9 Paul “returns to his principal purpose” of the previous argument.¹⁰ And most modern scholars follow this pattern, arguing that 3:9 refers to the accusation made in 1:18–2:29.¹¹

However, several scholars now question this reading. Thornsteinsson suggests that the prefix *προ-* refers to the previous accusation *in the Scriptures* and not the previous accusation in Paul’s argument. This is why 3:9 is followed by a catena of citations from the Hebrew Bible. Scripture, Paul argues, has accused beforehand that all

⁷Origen, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, trans. Thomas P. Schneck (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2001), 1: 188–89.

⁸Ambrosiaster, *Commentaries on Romans and 1–2 Corinthians*, Ancient Christian Texts, trans. and ed. Gerald L. Bray (Downers Grove, IL: 2009), 26.

⁹Thomas Aquinas, *Lectures on the Letter to the Romans*, trans. Fabian Larcher, ed. Jeremy Holmes with the support of the Aquinas Center for Theological Renewal, 143 [online]; accessed 23 June 2010; available from http://www.aquinas.avemaria.edu/Aquinas_on_Romans.pdf; Internet. Note also that the titles of many medieval manuscripts (κεφάλαια) label the first section “περὶ κρίσεως of Gentiles who do not do the things of nature” and the next section “περὶ κρίσεως of Jews who do not practice the laws (Reuben Swanson, ed., *New Testament Greek Manuscripts: Varient Readings Arranged in Horizontal Lines against Codex Vaticanus: Romans* [Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001], 275).

¹⁰Philip Melancthon, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. Fred Kramer (St. Louis: Concordia, 1992), 95). Calvin and Luther do not make a point of 3:9 referring to the previous discourse but simply explain the verse.

¹¹E.g., Sanday and Headlam see a reference to 1:18–2:29 (William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, ICC, old series [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1902], 77). Kuhr notes a reference to Gentiles in 1:18–32 and Jews in 2:1–3:8 (Friedrich Kuhr, “Römer 2^{14f.} und die Verheissung bei Jeremias 31^{31ff.},” *ZNW* 55 [1964]: 243–61). William Campbell calls 3:9 a “summary-conclusion” to 1:18–2:29 (W. S. Campbell, “Romans III As a Key to the Structure and Thought of the Letter,” *NovT* 23 [1981]: 24). Murray sees a reference to 1:18–2:24 (John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT, old series [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965], 102). And Moo sees a reference to the accusation against Gentiles in 1:19b–32 and Jews in 2:1–29 (Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT, new series [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996], 201).

Jews and Greeks are “under sin.”¹² This approach, however, cannot explain the use of the first person plural form of the verb: “we have previously accused” Thornsteinsson attempts to resolve this problem by making a parallel with Romans 4:9 in which Paul allegedly uses an inclusive first person plural to refer to the argument of Scripture: “For we say, ‘Faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness.’” However, in this verse Paul is not referring to the argument of Genesis 15:6 but to his own argument which is built upon Genesis 15:6, and Paul consistently uses the third person singular when he introduces Scripture in Romans.¹³ Thornsteinsson questions why Paul would need to use such a lengthy list of Scripture citations if he had already demonstrated his accusation.¹⁴ But it is typical for Paul to argue his own point in the letter and support that point with Scripture.¹⁵ Thus it is most unlikely that προητιασάμεθα refers to the accusation in Scripture and not the accusation in Paul’s own argument.

Similar to Thorsteinsson, Douglas Campbell links προητιασάμεθα to the following catena rather than to 1:18–2:29, but he suggests that Paul himself is making an accusation through the catena. To Campbell, the prefix προ- means “before” in a spatial sense—not in the sense that Paul is referring to the discourse which came “before” 3:9 but in the sense that Paul is making a public accusation “before” his Roman Christian

¹²Runar M. Thorsteinsson, *Paul’s Interlocutor in Romans 2: Function and Identity in the Context of Ancient Epistolography* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2003), 235–36. His interpretation of προητιασάμεθα has now been adopted by Ehrensperger (Kathy Ehrensperger, “Reading Romans ‘in the Face of the Other’: Levinas, the Jewish Philosopher, Meets Paul, the Jewish Apostle,” in *Reading Romans with Contemporary Philosophers and Theologians*, ed. David W. Odell-Scott [New York: T&T Clark, 2007], 134).

¹³He often introduces citations with γέγραπται (Rom 1:17; 2:24; 3:4, 10; 4:17; 8:36; 9:13, 33; 10:15; 11:8, 26; 12:19; 14:11; 15:3, 9, 21) or λέγει (Rom 3:19; 4:3, 6; 9:15, 17, 25; 10:6, 8, 11, 16, 19ff.; 11:2, 4, 9; 12:19; 14:11; 15:10, 12).

¹⁴Thorsteinsson, *Paul’s Interlocutor*, 235.

¹⁵Besides Rom 3:10, see 1:17; 2:24; 3:4; 4:17; 9:13, 33; 10:13; 11:8, 26; 12:19; 14:11; 15:3, 9, 21. In Rom 8:36 Paul’s citation of Ps 44:22 seems slightly different because it does not support his argument that persecution will not separate believers from the love of Christ. Instead, it supports the reality that the people of God will face persecution, a reality which underlies his argument.

audience.¹⁶ Campbell's reading, however, lacks warrant for why Paul would emphasize in 3:9 that he is now *publically* making an accusation. Campbell attempts to argue that Paul must make a public accusation because of his authority as an apostle invoking Holy Scripture, but Paul speaks with apostolic authority and appeals to Scripture throughout the letter. Why the appeal to a "public" accusation here? In contrast, the traditional reading has a clear warrant for the addition of *προ-* to the verb: As Paul transitions from his digression in 3:1–8, he returns to his "previous" argument.

Moreover, it is evident that Romans 3:9 echoes the themes of the previous argument. First, the division between Jews and Greeks in 3:9 parallels Paul's dual accusation—first against Gentiles (1:18–32), and then against Jews (2:1–29). Paul even repeats the distinctive phrase Ἰουδαίους τε καὶ Ἕλληνας which appears in his argument for the universality of judgment in 2:9 and 10 (cf. 1:16 and 10:12). Second, 3:9 claims that there is no advantage for either Jews or Gentiles. Scholars debate the meaning of *προεχόμεθα* in the first half of the verse (3:9a),¹⁷ but upon any rendering it is a

¹⁶Douglas A. Campbell, *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 579–81. Campbell seems to be following closely the argument of Walker, although he does not mention the article (William O. Walker, Jr., "Romans 1.18–2.29: A Non-Pauline Interpolation?" *NTS* 45 [1999]: 545).

¹⁷The verb *προεχόμεθα* may be (1) passive, asking whether the Jews are at a disadvantage to the Gentiles because of their sin (BDAG, s.v., "προέχω," use 1; Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 76; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, AB [New York: Doubleday, 1993], 330–31; Robert Jewett, *Romans*, Hermeneia [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007], 257); (2) a true middle, meaning "to hold something before oneself for protection or defense," i.e., asking whether "we" are making an excuse for Jewish unfaithfulness (BDAG, s.v., "προέχω," use 2; Frederic Louis Godet, *Commentary on Romans* [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1977], 139–40; Murray, *Romans*, 101–12; Nils Alstrup Dahl, "Romans 3.9: Text and Meaning," in *Paul and Paulinism: Essays in Honour of C. K. Barrett*, ed. M. D. Hooker and S. G. Wilson [London: SPCK, 1982], 192–6; James G. D. Dunn, *Romans*, WBC [Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1988], 146–47; Mark A. Seifrid, "Unrighteous by Faith: Apostolic Proclamation in Romans 1:18–3:20," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, vol. 2, *The Paradoxes of Paul*, ed. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004], 139); or (3) a middle with the same meaning as the active voice, "to have an advantage" (most commentators, e.g., Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980], 86; Brendan Byrne, *Romans*, Sacra Pagina [Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1996], 119; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998], 162). For a unique reading of the question based upon a textual argument, see Dahl ("Romans 3.9," 184–204), who is followed by Dunn (*Romans*, 145).

question about advantage for Jews or Gentiles, a possibility which Paul denies.¹⁸ His denial echoes the theme of divine impartiality for Jews and Gentiles at the judgment which he develops in 2:6–16. Third, 3:9 speaks of an accusation, and I have argued in chapters 2 and 3 that this is exactly what Paul is doing in 1:18–2:29—making an accusation that all are “without excuse” (1:20; 2:1).

Why do Thorsteinsson and Campbell argue, against the majority of interpreters, that προητιασάμεθα refers to the following catena? On the one hand, the verb offers a challenge to their distinctive rereadings of Romans 1:18–2:29, readings which I have addressed in previous chapters. But on the other hand, both Thorsteinsson and Campbell appeal to *the growing chorus of scholars who argue that Romans 1:18–3:20 does not in fact make a universal accusation*, and both argue that their interpretation of προητιασάμεθα alleviates this problem.¹⁹ Having established that προητιασάμεθα describes the previous discourse as an accusation, I will now argue that Paul summarizes his accusation as an universal indictment of sin and liability to the condemning judgment of God.

The Nature of the Accusation

Romans 1:18–3:20 makes an accusation of sin and liability to the condemning judgment of God. According to 3:9, the previous discourse accuses all Jews and Greeks of being ὑφ’ ἁμαρτίαν. Although this is only the third time Paul uses the ἁμαρτάνω

¹⁸If προεχόμεθα is taken as a passive, Paul denies the possibility of an advantage for Gentiles; if it is taken with either of the suggested middle meanings, Paul denies the possibility of an advantage for the Jews. If Paul is denying Jewish advantage then οὐ πάντως may mean “not altogether,” recognizing there is some advantage (cf. 3:1–2) (cautiously, C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, ICC, new series [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975], 1: 188–90; Byrne, *Romans*, 119). Note also that if Dahl is correct that οὐ πάντως is an early addition, there is still an implied negative answer (so Dahl, “Romans 3.9,” 195).

¹⁹Thorsteinsson says, “More recently, a number of scholars have criticized the traditional interpretation of 1:18–3:20, pointing out how badly such a charge seems to fit with what Paul has said prior to 3:9. The critique is fully warranted” (*Paul’s Interlocutor*, 235). Campbell speaks of this problem as “a nasty conundrum in the conventional construal” (*Deliverance of God*, 580).

word group in the letter (see 2:12 and 3:7), the *concept* of sin has been prominent. Gentiles are called unrighteous and ungodly and accused of a litany of evil practices in 1:18–32. Jews are said to have done the same things in 2:1–5 and are specifically accused of transgressing the law in 2:17–29. But what does Paul mean when he says Jews and Greeks are *under* sin? In light of Romans 5–8, it seems clear that ὑφ’ ἁμαρτίαν in 3:9 refers to Paul’s concept of sin as a power which reigns over humanity (thus they are “under” it).²⁰ Byrne rightly cautions, however, that the forensic language in the immediate context—προητιασάμεθα in 3:9, and ὑπόδικος in 3:19—suggests that ὑφ’ ἁμαρτίαν must refer to the guilt of human sin, or liability to judgment (cf. 1:20; 2:1).²¹ Thus, there is an intimate relationship between sin, the power of sin, and liability to judgment in Romans 3:9. To Paul, those who commit sinful actions are under the power of sin and liable to the condemning judgment of God.²²

Paul supports his accusation of sin and guilt with a catena of Scripture, a catena which also makes an accusation:²³

²⁰So almost all commentators: e.g., Anders Nyrgen, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. Carl C. Rasmussen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1949), 143; Ulrich Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer*, EKK (Zürich: Benziger/Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1980), 1: 172–73; Schreiner, *Romans*, 164; Wright, *Romans*, 457; so T. L. Carter, *Paul and The Power of Sin: Redefining ‘Beyond the Pale,’* SNTSMS 115 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 146. Cf. Rom 7:14 and Gal 3:22 for same phrase, ὑπὸ ἁμαρτίαν, which refers to the power of sin.

²¹Byrne, *Romans*, 120.

²²For those who see both the power and guilt of sin in 3:9, see John Gill, *An Exposition of the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*, Newport Commentary Series (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2002), 81; Godet, *Romans*, 140; Otto Michel, *Der Brief an die Römer* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1955), 84. Engberg-Petersen thinks that ὑφ’ ἁμαρτίαν means no more than one who risks sinning (Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and the Stoics* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000], 207), but this interpretation does not fit the context of the letter, because in Rom 7:14 Paul uses the phrase to describe the *egō* who is a clear transgressor of the law.

²³Keck’s suggestion that “Rom 1:18–3:9, 19 is a sustained theological exposition of the catena” depends upon the speculative presupposition that the catena existed independently before Paul wrote Romans (L. E. Keck, “The Function of Romans 3:10–18—Observations and Suggestions,” in *God’s Christ and His People: Studies in Honor of Nils Alstrup Dahl*, ed. Jacob Jervell and Wayne A. Meeks [Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1977], 152). However, his suggestion points up the many connections between Paul’s accusation and its support from the Old Testament.

There is none righteous, not one;	Ecc1 7:20?
There is none who understands;	Ps 14:1–3
There is none who seeks after God;	
All have turned away; together they have become useless.	
There is none who shows kindness, [not even] to the extent of one.	
Their throats are opened graves,	Ps 5:9
With their tongues they have deceived,	
The poison of asps is under their lips.	Ps 140:3
Whose mouths are full of cursing and bitterness,	Ps 10:7
Their feet are quick to shed blood,	Isa 59:7–8
Ruin and misery are in their ways, And the way of peace they have not known.	
There is no fear of God before their eyes.	Ps 36:1

The citations are from the Psalms and Isaiah (with a possible allusion to Eccl 7:20), but Paul refers to the catena as the speech of the νόμος. Although he may simply use νόμος to refer to the entire Old Testament,²⁴ he seems to be emphasizing the Mosaic law itself upon which the Psalms and Prophets build their accusation.²⁵ The purpose of the law's speech is to establish the guilt of the human world: "in order that every mouth may be shut and the whole world may become guilty before God" (3:19b). The adjective ὑπόδικος does not have the neutral meaning "accountable" in this context, because the catena develops the depth and extent of human sin and 3:20 says that the law reveals the knowledge of sin. In context, then, ὑπόδικος has the negative meaning "guilty" of sin or "liable" to the divine judgment.²⁶ Paul's language evokes the image of the divine

²⁴So Cranfield, *Romans*, 1: 195; Wright, *Romans*, 458. Cf. 1 Cor 14:21 where a citation from Isaiah is said to be written ἐν τῷ νόμῳ.

²⁵Dahl suggests that "the idea might be that the holy Law of God, speaking through the mouth of psalmists and prophets, utters complaints and accusations because not even those who are 'in the law' have done what it commanded" ("Romans 3.9," 204 n. 43). Schreiner similarly notes that the accusation in Isaiah and the Psalms comes against those who have failed to obey the Mosaic law (*Romans*, 168). This may explain the indefinite relative pronoun ὅσα which includes the speech of the catena but may also refer to any word of accusation within the law.

²⁶Contra Glenn N. Davies, *Faith and Obedience in Romans: A Study in Romans 1–4*, JSNTSP 39 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990, 102. So Mark A. Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness: Paul's Theology of Justification*, NSBT 9 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 60–63; Wright, *Romans*, 458; Jewett, *Romans*, 265. Although BDAG's glosses "answerable, accountable" allow for a neutral meaning, the extended definition suggests a negative meaning: "pert[aining] to being liable to judgment/punishment" (s.v., "ὑπόδικος").

judgment hall. When the law speaks its accusation, “every mouth is shut” because the human world is left before God’s judgment silent and without a defense.²⁷ Cranfield describes the image well: “The picture intended to be evoked . . . is probably that of men standing at God’s bar, their guilt proven beyond all possibility of doubt, awaiting God’s sentence of condemnation.”²⁸ Thus Käsemann rightly calls the catena a “message of judgment,”²⁹ for it, like Paul, makes an accusation of sin and liability to the divine condemning judgment.³⁰

The Scope of the Accusation

In the history of interpretation, most have argued that scope of the accusation of sin and guilt in Romans 1:18–3:20 is universal. A growing number of scholars, however, argue that the passage does not make a universal accusation. These scholars highlight the Gentiles who complete the law in Romans 2, and they argue that Paul does not prove that *every* Jew and Gentile is guilty of the vices listed in 1:18–2:29. To these scholars, interpreters of Romans have wrongly seen a universal accusation in 1:18–3:20.³¹ Some, however, argue that readers have rightly seen a universal accusation in 3:9–20, but Paul has simply failed in 1:18–2:29 to prove his own conclusion. To Sanders,

²⁷BDAG notes that the mouth is shut so that the person must be silent (s.v., “φράσσω,” use 1.b). Jewett suggests that the metaphor “follows the logic of the previous references to sinful throats, tongues, lips, and mouths, found in the catena” (*Romans*, 264–65; so Keck, “Romans 3:10–18,” 198). But because of the parallel between the stopping the mouth and becoming guilty, it is more likely that Paul speaks of a silencing of words spoken in defense than a silencing of sinful words.

²⁸Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:197.

²⁹ Käsemann follows Schlatter on this (Käsemann, *Romans*, 85–86).

³⁰For a survey of various approaches to reading the catena as an accusation, see Steve Moyise, “The Catena of Romans 3:10–18,” *ExpT* 106 (1994–1995): 367–70.

³¹J. M. Bassler, “Divine Impartiality in Paul’s Letter to the Romans,” *NovT* 26 (1984): 53–54, 57; idem, *Divine Impartiality: Paul and a Theological Axiom*, SBLDS 59 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982), 155, 164–5; Klyne R. Snodgrass, “Justification by Grace—To the Doers: An Analysis of the Place of Romans 2 in the Theology of Paul,” *NTS* 32 (1986): 76; Charles H. Cosgrove, “What If Some Have Not Believed? The Occasion and Thrust of Romans 3:1–8” *ZNW* 78 (1987): 90–92; Davies, *Faith and Obedience*, 94–96; Neil Elliott, *The Rhetoric of Romans: Argumentative Constraint and Strategy and*

Paul's case for universal sinfulness, as it is stated in Rom. 1:18–2:29, is not convincing: it is internally inconsistent and it rests on gross exaggeration. In Paul's own time this sort of exaggerated statement may have had rhetorical force; but nevertheless we should recognize that Rom. 1:18–2:29 was not written to give an objective, or even a consistent, description of Jews and Gentiles. Paul knows what conclusion he wants to draw, and it is the conclusion which is important to him [and not, apparently, the argument which supports that conclusion], since universal sinfulness is necessary if Christ is to be the universal savior.³²

Similarly, to Jewett, Paul has not made a “logically compelling argument.”³³ In response to these scholars, I will argue that Romans 3:9–20 summarizes the argument of 1:18–3:20 as a universal accusation and that 1:18–2:29 leads logically to this conclusion.

First, Romans 3:9 represents 1:18–2:29 as a universal accusation against Ἰουδαίους τε καὶ Ἕλληνας πάντας. When Paul couples Ἕλληνα with Ἰουδαῖος in Romans,³⁴ Ἕλληνα refers more generally to Gentiles, for there is overlap between Ἕλληνα and ἔθνος at several points. For example, Paul says the gospel is God's power for salvation “to the Jew first and also to the *Greek*” (1:16), but as he explains this thesis he

Paul's Dialogue with Judaism, JSNTSup 45 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 104–08; Stanley Kent Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 176–84; Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and the Stoics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 207; Carter, *Paul and the Power of Sin*, 154.

³²E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1983), 125. Cf. Dabourne: “If Paul's aim was to bring his audience to Rom. 3.20 accepting that the human race as a whole, or every person, has sinned and needs rescue from God's condemnation, then he must be judged to have failed” (Wendy Dabourne, *Purpose and Cause in Pauline Exegesis: Romans 1.16–4.25 and a New Approach to the Letters*, SNTSMS 104 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999], 12). “Paul did not offer any convincing demonstration that all have sinned” (*ibid.*, 24).

³³Robert Jewett, *Romans*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 258. Note that Jewett distances himself from Sanders by arguing that Paul has made an effective rhetorical plea but not an effective logical argument: “It would be impossible to maintain that all Jews, without exception, or that all Gentiles, without exception, are sinners. Yet Paul is required by the rhetorical situation of competing superiority claims in Rome to make precisely this case and he does so effectively” (*ibid.*). So Heikki Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, WUNT, new series 29 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983), 97–109; also Byrne: “The ‘charging’ that has already taken place presumably refers to the accusations deployed in 1:18–32 and 2:17–29, though, strictly speaking, nothing has been said there that could justify so sweeping a generalization” (Byrne, *Romans*, 116).

³⁴Paul couples “Jews and Greeks” together 5 times in Romans: Rom 1:16; 2:9, 10; 3:9; 10:12; Cf. 1 Cor 1:22, 24; 10:32; 12:13; Gal 3:28; Col 3:11. Cf. Acts 14:1; 18:4; 19:10, 17; 20:21. Note that in Rom 1:14 Ἕλληνα is not coupled with Ἰουδαῖος and refers to a subset of Gentiles—those characterized by Greek language and culture in contrast to the βάρβαροι.

argues that God is the God of both the Jews and the *Gentiles* (3:29–31). Again, as Paul speaks God’s saving purposes for Jews and *Gentiles* in Romans 9–11, he observes that “there is no difference between Jew and *Greek*, for the same Lord is over all, making rich all who call upon him” (10: 12).³⁵ The phrase Ἰουδαῖος τε καὶ Ἕλλην, then, refers to Jews and Gentiles—in other words, all of humanity from one perspective. Parallel couplets can be found in Galatians 3:28 where Paul says that in Christ “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female” (cf. 1 Cor 12:13). Each of these couplets encompasses all of humanity from one perspective. In Galatians 3:28 Paul limits his statement to human beings who have been baptized in Christ (Gal 3:27, 29). But in Romans 3:9 he gives no limitations, and the phrase is modified by an unqualified πᾶς, indicating the universal nature of the accusation. *All without exception* are under the power of sin and liable to the condemning judgment of God.³⁶ Thus, Romans 3:9 articulates what Wilckens calls the “spezifisch paulinischen These der Universalität der Sünde.”³⁷

The catena in Romans 3:10–18 supports the thesis of the universality of sin. Paul heads up the list with a universal indictment: “There is no one who is righteous, not even one” (3:10). This verse provides a lens by which to read the entire catena. It is followed by a series of verses repeating the line οὐκ ἔστιν six times, driving home “the universality of sin’s hold on man.”³⁸ In 3:19, Paul argues that the catena itself makes a

³⁵The clearest example of the overlap between Ἕλλην and ἔθνος in Paul’s letters is 1 Cor 1:22–24: “For Jews asks for signs and *Greeks* seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to *Gentiles*, but to those who are called, both Jews and *Greeks*, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

³⁶Räisänen rightly observes that the accusation in 3:9 is against “all without exception” (Heikki Räisänen, “Zum Verständnis von Röm 3,1–8,” in *The Torah and Christ: Essays in German and English on the Problem of the Law in Early Christianity*, Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society 45 [Helsinki, 1986], 188).

³⁷Wilckens, *Römer*, 1:173.

universal accusation: It speaks so that πᾶς ὁ κόσμος will be guilty before God. The word κόσμος refers to the world of humanity,³⁹ and the adjective πᾶς indicates humanity as a whole. It should be noted that humanity as a corporate entity cannot be abstracted from the individuals who make up the group, for Paul says πᾶν στόμα will be stopped, which means that no human being is left with a defense before God.

The accusation of the catena, then, speaks so that every human may be guilty before God. It reaches this goal, however, by speaking particularly to the Jewish people, “those with the law” (3:19a). Some have argued that this phrase refers to both Jews and Gentiles in 3:19,⁴⁰ but most understand ἐν τῷ νόμῳ to be used in the same way as it is in 2:12—to refer to the Jews in contrast with the Gentiles.⁴¹ Paul must clarify that the law speaks particularly to the Jewish people. Although the citations from the Psalms make an accusation against David’s enemies, Paul argues that this accusation speaks first to the Jewish people, a point clearly made in the original context of Isaiah 59:7–8. The law makes an accusation against the Jews for the purpose of drawing the entire world into judgment. The idea seems to be that if the Jews, God’s chosen people (Rom 9:4–5; 11:28–29), are liable to divine judgment, then obviously the rest of the world is guilty as well.⁴² Finally, Romans 3:20 repeats the universal accusation with unqualified πᾶς: οὐ δικαιοθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ.

³⁸Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:192. Note that οὐκ ἔστιν is textually questionable in Rom 3:12c, so Paul may only repeat the phrase five times. Note also πάντες ἐξέκλιναν in 3:12 which supports a universal accusation.

³⁹BDAG, s.v., “κόσμος,” use 6.

⁴⁰E.g., Origen argues that νόμος in 3:19 means natural law, so that Gentiles are also “those with the law” (2:14–15) (*Romans*, 202–05). Murray is also swayed to this position because the catena indicts “the whole world” (*Romans*, 106). So Bowsher who appeals to 1:32 and 2:14 (Herbert Bowsher, “To Whom Does the Law Speak? Romans 3:19 and the Works of the Law Debate” *WTJ* 68 [2006]: 295–303).

⁴¹Calvin, *Romans*, 130; Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:195; Dunn, *Romans*, 1:152; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 336; Schreiner, *Romans*, 168.

Second, Romans 1:18–2:29 leads logically to this conclusion of universal sin and guilt. Viewed in isolation from the larger argument, 1:18–32 and 2:1–29 might be read individually as accusations against merely a wicked segment of Gentile or Jewish humanity.⁴³ But taken together and combined with 3:9, they form a universal accusation against all of humanity—both the Gentile world and the Jewish people. In response to the objection that Paul fails to prove that *every* Jew and Gentile is guilty of the vices listed,⁴⁴ it is important to observe that Paul makes a logical proof, not an empirical proof in 1:18–29. To draw analogy, I may prove that no pigs can fly with the following syllogism:

Major premise: Without wings no animals can fly.⁴⁵

Minor premise: Pigs do not have wings.

Conclusion: Therefore, pigs cannot fly.

I have not (yet) verified empirically that no pigs can fly, but I have still proven my case logically. Similarly, Paul does not prove *empirically* that every Jew and Gentile is under the power of sin, but he does prove this case *logically* by highlighting notorious examples of Gentile unrighteousness and Jewish transgression.⁴⁶ Therefore, he is not exaggerating

⁴²So Ambrosiaster: “Paul says this because, with the Jews bound in sin, the whole world has become subject to God. For there is no doubt that the pagans were immersed in sins and wickedness

when Paul affirms that the Jews, who had received God’s law and to whom the promise had been given, were bound in sin, there is no doubt that all the Gentiles were also guilty of death” (*Commentaries on Romans and 1–2 Corinthians*, Ancient Christian Texts, trans. and ed. Gerald L. Bray [Downers Grove, IL: 2009], 27).

⁴³See especially Davies for this approach to Rom 1–4 (*Faith and Obedience*, 35–72; 80–101).

⁴⁴E.g., Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People*, 125; Byrne, *Romans*, 116. Keener suggests Paul is speaking hyperbolically in order to hold attention, which was common in rhetoric (*Romans*, 46).

⁴⁵For the sake of argument, readers are asked to suspend questions such as “what about flying squirrels?”

⁴⁶My point is similar to the argument that Paul does not make an empirical proof but an accusation. See S. Lewis Johnson, Jr. “Studies in Romans, Part IX: The Universality of Sin,” *BibSac* 131 (1974): 167; Moo, *Romans*, 201 n. 18; Schreiner, *Romans*, 164; and Laato: “It must still be noted that Paul in Rom. 1–2 does not endeavor to *prove* empirically the guilt of the Gentiles and the Jews (in contrast to

his conclusion in 3:9–20. Romans 1:18–2:29 leads logically to the conclusion that all Jews and Gentiles are under the power of sin and liable to the judgment of God. Why then does Paul speak of Gentiles who complete the law in Romans 2? This riddle must be postponed until chapter 7.

Summary of the First Thesis

Romans 1:18–3:20 is a universal accusation of sin and guilt, and the major theme Paul uses to level this accusation is the theme of judgment according to works. Here I reach the first thesis of the dissertation: *In Romans 1:18–3:20 the theme of judgment according to works primarily functions to make a universal accusation which lays the foundation for Paul's doctrine of justification by faith.*⁴⁷ This thesis is unpacked in the following points.

First, Romans 1:18–3:20 should be viewed as a discrete unit of thought. Most commentators recognize a major structural break between 3:20 and 3:21.⁴⁸ Richard Hays now questions this break because of the thematic continuity between 3:1–20 and 3:21–26.⁴⁹ He rightly observes continuity between the two passages—e.g., Paul continues to

Räisänen). It is not empirically demonstrable that they *all* (who knows how many millions!) sin even in their *innermost* and *multifarious* ways. According to 3:9 Paul has *indicted* (προητιασάμεθα) Gentiles as well as Jews. He presumes that they cannot in their consciences defend themselves against his indictments (1:19; 2:1) and lets God pass judgment (3:10–18)” (Laato, *Paul and Judaism*, 93). However, in contrast with this argument, I think that Paul, while not proving an empirical case, has proven a logical case in Rom 1:18–3:20.

⁴⁷Note that although accusation is the dominant rhetorical function of the judgment motif in Romans, there are only a few parallels of this function of the theme in Paul's other letters. Undisputed letters: 2 Cor 11:15. Disputed letters: 2 Thess 1:6–7; 2 Tim 4:14.

⁴⁸E.g., Godet, *Romans*, 60; C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, MFNT (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1932), ix; Murray, *Romans*, xxii; Cranfield, *Romans*, 28; Käsemann, *Romans*, ix; Moo, *Romans*, 33; Schreiner, *Romans*, 25; Wright, *Romans*, 410. Note the last line of Fitzmyer's commentary on Rom 3:20: “So Paul ends the negative development of his thesis in part A of Romans” (*Romans*, 339).

⁴⁹Hays concludes that “the major structural break which commentators usually posit between Rom 3:20 and 3:21 has no ‘justification’ in the text, and Paul's continuing use of terminology from Psalm 143 (δικαιοσύνη) shows clearly the intended continuity” (Richard B. Hays, “Psalm 143 and the Logic of Romans 3,” *JBL* 99 [1980]: 115).

speak of God's righteousness (3:21, 22, 26) and the universality of human sin (3:23). But the discontinuity is also striking, for Paul introduces new concepts like righteousness through πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (3:22; cf. 3:26), justification freely through his grace and through the redemption which is in Christ (3:24). Moreover, Paul associates these new concepts with a new period of human history: "but *now* the righteousness of God has been manifested" (3:21). The temporal shift indicated by νυνὶ δὲ does not always indicate a significant break in the letter to the Romans,⁵⁰ but in this case Paul draws a contrast between the former time in which God passed over sins in forbearance (cf. 2:4–5) and "the present time" in which God has made a demonstration of his righteousness (3:25–26). This is no small break, for it sets in contrast the entire preceding discourse about Jews and Gentiles under the power of sin (1:18–3:20) with the events of the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the major topics of the discourse through at least 8:39. Thus, 1:18–3:20 should be viewed a discrete unit of thought, the first discourse of the letter.

Second, the first discourse is held together by the judgment motif. As Seifrid observes, each subsection of the passage "takes its orientation from the coming day of judgment."⁵¹ Romans 1:18–3:20 develops the theme of judgment according works more extensively than any other passage in the letter. In Romans 3:21 Paul finishes his discussion of this theme and begins to develop the theme of justification by faith. Although justification builds upon the judgment motif, as I will argue in the next chapter, it is a separate theme in its own right. After 3:21 Paul does not return to a major discussion of judgment until Romans 14:1–23.

⁵⁰E.g., νυνὶ δὲ does not indicate a significant break in 6:22 or in 15:23.

⁵¹Seifrid, "Unrighteousness by Faith," 108.

Third, the meaning of judgment in Romans 1:18–3:20 is primarily negative, emphasizing the condemning judgment of God.⁵² Although Romans 2 describes an evaluative judgment which leads to both the positive and negative recompense, the emphasis is upon the condemning judgment. The first section of the letter, then, has rightly been characterized as a *Verdammnisgeschichte*, a history-of-damnation,⁵³ because it recounts the history of human unrighteousness and the divine condemning judgment. Paul contrasts this *Verdammnisgeschichte* with the new present reality in which the righteousness of God has been revealed through the advent of Jesus Christ. However, this is not a “history” in the customary sense, for Paul depicts an overlap of the two ages. When one speaks of the American Civil War, for example, the ante-bellum and post-bellum periods are mutually exclusive periods of human history. But in Paul’s argument the *Verdammnisgeschichte* continues until the end of time, for the revelation of God’s wrath within human history anticipates and is completed in the final judgment. Romans 1:18–3:20 does not only recount the past judgment but more fundamentally warns of the future judgment.⁵⁴ Therefore, this section is not only a *Verdammnisgeschichte* but also an *accusation* of liability to the final condemning judgment of God.⁵⁵

⁵²Kondradt rightly argues that the negative judgment is highlighted in this section and not merely the evaluative judgment (Matthias Kondradt, *Gericht und Gemeinde: Eine Studie zur Bedeutung und Funktion von Gerichtsaussagen im Rahmen der paulinischen Ekklesiologie und Ethik im 1 Thess und 1 Kor* [Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003], 513).

⁵³The term *Verdammnisgeschichte* was coined by Bell (Richard Bell, *No One Seeks for God: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans 1.18–3.20*, WUNT 106 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998], 239) and has been adopted by Gathercole (Simon Gathercole, “Sin in God’s Economy: Agencies in Romans 1 and 7,” in *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and his Cultural Environment*, ed. John M. G. Barclay and Simon Gathercole. LNTS Studies 335 [New York: T&T Clark, 2006], 159).

⁵⁴Theologians sometimes note the poet Schiller’s famous aphorism in parallel with Rom 1:18–32: “die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht” (“the history of the world is the judgment of the world”). But Bavinck rightly orients theologians away from a naturalistic view of history to a theological view of judgment, just as Paul does in Rom 1:18–3:20: “The history of the world may be a judgment of the world, but *the* judgment of the world will take place at the end of time, when Christ comes to judge the living and the dead” (Hermann Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 4, *Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008], 700).

This leads to the fourth point: Paul primarily employs judgment motif in Romans 1:18–3:20 to make a universal accusation of sin and guilt. His emphasis on the negative meaning of judgment supports this negative function. The final judgment is described in binary categories: Those who practice what is evil will be repaid wrath and fury; those who practice what is good will be repaid eternal life. Paul’s accusation builds upon this picture and clarifies that all of humanity fall within the first category—all are under the power of sin (3:9); all are without a defense and guilty (3:19); or as he summarizes later, “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (3:23).

How can Paul make a universal accusation without falling under the condemnation of his own indictment, particularly in light of his exhortation not to hypocritically judge others (2:1)? As Porter asks, “Is Paul exempt from his own exhortations? Is he inconsistent in his theological convictions?”⁵⁶ The answer is that the accusation of 1:18–3:20 is not merely Paul’s accusation but the accusation of his gospel.⁵⁷ According to speech-act theory, one must be in the right position for the speech to bring about the act. Vanhoozer uses the analogy of marriage: “in order to pronounce a couple married, one must be a minister, a judge, or a ship’s captain.”⁵⁸ As an apostle set apart for the gospel of God (1:1), Paul is in precisely the right position to make such an accusation.

Fifth, Paul concludes his accusation by stating it in terms of the justifying judgment rather than the condemning judgment: “by the works of the law no flesh will be

⁵⁵Keck rightly identifies 1:18–3:9, 19 as “a forensic indictment, a statement of God’s ‘case’ against the world” (“The Function of Romans 3:10–18,” 152).

⁵⁶Calvin L. Porter, “Romans 1.18–32: Its Role in Developing Argument,” *NTS* 40 (1994): 214.

⁵⁷So Cranfield: “In other words, it is not Paul’s judgment of his contemporaries that we have here, but the gospel’s judgment of men, that is, of all men, the judgment the gospel itself pronounces, which Paul has heard and to which he has himself submitted” (Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:104).

⁵⁸Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 63 n. 21.

justified before him, for through the law is the knowledge of sin” (3:20). This verse demonstrates that the accusation leveled by the theme of judgment according to works lays a foundation for Paul’s doctrine of justification by faith. How exactly it does this will be the topic of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

JUDGMENT AND JUSTIFICATION

Introduction

This chapter will explain how the theme of judgment according to works lays a foundation for Paul's doctrine of justification by faith in the epistle to the Romans.¹ The theme of justification by faith is announced within the thesis of the letter (1:16–17), developed primarily in the discourse of 3:21–5:21,² and mentioned throughout the rest of the main body of the argument through references to righteousness, condemnation, and the instrumentality of works, faith, and grace (6:7, 8:1–4, 8:30, 8:33–34; 9:12; 9:30–10:13; 11:6, 20, 23). It is clearly a more prominent theme in the letter than judgment according to works, but its announcement and primary development are interrupted by an extensive discourse about judgment in 1:18–3:20. Why? The first part of this chapter will argue that the judgment motif orients readers to the theme of justification by providing its ideological context. The second will argue that the accusation leveled through the judgment motif delineates the plight from which justification by faith offers salvation.

¹The intention of this chapter is not to summarize the secondary discussions about justification by faith in Paul's letters or in historical theology but to explore the theme's relationship to the judgment motif in Romans. Its contribution to the ongoing debates about justification will be to demonstrate how the judgment motif lays a foundation for the doctrine in the letter to the Romans. For secondary discussions about justification in Paul, see Mark A. Seifrid, *Justification by Faith: The Origin and Development of a Central Pauline Theme*, NovTSup 68 (New York: Brill, 1992), 1–77. For justification in historical theology, see Alister McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*, 3rd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); see also Bruce L. McCormack, ed., *Justification in Perspective: Historical Developments and Contemporary Challenges* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006). For justification in ecumenical pursuits, see John Reumann, "Righteousness" in the New Testament: "Justification" in the United States Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982); see also David E. Aune, ed., *Rereading Paul Together: Protestant and Catholic Perspectives on Justification* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006).

²Seifrid sees the thesis of the letter concluded at Rom 3:26 and Rom 3:27–5:21 as "four rhetorical units which expand, support, and apply 'justification by faith'" (*Justification by Faith*, 222).

Justification as a Judgment

The theme of judgment according to works lays the foundation for justification in Romans by developing the ideological context in which justification by faith is to be understood. Outside of the letter's thesis statement, the first reference to justification appears within Paul's explanation of the final judgment: "For whoever has sinned without the law will also perish without the law; and whoever has sinned with the law will be condemned by the law, for it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law will be justified" (Rom 2:12–13). Although this is only a brief mention of justification, it is significant because it sets the stage for Paul's later development of the theme. In Romans 2:13 readers learn three things about justification: first, it is the positive recompense of the divine judgment; second, it will take place at the future day of judgment; and third, its ground is the doing of the law.

First, justification in Romans 2:13 is the positive recompense of God's judgment, for Paul contrasts it with condemnation. Those who sin will be condemned (2:12), but those who do the law will be justified (2:13). He uses κρίνω and δικαιόω as antonyms to refer respectively to the negative and positive verdicts of the divine judgment. This antithesis crops up at other places in the argument as well. For example, the cognate nouns of κρίνω and δικαιόω appear as antonyms when Paul contrasts Adam with Jesus Christ. The judgment (κρίμα) from Adam's transgression leads to condemnation (κατάκριμα), but the free gift leads to justification (δικαίωμα) (5:16). The result of Adam's transgression is condemnation (κατάκριμα), but the result of Christ's obedience is justification (δικαίωσις) (5:18). Finally, Paul contrasts condemnation and justification in 8:33b–34: God is the one who justifies his elect; therefore no one can condemn them. Thus, in contrast with condemnation, justification is the positive recompense of the divine judgment. That is, the verb δικαιόω is associated

with the courtroom or with judgment—it is “forensic.”³

Historically, the forensic meaning of justification has been a much debated issue in Christian theology. McGrath, in his history of the doctrine observes that many theologians in the Western tradition understood justification to involve the regeneration or renewal of a person, God’s making them righteous. With the dawn of the Reformation, Protestant theologians formulated a distinction between justification and renewal. They argued that justification is a forensic declaration of righteousness based upon the alien righteousness of Christ.⁴ McGrath follows Ritschl in calling this a theological *novum* in the Western tradition.⁵ However, Needham has observed a major strand of teaching about justification in the fathers of the first four centuries who define the doctrine in a forensic sense as the non-imputation of sin and the imputation of divine righteousness.⁶ In any case, the formulation of the Council of Trent in reaction to the Reformation led to the solidifying of a Catholic tradition which understands justification as a process in which

³See the *OED*’s definition of “forensic”: “Pertaining to, connected with, or used in courts of law; suitable or analogous to pleadings in court” (s.v., “forensic,” use A.). Note the clear connection with the courtroom in Rom 8:33–34, where Paul highlights God’s justification (8:33b–34) in response to the possibility of an accusation against God’s elect (8:33a). One use of δικαιόω in Rom may fall outside of the forensic definition—Rom 6:7. Most English versions translate δεδικαίωται ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας as “has been set freed from sin” (cf. Acts 13:38; Sir 26:29; Test Sim 6:1). However, it seems more likely that Paul would use such a key word in his argument in a way consistent with its other uses in the letter to mean “has been justified from sin” (contra BDAG, s.v., δικαιόω, use 3). Although this sounds strange to English ears, perhaps Paul’s point in Rom 6:7 is that the one who has died has been saved from sin by being declared righteous (cf. Paul’s reported words in Acts 13:38–39). See below on the link between salvation and justification in Romans.

⁴McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 212–13. Note that the distinction between justification and regeneration is not clear in Luther’s writings. He instead speaks of the believer coming to Christ continually to be justified anew. However, as O’Kelley observes, Luther understands the alien righteousness of Christ alone to be the legal basis of justification, which is a present anticipation of the final judgment. The transformation given to the believer in justification is the product of what he is in Christ—a new creation (Aaron Thomas O’Kelley, “A Historical-Theological Critique of the New Perspective on Paul” [Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010], 93–94).

⁵McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 214–15.

⁶Nick Needham, “Justification in the Early Church Fathers,” in *Justification in Perspective: Historical Developments and Contemporary Challenges*, ed. Bruce L. McCormack (Grand Rapids: BakerAcademic, 2006), 36.

one is made righteous.⁷ Today, however, most New Testament scholars agree that the Reformers were at least correct on the point that δικαιοῶ is a forensic term in Paul, meaning “to declare righteous” rather than “to make righteous.”⁸ Only the forensic meaning makes sense of Paul’s contrast between justification and condemnation in Romans.⁹ Just as the action of condemnation does not make one guilty, neither does the action of justification make one righteous. Both instead are a declaration that someone is either guilty or righteous.¹⁰

Some scholars define “forensic justification” as the idea that one is declared righteous even though he or she is not ethically righteous. This definition rightly describes Paul’s category of the justification of the ungodly (Rom 4:5; cf. 5:6). However, one should not contrast “forensic” and “ethical” righteousness in every case. Vanlandingham’s work on judgment and justification, in particular, makes this mistake in his discussion of δικαιοῶ. For example, in Matthew 12:37 he suggests that the verb is not forensic, even though it is used in direct antithesis to καταδικάζω: “for by your words you will be justified and by your words you will be condemned.”¹¹ His reasoning

⁷“The entire post-Tridentine Catholic tradition . . . continued to regard justification as a process in which humanity was made righteous, involving the actualization rather than the imputation of righteousness (McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 355). For a careful explanation of this process of justification according to Trent, see O’Kelley, “A Historical-Theological Critique,” 56–66.

⁸For example, Fitzmyer, a Roman Catholic scholar, observes that justification is essentially forensic, although he allows for the possibility of an effective sense of justification in Rom as well because of Rom 5:19: “through the obedience of the one the many will be made righteous (διὰ τῆς ὑπακοῆς τοῦ ἑνὸς δίκαιοι κατασταθήσονται οἱ πολλοί)” (Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “Justification by Faith in Pauline Thought: A Catholic View,” in *Rereading Paul Together: Protestant and Catholic Perspectives on Justification*, ed. David E. Aune [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006], 84–85).

⁹Note that one reason Needham argues for a forensic understanding of justification in the fathers is the common antithesis of justification and condemnation in their writings (Needham, “Justification,” 29).

¹⁰So Godet who notes that the judicial (or forensic) force of the word “comes out forcibly in this passage [Rom 2:13], since in the day of judgment no one is *made* righteous morally speaking, and can only be *recognized* and *declared* such” (Frederic Lewis Godet, *Commentary on Romans* [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1977], 203).

is that “like Rom 2, the judgment [in Matthew 12:37] brings out publicly only what one actually is, since in this case words substitute for deeds. One’s status before God (i.e., ‘in the right’) is not the focus; rather as always with the Last Judgment, the individual’s character is the focus.”¹² But here VanLandingham sets up a false dichotomy between forensic and ethical righteousness. In Matthew 12:37, as in Romans 2:13, both one’s status before God *and* one’s individual character are in view. Those who are ethically righteous, in their words or deeds, will be declared to be righteous at the final judgment.¹³ To say that justification is “forensic,” then, is simply to say it is a term associated with judgment. Romans 2:16 establishes this forensic sense which continues into Paul’s discourse about justification in 3:21–5:21.

Second, Romans 2:13 associates justification with the final day of judgment. Paul speaks in the future tense of those who will perish or be condemned and those who will be justified (2:12–13). Some have argued that these future verbs should be read in the gnomic sense,¹⁴ but the context suggests otherwise—the verbs appear within Paul’s vision of the final judgment, the “day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus” (2:16). Within this vision of the final judgment, it is most likely that future verbs which speak of the verdict of judgment refer to the verdict of the final judgment. It is on this day that those who have sinned will be condemned and the doers of the law will be justified.

The forensic nature of justification continues into Romans 3:21–5:21, but

¹¹Chris VanLandingham, *Judgment & Justification in Early Judaism and the Apostle Paul* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson, 2006), 268.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Thus, Ziesler rightly speaks of righteousness in Rom 2:13 as both forensic *and* ethical (J. A. Ziesler, *The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul: A Linguistic and Theological Enquiry* [Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1972], 189–90).

¹⁴So Rudolf Bultmann, “ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣΥΝΗ ΘΕΟΥ,” *JBL* 83 (1964): 15. Ziesler suggests the gnomic sense because it includes but is not restricted to the final judgment (*Righteousness*, 189).

Paul's vision of the final judgment seems to disappear after 1:18–3:20, not clearly reemerging until Romans 14. This phenomenon has led VanLandingham to argue that justification by faith does not refer to the verdict of the final judgment of God.¹⁵ However, the fact that 1:18–3:20 interrupts the thesis statement of the letter and the full explanation of that thesis tells against such a reading. Paul devotes over ten percent of Romans to sketching his vision of the final judgment for a reason: He intends for the concept of the final judgment to inform his readers' understanding of justification by faith. This is clear because he connects the themes of judgment and justification with the hinge verse of 3:20, which restates the accusation of 1:18–3:19 in the language of justification. Justification by faith, then, must be viewed within the ideological context of the *final* judgment. Paul's vision of the future does not recede from view after 3:20 because the final judgment is irrelevant to his argument.¹⁶ Rather, it recedes from view because Paul understands the verdict of the future judgment to have been brought into the present already through the revelation of God's righteousness. Just as the revelation of God's wrath in 1:18 is a proleptic appearance of the final condemning judgment (cf. 2:4), so the revelation of God's righteousness in 3:21 is a proleptic appearance of the final justifying judgment.¹⁷

Third, in Romans 2:13, the ground of the justifying judgment is the doing of the law: οἱ ποιηταὶ νόμου δικαιοθήσονται. Romans 2:7 and 10 speak of the ground of the positive recompense as doing what is good. Romans 2:13 specifies the standard of

¹⁵VanLandingham argues that justification in Paul does not refer to acquittal at the final judgment (*Judgment & Justification*, 245, 303).

¹⁶Contra Campbell who suggests that the “implications of 1:18–3:20 are irrelevant. So the retributive presuppositions of that argument no longer need to be assumed in the interpretation of 3:21–26” (Douglas A. Campbell, *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009], 663).

¹⁷Stuhlmacher repeatedly emphasizes that justification must be understood within the horizon of the final judgment (*Revisiting Paul's Doctrine of Justification* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001], 14–16, 32, 61). So K. Stendahl, “Rechtfertigung und Endgericht,” *Lutherische Rundschau* 11 (1961): 6.

what is good—doing the Mosaic law.¹⁸ New Testament scholars in the past few decades have rightly stressed the category of covenant in Pauline thought. But interpreters must be specific about *which* covenant is in view. Romans 2:13 refers to the covenant the LORD made with Moses and Israel (Exod 20–24). During the ceremony ratifying this covenant, Israel promised, “all that the LORD has spoken we will do and obey” (Exod 24:7). Paul now explains that his Jewish dialogue partner must follow through on this commitment by doing the law in order to experience the justifying judgment.¹⁹ Romans 2:13 supports Gathercole’s criticism of Wright that righteousness in Romans is not merely “covenant membership” but “*doing what God requires* within the covenant,”²⁰ that is within the *Mosaic* covenant. The verse introduces the first approach to justification in the letter to the Romans—being justified upon the ground of doing the law.

In summary, Paul develops the judgment motif in Romans as the ideological context for justification. Justification is the positive recompense of the final judgment of God, and the ground of the first approach to justification is the doing of the law. In context, Romans 2:13 supports Paul’s accusation that the Jewish people are transgressors of the law (2:1, 5, 12, 25, 27). The Jewish people do not do the law—they will not be

¹⁸Most scholars now agree that νόμος in Romans, whether it is articular or anarthrous, generally refers to the law of Moses (Thomas R. Schreiner, *The Law and Its Fulfillment: A Pauline Theology of Law* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993], 33–34). There are exceptions where Paul plays on the word νόμος by using it in a metaphorical sense (note especially ἕτερον νόμον in Rom 7:23; see also Rom 3:27; 7:21, 25; 8:2).

¹⁹Although in Hebrew “to hear” also means “to obey” (thus the people promise, “we will hear/obey” (שָׁמַעַ) in Exod 24:7), Paul places a wedge between hearing and doing in order to expose the hypocrisy of his dialogue partner, as I argued in chap. 3. Contra Garlington, Paul does not drive this wedge between hearing and doing to call for “a different kind of ‘doing the law’” (Donald Garlington, *Faith, Obedience, and Perseverance*, WUNT 79 [Mohr Siebeck, 1994], 59). Rather, Paul simply calls the dialogue partner to follow through with his commitment—to do the law rather than transgress it (Rom 2:7–24).

²⁰Simon J. Gathercole, “The Doctrine of Justification in Paul and Beyond: Some Proposals,” in *Justification in Perspective: Historical Developments and Contemporary Challenges*, ed. Bruce L. McCormack (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 237.

justified by this first approach. Thus, in context, “the doers of the law” is an empty set.²¹ In 3:20, in fact, Paul restates his accusation in exactly these terms: “no flesh will be justified before him by the works of the law.” Because of this accusation, Romans 1:18–3:20 not only provides the ideological context of justification but also establishes the plight from which justification by faith offers salvation.²²

Alternative Approaches to Justification

“Plight” and “solution” have become household terms in New Testament studies since the publication of Sanders’s influential *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*. Sanders argues that Paul’s thinking and missionary preaching starts with the solution. Paul “never specifies the plight of man as what is preached.”²³ But within the argument of Romans Paul begins the explanation of his thesis, and hence his gospel, with a description of the plight (1:18–3:20). This plight—the wrath of God being revealed within human history against the Gentiles and stored up for the impending judgment of the Jews—is the grim landscape into which the righteousness of God is revealed. Paul’s accusation of universal liability to the final condemning judgment is the foundation of his doctrine of justification by faith. This is one reason Paul can speak of the final judgment through Jesus Christ as a part of his gospel (2:16).

The plight-salvation framework of Paul’s gospel sets up two alternative

²¹I borrow this terminology from Lee Irons, who has written one of the best recent defenses of the hypothetical interpretation of Romans 2 in an unpublished paper (Lee Irons, “Romans 2:13: Is Paul Coherent?” [on-line]; accessed 23 April 2010; available from <http://www.upper-register.com/papers/Rom213.pdf>; Internet).

²²As many have observed, Rom 1:18–3:20 establishes the *need* for the revelation of God’s righteousness in the gospel. E.g., Seifrid: “Rom 1:18–3:20 subsequently serves to confirm that a universal need for salvation exists, and that salvation is available through the righteousness of God revealed in the Gospel” (Seifrid, *Justification by Faith*, 219); so Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 33; James D. G. Dunn, *Romans*, WBC, vol. 38 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson), 1:70).

²³E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1977), 443–44.

approaches to the justifying judgment. The first, justification by works of the law, is associated with the accusation of liability to the condemning judgment. The second, justification by faith, is associated with *salvation* from liability to the condemning judgment.

Plight: No Justification by Works of the Law

First, the conclusion of Paul's accusation associates the plight with justification by works of the law: "For²⁴ by works of the law no flesh will be justified before him, for through the law is the knowledge of sin" (3:20). This verse operates as a hinge which connects the first discourse with the second. Up to this point Paul employs the judgment motif to make his accusation. But in 3:20 uses the language of justification, restating the accusation by negating its antonym. The whole world will be condemned before God—i.e., no flesh will be justified before God. The future tense δικαιωθήσεται ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ continues Paul's vision of the final judgment, and the subject πᾶσα σὰρξ continues the universal scope of the accusation. Once again, the accusation is rooted in the problem of sin: διὰ γὰρ νόμου ἐπίγνωσις ἁμαρτίας. The controversial element of Romans 3:20, of course, is the phrase ἐξ ἔργων νόμου. In what follows I will argue that this phrase, like the other elements of Romans 3:20, restates Paul's accusation and draws it to a conclusion.

The phrase ἔργα νόμου occurs eight times in Paul's letters (Rom 3:20, 28; Gal 2:16 [3x]; 3:2, 5, 10), and it has become a battleground for New Testament scholars with the advent of the new perspective on Paul. The contours of this perspective are now well

²⁴The word διότι should be translated "because" or "for," introducing the ground of 3:19, because the parallel in Gal 2:16 and the allusion to Ps 143:2 are both clearly causal. So most commentators: William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, ICC, old series (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1902), 80; John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (old series) (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 107; C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, ICC, new series (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975), 1:197; Dunn, *Romans*, 153; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 169; Wright, *Romans*, in vol. 10 of *The New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 458; Robert Jewett, *Romans*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 265.

known.²⁵ It builds upon E. P. Sanders's argument that Second Temple Judaism was a religion of grace rather than a religion of legalism—Jews did not believe they could earn their salvation through law keeping.²⁶ And it claims, therefore, that when Paul says that no flesh will be justified by the works of the law he cannot refer to law keeping. Instead, he refers to works that distinguish the Jewish people from the Gentiles, works like circumcision, Sabbath, and food laws.²⁷ This understanding is not completely new, for it is similar to the interpretation of many church fathers who understand ἔργα νόμου to refer to the ceremonial laws of Judaism.²⁸ It is in contrast, however, with the traditional Protestant interpretation which understands the phrase to refer to obedience to the law. According to the new perspective on Paul, justification by works of the law cannot refer to a justification based upon obedience to the law, because Jews never attempted to keep the law in order to be justified.

Many, however, have now questioned this assumption. Some argue that Sanders's portrayal of Judaism is too monolithic and does not account for the many ways in which Jews of the Second Temple period approached the law.²⁹ In particular, scholars

²⁵For a thorough survey of the new perspective on Paul, see Stephen Westerholm, "The 'New Perspective' at Twenty-Five," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, vol. 2, *The Paradoxes of Paul*, ed. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004).

²⁶In particular, Sanders argued against two models of Jewish legalism: (1) perfection in law keeping; and (2) weighing of deeds, or salvation through obeying more commands than transgressions (Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 137, 233). The weighing of deeds model was the primary target of Sanders's argument.

²⁷See Dunn and Wright's commentaries on Romans for this approach to ἔργα νόμου (Dunn, *Romans*, 1:152–60; Wright, *Romans*, 460–61). It should be noted that Dunn has qualified his previous position in response to the criticisms of both Cranfield and Schreiner, and he now argues that ἔργα νόμου should not be restricted to circumcision, Sabbath, and food laws, but that the phrase denotes more broadly the requirements for the covenant people (James D. G. Dunn, "Yet Once More—'The Works of the Law': A Response," *JSNT* 46 [1992]: 102).

²⁸For example, Pelagius argues that ἔργα νόμου in Rom 3:20 means circumcision, the Sabbath, and other ceremonies (Theodore DeBruyn, *Pelagius's Commentary on St Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993], 81). And, as Calvin observes, Chrysostom, Origen, and Jerome all understand the phrase to refer to the ceremonial law (John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*, trans. and ed. by John Owen [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948], 130–33).

have observed that many strands of Judaism understood salvation to come through obedience to the law.³⁰ Further, O’Kelley has now argued that even if Sanders’s portrayal of Judaism is correct, it would not rule out the possibility of the traditional Protestant interpretation of justification in Paul. This interpretation arose in response to Roman Catholic theologies of grace, so Paul may articulate an understanding of justification apart from doing the law in response to Jewish theologies of grace.³¹ These studies are important, because they demonstrate that ἔργα νόμου may refer to obedience to the law, even after the work of Sanders. Moreover, many scholars have offered extended arguments demonstrating that this Protestant reading of ἔργα νόμου is the most likely reading.³² My contribution to this debate lies in the relationship of the accusation to its

²⁹See especially D. A. Carson, Peter T. O’Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid, eds., *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, 2 vols. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001, 2004). Bird has now adopted the term “variegated nomism” as well (Michel Bird, *The Saving Righteousness of God: Studies on Paul, Justification, and the New Perspective* [Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007], 114). Similar is Campbell, who argues that Second Temple Judaism was characterized by diversity and follows Neusner in speaking of “Judaisms” (*Deliverance of God*, 117).

³⁰For different approaches, see Timo Laato, *Paul and Judaism: An Anthropological Approach*, trans. T. McElwain (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995); Friedrich Avemarie, *Torah und Leben: Untersuchungen zur Heilsbedeutung der Tora in der frühen rabbinischen Literatur*, Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum 55 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996); and Simon J. Gathercole, *Where Is Boasting: Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul’s Response in Romans 1–5* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002).

³¹This is the essential thesis of O’Kelley, “A Historical-Theological Critique.”

³²Douglas Moo, “‘Law,’ ‘Works of the Law,’ and Legalism in Paul,” *WTJ* 45 (1983): 73–100; C. E. B. Cranfield, “‘The Works of the Law’ in the Epistle to the Romans,” *JSNT* 43 (1991): 89–101; Thomas R. Schreiner, “‘Works of Law’ in Paul,” *NovT* 33 (1991): 217–44; Robert Keith Rapa, *The Meaning of “Works of the Law” in Galatians and Romans*, Studies in Biblical Literature 31 (New York: Peter Lang, 2001). Note Gaston’s alternative grammatical proposal that ἔργα νόμου is a subjective genitive meaning that the law “works” sin and wrath for Gentiles (Lloyd Gaston, *Paul and the Torah* [Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987], 100–06) which Schreiner rightly critiques as a meaningless tautology in Rom 3:20. Owen has now revived Gaston’s grammatical proposal suggesting that the phrase is parallel to the subjective genitive reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ (Paul L. Owen, “The ‘Works of the Law’ in Romans and Galatians: A New Defense of the Subjective Genitive,” *JBL* 126 [2007]: 553–77). However, the telling point against Owen’s interpretation is that Paul uses ἔργα νόμου interchangeably with ἔργα throughout Romans to refer to human agency rather than the law’s agency (see especially Rom 3:27, which continues the argument of 3:21–26; see also Rom 4:6; 9:11, 32; 11:6). The new suggestion of de Roo that ἔργα νόμου refers to reliance upon Abraham’s obedience for atonement of sin is highly unlikely (Jacqueline C. R. de Roo, “Works of the Law” at *Qumran and in Paul*, New Testament Monographs 13 [Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2007]).

conclusion in Romans 3:20—the impossibility of justification by the works of the law must be read in light of its foundation in the theme of judgment according to works. In order to demonstrate this I will interact with the still important exchange between Cranfield and Dunn over “works of the law” in Romans, for at the heart of this exchange is Paul’s accusation and its relationship to Romans 3:20.

Dunn’s 1988 commentary on Romans was the first to systematically apply the insights of the new perspective on Paul to Romans. In a 1991 article, Cranfield responded to Dunn’s view of ἔργα νόμου in this commentary, and Dunn published his response the next year. Cranfield criticizes Dunn for losing sight of Paul’s argument when he explains ἔργα νόμου in 3:20. To Cranfield, Romans 3:19–20 reaches back to 1:18 and demonstrates that there are no exceptions to the “sweeping judgment” of 1:18–32, even for the Jews. From 1:18 onward Paul leads to the conclusion expressed in 3:20 and 3:23 that all human beings are sinners.³³ Dunn responds that he has not lost sight of Paul’s argument. Indeed, Paul’s point is to establish that the Jews are condemned along with the Gentiles. However, Dunn argues for a different understanding of the nature of Paul’s accusation of the Jew. Paul is not merely indicting the Jew for disobedience to the law (and liability to judgment) in Romans 2–3; he is also attacking a false attitude towards the law.³⁴ The problem to which Paul responds is that “the law is preventing the ‘Jew’ from recognizing the seriousness of his sin. To that degree the primary problem is the Jewish attitude to the law, simply because the sense of difference and of privilege which it inculcates dulls the sense of sin’s seriousness.”³⁵ In other words, when Paul says “no

³³Cranfield, “Works of the Law,” 93.

³⁴Dunn, “Works of the Law,” 108. It should be observed that Dunn has modified his earlier approach in view of Schreiner, who critiques Dunn on the point that “nothing is said here [in Rom 3:20] about a wrong attitude or an exclusive spirit; the problem is disobedience” (Schreiner, “Works of the Law,” 228). To this Dunn says that Paul in Rom 2 has in view “both actual disobedience and the assumption of the ‘Jew’ that such disobedience is not so serious as the lawlessness of the non-Jew” (Dunn, “Works of the Law,” 106). Thus Dunn argues that the problem is both a false attitude toward the law and disobedience, although his argument only seems to emphasize the false attitude.

flesh will be justified by works of the law,” he is accusing the Jew of thinking that his mere possession of the law will shield him from being judged for his sin. Cranfield and Dunn both agree that Paul understands the Jew to be disobedient and under the power of sin along with the Gentile.³⁶ Both also agree that Paul’s Jewish contemporaries were preoccupied with activities that safe-guarded their exclusiveness from Gentiles.³⁷ The question is: which of these does Paul refer to when he argues that no flesh will be justified by the works of the law? Disobedience to the law? Or Jewish exclusiveness?

If the first thesis of this dissertation is correct—i.e., Paul primarily employs the theme of judgment according to works to make a universal accusation of sin and guilt in Romans 1:18–3:20—then it seems far more likely that Romans 3:20 concludes with an accusation of disobedience and that ἔργα νόμου in this verse refers to obedience to the law. Paul uses ἔργον together with its cognates and synonyms to refer to good or evil works throughout the accusation. Condemnation falls upon those who “practice” (πράσσω) the evil works of the Gentiles (Rom 1:32; 2:1, 2, 3). At the judgment those who persevere in the good “work” (ἔργον) and those who “work” (ἐργάζομαι) what is good will receive the positive recompense. On the other hand, those who “work” (κατεργάζομαι) what is evil will receive the negative recompense (2:7–10). The “doers” (ποιητής) of the law will be justified at the judgment (2:13), and certain Gentiles will show that the “work” (ἔργον) of the law is written on their hearts (2:15). Addressing the Jew, Paul argues that circumcision only benefits if you “practice” the law (πράσσω) and that even the Gentile who “practices” (πράσσω) the requirements of the law will be considered to be circumcised (2:25, 26). Finally he speaks of the Gentile “completing” (τελέω) the law (2:27). Within the accusation, these words refer to obedience or

³⁵Dunn, “Works of the Law,” 108–09.

³⁶See Dunn’s response to Cranfield’s critique on this point (ibid., 109).

³⁷See Cranfield’s note of this (“Works of the Law,” 100).

disobedience, and obedience to the law results in the positive recompense. Therefore, it seems likely that Paul would use ἔργα νόμου in connection with justification, the positive recompense of the final judgment, to speak about obedience to the law.

Moreover, Paul's accusation makes it unlikely that the problem with justification by works of the law in Romans 3:20 is an attitude of Jewish exclusiveness. The accusation against the Jewish interlocutor in 2:1–29 does not arise from his exclusive possession of the law but from his possession of the law while being a *transgressor* of it. In fact, Paul argues that the Jewish possession of circumcision is an *advantage* at the judgment if one obeys the law: “Circumcision is of benefit if you practice the law” (2:25a). The problem is not circumcision but transgression: “but if you are a transgressor of the law, then your circumcision has become uncircumcision” (2:25b). Paul's accusation is against the failure of the Jewish people to obey the law.

Therefore, Romans 3:20 draws to a conclusion the accusation Paul has been making since 1:18: The whole world is liable to condemnation at the final judgment of God because of their disobedience—i.e., no flesh will be justified before God by obedience to the law. To argue Romans 3:20 refers to the problem of Jewish exclusion blunts the edge of Paul's indictment.³⁸ His point in this verse is that even the law, when combined with human sin, brings condemnation, not justification. While he believes that the doers of the law will be justified (2:13; cf. the citation of Lev 18:5 in Rom 10:5), his accusation establishes that the power of sin (see 3:9) prevents all human beings from this approach to justification (3:20). This is likely why he says “no *flesh*” will be justified by doing the law in 3:20. The verse alludes to the LXX of Psalm 143:2, a plea that the LORD will not enter into judgment with the psalmist. The foundation of this plea is the same

³⁸Cranfield's concluding comments are perceptive: “In so far as it actually reduces Paul's argument to polemic against a misunderstanding probably not shared by the majority of those he was addressing (not to mention Christians of today), would it perhaps be fair to say that its effect is something of a *Verharmlosung* of the Epistle—a blunting of its cutting edge, a giving of the impression that it is less pointedly relevant to human life than it really is?” (“Works of the Law,” 100).

point as Paul's accusation: "because no living being will be justified before you" (Ps 143:2b). Instead of "no living being," Paul says that "no flesh" will be justified by the works of the law, associating "flesh" with sin.³⁹ He later explains that the law was "weakened by the flesh" so that it was unable to bring life (Rom 8:3; cf. 7:10–12), the positive recompense—i.e., sin prevents the law from justifying.⁴⁰ Thus the accusation leveled by the judgment motif associates justification by works of the law with the plight of the condemning judgment.

Salvation: Justification by Faith

Paul's accusation establishes the need for an alternative approach to the justifying judgment, developed particularly in 3:21–5:21—justification by faith. This approach is associated with salvation, a link which is forged within the thesis statement of Romans: "for I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes . . . because the righteousness of God is revealed in it" (1:16–17). As many have noted, this link between God's salvation and his righteousness is rooted in the Old Testament. Psalm 98:2 says, "The LORD declared his salvation; before the eyes of the nations he revealed his righteousness." Similarly, Isaiah 51:4–8 speaks three times of the LORD's everlasting salvation in parallel with his righteousness as the prophecy comforts the destroyed city of Zion (cf. Isa 46:13). In the thesis statement of Romans, however, Paul draws a particular link between salvation and the revelation of

³⁹Contra Wilckens (Ulrich Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer*, EKK [Zürich: Benziger/Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1980], 1:173). So Gathercole: "Paul is not opposed in principle to the idea of final vindication on the basis of obedience" (Rom 2:7–10); what he is opposed to is the idea that the flesh can accomplish this (Rom 8:3, 7)" (Simon J. Gathercole, "The Doctrine of Justification in Paul and Beyond: Some Proposals," in *Justification in Perspective: Historical Developments and Contemporary Challenges*, ed. Bruce L. McCormack [Grand Rapids: BakerAcademic, 2006], 239).

⁴⁰For an argument that the "inability of the law" in Rom 8:3 refers to its impotence to bring life, see Kevin W. McFadden, "The Fulfillment of the Law's *Dikaiōma*: Another Look at Romans 8:1–4," *JETS* 52 (2009): 487.

God's righteousness *by faith*.⁴¹ Justification by faith in Romans is not merely the positive verdict of the final judgment but salvation from liability to the condemning judgment.⁴²

Paul reinforces the plight-salvation framework and the need for this alternative approach to justification by repeating the accusation as the foundation of justification by faith in Romans 3:21–26. God's righteousness is "for all who believe" (3:22a) *because* "there is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (3:22b–23). This statement is essentially a summary of the accusation in 1:18–3:20: "There is no difference" echoes the impartiality of God; "all have sinned" echoes the summary of Paul's accusation (3:9; cf. 2:12); and "all come short of the glory of God," indirectly echoes both the initial accusation against the Gentiles and the accusation of the Jew. Paul speaks in terms of falling short of God's glory or radiance, perhaps alluding to the tradition in Jewish literature that Adam lost God's glory in the fall.⁴³ More importantly, within the argument of Romans this language points back to the failure of the Gentile world to "give glory to God" (1:21), and the failure of the Jewish people to seek the glory

⁴¹In the context of Rom 1:16–17, the enigmatic phrase ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν likely refers to human faith since Paul speaks of this salvation coming to παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι. While many commentators suggest that the phrase is an idiom of emphasis meaning "completely by faith," Quarles has now demonstrated that this is unlikely in light of the use of the construction ἐκ + A εἰς + A in ancient Greek texts (Charles L. Quarles, "From Faith to Faith: A Fresh Examination of the Prepositional Series in Romans 1:17," *NovT* 45 [2003]: 1–21). It seems most likely to me that Paul is referring to the progress of faith from Jew to Gentile, for he has just stated that the gospel is God's power for salvation to the Jew *first* and also the Greek. "The righteous," both Jew and Greek, "will live by faith."

⁴²In Rom 5:9, Paul distinguishes between justification and salvation, speaking of justification as a present reality which guarantees future salvation from God's wrath. However, this distinction between justification and salvation should not be understood absolutely, because righteousness and salvation are again connected in Rom 10:10: καρδίᾳ γὰρ πιστεύεται εἰς δικαιοσύνην, στόματι δὲ ὁμολογεῖται εἰς σωτηρίαν. Paul is not speaking of two separate acts with two separate results, because salvation in the previous verses is the result of both confessing with the mouth and believing with the heart. Rather, he is picking up on the language "mouth" and "heart" from his quotation of Deut 30:14 and explaining justification by faith in parallel ways.

⁴³E.g., in the Greek version of the *Life of Adam and Eve* (also known as the *Apocalypse of Moses*) Eve describes her enticing of Adam to eat the fruit as the "unlawful words of transgression such as brought us down from great glory," and Adam says to Eve, "O evil woman! Why have you wrought destruction among us? You have estranged me from the glory of God" (*L.A.E.* 20:6; translation from *OTP* 2:281).

which is the positive recompense of the final judgment (2:7, 10).⁴⁴ This summary of the plight once again establishes the universal need for an alternative approach to justification which offers salvation.⁴⁵

There is a striking contrast between the accusation and this alternative approach to justification, a contrast particularly noticeable when Paul identifies justification by faith as the justification of the “ungodly” (4:5; cf. 5:10). In the accusation Paul argues that God’s wrath is against πᾶσαν ἀσέβειαν καὶ ἀδικίαν of men. But now, with the revelation of God’s righteousness by faith, God justifies τὸν ἀσεβῆ (4:5) and Christ died for the ἀσεβῶν (5:6).⁴⁶ By implication, one can also say that Christ died for the unrighteous, for Paul contrasts Christ’s death for the ἀσεβῶν with someone dying for a δικαίου (5:7).

There is a parallel contrast between the first approach to justification and its alternative. In the first approach, God will repay to each person according to their works (2:6). Thus, he will justify only the doers of the law (2:13), whereas whoever ἥμαρτον will be condemned (2:12). But in the alternative approach, God justifies those ἥμαρτον (3:23; cf. 6:8). Thus the alternative approach to justification in some sense reverses the

⁴⁴In Romans Paul often speaks of glory as the eschatological reward (Rom 5:2; 8:18, 21, 30; 9:4, 23). There is a close connection in Romans between the glory of God which humanity ought to praise and the glory of God which they should seek for themselves. Even the result of justification in Romans is described as “the hope of the glory of God” (Rom 5:2).

⁴⁵Seifrid rightly concludes that “Paul’s preceding claim, that the Jew stands under divine judgment, is therefore the linchpin of his argument in Rom 3:21–26. The repetition of this idea in Rom 3:23 (πάντες γὰρ ἥμαρτον καὶ ὑστεροῦνται τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ) is not superfluous, but central to the argument of this section” (Seifrid, *Justification by Faith*, 222).

⁴⁶Regarding Rom 4:5, Yinger argues that Paul’s “rather shocking language of belief in ‘the one who justifies the ungodly’ was not meant by Paul to overturn a fundamental biblical axiom [he notes Exod 23:7; Prov 17:15; 24:24; Isa 5:23; Sir 42:2; CD I,19], but to hint at Abraham’s lack of crucial law-works at the time of his believing in Genesis 15:6” (Kent L. Yinger, *Paul, Judaism, and Judgment According to Deeds* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999], 185). By “crucial law-works” he means works which are crucial to Jewish identity (ibid., 186). But in the context of Paul’s argument, the language of “ungodliness” refers to the reason God’s wrath is being revealed against the world (Rom 1:18), and it is later contrasted with the language of “righteousness” and “goodness” (Rom 5:6–7). It is not a simple matter of Abraham’s initial non-Jewish identity but of his lack of righteousness.

accusation leveled by the theme of judgment according to works. Although the alternative approach to justification is the positive verdict of final judgment, there is clearly a sense in which it is not a recompense according to works. In distinction from the approach to justification explained in 2:13 and 3:20, the ground of this saving, justifying judgment is not one's obedience to the Mosaic law.

On the contrary, Paul grounds this alternative approach to justification in faith (Rom 3:22–23), grace (3:24a), and “the redemption which is in Christ Jesus” (3:24b).⁴⁷ The positive recompense comes by a faith in God like Abraham had (Rom 4), in particular a faith in Jesus Christ (3:22).⁴⁸ It is also comes about “freely by his grace,” for it is the justification of sinners, those who would rightly be condemned (3:23–24a). Most fundamentally, it comes about through the death of Jesus Christ (3:24b), a ground which Paul goes at length to explain in the adjective clauses of 3:25–26 which modify Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ in 3:24b. In these verses Paul describes the death of Christ as a condemning judgment for human sins.

First, Paul says that God set Christ forth as a ἱλαστήριον. . . ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι” (3:25a).⁴⁹ It is possible that ἱλαστήριον refers to the “mercy-seat” above the ark of the covenant, since this is word the LXX typically uses to translate כַּפֶּרֶת. However,

⁴⁷Bird has now rightly stressed the foundational role of the Christ's resurrection to justification by faith (see Rom 4:25) (Bird, *Saving Righteousness*, 40–59). But it must still be stressed that the cross is in focus as the ground of justification in Rom 3:21–26.

⁴⁸New Testament scholars now question whether πίστις Χριστοῦ is an objective genitive meaning “faith in Christ” or a subjective genitive meaning “faithfulness of Christ” (for an overview of the debate, see Michael F. Bird and Preston M. Sprinkle, eds., *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2009]). For the purpose of this dissertation I will speak of “justification by faith,” rather than “justification by faithfulness,” because the objective genitive has been assumed by most in the history of research on judgment in Paul, and because if the “faithfulness of Christ” view is correct, Paul still speaks of justification “for those who believe” (τοὺς πιστεύοντας, 3:22), whereas if the “faith in Christ” view is correct, Paul never speaks of justification by Christ's faithfulness.

⁴⁹The phrase ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι most likely modifies ἱλαστήριον since sacrifices were made with blood. Note also that “set forth” seems to capture the verbal idea of προ-τίθημι, although perhaps Paul speaks of a public display (so BDAG, s.v., “προτίθημι,” use 2). The definition “to plan in advance” seems out of context here.

as Leon Morris observes, the LXX always uses the article to distinguish τὸ ἱλαστήριον as *the* place of propitiation. The only exception is its first occurrence in Exodus 25:17, and in this case ἱλαστήριον is apparently an adjective modifying ἐπίθεμα.⁵⁰ More important is the question over whether ἱλαστήριον refers to an expiatory sacrifice which simply wipes away sin or a propitiatory sacrifice which assuages the wrath of God. The arguments of Dodd and Morris regarding this issue fifty years ago have still not persuaded the majority of scholars in one direction or the other.⁵¹ In Romans 3:25a the flow of the context should be given priority in interpretation. I have argued against Dodd that God is agent of judgment in Romans 1:18–32 and 2:1–29. The plight developed in 1:18–3:20 is the wrath of God’s judgment breaking into human history and awaiting its full manifestation at the final day. Salvation from this plight must address the problem of divine wrath, and, as Morris observes, ἱλαστήριον is the only word in 3:21–26 which may express the turning away of wrath.⁵² Thus ἱλαστήριον in this context should be understood as a propitiatory sacrifice which assuages the wrath or condemning judgment of God.⁵³

Second, Paul describes the cross as a condemning judgment of the cross in the motive clauses which outline the purpose for which God set forth Christ as a propitiatory sacrifice—in order to demonstrate his righteousness (Rom 3:25b–26). As was observed in chapter 4, New Testament scholars since Luther tend to exclude divine judgment in their definitions of the phrase δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ in Romans, rejecting the concept of *iustitia distributiva* which Luther abandoned. Following up this discussion, I will now argue that the righteousness of God in 3:25b–26 is expressed through the divine judgment of sin in

⁵⁰See Leon Morris, “The Meaning of ἱλαστήριον in Romans III.25,” *NTS* 2 (1955–56): 33–34.

⁵¹C. H. Dodd, *The Bible and the Greeks* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1935); and Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965).

⁵²Morris, *Apostolic Preaching*, 201.

⁵³So Wright, *Romans*, 476.

the propitiatory sacrifice of Jesus Christ.⁵⁴ To this end I will interact with what is perhaps the most influential essay arguing that δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ means divine salvation in the passage—Kümmel’s piece on ἔνδειξις and πάρεσις.⁵⁵

Kümmel argues that ἔνδειξις in Romans 3:25b–26 means a “demonstration” (*Kundwerden*) of God’s righteousness through his saving action rather than a “proof” (*Beweiss*) of God’s righteousness to those who have questioned it; and πάρεσις means a “remission” (*Erläss*) of sins rather than a “passing over” (*Hingehenlassen*) of sins.⁵⁶ In his interpretation of these verses, the divine purpose of Christ’s death was a demonstration of God’s righteousness in salvation through the forgiveness of previously committed sins, rather than, as is commonly suggested, the proof of God’s righteousness in judgment because of his passing over of previously committed sins. In defense of his translation of ἔνδειξις, Kümmel observes that God’s righteousness refers to the *saving action* of justification in 1:17 and 3:21, not the righteous character of God which must be defended.⁵⁷ But God’s righteous character and actions should not be separated,⁵⁸ and Kümmel fails to mention 3:5, a text in which God’s righteousness is expressed through

⁵⁴After the influence of Bultmann and Käsemann, many scholars consider it “beyond reasonable doubt” that Rom 3:25–26 is a fragment of pre-Pauline Christian tradition (C. H. Talbert, “A Non-Pauline Fragment at Romans 3:24–26,” *JBL* 85 [1966]: 287; note that Käsemann originally argued that Rom 3:24 is also included in the fragment, Ernst Käsemann, “Zum Verständnis von Römer 3,24–26,” in *Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960], 96–100). The difficulty with this line of thinking comes when scholars suggest that the statements are therefore not part of Paul’s own argument. Wright correctly observes the unlikelihood of such a suggestion: “It is by no means impossible that Paul was making use, in what is after all a highly charged and densely packed statement, of phrases already familiar in early Christianity. But here of all places, he is very unlikely to have allowed himself to say something he did not mean” (Wright, *Romans*, 371).

⁵⁵Werner Georg Kümmel, “Πάρεσις und ἔνδειξις: Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis der paulinischen Rechtfertigungslehre,” in *Heilsgeschehen und Geschichte* (Marburg: N. G. Elwert Verlag, 1965), 260–70.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 260–61.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 265–66.

⁵⁸So N. T. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 103.

his judgment of sin, establishing the possibility that δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ may refer to God's judgment in 3:25b–26. Kümmel further observes Paul's argument in 9:19–20 that human beings cannot bring God's actions into question.⁵⁹ However, one need not think that human beings are wrongly questioning God's righteousness in 3:25b–26 in the way that Paul's interlocutor questions God's judgment in 3:5–8 and 9:19–20. Paul is not arguing that God must prove his righteousness to human beings as much as he is arguing that God must *be* righteous,⁶⁰ for the intended result of the demonstration of his righteousness is εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν δίκαιον (3:26). The idea is that God would not be righteous if he did not punish previously committed sins: διὰ τὴν πάρεσιν τῶν προγεγονότων ἁμαρτημάτων. This concept is rooted in a programmatic statement of the law in which the LORD reveals himself to Moses as one who “will by no means leave [sin, or the guilty person] unpunished” (יְהוָה אֵלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה) (Exod 34:7).

In defense of his translation of πάρεσις as “remission” rather than “passing over,” Kümmel observes that Romans 1:24–32 establishes that God does not pass over previously committed sins. This point, however, misses the key allusion relating 3:25b–26 back to 2:1–5. Paul speaks of the “forbearance of God” in 3:26, echoing his accusation of the Jewish interlocutor who despises the “riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience” (2:4). Kümmel suggests that ἀνοχή in 2:4 does not refer to a passing over of sins but speaks of the final fate of man which is still left open. But this makes no sense of 2:5 in which Paul tells the dialogue partner he is “storing up wrath” for himself on the day of judgment—in other words, the judgment for his sin is piling up because God is overlooking punishment of that sin in the present time. God's wrath is being revealed within human history (Rom 1:18–32) but not to its full measure (cf. Wis 12:10). In particular, Paul speaks of the present forbearance of God's wrath against the Jewish

⁵⁹Kümmel, “Πάρεσις und ἔνδειξις,” 267.

⁶⁰See especially Cranfield, *Romans*, 1: 213; and Schreiner, *Romans*, 197–98.

people in Romans 2:4. With an allusion to this verse, it is most likely that πάρεσις in Romans 3:25b–26 refers to God’s “passing over,” of previously committed sins in his forbearance.

Interpreting πάρεσις as a “passing over” rather than “forgiveness” also makes better sense of Paul’s description of these sins as “previously committed.” If πάρεσις simply means “remission,” then there is no reason to qualify that these sins were committed “previously.” However, if the word means “passing over,” then Paul would need to specify that these were sins committed before the revelation of God’s righteousness which had not yet been judged. This translation also makes better sense of the preposition διὰ with the accusative. Technically, διὰ with the accusative can mean “through” as Kümmel suggests.⁶¹ But in this context, Paul has already used διὰ with the genitive to mean “through” three times. Why would he not use the genitive object again?⁶² Instead, he seems to use the accusative case to indicate a causal relationship. God demonstrated his righteousness *because of* the πάρεσις of previously committed sins. With this reading, once again, “passing over” makes the best sense of the word.

I conclude, therefore, that the motive clauses of Romans 3:25b–26 indicate that God orchestrated the death of Christ Jesus in order to demonstrate his righteousness because he had previously passed over sins in his forbearance.⁶³ In this reading, the righteousness of God in 3:25b–26 must refer to his judgment of sin in the sacrificial death of the Messiah.⁶⁴

⁶¹This use, rare with the accusative, indicates the efficient cause, meaning “via” or “through” (BDAG, s.v., “διὰ,” use A.3.d and B.2.d; see also C. D. F. Moule, *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek*, 2nd ed. [London: Cambridge University Press, 1959], 54–55).

⁶²I am indebted to Campbell for this observation (Douglas A. Campbell, *The Rhetoric of Righteousness in Romans 3.21–26*, JSNTSup 65 [Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1992], 194).

⁶³For a similar reading of these verses, see John Piper, *The Justification of God: An Exegetical & Theological Study of Romans 9:1–23*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 135–50.

⁶⁴So Stuhlmacher, who argues that Christ’s death is a vicarious condemnation for sinners (*Justification*, 61). Although in his dissertation he followed his *Doktorvater* and argued that the

Thus, as in Romans 3:5, judgment is one expression of the righteousness of God in 3:21–26. In contrast with 3:5, however, God’s righteousness is not a distributive righteousness for all people, but a judgment of sin in the sacrificial death of Christ. In this sense, Luther was correct that the revelation of God’s righteousness in the gospel is not the *iustitia distributiva* of which he was so afraid. Instead, God’s righteousness in Romans is the salvation of God by means of the condemning judgment carried out in the death of Christ Jesus for human sins. Paul repeats the purpose clause two times in 3:25b–26, demonstrating the importance of the aspect of the judgment of the cross as a component of the righteousness of God in Romans. This is a judgment which means salvation. It is the ground of the alternative approach to justification. Paul speaks of justification bringing the positive verdict of the final judgment into the present, because God has carried out the negative verdict within human history in the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. The proleptic condemnation of sin in the flesh of Jesus Christ is the ground of the proleptic justification of those who believe.⁶⁵

Finally, justification by faith in Romans is Paul’s way of speaking comprehensively about salvation from the condemning judgment, a salvation which extends to the final, eschatological judgment itself. As was observed in the first section of this chapter, justification is the positive verdict of the *final* judgment, but Paul’s vision of this judgment recedes from view after Romans 3:20, not clearly reemerging until Romans 14. This phenomenon can now be explained by Paul’s understanding of the cross and its relationship to the eschatological judgment: The revelation of God’s righteousness in the

righteousness of God in Romans refers solely to God’s saving power, he was later compelled by Romans 3:5 and 3:25–26 to see divine judgment as one expression of the righteousness of God (Scott Hafemann, “The ‘Righteousness of God’: An Introduction to the Theological and Historical Foundation of Peter Stuhlmacher’s Biblical Theology of the New Testament,” in *How to Do Biblical Theology* [Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1995], 255–61).

⁶⁵So Ridderbos: “Paul’s doctrine of justification is a definite interpretation and application of his eschatology. . .” (Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, trans. John Richard De Witt [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975], 162–63).

present time through the cross brings both the condemning and justifying verdicts of the final judgment into the present.⁶⁶ Paul's vision of the final judgment does not disappear in 3:21 because it has no relationship with justification by faith, for the entire first discourse of the letter provides the ideological context of justification. Rather, Paul's vision of the final judgment recedes from view because in the cross, the condemning and justifying verdicts have been made *within human history*. In one sense, the verdict of the final judgment has already been made.

In the history of research of judgment according to works in Paul, several scholars have suggested that justification by faith refers only to salvation from "previously committed sins" (see Rom 3:25) and not from the final judgment itself. Filson followed the work of Wernle and argued that Paul "never states that the benefits of Christ's death avail for sins committed after baptism."⁶⁷ Vanlandingham has recently made a similar argument, suggesting that justification by faith in Paul refers to forgiveness of past sins and freedom from the power of sin but that works "form the ultimate criterion for determining one's eternal destiny at the Last Judgment."⁶⁸ In response, as Vos noted years ago in response to Wernle, "it ought to be sufficient answer to quote Romans 5:1–11 and 8:31–39."⁶⁹ To suggest that the salvation of justification by faith does not avail for future sins in Romans is to miss the thesis of the letter altogether.⁷⁰ In fact, as Paul develops of the results of justification by faith in Romans 5–

⁶⁶This present (νῦν) manifestation of God's righteousness in Rom 3:21–26 refers to the time characterized by both the objective event of the cross and the subjective event of faith in the life of Paul's readers. One may compare Gal 3:23–29 where Paul telescopes the coming of Christ with the coming of "faith" and the baptism of his converts. Although some argue that πίστις in this context refers to the "faithfulness" of Christ, one may still observe the telescoping of the objective event of Christ and the subjective event of baptism into Christ.

⁶⁷Floyd Filson, *St. Paul's Conception of Recompense* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche, 1931), 16.

⁶⁸VanLandingham, *Judgment and Justification*, 302–3, 175.

⁶⁹Geehardus Vos, "The Alleged Legalism in Paul's Doctrine of Justification," in *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Richard B. Gaffin, Jr. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1980), 385.

8, he argues that justification is a comprehensive salvation which guarantees the positive verdict of the final judgment itself.

The beginning of Romans 5–8 lists several results of justification by faith, including peace and the hope of the resurrection or “God’s glory” (5:1–2). This statement anticipates the “golden chain” of 8:29–30 in which those whom God foreknew, he predestined, called, justified, and glorified. The glory of God is the positive recompense of the final judgment (cf. 2:7, 10), and Paul now argues that justification by faith gives the hope of this future glory. Similarly, in 5:9 Paul employs a lesser-to-greater argument in order to prove that those who have been justified through the death of Christ will certainly be saved from God’s wrath. The mention of “wrath” with the future tense σωθησόμεθα clearly points to a salvation which will take place at the final judgment, “day of wrath and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God” (2:5). Justification by faith, then, results in the hope of the positive recompense and the guarantee of salvation from the final condemning judgment.

Within the argument of Romans 5–8, Paul speaks of justification as a verdict which comprehends the final judgment. In 5:12–21 those who receive the justification which resulted from Christ (the “abundance of the grace and the gift of righteousness”) certainly “will reign in life,” a statement which evokes both the eschatological kingdom of God and the positive recompense of the divine judgment (cf. “life” in 2:7). Paul similarly speaks of the “justification of life” in 5:18, again associating justification with the resurrection life of the age to come. In 8:1–4 Paul opens with the statement “there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus” (8:1). Just as “no justification” in 3:20 means “condemnation,” so “no condemnation” in 8:1 means “justification.” This justifying verdict revealed within human history (νῦν, 8:1) and grounded in the condemning judgment of the cross (8:3) guarantees that the threat of the condemning

⁷⁰This is the critical point at which VanLandingham’s thesis about Paul falls short.

judgment cannot come about in any way.⁷¹ It is a comprehensive salvation from the condemning judgment of God.

Finally, the end of Romans 5–8 speaks of Christ’s death, resurrection, and intercession as the guarantee of the comprehensive nature of justification (8:31–39). After delineating the golden chain of foreknowledge-predestination-calling-justification-glorification, Paul asks, “if God is for us, who is against us?” (8:31) The nature of God being “for us” is rooted in the death of Christ (“He who did not spare his own Son but gave him for us all. . .”), and it is comprehensive of “all things” (“. . . how will he not also with him freely give us all things”) (8:32). In particular, God’s justifying verdict is guaranteed for the future: “Who will bring a charge against the elect of God? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who will condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died, and more was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us” (8:33–34). Interestingly, Paul extends the impossibility of condemnation to the present intercession of the Messiah for God’s elect. He does not envision forgiveness of past sins only, for in that case there would be no purpose for the present intercession of Christ at the right hand of God. And he has confidence that no one can ever bring a charge against God’s elect. VanLandingham suggests here that Paul’s confidence is rooted in his assumption that “believers will remain on the path they themselves have freely chosen.”⁷² But the text itself indicates that Paul’s confidence is in the death (ὁ ἀποθάνων), resurrection (ἐγερθείς), and intercession (ἐντυγχάνει ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν) of Christ (Rom 8:34).⁷³

⁷¹Lowe argues that the verdict of “no condemnation” in Rom 8:1 is grounded in the works of Christian obedience (Chuck Lowe, “‘There is No Condemnation’ [Romans 8:1]: But Why Not?” *JETS* 42 [1999]: 231–50). But a close reading of 8:1–4 demonstrates that Paul grounds the justifying verdict in the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ (see McFadden, “Romans 8:1–4,” 483–97).

⁷²VanLandingham, *Judgment and Justification*, 328. This a quite a statement when one considers that Paul’s confidence concerns “God’s *elect*”!

⁷³So Volf, who concludes from Rom 8:31–34 that “in the cross of Jesus Christ God has already given the definitive word of acquittal for those who believe” (Judith M. Gundry-Volf, *Paul and*

Conclusion

In conclusion, the theme of judgment according to works in Romans 1:18–3:20 lays a foundation for Paul’s doctrine of justification by faith in two ways. First, it orients readers towards the theme of justification by providing its ideological context. Justification is the positive verdict of the final judgment on the ground of doing the Mosaic law (Rom 2:13). This is the first approach to the justifying judgment in Romans. Second, the accusation leveled by the judgment motif defines the plight from which justification by faith offers salvation. Paul’s universal accusation of sin and guilt associates the first approach to justification with the plight—human sin prevents the law from being obeyed, rendering “the doers of the law” (2:13) to be an empty set. The accusation establishes the need for an alternative approach to justification, a justifying judgment on the ground of faith, grace, and the sacrificial death of Christ. It is an approach associated with salvation from the plight. Paul argues that the positive verdict of the final judgment comes to sinful Jews and Gentiles only through justification by faith, a justifying judgment which is in some sense *not* a judgment according to works, because it is grounded in the condemning judgment of the cross which justifies the ungodly. This alternative approach to the justifying judgment differentiates it from the condemning judgment in Romans, a point which will be developed in chapter 9. First, however, I must explain how Paul can describe Gentiles who complete the law and seem to be justified according to the first approach—i.e., the riddle of Romans 2.

Perseverance: Staying in and Falling away [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1990], 69). See her full discussion of the passage, 65–69. So also Stuhlmacher, who repeatedly observes that Rom 8:34 presents the risen Christ as the guarantor of justification until the final judgment (*Justification*, 31, 52, 56, 58–59, 62).

CHAPTER 7

THE RIDDLE OF ROMANS 2

Introduction

Thus far I have argued that Paul employs the judgment motif in Romans 1:18–3:20 to level a universal accusation of sin and liability to the condemning judgment of God. This accusation lays a foundation for Paul’s doctrine of justification in Romans by ruling out the possibility of justification on the ground of obedience to the law and demonstrating the need for an alternative approach to justification, a justifying judgment on the ground of faith (3:21–22), grace (3:23–24a), and the cross of Christ (3:24b–26). How then can Paul speak in Romans 2 of Gentiles who complete the law and receive the positive recompense at the final judgment? This chapter will finally address this riddle in Romans 2. It will explain the nature of the problem, outline three possible solutions, and then offer a mediating solution. I will argue that the riddle of Romans 2 is solved when the Gentiles who complete the law are understood to be Gentiles who partake in the new covenant. My solution is very similar to the Gentile Christian view suggested by many scholars. However, I will argue that interpreters must also adopt elements of the hypothetical view in order to make sense of Paul’s accusation. Paul’s accusation renders the category of those who do the Mosaic law and receive the positive recompense to be an empty set (2:7, 10, 13). However, Paul sees a close analogy between the obedience required by the Mosaic law, which was hindered by sin, and the new covenant obedience which is enabled by the Spirit, for this obedience fulfills the law.

Three Proposed Solutions

Paul’s vision of the final judgment in Romans 2 has raised exegetical and

theological questions since the beginning of Christian commentary on the letter. Origen pondered how God's judgment could be according to truth if he also forgives people's sins.¹ Augustine changed his mind about the identity of the Gentiles in 2:14–15.² And more recently, the interpretive tensions in the chapter have led a few scholars to charge Paul with inconsistency. These tensions arise from Paul's description of certain Gentiles who complete the law and receive the positive recompense at the final judgment (2:14–15, 26–29), a description which seems to contradict the universal accusation of 1:18–3:20.³ Some scholars solve this riddle by arguing that Paul does not in fact make a *universal* accusation. But I have already established in chapter 5 that this view is incorrect—the scope of Paul's accusation in 1:18–3:20 is universal. Other scholars solve the problem with one of three options: A few argue that Paul is inconsistent; some argue that the Gentiles who receive the positive recompense are only a hypothetical possibility; and others argue that Paul speaks of Gentile *Christians* who fulfill the law by the Spirit.⁴

First, a few scholars suggest that Paul is inconsistent in Romans 2. Räisänen

¹“But it is asked whether God seems to hold judgment in accordance with truth towards those whose iniquities have been forgiven through the grace of baptism, or whose sins have been covered through repentance, or to whom sin is not going to be imputed on account of the glory of martyrdom. The truthfulness of judgment, of course, demands that the bad man receives bad things and the good man good things . . .” (Origen, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans: Books 1–5*, trans. Thomas P. Schneck [Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2001], 102–03). Origen's answer to the question is that the man who repents of his evil deeds and then does good is worthy to receive good things (and vice versa) (ibid.).

²See Simon J. Gathercole, “A Conversion of Augustine: From Natural Law to Restored Nature in Romans 2.13–16,” *SBL Seminar Papers* (1999): 327–58.

³Sanders articulates the problem well: “The principle incongruity within the section is easily spotted and well known: the Gentiles are condemned universally and in sweeping terms in 1:18–32, while in 2:12–15, 26 Paul entertains the possibility that some will be saved by works” (E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1983], 123–24).

⁴A few scholars suggest that 2:14–15 and 26–29 describe moral Gentiles outside of Judaism and Christianity who respond to the revelation given to them and receive the positive recompense (J. M. Bassler, *Divine Impartiality: Paul and a Theological Axiom*, SBLDS 59 [Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982], 141–45; Molly Truman Marshall, *No Salvation Outside the Church? A Critical Inquiry*, NABPR Dissertation Series, 9 [Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1993], 225; John W. Martins, “Romans 2.14–16: A Stoic Reading,” *NTS* 40 [1994]: 55–67). But this view is impossible if, as I have argued, Paul makes a universal accusation in Rom 1:18–3:20.

argues that Romans 2:14–15 and 2:26–27 “stand in flat contradiction to the main thesis of the section,”⁵ and he concludes that “Paul’s mind is divided.”⁶ Sanders similarly concludes that Paul’s case for universal sinfulness in 1:18–2:29 is unpersuasive and inconsistent.⁷ Rather than locating this inconsistency within Paul’s own thinking, however, Sanders offers a source-critical explanation. Romans 2 cannot be harmonized with what Paul says elsewhere about the law because the source of Paul’s argument is a previously composed synagogue sermon.⁸ In response, interpreters should always seek a plausible explanation within a text before appealing to inconsistency, unless the author gives reason to believe he or she is incoherent. Incoherence may be likely in a carelessly written document or in a document written by a delusional person. But incoherence is very unlikely in the letter to the Romans, since commentators generally recognize the majesty of its argument.⁹ It stretches the imagination to believe that Paul is simply inconsistent or has incorporated a source into a key place in the letter’s argument which contradicts the very thesis he is trying to establish.

Second, many highlight the conditional nature of Paul’s argument and suggest

⁵Heikki Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, WUNT 29 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1983), 103.

⁶*Ibid.*, 107.

⁷Sanders, *Paul and the Jewish People*, 125.

⁸Sanders, *Paul and the Jewish People*, 123. Douglas Campbell’s novel interpretation of 1:18–3:20 is also driven by Paul’s apparent inconsistency (Douglas A. Campbell, *The Quest for Paul’s Gospel: A Suggested Strategy*, JSNT [London: T. & T. Clark International, 2005], 233–61). His new book is essentially a continuation of this approach (Douglas A. Campbell, *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009]).

⁹Wright justly waxes eloquent in the opening words of his commentary: “Romans is neither a systematic theology nor a summary of Paul’s lifework, but it is by common consent his masterpiece. It dwarfs most of his other writings, an Alpine peak towering over hills and villages. Not all onlookers have viewed it in the same light or from the same angle, and their snapshots and paintings of it are sometimes remarkably unlike. Not all climbers have taken the same route up its sheer sides, and there is frequent disagreement on the best approach. What nobody doubts is that we are here dealing with a work of massive substance, presenting a formidable intellectual challenge while offering a breathtaking theological and spiritual vision” (N. Thomas Wright, *Romans*, in vol. 10 of *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002], 395).

that Paul speaks of the positive recompense in Romans 2 as only a hypothetical possibility which no one fulfills.¹⁰ The conclusion of Paul's accusation demonstrates that the category of those who do what is good is an "empty set." No flesh will be justified by doing the law (3:20), i.e., no one actually does the law and is justified at the final judgment (2:13).¹¹ As far as I can tell, this reading goes back to the Protestant commentaries of Melancthon and Calvin, who both adopt a hypothetical reading of Romans 2:13. However, it is not as though earlier commentators failed to see that 2:13 must be explained in light of 3:20. The fourth century commentator "Ambrosiaster" suggests that "the doers of the law" in 2:13 are actually those who believe in Christ because of the argument of the letter as a whole.¹² And Aquinas observes that 2:13 "seems to conflict with his [Paul's] own statement below (3:20) that 'no human being will be justified in his sight by the works of the law.' Consequently, no one is justified precisely for doing the works of the Law."¹³ Melancthon and Calvin, however, seem to be the first to suggest that "the doers of the law" in 2:13 are an empty set. Melancthon argues that in 2:13 "Paul is speaking of the ideal and convicts the Jews that they are not righteous by the Law, because no one satisfies the Law. Therefore this passage cannot be twisted

¹⁰It is common to argue against the hypothetical reading that there are no conditional statements in Rom 2, particularly in 2:12–16 (e.g., Michael Bird, *The Saving Righteousness of God: Studies on Paul, Justification, and the New Perspective* [Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007], 160). But this argument is misguided, for the theme of judgment according to works is by its very nature conditional: If people do good, then they will be justified; if they do evil, they will perish (cf. 2:7–10; 2:12).

¹¹As noted in chapter 6, I borrow the term "empty set" from Lee Irons, who has written one of the best recent defenses of the hypothetical view of Rom 2 in an unpublished paper (Lee Irons, "Romans 2:13: Is Paul Coherent?" [on-line]; accessed 23 April 2010; available from <http://www.upper-register.com/papers/Rom213.pdf>; Internet).

¹²Ambrosiaster, *Commentaries on Romans and 1–2 Corinthians*, Ancient Christian Texts, trans. and ed. by Gerald L. Bray (Downers Grove, IL: 2009), 17–18.

¹³Thomas Aquinas, *Lectures on the Letter to the Romans*, trans. Fabian Larcher, ed. Jeremy Holmes with the support of the Aquinas Center for Theological Renewal, 112 [on-line]; accessed 23 June 2010; available from http://www.aquinas.avemaria.edu/Aquinas_on_Romans.pdf 112; Internet. Interestingly, Aquinas argues that "works of the law" in Rom 3:20 cannot be merely ceremonial laws because of the phrase "the law reveals the knowledge of sin" (ibid., 151). He explains the tension between Rom 2:13 and 3:20 by explaining justification in two different senses in the two verses (ibid., 112).

against the righteousness of faith.”¹⁴ And Calvin observes that “the doers of the law” in 2:13 are an empty set because no one can keep the law perfectly.¹⁵ Many subsequent commentators have argued for a hypothetical reading of 2:13, including Gill, Murray, Bruce, and Wilckens.¹⁶

All of these commentators, including Melancthon and Calvin, argue that the positive recompense in Romans 2:13 is hypothetical, while the positive recompense in 2:7 and 10 is fulfilled by Christian obedience. A few, however, take a consistently hypothetical approach to Romans 2. Lietzmann argues that the positive recompense according to works would only come if fulfillment of the law was possible and the gospel did not exist. Thus it is hypothetical.¹⁷ Moo does not like the language “hypothetical,” but nevertheless he argues that Paul’s category of those who do good and receive the positive recompense is an empty set:

vv. 7 and 10 set forth what is called in traditional theological (especially Lutheran) language ‘the law.’ Paul sets forth the biblical conditions for attaining eternal life apart from Christ. Understood this way, Paul is not speaking hypothetically. But once his doctrine of universal human powerlessness under sin has been developed (cf. 3:9 especially), it becomes clear that the promise can, in fact, never become operative because the condition for its fulfillment—consistent, earnest seeking after good—can never be realized.¹⁸

¹⁴Philip Melancthon, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. Fred Kramer (St. Louis: Concordia, 1992), 89.

¹⁵John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*, trans. and ed. John Owen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948 [original, 1539]), 89–96. See also *Institutes*, where Calvin explains 2:13 with this syllogism: “the righteousness of the law lies in perfection of works; no one can boast that he has fulfilled the law through works; consequently, there is no righteousness arising from the law” (3.17.13). Calvin also reads Rom 2:26–7 as only a hypothetical possibility (*Romans*, 110).

¹⁶John Gill, *An Exposition of the Epistle Paul the Apostle to the Romans*, Newport Commentary Series (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2002 [original, 1809], 44–52; Murray does not officially endorse a position on 2:13 but he favorably cites Philippi who argues for the hypothetical reading (John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT, old series [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965], 60–72); F. F. Bruce, *Romans*, rev. ed., TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 84–86; Ulrich Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer*, Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament [Zürich: Benziger/Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1980], 1:126–7, 132–33.

¹⁷Hans Lietzmann, *An die Römer* (Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 1919), 38.

Lietzmann and Moo likewise speak of “the doers of the law” in 2:13 and the Gentile who “completes the law” in 2:26–27 as empty sets.¹⁹ In summary, according to the hypothetical view, Paul’s description of Gentiles who complete the law and receive the positive recompense is a group which does not exist because of the power of sin.²⁰

Third, many argue that Romans 2 describes Gentile *Christians* who fulfill the law by the Spirit and receive the positive recompense. There are two variations of this view. A few commentators argue that the doing of good which will be repaid eternal life (ἔργον ἀγαθός in 2:7 and τὸ ἀγαθόν in 2:10) is actually faith. There is a parallel in John 6:29: “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘This is the work of God (τὸ ἔργον τοῦ θεοῦ), that you believe in the one he has sent.’” This view is prominent throughout the commentary of Ambrosiaster in Romans 2. He speaks of the positive recompense in 2:10 as the “benefits for believers.”²¹ And, commenting on Paul’s statement that “the doers of the law will be justified” (2:13), he notes that

Paul says this because those who hear the law are not justified unless they believe in Christ, whom the law itself has promised. This is what it means to keep the law. For how does someone who does not believe the law keep it, when he does not receive the one to whom the law bears witness?²²

Some modern scholars speak in a similar way. For example, Flückiger speaks of the norm

¹⁸Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 142. Byrne also seems to take a consistently hypothetical view, but he does not clearly explain what he thinks about the positive recompense in 2:7 and 10 (Brendan Byrne, *Romans*, Sacra Pagina [Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1996], 82–83, 89).

¹⁹Lietzmann, *Römer*, 42; Moo, *Romans*, 148, 172. Note that Moo does not speak of the Gentiles who “do the things of the law” in 2:14–15 to be an empty set, because these are “Gentiles who do some part of the law but who are not saved” (Moo, *Romans*, 148).

²⁰Marshall, Westerholm, and Piper also adopt this view (I. H. Marshall, *New Testament Theology: Many Witnesses, One Gospel* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004], 439; Stephen Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The “Lutheran” Paul and His Critics* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004], 271 n. 23; John Piper, *The Future of Justification: A Response to N. T. Wright* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007], 109–10).

²¹Ambrosiaster, *Romans and 1–2 Corinthians* 17.

²²*Ibid.*, 18.

of the positive recompense of the final judgment as the righteousness of faith.²³ This suggestion rightly highlights the close association of faith and obedience in Romans. Paul can speak of faith itself as a kind of obedience—e.g., in 10:16 one could substitute πιστεύω for ὑπακούω: “not all have obeyed [i.e., believed] the good news.”²⁴ However, it wrongly *equates* faith with obedience in Romans 2. In 2:13, one cannot substitute πιστοί for ποιηταί: “the doers [~~i.e., believers~~] of the law will be justified.”

Most scholars who adopt the Gentile Christian view argue that the good which will be repaid the positive recompense (Rom 2:7, 10, and 13) is the Christian fulfillment of the law by the Spirit (cf. 8:4; 13:8–10). Scholars who argue for this position include Ridderbos, Cranfield, Schreiner, Wright, and Caneday.²⁵ To be clear, Ridderbos and Schreiner see Christian obedience in 2:26–29, but argue that in 2:14–15 Paul is speaking of only the occasional obedience of unbelieving Gentiles.²⁶ The other scholars listed understand Paul to be referring to Christian Gentiles in both 2:14–15 and 2:26–29. These nuances will be discussed below as I hammer out a mediating solution which is similar to the Christian obedience view but adopts elements of the hypothetical view.

²³“Die Glaubensgerechtigkeit diese Norm sei” (Felix Flückiger, “Zur Unterscheidung von Heiden und Juden in Röm. 1,18–2,3,” TZ 10 [1954]: 39).

²⁴Also, in my view, the phrase ὑπακοή πίστεως likely refers to faith as a kind of obedience—“the obedience which is faith” (1:5; 16:26; cf. 6:17; 10:16; 16:19). So, e.g., Wright, *Romans*, 240.

²⁵Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, trans. John Richard De Witt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 178–81; C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, ICC, new series (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975), 151–52; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 141–45; N. T. Wright, “The Law in Romans 2,” in *Paul and the Mosaic Law*, ed. James D. G. Dunn (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 131–50; A. B. Caneday, “Judgment, Behavior and Justification according to Paul’s Gospel in Romans 2” (this article is pending publication).

²⁶Ridderbos, *Paul*, 106–07; Schreiner, *Romans*, 121–24.

Toward a Mediating Solution

Several scholars adopt elements of both the hypothetical view and the Gentile Christian view. Murray, for example, makes a strong argument for the Gentile Christian view of 2:6–11, but he then seems to endorse the hypothetical view of 2:13.²⁷ This is similar to the exegesis of Melancthon and Calvin, who both endorse a hypothetical view of 2:13, and yet argue that the positive recompense in 2:7 and 10 is fulfilled by Christian obedience. Although I previously held this view, I now believe it is inconsistent, because Romans 2:7, 10, and 13 all speak of the same positive recompense at the final judgment.²⁸ However, Murray’s view highlights the fact that neither the hypothetical view nor the Gentile Christian view can fully account for the details of Paul’s argument.

On the one hand, the hypothetical view cannot account for the flow of thought in Romans 2:25–29. Paul argues that circumcision will not benefit the Jew who transgresses the law, but that the Gentile who practices the righteous requirements of the law will be accounted as a circumcised person at the final judgment. Crucially, he grounds this argument in a statement about the Spirit: “for it is not the Jew in the open, neither the circumcision by the flesh in the open, but the Jew in secret, and the circumcision of the heart by the Spirit not the letter, whose praise is not from men but from God” (2:28–29). Virtually everyone agrees that Paul refers in 2:28–29 to the new covenant promises associated with justification by faith. Since 2:26–27 are grounded in these new covenant promises, they must refer to the completion of the law by a Gentile Christians. This in turn makes it likely that Paul views Christian obedience to be that which in some sense receives the positive recompense of the final judgment (2:7, 10, 13).

²⁷Murray, *Romans*, 62–72. Note that Gaffin basically follows Murray on Romans 2 (Richard B. Gaffin, *By Faith, Not by Sight: Paul and the Order of Salvation* [Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2006], 94–96).

²⁸I adopted this view for a presentation at the 2010 meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, but Ardel Caneday rightly pointed out the inconsistency of adopting a hypothetical view of Rom 2:13 and a Christian obedience view of 2:7 and 10. The three verses speak of the same positive recompense.

Leitzmann and Moo both acknowledge that Paul teaches a final judgment according to works for the Christian in other places.²⁹ But their hypothetical explanation of Romans 2 constrains them from acknowledging the positive recompense for Christians in this passage.³⁰

On the other hand, the Gentile Christian view cannot explain how Paul's universal accusation (3:9, 19–20) renders the positive recompense of the judgment to be an empty set (2:7, 10, 13). Those who adopt the Gentile Christian view typically affirm that Paul makes a universal accusation in this section, but they distance the conclusion of this accusation in 3:20 from its foundation in 2:1–29, particularly from 2:13. Cranfield, for example, argues that Paul's point in Romans 3:20 is that no one can earn justification by obedience because no one can perfectly obey the law.³¹ But when he explains 2:7, 10, and 13 he emphasizes that Paul is not speaking about a perfect obedience which earns justification.³² Why then does he argue that 3:20 assumes one must perfectly obey the law? Cranfield fails to recognize that the judgment described in 2:7, 10, and 13 is the background for Paul's conclusion in 3:20, which renders the category of those who receive the justifying judgment to be an empty set. Wright's interpretation also fails to explain how Paul's accusation renders the positive recompense to be an empty set. He

²⁹Leitzmann, *Römer*, 38; Moo, *Romans*, 143.

³⁰ Many note that Paul's teaching in other places of a judgment according to works for Christians tells against the hypothetical view of Romans 2. E.g., Godet, *Romans*, 196; Klyne R. Snodgrass, "Justification by Grace—To the Doers: An Analysis of the Place of Romans 2 in the Theology of Paul," *NTS* 32 (1986): 74; Schreiner, "Justification by Works," 135–36; Bird, *Saving Righteousness*, 160. See, e.g., 1 Thess 4:6; Gal 6:7–8; 1 Cor 3:10–15, 16–17; 4:1–5; 11:27–29; 2 Cor 5:10; 11:15; Col 3:24–25.

³¹"No flesh will be justified in God's sight on the ground of works—that is, no man will earn justification by his obedience to God's requirements. The reason why this is so is that ἔργα νόμου in the sense of such a perfect obedience as would merit justification are not forthcoming" (Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:198).

³²*Ibid.*, 153, 155. Similarly, Smith argues that the accusation of Rom 3:19–20 rests on the assumption of perfect obedience to the law, but that that Rom 2:7 and 10 is not a requirement of perfect obedience (Barry D. Smith, *What Must I Do to Be Saved? Paul Parts Company with His Jewish Heritage* [Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2007], 89, 184–85). He draws the conclusion that "implicitly, [Paul] is assuming that there are two types of final judgment: strict and merciful" (*ibid.*, 185).

argues that justification in Romans 3:21–4:25 is the verdict of the present, on the basis of faith, which corresponds with the verdict of the future in 2:1–16, on the basis of the whole life lived.³³ But this interpretation does not explain how the judgment described in 2:1–16 lays the foundation for Paul’s conclusion in 3:20 and 3:21–4:25. Romans 2:13, 3:20, and 3:21–4:25 all speak of *the same justifying verdict of the final judgment*. Romans 2:13 builds a foundation for the conclusion of Paul’s accusation in 3:20 and his teaching about justification by faith in 3:21–4:25.

In contrast with Cranfield and Wright, Murray affirms that Paul speaks of Christian obedience receiving the positive recompense of the final judgment, but he also clearly explains the relationship between 2:13 and 3:20. He comments that 3:20 “does not overthrow the principle stated in 2:13 that ‘the doers of the law will be justified.’ This hold true as a principle of equity but, existentially, it never comes into operation in the human race for the reason that there are no doers of the law, no doing of the law that will ground or elicit justification.”³⁴ Thus, he recognizes that 3:20 renders 2:13 to be an empty set. However, to be consistent, one must also recognize that 3:20 renders 2:7 and 10 to be an empty set, for 2:7, 10, and 13 all lay the foundation for the conclusion of Paul’s accusation. Just as the justifying judgment on the ground of doing the law in 2:13 is ruled out by 3:20, so the positive recompense on the ground of doing what is good in 2:7 and 10 is ruled by out Paul’s argument that no one does what is good (3:9–18).³⁵

It seems, then, that one must combine elements of the hypothetical view and the Gentile Christian view in order to account for all of the details of Paul’s argument in

³³N. T. Wright, “New Perspectives on Paul,” in *Justification in Perspective*, ed. Bruce L. McCormack (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 253–55.

³⁴Murray, *Romans*, 107.

³⁵Note how the category of those who seek glory (2:7) is rendered an empty set by the accusation of the law: “there is none who seek God” (3:11). This point was brought to my attention by Bell, who also proposes a mediating solution for the riddle of Rom 2 (Richard H. Bell, *No One Seeks for God: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans 1.18–3.20*, WUNT 106 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998], 253 n. 70).

Romans 1:18–3:20. On the one hand, it is true that the universal accusation renders those who do what is good and receive the positive recompense to be an empty set. On the other, it is true that Paul hints at Christian Gentiles who fulfill the law by the Spirit. How can these observations be combined? In what follows, I will argue that a combination of these two observations is possible if Paul sees a close analogy between the obedience of the old covenant, which was hindered by sin, and the obedience of the new covenant, which is enabled by the Spirit. First, I will argue that Romans 2:15 and 26–29 subtly speaks of Gentiles who partake in the new covenant—i.e., those who have been justified by faith. Second, I will argue that this alternative approach to justification necessarily leads to the fulfillment of the law by the Spirit.

New Covenant People

First, when Paul describes Gentiles who complete the law in Romans 2 he is subtly referring to Gentiles who partake in the new covenant. Two passages speak of Gentiles within Paul’s accusation of the Jewish people: 2:14–15 and 2:26–27. In the first, the identity of the Gentiles is a notoriously difficult problem. I suggested in chapter 3 that Rom 2:14–15 refers to Gentiles in general who occasionally, or at times (ὅταν), do what the Mosaic law requires (τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν) and are thus a law to themselves (ἑαυτοῖς εἰσὶν νόμος) (2:14). When Paul says they demonstrate that the work of the law is written in their hearts (2:15), he likely refers to an innate knowledge of the requirement of the Mosaic law, similar to the knowledge of the “righteous requirement of the law” in 1:32. If this interpretation is correct, then Paul’s description of Gentiles in 2:14–15 refers to all Gentiles and establishes their innate knowledge of the law’s requirement in order to demonstrate that possession of the law brings no advantage to Jewish sinners.³⁶ However,

³⁶So Schreiner: “Paul’s main purpose in Rom 2:12–16 is to convince the Jews that possession of the law is of no salvific advantage. After all, Gentiles are also aware of the moral norms of the law and sometimes keep them, but that does not spare them from God’s judgment” (Thomas R. Schreiner, “Did Paul Believe in Justification by Works? Another Look at Romans 2,” *BBR* 3 [1993]: 147).

in 2:15 Paul subtly hints at the possibility of certain Gentiles partaking in the new covenant when he says their thoughts “accuse *or even excuse* them” (2:15b).³⁷

This event takes place at the final judgment, for Paul connects Romans 2:15 with Romans 2:16 through the phrase ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὅτε κρινεῖ ὁ θεὸς τὰ κρυπτὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων (2:16a). Some have argued that 2:16 explains only the time when the doers of the law will be justified (2:13) and that 2:14–15 are a paranthetical aside.³⁸ But the most natural reading of the text connects 2:15 with the final judgment of 2:16. Grammatically the relative pronoun οἵτινες in 2:15 starts a new clause with actions that take place at the final judgment. The doing of the law in the present will demonstrate on the day of God’s judgment that the work of the law was written on their hearts. In this view, the actions represented by the genitive absolutes τῶν λογισμῶν κατηγορούντων ἢ καὶ ἀπολογουμένων will take place at the last judgment as well. With that said, it seems likely to me that Paul is shading together the present and future in these verses. The accusing and excusing of their thoughts takes place in both the present and *especially* on the day of God’s judgment.³⁹

Paul says their thoughts will “accuse or even defend them.” The accusation brought by their thoughts points away from the new covenant interpretation of Romans 2:14–15, because the law written on their hearts is connected with a knowledge of their own evil actions. Their thoughts accuse them because they have sinned.⁴⁰ However, Paul

³⁷So Seifrid who says that ἀπολογέομαι in 2:15 refers to the Spirit’s new obedience (Mark A. Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness: Paul’s Theology of Justification*, NSBT 9 [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000], 55–56.

³⁸E.g., Frederic Louis Godet, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1977 [original, 1883]), 210.

³⁹So Tholuck who notes “what now takes place inwardly, will then be manifested openly” (Frederick A. Tholuck, *Exposition of St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans*, trans. Robert Menzies [Philadelphia: Sorin and Ball, 1844], 82–83).

⁴⁰So Schreiner, “Justification by Works,” 146–47.

also says their thoughts defend their actions (ἀπολογέομαι, “to defend oneself”⁴¹). He envisions certain Gentiles who have done what is good and will have a defense at the final judgment. One might argue that this defense at the judgment is hypothetical or that it is a defense for only occasional obedience which does not bring about the positive recompense. But in view of the Gentiles mentioned in 2:26–29, it seems more likely that Paul is beginning to hint at real Gentiles who will have a defense at the judgment. Paul first describes the accusing thoughts which would be the assumption of his Jewish dialogue partner who agrees with 1:18–32. He then describes the surprising possibility of defending thoughts as well, which he highlights by using ἢ καὶ rather than a simple καὶ or δέ: Their thoughts will accuse *or even* defend them on that day.⁴² This defense will take place when God judges the “secrets of men” (2:16), and 2:28–29 clarify that one secret which will be revealed is that a Gentile may in fact be a “Jew in secret” with the “circumcision in the heart by the Spirit,” and he will have a defense at the judgment.

Thus, in Romans 2:15 Paul likely hints at Gentile Christian obedience which will lead to a defense at the judgment. These Christian Gentiles have both accusing and defending thoughts, thoughts which Paul says conflict with one another (μεταξὺ ἀλλήλων). This description matches Paul’s later teaching that Christians who have life by the Spirit still struggle with the fleshly body (Rom 8:10).

In the second text Paul contrasts the Jewish interlocutor, a transgressor of the law, with a Gentile who “keeps the righteous requirements of the law” (Rom 2:26). This Gentile who “completes the law” will judge the Jewish transgressor at the future

⁴¹BDAG, s.v., “ἀπολογέομαι.”

⁴²Many interpreters have noted that conjunctions cluster ἢ καὶ demonstrates the *unlikeliness* of the defending thoughts (e.g., Jeffrey S. Lamp, “Paul, the Law, Jews, and Gentiles: A Contextual and Exegetical Reading of Romans 2:12–16,” *JETS* 42 [1999]: 48). But in response, Gathercole notes that ἢ καὶ instead highlights the *surprising nature* of a defense at the judgment (S. J. Gathercole, “A Law unto Themselves: The Gentiles in Romans 2.14–15 Revisited,” *JSNT* 85 [2002]: 46). However, an absolute distinction between the unlikeliness of the defense and its surprising nature should not be drawn, because the reason it is surprising is because it is unique and unlikely.

judgment (2:27). Paul envisions an eschatological reversal in judgment. Just as the Jew stands in judgment over unrighteous Gentiles in 2:1, so this Gentile who completes the law will stand in judgment over the Jew who transgresses the law.⁴³ As in 2:1 Paul does not refer to a judicial sentence but an accusation of liability to God's condemning judgment. The Gentile will testify against the Jew because he keeps the very law the Jew transgresses.⁴⁴ Some consider the Gentile law keepers in 2:26–27 to be an empty set because Paul speaks conditionally: "if then the uncircumcised Gentile keeps the righteous requirements of the law..." (2:26). But as was observed above, Paul grounds this obedience in the work of the Holy Spirit: "For it is not the Jew in the open, nor the circumcision in the open in flesh, but it is the Jew in secret, and circumcision of the heart by the Spirit not the letter, whose praise is not from men but from God."⁴⁵

When Paul speaks of the circumcision of the heart by the Spirit, he alludes to the promises of the new covenant. Schreiner helpfully draws together the connections:

In particular, Deut 30:6 looks forward to a future day when God would circumcise the hearts of his people. In Jeremiah the call to circumcise the heart is reiterated (Jer 4:4; cf. Deut 10:16). The fulfillment of this command will only be possible when God writes his law on the heart in a new covenant (Jer 31:31–34). Ezekiel says that obedience will only be possible when God takes out the heart of flesh and puts his Spirit in his people (Ezek 11:19–20; 36:26–27).⁴⁶

As Wright concludes, Paul is describing "*the people of the new covenant*."⁴⁷ These texts promise that God will enable his people to obey the law, which is exactly how Paul

⁴³The idea that righteous Gentiles would stand in judgment over the Jews is rooted in the teaching of Jesus (see Matt 12:41–42; Luke 11:31–32). On the righteous judging the unrighteous see *I Enoch* 91:12; 98:12; 1 Cor 6:2.

⁴⁴So Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:174; Schreiner, *Romans*, 139.

⁴⁵So Schreiner, "Justification by Works," 137, 149.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 150. See also Timothy W. Berkley, *From a Broken Covenant to Circumcision of the Heart: Pauline Intertextual Exegesis in Romans 2:17–29*, SBLDS 175 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 152–55.

⁴⁷Wright, "Law in Romans 2," 136.

describes the Gentile. He keeps the righteous requirements of the law and completes the law. Moreover, he receives the positive recompense. Paul says the one who is circumcised by the Spirit receives ἔπαινος not from men but from God (Rom 2:29). Like τιμή in 2:10, ἔπαινος refers to the approval of God which is the reward at the final judgment to those who do what is good.⁴⁸ Similar language is found in 1 Corinthians 4:1–5. There Paul says he is not concerned about judgment by any human court (literally ὑπὸ ἀνθρωπίνης ἡμέρας, cf. Rom 2:5). Rather he is concerned with the judgment of the Lord. When the Lord comes he will bring to light “the secrets of darkness” (cf. Rom 2:16, 29), and then “each one’s praise will be from God” (cf. Rom 2:6). In both cases, Paul uses ἔπαινος to refer to the reward of the final judgment.⁴⁹ The Gentile who keeps the law in 2:26–29 receives the positive recompense.

Paul typically applies new covenant language to Christians in his letters. In Philippians 3:3 he speaks of Christians as “the circumcision” in contrast with the merely physical circumcision of his opponents.⁵⁰ Christians who are truly circumcised are “those who worship by the Spirit of God.” The verb λατρεύω indicates that Christians serve as God’s covenant people, and the mention of the Spirit indicates they are his new covenant people.⁵¹ In 2 Corinthians 3:6 Paul speaks of himself as an appointed minister of this new covenant, picking up on the letter and Spirit antithesis mentioned in Romans 2:29. He is a minister “not of the letter but of the Spirit.” And even within the epistle to the Romans

⁴⁸Cf. 1 Pet 1:7 which brings together both terms to refer to the final reward.

⁴⁹So Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 177; Wilckens, *Römer*, 158; Schreiner, *Romans*, 144. Jewett argues against this view of Rom 2:29 since an eschatological reward could not come ἐξ ἀνθρώπων (Robert Jewett, *Roman Hermeneia* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007], 237). But Paul’s point is that the reward of the human court parallels the reward of the divine judgment. Cf. Rom 13:3 for ἔπαινος as the reward of the judgment of human authorities.

⁵⁰See O’Brien for an argument that ἡμεῖς refers to all Christians in Phil 3:3 (Peter T. O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, NIGTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991], 358–9). Cf. also the use of περιτομῇ ἀχειροποιήτῳ to refer to Christians in Col 2:11.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 360–61.

itself, Paul says that Christian believers now serve “by the newness of the Spirit and not by the oldness of the letter” (Rom 7:6). Since Paul applies to Christians the language of the new covenant, and since the new covenant was promised to bring about true obedience to the law, it seems clear that in 2:26–29 Paul is speaking of a Christian Gentile who has been given the promised Spirit and now keeps the law.⁵²

In summary, the possibility of a Gentile defense at the judgment mentioned in 2:15 is explained in 2:26–29 where Paul describes a Gentile who is a member of the new covenant, who completes the law, and who will receive the positive recompense at the judgment. If Paul’s dialogue partner in Romans 2 is a non-Christian Jew who represents the Jewish people, then the Gentile who has a defense and completes the law by the Spirit in Romans 2 is a Christian Gentile who represents those who have been justified by faith.⁵³ In other words, whereas Paul’s dialogue partner is a member of the old covenant, the Gentile is a member of the new covenant.

New Covenant Obedience

Second, in the letter to the Romans justification by faith necessarily leads to the fulfillment of the law by the Spirit. Paul’s accusation rules out the possibility of a justification by the works of the law, the requirement of the old covenant. But Paul hints at Gentiles who have changed categories and become partakers of the new covenant. Although they were formally liable to the condemning judgment because of their works, they have now been saved from the condemning judgment through the revelation of God’s righteousness by faith. Sanders suggests that Paul’s accusation comes as a surprise in 3:9, because “the conclusion which would naturally follow from chapter 2 is ‘repent

⁵²So Wright, “Law in Rom 2,” 134. I am indebted to Wright’s argument here.

⁵³When I say “those who have been justified by faith” I include Abraham who Paul says is the father of all who are justified by faith (Rom 4:11–12; cf. Gal 3:7–9). Paul sees these realities that came with Christ anticipated in the old era. This answers Snodgrass’s objection that reading 2:29 as giving the Spirit to Christians ignores the activity of the Spirit in the Old Testament (“Justification by Grace,” 81).

and obey the law from the bottom of your heart, so that you will be a true Jew.”⁵⁴ But this conclusion is not incompatible with the rest of Paul’s argument, for justification by faith is not mutually exclusive with repentance and obedience to the law.

It is well known that Paul speaks of repentance in only three passages of his letters.⁵⁵ One of those passages is Romans 2:4–5 where he tells his Jewish dialogue partner that God’s kindness is meant to lead him to μετάνοιάν. The interlocutor, however, is storing up wrath for the day of judgment because of his hard and ἀμετανόητον heart. After these verses Paul does not speak of repentance in Romans. Why? Most Pauline scholars have suggested that Paul incorporates the idea expressed by μετάνοια within his preaching of πίστις.⁵⁶ They are likely correct, for repentance and faith were closely connected in the early Christian preaching depicted in Acts.⁵⁷ Paul implicitly calls the Jewish people to repent of their evil deeds in 2:4–5. And the idea of turning from transgression to God is later expressed in terms of faith: “if they do not remain in unbelief, they will be grafted in” (11:23). The call to be justified by faith, then, is not mutually exclusive with the call to repentance.

However, this repentance only comes about through justification by faith—i.e., through the new covenant. Paul’s gospel calls for faith rather than works of the law because of the problem of sin (3:20, 21–26), but this alternative approach to justification necessarily results in freedom from sin and the fulfillment of the law by the Spirit (Rom

⁵⁴Sanders, *Paul and the Jewish People*, 129.

⁵⁵In addition to Rom 2:4–5, see 2 Cor 7:9, 10 and 12:21. In the disputed epistles, see only 2 Tim 2:25. Note also the verb ἐπιστρέφω used in the sense of repentance in 1 Thess 1:9 and 2 Cor 3:16. Harper concludes that both of these cases speak of “conversion” (George Harper, “Repentance in Pauline Theology” [Ph.D. diss., McGill University, 1988], 162).

⁵⁶See Harper, “Repentance,” 21. Others suggest that repentance was replaced by the Spirit in Pauline theology or that it simply was not important to Paul (*ibid.*).

⁵⁷Both μετάνοια and πίστις are called for throughout the preaching described in Acts. In a few cases the concepts are brought together (Acts 20:21 brings together μετάνοια and πίστις; Acts 26:28 brings together ἐπιστρέφω and πίστις).

8:1–4). In the theology of Romans, the death of Christ has freed Christians from sin and the law (Rom 6–7), so that they now “serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the letter” (7:6).⁵⁸ That is, they serve in the way of the new covenant and not in the way of the old covenant. This “new way of the Spirit” is the new covenant promise which Paul hints in 2:29, and it is explained more clearly in 8:1–17. God has executed the condemning judgment of sin in the flesh of his Son in order that those who are in Christ might fulfill the righteous requirement of the law by the Spirit who now dwells within them (8:1–4). The mindset of human flesh leads to the negative recompense of death because it cannot submit to the law of God. But the mindset of the Spirit leads to life and peace because God will certainly raise to life the one who has the Spirit (8:5–11). Paul stresses that his Christian audience in Rome does not exist in the flesh but in the Spirit: “you do not exist in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you” (8:9). He concludes that Christians are not obligated to live according to the flesh. This lifestyle of sin leads to death (cf. 6:23), but the one who puts to death the evil practices of the body by the Spirit will live, because they demonstrate by this that they are children of God (8:12–17).

To Paul, then, those who have been justified by faith in Christ have been given the Spirit of Christ as a new power to war against sin and fulfill the law.⁵⁹ This is the eschatological obedience of the new covenant promised in the Old Testament, and it is the obedience Paul speaks of in Romans 2:26–29.⁶⁰ These are Gentiles who have been

⁵⁸Schreiner follows Laato in saying that Paul emphasizes the Spirit rather than repentance, because “the repentant heart owes its transformation to his glorious work” (Schreiner, *Romans*, 109).

⁵⁹Maston observes that the Christological focus of Paul’s concept of divine empowerment distinguishes him from his Jewish contemporaries: “the linking of the Spirit with Christ not only signals a drastic redefinition of God, but also distinguishes Paul’s conception of divine empowerment from his contemporaries. While other Jews pointed to the Spirit as the means to obedience, Paul insists that the Spirit must be connected with Christ. It is not enough to claim that the Spirit of God helps one. Rather, the Spirit that assists must be the Spirit of Christ” (Jason Maston, “Divine and Human Agency in Second Temple Judaism and Paul: A Comparison of Sirach, *Hodayot*, and Romans 7–8” [Ph.D. thesis, Durham University, 2009], 191).

saved from the condemning judgment through Christ and given the Spirit to fulfill the righteous requirement of the law. Paul does not imagine that his Christian readers obey the law flawlessly, because he makes it clear that they must “put to death” by the Spirit the evil practices of the body. But neither does he downplay the requirement of obedience. Christian obedience before the resurrection is a foretaste of the perfect obedience which will be theirs when the mortal body is raised from the dead. The freedom from sin they experience now (8:2) will be experienced fully at the redemption of their bodies, for they were saved with this hope (8:23–25).

Therefore, the concept of repentance and obedience to the law is not mutually exclusive with justification by faith. Paul focuses on faith in Christ and the power of the Spirit. But it is legitimate to speak of the Christians in Romans as those who have repented, for they have changed from being those under the power of sin into those who do what is good and receive the positive recompense. The categories of those who receive the negative and positive recompense should not be viewed statically, as if Paul did not allow for repentance. However, this repentance and obedience, Paul argues, can only be accomplished through the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel. It can only be accomplished through the new covenant. Paul’s accusation states that all Gentiles and Jews are under the power of sin and liable to the condemning judgment: “God has imprisoned all in disobedience. . .” (Rom 11:32a). But Paul’s gospel of justification by faith offers salvation from this judgment and freedom from the power of sin by the Spirit: “. . . in order that he might have mercy on all” (Rom 11:32). His gospel offers change.

This anthropological change is rooted in a historical change: Paul first outlines the *Verdammnisgeschichte* of the world in which no one has a defense at the judgment

⁶⁰Flückiger rightly stresses that the doers of the law in Rom 2 are the end time people of God (Felix Flückiger, “Die Werke des Gesetzes bei den Heiden [nach Röm. 2,14ff.],” *TZ* 8 [1952]: 24–25, 38). As Meyer argues, “Paul conceives of the Mosaic (old) covenant as fundamentally non-eschatological in contrast to the eschatological nature of the new covenant” (Jason C. Meyer, *The End of the Law: Mosaic Covenant in Pauline Theology* [Nashville: B&H Academic, 2009], 1).

and in which the positive recompense is hypothetical (Rom 1:18–3:20). The righteousness of God by faith enters into this history and provides salvation from the condemning judgment and a defense at the final judgment. In other words, before the revelation of the God’s righteousness, under the old covenant, the positive recompense (Rom 2:7, 10, 13) is hypothetical because those who receive it are an empty set (3:20). But after the revelation of God’s righteousness, under the new covenant, Christians now fulfill the righteous requirement of the law and have a defense at the judgment according to works.⁶¹

Why does Paul hint at Christian Gentiles in Romans 2? Most fundamentally, he does this in order to complete the accusation of his Jewish interlocutor. Paul envisions a reversal at the final judgment of the accusation made by the hypocritical Jew (compare 2:1 with 2:27). The obedience of the Gentile leads to an accusation of the Jew because it shows the true obedience which, as I have argued, the Jew claimed to have done but in reality failed to do. Second, it is likely that Paul is beginning to employ his strategy of provoking the Jews to jealousy. Taking his cue from Deuteronomy 32:21, Paul magnifies the salvation of the Gentiles in his own ministry so that the Jews will also turn to the Messiah and be justified by faith in him (Rom 10:19; 11:11–14). Thus, although Paul primarily employs the judgment motif in Romans 2:1–29 to make an accusation against the Jewish people, he may also subtly employ the motif, like Ezekiel, in order to call the Jews themselves to repentance and a new heart (Ezek 18:30–32).⁶²

⁶¹Since the work of Käsemann, New Testament scholars have debated whether the righteousness of God in Romans is only a forensic gift or whether it also includes the power for new obedience. In either case, the righteousness of God by faith necessarily results in a new power for obedience, or fulfillment of the righteous requirement of the law. Therefore, I have chosen not to engage in this debate here.

⁶²So Thomas R. Schreiner, “Paul and Perfect Obedience to the Law: An Evaluation of the View of E. P. Sanders,” *WTJ* 47 (1985): 271; Gathercole, “A Law unto Themselves,” 48; Jewett, *Romans*, 213. See appendix 1 of this dissertation.

Conclusion

Paul's description of the final judgment in Romans 2 is not unconvincing or contradictory, although it is complex. I have suggested that the riddle of Romans 2, the Gentiles who complete the law and receive the positive recompense, is solved when interpreters explain this obedience in terms of the new covenant. Paul does not argue that certain Gentiles are justified by the Mosaic law, for his universal accusation rules out such a possibility. However, he sees a close analogy between the obedience of the old covenant and the obedience of the new covenant. The only hope for all Jews and Gentiles is justification by faith, grace and the cross of Christ. This alternative approach to justification, however, necessarily results in the fulfillment of the law by the Spirit. Moreover, the proleptic judgment of the cross and the resulting justification for those who believe does not replace the final judgment according to works. As Paul argues in Romans 14:1–23, Christians will give an account of their works at the final judgment. This passage will be the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 8

JUDGMENT IN ROMANS 14:1–23

Introduction

Paul's vision of the final judgment recedes from view after Romans 3:20, but it reappears again in 14:1–23.¹ Scholars have observed similarities between Romans 2 and Romans 14—both speak of the divine judgment in order to address the problem of human judgment, and both use the rhetorical device of diatribe. Some have suggested a close connection between the two passages. However, I will argue in this chapter that, although the meaning of the judgment in 14:1–23 is similar to its meaning in 1:18–3:20, there are differences in meaning which underlie a fundamentally different function of the motif. In Romans 14:1–23, Paul does not employ the theme of divine judgment according to works in order to make an accusation against the world but in order to make an exhortation to the Christian community at Rome.

The Meaning of Judgment in Romans 14:1–23

Romans 14:1–15:13 forms the last major discourse in the epistle to the Romans. Within this discourse, the theme of divine judgment according to works is employed in 14:1–23. The meaning of the motif will be analyzed along four lines—the object of judgment, the agent of judgment, the action of judgment, and the ground of judgment. Paul's description is similar to that of 1:18–3:20, but several differences are notable, particularly the object of judgment, and the action and ground of the positive recompense.

¹Paul mentions God's final wrath in 12:19 and possibly refers to the final judgment 13:2, but a fully developed picture of the final judgment reappears in 14:10–12.

The Object of Judgment

I will begin with an analysis of the object of judgment because the identities of the “weak” and “strong” are important for an understanding of the other elements of the motif. The exact identification of the weak and strong is highly debated, but almost all agree that both designations represent in some way the Christian community at Rome.² Nanos has recently questioned this consensus by arguing that the “weak in faith” are “those Jews who do not yet believe in Jesus as the Christ of Israel or Savior of the nations: they are the non-Christian Jews in Rome.”³ He suggests that the letter to the Romans was written primarily to Christian Gentiles who were still attending the Jewish synagogues in Rome. Thus the strong and the weak represent Christian Gentiles and *non-Christian* Jews.⁴ Detailed critiques of his position are now available.⁵ Here I will highlight evidence from 14:1–23 which suggests that both the weak and strong represent the Christian community.

First, both groups are identified as those who possess faith—the weak are weak “in faith” (14:1), and the strong act out of faith (14:2, 22). Nanos attempts to identify the weak with the Jews who are “stumbling” in Romans 9–11.⁶ But Paul describes this stumbling as “unbelief” (11:20, 23),⁷ and he considers non-Christian Jews to be

²For a concise and careful survey, see C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, ICC, new series (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975), 2:690–97. For an in-depth analysis, see Mark Reasoner, *The Strong and the Weak: Romans 14.1–15.13 in Context*, SNTSMS 103 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

³Mark Nanos, *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul’s Letter* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 143.

⁴*Ibid.*, 84. See his entire argument, 85–165.

⁵See Robert A. Gagnon, “Why the ‘Weak’ at Rome Cannot be Non-Christian Jews,” *CBQ* 62 (2000): 64–82; and A. Andrew Das, *Solving the Romans Debate* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 115–48.

⁶Nanos, *Mystery of Romans*, 123–39.

⁷So Gagnon, “‘Weak’ at Rome,” 78–79; Das, *Romans Debate*, 136–37.

“enemies” of the Christian gospel (11:28). Second, Paul uses the title ἀδελφός for both the weak and the strong (14:10 [2x], 13, 15, 21), a title he normally uses in Romans to address his Christian audience which has already become obedient to the faith (6:17; 16:19).⁸ Nanos notes that Paul uses ἀδελφός to refer to his Jewish brothers who are his “kinmen according to the flesh” in 9:3.⁹ But this is clearly an exception to the rule of Paul’s normal use of the title for Christians.¹⁰ Third, Paul identifies the weak as people “for whom Christ died” (14:15; cf. 14:20; 15:7).¹¹ Fourth, comparison with Paul’s other letters confirms this analysis: Romans 14:1–23 reads much differently than the epistle to the Galatians because Paul sees no threat of another gospel among the weak—despite the weakness of their faith, they are still seeking to be justified by faith in Christ.¹² The passage reads more like a reworking of the exhortations addressed to the Christian community of 1 Corinthians 8–10.¹³ Therefore, the weak and the strong should both be identified as Christians. The object of judgment in Romans 14:1–23 is the Christian community at Rome. Further, it is the *entire* community, for Paul makes the point that

⁸Rom 1:13; 7:1, 4; 8:12; 10:1; 11:25; 12:1; 15:14; 15:30; 16:17. Note that \mathfrak{P}^{46} and B omit ἀδελφοί in Rom 15:30.

⁹Nanos, *Mystery of Romans*, 110–13.

¹⁰Gagnon observes that “without exception, the 108 unqualified references to ‘brothers’ in Pauline literature and the twenty in deuteron-Pauline literature are references to *Christian Brotherhood*” (“‘Weak’ at Rome,” 67). So Das, *Romans Debate*, 123–26.

¹¹Witherington calls Rom 14:15 “an insurmountable objection to Nanos’ reading of this material” (Ben Witherington III with Darlene Hyatt, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004], 331).

¹²So Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:691; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 713; Reasoner, *Strong and the Weak*, 86; William S. Campbell, *Paul and the Creation of Christian Identity*, LNTS 322 (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 112.

¹³Many scholars see Rom 14–15 as a reworking of 1 Cor 8–10. Some see Paul giving general exhortations based upon his previous experience (e.g., Wayne A. Meeks, “Judgment and the Brother: Romans 14:1–15:13,” in *Tradition and Interpretation in the New Testament: Essays in Honor of E. Earle Ellis for His 60th Birthday*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987], 292–93). Others think (probably rightly) that Paul addresses a specific situation in the Christian community at Rome (e.g., Schreiner, *Romans*, 705).

“*all* of us will stand before the judgment bench of God” (14:10).

The Agent of Judgment

Like Romans 2:16, the agent of the final judgment is both God and the Lord Jesus Christ. In 2:16 Paul clearly distinguishes between God and Jesus Christ at the judgment: “according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Jesus Christ.” But in 14:1–12 the two persons are not so clearly distinguished. Instead, Paul overlaps the two agents of judgment by using the title κύριος ambiguously for both God and Christ.

Upon first reading, one may identify the nine uses of this title in 14:1–12 with God himself. The first two uses of κύριος (14:4) follow from Paul’s statement that God has received the person in question (14:3). This reception establishes God’s ownership of the person—the person is God’s slave, and he is their Lord. Thus Paul reasons, “Who are you, the one who judges the household-slave of another? By his own Lord he stands or falls. And he will be made to stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand” (14:4). In context, then, the first two uses of κύριος appear to refer to God.¹⁴ It is by God’s agency that Christians stand or fall at the judgment, because he is the one who owns them.¹⁵ Similarly, the six uses of κύριος within Paul’s discussion about living and dying “for the Lord” may be identified with God himself (Rom 14:6–9). This is because Paul’s statement that the one who eats and the one who does not eat both act “for the Lord” is grounded in the fact that both people give thanks to God: “The one who considers the day considers it for the Lord, and the one who eats, eats for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God. And the

¹⁴This is reflected in the textual tradition which substitutes θεός for κύριος: “God will cause him to stand.” Κύριος is likely original because it has stronger external support (Ɀ⁴⁶ Ɀ A B C P Ψ pc sy^p co) and influence of 14:3 explains the variant θεός (so Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. [New York: United Bible Societies, 1994], 468).

¹⁵The dative τῷ ἰδίῳ κυρίῳ in Rom 14:4b is not a dative of advantage (contra Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:703). Instead, it stands in contrast with the human judgment 14:4a, and thus indicates the divine agency of judgment. Cf. Schreiner’s paraphrase: “by virtue of his decision” (Schreiner, *Romans*, 718).

one who does not eat, refrains from eating for the Lord, and he gives thanks to God” (14:6).¹⁶ Their thankfulness to God proves that their actions are motivated by a desire to please the Lord. Thus, Paul seems to identify God with the two uses of κύριος in 14:6. One would expect the four other uses of κύριος in 14:6–8 to refer to God as well, except 14:9 indicates that the title must have a reference to Christ. Finally, the oath formula “as I live, says the Lord,” which appears in Paul’s citation of Isaiah 45:23, seems to refer to God. This citation supports the claim that God’s judgment will be universal: “For all of us will stand before the judgment bench of God” (14:10). In most Old Testament citations in Romans, κύριος represents the divine name Yahweh and refers to God himself within Paul’s argument.¹⁷ The one exception is the Christological citation of Joel 2:32 in Romans 10:13, for the words “everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved” follows the claim that “if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord. . . you will be saved” (Rom 10:9). Following the pattern of the other citations in Romans, then, Dunn concludes that Paul means for the title κύριος in 14:11 to refer to God himself.¹⁸

However, there are also good reasons to read the nine uses of κύριος in 14:1–12 as references to Jesus Christ. Except for the Old Testament citations, almost every use of the title κύριος in Romans refers to Jesus Christ. Over half are modified by Ἰησοῦς, Χριστός, or some combination of the two (26 of 43 occurrences), and most of the absolute uses refer to Jesus Christ in context: Romans 10:12 comes on the heels of the statement about confessing Jesus as κύριος (10:9), and the 7-fold repetition of ἐν κυρίῳ

¹⁶Paul likely uses καί instead of γάρ in the second clause because the weak is not giving thanks *for* his refraining from eating but is giving thanks *as* he refrains from eating (so James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, WBC, vol. 38b [Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1988], 807; Schreiner, *Romans*, 720). In both cases the thankfulness of the person is still the proof that their actions are motivated by a desire to please God.

¹⁷Rom 4:8 (Ps 32:2); 9:28 (Isa 28:22); 9:29 (Isa 1:9); 10:16 (Isa 53:1); 11:34 (Isa 40:13); 15:11 (Ps 117:1). Note also the two Old Testament citations in which Paul adds an address to κύριος or a citation formula with κύριος: Rom 11:3 (1 Kgs 19:10); 12:19 (Deut 32:35). In these cases the title again refers to God himself within Paul’s argument.

¹⁸Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 810.

in Romans 16 clearly means “in Christ.” This leaves only nine remaining uses of the title which are ambiguous—one in 12:11 and eight in 14:1–12 (plus one in the citation of Isaiah 45:23). In context, one must identify the three uses of κύριος in 14:8 with Jesus Christ, because Paul grounds belonging to and living for the Lord in a statement about *Christ’s* lordship: “for to this end Christ died and lived [again], in order that he might reign as Lord (κυριεύση) over the dead and the living” (14:9). This reference to Christ must also inform the three uses of κύριος in 14:6, because 14:7–9 explains the reason specific actions are performed “for the Lord.” Finally, the identification of κύριος with Jesus Christ may better explain the oath formula in Paul’s citation of Isaiah 45:23. The MT and the LXX have a different oath formula—נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי בַי / κατ’ ἐμαυτοῦ ὀμνύω. But Paul substitutes the formula found in many other places in the Old Testament—צִוֵּנָה אֲנִי אֵלֹהִים, λέγει κύριος.¹⁹ Perhaps the substitution purposely identifies the divine agent of the final judgment with Jesus the risen Christ and Lord.²⁰

In any case, the argument leading up to Paul’s citation certainly indicates an identity between God, the Lord, and the Christ. In Romans 14:1–12, then, Paul uses the title κύριος with purposeful ambiguity to refer to both God and Jesus Christ as the agent of the final judgment.²¹ One should see no substantial difference between the “judgment bench of God” in Romans 14:10 and the “judgment bench of Christ” mentioned in 2

¹⁹Cf. LXX of Num 14:28; Isa 49:18; Jer 22:24; 26; 18; Ezek 5:11; 14:16, 18, 20; 16:48; 17:16; 18:3; 20:31, 33; 34:8; 35:6, 11; and Zeph 2:9.

²⁰So Matthew Black, “The Christological Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament,” *NTS* 18 (1971–72): 8; N. T. Wright, *Romans*, in vol. 10 of *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 738.

²¹Cranfield on Rom 14:4: “It is not easy to decide whether Paul had Christ or God in mind here. The last clause of v. 3 may be adduced in support of the view that he was thinking of God: on the other hand, v. 9 makes it necessary to understand the repeated τῷ κυρίῳ of v. 8 to refer to Christ. But anyway Paul is inclined in this passage to oscillate between references to God and to Christ (Cranfield, *Romans*, 2: 702 n. 3; so Schreiner, *Romans*, 722). I am indebted to Hurtado for my discussion of the title κύριος (Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003], 108–18).

Corinthians 5:20.²²

The Action of Judgment

Paul describes the future judgment as the βῆμα τοῦ θεοῦ (Rom 14:10).²³ The word βῆμα means “step” and came by extension to mean a platform in a public assembly which required steps to ascend, often the dais or tribunal of a courtroom.²⁴ This is how Paul uses the word. Most English versions have the translation “judgment seat” which goes back to Tyndale’s translation,²⁵ but a better modern English equivalent is “judgment bench,” the raised place in the courtroom where a judge sits. This “judgment bench of God” is the future judgment before which “we will all stand” (14:10) and “each of us will give an account” (14:12). In other words, it is the final judgment of God.

The judgment is an evaluative judgment which may result in a justifying or condemning verdict. Paul describes these two outcomes in terms of standing and falling: “By his own Lord he stands or falls. And he will be made to stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand” (Rom 14:4). Many commentators argue that standing and falling in this verse does not refer to the verdict of the final judgment.²⁶ But in the larger context the prohibition of human judgment is clearly rooted in the reality of the final divine judgment: “Why are you judging your brother? . . . for all of us will stand before the

²²So Origen, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans: Books 6–10*, trans. Thomas P. Schneck (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2002), 244; Robert Jewett, *Romans, Hermeneia* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 851.

²³The variant reading Χριστοῦ is very early, with extant evidence going back to the 2nd century (Marcion and Polycarp). However, it can be explained as a scribal harmonization with 2 Cor 5:10, whereas the reading θεοῦ cannot be easily explained as a later substitution (so Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 468–69).

²⁴LSJ, s.v., “βῆμα,” use II.2; BDAG, s.v., “βῆμα,” use 3.

²⁵OED, s.v., “judgment-seat.”

²⁶E.g., John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT, old series (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 176–77; Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:703; Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 804.

judgment bench of God” (14:10). The prohibition of human judgment in 14:4, then, should be read within this context: One should not judge the slave of the Lord because this slave will stand or fall by his own Lord’s judgment. It may be true that Paul does not refer exclusively to standing and falling at the final judgment in 14:4, for there is overlap between God’s judgment in the present and its consummation in the future (cf. 1:18–2:29). However, the standing and falling must include the consummation of the final judgment described in 14:1–12. The slave of the Lord “will be made to stand” at the final judgment.²⁷

Paul’s confidence that the Christian community in Rome will receive the justifying judgment is striking, for it stands in contrast with his earlier accusation of liability to the condemning judgment in 1:18–3:20. Why such confidence? First, Paul is confident because the slave of the Lord has been received into a slave-master relationship with God and Christ (14:8–9). Both the weak and strong have faith. Of the strong, Paul says, “God has received him” (14:3). And of the weak Paul describes him as “that one for whom Christ died” (14:15) and “the work of God” (14:20).²⁸ In light of the argument of Romans, one may say that Paul understands the weak and the strong to have both been justified by faith through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. Thus he is confident that they have been received by God.

Second, Paul is confident because of the Lord’s strength or ability to justify the

²⁷So Schreiner, *Romans*, 718–19; Jewett, *Romans*, 843. The future passive σταθήσεται may simply have the intransitive meaning “he will stand” (cf. Matt 12:25, 26). Many commentators adopt this translation because the true passive “he will be made to stand” seems to duplicate the following clause which says “the Lord is able to make him stand” (Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:703–04; Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996], 841 n. 63; Schreiner, *Romans*, 718 n. 15). However, in my view the divine agency of judgment in the following clause actually makes it more likely that the verb is a true passive (so Jewett, *Romans*, 843). Paul’s repetition in the next clause specifies the reason for his confident assertion.

²⁸The phrase τὸ ἔργον τοῦ θεοῦ may refer to the one who is weak in faith himself (Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:723; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, AB [New York: Doubleday, 1993], 698) or to the Christian community as a whole (Moo, *Romans*, 860; Jewett, *Romans*, 866). In either case, “the work of God” includes the person who is weak in faith.

one whom he has received at the final judgment: “he will be made to stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand” (14:4). This assertion speaks not only of God’s ability to make the right decision at the evaluative judgment but of God’s strength to cause his own slave to stand at the judgment. In other words, Paul is confident in God’s ability to *save* the person at the final judgment. A similar statement is found in the letter of James: “there is one lawgiver and judge, who is able to save and destroy. . .” (Jas 4:12).²⁹ Paul’s citation of Isaiah 45:23 in Romans 14:10 also supports the idea that the final judgment will be a day of his salvation for his people, for its context highlights the final salvation associated with the return from exile through Cyrus. The LORD calls out, “Turn to me and be saved all the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is no other” (Isa 45:22). He then takes an oath in righteousness that “to me every knee will bow, and every tongue will swear” (Isa 45:23). On that day, “all those who are enraged with him will be ashamed” (Isa 45:24), but “in the LORD, all the seed of Israel will be righteous and will glory” (Isa 45:25). In other words, those who belong to the Lord will be saved. It is interesting to compare the LXX translation of this verse with Paul’s statement about the comprehensive nature salvation of God in Romans 8:30.

ἀπὸ κυρίου δικαιοθήσονται καὶ ἐν τῷ θεῷ ἐνδοξασθήσονται πᾶν τὸ σπέρμα τῶν υἰῶν Ἰσραὴλ (Isa 45:25)

οὓς δὲ προώρισεν, τούτους καὶ ἐκάλεσεν· καὶ οὓς ἐκάλεσεν, τούτους καὶ ἐδικαίωσεν· οὓς δὲ ἐδικαίωσεν, τούτους καὶ ἐδόξασεν (Rom 8:30)

Perhaps Paul is echoing these words of salvation in his famous golden chain of salvation.³⁰ But in any case, the context of Isaiah 45:23 speaks of salvation for the people of God at the final judgment, the same confidence which Paul expresses in Romans 14:1–

²⁹Interestingly, this statement in James also rules out human judgment: “who are you to judge your neighbor?” (Jas 4:12b). Cf. “why do you judge your brother?” (Rom 14:10)

³⁰Wagner notes the closeness in wording but draws no conclusions (J. Ross Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul “In Concert” in the Letter to the Romans*, NovTSup 101 [Leiden: Brill, 2002], 339 n. 126).

12. Not only has God received the person, Paul is confident that God has the ability to make the person stand at the final judgment.³¹

Paul's confidence does not rule out any threat of falling, for he warns his Christian readers not to "destroy" the person for whom Christ died (Rom 14:15; cf. 14:20). The verb ἀπόλλυμι is the word used to describe the condemning judgment in the initial accusation: "for whoever has sinned without the law, will also be destroyed without the law" (2:12a). In 14:15 Paul warns of the same threat.³² He also warns that "the one who doubts is condemned" (14:23). This condemnation may include self-condemnation, but it is not merely a subjective sense of guilt,³³ for Paul speaks of this condemnation in parallel with the beatitude of 14:22.

Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself (14:22).

But the one who doubts is condemned (14:23).

The blessing is not merely a subjective feeling but an objective state in which the person exists. Similarly, condemnation is an objective state of liability to destruction. As Paul states in the accusation, self-condemnation because of sin demonstrates liability to the divine condemning verdict (2:1–5).

The Ground of Judgment

Upon what ground will Paul's readers be saved or destroyed at the final judgment? Paul assumes that his readers understand the final judgment will be a

³¹Cf. Paul's statement of confidence to his converts in Philippi: "I am confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will complete it all the way to the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil 1:6).

³²In a passage which envisions the final judgment like Rom 14:1–23, the verb ἀπόλλυμι should be taken to refer to the condemning judgment, despite the fact that Christians are being addressed (contra Judith M. Gundry-Volf, *Paul and Perseverance: Staying in and Falling away* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1990], 86–90). So Konradt who rightly argues that ἀπόλλυμι in 14:15 warns of the loss of eschatological salvation and that 14:20 and 23 amplify this warning (Mattias Konradt, *Gericht und Gemeinde: Eine Studie zur Bedeutung und Funktion von Gerichtsaussagen im Rahmen der paulinischen Ekklesiologie und Ethik im 1 Thess und 1 Kor* [Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003], 519). So also Lieselotte Mattern, *Das Verständnis des Gerichtes bei Paulus* (Zürich: Zwingli Verlag, 1966), 117.

³³Contra Gundry-Volf, *Paul and Perseverance*, 91–92.

judgment according to works, for he has vividly described it as such in Romans 2:1–16. He assumes, then, that readers will understand the statement “each of us will give an account for himself to God” (14:12) to mean that each will give an account of his or her *works* to God.³⁴ Further, in 14:1–23 there is an analogy between the human judgment which is prohibited and the divine judgment to come. Just as the human judgment is a judgment of a person’s works (14:3, 10), so the final judgment of God will be a judgment of works.

Paul warns that sin will be the ground of the final condemning judgment: “the one who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not do it by faith; and everything which is not by faith is sin” (Rom 14:23). Here Paul repeats what he established earlier in the letter—sin leads to death (2:12; 6:21–23). But why is the action of eating sin? In this verse the target of Paul’s warning is the “weak in faith,” one of two categories of Christians addressed in 14:1–15:1.³⁵ The “weak in faith” eats only vegetables, but the “strong” in faith believes he can eat anything (14:1–2).³⁶ Scholars disagree over why the weak practiced vegetarian food restrictions. Some point to vegetarian traditions among the Greeks and the Romans such as ancient Orphics, Pythagoreans, and Roman philosophers like Seneca.³⁷ Some suggest a parallel to the

³⁴It is difficult to know whether the words τῷ θεῷ in Rom 14:12 are original, because they are omitted in several manuscripts and are easily explained as a later addition in conformity with Rom 14:11. However, the variant makes no difference to the meaning of the text.

³⁵Minear argued for a third group in Rom 14:23 which he called “the doubters” (Paul S. Minear, *The Obedience of Faith: The Purposes of Paul in the Epistle to the Romans*, SBT 19 [second series] [London: SCM Press, 1971], 12–13). But most rightly see that the “weak in faith” are clearly in view (e.g., Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 828).

³⁶See Rom 15:1 for the designation “strong” which must mean “strong in faith” in parallel with the “weak in faith.” Note also 14:2 and 22 which speaks of the strong acting in faith.

³⁷Barrett and Käsemann see a fusion of these Greco-Roman traditions with syncretistic Judaism (C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 2nd ed., BNTC [London: A & C Black, 1991], 237; Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980], 367–68). See Jewett for a helpful discussion of the Greek and Roman traditions, but note that he allows for Jewish influences and suggests that Paul is speaking hyperbolically for rhetorical effect (*Romans*, 837–38).

problem in 1 Corinthians 8–10 where Paul addresses meat offered to idols.³⁸ Most however locate this food restriction in the Mosaic law, which did not require a principled vegetarianism but required it by implication when kosher food was unavailable.³⁹ Examples of such abstinence from meat and wine by Jews are recorded in Daniel 1:8–16 and Judith 12:1–4.

Several lines of evidence support a food restriction rooted in the Mosaic law. First, Paul uses the word κοινός to speak of unclean food (Rom 14:14), a term used in the Hellenistic period for foods unclean according to Mosaic purity laws (1 Macc 1:47, 62; Acts 10:14, 28; 11:8). Second, Paul anchors his identity with the strong in Jesus' declaration that foods which were unclean under the Mosaic covenant are now clean.⁴⁰ Third, the conclusion of the passage, which repeats the opening imperative προσλαμβάνεσθε, addresses God's reception of both Jews and Gentiles (15:7–13). Thus, it seems most likely that the weak practiced vegetarian restrictions because of the Mosaic law. They are weak *in faith* because they do not fully believe Jesus has declared all foods to be clean. Although Paul is convinced that all foods are clean (14:14, 20), he warns the strong repeatedly not to cause his weak brother to stumble, presumably by

³⁸Anders Nygren, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. Carl C. Rasmussen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1949), 442.

³⁹So Joel Marcus, "The Circumcision and the Uncircumcision in Rome," *NTS* 35 (1989): 72; John M. G. Barclay, "'Do We Undermine the Law?' A Study of Romans 14.1–15.6," in *Paul and the Mosaic Law*, ed. James D. G. Dunn (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 289–93. See Reasoner for a concise summary of the issues (*Strong and the Weak*, 136–38). It is better to speak of restrictions rooted in the Mosaic law than restrictions rooted in Jewish Christianity, for as Brown notes, there were different kinds of Jewish and Gentile Christianity (Raymond E. Brown, "Not Jewish Christianity and Gentile Christianity but Types of Jewish/ Gentile Christianity," *CBQ* 45 [1983]: 74–79).

⁴⁰Paul says, "I know and I am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself" (14:14). His persuasion "in the Lord" likely points to the dominical tradition later recorded in Mark 7:15// Matthew 15:11: "there is nothing outside of a man which is able to make him unclean by going inside him" (Mark 7:15; cf. 7:18–19a). Mark comments that in saying this Jesus "made all foods clean" (7:19b). See Thompson for a thorough defense of this dominical allusion which he concludes is "virtually certain" (Michael Thompson, *Clothed With Christ: The Example and Teaching of Jesus in Romans 12.1–15.13*, *JSNTSup* 59 [Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991], 185–99). So Jewett, although I do not agree with him that ὅτι introduces a citation of the dominical tradition (*Romans*, 859).

causing him to eat what he thinks is unclean, i.e., to do what he thinks is evil (14:13–22). Thus, the action of eating “unclean” food is sin to the weak in faith because he or she doubts that it is a good thing to do—they think it is evil, and thus to them it is evil (14:14). And the one who sins, Paul warns, will be condemned (14:23).⁴¹

My explanation of the ground of the justifying judgment in Romans 14:1–23 must be more nuanced, for Paul’s description of final justification is more nuanced. Paul is concerned that the Christian community at Rome act in a way that is pleasing to God (14:18), a concern which reflects the overall aim of the final section of his letter (Rom 12:1–2).⁴² He is confident that both the weak and strong act in the matters of eating out of the motivation to be pleasing to the Lord (14:6–8). He tells the strong in particular that their eating habits are “good” (14:16).⁴³ But he encourages them to pursue an even greater “good”—to refrain from eating meat or drinking wine in order to walk in love toward their weak Christian brother or sister by not setting out a stumbling block before them (14:21; cf. 14:13–15). One may parallel this concern with Paul’s earlier description of the final judgment according to works—the one who does what is good will be repaid eternal life (2:7, 10, 13). Good works are a necessary and significant factor in the final justifying verdict.

Most fundamentally, however, Paul is convinced that the Christian community at Rome will stand at the judgment because the Lord is able to make them stand (14:4). In other words, the ground of the final justification is the saving work of God. This saving

⁴¹Mattern argues that in Rom 14:23 the sinful deed itself is not the ground of condemnation; rather, the deed leads to unbelief which is the ground of falling (*Gerichtes bei Paulus*, 117–18). On the contrary, in 14:23 unbelief leads to sin which is the ground of condemnation.

⁴²Konradt argues that the positive recompense plays no role in Rom 12:1–15:13, for Paul only warns of the *negative* soteriological consequences (*Gericht und Gemeinde*, 520). On the contrary, Paul is very concerned in Rom 14:1–23 that his readers be pleasing to the Lord in light of the final judgment.

⁴³See Gagnon for a compelling argument that ὑμῶν τὸ ἀγαθόν in Rom 14:16 refers to the faith of the strong to eat all things (Robert A. J. Gagnon, “The Meaning of ὑμῶν τὸ ἀγαθόν in Romans 14:16,” *JBL* 117 [1998]: 675–89). I would nuance his definition by saying it refers to the actions themselves which are done in faith.

work is something which began in the past in God's reception of Christians into a slave-master relationship through the death of Christ (14:3, 15). It also results in the present good works of believers, for Paul argues that his Christian readers are motivated to please the Lord because Christ died and lived again in order to reign over them (14:9). He appeals to Christ's reign again as he encourages the strong to pursue an even greater good: "For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (14:17). Here he encourages them to pursue the "peace" and "joy" in the Holy Spirit which he calls in Galatians the "fruit of the Spirit" (Gal 5:22–23). These good works are thus the result of Christ's death and resurrection as well as the work of the Spirit. Finally, Paul is confident that the saving work of God will be culminated in the future—believers will stand because the Lord is able to make them stand (14:4). This confidence is not surprising, for Paul has argued at length that those who are justified by the alternative, saving justification will certainly be saved from the final day of God's wrath (5:9–11; 8:31–39). Thus although good works are necessary for the final justifying judgment, it is more accurate to explain the ground of the justifying judgment in 14:1–23 as the saving work of God.

Is the final justifying judgment a justification by faith in Romans 14:1–23? The chapter begins and ends on the note of faith (14:1–2, 22–23), but there is debate over what exactly πίστις means. Some commentators distinguish between πίστις as the "faith" which justifies in 3:21–4:25, and πίστις as the "confidence" which allows someone to perform an action in 14:1–23. One may be strong in justifying πίστις but weak in πίστις to do certain actions.⁴⁴ Others see a closer connection between πίστις in 3:21–4:25 and 14:1–23.⁴⁵ The continuity and discontinuity between πίστις in the two

⁴⁴Hans Lietzmann, *An die Römer* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1919), 55; Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:697–98; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 688–89; see also BDAG, s.v., "πίστις," use 2.d.ε.

⁴⁵Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 828–29; Schreiner, *Romans*, 713–14; Wright, *Romans*, 742.

passages has been observed since Origen. He notes the contrast between 14:1 and 4:19 where Paul says Abraham did not weaken in faith, and yet he sees continuity when he says “it is one thing to be an unbeliever and something else to be weak in faith.”⁴⁶ In my view, it is unlikely that Paul sees no connection between the justifying πίστις of Abraham and the πίστις of his readers in 14:1–23, since there are several lexical connections (πίστις, ἀσθενέω [4:19; 14:1], and διακρίνω [4:20; 14:23]). Both groups in 14:1–23 have a justifying faith like Abraham; both belong to the Lord who died and lived again (14:8–9; cf. 4:25). But one group is weak in faith, unlike Abraham who did not grow weak in faith when he considered the impossibility of the promise (4:19).⁴⁷ Because of their weakness Paul exhorts the strong in faith to “have their faith privately before God.” He does not mean to be private about their faith in Christ in every aspect, but only to be private about the implications of their faith—the freedom to eat food which would cause the weak in faith to stumble.⁴⁸ Further, the weak are in danger of acting without faith altogether, of doubting in unbelief and thus doing what they believe to be sinful (14:23; cf. 14:14).⁴⁹ Wright thus sums up 14:23 nicely: “In other words, you are either with Abraham or with Adam. You are either, like Abraham, in unwavering trust in God and God’s promises; or you are turning away from God and living by some other means.”⁵⁰ The weak in faith are in danger of being condemned by unbelief resulting in sin. But is the final justification thus by faith? Paul does not make this clear. But because

⁴⁶Origen, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans: Books 6–10*, trans. Thomas P. Schneck (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2002), 233–34.

⁴⁷So Schreiner who argues that the weak have genuine but deficient faith (*Romans*, 713–14), and Wright who argues that the weak “are people whose faith, though real, has not matured to the point where they understand its full implications” (*Romans*, 733).

⁴⁸This point answers Cranfield’s objection that Paul cannot be telling his audience to be private about their faith in Christ in Rom 14:22 (*Romans*, 2:726).

⁴⁹That this doubting goes beyond their weakness in faith is suggested by Rom 4:20 where doubt is connected with “unbelief.”

⁵⁰Wright, *Romans*, 742.

the ground of the final judgment is fundamentally the saving work of God which in the argument of Romans is connected with the righteousness revealed by faith (1:16–17), one may say by implication that the final justifying judgment is, in this sense, a justification by faith.

The standard of divine judgment in Romans 14:1–23 is in one sense relative to the individual believer. Paul’s audience disagrees over whether the specific works in view—namely, the eating of meat (14:3, 6), and the observing special days (14:5, 6)—are good or evil. He counsels each person to be “fully convinced in his own mind” about what is pleasing to the Lord (14:5). If I am correct that these are issues pertaining to the Mosaic law, then one can say that following the Mosaic food and festival regulations are relative for the final judgment. Paul’s understanding is rooted in Jesus’ declaration of all foods to be clean and in the new era in which believers are no longer under the Mosaic law (6:14–15). In Romans 7 Paul argues that believers have been set free from the law through the death of Christ in order that they might serve in the new way of the Spirit:

Therefore, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ in order that you might be bound to another, to the one who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God. For when we were in the flesh, the passions of sin which came through the law worked in our members in order to bear fruit to death. But now we have been set free from the law, because we have died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the letter (7:4–6).

This argument has direct bearing on 14:1–23, because in both passages Paul argues that believers do good works as a result of their relationship with the risen Lord (7:4; 14:9), a service rendered in the new way of the Spirit of God (7:6; 14:17). It also has bearing on the perfect obedience required by the Mosaic law, for believers are no longer bound to that law (7:1, 4), but instead have the Spirit as a down payment of the perfection which will be theirs at the resurrection (8:10–12), a perfection which they are now to strive for (12:2).

The Function of Judgment in Romans 14:1–23

The theme of divine judgment in Romans 14:1–23 has a fundamentally different function than it does in the first discourse of the letter. Some scholars find significance in the similarities between 14:1–23 and 2:1–29. Both speak of the divine judgment in order to address the problem of human judgment, and both use the rhetorical device of diatribe with speech in the second person singular to an imaginary interlocutor. Thompson draws parallels between Romans 2:1–11, Romans 14:1–13a, and Jesus' prohibitions of judgment in Matthew 7:1–5 and Luke 6:37–38. Although he sees differences in the traditions, he suggests that all are concerned with the problem of hypocritical judgment.⁵¹ Minear suggests that “the ‘you’ which is so prominent in 2.1–6 and 2.17–24 applies more precisely to one of the factions in Rome” which are laid out in 14:1–23.⁵² Similarly Jewett argues that 2:1–16 is a rhetorical trap for Paul’s Christian audience in Rome which becomes clear in 14:1–15:13.⁵³

However, I have observed a different object of judgment in Romans 14:1–23. Whereas in 2:1–29 the target of Paul’s discourse is the Jewish people, in 14:1–23 the target of his discourse is the Christian community at Rome. The problem in 2:1–29 is hypocritical human judgment—Paul accuses his dialogue partner of doing the very things he condemns. But Paul makes no such charge against the weak and the strong in 14:1–23—the problem in this passage is not hypocritical judgment but human judgment of the one whom God has received. Thus, Romans 14:1–23 has a different target with a different problem than Romans 2:1–29. This difference in meaning underlies the difference in function of the judgment motif.

In Romans 12:1–2 Paul introduces the final section of his letter (Rom 12:1–

⁵¹Thompson, *Clothed With Christ*, 161–67, 172–73.

⁵²Paul S. Minear, *The Obedience of Faith: The Purposes of Paul in the Epistle to the Romans*, SBT 19, 2nd series (London: SCM Press, 1971), 46. See his entire argument, 46–56.

⁵³Jewett, *Romans*, 26. See pp. 69–71 of this dissertation.

15:13).⁵⁴

Therefore, I exhort you through the mercies of God, brothers and sisters, to present your bodies as a sacrifice which is living, holy, and pleasing to God, your rational service of worship. And do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind in order that you may approve what is the will of God, that which is good and pleasing and perfect (12:1–2).

Just as Paul’s summary statement in 3:9 suggests that the function of the judgment motif in the first discourse is to make an accusation, so his introductory statement in 12:1 suggests that the function of the motif in 14:1–23 is to make an exhortation. The verb παρακαλῶ means “I exhort,” and is characteristic of Pauline ethical instruction.⁵⁵ Paul exhorts the Christian community at Rome to present their entire selves in service to God and to think and live in a way not characterized by the present evil age, but by the will of God. He then elaborates his exhortation with a series of ethical instructions which culminates in his instructions to the strong and the weak (14:1–15:13).⁵⁶ Therefore, Paul speaks of the final judgment in 14:1–23 in order to continue his exhortation to the Christian community at Rome.

Specifically, the theme of divine judgment in Romans 14:1–23 functions to exhort Paul’s Christian readers to cease from their judgment of one another, for the theme is the ground of his repeated exhortation to refrain from human judgment.⁵⁷ First, his argument that the slave of God will stand or fall by his own Lord is the ground of the rhetorical question “who are you to judge the slave of another?” (14:4). The correct

⁵⁴Both Cranfield and Schreiner argue that Rom 12:1–2 introduce the theme of 12:1–15:13 (Cranfield, *Romans*, 595; Schreiner, *Romans*, 640).

⁵⁵BDAG, s.v., “παρακαλέω,” use 2. Cf. 1 Thess 2:12; 4:1, 10; 5:14; 1 Cor 1:10; 4:16; 2 Cor 2:8; 10:1; Eph 4:1; Phil 4:2. Cranfield rightly argues that Paul does not mean “I encourage” in Rom 12:1 but “I exhort” (*Romans*, 597–98).

⁵⁶Note that in these instructions, Paul aims that his readers will be “pleasing to God” (14:18), just as he lays out in the summary statement (12:1 and 2).

⁵⁷So Yinger: “Divine judgment. . . functions as a theological reason (γάρ) for rejecting such intra-community judgment” (Kent L. Yinger, *Paul, Judaism, and Judgment According to Deeds* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999], 197).

response assumed by this question is “you do not have the right to judge the slave of God!” Second, his reminder that all of us will stand before God’s judgment bench is the ground of the rhetorical questions, “You, why are you judging your brother? Or you also, why are you despising your brother?” (14:10). Again, the correct response is “you have no right to judge or despise!” Although it is the weak who is tempted to judge the strong for eating what the weak considers to be unclean, Romans 14:10 shows that the final judgment also rules out the temptation of the strong to despise the weak for restricting his diet. In the third exhortation, Paul uses the verb κρίνω to summarize the prohibited activity of both the weak *and* the strong: “Therefore, let us no longer judge one another” (14:13a).⁵⁸ Once again, this exhortation is grounded in the theme of divine judgment, for it is a conclusion which follows from Paul’s explanation of our universal appearance before the divine judgment bench (14:10b–12).

First Corinthians 4:1–5 offers the only exact parallel in Paul’s letters to the function of the motif in Romans 14:1–23. Paul tells the church at Corinth, “I am conscious of nothing against myself, but I am not justified by this; instead, the one who judges me is the Lord” (1 Cor 4:4). His exhortation follows from this: “Thus, do not judge anything before the time, until the Lord comes, who will bring to light the secrets of darkness and will reveal the intentions of hearts, and then each one’s praise will come from God” (1 Cor 4:5). The theme of the final divine judgment according to works is the ground of Paul’s exhortation to refrain from human judgment. The brief mention of God’s wrath in Romans 12:17 is also a close parallel, for in this verse Paul exhorts his Christian readers to refrain from human vengeance because of the coming wrath of God.

There are many parallel passages, however, in which Paul employs the judgment motif to make various exhortations to a Christian audience—typically warnings

⁵⁸So Cranfield (*Romans*, 2:711). Thompson notes that it must include both the weak and the strong since Paul includes himself (*Clothed with Christ*, 163). Note that Paul seems to transition in Rom 14:13b and address primarily the strong.

against sin, but also motivation for righteousness. This is perhaps the most common function of the motif in Paul's letters, although not in his letter to the Romans. If κρίμα in Romans 13:2 refers to divine judgment, then the motif functions here to warn Paul's Christian readers against resisting the human authority which has been ordained by God.⁵⁹

Finally, it must be observed how this exhorting function of the judgment motif in Romans 14:1–23 is different from its earlier accusing function in 1:18–3:20. When Paul employs the theme of judgment according to works to make accusation he declares the guilt of his readers. But in 14:1–23 he does not declare the guilt of the readers, but rather assumes good things and urges them to avoid sin and practice righteousness.

Conclusion

In many ways, the judgment motif in Romans 14:1–23 is similar to the passages studied earlier in the dissertation. The agent of judgment is God and Jesus Christ. The action is an evaluative judgment which results in falling for some and standing for others. The ground of the final condemning judgment is human sin. In other ways, however, the meaning of the motif is different from its meaning in 1:18–3:20. The object of judgment is the Christian community rather than the entire world. This different target of Paul's discourse underlies a fundamentally different function—in 14:1–23 judgment functions to make an exhortation to Christians rather than an accusation against the world. Finally, the ground of the final justifying judgment in 14:1–23 is more nuanced than its ground in 1:18–3:20. In that passage one may accurately explain the ground of final justification as human good works or the doing of the law. But this passage does not lend itself to such an explanation. Although good works are a necessary and significant factor in the final justifying verdict, Paul grounds the final standing of

⁵⁹Other examples can be found in Gal 6:7–8; 1 Thess 4:6; 1 Cor 3:16–17; 11:27–29; 2 Cor 5:10. There are also examples in the disputed Pauline letters: Col 3:24–25; Eph 6:8; 2 Tim 4:8.

Christians fundamentally in the saving work of God.

Having examined justification by faith, the riddle of Romans 2, and Paul's application of the judgment motif to his Christian readers, I am now in the position to summarize the second thesis of the dissertation and draw some conclusions from this study. To the summary and conclusion of this dissertation I now turn.

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Summary

In one of the earliest references to the collection of Paul's letters, a pastor reminds his Christian readers, in light of the seeming delay of God's judgment, to "consider the patience of our Lord to be salvation, as also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given to him" (2 Pet 3:15). It is likely that he speaks of Romans 2:4 where Paul says that the patience of God is meant to lead sinners to repentance. As he continues, the pastor notes that some things in Paul's letters are "hard to understand" (2 Pet 3:16). Perhaps a more appropriate adjective could not be chosen for Romans 2 and the theme of judgment according to works in Paul.

In this dissertation I have sought to understand and explain the meaning and function of the judgment motif within the argument of Romans. The meaning of divine judgment is consistent throughout the letter—at the final judgment God will repay each person according to works. However, differences in each passage highlight the different functions of the motif. In Romans 1:18–32 the action of judgment is completely negative and the object of judgment is described in terms of Gentile idolatry. These details underlie Paul's accusation against the Gentile world. Romans 2:1–29 also focuses upon the condemning judgment and upon the priority of Jews in judgment, emphases which underlie Paul's accusation against the Jewish people. Romans 3:1–8 is a digression in which judgment functions to defend the righteousness of God. However, the passage continues to focus upon the Jewish people as the object of the condemning judgment as it answers objections to the accusation of 2:1–29. Thus, 3:1–8 confirms the finding which

forms the first thesis of this dissertation: *The theme of judgment according to works primarily functions in Romans 1:18–3:20 to make a universal accusation of sin and guilt which lays the foundation for Paul’s doctrine of justification by faith.* This thesis is confirmed by Paul’s summary and conclusion in Romans 3:9–20.

Now that I have explained how the accusation lays a foundation for justification, addressed the riddle of Romans 2, and examined judgment in Romans 14:1–23, I may summarize the second thesis: *In the argument of Romans, justification by faith is an alternative, saving approach to the positive recompense of the final judgment.* Throughout the letter, Paul presents only one ground of the condemning judgment: sin, which is alternately described as doing what is evil or transgression of the law. This is the ground of the condemning judgment in both 1:18–3:20 and 14:1–23. However, the letter presents two approaches to the justifying judgment. The first approach, on the ground of obedience to the law (2:7, 10, 13), is ruled out by Paul’s universal accusation in 1:18–3:20. This necessitates an alternative, saving approach to justification, on the ground of faith, grace, and the condemning judgment of the cross (3:21–26).

In Romans 14:1–23 what is striking is Paul’s confidence that his readers will stand at the final judgment. This positive emphasis forms a contrast with the negative emphasis of the judgment motif in 1:18–3:20, and it underlies a different function of the theme. In 14:1–23 Paul employs the theme of judgment according to works to make an exhortation to his Christian audience. Whereas Paul’s accusation of 1:18–3:20 declares the guilt of the world, his exhortation assumes good things of the Christian community in Rome because they have been received by God—i.e., they have been justified by faith. Thus, Paul’s confidence in 14:1–23 is based upon the saving approach to the positive recompense of the final judgment.

This alternative approach to justification is not mutually exclusive with obedience to the law, for it necessarily results in the fulfillment of the law by the Spirit (Rom 8:1–4). Indeed, Paul hints at such new covenant obedience by certain Gentiles

within his accusation of the Jewish people (2:15, 26–29). Moreover, the proleptic judgment of the cross does not replace the final judgment according to works, because Paul warns in 14:1–23 that his Christian readers will give an account of their works at this judgment. For Christians, good works are a necessary and significant factor in the final justifying verdict. At the same time, the ground of the final justification is not described in terms of obedience to the law but in terms of the saving work of God. The relationship between Christians and their crucified and risen Lord ensures a service in the new way of the Spirit (7:4–6; 14:6–9) and the hope that the Lord is able to make them stand at the judgment (14:4). Thus, the ground of the final justifying judgment in 14:1–23 may be described as an alternative approach from that of 2:7, 10 and 13, even though there are points of analogy between the two. It is this alternative, saving approach to the final justifying judgment which creates the tension between justification and judgment in the theology of Romans.

Defining the Tension

One goal of this study has been to pinpoint the exact nature of the tension between justification and judgment in the theology of Romans. It can now be said that the tension between justification and judgment in Romans is created by Paul's distinction between two alternative approaches to the final justifying judgment. Paul's accusation rules out the first approach on the ground of doing the law, and establishes the need for a second, saving approach on the ground of faith, grace, and the proleptic condemning judgment of the cross.

This tension is apparent within the Protestant theological tradition because theologians in this tradition have employed various constructs in order to explain the distinction between these two alternatives in Paul. The most familiar example is probably the distinction between the law and the gospel in Lutheran theology. Another example is the distinction between the covenant of works and the covenant of grace in Protestant

orthodoxy. And in New Testament studies, Westerholm captures the same distinction with the terms of “ordinary righteousness” and “extraordinary righteousness.”¹

But why does this distinction create a tension? It creates a tension because, although Paul rules out the first approach to the justifying judgment and establishes the need for an alternative approach, he then seems to validate the first approach when he describes Christians who stand before the final judgment according to their works.² Just as the proleptic revelation of God’s wrath within human history does not replace the final judgment, so the revelation of God’s righteousness within human history does not replace the final judgment according to works.³

When Paul says Christians will be judged according to their works, he is echoed by the universal testimony of the New Testament. Outside of Romans 2:1–16, Matthew 25:31–46 and Revelation 20:11–15 offer the most extended descriptions of the final judgment in the New Testament. In Matthew 25 Jesus speaks of his coming in glory to judge all of the nations of the earth:

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. And they will gather before him all the nations, and he will separate them from one another, as a shepherd sets apart the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep at his right hand, and the goats at his left (Matt 25:31–33).

The passage goes on to describe the sheep as “the righteous” (Matt 25:37, 46), as those who have done good works for the benefit of the Son of Man by doing good “to one of the least of these my brothers,”⁴ and as those who will depart into “eternal life” (Matt

¹See Stephen Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The “Lutheran” Paul and His Critics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 263–84.

²In addition to Rom 2:15, 26–29 and 14:1–23, see the list of Pauline passages on p. 188 n. 59 of this dissertation.

³So Nygren: “By justification by faith God has not abolished the judgment of the works of men” (Anders Nygren, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. Carl C. Rasmussen [Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1949], 127). Contra Lietzmann, who argues that Rom 2 teaches God would judge only if the gospel had not come (Hans Lietzmann, *An die Römer* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1919], 31, 40).

25:46). The goats, however, have failed to do good to the Son of Man and will depart into “eternal punishment” (Matt 25:46). Each will be recompensed according to their works. In Revelation 20, the author pictures God sitting on a “great white throne” (Rev 20:11). All of the dead will stand before him at that judgment, and they will be judged according to what has been written in certain books—that is, they will be judged “according to their works” (Rev 20:12). Each of the three extended descriptions of the final judgment in the New Testament speaks of a judgment according to works.

One should not assume, however, these descriptions validate Paul’s first approach to the justifying judgment. In the vision of Revelation there is another element which is only involved in the justifying judgment: “the book of life.” In order to be saved from the condemning judgment, which is described as the “lake of fire,” one’s name must be written in the book of life (Rev 20:15). This book is earlier described as “the book of life of the lamb who was slain” (Rev 13:8; cf. Rev 21:27). Like Paul, then, the author speaks of an alternative approach to the positive recompense which is associated with the death of Christ. In neither Romans nor Revelation does this alternative approach to the positive recompense replace the final judgment according to works, but in both cases it has a bearing upon the positive verdict of that judgment.

Evaluating Proposed Solutions

Having defined the tension between justification and judgment in Romans, I will now evaluate the proposed solutions to the tension within Pauline theology. First, many New Testament scholars have argued that the theme of judgment according to works is simply a remnant of Jewish theology. But while the theme is certainly rooted in the Old Testament and Jewish thought, this does not mean it has no significance in Paul’s

⁴A few manuscripts and fathers do not have τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου, but not enough to put the reading in doubt.

own theology.⁵ In fact, my study demonstrates that the theme of judgment according to works lays a foundation for Paul's doctrine of justification by faith. Contra Braun, Paul does not develop the theme of judgment separately from the theme of justification.⁶ Rather, it is the very presupposition of Paul's doctrine of justification.⁷ Justification by faith only makes sense with the "horizon of expectation" of a final judgment according to works.⁸ Thus Paul rightly speaks about the theme of divine judgment according to works as a theme which accords with his gospel (Rom 2:16). This suggestion cannot be a solution to the tension between justification and judgment in Paul.

Second, several scholars have suggested that Paul speaks of a separate judgment according to works for Christians, a judgment for rewards rather than salvation. A theology of rewards is not absent in Paul, for Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:10–15 that a teacher can suffer loss while still being saved at the final judgment (implying that he might have had gain).⁹ But Paul warns the Christian community in Rome that sin will still lead to the condemning judgment for believers (Rom 14:23; cf. Rom 6:21–23). Thus, he does not envision a separate judgment for Christians. Instead, when Paul reminds his Christian audience in 14:1–23 about the coming judgment, he assumes his earlier

⁵As Bassler demonstrates with the theme of divine impartiality, traditional theological statements can have significance in Paul's theology as well (J. M. Bassler, *Divine Impartiality: Paul and a Theological Axiom*, SBLDS 59 [Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982], 4–5, 188).

⁶Herbert Braun, *Gerichtsgedanke und Rechtfertigungslehre bei Paulus* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche, 1930), 32–33.

⁷Snodgrass rightly emphasizes that judgment according to works is the presupposition of justification by faith (Klyne R. Snodgrass, "Justification by Grace—To the Doers: An Analysis of the Place of Romans 2 in the Theology of Paul," *NTS* 32 [1986]: 82, 86–87).

⁸Peter Stuhlmacher, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary*, trans. Scott J. Hafemann (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 46.

⁹See Yinger, for a superb treatment of this passage. He observes that Paul speaks of rewards in 3:10–15, but then gives a warning of condemnation in 3:16–17 (Kent L. Yinger, *Paul, Judaism, and Judgment According to Deeds* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999], 215–28).

description of the final judgment according to works in Romans 2:1–16.

Third, many have suggested that the tension within the Protestant tradition indicates the need for a revised view of justification. Filson and VanLandingham suggest that the alternative justification on the ground of Christ's death does not apply to post-conversion sins in Pauline theology. However, as I observed in chapter six, this suggestion is clearly wrong for Paul emphasizes the comprehensive nature of the saving, justifying judgment in Romans 5–8.¹⁰ New perspective scholars argue that justification by faith is not an alternative to a justification on the ground of doing what is good. Paul's indictment does not rule out the justifying judgment on the ground of obedience to the law, for it is not fundamentally an accusation of disobedience. Rather, Paul's indictment rules out the justifying judgment on the ground of works crucial to Jewish identity, for it is fundamentally an accusation of Jewish exclusiveness.¹¹ Thus, in the new perspective reading, the tension is not as apparent, because the accusation simply rules out the Jewish attitude of presumption rather than setting up the need for an alternative approach to the justifying judgment.

In response, I have argued that the new perspective reading of justification dulls the conclusion of Paul's accusation in Romans 1:18–3:20. Paul's Jewish interlocutor thinks of himself as a circumcised Jewish *law keeper* unlike the Gentile sinners.¹² However, Paul's accusation places the dialogue partner in the dock along with the Gentile world. Thus when Paul concludes that "no flesh will be justified by works of the law," (3:20), he is most likely saying that no one will receive the justifying judgment on the ground of obedience to the law, because all people are under the power of sin

¹⁰See pp. 143–46 of this dissertation.

¹¹James D. G. Dunn, "Yet Once More—"The Works of the Law": A Response," *JSNT* 46 (1992): 99–117; Yinger, *Judgment According to Deeds*, 169–75, 182–87.

¹²See pp. 73–75 of this dissertation.

(3:9).¹³ Paul’s universal accusation not only rules out Jewish presumption on the basis of possession of the law—it rules out the very possibility of receiving the justifying judgment through obedience to the law. Paul believes that the “doers of the law will be justified” (2:13), but his universal accusation renders this category to be an empty set (3:20). Thus, the new perspective revision of justification does not adequately explain the accusation leveled by the judgment motif which establishes the need for an alternative approach to the justifying judgment.¹⁴

Conclusion

In the introduction I observed that Protestant theologians generally affirmed that the final judgment is according to works, but they explained the good works of Christians as something other than the ground of justification. My study of divine judgment in Romans has convinced me that this solution is correct. Paul employs the judgment motif to level an accusation which rules out the possibility of receiving the final justifying verdict on the ground of works (2:7, 10, 13; 3:19–20). This accusation lays the foundation for justification by faith, which Paul describes as an alternative, saving approach to the justifying verdict of the final judgment (3:21–26).

The alternative approach to justification is not mutually exclusive with obedience to the law. Paul argues that justification by faith necessarily leads to a new way of obedience by the Spirit (Rom 7:6). Further, this new covenant obedience is a close analogy to the obedience required by the Mosaic law, for Paul calls it the fulfillment of the law (8:4). Nor does the alternative approach to justification replace the final judgment according to works. Christians will give an account at that judgment, and

¹³See pp. 129–35 of this dissertation.

¹⁴Martin Hengel similarly notes that the new perspective fails to see Paul’s distinction between the law and the gospel in Rom 1:18–3:20 (R. Alan Streett, “An Interview with Martin Hengel,” *Criswell Theological Review* 2, no. 2 [Spring 2005]: 14).

works are a necessary and significant factor in the final justifying verdict (14:1–23).

In Romans 2:15 and 26–29 Paul hints that the obedience of the new covenant is a close analogy to the obedience required by the Mosaic law, for Christian obedience fulfills the righteous requirement of the law (Rom 8:4; 13:8–10). However, Paul does not explain the role of Christian obedience as the ground of the final justifying verdict in the same way he explains good works as the ground of the justifying verdict in 2:7, 10 and 13 (cf. Rom 4:4). For example, though he continues to speak of sin as the ground of the negative recompense when he warns his Christian readers that “the wages of sin is death” (Rom 6:23a), he does not, in the parallel clause, speak of good works as the ground of the positive recompense. Rather, “the *free gift* of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (6:23b, my emphasis; cf. 5:15–16). Similarly, in 14:1–23 Paul continues to warn that sin leads condemnation (14:23), but he argues that God himself will cause Christians to stand at the final judgment (14:4). Therefore, it seems correct to suggest that, according to Romans, Christians will be judged according to their works, but these works are not the ground of the final justifying verdict. Interpreters and theologians, then, should avoid the language of “ground” or “basis” when explaining the role of Christian good works in justification.¹⁵ My call to avoidance of this terminology is not because Christian obedience has no bearing on the final judgment in Paul, for it clearly does. Rather, theologians should avoid the language of “ground” for Christian obedience because they must be able to explain how justification is *not by the works of the law*.

How then should theologians describe the role Christian obedience at the final judgment? I observed in the introduction that many scholars continue to speak of such obedience as the fruit and evidence (or manifestation) of justifying faith. This is language was often employed by Protestant theologians and confessions. For example, the

¹⁵Contra Paul A. Rainbow, “Justification according to Paul’s Thessalonian Correspondence,” *BBR* 19 (2009): 249–74.

Westminster Confession describes Christian good works as “fruits and evidences of a lively faith.”¹⁶ The language of fruit follows Paul himself, who describes Christian obedience as the “fruit of the Spirit” (Gal 5:22–23). He uses the same language in Romans when he argues that freedom from sin and enslavement to God results in “fruit” leading to sanctification and eternal life (Rom 6:22). Similarly, Paul says that Christians have died to the law and been united with the resurrected Christ “so that we may bear fruit to God” (Rom 7:4). The language of evidence may also be helpful for a description of the role of good works in the final justification verdict. In legal theory “evidence” is distinguished from the law-plus-facts which are considered the ground of a legal decision.¹⁷ Evidence refers to something “that tends to prove or disprove the existence of an alleged fact.”¹⁸ Thus, evidence is necessary and significant for a legal decision, but it points to something more fundamental—the facts. Similarly, Paul argues that Christians must be pleasing to the Lord in their works, but that their good works prove the more fundamental fact that God has received them and will certainly make them stand at the final judgment (14:1–9).¹⁹

Some things in Paul’s letters are indeed “hard to understand.” This fact should not hinder interpreters and theologians from working to explain Paul’s theology, but it should encourage them to be careful as they do so. It is my hope that this dissertation has

¹⁶Westminster Confession of Faith, XVI, *Of Good Works*.

¹⁷Thanks to Jonathan Keim, J. D., for his help with this argument.

¹⁸ Brian A. Garner, ed., *Black’s Law Dictionary*, 7th ed. (St. Paul, MN: West Group, 1999), s.v., “evidence.”

¹⁹Cf. 8:14 where Christian obedience shows or manifests that one has already been adopted by God: “All who are lead by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God.” Other New Testament scholars and theologians have also suggested the language of evidence for the role of Christian good works in final justification. For example, Beale follows Edwards in distinguishing between Christ’s work as the necessary cause of justification and Christian obedience as the necessary evidence of justification (G. K. Beale, “The Role of Resurrection in the Already-and-Not-Yet Phases of Justification,” in *For the Fame of God’s Name: Essays in Honor of John Piper*, ed. Sam Storms and Justin Taylor [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010], 204–05).

carefully explained Paul's theology of the final judgment in Romans.

APPENDIX

PROVOKING THE JEWS TO JEALOUSY

Introduction

In Romans 2:1–29, the theme of judgment according to works primarily functions to make an accusation against the Jewish people. But the motif may also subtly function in this passage to call the Jews to repentance and a new heart. It is likely that Paul speaks of a defense at the judgment for certain Christian Gentiles in order to provoke the Jews to jealousy so that they will seek salvation through faith in Christ. This secondary function of the motif also helps to explain the tension between Paul's accusation and his description of a Gentile defense in Romans 2. His description of Gentiles in Romans 2 does not contradict his accusation against Gentiles in 1:18–32. Instead, within his accusation against the Jewish people, he speaks of the justification of Christian Gentiles in order to draw non-Christian Jews to salvation, a strategy which he explains in Romans 11:13–14. If Romans 1:18–3:20 should be understood as an explanation of the gospel Paul preached in his mission, then Paul's own reflection on the strategy of his mission may provide help for unraveling the riddle of Romans 2.

Provoking to Jealousy in Romans 11:11–32

Paul explains his strategy of provoking the Jews to jealousy in the context of Romans 9–11. Some older commentators described these chapters as an appendix to Romans 1–8,¹ but most now see them as an integral part of Paul's argument in the letter in which he explains God's purposes for Israel and the Gentiles in light of his gospel. The

¹See especially Dodd who argued that Rom 9–11 is an inserted sermon which has no relevance to the rest of the letter (C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, MNTC [New York: Harper and Brothers, 1932], 161–63).

problem which drives the passage is the fact that most Jews have failed to believe in the Messiah despite the promises God made to them. This problem leads to two questions in Romans 11. First, Paul asks whether God has rejected his people (11:1). His answer is that God has not rejected his people because he has saved a remnant. The rest of Israel, however, has been hardened which leads Paul to a second question:² “Therefore, I say, they have not stumbled so that they might fall, have they? May it never be!” In other words, Paul asks whether the current stumbling of the majority of Israel will inevitably lead to their condemnation.³ He answers emphatically that it will not, and he explains this answer in the rest of the chapter. For the purposes of this dissertation, I will only address God’s purpose of stirring Israel to jealousy for their salvation and how Paul adapts the jealousy motif as strategy in the context of his own missionary preaching.

Paul speaks of God’s purpose for the salvation of Israel, laying out a sequence of events: (1) Their transgression has led to (2) the salvation of the Gentiles (3) in order to stir them to jealousy (4) so that they will be saved (11:11–12). Most interpreters think that Israel’s παράπτωμα, which Paul mentions twice in these verses, refers to their rejection of the gospel.⁴ Barth suggested a specific historical reference to their rejection

²The question is a false conclusion drawn from the fact of the hardening of the rest of Israel. This technique of raising a question in response to a previous argument is common in Romans (e.g., 3:1, 9; 4:1, 6:1, 15; 7:7; 8:31; 9:14, 30; 10:14; 11:1, 11)

³Munck rightly observes that the subject of the Rom 11:11 is οἱ λοιποὶ of Israel who have been hardened in Rom 11:7 (Johannes Munck, *Christ & Israel: An Interpretation of Romans 9–11*, trans. Ingeborg Nixon [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967], 116). In view of this it seems more likely that Paul is asking a question about Israel as a whole rather than merely whether any *more* individual Jews can be saved beyond the initial remnant (contra N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991], 247). Schreiner notes that virtually all commentators take this position (Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998], 593; so, e.g., James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, WBC, vol. 38b [Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1988], 653; Douglas Moo, *Romans*, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996], 687; Robert Jewett, *Romans*, Hermeneia [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007], 673).

⁴E.g., Munck, *Christ & Israel*, 120; Schreiner, *Romans*, 594; Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 2: 974. There is a certain truth in this suggestion. Israel’s transgression is not unconnected with their rejection of the gospel, for they have sought to establish their own righteousness rather than submitting to the righteousness of God in Christ (9:30–10:4).

of Jesus at the crucifixion.⁵ But in the context of Romans, the word παράπτωμα specifically recalls two passages in the letter, 2:17–29 and 5:12–21. Transgression is related to sin in Romans but typically refers to the overstepping of a known standard. This is why Paul says that “sin was in the world before the law, but sin is not counted when there is no law” (5:13) and why he observes “where there is no law, neither is there transgression” (4:15).⁶ The point is that Paul sees transgression occurring within the context of God’s commandments. He typically reserves the terms παράβασις, παραβίασις, and παράπτωμα for Adam’s transgression of God’s command (5:14, 15 [2x], 17, 18) and for Israel’s transgression of the law (2:23, 25, 27; 5:16, 20).⁷ Since Paul clearly has Israel’s transgression in view in 11:11 (αὐτῶν παραπτώματι), he seems to be recalling 2:17–29 in which he accuses Israel for their transgression of the law.⁸ This passage continues the accusation of Paul’s Jewish interlocutor. In 2:1–5 Paul accuses him of doing the same evil deeds as the Gentiles, but in 2:17–29 Paul is more specific: he is a transgressor of the law. Further, he is a hypocritical transgressor of the law because he

⁵This view was suggested by Barth and followed by Cranfield (C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, ICC [new series] [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975], 2: 556).

⁶In this verse Paul uses παράβασις which is a synonym of παράπτωμα. Both essentially mean the overstepping of a boundary (see BDAG, s.v., “παράβασις,” and s.v., “παράπτωμα”).

⁷In at least one case, however, he has a broader reference. Rom 4:25 speaks to all who believe on the God who raised Jesus from the dead, and it says “he was delivered up for our transgressions, and he was raised for our justification.” Perhaps Paul also has a broader reference than Israel in mind when he says τὸ δὲ χάρισμα ἐκ πολλῶν παραπτωμάτων εἰς δικαίωμα (Rom 5:16).

⁸Thus, the phrase τῷ αὐτῶν παραπτώματι does not merely continue the metaphor of stumbling in a neutral way (contra William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, ICC, old series [Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1902], 321; C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 2nd ed. BNTC [London: A & C Black, 1991], 197; Munck, *Christ and Israel*, 118). Instead, it recalls Israel’s sinfulness (so Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 653; Schreiner, *Romans*, 594). Munck tentatively suggests a reference to Adam’s transgression in 5:12–21 because Paul’s Gentile Christian audience may have viewed Israel’s transgression to be “of the same decisive nature as the fall of Adam” (*Christ & Israel*, 118). But he fails to consider the synonyms for παράπτωμα which are used in 2:17–29 (see my n. 36). Wright correctly sees a reference to Israel’s transgression of the law. Perhaps he is also correct to relate Israel’s transgression to Adam’s when he says that the world is saved by Israel acting out of Adam’s sin (Wright, *Climax*, 247–48).

breaks the very commands which he teaches others (2:21–22)!⁹ Paul concludes that the Jews boast in the law but dishonor God by their transgression of the law (1:23). Just as the Gentiles have failed to glorify God or give him thanks (1:21), so the Jews have failed to honor God by keeping the law.¹⁰

Paul now argues that this failure on the part of Israel to keep the commandments has led to the salvation of the Gentiles.¹¹ What does he mean? Many observe that Paul is reversing the prophetic expectations that the restoration of Israel would lead to the eschatological pilgrimage of the Gentiles.¹² The prophets envision Mt. Zion being lifted up above all the other mountains and the Gentiles streaming up to it to hear of the ways of the Lord (Isa 2:1–5; Micah 4:1–5). In contrast Paul says that salvation comes to the Gentiles *before* the restoration of Israel. Donaldson has now cautioned interpreters of reading Romans 11 against this background since Paul does not cite the texts associated with the eschatological pilgrimage.¹³ Yet a reference to the eschatological pilgrimage theme may still be warranted when one considers the broader

⁹E.g., he steals and commits adultery even though he teaches others not to do so. In a third example Paul says he despises idols and yet he robs temples. As I noted in chapter three, Jewish idolatry was unheard of in the first century. However, there are examples of Jewish temple robbery in the intertestamental period (e.g., Menelaus the high priest in 2 Macc 4:30–34).

¹⁰I am indebted to Schreiner for this observation (*Romans*, 134).

¹¹Commentators debate whether παραπτώματι is a dative of means or cause, but the ideas are very similar. In either case salvation has come to the Gentiles as the result of Israel's transgression.

¹²E.g., Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 655; Moo, *Romans*, 684; Schreiner, *Romans*, 594. See also Allison who suggests a reversal of the expectations of Jewish apocalyptic and rabbinic literature. Instead of salvation coming to the Gentiles after the repentance and restoration of Israel, Paul argues that Gentiles will repent before Israel's acceptance of the gospel and the coming of the end (Dale C. Allison, Jr., "Romans 11:11–15: A Suggestion," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 12 [1985]: 28–30). This article is a reprinting and extension of his earlier article Dale C. Allison, Jr., "The Background of Romans 11:11–15 in Apocalyptic and Rabbinic Literature," *Studia Biblica et Theologica* 10 (1980): 229–34. Note also Munck's similar suggestion that Paul reverses the expectations of Jesus' early disciples that the gospel would first be preached to the Jews (Munck, *Christ and Israel*, 123). However, Paul does not really reverse the expectation that the gospel would first be preached to the Jews (see Rom 1:16).

¹³He suggests an alternative context—Jewish proselytism (T. L. Donaldson, "Riches for the Gentiles' [Rom 11:12]: Israel's Rejection and Paul's Gentile Mission," *JBL* 112 [1993]: 90–98).

context of Romans 9–11.¹⁴ Perhaps a better explanation of the sequence in 11:11, however, is rooted in Paul’s reading of the Song of Moses, for Paul says that the reason salvation has come to the Gentiles by Jewish transgression is in order to stir the Jews to jealousy (εἰς τὸ παραζηλώσαι αὐτούς), echoing the passage he quotes in 10:19.

Paul derives the jealousy motif from Deuteronomy 32:21. In Romans 10:19 he poses a question: “It is not true that Israel has not known, is it?” The answer implied by the particle μὴ is “no, they have known it.”¹⁵ What have they known? Because of the citations Paul uses to support his answer, Paul apparently means that Israel has known God would save the Gentiles in the midst of their own disobedience.¹⁶ Paul musters two witnesses from the Old Testament which testify to this fact. The first is Deuteronomy 32:21, a witness from the law which contains the jealousy motif:

ἐγὼ παραζηλώσω ὑμᾶς ἐπ’ οὐκ ἔθνει,
ἐπ’ ἔθνει ἀσυνέτῳ παροργισῶ ὑμᾶς.¹⁷

The jealousy motif introduced by this verse is significant to Paul’s theology in Romans

¹⁴Moo notes that Paul quotes texts from Isaiah which are in the same contexts as pilgrimage texts, e.g., Isa 59:20–21 (Moo, *Romans*, 684, n. 2). Contra Donaldson, Paul may reverse the order of the salvation of Jews and Gentiles and still hold on to the pilgrimage theme. Moreover this change in order does not have to mean that Israel must be cut off for the Gentiles to have space (Donaldson, “Israel’s Rejection,” 92–94). Instead Paul simply depicts this order as God’s unfathomable plan (Rom 11:25–36).

¹⁵Note that the use of two negative participles in this verse is a true double negative, with one canceling out the other, since μὴ is negating the clause which is already negated (BDF §247[2]). This is rare in New Testament Greek.

¹⁶So Richard H. Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy: The Origin and Purpose of the Jealousy Motif in Romans 9–11* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 101–2; Moo, *Romans*, 668; Schreiner, *Romans*, 573. Schreiner observes that most commentators imply that Paul is simply repeating his question in 10:18, asking whether Israel knew the message of the gospel (e.g., Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 624–25; Jewett, *Romans*, 644). Wagner implies this as well (J. Ross. Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul “In Concert” in the Letter to the Romans*, NovTSup 101 [Leiden: Brill, 2002], 187), but he later says that Israel has known the “plot their national story would follow,” which sounds more like my position (ibid., 193).

¹⁷Paul quotes Deut 32:21 verbatim from the LXX except that he replaces αὐτούς with ὑμᾶς. Bell observes that Paul may change the pronoun in order to distinguish Israel from “they” in his previous quotation (Rom 10:18) (*Provoked to Jealousy*, 96). But Wagner doubts this because Paul has already specifically mentioned Israel in 10:19. He suggests that Paul changes the pronoun as a rhetorical move in order to directly address Israel (*Heralds*, 190).

9–11 because he alludes to it two more times (Rom 11:11 and 14). Moreover the context of the verse, the Song of Moses, is generally important for Pauline theology.

Deuteronomy 32 is the second most quoted and alluded to chapter in Paul's letters,¹⁸ and the Song is quoted three times in Romans (Rom 10:20; 12:19; 15:10).

Paul follows the logic of the Song when he links Israel's transgression and the salvation of the Gentiles.¹⁹ In Romans 10:19–21 he demonstrates that the law and the prophets testified that the Gentiles would be saved through Israel's disobedience.²⁰ Thus while he may be reversing prophetic expectations of the eschatological pilgrimage, he also demonstrates that the Scriptures witness to the sequence. The sequence is particularly clear in Deuteronomy 32:21 which recounts Yahweh's judgment against Israel's idolatry. Despite Yahweh's election of Israel (32:8–14), his people forsook him and stirred him to jealousy with other gods (32:15–18). In response,

Yahweh saw this and rejected them because his sons and daughters provoked him. He said, "I will hide my face from them; I will see what their end will be. For they are a perverse generation, children in whom there is no truth. They made me jealous by what is not a god; they provoked me with their idols. So I will make them jealous by those who are not a people; I will provoke them with a foolish nation" (Deut 32:19–21).²¹

¹⁸Paul only quotes Gen 15 more frequently (Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy*, 200–01).

¹⁹The identity of the ἔθνος ἀσύνετος is unspecified in the original context of Deut 32:21, but Paul applies the term to the Gentiles (see Wagner for suggestions about the identity of the "no-nation" in the original context [*Heralds*, 197 n. 237]). Seifrid rightly notes that it specifically refers to the "eschatological people of promise" (Mark A. Seifrid, "Romans," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007], 665). However, it seems unlikely to me that Paul speaks of both Gentile and Jewish Christians, because he is contrasting unbelieving Israel with the believing Gentiles throughout Rom 9–11. My interpretation is confirmed by Rom 11:11 which echoes Deut 32:21 and notes that salvation has come τοῖς ἔθνεσιν.

²⁰The second witness Paul musters is Isa 65:1–2, which he reads to speak of Gentile inclusion (65:1) and Jewish disobedience (65:2). Wagner observes that Paul takes these verses which both originally referred to Israel, following his common practice of "locating Gentiles in negatively-phrased descriptions of people (often Israelites!) who are estranged from God" (*Heralds*, 212). Wagner thinks Paul's reading of the Song of Moses affected his interpretation of Isa 65:1–2 (*ibid.*, 216).

The elements of judgment motif are clear in these verses. It is the recompense of a divine agent upon human objects because of their evil deeds. The motif is similar to Romans 1:18–32 in the song because it speaks of an appropriate recompense. Just as Israel provoked Yahweh to jealousy by embracing gods which are not really gods, so Yahweh promises to provoke them to jealousy by embracing a people who are not really his chosen people, a foolish nation. Yahweh’s judgment of Israel’s transgression leads to his embrace of another nation. The Song of Moses points forward to the end of days, and Paul reads God’s embrace of a foolish nation as the salvation of Christian Gentiles. The pattern of Israel’s judgment is being repeated in the present, and the promise of the Song is being fulfilled.²²

Therefore, Paul finds the sequence of Israel’s transgression leading to the salvation of the Gentiles within the Song of Moses.²³ But again, what does Paul mean by this? He cannot merely refer to Israel’s historical rejection of the gospel, whether their rejection of the Messiah at the crucifixion, or their rejection of the Christian mission leading to the mission to the Gentiles.²⁴ He speaks specifically of Israel’s transgression, which has caused their rejection of the Messiah (Rom 9:30–10:4) but is not coextensive

²¹My translation is from the MT. The LXX is very close, except it translates אֱלֹהֵי אֲרָם with δειξίω in Deut 32:20.

²²Seifrid observes the typology: “God’s dealings with Israel in the past have been recapitulated in the present” (“Romans,” 666). Ross notes, “In both the introduction and in the poem itself, it is explicitly stated that the Song addresses events that will befall Israel ‘at the end of days’ (31:29; 32:20), the time period in which Paul believes he and his hearers are now living” (Ross, *Heralds*, 193).

²³Bell argues convincingly that Israel’s transgression and the salvation of the Gentiles can be explained by Paul’s understanding of Deut 32 (Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy*, 112). I suggest that it is also rooted in Paul’s reading of the prophets because Paul finds the ideas of Jewish transgression and Gentile salvation in Hosea and Isaiah which he quotes in Rom 10:25–29 and 10:20–21. Dunn notes that “the importance of the verse [Deut 32:21], not least for Paul, is that it begins to bring together the two strands so far treated separately in chaps. 9–10—God’s purpose to call a ‘no-people’ (9:25) and Israel’s rejection of the gospel: the former will provide the solution to the latter within the purpose of God” (Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 625).

²⁴So Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy*, 110–11.

with that rejection. And he roots the sequence within not only history but within the plan of God. Bell rightly states, “In order that the Gentiles should come to faith, it was necessary for Israel to disobey God.”²⁵ But how exactly does Israel’s disobedience lead to the salvation of the Gentiles? I suggest that Israel’s transgression leads to the salvation of the Gentiles because *this salvation is part of the judgment against the Jews within human history*. God’s hardening of Israel and embrace of a foreign nation is the appropriate recompense for Israel’s rejection of God through transgression. The Gentiles are saved because Yahweh is judging Israel.²⁶

God’s judgment within human history against the Jewish people is depicted most clearly in the verses leading up to Romans 11:11. After explaining that the elect from Israel obtained the justification for which they were seeking,²⁷ Paul says that the rest did not obtain it but ἐπωρώθησαν (11:7). Paul supports the hardening of Israel with two Scripture citations which make it clear that it is a divine hardening. The first citation is a mixture of Deuteronomy 29:3 and Isaiah 29:10 and the second is from Psalm 69:22–23 (LXX: 68:23–24). There is no need to explain these citations in detail here. The first speaks of how God hardened Israel by giving them eyes that do not see. The second repeats this idea of divine blinding in David’s call for God to bring judgment upon his enemies: “Let their table become a snare and a trap and a stumbling block and a recompense for them. Let their eyes be darkened so that they do not see and bend their backs forever.”²⁸ David calls for a divine recompense (ἀνταπόδομα) against his

²⁵Ibid., 112.

²⁶Calvin rightly notes that God’s action in Deut 32:21 takes place according the law of retaliation (John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*, trans. and ed. John Owen [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948], 301).

²⁷Paul does not make explicit what they were seeking to obtain, but the verse is a restatement of Rom 9:31 in which Israel was pursuing a law of righteousness but did not obtain it. Paul seems to be saying that Israel was pursuing righteousness or justification (so Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 640).

²⁸Paul views Christ in the role of David in this Psalm (Rom 15:3). Thus he can place the majority of ethnic Israel who have rejected him in the role of the Messiah’s enemies. Schreiner notes how

enemies, and Paul sees a fulfillment of this text in God's judgment of the majority of Israel within human history by hardening them against the gospel.

Israel is hardened because of the purpose of God in Romans 9–11: God “has mercy on those whom he desires and hardens those whom he desires” (9:18). However, the judgment is still according to Israel's works because it comes as a result of their transgression (11:11; cf. 2:25–29). Like the judgment of the Gentiles in 1:18–32, the judgment of Israel within human history leads to the final condemning judgment. The hardening has caused them to reject the Messiah, and Paul speaks of God's final judgment upon Israel. God has born with much patience (μακροθυμία) vessels of wrath (ὀργή) prepared for destruction (9:22). This language echoes the accusation against the Jewish dialogue partner who is despising God's patience (μακροθυμία) and storing up wrath (ὀργή) for himself on the day of judgment (2:4–5). As Isaiah cries out, only a remnant of Israel will be saved (Rom 9:27–29; Isa 10:22), and for the rest “the Lord will bring his accusation (λόγος)²⁹ completely and quickly against the earth” (Rom 9:28; cf. Isa 28:22). Finally, God's judgment against Israel means salvation for the Gentiles. It consists of both the hardening of his people and the embrace of a foreign people. As Paul will later clarify, a hardening has come upon Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in (11:25). Paul says that salvation has come to the Gentiles by the means of Israel's transgression in Romans 11:11, because Israel's hardening and God's embrace of the Gentiles are both expressions of God's judgment against Israel.

Judgment, however, is not the last word for Israel in 11:11. God's judges Israel within human history in order to bring about their ultimate salvation. This is the main

often Psalm 69 is used to refer to the life and death of Jesus Christ (Matt 27:34, 48; Mark 3:21; 15:23, 36; Luke 13:35; 23:36; John 2:17; 15:25; 19:29; Acts 1:20; Rom 15:3; Heb 11:26; cf. also Phil 4:3; Rev 3:5; 16:1) (Schreiner, *Romans*, 588). See Seifrid on the minor differences between the MT, LXX, and Paul in these verses (Seifrid, “Romans,” 670).

²⁹In this context λόγος is a formal declaration of charges, a sentence, or an accusation (Louw & Nida, domain 56.1).

point of the passage. Israel has not stumbled so that they might finally fall at the judgment.³⁰ Commentators have debated whether ἵνα πέσωσιν indicates the purpose or simply the result of their stumbling. Since the context highlights God's action both in saving a remnant of Israel (11:1–6) and judging the rest (11:7–10), Paul is likely asking a question about God's purpose in Israel's stumbling.³¹ Did God harden them in order that they might irrevocably fall? Μὴ γένοιτο! Instead, Paul argues that God's judgment in the present is for the purpose of salvation in the future. Within this divine plan for the salvation of Israel, provoking them to jealousy plays a key role. God provokes Israel to jealousy not only to judge Israel but also to save them.

God has brought salvation to the Gentiles in order to provoke Israel to jealousy to draw them to salvation. Romans 11:11 does not make explicit God's saving purpose in provoking Israel to jealousy, but this is clearly Paul's point in the context. Romans 11:11 is the positive counterpart to μὴ γένοιτο! Negatively, God has not hardened them so that they will irrevocably fall. Positively, salvation has come to the Gentiles by their transgression in order to provoke them to jealousy. The implication is that God provokes Israel to jealousy for a saving purpose. This corresponds with Paul's strategy of provoking the Jews to jealousy with his ministry. Paul glorifies his own ministry among the Gentiles with the hope that he might provoke the Jews to jealousy and save some of them (11:14).

In his exhaustive study of the jealousy motif, Bell argues that the verb

³⁰Ὁν πίπτω cf. 11:22 and especially 14:4 where Paul uses the verb to refer to a negative verdict at the final judgment.

³¹Dunn observes both the divine purpose in the passage and the idea of result evoked by image of stumbling and subsequent falling (Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 652–3). The two uses of ἵνα are very close because a purpose is simply an intended result. But the emphasis is on divine action in the passage indicating God's purpose in Israel's stumbling (so Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980], 304; Munck, *Christ & Israel*, 118–19; Schreiner, *Romans*, 539). Baker rightly observes that “the point of the entire passage is God's action,” although he is incorrect to conclude that Paul would downplay any part his efforts can have in the salvation of Israel (see Rom 11:14) (Murray Baker, “Paul and the Salvation of Israel: Paul's Ministry, the Motif of Jealousy, and Israel's Yes,” *CBQ* 67 [2005]: 483).

παράζηλώ has a different meaning in Romans 11:11 than it does in 10:19. When Paul quotes Deuteronomy 32:21 in Romans 10:19, the word means “to provoke to jealous anger,” but in 11:11 and 14 it means “to provoke to emulation.” Bell argues for this slight change of meaning because in 10:19 the jealousy motif is used negatively to refer to Yahweh’s judgment upon Israel in the past and present, but in 11:11 and 14 the motif is used with a positive sense as the means God will use to bring Israel to salvation in the future.³² Bell’s analysis rightly sees that jealousy is both God’s judgment and the means of salvation for Israel. However, it seems unlikely that Paul would change meanings of the word in such a close context, particularly when he is alluding to the same passage of Scripture.³³

Baker now argues that the jealousy motif only involves judgment in Romans 9–11: “Jealousy has no connection with Israel’s salvation.”³⁴ To Baker, Paul glorifies his ministry in order to bring about two separate results: first he hopes to harden some of his people (“provoke to jealousy”); second, he hopes to save some of them, i.e., the remnant. He argues that this is the most direct reading of καί which is a simple conjunction linking two separate purposes of Paul’s ministry. The reading also solves several problems of the typical interpretation including the shift in meaning of παράζηλώ from Romans 10:19 to 11:11 and the difficulty of explaining how Israel’s *jealousy* will lead them to salvation.³⁵ The latter problem is noted by many,³⁶ and some are rather skeptical of Paul’s

³²Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy*, 39–41.

³³So Schreiner, *Romans*, 573, n. 24.

³⁴Baker, “Paul and the Salvation of Israel,” 471, 483–4. Baker sees precedence for his view in Stuhlmacher (Peter Stuhlmacher, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Commentary*, trans. Scott J. Hafemann [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995]: 161, 167) and Keller (Winifrid Keller, *Gottes Treue—Israels Heil: Röm 11,25–27—Die These vom ‘Sonderweg’ in der Diskussion*, SBB 40 [Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1998], 192) (Baker, “Paul and the Salvation of Israel,” 473–4).

³⁵Baker, “Paul and the Salvation of Israel,” 471–2.

³⁶E.g., Käsemann, *Romans*, 304; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 611; and Jewett, who finds the idea that jealousy would motivate salvation puzzling yet admits this is what Paul is arguing (*Romans*, 675). Nanos

argument and strategy. Räisänen calls Paul's reading of Deuteronomy 32:21 "idiosyncratic," the result of a desperate search through Scripture in order to demonstrate that his ministry related to the Jews. This "strange account of his motives" cannot have been a driving factor in Paul's ministry.³⁷ Sanders asks, "Does he really think that jealousy will succeed where Peter failed?"³⁸ How would the jealousy of Jews lead to their salvation? Even Calvin notes this problem in his 1539 commentary on the letter. In my view, Calvin's explanation is still the most natural reading of the jealousy motif. He explains the problem through an analogy with marriage. If a wife has left her husband and caused a divorce, and the husband then gives attention to another woman, the wife may be provoked to jealousy and seek to be reconciled with him. In the same way Israel has forsaken God, so God embraces the Gentiles in order that they might seek him again.³⁹ This analogy also solves the former problem, the shift in meaning for *παράζηλώω*. Jealous anger leads to salvation because jealousy leads Israel to seek the

avoids the problem by arguing that the Jews would be jealous of Paul's proselytizing of Gentiles rather than being jealous of Gentile salvation itself (Mark D. Nanos, *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul's Letter* [Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1996], 248–50), but this seems unlikely. Jealousy involves three parties (Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy*, 6). And in Deut 32:21 the parties are God, Israel, and the no-nation. Likewise, in Rom 11:11 *God* has saved the Gentiles for the purpose of stirring the Jews to jealousy. In other words, the Jews are jealous of the relationship between God and the Gentiles, not Paul and the Gentiles. Nanos is probably correct that Jews would generally welcomed the salvation of Gentiles (Nanos, *Mystery of Romans*, 249), but when the Gentiles have experienced salvation *and the Jews have not*, this would have stirred jealousy.

³⁷Heikki Räisänen, "Paul, God, and Israel: Romans 9–11 in Recent Research," in *The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism: Essays in Tribute to Howard Clark Kee*, ed. Jacob Neusner, et al. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 187–8.

³⁸E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1983), 198. Sanders thinks that "Paul's solution to the problem posed by Israel's unfaith is to be seen as a somewhat desperate expedient," an attempt to hold together his conflicting convictions that salvation is by faith and yet God's promise to Israel is irrevocable (*ibid.*).

³⁹"But there is no reason for readers to weary themselves much as to the application of this testimony: for Paul does not dwell on the strict meaning of the word, but alludes only to a common and well-known practice. For as emulation stimulates a wife, who for her fault has been rejected by her husband, so that she strives to be reconciled again; so it may be now, he says, that the Jews, seeing the Gentiles introduced into their place, will be touched with grief for their divorce, and seek reconciliation" (Calvin, *Romans*, 422).

Lord.

Baker wrongly identifies two separate purposes in Paul's ministry, because a pattern of jealousy leading to salvation is the most natural reading of Romans 11:11 and 11:14. The pattern is clearest in 11:14. Paul says, "in the hopes that I may provoke my people⁴⁰ to jealousy and will save certain of them." It is unlikely that Paul would hope (εἰ πῶς, "in the hopes")⁴¹ to provoke the Jews to jealous anger unless this jealousy led to salvation. And the conjunctive καί in 11:14 does not naturally link two separate purposes for different groups of people but a chain of purposes for one group of people. Paul's ministry leads to jealousy which leads to salvation.⁴² Paul realizes, of course, that provocation to jealousy will not always lead to the salvation of the Jews. Some will simply be angry. This is why he says that he hopes to provoke his people to jealousy and save only τινὰς ἐξ αὐτῶν. In 11:11 the same pattern emerges. Since the jealousy motif is Paul's answer that God does not intend for Israel to fall irrevocably, it is most natural to see jealousy leading to salvation. This does not mean, however, that παραζηλώω must have a strictly positive meaning in 11:11 and 14. The word παραζηλώω has essentially one meaning in the context, "to provoke to jealousy, make jealous."⁴³ The jealousy motif in 10:19, 11:11, and 11:14 follows Deuteronomy 32:21. Provocation to jealousy is Yahweh's appropriate recompense for Israel's transgression. Baker rightly observes "Israel's jealousy. . . is the human face of God's hardening."⁴⁴ This judgment within

⁴⁰Paul uses τὴν σάρκα to mean something like the English expression "my flesh and blood," perhaps reflecting the LXX translation of בָּשָׂר (Gen 19:14; Judg 9:2; 2 Sam 5:1). It is difficult to determine whether the word has a negative connection as it typically does in Romans (yes: Dunn, *Romans* 9–16, 656; no: Jewett, *Romans*, 679).

⁴¹See BDF §375 on this expression of expectation. Cf. Rom 1:10; Acts 27:12; Phil 3:11.

⁴²Paul uses καί in a chain of results in other places. E.g., "sin, receiving opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me" (Rom 7:11). In other words, sin deceived me *and the result* was that it killed me. Cf. also Rom 7:10.

⁴³BDAG rightly lists only this one basic definition (s.v., "παραζηλώω").

human history, however, is meant to result in salvation for Israel. Jealousy is both God's judgment and Israel's hope.

The pattern of judgment leading to salvation for Israel rests well within the context of Paul's citations from the Hebrew Bible. The Song of Moses is "a summary of Israel's total history, from inception until the end of days."⁴⁵ It recounts Yahweh's election of Israel (32:8–14), Israel's rejection of Yahweh (32:15–18), and Yahweh's response of judgment against Israel (32:19–33). But it also looks forward in hope to Israel's salvation. In the midst of a discussion of Yahweh's vengeance, the Song says that "Yahweh will judge⁴⁶ his people, and have compassion⁴⁷ on his servants when he sees that their strength is gone" (Deut 32:36). Yahweh is the one who both kills and makes alive, who both wounds and heals (Deut 32:39). The Song of Moses offers hope for Israel's salvation after judgment.⁴⁸ Similarly, Paul's fusion of Deuteronomy 29:3 and Isaiah 29:10 in Romans 11:8 speaks of God's judgment of Israel while offering hope for salvation. Schreiner's analysis is worth citing in full:

The OT context of both quotations is suggestive. In Deuteronomy (29:2–30:20) Moses rehearses and foretells the history of Israel, arguing that they will face exile for their sin and will be delivered only in the future when God circumcises their hearts

⁴⁴Baker, "Paul and the Salvation of Israel," 476.

⁴⁵H. W. Bassler, *Midrashic Interpretations of the Song of Moses* (New York: Berne, 1984), 4, quoted in Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy*, 210.

⁴⁶It is not certain whether יָדִין means that God will "vindicate" his people or "judge" his people. I am following the LXX which uses $\kappa\rho\iota\nu\epsilon\acute{\iota}$, because Paul quotes Deut 32:21 from the LXX. "To judge" also fits the context since this verse is the grounds of the previous statement that the day of their calamity is at hand. In either case, the next phrase speaks of Yahweh's compassion.

⁴⁷The hithpael of חָנַן means in this verse "to be sorry, have compassion" (BDB, s.v., " חָנַן "). A slightly different meaning is "to be grieved by, change one's mind" (HALOT, s.v., " חָנַן "). I am following the LXX, which uses $\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\kappa\alpha\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\omega$, "to comfort." Cf. Ps 135:14 which repeats the wording of this line.

⁴⁸So Bell: "The Song is a Song of Witness against disobedient Israel. But the Song goes on to speak of Israel's salvation and, as I will show, influenced Paul's argumentation in Rom. 11" (Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy*, 106).

(30:6). At the beginning of his discourse (29:3) [English versions: 29:4] Moses acknowledges that the people of his day are incapable of keeping the law, because God has withheld understanding from them “until this day” (ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ταύτης . . .). Significantly, Paul includes these words as well . . . indicating that he believes that the gracious work of God that will lift the blindness off the majority of Israel has not yet occurred. When the Lord circumcises their hearts (30:6), then all Israel will be saved. But Israel at this juncture is still in the state in which they are blinded from seeing the truth. Isaiah 29 contains a judgment oracle against the prophets (29:9–16; cf. 6:9–10). Paul elsewhere applies Isa. 29:14 to the blindness of the Jews in his day (cf. 1 Cor. 1:19). But Isa. 29:17–24 looks forward to a new day in Israel in which shame will be removed from Jacob and understanding will be granted to them.⁴⁹

Schreiner concludes: “Thus Paul understands Israel to be under the judgment described in Deuteronomy and Isaiah, although the contexts of both prophecies indicate that this is not the last word for Israel.”⁵⁰ Even in Romans 2, the hope of Israel’s salvation is found in the context of Paul’s citation. He grounds the conclusion that the Jewish interlocutor has dishonored God by his transgression of the law in a citation of Isaiah 52:5, putting the divine word in the third person: “for the name of God is being blasphemed among the Gentiles” (Rom 2:24). Isaiah speaks of Israel’s exile among the nations for their transgression of the law, all of which has led to the reviling of the name of the Lord. But in the context Isaiah also proclaims the good news of Yahweh’s salvation (Isa 52:1–12).⁵¹ Thus, Paul’s sequence of judgment leading to the salvation of Israel follows the pattern of Paul’s citations of the Hebrew Scriptures. Paul finds this pattern particularly clear in Deuteronomy 32:21. Israel’s transgression will lead to God’s judgment in which he embraces the Gentiles as his people and provokes his people to jealousy; but this jealousy will be the very means which God brings his people back to himself.

Finally, I should observe that Israel’s salvation from judgment will come only through the righteousness of faith. Romans 9–11 is not dissimilar to 1:18–4:25. Israel is

⁴⁹Schreiner, *Romans*, 587–88.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 588. So Seifrid who notes the hope of future salvation in Deut, Isa, and Rom (“Romans,” 670).

⁵¹So Wagner (*Heralds*, 176–78) and Seifrid who stresses the typological relationship between Israel’s past failures and present transgression (“Romans,” 613).

liable to judgment because of their transgression (cf. 2:1–3:20), and they will only be saved by the revelation of the righteousness of God (cf. 3:21–4:25). Much of the language in Romans 9–11 recalls the earlier explanation of Paul’s gospel. He emphasizes believing in the Messiah with two quotations of Isaiah’s words ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ’ αὐτῷ οὐ κατασχυνθήσεται (Rom 9:33; 10:11; Isa 28:16).⁵² These words recall Paul’s thesis statement: he is not ashamed (οὐ ἐπαισχύνομαι) of the gospel; and the gospel is for everyone who believes (παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι) (1:16–17). Paul also emphasizes the universality of righteousness by faith: οὐ γάρ ἐστιν διαστολή Ἰουδαίου τε καὶ Ἑλλήνου (10:12a). These words again recall Paul’s gospel which is to all who believe, to the Jew first and to the Greek (Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλληνι, 1:16), just as God’s impartial judgment is for both Jew and Greek (2:9, 10). The words also recall the expanded restatement of Paul’s thesis: there is no difference (οὐ γάρ ἐστιν διαστολή) because all have sinned and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption found in Christ Jesus (3:22–23; cf. 1:16; 2:9, 10).

Israel has not yet experienced salvation (cf. 10:1) because they have “stumbled over the stumbling stone” instead of believing on him (9:32–33). They have sought to establish their own righteousness through the law rather than submitting to the righteousness of God (10:3). Salvation comes by confessing that Jesus is Lord and believing that God has raised him from the dead; believing leads to righteousness and confession to salvation (10:9–10). In other words, salvation from the judgment comes through being justified by faith. This is for both Jew and Greek, “for the same Lord is Lord of everyone, making rich everyone who calls upon him, for ‘everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved’” (10:12–13; citing Joel 2:32 [LXX: 3:5]). Calling upon the name of the Lord is another way to speak of faith, and it is the means by

⁵²There is a minor difference with the LXX which has emphatic negation: οὐ μὴ κατασχυνθῆ (Isa 28:16).

which everyone will be saved.

Further, Paul makes it clear to the Gentiles that they have experienced salvation from the judgment only by faith. He warns them of lifting themselves up in pride against the Jews who have been hardened (11:18). Employing diatribe with an imaginary Gentile dialogue partner,⁵³ Paul finds common ground with the statement that Jews were cut off of the people of God so that Gentiles could be brought in (11:19).⁵⁴ But he reminds the Gentiles of *why* this happened: “They were cut off by unbelief but you stand by faith” (1:19).⁵⁵ Faith is the necessary criterion for standing with the people of God. Paul’s use of ἴσθημι points forward to the final judgment. Speaking of the judgment in Romans 14:4 Paul says that the servants of the Lord will stand (στήκει) or fall (πίπτει, cf. 11:11) before their own Lord, and he states confidently that “they will stand (σταθήσεται), for the Lord will be able to make them stand (στήσῃ αὐτόν)!” The Gentiles have been saved from the judgment and stand before God by faith. On this basis, Paul warns them, “Do not be arrogant but fear! For if God did not spare the natural branches, perhaps he will not spare you either” (11:20–21). Why should they fear? Clearly Paul implies that God may allow them to be cut off from the people of God by

⁵³Contra Thorsteinsson this is clearly a different interlocutor than the person in Rom 2:1–29 (Runar M. Thorsteinsson, *Paul’s Interlocutor in Romans 2: Function and Identity in the Context of Ancient Epistolography* [Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2003], 144).

⁵⁴The dialogue partner’s statement uses the terms of Paul’s metaphor of the olive tree: “branches were broken off in order that I could be grafted in” (11:19). In other words, Jews were broken off so that Gentiles could be grafted into the olive tree. Scholars debate what the olive tree stands for. Speaking broadly, most agree that it stands for the people of God, which began with Israel and now includes the Gentiles (e.g., Sandy and Headlam, *Romans*, 327; Munck, *Christ & Israel*, 128; Schreiner, *Romans*, 605). For a study of the metaphor of the olive tree in Rom 11, see Myles M. Bourke, *A Study of the Metaphor of the Olive Tree in Romans XI* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1947). Dunn rightly notes that Bourke resolves the issue too simply when he concludes that “the olive tree is simply another designation for the Church” (Bourke, *Olive Tree*, 111, cited in Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 661).

⁵⁵There is debate over whether the datives τῇ ἀπιστίᾳ and τῇ πίστει are instrumental (so Moo, *Romans*, 705, n. 45) or causal (so Käsemann, *Romans*, 310), but the two senses are very close. However, in theological discourse which examines the teaching of Romans as a whole, it is appropriate to identify faith as the instrument and not the ground of salvation. Therefore, I have translated the datives in an instrumental manner.

unbelief just as the Jews were.⁵⁶ Moreover, Paul gives hope for the salvation of the Jews if they come to faith: “they will be grafted in, if they do not remain in unbelief, for God is able to graft them in again” (11:23).

In summary, Paul argues that God has not hardened Israel for the purpose of their irrevocable fall. Instead he is following the sequence of events prophesied in the Scriptures. Israel’s transgression will lead to the salvation of the Gentiles in order to provoke Israel to jealousy for their eventual salvation. Israel’s salvation will be the final result of the divine judgment within human history. This salvation will only come by the righteousness of faith, for the Gentiles stand before God by faith, and Israel’s hope for salvation from judgment, their justification, will come through believing in the Messiah.⁵⁷ Paul allows this divine purpose to impact the strategy of his own mission to the Gentiles (Rom 11:13–14).⁵⁸

Provoking to Jealousy in Paul’s Ministry

The jealousy motif plays a key role within Paul’s mission to the Gentiles. In 11:13 Paul makes it clear that he is speaking to the Gentile Christians in Rome (“I am

⁵⁶Both Calvin (*Romans*, 433) and Wright (*Romans*, 686) argue that this refers to the Gentiles as a group and not to individuals. But this distinction seems to miss the individual nature of faith.

⁵⁷Contra Gaston and others who argue for a two-covenant view in which Paul sees Israel being saved by faithfulness to Torah and not faith in Christ (L. Gaston, *Paul and the Torah* [Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987], 135–50). See also Stanley Kent Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994]; John G. Lodge, *Romans 9–11: A Reader-Response Analysis* [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996]; John G. Gager, *Reinventing Paul* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2000]; and Nanos, *Mystery of Romans*).

⁵⁸Wagner rightly observes that Paul reads Deut 32:21 “as a charter for his mission to Gentiles,” and this “reveals a dynamic dialectic in which the apostle’s interpretation of scripture and his practice of ministry continually shape and reshape one another” (Wagner, *Heralds*, 269). Paul does not seem to understand Israel’s salvation to be *completely fulfilled* in his ministry, for he expresses reserve about the outcome of his own efforts when he says he hopes to save “some of them” (so Moo [*Romans*, 692] and Schreiner [*Romans*, 596]; contra Munck [*Christ and Israel*, 123–4] and Käsemann, who suggests that Paul “regards himself as one who brings about the divinely willed conclusion of salvation history” [*Romans*, 307]). Unfortunately, I cannot address all of the issues regarding the meaning and the timing of Israel’s salvation in Rom 9–11. For an older but still helpful survey see N. T. Wright, *Climax of the Covenant*, 231–57.

speaking to you Gentiles”), and he explains his apostleship to the Gentiles in terms of the jealousy motif: “Therefore to the extent that I am an apostle of the Gentiles, I glorify my ministry, in the hopes that I may provoke my people to jealousy and save some of them” (11:13b–14). Following the pattern of the Deuteronomy 32:21, Paul hopes to provoke his people to jealousy in order to save them. Specifically, Paul says τὴν διακονίαν μου δοξάζω. Most commentators understand this to mean that Paul works to accomplish it.⁵⁹ The specific word indicates that Paul works to enhance the reputation of his ministry as well.⁶⁰ As the Gentiles embrace the Messiah through Paul’s ministry and receive a righteousness which they were not pursuing (9:30), he magnifies their justification in order to provoke the hardened Jews to be jealous so that they too would embrace the Messiah and be saved from the judgment. One gets a glimpse of this in Paul’s praise of the faith and obedience of the Roman Christians which is being proclaimed throughout the world (1:8; 16:19), statements which parallel his prayers of thanksgiving for his own children in the faith.⁶¹

This Pauline strategy helps explain the riddle of Romans 2. Once more: how can Paul envision Gentiles who have a defense at the judgment in Romans 2 when he concludes that all Jews and Gentiles are under the power of sin (3:9, 19–20)? Part of the answer is found in the strategy of Paul’s mission. I have argued that Romans 1:18 begins an explanation of Paul’s gospel which should be viewed within the context of his missionary preaching. In this context, the target of Paul’s accusation in 1:18–3:20 is a non-Christian audience. Romans 1:18–32 accuses primarily non-Christian Gentiles, and 2:1–29 accuses primarily non-Christian Jews. In the context of the accusation, Paul only

⁵⁹Noted by Schreiner, *Romans*, 595. Munck’s suggestion that Paul utters a hymn of praise here does not explain how Paul’s glorying could result in Israel’s salvation (Munck, *Christ and Israel*, 122).

⁶⁰See BDAG, s.v., “δοξάζω,” use 1: “to influence one’s opinion about another so as to enhance the latter’s reputation, *praise, honor, extol*.”

⁶¹Dunn notes Paul’s prayers of thanksgiving in 1 Cor 1:4; Phil 1:3; Col 1:3; 1 Thess 1:2; 2:13; and 2 Thess 2:13 (Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 656).

speaks of Gentiles who have a defense at the judgment, and he only mentions these Gentiles within his accusation of the Jews. He is not merely presenting Gentiles in a positive light in order to remove distinction between Jews and Gentiles.⁶² Instead, when Paul suggests that Gentiles may have a defense at the judgment, he is speaking in a veiled way of Christian Gentiles who have been justified by faith. Paul makes this clear in his last verse of the chapter when he refers to them with the new covenant language of the Spirit in 2:29.⁶³ The law keeping envisioned in 2:25–29 is what he will later call the fulfillment of the righteous requirement of the law by those who are in Christ Jesus (8:4; 13:8–10).

Conclusion

Paul glorifies this new covenant obedience in order to pronounce a judgment against the Jewish people. The Christian Gentile fulfills the very law which Paul's dialogue partner transgresses, and Paul says he will judge the Jewish dialogue partner. This does not mean the Gentile assumes the role of judge, since Paul has already explained God will judge through Jesus Christ, according to his gospel (2:16). Instead, it means that the Gentile will confirm God's righteous judgment of Israel's transgression by completing the law which the Jew has transgressed.⁶⁴ These verses complete Paul's accusation of his Jewish dialogue partner and reverse the human judgment which opened the chapter. Just as the Jew confirms God's accusation within history against the Gentiles in 1:18–32, so these Gentiles will confirm God's accusation of Jewish transgressors on

⁶²As suggested by Moo, *Romans*, 176.

⁶³Paul may also be speaking of justification in a veiled way when he says that their uncircumcision will be reckoned to be circumcision, because he employs a verb (λογίζομαι) particularly connected with the justification of the ungodly in Rom 4 (see Rom 4:3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 23, 24; cf. Gen 15:6).

⁶⁴Cranfield notes that the Gentile is not assuming role of judge but the role of a witness for the prosecution, for his obedience is evidence of what the Jew ought to have been (Cranfield, *Romans*, 1: 174; so Schreiner, *Romans*, 139).

the day of judgment. The Jewish people have transgressed the law and will face the condemning judgment of God. However the confirmation of the Jew's judgment is also the means of their salvation. Paul contrasts Jewish transgression with Gentile obedience in order to provoke the Jew to jealousy that he might embrace the Messiah for salvation. The primary function of the judgment motif in Romans 2:1–29 is an accusation of liability to the judgment. But following the pattern of Hebrew Scripture, Paul also employs the judgment motif as a means of salvation for the people of God.

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ABSTRACT

JUDGMENT ACCORDING TO WORKS IN THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

Kevin William McFadden, Ph.D.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011
Chairperson: Dr. Thomas R. Schreiner

This dissertation examines the meaning and function of the theme of judgment according to works in the epistle to the Romans. It may be summarized with two theses: First, in Romans 1:18–3:20, the judgment motif primarily functions to make a universal accusation of sin and guilt which lays the foundation for Paul's doctrine of justification by faith. Second, within the argument of Romans, justification by faith is an alternative, saving approach to the positive recompense of the final judgment. Two other functions of the motif are also identified in the letter. In Romans 3:1–8 the theme of judgment functions to make a defense of the righteousness of God. This passage also confirms my argument that judgment functions as an accusation against the Jewish people in 2:1–29, because it answers objections to that accusation. Finally, in Romans 14:1–23 the theme of judgment according to works functions to make an exhortation to the Christian community at Rome. In this passage Paul is confident that his Christian audience will stand at the judgment because of the saving work of God.

VITA

Kevin William McFadden

PERSONAL

Born: April 3, 1980, Dearborn, Michigan
Parents: Gary and Margaret McFadden

EDUCATIONAL

Diploma, Inter-City Christian High School, 1998
B.S., Maranatha Baptist Bible College, 2002
M.Div., Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, 2005
Th.M, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2006

ACADEMIC

Garrett Fellow, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2007–2010
Assistant Professor of New Testament and Greek, Louisiana College, 2010–

ORGANIZATIONAL

Member of the Evangelical Theological Society
Member of the Society of Biblical Literature

