IDENTITY AND AGENCY IN THE CRISIS AT ANTIOCH: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GALATIANS 2:11–21 AND SELECTED SECOND TEMPLE JEWISH TEXTS

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

Keneth Pervaiz

December 2021

APPROVAL SHEET

IDENTITY AND AGENCY IN THE CRISIS AT ANTIOCH: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GALATIANS 2:11–21 AND SELECTED SECOND TEMPLE JEWISH TEXTS

Keneth Pervaiz

Read and Approved by:

_____
Jarvis J. Williams (Chair)

_____
Thomas R. Schreiner

_____
Brian J. Vickers

Date_____

For my mother, Shazia; my wife, Aroona; and my daughter, Amelia

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chaper Page

Chapter Page

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Ag. Ap.	*Against Apion*
Ant.	*Jewish Antiquities*
ʻAbod. Zar.	ʻAbodah Zarah
BDAG	Bauer, Walter, and William F. Arndt. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Edited by Frederick W. Danker. 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000
CD	Cairo Genizah copy of the Damascus Document
CEJL	Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature
Chron.	*Chronographia*
Cic.	*Cicero*
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
Decal.	*On the Decalogue*
EP	*Epistulae*
Flac.	*Pro Flacco*
Flacc.	*Against Flaccus*
Hist. eccl.	*Ecclesiastical History*
Hist.	*Historiae*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
*JSNT*Sup	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, Supplement Series
*JSOT*Sup	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, Supplement Series
J.W.	*Jewish War*
KEK	Kritisch-Exegetischer Kommentar Über Das Neue Testament

Legat.	*Legatio ad Gaium*
Mos.	*On the Life of Moses*
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*
*NovT*Sup	Supplements to *Novum Testamentum*
NPNF[1]	*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Series 1. 14 vols. Edited by Philip Schaff. Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature, 1886–1889
NPNF[2]	*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Series 2. 14 vols. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature, 1890–1900
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
PL	*Patrologia Latina*
4QMMT[a]	*Miqṣat Maʿaśe ha-Torah*[a]
1QS	*Serek Hayaÿad* or *Rule of the Community*
SJT	*Scottish Journal of Theology*
Spec.	*On the Special Laws*
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
Vit. Apoll.	*Vita Apollonii*

PREFACE

While the life of a PhD student is considered a lonely journey, my doctoral research made me realize that the process of research is not a lonely journey. Writing a doctoral dissertation is a voyage full of intellectual, physiological, and emotional challenges. It would have been impossible for me to surmount these challenges without support from various people. For this reason, I would like to thank the following people, without whom I would not have been able to complete this long academic journey and make it through my PhD degree.

First and foremost, I am thankful to God for providing a weak vessel like me the opportunity and strength to pursue higher education in theological studies to be equipped with the knowledge of his Word to serve him diligently and faithfully.

I would also wish to express my greatest appreciation towards the professors of the New Testament department at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary for helping me grow in my understanding of the Scriptures and academic scholarship. In particular, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Jarvis J. Williams, who provided me academic guidance and challenged me in many ways for my intellectual growth. But, more than that, as a brother in Christ, he also continued to show Christ-like love and care and offered moral and spiritual support to me throughout this project. Under his supervision, I have learned what it means to be an academic scholar who pursues excellence, hard work, and dedication in his work and what it means to be a Christian scholar who desires to glorify the Lord above all. I would also like to thank Drs. Thomas R. Schreiner and Brian J. Vickers who agreed to serve on my dissertation committee. I am grateful for their constructive critique and helpful insights on this project. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. A. Andrew Das for his willingness to serve as my external

reader. I appreciate his expertise as a New Testament scholar that helped to strengthen my dissertation.

My sincere thanks to Torey Teer, whose editorial assistance brought this project to a higher level, as well as to Ronda Cox from my church, who graciously read this project thoroughly and provided insightful feedback.

I am also indebted to my family, who have contributed much to sustain me in this journey. I am thankful to my father in Christ, mentor, and friend, Robert K. Wetmore, from whom I initially learned in Pakistan what it means to be a biblical scholar and faithful servant of God simultaneously. His God-gifted intellect, character, simplicity, and love for the Lord have impacted me in significant ways. Joyce Wetmore, who lovingly and patiently took care of so many things without which my family would not have survived. I value her godly wisdom and the sacrifices that she makes for people.

Finally, I owe my gratitude to the three most treasured women of my life: my mother, Shazia Pervaiz, who shaped my character tremendously through her life and godly wisdom and has sacrificed many things in life to support me in my calling for ministry; my wife, Aroona Keneth, who is God's gift to me and without whose support I would not have made it through this program, for she did not cease to pray for me and show unconditional love and care towards me during this very intense academic journey; and finally my daughter, Amelia Keneth, who has been a source of immense joy to my heart and whose smile and hugs kept me sane during this journey.

Keneth Pervaiz

Louisville, Kentucky

December 2021

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Paul's letter to the Galatians expresses concern for congregations in Galatia who have reverted to a different gospel (1:6). The troublemakers in Galatia[1] (1:7; 5:12) have distorted the message of the gospel by telling Gentile believers that in addition to their faith in Jesus Christ, they must submit to the Jewish rite of circumcision along with other essentials of the Torah (2:1–9; 3:3b–6, 10; 5:2–4). In light of this broader context, Paul recounts the incident at Antioch[2] to demonstrate the relevance of this event because of the Galatians' perplexing situation (2:11–21).

The brevity of Paul's remarks on the incident at Antioch has caused scholars to put forward a copious amount of different—and sometimes even contradictory—interpretations in order to solve historical issues related to the crisis at Antioch.[3]

---

[1] I am aware of different scholarly opinions on the identity and agenda of those who preached a different gospel in Galatia. However, I will not delve into this discussion because it does not directly relate to my thesis. In addition to consulting the standard commentaries on Galatians that deal with this subject, see also Robert Jewett, "The Agitators and the Galatian Congregation," *NTS* 17, no. 2 (1971): 198–212; John M. G. Barclay, "Mirror-Reading a Polemical Letter: Galatians as a Test Case," *JSNT* 31 (1987): 86–90; Barclay, *Obeying the Truth: A Study of Paul's Ethics in Galatians*, Studies of the New Testament and Its World (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), 36–74; Ben Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 21–25; Stephen Anthony Cummins, *Paul and the Crucified Christ in Antioch: Maccabean Martyrdom and Galatians 1 and 2*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 114 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 95–98; Craig S. Keener, *Galatians*, New Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 12–21; Nikolaus Walter, "Paul and the Opponents of the Christ-Gospel in Galatia," in *The Galatians Debate: Contemporary Issues in Rhetorical and Historical Interpretation*, ed. Mark D. Nanos (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 362–66; Francis Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles: Beyond the New Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 112–18; Ian J. Elmer, *Paul, Jerusalem and the Judaisers: The Galatian Crisis in Its Broadest Historical Context*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 131–44; A. Andrew Das, *Galatians*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 2014), 3–17.

[2] Scholars typically refer to this event as "the incident at Antioch," "the Antioch incident," "the crisis at Antioch," or "the Antiochene crisis." I will use these phrases interchangeably in my project.

[3] The following list represents secondary literature written on the incident at Antioch: Jerome, *St. Jerome's Commentaries on Galatians, Titus, and Philemon*, trans. Thomas P. Scheck (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), 98–102; Ian Christopher Levy, ed. and trans., *The Letter to the*

However, my dissertation will approach the Antioch incident in light of the following research questions: (1) Does the crisis at Antioch in Galatians 2:11–21 shed light on the relationship between divine and human agency? (2) How can this relationship between the Antioch incident and agency be compared to the issue of mixed table-fellowship and agency in selected Second Temple Jewish texts?

In this dissertation, I will argue that Paul's confrontation with Peter at the mixed table-fellowship at Antioch should be understood as a conflict between two competing understandings of agency. That is, Peter's withdrawal from the mixed table-fellowship between Jews and Gentiles at Antioch suggested the priority of a distinct

---

Galatians: The Bible in Medieval Tradition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 193–201; Martin Luther, *Galatians*, Crossway Classic Commentaries (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1998), 118–32; John Calvin, *Commentary on Galatians and Ephesians*, trans. William Pringle (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1854), 46–49; Ferdinand Christian Baur, *The Church History of the First Three Centuries*, vol. 1, trans. Allan Menzies (London: Williams & Norgate, 1878), 1:54–55; Johannes Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*, trans. Frank Clarke (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1959), 100–34; James D. G. Dunn, "The Incident at Antioch (Gal. 2:11–18)," *JSNT* 18 (1983): 3–57; Philip F. Esler, *Galatians*, New Testament Readings (London: Routledge, 1998), 135–40; Esler, "Sectarianism and the Conflict at Antioch," in *The First Christians in Their Social Worlds: Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 50–67; Esler, "Making and Breaking an Agreement Mediterranean Style: A New Reading of Galatians 2:1–14," in Nanos, *The Galatians Debate*, 261–81; E. P. Sanders, "Jewish Association with the Gentiles and Galatians 2:11–14," in *The Conversation Continues: Studies in Paul & John in Honor of J. Louis Martyn*, ed. Robert T. Fortna and Beverly R. Gaventa (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 170–87; Craig C. Hill, *Hellenists and Hebrews: Reappraising Division within the Earliest Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 126–42; Mark D. Nanos, "What Was at Stake in Peter's 'Eating with Gentiles' at Antioch?," in Nanos, *The Galatians Debate*, 282–318; Das, *Galatians*, 200–232; Markus Bockmuehl, *Jewish Law in Gentile Churches: Halakhah and the Beginning of Christian Public Ethics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 56–61; Peter J. Tomson, *Paul and the Jewish Law: Halakha in the Letters of the Apostle to the Gentiles*, *Jewish Traditions in Early Christian Literature*, vol. 1, Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum, sect. 3 (Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1990), 222–36; David J. Rudolph, *A Jew to the Jews*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 46–53; Elmer, *Paul, Jerusalem and the Judaisers*, 104–16; Atsuhiro Asano, *Community-Identity Construction in Galatians: Exegetical, Social-Anthropological, and Socio-Historical Studies* (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 129–46; Francis Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles: A Sociological Approach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 53–67; Dragutin Matak, "Another Look at the Antioch Incident (Gal 2:11–14)," *Kairos: Evangelical Journal of Theology* 6, no. 2 (2012): 49–59; Walter Schmithals and Dorothea M. Barton, *Paul and James*, Studies in Biblical Theology (Naperville, IL: Alec. R. Allenson, 1965), 64–69; Richard Bauckham, "James, Peter, and the Gentiles," in *The Missions of James, Peter, and Paul*, ed. Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 121–30; Magnus Zetterholm, *The Formation of Christianity in Antioch: A Social-Scientific Approach to the Separation Between Judaism and Christianity* (London: Routledge, 2003), 129–66; Zetterholm, "The Antioch Incident Revisited," *Journal for the Study of Paul and His Letters* 6, no. 2 (2016): 249–59; Michelle Slee, *The Church in Antioch in the First Century CE: Communion and Conflict* (New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2004), 42–52; Jack J. Gibson, *Peter between Jerusalem and Antioch: Peter, James and the Gentiles*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2, Reihe 345 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013); Cummins, *Paul and the Crucified Christ in Antioch*, 161–88; John M. G. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 265–71; John Riches, *Galatians through the Centuries* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 106–14.

Jewish identity constructed by the human agent through the observance of Jewish table-fellowship practices based on the Torah. Peter's behavior at Antioch hindered Jewish-Gentile unity (Gal 3:28), and thus, minimized the divine action in Christ (Gal 2:14). However, Paul's direct rebuke to Peter suggested the priority of divine agency (Gal 2:11, 14, 15–21). In Paul's estimation, Peter's *social* action in abandoning the mixed table-fellowship of Gentile believers expressed a significant *theological* reality. Paul's remarks in Gal 2:15–21 teach that the believer's distinct ethnic identity has been redefined because of God's saving action in Christ. As I argue this thesis, the study will attempt to establish the relationship between identity, agency, and mixed table-fellowship through a careful exegetical analysis of the crisis at Antioch in Galatians 2:11–21 in conversation with selected Second Temple Jewish texts.

The above thesis may require some clarifications: First, one may inquire whether there is a legitimate relationship between the social practice of table-fellowship and the issue of agency. To validate the relationship between mixed table-fellowship and agency, I will approach Jewish table-fellowship practices as a significant Jewish identity-marker that serves to construct distinctions between "Us" and "Them." In light of this, I will argue that the phenomenon of Jewish table-fellowship practices in the Second Temple period is fundamentally concerned with an issue of distinct Jewish identity. That is, Jewish table-fellowship restrictions based on the Torah function to define and construct one's individual and communal Jewish identity, both of which simultaneously define the Israelite's relationship with God. Thus, viewed from this perspective, the subject of distinct Jewish identity relates directly to the issue of divine and human agency.

Second, while I will be exploring the concept of divine and human agency in ancient texts in this project, I, by no means, intend to impose this agency template in my interpretation of the texts. Instead, I will let the texts speak for themselves. Furthermore, concerning Galatians 2:11–21, I am neither arguing that Paul was wrestling with the

question of divine and human agency, at least not in how we approach this issue, nor suggesting that he was operating with the same definitions of divine and human described above. Instead, I will argue that the crisis at Antioch is a dispute over the issue of identity that gives insight into the divine and human agency.[4]

Methodology

I will support my thesis with a historical, exegetical, and comparative analysis of the relevant texts in Galatians and Second Temple Jewish literature. Following Barclay's advice, my thesis seeks "to understand Paul within his own intellectual landscape, rather than transporting him into our own, where an alien and anachronistic structure of discourse may deeply distort our understanding of his thought."[5] Hence, the present study will be historical since it will situate Galatians in its own historical and cultural background in the Greco-Roman world. Furthermore, my research will be exegetical because it will carefully and critically engage in the exegesis of primary Jewish and Pauline texts. Finally, this study will be comparative in that it will conceptually compare and contrast the analysis of selected Second Temple Jewish literature with that of Galatians 2:11–21.[6] This comparative analysis seeks to understand

---

[4] I am aware of scholars who view this model and its application on ancient texts skeptically. For instance, Troels Engberg-Pedersen, critiquing J. Louis Martyn's work, argues that the discussion of the "divine and human agency" model is a contemporary category because it works "with the either/or dichotomy" between the divine and human agent. Furthermore, he argues that the issue of agency is merely a modern construct since the notion is absent in the ancient texts. Therefore, the use of this model can lead to a misreading of Paul's text. See Troels Engberg-Pedersen, "Response to Martyn," *JSNT* 86 (2002): 109; Engberg-Pedersen, "Once More a Lutheran Paul? Francis Watson, Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith," *SJT* 59 (2006): 452–56. Engberg-Pedersen's criticism of the agency model may be a fair challenge warning scholars to utilize this model in ancient texts cautiously. However, his complete discreditation of the model and its application on ancient texts is not justified. Jason Maston rightly criticizes Engberg-Pedersen, claiming that ancient texts dealt with the issue of divine and human agency. To illustrate, he employs Josephus's writings (*J.W.* 2.119–66; *Ant.* 13.171–73, 18.11–25) to pinpoint the presence of divine and human agency through Josephus's explanation of different Jewish schools of thoughts on the relationship between human free will and fate. See Jason Maston, *Divine and Human Agency in Second Temple Judaism and Paul: A Comparative Study* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 10–17; cf. Barclay, introduction to *Divine and Human Agency in Paul*, 4–6.

[5] Barclay, introduction to *Divine and Human Agency in Paul*, 4.

[6] On 'method of comparison,' I have greatly benefited from *The New Testament in Comparison: Validity, Method, and Purpose in Comparing Traditions*, ed. John M. G. Barclay and B. G.

the phenomenon of table-fellowship practices and its related issues in Galatians and selected Second Temple Jewish texts. More importantly, as Barclay puts it, my comparative analysis aims "to see the familiar in a new light . . . and thereby to generate the possibility of new understandings."[7]

Before proceeding further, I find it necessary to make some brief but important methodological remarks for clarifying the present comparative study: First, I have confined myself to the Second Temple Jewish corpus, particularly giving detailed attention to these primary texts: Letter of Aristeas, Joseph and Aseneth, Judith, and Additions to Esther. The reason for selecting these Jewish texts is that they contain the narratives that involve mixed table-fellowship between Jews and Gentiles and its related issues. Also, while the scope of this qualitative research cannot claim to be fully representative of all Jewish groups in the Second Temple period, the chosen literary data will offer a broad spectrum of the issue at hand.

Second, in my comparative analysis, I do not intend to approach the Jewish texts written in the Second Temple period merely as a background for Paul; rather, I will interpret these Jewish texts on their own terms. By this statement, I mean that Paul's understanding of divine-human agency at the mixed table-fellowship at Antioch because of his Christ-experience as a priori assumption will not be reflected in my analysis of the Jewish texts. Moreover, since the task of comparative analysis has the danger of

---

White (London: T&T Clark, 2020), which instructs about not only how to perform a comparative study well in the field of New Testament studies but also how to avoid possible pitfalls in this method. Introducing the method and its use in the New Testament scholarship, editors Barclay and White write that a comparative analysis of ancient texts "is not only a historical but also a *hermeneutical* procedure" whose purpose is "to elucidate the meaning of a text by placing it into a comparative frame with other texts or traditions." Furthermore, the book made me aware of the five challenges that any scholar might face in performing the task of comparative analysis: (1) "choosing what to compare," (2) "selecting for the purpose of comparison," (3) "categorizing the items compared," (4) "determining the purpose of the comparison," and (5) "measuring degrees of similarity or difference." For more details, see John M. G. Barclay and B. G. White, eds., "Introduction: Posing the Questions," in *The New Testament in Comparison*, 1–7; John M. G. Barclay, "'O Wad Some Pow'r the Giftie Gie Us, to See Oursels as Others See!': Method and Purpose in Comparing the New Testament," in *The New Testament in Comparison*, 9–22.

[7] Barclay, "'O Wad Some Pow'r the Giftie Gie Us'," 9.

projecting Pauline concerns and ideology onto non-Pauline texts, I will be cautious not to project issues that emerge from Galatians 2:11–21 back onto my reading of the Jewish texts. Instead, my analysis of table-fellowship narratives in the Second Temple period will be within each distinct and individual Jewish text's theological context. This caveat will help me to be mindful of different concerns and objectives that Paul and other Jewish texts have in their distinct contexts.

Third, although each Jewish text will be examined on its own terms and in its own context, my ultimate purpose is to illuminate Paul's understanding of the mixed table-fellowship at Antioch.[8] Fourth and finally, my comparative analysis will be analogical rather than chronological because it will not concern itself with the dating of the given texts. I will mainly seek to explore the conceptual ideas in Jewish and Pauline texts.[9]

Historical Summary of the Research

In reviewing the literature on Galatians 2:11–14 in New Testament scholarship, I have not been able to find focused research on the Antioch incident in relation to the topic of divine and human agency. However, the issues raised by contemporary scholarship and its proposed solutions concerning Galatians 2:11–14 will offer me the avenue of engaging with dialogue partners to discuss the historical problem of the Antioch incident. Also, since my project seeks to develop a connection between the

[8] I received this methodological insight from Barclay and White, who proposed that the comparativist must strive as hard as he can to interpret the literary texts being compared in their own contexts and terms. However, they also add that "when we come to comparison, we are not simply discerning what is 'in' the text; we are creating a connection with another text in which we dictate the terms of the comparison." Barclay and White, "Introduction: Posing the Questions," 5.

[9] See Barclay and White, "Introduction: Posing the Questions," 3, where the editors clarify that although genealogical or chronological connections in the enterprise of comparison are important, *analogical* comparison (i.e., the task where conceptual ideas are compared) has been recognized as legitimate by scholars. See also Barclay, "'O Wad Some Pow'r the Giftie Gie Us'," 12–13; Francis Watson, "Comparing Like with Like? The New Testament within Its Christian Literary Environment," in Barclay and White, *The New Testament in Comparison*, 159–72.

Antioch incident and divine-human agency, it will be helpful to briefly outline the understanding and state of the concept of agency in the recent Pauline scholarship.

Divine-Human Agency in Pauline Studies

Since this study's argument primarily deals with the concept of agency, it will be helpful for readers to know how I define divine and human agency.

One of the essential questions that every religion deals with and distinguishes one religion from the other is this: How do God and human beings interact with each other? This question explores how divine and human agents relate to each other in religious, social, and ethical spheres.[10]

With a few nuances, I mainly rely on the definitions of these terms provided by John M. G. Barclay in *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment*. Concerning "human agency," I understand this term as "involving the capacity to know, to desire/will, and to act."[11] Since my thesis seeks to establish a link between identity and agency, I understand human agency as referring to a human agent's active role in defining and constructing his distinct ethnic identity through observing certain socio-religious practices. Barclay conceptualizes "divine agency" as referring to the divine agent capable of knowing, willing, and acting independently of any external force or power. Furthermore, Barclay asserts that divine agency can manifest itself in "direct and indirect" ways and can be "conceptualized in stronger or weaker forms, ranging from absolute predetermination through foreknowledge, intention, enabling, and permission."[12]

---

[10] In biblical scholarship, awareness of the notion of divine-human agency, particularly in Pauline literature, is not recent. In the introduction of his *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment* (1–2), John Barclay affirms the existence of the concept of agency in Paul's writings (Rom 4:4–6; 9:6–13; 11:6; 1 Cor 15:9–10; Gal 2:16; 5:18; Phil 2:12–13), which "has engaged the attention of serious thinkers right down the centuries."

[11] John M. G. Barclay, introduction to *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment*, ed. Simon J. Gathercole and John M. G. Barclay (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 5.

[12] Barclay, introduction to *Divine and Human Agency in Paul*, 5.

For my argument, I approach divine agency as referring to God's salvific action in Christ that has redefined and transformed believers' identity through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.[13]

Furthermore, in his introductory material on the concept of agency, Barclay offers three different models for understanding how the divine agent might relate to human agents. The most common model in which the divine agent's relation to humans is understood is the "competitive" model. As the term "competitive" depicts, divine and human agents are inversely proportional to each other in this model. That is, "the more one is said to be effective, the less can be attributed to the other."[14] The second is the "kinship" model, whereby instead of the two agents standing against each other in stark competition, "the agency of one is shared with the other."[15] Third, Barclay introduces a "non-contrastive transcendence" model, whereby divine and human agencies are neither inversely proportional nor mutually exclusive. Instead, both divine and human agents are directly proportional to each other: "the more the human agent is operative, the more (not the less) may be attributed to God."[16] This "non-contrastive transcendence" model presents the divine agent as a sovereign being upon which the human agent ultimately depends. "Hence, if God is everything, humanity is nothing without God—but may be

---

[13] Note that this understanding of the notion of divine agency does not intend to eliminate the role of the human agent altogether. Nevertheless, within this framework, although the human agent participates in the accomplished action of God in various ways, it is the divine agent who takes the initiative independent of any human action. See Barclay, introduction to *Divine and Human Agency in Paul*, 5.

[14] Barclay, introduction to *Divine and Human Agency in Paul*, 6. In this model, the more the divine agent operates actively, the less active the human agent's role becomes; divine sovereignty and human autonomy are considered "mutually exclusive," and their roles are perceived as "independent of one another." Therefore, the relationship between divine and human agency "stand over against one another as polar opposites, even when they collaborate as partial causes of the same effect."

[15] Barclay, introduction to *Divine and Human Agency in Paul*, 6. In this type, human freedom is not independent of God; rather, it operates "in accordance with God."

[16] Barclay, introduction to *Divine and Human Agency in Paul*, 7. Furthermore, despite the direct relationship, the agents in this model are ultimately not identical—"God is radically distinct from human agency and not an agent within the same order of being or in the same nexus."

both powerful and effective as a created agent in dependence on God."[17] However, in providing three varied agency models, Barclay points out that different ancient texts exhibit different models of agency in either an explicit or implicit manner.[18]

Additionally, within the apocalyptic worldview, the legacy of J. Louis Martyn in regard to the issue of divine and human agency cannot be neglected in the New Testament studies. The issue of how the divine agent interacts with the human agents in Pauline writings became significant for Martyn. He considered the notion of divine-human agency as one of the important aspects of Paul's gospel.[19] As one of the prominent advocates of the Apocalyptic school of thought, Martyn claims that the essence of Paul's gospel lies in the fact that the divine apocalyptic action (a particular event in history) has redeemed enslaved and incompetent human agents from the grip of cosmic powers of Sin and Flesh.[20] According to Martyn's apocalyptic worldview, Paul's gospel highlights the *priority of divine agency* whereby everything primarily revolves around God. God appears on the stage of redemptive history as the initiator and sustainer of salvation for humankind through the person and work of Jesus Christ and the Spirit. In this sense, the divine action in Christ always takes priority in the human orbit. In Martyn's words,

> This is the God who is on the move. In the gospel of Christ (for Paul an event) God *steps on the scene*. Far from allowing the human agent to stand alone at the road

---

[17] Barclay, introduction to *Divine and Human Agency in Paul*, 7–8.

[18] Barclay, introduction to *Divine and Human Agency in Paul*, 6–7. Barclay maintains that the concept of agency manifesting itself in these three viable models must be kept in mind while studying ancient texts. He acknowledges that not every single ancient text deals with the notion of agency, However, he maintains that there are many ancient texts that clearly exhibit the concept of divine-human agency.

[19] See J. Louis Martyn, "Epilogue: An Essay In Pauline Meta-Ethics" in *Divine and Human Agency in Paul*, 173–83; Martyn, "Afterword: The Human Moral Drama," in *Apocalyptic Paul: Cosmos and Anthropos in Romans 5–8*, ed. Beverly R. Gaventa (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2013), 157–66; Martyn, "The Apocalyptic Gospel in Galatians," *Interpretation* 54:3 (2000): 246–66; Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible, vol. 33A (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 97–105. Cf. Martinus C. de Boer, *Galatians: A Commentary*, The New Testament Library (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 31–35, 79–96.

[20] Martyn, *Galatians*, 97–105, 349.

> fork, this invasive God powerfully meets both the incompetent, enslaved agent and the powers that enslave him in their own orb.[21]

Thus, Martyn prioritizes divine agency for the victory and liberation of the human agents in the battle against the cosmic powers of Sin and Flesh through the sending of God's son and the indwelling of God's Spirit. However, Martyn's insistence on prioritizing divine agency should not be taken as believers' passiveness whereby they act as mere puppets. Martyn rejects this assertion. In his apocalyptic interpretation of Paul, he considers believers as the active agents who are capable of willing, deciding, and acting in God's redemptive plan. For Martyn, believers are "soldiers" who actively participate in the cosmic battle against the Sin and Flesh to gain victory as loyal members of God's community.[22] Nevertheless, although Martyn concurs with the human agents' active participation within the community through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, his emphasis on the priority of divine action in Christ for the deliverance and triumph of the human agents through the indwelling of the Spirit remains strong.[23]

Synopsis of Interpretation of the Antioch Incident from the Patristic Era to Contemporary Scholarship

Paul's direct rebuke to Peter in Galatians 2:11–14 caused concern among some early church fathers. Possibly, they understood the dispute between the two apostles as something that could raise suspicions concerning the unity of the early church. For this reason, one can observe mitigation of the Antiochene conflict between Paul and Peter in patristic exegesis.

For instance, Jerome's interpretation of Galatians 2:11–14 attempts to settle the conflict by suggesting that both apostles simply devised the conflict over the table-

---

[21] Martyn, "Epilogue: An Essay In Pauline Meta-Ethics," 180 (emphasis original).

[22] Martyn, *Galatians*, 529–32.

[23] Martyn, *Galatians*, 271. For a helpful review of how Martyn understands the relationship between the divine and human agents, see Susan Eastman, "The Legacy of J. Louis Martyn: Questions of Agency," *Journal for the Study of Paul and his Letters* 17, no. 1–2 (2017): 119–128.

fellowship issue. That is, the disagreement between them was not factual. Jerome argues that lawyers' job is to engage in a severe argument in a public trial to win their audience's approval.[24] Likewise, Peter and Paul orchestrated this artificial conflict at Antioch so that "the hypocrisy of observing the law, which was harming those who had believed from the Gentiles, would be corrected by the hypocrisy of correction."[25]

Jerome was not the only one who interpreted Antioch's incident in this manner. Before him, other Eastern church fathers (e.g., Origen of Alexandria, John Chrysostom, Clement of Alexandria) had also approached the incident with the same hermeneutical principle.[26]

Augustine of Hippo was the first one in the West to challenge this line of interpretation. Contrary to Jerome and others, Augustine believed the event in Galatians 2:11–14 to be factual and not artificial.[27] Later, following Augustine, the medieval

---

[24] Jerome, *St. Jerome's Commentaries on Galatians, Titus, and Philemon*, trans. Thomas P. Scheck (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press), 100; cf. Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians*, trans. Andrew Cain (Baltimore: Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 104–11.

[25] Jerome, *St. Jerome's Commentaries on Galatians*, 98–99, 102. Furthermore, Jerome justifies his interpretation by referring to instances where Paul himself seems to observe the Jewish customs for the sake of Messiah-believing Jews (Acts 16:1–5; 24:17–18; 27:9). Based on these references, Jerome argues that if anyone deems the conflict between the two apostles as real, he must explain why Paul observed the Jewish law on specific occasions. Interestingly, Jerome believes that "a pretense is useful and should be adopted on occasion." He authenticates his point by referring to (1) the story of King Jehu in the Old Testament whereby the king pretended to worship the idol in order to kill the priests of Baal (2 Kgs 10:18–19), (2) the story of David's pretending before Abimelech (1 Sam 21:13–15), and (3) the example of Jesus, who "adopted the pretense of sinful flesh" (Rom 8:3). In Jerome's understanding, if an act of pretense carries out a bigger practical purpose, it must be justified. Therefore, the artificial conflict between the apostles at Antioch should not cause worry to the church since they acted out in this way to avoid schism in the early church. However, it is interesting to note that Jerome, at other places, seems to contradict his position such that his comments give the impression that Peter made an error in reality.

[26] For example, Origen, who influenced Jerome's interpretation, believed that both apostles feigned in the Antiochene scenario: Paul pretended to rebuke Peter in public, and Peter pretended to silently accept Paul's reproach so that both the Jewish and Gentile parties might benefit from this act. See Jerome, *PL* 26:364, in Riches, *Galatians through the Centuries*, 107. Likewise, John Chrysostom contends that the conclusion that perceives Paul as charging Peter of hypocrisy is based on a superficial reading of the passage. He responds, "This is not so, indeed it is not." According to Chrysostom, Peter's silence over Paul's harsh rebuke suggests that the two apostles had already planned what they were about to do for Jewish and Gentile believers. John Chrysostom, *Commentary on Galatians*, in *NPNF*[1], 13:18, Christian Classics Ethereal Library, https://ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf113/npnf113/Page_18.html.

[27] Augustine interprets the Antiochian incident in light of salvation history. In his understanding, the Jewish law had validity and purpose in history. However, with the advent of Jesus, the Torah's role has been abolished. Augustine claims that Peter's fault did not lie in the fact that he observed the Jewish law per se—Peter's observation would not have been problematic to Paul. Peter was condemned

theologians also understood the incident at Antioch as based on factual details and considered Peter to be worthy of Paul's reprimand because he led others astray. Despite his error, however, medieval interpreters still commended Peter for displaying a great example of humility by submitting himself to his subordinate's rebuke.[28]

The Reformers, influenced by Augustinian thought, also differed from the patristic interpretation of Galatians 2:11–14. For instance, Martin Luther criticizes Jerome's interpretation of the passage by expressing that he "understood neither this passage nor the whole letter" since he tries to lessen Peter's serious error.[29] Luther believes that this incident demonstrates the "chief point of all Christian doctrine,"[30] namely, justification by faith. Moreover, he relates the conflict in the biblical text to his battling with the authorities of the Roman Catholic Church. He urges believers to imitate Paul in defending the gospel's glorious truth against anyone who attempts to suppress it.[31]

---

for his hypocrisy that could have encouraged Paul's Gentile believers to adopt a Jewish lifestyle. Augustine argues that if Paul, according to Jerome, reported something that was faked in nature, then it undermines the Scriptures' authority of truthful narrations. Furthermore, Augustine thinks that Peter's silence demonstrated humility in accepting Paul's rebuke; thus, Augustine's exegesis maintains apostolic accommodation and unity in the early church among the apostles. See *EP* 28.3, in CSEL 34/1:109.9; cf. Riches, *Galatians through the Centuries*, 107; Tomson, *Paul and the Jewish law*, 224.

[28] See, e.g., Peter Lombard in Levy, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 193–95. Levy translated Lombard's commentary on Galatians from *PL* 192:93–170. Furthermore, for an overview of interpretation of Galatians in the medieval era, see Riches, *Galatians through the Centuries*, 107–8; Cummins, *Paul and the Crucified Christ in Antioch*, 2–3.

[29] Luther, *Galatians*, 124.

[30] Luther, *Galatians*, 118.

[31] Luther, *Galatians*, 122. In his exegesis of this pericope, Luther writes that Peter was not only misled by withdrawing himself from the table-fellowship with Gentiles, but he also committed a grave sin in doing this. Luther believes that Peter's action on the issue of table-fellowship gave the impression to Gentiles that they were required to observe the rite of circumcision and, eventually, Torah. Furthermore, for Luther, the main issue at stake in Antioch was the non-kosher food being consumed over the table-fellowship. He further adds that Peter knew that the menu used at the table was non-kosher, but he transgressed the Jewish law regardless since it did not bother him. Peter did not consider eating the Gentiles' food as the unlawful thing; he was not guilty. Thus, before James's men came over, Peter did not believe that the law was necessary for the Gentiles' righteousness. He ate the abstained food from the Jewish point of view. Paul did not denounce "Peter's action but its end," that is, "the idea that if you eat you are sinning, and if you abstain you are righteous."

Furthermore, John Calvin, a second-generation Reformer, also considers Paul's rebuke to Peter in Galatians 2:11–14 as genuine and not fabricated. He believes that both Chrysostom and Jerome were mistaken in their interpretation of the passage.[32] It is noteworthy that the Reformers' interpretation of the conflict at Antioch reflects their own religious, social, and political setting, whereby they compared Peter to their adversaries (viz., Roman Catholic authorities) who deserted the truth of the gospel.[33]

In the first half of the nineteenth century, a prominent scholar belonging to the Tübingen school, Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792–1860), offered a historical reconstruction of the early church. Many future scholars followed him. His theory proposed that the early church split up into two opposed parties: Gentile Christianity and Jewish Christianity. This major split occurred due to the apostles' different ideologies: one community of believers was led by James (Jesus's brother) and Peter, which primarily supervised the early Jewish Christians and remained loyal to their Jewish ancestral traditions; another group was led by Paul, who believed in the Christian faith's universalistic nature, which ultimately led him to abrogate Mosaic law's role entirely.[34]

Baur approached the Antioch incident with the same hermeneutical principle. He took the conflict at Antioch as a cause of a lasting rift between Christianity and Judaism. In *The Church History of the First Three Centuries,* Baur suggests that the Jerusalem council's agreement among the apostles (Acts 15) entailed a parting of ways in which both parties recognized "that each party had a right to go his own way, separate

---

[32] Calvin, *Commentary on Galatians and Ephesians*, 47–48. Like Luther, Calvin also applies the passage to his own religious situation.

[33] Riches, *Galatians through the Centuries*, 108.

[34] F. C. Baur, "Die Christuspartei in Der Korinthischen Gemeinde, Der Gegensatz Des Petrinischen Und Pauli-Nischen Christenthums in Der Ältesten Kirche, Der Apostel Petrus in Rom," *Tübinger Zeitschrift Für Theologie* 5, no. 4 (1831): 61–206. Cf. Peter C. Hodgson, "F. C. Baur's Interpretation of Christianity's Relationship to Judaism," in *Is There a Judeo-Christian Tradition? A European Perspective*, ed. Emmanuel Nathan and Anya Topolski (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 31–52.

from, and independent of the other."[35] He believes that the missionary labor division gave rise to two different gospels—"a Gospel of the circumcision and a Gospel of the uncircumcision."[36]

Baur maintains that Peter was comfortable having a mixed table-fellowship with the Gentile brothers at Antioch. However, men from James "reminded Peter so strongly of the principles which were so rigorously upheld at Jerusalem that he gave up sitting at the same table with the Gentile Christians."[37] Baur does not provide the details of what the Jewish group might have found objectionable with Peter. Nevertheless, he explains that when Paul observed Peter's hypocrisy, he could not overlook it and confronted him fearlessly to take a stand for the truth of the gospel. The impact of the Antiochian conflict was such that "throughout all the Epistles of Paul, we do not find the slightest indication that the apostles ever drew nearer to each other in after years."[38] Therefore, Baur views Antioch's incident in Galatians 2:11–14 as an avenue that caused the emergence of two distinct Christian sects, namely, Petrine churches and Pauline churches, due to severe theological matters.[39]

---

[35] Baur, *Church History*, 1:53.

[36] Baur, *Church History*, 1:53. Analyzing the agreement of the Jerusalem council in Acts 15, Baur argues that even the compromise reached by the apostles of Jerusalem did not originate from their inner convictions; it was, in fact, against their religious commitments. Therefore, the boundary line drawn between Paul and the Jerusalem apostles in terms of two different missions signaled the incoming division between Jewish Christianity and Pauline Christianity. Baur thinks that the Antioch conflict is the aftermath of the division that had already occurred at the Jerusalem council.

[37] Baur, *Church History*, 1:54.

[38] Baur, *Church History*, 1:55.

[39] Baur's historical reconstruction, however, did not go uncriticized. Aiming to correct the claims of many scholars who belonged to the Tübingen school (e.g., Baur, Schwegler, Volckmar, Hilgenfeld), Hans Joachim Schoeps argues that the notion of schism in early Christianity is an artificial historical reconstruction. Acknowledging that there must have existed some strong disagreements between Paul and the church's pillars due to the different nature of their callings, Schoeps, nevertheless, denies the everlasting division among early church apostles. Therefore, he writes, "There were indeed differences of outlook, but no enmity and above all no 'unbridgeable gulf.'" Shedding light on the incident at Antioch, he further suggests that the incident "was merely episodic, occasioned by uncertainties about the correct procedure for mixed Christian communities." Based on the historical and biblical data, Schoeps calls Baur's and his followers' historical reconstruction of the early church biased and unreliable. See Hans Joachim Schoeps, *Paul: The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History*, trans. Harold Knight (Cambridge: James Clark, 1959), 67–69; Albrecht Ritschl, *Die Entstehung Der Altkatholischen*

Due to the enormity of secondary literature devoted to the incident at Antioch in contemporary scholarship, this literature review will only focus on the material relevant to my thesis. For clarity and convenience, I have thematically categorized the central issues associated with Galatians 2:11–14. The following survey aims to accomplish two goals: (1) summarize recent scholarly discussions and (2) help to situate my contribution to the ongoing scholarly discussion on the incident at Antioch.

The issue of identifying the anonymous interest groups. In Galatians 2:12, Paul states that Peter used to eat with Gentiles at the same table until "certain ones from James" (τινας ἀπὸ Ἰακώβου) arrived in Antioch. Except for mentioning that the "certain ones" were from James, Paul does not provide any additional information about their identity and purpose in his retelling of the story in Antioch. Hence, the missing pieces of information have driven scholars to produce many divergent theories on this issue.

Some interpreters develop a connection between the "certain ones" and the pronoun in Galatians 1:7 (τινές), arguing that this group from James could be the same agitators in Galatia who "went there in order to put into practice the policies which had already been successful at Antioch."[40] In contrast, others argue that the group's identity, which Paul associated with James (ἀπὸ Ἰακώβου), does not necessarily manifest that James had sent this group. So, the group's association with James could be merely geographical because the delegation arrived from the region of Jerusalem.[41]

Furthermore, Mark D. Nanos points out that the identity and agenda of these

---

Kirche: Eine Kirchen-Und Dogmengeschichtliche Monographie (Bonn: Adolph Marcus, 1857); J. B. Lightfoot, *Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians: With Introductions, Notes, and Dissertations* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1957).

[40] E.g., Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 60.

[41] E.g., Bockmuehl thinks that while the men did not directly associate with James, they presented themselves as James's representatives when the mixed table-fellowship conflict arose. Bockmuehl, *Jewish Law in Gentile Churches*, 72; see also Craig S. Keener, *Galatians: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), 317.

men from James seem to be as vague as the "pseudo-brothers" (ψευδαδέλφους) in Galatians 2:4. He wonders if James's group was merely "traveling through Antioch or there for something that had nothing to do with the events that unfolded."[42] However, most scholars on this issue argue that the phrase "the certain ones from James" does not merely describe the group's geographical origin but also its commissioning by the elder James to speak into the matter evolving in the Antioch church.[43]

Additionally, Concerning the issue of the identity and agenda of unnamed interest groups, scholars debate how or whether the men from James (2:12a) and the circumcision group (2:12b) relate to each other. In other words, are these two parties the same, or do they represent two different parties with distinct ideologies and ambitions? Conventionally, mainstream scholarship has perceived the "certain ones from James" and "those of the circumcision" as one group with the same interest that ultimately led Peter to cease dining with Gentiles.[44] However, quite a few scholars argue that the text at hand does not suggest that the two groups are identical and, thus, they should be considered as distinct.[45] A. Andrew Das, although arguing that the two groups are different, is open to

---

[42] Nanos, "What Was at Stake in Peter's 'Eating with Gentiles'?," 286.

[43] Das, *Galatians*, 206; Frank J. Matera, *Galatians*, Sacra Pagina Series 9 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 89; J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible, vol. 33A (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 242; Martinus C. de Boer, *Galatians* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 132; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Galatians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 140. Furthermore, a few scholars—differing slightly from this majority view—argue that though authorized by James, these men "abused" the elder's authority to carry out their agendas. See Lightfoot, *Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians*, 112; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 74.

[44] Ernest DeWitt Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1971), 107–8; Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 108–9; Tomson, *Paul and the Jewish Law*, 226; Esler, "Making and Breaking an Agreement Mediterranean Style," 276–78; Martyn, *Galatians*, 236–40; Bengt Holmberg, "Jewish versus Christian Identity in the Early Church?," *Revue Biblique* 105, no. 3 (1998): 410–11; Zetterholm, *The Formation of Christianity in Antioch*, 210.

[45] Das, *Galatians*, 207; Schmithals and Barton, *Paul and James*, 66–67; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 143–44; Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 41 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 74–75; Keener, *Galatians* (2019), 319; Douglas J. Moo, *Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 148; Nanos, "What Was at Stake in Peter's 'Eating with Gentiles'?," 291–92.

the possibility of a limited "overlapping" between the groups. He writes, "Perhaps the arriving party from James was representing the interests of the Jerusalem circumcision party ('those of the circumcision')."[46]

Another related issue in this debate deals with the religious affiliation of the unnamed circumcision group. There is a scholarly division over whether "those of the circumcision" were Jewish Christians or unbelieving Jews in general. Naturally, those who associate the circumcision group with men from James argue that individuals in this group were Jewish Christians.[47] Alternatively, other scholars contend that the circumcision group whom Peter feared refers to Jews in general (i.e., unbelieving Jews).[48] Also, scholars who think that "those of the circumcision" were unbelieving Jews associate this group with a Jewish sect in the first century that sought to impose Torah observance on the Jewish people at large. It is believed that this Jewish attitude arose due to the identity crisis Jews faced amid a disturbing socio-political and religious atmosphere.[49]

---

[46] Das, *Galatians*, 207. Furthermore, among those who develop a connection between "the certain ones" and other opposing groups, Schoeps stands out as suggesting that the individuals from James are the same people who also appear in Galatians 2:4 ("the false brothers"; ψευδαδέλφους) and in Acts 15:5 ("certain ones from the sect of the Pharisees"; τινες τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς αἱρέσεως τῶν Φαρισαίων). Schoeps, *Paul*, 74–75.

[47] Lightfoot, *Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians*, 112; Boer, *Galatians*, 133; Burton, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 107; Betz, *Galatians*, 109; Matera, *Galatians*, 86; Michael F. Bird, *The Saving Righteousness of God: Studies on Paul, Justification and the New Perspective* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007), 125–26. The scholars who advocate this position believe that Peter abandoned the eating practice with Gentiles because of a fear of James—the fear which was inspired by the delegation. The advocates of this view generally make a linguistic argument, claiming that in all other biblical passages (Acts 10:45; 11:2; Rom 4:12; Col 4:11; Titus 1:10), the same phrase (τοὺς ἐκ περιτομῆς) refers to Jewish Christians.

[48] Das, *Galatians*, 207; Schmithals and Barton, *Paul and James*, 66–67; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 144; Bruce, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 131; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 74–75; Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 154–55.

[49] Robert Jewett, "The Agitators and the Galatian Congregation," in Nanos, *The Galatians Debate*, 334–47; Bruce, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 130–31; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 74–75; Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 154–56; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 144; Moo, *Galatians*, 148. This view does not go uncriticized, however. See, e.g., Nanos, "What Was at Stake in Peter's 'Eating with Gentiles'?," 291.

The issue of sharing table with Gentiles. Another subject related to the incident at Antioch that has occupied scholars' attention involves the question of the core issue at stake at Antioch: What did "those of the circumcision" or James's party find objectionable concerning Peter's eating with the Gentiles?

Traditionally, New Testament scholarship has principally understood the food consumed by Jews and Gentiles as the core issue at stake at Antioch. In this interpretation, scholars argue that the food items at the dinner table at Antioch were not conformed to the Jewish dietary laws. Therefore, non-kosher food was the main issue at stake at Antioch.[50]

Whereas the traditional scholarship has maintained that observant Jews typically avoided table-fellowship with Gentiles, some scholars have described this view as simplistic and, thus, sought alternate interpretations.[51] In his article "The Incident at Antioch (Gal. 2:11–14)," James D. G. Dunn has argued that commensality between Jews and Gentiles was a complex phenomenon in the ancient world. Most probably, the barriers to the mixed table-fellowship at Antioch must have involved unclean foods, ritual purity, and tithing. According to Dunn, the food consumed at Antioch was not appropriately tithed under religious standards, and the people eating the food were ritually impure. To support his thesis, he employs Second Temple Jewish literature

---

[50] Lightfoot, *Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians*, 112–14; Burton, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 106; Betz, *Galatians*, 112; Luther, *Galatians*, 122; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 143; Martyn, *Galatians*, 232; Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 153, 158; Moo, *Galatians*, 146; Scot McKnight, *Galatians*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 101–3; R. Alan Cole, *Galatians*, TNTC (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 119; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 75; Matera, *Galatians*, 89. Critiquing this view, Nanos argues that this conventional explanation entails two assumptions: (1) it presupposes that the observant Jews (both Christian and non-Christian) found it offensive to share a table of food with Gentiles because doing so would either require them to negotiate with their food regulations or eventually lead them to compromise in food matters; (2) in considering food as the issue at stake in Antioch, the scholars presume that Peter in Gal 2:11–14 was engaged in eating Gentile food (i.e., unclean food) in a Gentile social setting. Nanos, "What Was at Stake in Peter's 'Eating with Gentiles'?," 292.

[51] E.g., Dunn, "The Incident at Antioch (Gal. 2:11–18)," (2002) 199–234; Sanders, "Jewish Association with the Gentiles"; Nanos, "What Was at Stake in Peter's 'Eating with Gentiles'?"; Das, *Galatians*, 216–32; Zetterholm, *The Formation of Christianity in Antioch*, 129–66; Cummins, *Paul and the Crucified Christ in Antioch*, 166–88.

highlighting the issues of unclean foods, ritual purity, and tithing in Second Temple Judaism.[52] So, from his viewpoint, the food at Antioch was conformed to the Torah's prescriptions. However, James and his delegation's main concern was *a lesser degree of observance* of the Jewish dietary laws, specifically with regard to ritual purity and tithing.[53]

Having approached the issue at Antioch from a different perspective, Philip F. Esler has challenged Dunn's understanding of the nature of mixed table-fellowship that argued for a range of Jewish attitudes towards eating with Gentiles. In his book *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts*, Esler proposes that the practice of eating with Gentiles was not prevalent among Jews of the ancient world. He admits that there were exceptions wherein few Jews chose not to observe the Jewish dietary regulations strictly in order to enhance their social relations with the surrounding world. Nevertheless, he maintains that the "Jews who permanently gave up the prohibitions that distinguished them from the Gentiles ceased to be Jews."[54] Thus, surveying both the literary and historical primary sources, Esler suggests that Jews usually avoided eating with Gentiles.[55]

An additional piece of literature that made a worthwhile contribution to discussing the Antioch incident in Galatians 2:11–14 is E. P. Sanders's article "Jewish Associations with Gentiles and Galatians 2:11–14." In his article, Sanders criticizes both Dunn's and Esler's interpretation of the Antioch incident.

---

[52] Dunn, "The Incident at Antioch (Gal. 2:11–18)," (2002) 207–19.

[53] Dunn, "The Incident at Antioch (Gal. 2:11–18)," (2002) 225.

[54] Philip Francis Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts: The Social and Political Motivations of Lucan Theology* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 86.

[55] Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts*, 71–86. Moreover, Esler's interpretation argues that the issue at stake at Antioch was that James demanded that the Christian Gentiles ought to be circumcised if they desire to restore the meal-sharing practice with Christian Jews. Therefore, in Esler's view, the core issue at stake was Gentile believers' status at Antioch. Cf. Esler, *Galatians*, 135–40.

First, Sanders refutes Dunn's analysis of the Antiochene incident by arguing that it was based on false presuppositions. He adds that even if the Jews in the Diaspora had perceived Gentiles as ritually impure people, this idea could not have led them to avoid social interaction with the Gentile world altogether. He further argues that "all Jews, including Pharisees, were impure more or less all the time."[56] Second, critiquing Esler's interpretation, Sanders declares that his explanation indicates a "complete misrepresentation" of literary sources.[57] Objecting to Esler's misinterpretation of Jewish primary texts, Sanders argues that primary data, contrary to Esler's conclusions, find food to be the issue and not the company of people consuming the food.[58] Finally, Sanders proposes that it is more likely that James and the circumcision party might have found two things objectionable at the mixed table-fellowship at Antioch: Firstly, both parties might have feared that "too much association" with Gentile believers, in general, would lead Jewish believers at Antioch to get involved in Gentile ritual practices (e.g., idolatry) unintentionally. Secondly, they might have thought that Peter's unhesitant practice of eating with Gentiles, in particular, would eventually harm his reputation and his ministry among Jews.[59]

Furthermore, adopting an entirely different approach towards the issue at Antioch, Mark D. Nanos argues that the main issue at stake to which the circumcision party objected at Antioch was neither the food nor the company of Gentiles present at the

---

[56] Sanders, "Jewish Association with the Gentiles," 175–76. Sanders further argues that the matter of Gentiles' impurity was problematic only with regard to Gentiles' entrance into the holy temple.

[57] Sanders, "Jewish Association with the Gentiles," 176.

[58] Sanders, "Jewish Association with the Gentiles," 176–80.

[59] Sanders, "Jewish Association with the Gentiles," 186. Furthermore, Hill presents his reconstruction of the Antioch incident by asserting that what James and his representatives were fundamentally concerned about was the issue of "Jewish legal observance for its own sake." In other words, James, through his delegation, clarified that the Jerusalem decree (Acts 15) concerned the inclusion of Gentiles (i.e., Gentiles did not need to live like Jews) and did not intend for Jews to follow the Gentiles' lifestyle. Thus, from James's and the circumcision party's perspective, the issue at stake was the deliberate denunciation of the Jewish legal code by the Jewish Christians at Antioch. Hill, *Hellenists and Hebrews*, 141.

table-fellowship. “Rather, it was the way that these Gentiles were being *identified* at these meals.”[60] In Nanos’s view, the mixed table-fellowship practice at Antioch, where Gentile believers dined with Jewish believers as equal and full participants of God’s community, signified the elimination of all sorts of ethnic differences. However, this radical eradication of socio-religious features caused discomfort among the circumcision group.[61]

Reading the Galatians text with an apocalyptic lens, Martyn proposes that the Teachers at Galatia had already given their version of the incident at Antioch to the Galatian congregations. However, in giving his version, Paul highlights what the Teachers had failed to convey, that is, the significance of the Antioch incident “in the light of the of the truth of the gospel, the theological issue that was — and is — at

[60] Nanos, “What Was at Stake in Peter’s ‘Eating with Gentiles’?,” 300–1. Nanos agrees with Dunn’s argument that Jews in the Diaspora would have been socially interacting with their Gentile neighbors and sharing food-table with them. Nevertheless, Nanos maintains that there must have been some “prevailing norms” for mixed table-fellowship that Jews must observe in order to keep the distinction between them and Gentiles. The two “prevailing norms” necessitated that Gentiles could eat with Jews either as “pagan guests” or as “proselyte candidates.” Viewing the Antioch incident from this perspective, Nanos holds that the issue at stake was neither non-kosher food nor the company of Gentiles; instead, it was the status of the Gentiles at the table-fellowship with Jews that raised red flags for the circumcision party. In Nanos’s words, “The ones advocating the proselyte conversion of Gentiles thus objected to circumventing the place of this rite to reidentify these Gentiles as full and equal members of this Jewish subgroup—which was how they were being identified at these meals, rather than as mere pagan guests.”

[61] Nanos, “What Was at Stake in Peter’s ‘Eating with Gentiles’?,” 301–18. In addition to the interpretations discussed on this issue, there are many other prevalent scholarly opinions concerning the issue(s) at Antioch in Gal 2:11–14. For example, scholars like Schmithals and Barton (*Paul and James*, 64–69), Betz (*Galatians*, 108), C. K. Barrett (*Freedom and Obligation: A Study of the Epistle to the Galatians* [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985], 13), and Eckhard J. Schnabel (*Early Christian Mission*, vol. 2 [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004], 1003–4) argue that the concept of Jew-Gentile separation is primary in the controversial episode of Antioch. Quite differently, Zetterholm (*The Formation of Christianity in Antioch*, 160–61) interprets the incident at Antioch in light of the eschatological concept present in the book of Galatians. Moreover, he infers that for James, the Christ advent did not transform Gentiles’ status, and the Gentile Christians should still be identified as God-fearers and obliged to observe the Jewish halakhic regulations. Therefore, James’s men required Peter and other Jewish Christians to separate from the mixed table-fellowship. Along similar lines, Joachim Gnilka (*Petrus Und Rom: Das Petrusbild in Den Ersten Zwei Jahrhunderten* [Freiburg, Germnay: Herder, 2002], 103) argues that the circumcision party explained to Peter that the Jerusalem contract puts him under obligation to strictly observe the customary Jewish religious norms, which included the practice of not eating with impure Gentiles at the same table-fellowship. Cf. Bauckham, “James, Peter, and the Gentiles,” 124–26. More recently, Gibson’s monograph (*Peter between Jerusalem and Antioch* [2013]) focuses on Peter’s character, in particular, to explore the possible beliefs and motivations behind his behavior over the table-fellowship with Gentiles.

stake."[62] According to Martyn, Peter's separation from Gentile believers at the mixed table-fellowship "proved contagious along ethnic lines" and thus diminished the believers' ethnic unity in diversity in Christ (Gal 3:28).[63] Martyn contends that Paul was not unaware of different socio-religious mixed table-fellowship practices that existed among Jewish and Gentile communities. He was not against these particular ethnic meal practices per se "so long as neither pattern was imposed outside its orb, thus implying that it was itself salvific (cf. 2 Cor 10:12–18)."[64] Therefore, Paul's rebuke to Peter was not intended to demand Peter to abandon his Jewish eating practices altogether since this would mean demeaning his Jewish socio-religious heritage. Instead, Paul objected to "a corporate walkout" of Peter and other Jewish believers. Peter's action "had the effect of compelling the Gentile members of the Antioch church to observe the food laws, as though that form of Law observance were God's elected means of making right what had gone wrong in the world."[65] In his overall apocalyptic reading of the Galatians text, Martyn highlights the priority of divine agency in rectifying or justifying the human agents through the faith of Jesus Christ and not through their observance of the Law. However, he does not directly relate the issue of divine-human agency with the mixed table-fellowship at Antioch, particularly in relation to the notion of ethnic identity.

The above discussion on the critical issues in Galatians 2:11–14 reveals that most scholars employ Second Temple Jewish literature to understand the socio-cultural-

---

[62] Martyn, *Galatians*, 240.

[63] Martyn, *Galatians*, 243.

[64] Martyn, *Galatians*, 244.

[65] Martyn, *Galatians*, 245. Along similar lines of interpretation, see also de Boer, *Galatians*, 31–36, 140, who reads the letter of Galatians through the lens of "apocalyptic eschatology" and claims that in the Antiochene conflict between the two apostles,

> Paul presents himself here as a paradigm for how Christ's death by crucifixion puts an end to the world determined by (works of) the law. The passage concludes with an argument for the absolute incompatibility of the law and the death of Christ in the manner of "justification" (*dikaiosynē*). On that argument, which is Paul's elaboration of the thesis found in 2:16, hangs Paul's entire theology in this letter.

religious context of Jew-Gentile social interactions over table-fellowship. Their selection and analysis of different Jewish ancient texts lead them to different interpretations of the issues at stake at Antioch.

Significance

As seen from the literature review above, scholarly proposals on "what was at stake at Antioch in Gal. 2:11–14" are legion. However, a few findings emerge.

About the issue of agency, many scholars have sought to explore the subject of divine and human agency in Paul's writings in light of contemporary Jewish and Hellenistic literary sources.[66] Furthermore, a few scholars have recently examined the notion of agency in Paul's letter to the Galatians, particularly in Paul's theological treatise that we find in Galatians 2:15–20.[67] However, the lack of exploration concerning the relationship between the Antioch incident and agency suggests a need for a study that offers a comprehensive analysis of the crisis at Antioch in Galatians 2:11–21 that

---

[66] Rudolf Bultmann, "The Problem of Ethics in Paul," in *Understanding Paul's Ethics: Twentieth Century Approaches*, ed. Brian S. Rosner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 196; Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III/3, *The Doctrine of Creation*, trans. G. W. Bromiley (London: T&T Clark, 1961), 3, 12; Stephen Westerholm, "Paul's Anthropological 'Pessimism' in Its Jewish Context," in Gathercole and Barclay, *Divine and Human Agency in Paul*, 71–98; Francis Watson, "Constructing an Antithesis: Pauline and Other Jewish Perspectives on Divine and Human Agency," in Gathercole and Barclay, *Divine and Human Agency in Paul*, 99–116; Troels Engberg-Pedersen, "Self-Sufficiency and Power: Divine and Human Agency in Epictetus and Paul," in Gathercole and Barclay, *Divine and Human Agency in Paul*, 117–39; Barclay, "'By the Grace of God I Am What I Am': Grace and Agency in Philo and Paul," in Gathercole and Barclay, *Divine and Human Agency in Paul*, 140–57; Simone Gathercole, "Sin in God's Economy: Agencies in Romans 1 and 7," in Gathercole and Barclay, *Divine and Human Agency in Paul*, 158–72; Preston M. Sprinkle and Stephen Westerholm, *Paul and Judaism Revisited: A Study of Divine and Human Agency in Salvation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013); Maston, *Divine and Human Agency*; Jeanette Hagen Pifer, *Faith as Participation: An Exegetical Study of Some Key Pauline Texts* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019), 29–33, 132–59, 222–23; Jarvis J. Williams, *For Whom Did Christ Die? The Extent of the Atonement in Paul's Theology*, Paternoster Biblical Monographs (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2012), 180–245; Kyle B. Wells, *Grace and Agency in Paul and Second Temple Judaism: Interpreting the Transformation of the Heart* (Leiden: Brill, 2015); Volker Rabens, "'Indicative and Imperative' as the Substructure of Paul's Theology-and-Ethics in Galatians? A Discussion of Divine and Human Agency in Paul," in *Galatians and Christian Theology: Justification, the Gospel, and Ethics in Paul's Letter*, ed. Mark W. Elliot et al. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 285–305; Simeon Zahl, "The Drama of Agency: Affective Augustinianism and Galatians," in Elliot et al., *Galatians and Christian Theology*, 335–52; Barclay, "Grace and Transformation of Agency in Christ," in *Redefining First-Century Jewish and Christian Identities: Essays in Honor of Ed Parish Sanders*, ed. E. P. Sanders et al. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 372–90.

[67] E.g., Maston, *Divine and Human Agency*, 4, 164, 124–25; Wells, *Grace and Agency*, 283, 298; Barclay, "Grace and Transformation of Agency in Christ," 379–80; Pifer, *Faith as Participation*, 155; Rabens, "'Indicative and Imperative'?," 285–305; Zahl, "The Drama of Agency," 335–52.

explicitly discusses the Antioch incident within the framework of divine and human agency.[68] Furthermore, I am unaware of any monograph or dissertation that analyzes Paul's remarks in Galatians 2:11–21 by setting his comments about agency in these verses. Also, to my knowledge, there is no scholarly work done that studies the Antioch incident in conversation with selected Second Temple Jewish texts and approaches Jewish and Gentile table-fellowship narratives in these texts in light of the relationship between divine and human agency.

My contribution does both. First and foremost, it fills a gap in the current discussion on the Antioch incident by asking the broader and more essential question about how Paul and Jewish authors in the Second Temple era understood the issue of divine and human agency in relation to the social practice of mixed table-fellowship between Jews and Gentiles. Second, my comparative analysis of Galatians 2:11–21 and Second Temple literature also contributes by illuminating the points at which Paul's understanding of identity and agency in Galatians 2:11–21 is similar to and different from selected Second Temple Jewish texts that contain table-fellowship narratives.

The contribution highlighted above may give rise to two possible questions that need to be addressed: First, one may ask whether there is a legitimate connection between the social practice of mixed table-fellowship and divine-human agency? Second, one may inquire that if there is any connection between mixed table-fellowship practices and agency, then why has New Testament scholarship not developed an association between these two entities?

To respond to the first concern, I acknowledge that the association developed between mixed table-fellowship and agency seems odd or artificial. However, my dissertation will argue that the relationship between mixed table-fellowship practices and

---

[68] I found only one academic monograph that related the divine-human agency concept to Gal 2:11–14; see Williams, *For Whom Did Christ Die?*, 226–27. However, due to its different argument, this monograph does not explore the relationship between agency and Gal 2:11–14 comprehensively.

agency is more direct than it appears when approached and understood in light of the nature of divine and human agency. Concerning the second reservation, I will argue that scholars have failed to recognize the connection between mixed table-fellowship and agency not because there can be no such relationship between these two entities. Instead, the reason for this lack of awareness of this connection lies somewhere else. I will argue that because most scholars have understood the mixed table-fellowship conflict at Antioch to be of a sociological rather than a soteriological nature,[69] they may have overlooked the relevance of divine and human agency in Galatians 2:11–14. Nevertheless, I will refute a false dichotomy established by scholars on this issue between the soteriological and sociological aspects of the Antiochene crisis. I consider this dichotomy to be artificial because, like the indicative-imperative paradigm in Paul's writings (Rom 12:1; 1 Cor 5:7; 6:9–10; Gal 5:1, 25; Phil 2:5, 12–13; 1 Thess 4:6), both sociological and soteriological aspects are intimately tied together in Paul's theology.

Argument

At a broader level, this study will focus on the relationship between divine and human agents in relation to the mixed table-fellowship conflict at Antioch in Galatians 2:11–21. I will present my argument by establishing the relationship between identity, agency, and mixed table-fellowship through a careful exegetical analysis of the crisis at Antioch in Galatians 2:11–21 in conversation with selected Second Temple Jewish texts. More specifically, this study will argue that Paul's and Second Temple Jews' understanding of the social practice of mixed table-fellowship between Jews and Gentiles signifies two conflicting notions of identity. These competing perceptions of identity, in turn, represent reliance on two different agents. One pattern of identity construction

[69] E.g., James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 355–62; N. T. Wright, *Justification: God's Plan & Paul's Vision* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 117; Todd Scacewater, "Galatians 2:11–21 and the Interpretive Context of 'Works of the Law'," *JETS* 56, no. 2 (2013): 308–9.

suggests the priority of human agency through certain socio-religious table-fellowship practices and restrictions. However, another pattern of identity-construction prioritizes the divine agency, which both redefines and transforms the believer's identity through Jesus's death and resurrection and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 2 will set a foundation for the argument that I intend to utilize later in my project by establishing the relationship between the social practice of meal-sharing and identity. Food ingestion and its sharing involve more than merely consuming calories; this phenomenon is a substantial means of identity construction. By developing a connection between a group's dietary practices and its identity, I will argue how table-fellowship norms and restrictions serve as a distinctive boundary marker that integrally functions to distinguish between "Us" and "Them," and thus ultimately creates a difference between insiders and outsiders. This chapter will show how one's identity is characterized by *what* and *with whom* one eats.[70]

Rosenblum claims that "stories about food practice . . . work together to establish narratives and rules that help to construct a distinct identity."[71] Thus, in chapter 3, I will focus on the narratives recorded in the ancient Jewish texts of the Second Temple period to explore how these stories function to establish a distinct Jewish identity at the mixed table-fellowship between Jews and Gentiles. I have chosen the narratives from Letter of Aristeas, Joseph and Aseneth, Judith, and Additions to Esther. I have chosen these particular ancient texts due to the broad range of table-fellowship practices

---

[70] That food and commensality practices construct a distinct identity on an individual as well as communal level is a well-established claim in the field of sociological and religious studies. See Jordan D. Rosenblum, *Food and Identity in Early Rabbinic Judaism*, 2–3, 15–16; Rosenblum, "Food and Identity in Early Rabbinic Judaism," 60; David M. Freidenreich, *Foreigners and Their Food: Constructing Otherness in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Law* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 4–10; David C. Kraemer, *Jewish Eating and Identity through the Ages* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2007), 1–3; Paul Erdkamp, "Jews and Christians at the Dinner Table: A Study in Social and Religious Interaction," *Food and History* 9, no. 2 (2012): 72–73. Cf. Claude Grignon, "Commensality and Social Morphology: An Essay of Typology," in *Food, Drink and Identity: Cooking, Eating and Drinking in Europe since the Middle Ages*, ed. Peter Scholliers (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 23–24; Mary Douglas, "Deciphering a Meal," in *Implicit Meanings: Selected Essays in Anthropology* (London: Routledge, 1975), 249.

[71] Rosenblum, "Food and Identity in Early Rabbinic Judaism," 59.

they represent between Jews and Gentiles. For instance, whereas some narratives portray Jews prioritizing their distinct Jewish identity by rejecting Gentile food (e.g., Let. Aris. and Jdt), other narratives highlight the Jewish identity's priority by abandoning Gentiles' company altogether (e.g., Jos. Asen.).[72]

In chapter 4, I will explore whether the perception of distinct Jewish identity over mixed table-fellowship between Jews and Gentiles relates to the issue of agency. And if it does relate, then in what manner? This section of the dissertation will argue that table-fellowship practices and restrictions of observant Diaspora Jews in the Second Temple period were grounded in the dietary laws found in the Torah. Furthermore, in establishing the relationship between Jewish identity and the Torah, this chapter will demonstrate that the Torah played a significant role in defining and constructing distinct Jewish identity in the Second Temple period. The strict observation of the socio-religious dietary and commensality practices based on the Torah will suggest an active role of the human agent (i.e., the priority of human agency) in constructing a distinct Jewish identity.[73]

---

[72] Concerning these Jewish texts, I will also highlight two important things: First, in proposing this argument, I am not proclaiming that all Jewish table-fellowship customs and restrictions were monolithic, since different narratives show different levels of Jewish assimilation or segregation over the table-fellowship with their Gentile contemporaries. What I essentially intend to argue is that despite a broad range of Jew-Gentile eating practices, the issue of distinct Jewish identity remained an underlying concern for observant Diaspora Jews. Second, in making this argument, I will be suggesting neither that the issue of table-fellowship, along with its regulations, is the only way that one can comprehend the notion of distinct Jewish identity nor that that this specific socio-cultural practice can be disconnected from other distinctive Jewish identity-markers. Certainly, there are many other avenues (e.g., the Sabbath, circumcision, the temple) that might contribute to gaining insight into Jewish identity. However, I am focusing only on this particular practice, first, because of my own interest in this area and, second, because the theme of table-fellowship deserves a comprehensive analysis. I agree with Kraemer (*Jewish Eating and Identity through the Ages*, 8), who also thinks that this subject "has been neglected, and for that reason it merits an extended and dedicated study." Furthermore, in my exegesis of the Second Temple Jewish texts, I will not attempt to resolve all chronological, dating, literary, and theological issues related and will only focus on my thesis's conceptual idea.

[73] Note that with respect to the issue of agency, I do not claim that divine agency is completely absent in the Jewish literary sources, since Torah and its observance were sanctioned by God himself (divine agency). What I will be arguing for, however, is that Jewish table-fellowship practices in these narratives under consideration center on the human agent and thus prioritize human agency.

The next section of my research project will focus on the Galatians text. Due to divergent and contentious scholarly opinions on the issues found in Galatians 2:11–21 (highlighted in the section on "summary of research" above), in chapter 5, first of all, I will address the exegetical and contextual matters in the biblical passage at hand, which will be relevant to my thesis. Then, I will explain how the crisis at Antioch in Galatians 2:11–14 relates deeply to the theme of identity.[74] In "Jewish versus Christian Identity in the Early Church," Bengt Holmberg states, "The Antioch incident (Gal. 2:11–21) reveals a conflict in the early church about how it should relate to its Jewish identity."[75] That is, the key issue at Antioch entails the conflict between two different identities.[76] In this regard, the conflict between Paul and Peter at Antioch represents a clash between two conflicting notions of identity.[77]

---

[74] The summary of historical research above has shown how exegetes have attempted to interpret the incident at Antioch in several ways using different methodologies. However, one of the interpretive lenses that is utilized to comprehend the Antiochene crisis is the theme of identity that is prevalent in the letter to the Galatians. Highlighting believers' redefined and transformed identity in Christ, Paul tells his Galatian readers that they are "redeemed" (1:4) and "called" people of God (1:6). They have been justified by faith and not by works of the law (2:16), have died to the law (2:19), and have been crucified with Christ; thus, they live their earthly life by putting their faith in Jesus Christ, who has loved and delivered them (2:20). Through their faith in Jesus, the Galatians have been identified as sons of Abraham (3:9) and enjoy Abrahamic blessings (3:14) and have been freed from the curse of the law through Jesus, who took the curse upon himself (3:13). They are neither the law's prisoners (3:22–23) nor under its supervision (3:25); instead, they are now sons of God through their faith in Jesus (3:26). Their identity is no more based on their ethnicity, gender, or race; rather, they have been united in Christ Jesus (3:28). Now belonging to Christ, they are Abraham's "seed" and "heirs" according to the promise (3:29) and thus adopted sons of God (4:4–6) who have been liberated from the law's bondage (4:5). Moreover, they are not slaves anymore to false gods (4:7–8) but have been proclaimed sons of God (4:7). Like Isaac, they are children of promise (4:48) and of the free woman (4:31), whose identity is not defined by old religious rituals (5:6a). Instead, they live by the Spirit (5:16) by crucifying their "sinful nature along with its passions and desires" (5:24). To the Galatian believers, their new creation should matter the most since that is their identity in Christ (6:15).

[75] Holmberg, "Jewish versus Christian Identity in the Early Church?," 397.

[76] Many scholars have pinpointed the significant role that the theme of identity plays in the Antiochene crisis at the mixed table-fellowship. See Asano, *Community-Identity Construction in Galatians*, 116–46; Asano, "Galatians 2.11–14 as Depiction of the Church's Early Struggle for Community-Identity Construction," in Tucker and Coleman, *T&T Clark Handbook to Social Identity in the New Testament*, 311–31; Holmberg, "Jewish versus Christian Identity in the Early Church?"; Esler, *Galatians*, 37–38; Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts*, 87–89; Nanos, "What Was at Stake in Peter's 'Eating with Gentiles'?," 303–18; Nanos, "The Question of Conceptualization: Qualifying Paul's Position on Circumcision in Dialogue with Josephus's Advisors to King Izates," in *Paul within Judaism: Restoring the First-Century Context to the Apostle*, ed. Mark D. Nanos and Magnus Zetterholm (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 150; Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 367–70; Robert Jewett, "Gospel and Commensality: Social and Theological Implications of Galatians 2.14," in *Gospel in Paul: Studies on Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans for Richard N. Longenecker*, ed. L. Ann Jervis and Peter Richardson, *JSNT*Sup 108 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 240–52; Dragutin Matak, "Another Look at the Antioch Incident

In chapter 6, I will argue that what Paul says concerning the believer's identity in Galatians 2:11–21 gives insight into the divine and human agency. Here, I will demonstrate how Paul stresses the divine agent's role in Galatians 2:11–21.[78] Furthermore, I will argue that Peter's behavior over the mixed table-fellowship (Gal 2:12) resembles certain Jews of the Second Temple period who would also avoid eating with Gentiles to accentuate their distinct Jewish identity.[79] In this way, from Paul's perspective, Peter's action at Antioch gave rise to Jew-Gentile disharmony and thus minimized the divine action in Christ. Through Jesus's death and resurrection, God has

---

(Gal 2:11–14)," 57; Cornelis Bennema, "The Ethnic Conflict in Early Christianity: An Appraisal of Bauckham's Proposal on the Antioch Crisis and the Jerusalem Council," *JETS* 57, no. 4 (2013): 762–63; Jae Won Lee, *Paul and the Politics of Difference: A Contextual Study of the Jewish-Gentile Difference in Galatians and Romans* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014), 107–35.

[77] E.g., highlighting the conflict between two different ideologies with regard to community-identity at Antioch, Asano (*Community-Identity Construction in Galatians*, 146) points out that "negotiations at ethnic boundaries always presupposed a core commitment to cultural values and behaviors" and that this religious allegiance would have resulted in classifying "Gentile believers as second-class citizens." Therefore, from Paul's perspective, the incident at Antioch depicts "an epitome of the incoherence of community-identity construction based upon a core ethnic sentiment." Furthermore, Barclay (*Paul and the Gift*, 369), exegeting the incident through the concept of "incongruous grace," claims that the divine grace through the Christ-event has affected how Jews and Gentiles relate to each other. According to him, the criteria of who belongs to God and the Christ-community (i.e., believers' identity) have been redefined by God's grace through the Christ-event. One's identity in Christ supersedes all religious and ethnic barriers. Hence, the issue of division over the table-fellowship at Antioch should be understood in light of this socio-theological reality. Along similar lines, Holmberg ("Jewish versus Christian Identity in the Early Church?," 411–14) also considers the conflict at Antioch as signifying "two competing views on the identity of the Christian church." Holmberg asserts that Peter's and other Jewish Christians' withdrawal from the table-fellowship at Antioch clearly demonstrates that all Jewish Christians prioritized their Jewish identity over fellowship with their Gentile brothers in Christ. Paul alone, however, stood up against such an attitude adopted by Peter and his Jewish fellows showing his co-religionists that how "their assertion was manifestly wrong, and must cede to the manifestation of a common Christian identity in the name of the truth." Cf. Nanos ("What Was at Stake in Peter's 'Eating with Gentiles'?," 314), who also notes and highlights the language and theme of identity in Paul's usage of "living" (Gal 2:15–21) and remarks that Paul's rebuke was appropriate because Peter's act of separation form Gentiles at Antioch was "based on his *privileging* of Jewish identity."

[78] In my argument, I am not suggesting that Paul sets divine and human agency in opposition. However, I will argue that in comparison with some of his fellows Jews, Paul's rebuke to Peter (Gal 2:11–14) and his analysis of the mixed table-fellowship conflict at Antioch (2:15–21) do prioritize divine action by de-emphasizing the role of distinct Jewish identity prioritized by the human agent in defining people's relationship with God. Put differently, I will propose that the way Paul's theology in Gal 2:11–21 prioritized divine agency at the table-fellowship conflict in Antioch is not seen in some of the Second Temple Jewish texts.

[79] Paul's theological discourse in Gal 2:11–21 describes Peter's action as not in alignment "with the truth of the gospel" (οὐκ ὀρθοποδοῦσιν πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου; v. 14), suggestive of forcing Gentile believers to Judaize (τὰ ἔθνη ἀναγκάζεις Ἰουδαΐζειν; v. 15) and signifying justification "by works of the law" (οὐ δικαιοῦται ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ἔργων νόμου; v. 16).

broken the walls of ethnic discrimination between Jews and Gentiles erected by the Torah. However, Paul's disapproval of Peter's separation from the table-fellowship with Gentiles (2:11, 14b) suggests that he (i.e., Paul) prioritized God's salvific action in Christ (divine agency). Paul's theological remarks on this incident (2:14–21, 19, 20; 3:5, 9, 13–14, 22–23, 25–29; 4:4–9, 28, 31; 5:13, 16; 6:14b, 15) validated how God's action has both subverted the previous mode of socio-religious ethnic identity based on the Torah and redefined the believer's identity through Jesus's death and resurrection and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.[80]

In chapter 7, after summarizing my arguments and making inferences, I will present a comparative analysis of Paul (Gal 2:11–21) and selected Second Temple Jewish texts. Employing exegetical conclusions from chapters 3–6, I will explore the points where Paul is similar to and different from Jewish texts of the Second Temple period in his understanding of identity as they relate to divine and human agency. Additionally, in this concluding chapter, I will offer this project's significance in Pauline studies. Moreover, to apply this research to my indigenous context, I will briefly reflect on the identity crisis that Pakistani Christians face living as a minority group in an Islamic country.

---

[80] In examining Paul's understanding of believers' new identity in Christ, I will not be suggesting that Paul seeks to eradicate believers' particular ethnic identity altogether. In other words, it would be wrong to assume that Paul would expect American Christians or Asian Christians to cease to be Americans or Asians after putting their faith in Jesus Christ. Rather, what I will be arguing is that whereas Paul would allow ethnic distinctions within the Christian community, he would not allow these ethnic distinctions to become the cause of discrimination. William S. Campbell (*Paul and the Creation of Christian Identity* [New York: T&T Clark, 2008], 7, 156) presents the same idea by stating, "The Christian community for Paul is a place where ethnic distinctions are recognized whilst not being permitted to become a means of discrimination." Campbell calls this retaining of ethnic identity a believer's "particularity." Describing the nuance between a believer's particularity and transformation in identity, Campbell asserts that when a believer puts his faith in Jesus and thus becomes a part of the Christ-community, his "particularity is retained but transformed through the relationship, yet only as a transformation of particular identity rather than a replacement of it. Thus, despite the fact that Christian identity is a Christ-defined identity, to be in Christ is to retain one's particularity whether as a Jew or as a gentile, and diversity is thereby demonstrated as normative for the body of Christ."

CHAPTER 2

FOOD, TABLE-FELLOWSHIP, AND IDENTITY: YOU ARE WHAT AND WITH WHOM YOU EAT

In 1826, the French lawyer Anthelme Brillat-Savarin stated, "Dis-moi ce que tu manges, je te dirai ce que tu es" ("Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you what you are").[1] Implied in this famous maxim is a declaration about the relationship between food and identity. How is it possible that a mere act of choosing what to eat or not eat reveals something about a person's identity? This chapter will argue that food (*what we eat*) and commensality (*with whom we eat*) function to construct and sustain our distinct individual and communal identity. Furthermore, I will discuss how Jewish eating practices through the ages relate directly to and serve as an expression of distinct Jewish identity.

Defining the Term "Identity"

The theme of identity plays an important role in my overall argument. However, since this term is so broad and employed and defined in various ways in different theories, it will be helpful to explain what I mean or do not mean by this term. Hence, it is necessary to briefly define and address the notion of identity as it will be used in this study.[2]

---

[1] Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, *Physiologie du Gou^t: Premi`ere E´dition Mise Ordre et Annot´ee avec une Lecture de Roland Barthes* (Paris: Hermann, 1975), 37; translation from *The Physiology of Taste, or, Meditations on Transcendental Gastronomy*, trans. M. F. K. Fisher (New York: Heritage Press, 1949), 1.

[2] Certainly, the theme of identity is way more comprehensive and controversial than can be discussed here. Therefore, for a thorough survey of differing theories and approaches on identity, see J. C. Turner, "Some Current Issues in Research on Social Identity and Self-Categorization Theories," in *Social Identity: Context, Commitment, Content*, ed. Naomi Ellemers, Russell Spears, and Bertjan Doosje (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 6–34; Jan E. Stets and Peter J. Burke, "Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory," *Social Psychology Quarterly* 63, no. 3 (2000): 224–37; Henri Tajfel, *Human Groups and Social*

Because of its usage in current socio-cultural, historical, political, and religious aspects of life, the term identity has taken a multitude of divergent and complex connotations. Thus, in the plethora of descriptions and meanings of the term, it becomes difficult to ascertain what one precisely means by it. Since the concept of identity and its understanding plays an essential role in my argument, it is necessary to define and clarify how I will be using this term for my project.

One must acknowledge that identity and its role and operation in human societies is a complex subject. At its basic level, identity offers an individual or community "a recognizable social profile."[3] Furthermore, it informs our and others' perception of us (i.e., "who we are") and serves to differentiate us from "who they are."[4] In *The Value of Difference*, describing the term identity in a more nuanced way, J. Weeks writes,

> Identity is about belonging, about what you have in common with some people and what differentiates you from others. At its most basic level it gives you a sense of personal location, the stable core to your individuality. But it is also about your relationships, your complex involvement with others and in the modern world these have become even more complex and confusing . . . . At the center, however, are the values we share or wish to share with others.[5]

Describing identity at a basic level, Weeks perceives it as an entity that

---

Categories: Studies in Social Psychology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Philip Francis Esler, *Galatians*, New Testament Readings (London: Routledge, 1998), 40–57; A. Sue Russell, "A Genealogy of Social Identity Theory," in *T&T Clark Social Identity Commentary on the New Testament*, ed. J. Brian Tucker and Aaron Kuecker (New York: Bloomsbury, 2020), 1–24; Maykel Verkuyten, *The Social Psychology of Ethnic Identity* (Hove, UK: Psychology Press, 2005). More particularly, the notion of group identity and its formation has also received scholarly attention within the field of New Testament studies. For instance, to explore a range of approaches and how they are applied differently than the theme of identity in New Testament studies, see Bengt Holmberg, "Understanding the First Hundred Years of Christian Identity," in *Exploring Early Christian Identity*, ed. Bengt Holmberg (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 1–32; Bengt Holmberg and Mikael Winninge, eds., *Identity Formation in the New Testament* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008); Paul Trebilco, *Self-Designations and Group Identity in the New Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[3] Esther Kobel, *Dining with John: Communal Meals and Identity Formation in the Fourth Gospel and Its Historical and Cultural Context* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 33.

[4] Philip A. Harland, *Dynamics of Identity in the World of the Early Christians* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2009), 6.

[5] J. Weeks, "The Value of Difference," in *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. J. Rutherford (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990), 88.

simultaneously communicates *sharing* and *separation* of people regarding their sense of belonging to a particular society. When a person or a social group dwells among hundreds and thousands of nations and tribes, that person's (or social group's) identity creates an imaginary circular boundary for him (or it). Identity tells him who is *inside* (i.e., those with whom he can share his social, cultural, and ethical values) and who is *outside* (i.e., those with whom he cannot share all of these things).

In New Testament studies, scholars, in the past two decades, have approached the subject of identity in light of the "Social Identity Theory" (SIT) model for interpreting the New Testament (NT) writings. This social-scientific model is employed as a hermeneutical tool in interpreting the New Testament literature for two reasons. First, its primary aim is to acknowledge the cultural difference between the reader of the biblical text and the ancient Mediterranean world. And secondly, it fills that cultural gap through socio-anthropological observations from the ancient world.[6]

The model of 'Social Identity Theory' was first introduced by Henri Tajfel and John C. Turner in one of the essays titled as "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict."[7] This theory seeks to understand the notion of an individual's identity by placing it in the context of group identity and how it distinguishes itself from other communal groups. Based on some of the social experiments that he conducted among small groups, Tajfel suggested that a sense of distinctiveness in a social group and its members not only brings cohesiveness within a social group and its members. But it also gives rise to the phenomenon of social conflict. The conflict among different groups results from the mental and behavioral differences of the group members within each group.

---

[6] Philip F. Esler, *Galatians*, New Testament Readings (New York: Routledge, 1998), 3–5.

[7] Henri Tajfel and John Turner, "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict," in *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, ed. W. G. Austin and S. Worchel (Monterey, CA: Brooks-Cole, 1979), 33–47.

Among prominent NT scholars, Philip Esler has employed the SIT model in his interpretation of biblical texts. Esler heavily relies on Tajfel's work and understands the SIT model as a social concept that "deals with group belonging, but since it involves not merely a person's knowledge of a group's attributes but has self-evaluative consequences, it is also psychological."[8] In highlighting the relevance of the SIT model in the interpretation of Paul's letter to the Galatians, Esler writes:

> Paul is concerned with maintaining the distinctive identity of his congregations in relation to the Israelite and gentile outgroups. Moreover, he wishes to defend their distinctiveness not so much by reminding them of the fact of their membership (the cognitive dimension) as by developing the evaluative dimension through drawing out the positive aspects of belonging to the ingroup which accepts his version of the gospel as compared with the negatively evaluated outgroups.[9]

According to Esler, Paul's main point and concern(s) can be understood better if they are viewed through the lens of the SIT model. Esler argues that, in Galatians, Paul's remarks that he makes to address the issues in his congregations at Galatia are comparative and evaluative in nature, signifying the comparison and conflict between two groups (namely, Jewish and Gentile groups of believers).[10]

Despite the SIT model's contribution and significance in the field of New Testament studies, I do not intend to use and apply the term "identity" to my research in the way that the SIT model understands it. I have some reservations towards this sociological model similar to those of John M. G. Barclay. On this issue, Barclay contends that New Testament scholarship tends to impose the contemporary sociological analysis developed within the framework of the SIT model on the ancient biblical texts. For example, referring to Philip Esler's utilization of "social identity theory" in his

---

[8] Esler, *Galatians*, 43.

[9] Esler, *Galatians*, 42–43.

[10] Esler, *Galatians*, 43. For an overview of the SIT model and its application to biblical interpretation, see Coleman A. Baker, "Social Identity Theory and Biblical Interpretation," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 42, no. 3 (2012): 129–38; Philip Esler, "An Outline of Social Identity Theory," in *T&T Clark Handbook to Social Identity in the New Testament*, ed. J. Brian Tucker and Coleman A. Baker (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 13–39; Esler, *Galatians*, 40–57.

commentaries on Galatians and Romans, Barclay writes, "This form of social analysis is based on necessarily artificial experiments on modern subjects, and its applicability across time and culture is extremely uncertain."[11]

In contrast to SIT's definition of "identity," the way I will define and use the term in my dissertation is heavily influenced by the work of Jordan D. Rosenblum, whose conceptualization of identity is more relevant to my project and less complicated compared to the definition proposed by the SIT model.

According to Rosenblum, identity is an essential aspect of a person's life formed by practices.[12] That is, one's identity directly corresponds to one's practices. Acknowledging that a particular set of beliefs one holds is central to one's distinct identity, I assert that, notwithstanding their importance, beliefs alone do not characterize one's distinct identity. Our practices equally define our distinctive identity. While a person's beliefs make him distinct on an abstract level, the practices carried out by him make him distinct in a more concrete way. Moreover, if one's beliefs are not expressed through one's practices or actions, then a person's identity is left shallow.

Nevertheless, the question is, how are we to understand practices? Developing a relationship between identity and practices, Rosenblum defines practices as "bundled sets of social activities that allow one to signal overtly his or her perceived relationship to a given identity."[13] That is, "who you are" (i.e., one's perceived identity) is ultimately determined not only by one's beliefs but primarily by "what you do" (i.e., the social practices in which one engages). To illustrate, Rosenblum says that one might inform another in a textual form that he or she is an opera fan, which might sound fascinating

---

[11] Barclay, *Pauline Churches and Diaspora Jews* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 7n10.

[12] Jordan D. Rosenblum, "Food and Identity in Early Rabbinic Judaism," in *Meals in Early Judaism: Social Formation at the Table*, ed. Susan Marks and Hal Taussig (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 59.

[13] Rosenblum, "Food and Identity in Early Rabbinic Judaism," 59.

and impressive to the reader of the text. However, this textual statement is meaningless if the person who asserts this idea does not "buy opera recordings, never visit[s] an opera house, never read[s] opera scores, etc."[14] A person's mere words (either spoken or written) do not signify anything since he does not practically engage in what he verbally proclaims for himself (i.e., his identity). Therefore, one's individual or group identity in relation to his practices seeks "to close the gap between texts and their lived contexts, between words and actions."[15] Furthermore, Rosenblum proposes that practices (whether social or religious) function to bridge the gap between "the words one utters and ascribes about his/her actions ('sayings'/professing a love for opera) and the actual actions themselves ('doings'/engaging in opera-related activities) in the construction of self- and group identification."[16]

The biblical data also validates the relationship between identity and practices highlighted above. For instance, the New Testament writings repeatedly admonish believers that their Christian identity is not based merely on the set of beliefs they hold but also on what they practice or whether they do what they believe (Matt 7:21–27; Rom 6:8–14, 8:5–8; Gal 5:16–26; Eph 2:8–10; 4:17–32; Col 3:5–14; Jam 2:14–26). Merely learning and knowledge in Christian life is insufficient unless they manifest themselves in the believer's behavior, which is evident in Paul's instruction to Philippians 4:9, where Paul writes, "Whatever you have learned, or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice." The verb "practice" (πράσσω) used here as a present active

---

[14] Rosenblum, "Food and Identity in Early Rabbinic Judaism," 60.

[15] Rosenblum, "Food and Identity in Early Rabbinic Judaism," 60.

[16] Rosenblum, "Food and Identity in Early Rabbinic Judaism," 60. For further references, see Jordan D. Rosenblum, "Food and Identity in Early Rabbinic Judaism," in Meals in Early Judaism: Social Formation at the Table, ed. Susan Marks and Hal Taussig (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 59–60; cf. Rosenblum, Food and Identity in Early Rabbinic Judaism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 5–7. Rosenblum himself heavily depends on the work of Theodore R. Schatzki, The Site of the Social: A Philosophical Account of the Constitution of Social Life and Change (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 47, 50–51, 70–88.

imperative means "to bring about or accomplish something through activity."[17] This reference indicates an association between Christian beliefs and behavior. Beliefs and behavior go hand in hand, playing a vital role in the believer's identity. Christian doctrines or beliefs shape believers' identity in Christ more effectively when aligned with Christian ethical, moral, and religious practices.[18]

One may inquire why it is crucial to conceptualize identity in terms of practice. For my project, there are two main reasons for focusing on identity in relation to practice. First, as pointed out by Rosenblum, in the analysis of textual data, it is possible to perceive identity "as being merely constituted by words or as being a purely discursive affair."[19] However, when texts prescribe something to their intended readers, they do not merely propose an "empty rhetoric."[20] Instead, they ultimately aim to develop in their audience "a bundled set of social activities—a practice—that constructs, in part, a discrete identity."[21] Second, practices (whether cultural, moral, or religious) constitute social structures. In other words, any specific society's practices offer an understanding of both its distinct identity and how it operates.[22] Practices provide people in a society an avenue to enhance social interactions with each other. Thus, when texts offer their

---

[17] BDAG, 860.

[18] See Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin (*Philippians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 43 [Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004], 253), who comment that Paul's conviction was that "the truths of the Christian gospel must never be abstracted from action and out into highly-toned words and phrases but must always be expressed in the life of the teacher." Along similar lines, highlighting the importance of actions in Christian life, George Hunsinger (*Philippians*, Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible [Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2020], 156) says, "The *vita contemplativa* is fulfilled in the *vita activa*. Contemplation is not perfected without action."

[19] Jordan D. Rosenblum, *Food and Identity in Early Rabbinic Judaism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 5.

[20] Rosenblum, *Food and Identity in Early Rabbinic Judaism*, 5.

[21] Rosenblum, *Food and Identity in Early Rabbinic Judaism*, 5. For his understanding of identity and practice, Rosenblum follows Theodore R. Schatzki, *The Site of the Social: A Philosophical Account of the Constitution of Social Life and Change* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), 70–88.

[22] Rosenblum, *Food and Identity in Early Rabbinic Judaism*, 6; cf. Schatzki, *The Site of the Social*, 89–105.

intended readers prescriptions, the prescriptions are not an end in themselves. Instead, they aim to establish practices in their readers that eventually construct a distinct identity for them.[23]

Keeping in mind the above remarks concerning identity and practice, I will argue throughout this study that the establishment and priority of distinct Jewish *identity* are directly interlinked with the *practices* over mixed table-fellowship in the Jewish texts.

Sociological Significance of Food and Table-Fellowship Practices in Identity Construction

Although many things distinguish humankind from animals (e.g., rationality, relationality), one of the differences between humans and animals is their eating practices. That is, *what* we eat, *with whom* we eat, and *how* we eat largely differentiates us from other animal species.[24] Our cooked food, chosen among the foods that nature offers us; our sharing of that food with families and friends; and our manner of enjoying that food around the table with lively conversations and appropriate etiquette demonstrate our distinct human identity. In other words, "Peoples' eating habits somehow express who they are."[25] Our experiential knowledge also affirms this observation. We would not be wrong in assuming that a man is Italian if he eats noodles fully dipped in tomato sauce every day. Likewise, our guess would be correct that someone is either a Muslim or a Jew living in the West if he seeks a kosher food market in his neighborhood. Thus, though often stereotyped, based on a person's food habits, one can come up with a rough hint of that person's ethnic, cultural, or religious identity.[26] It is important to mention that

---

[23] Rosenblum, *Food and Identity in Early Rabbinic Judaism*, 6.

[24] Jean-Louis Flandrin and Massimo Montanari, *Food: A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present*, trans. Albert Sonnenfeld (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 33.

[25] David C. Kraemer, *Jewish Eating and Identity through the Ages* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2007), 1.

[26] Kraemer, *Jewish Eating and Identity through the Ages*, 1–2.

although I argue in this chapter for the implicit relationship between food and table-fellowship practices, I do not claim that regular dietary habits are the only and definitive mode of exploring one's identity. Instead, I argue that one's dietary choices are among the significant factors that speak volumes regarding one's social, ethnic, and religious identity.

Cooking and eating are as crucial in human life as a human language since both mediums express social and cultural norms. Like any given language serves to express an individual's or a culture's distinctiveness, food customs—the way food is chosen, eaten, served, and shared with others—are a language used by individuals or societies to communicate their discrete identity and distinctive way of life.[27] According to Jean Soler, there exists a connection between people's food choices and their understanding of the world.[28] Indeed, food provides humans biological sustenance as a source of nourishment. However, its role cannot be confined to this end in human life. Another feature of food is *sharing*. In other words, food is not only *consumed* for calories, but it also *connects* individuals, families, communities, and societies. The act of eating food and sharing it with others entails a social act between humans.[29]

Furthermore, according to David M. Freidenreich, due to its essentiality in human life, food "serves as a powerful medium for the expression and transmission of culture, and more specifically, of communal identity."[30] Both food (i.e., the choices one

---

[27] Veronika E. Grimm, *From Feasting to Fasting, the Evolution of a Sin: Attitudes to Food in Late Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 1996), 3.

[28] Jean Soler, "The Semiotics of Food in the Bible," in *Food and Drink in History: Selections from the Annales: Economies, Societies, Civilizations*, vol. 5, ed. R. Foster and O. Ranum (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1979), 126.

[29] Grimm, *From Feasting to Fasting*, 3.

[30] David M. Freidenreich, *Foreigners and Their Food: Constructing Otherness in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Law* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 4. W. Robert Smith (*The Religion of the Semites: The Fundamental Institution* [New York: Meridian Books, 1957], 269) shares the same ideology concerning the social aspect of food by stating, "The very act of eating and drinking with a man was a symbol and confirmation of fellowship and mutual social obligation . . . . Those who sit at meal

makes concerning what to eat and what to avoid) and commensality (i.e., with whom one can or cannot eat) powerfully communicate one's individual and communal identity. Furthermore, it is interesting to reflect upon the fact that while humankind at large has the option to choose from literally thousands of food items, different individuals or societies decide to choose from a relatively small set of food items. Why do certain communal groups eat cow or lamb meat but detest the idea of consuming dog meat? Why is eating a chicken's wings appropriate but eating its eyes is not?[31] Along similar lines, decisions about the suitable company at the food table are not arbitrary. Specific customs of any given society concerning eating or not eating with "others" divide the world into two. Therefore, in light of this social reality, Rosenblum describes food and table-fellowship as "a locus for identity negotiation."[32]

The decision that individuals or communal groups make concerning their eating habits highlights two critical features: First, it marks the social cohesiveness or bonding among them to demonstrate their distinct identity.[33] For example, illustrating how specific food customs of a particular culture characterize its distinct identity, Rosenblum writes,

> American identity is, at least in part, derived from one's participation in certain commensal practices, such as ingesting turkey, stuffing, cranberry sauce, and the like on the fourth Thursday of November (Thanksgiving); attending a barbecue, eating hot dogs, and watching fireworks on July 4 (Independence Day); consuming apple pie; and eating "peanuts and Cracker Jacks" at a baseball game, to name a few. To engage in these bundled sets of social activities is, in some sense, to perform an American identity.[34]

In this example, the choice and consumption of specific food items and their sharing

---

together are united for all social affects; those who do not eat together are aliens to one another without fellowship in religion and without reciprocal social duties."

[31] Safran Foer, *Eating Animals* (New York: Back Bay Boys, 2010), 12.

[32] Rosenblum, *Food and Identity in Early Rabbinic Judaism*, 2.

[33] Freidenreich, *Foreigners and Their Food*, 4.

[34] Rosenblum, *Food and Identity in Early Rabbinic Judaism*, 6.

demonstrate individuals' membership in the American culture.

Second, in addition to defining social bonding, the choice of culinary and commensality also functions to characterize human beings' distinctiveness, signifying how they are different from others. For instance, when a Muslim makes a statement that "Americans eat pork, but we do not," such a declaration reflects a Muslim person's perception of his own distinct identity and of Americans' identity in relation to food.[35] However, it is important to keep in mind that not all food and commensality choices depict a discrete identity. To illustrate, a prohibition to a kid not to swallow worms neither assigns a child to a particular social group nor adds any distinctive feature to his existence. Such choices simply convey a general common-sense principle of not consuming food that is considered uncivilized. Nevertheless, the situation changes completely if a Muslim parent disapproves of his or her son's behavior of eating pork while living in the United States. In this case, a child is involved in eating something that is not "Theirs" (i.e., Muslims' identity).[36]

In pointing out the nuances in food and commensality choices, Freidenreich rightly asserts, "A statement about Our food practices is only a marker of communal identity when accompanied, explicitly or implicitly, by a contrast with their food practices."[37] In other words, the identity-marking function of food and table-fellowship practices makes a particular statement about "Our" identity in the context where it is

---

[35] Freidenreich, *Foreigners and Their Food*, 5.

[36] Freidenreich, *Foreigners and Their Food*, 5.

[37] Freidenreich, *Foreigners and Their Food*, 5. See also Kraemer (*Jewish Eating and Identity Through the Ages*, 3), who makes the same point by using the example of pork eating in the Jewish context. He explains that from the perspective of Jews and Gentiles, pork is a non-Jewish food. The intentional consumption of pork by a Jew in private will charge him as a law-breaker. Moreover, if a Jew eats pork in the presence of non-Jews, he can be as guilty as an apostate. Thus, eating or not eating pork will provide a statement about distinct Jewish identity in the context of Gentiles. However, a decision about pork consumption would not completely distinguish Jews from non-Jews in a Muslim country where pork is already prohibited on religious grounds. Kraemer proposes that in such scenarios, "one would have had to look for subtler evidence of Jew's eating practices, such as the separation of meat and dairy." Therefore, food and commensality choices function as distinctive identity-markers in specific socio-cultural-religious contexts.

being contrasted with "Their" identity. Even with some nuances and complexities of understanding identity about food and its sharing, it may safely be claimed that, on a general level, the deliberate decisions and choices individuals or communities make concerning their eating practices and patterns distinguish their identity from that of outsiders. Sociologists, anthropologists, and psychologists have highlighted various social, cultural, and ethical aspects of food and commensality practices that go beyond mere fulfillment of biological need: food and table-fellowship practices symbolize the initiation and maintenance of social interrelationships; the expression of social bonding, care, and concern; the distinctness of a social group; the sense of belonging to a particular community; the social and financial status in the society; the emotional experience; the relationship between humans and deity; and so on.[38] To sum up, food and commensality practices act as a highly significant locus for an individual and social group's identity that simultaneously creates a sense of a shared bond within the group and distinguishes them from others outside the group.[39]

Food Practices and Jewish Identity

A brief survey of the literature on the significance of food and commensal practices in relation to identity in the ancient world shows that this social practice was prominent in society.[40] Although in the past, this subject gained less interest within the

---

[38] Grimm, *From Feasting to Fasting*, 5.

[39] The following list is representative of secondary literature that that has sought to explore the sociological importance of food and eating practices in the formation of individual and group identity: Claude Fischler, "Food, Self and Identity," *Anthropology of Food* 27, no. 275 (1988): 275–92; Margaret Visser, *The Rituals of Dinner: The Origins, Evolution, Eccentricities, and Meaning of Table Manners* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1991), 2; Peter Scholliers, "Meals, Food Narratives, and Sentiments of Belonging in Past and Present," in *Food, Drink and Identity: Cooking, Eating and Drinking in Europe since the Middle Ages*, ed. Peter Scholliers (New York: Berg, 2001), 3–22; Claude Grignon, "Commensality and Social Morphology: An Essay of Typology," in Scholliers, *Food, Drink and Identity*; Susanne Kerner, Cynthia Chou, and Morten Warmind, eds., *Commensality: From Everyday Food to Feast* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2015); Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik, eds., *Food and Culture: A Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2013); Mary Douglas, "Deciphering a Meal," in *Implicit Meanings: Essays in Anthropology* (London: Routledge, 1975), 249.

[40] Peter Garnsey, *Food and Society in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Flandrin and Montanari, *Food*; John Wilkins, F. David Harvey, and Michael J. Dobson, eds.,

biblical studies, recently, it began to gain attention in the scholarly discussions where sociologists, anthropologists, exegetes, and historians have sought to investigate the origins, role, and practices related to food and commensality in the Old and New Testament.[41]

While it remains true that eating practices play a significant role in every individual's and society's life, Carlo Petrini, in *Global Jewish Foodways: A History*, rightly notes that "some cultures and some peoples place greater emphasis, sanctity, and importance on food, because historical circumstances forced them to do so. In some historical and cultural contexts, food emerged as central to their narratives of identity and spirituality."[42] In this regard, the Jewish community stands out. In antiquity, Jewish food choices and table-fellowship practices became a primary key in understanding both Jews' distinct identity and their relationship with God. Discussing the boundaries established in different ways around the Jewish community, Shaye J. D. Cohen writes,

---

Food in Antiquity (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1995); John F. Donahue, *Food and Drink in Antiquity: A Sourcebook: Readings from the Graeco-Roman World*, Bloomsbury Sources in Ancient History (New York: Bloomsbury, 2015); Meredith J. C. Warren, *Food and Transformation in Ancient Mediterranean Literature* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2019); Paul Erdkamp and Claire Holleran, eds., *The Routledge Handbook of Diet and Nutrition in the Roman World* (New York: Routledge, 2019); Joan P. Alcock, *Food in the Ancient World*, Food through History (London: Greenwood Press, 2006).

[41] Hasia R. Diner and Simone Cinotto, eds., *Global Jewish Foodways: A History* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2018); Kraemer, *Jewish Eating and Identity through the Ages*; Freidenreich, *Foreigners and Their Food*; Rosenblum, *Food and Identity in Early Rabbinic Judaism*; Rosenblum, *The Jewish Dietary Laws in the Ancient World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Inge Nielsen and Hanne Nielsen, *Meals in a Social Context: Aspects of the Communal Meal in the Hellenistic and Roman World*, 2nd ed., Aarhus Studies in Mediterranean Antiquity (Aarhus, Denmark: Aarhus University Press, 2001); Grimm, *From Feasting to Fasting*; Marks and Taussig, *Meals in Early Judaism*; Nathan MacDonald, *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat? Diet in Biblical Times* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008); MacDonald, *Not Bread Alone: The Uses of Food in the Old Testament* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2008); Cynthia Shafer-Elliott, *Food in Ancient Judah: Domestic Cooking in the Time of the Hebrew Bible*, BibleWorld (Sheffield, UK: Equinox, 2013); Anthony F. Chiffolo and Rayner W. Hesse, *Cooking with the Bible: Biblical Food, Feasts, and Lore* (London: Greenwood Press, 2006); Michaela Geiger, Christl Maier, and Uta Schmidt, eds., *Essen Und Trinken in Der Bibel: Ein Literarisches Festmahl Für Rainer Kessler Zum 65. Geburtstag* (Gütersloh, Germany: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2009); Gillian Feeley-Harnik, *The Lord's Table: The Meaning of Food in Early Judaism and Christianity* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994); Dennis E. Smith and H. Taussig, eds., *Meals in the Early Christian World: Social Formation, Experimentation, and Conflict at the Table* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Douglas E. Neel and Joel A. Pugh, *The Food and Feasts of Jesus: Inside the World of First-Century Fare, with Menus and Recipes*, Religion in the Modern World (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012); Kobel, *Dining with John*.

[42] Carlo Petrini, foreword to Diner and Cinotto, *Global Jewish Foodways*, ed. Hasia R Diner and Simone Cinotto, At Table Series (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2018), xi.

> Jewishness, the conscious affirmation of the qualities that makes Jews Jews, presumes a contrast between Us and Them. The Jews constitute an Us; all the rest of humanity, or, in Jewish language, the nations of the world, the gentiles, constitute a Them. Between Us and Them is a line, a boundary, drawn not in sand or stone but in mind. The line is no less real for being imaginary, since both Us and Them agree that it exists.[43]

The distinct Jewishness (i.e., the Jews' distinct identity) to which Cohen refers was established and prioritized through different modes by the Jewish community. For instance, the rite of circumcision as a covenant act to attain membership in the Israelite community, Sabbath observance, and the ritual ceremonies draw the boundary line of distinction for Jews. Jewish food and commensal regulations also functioned as an expression of establishing and prioritizing Jewish identity. David Kraemer claims that for the Jews, their food and commensality regulations and restrictions have "always been a 'negotiation.'"[44]

First, my study will focus on food and table-fellowship practices, that is, how and with whom Jews ate. I will focus on how Jews' eating practices made them especially notable among their neighbors. Second, I will argue that explicit Jewish food customs and restrictions implicitly served as a key to defining and expressing a distinct Jewish identity. However, it must be acknowledged that while important, the phenomenon of Jewish eating is not the only means the Jewish community deployed to establish their distinct identity. Through the analysis of textual data, I will demonstrate that Jewish food and commensal practices, among other socio-religious and cultural practices, potentially contributed to a larger narrative and norms of Judaism that together served to establish a distinct Jewish identity.

In the Old Testament, the very first chapter of Daniel narrates a story of four young Jewish men who were taken as captives when Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon,

---

[43] Shaye J. D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 341.

[44] Kraemer, *Jewish Eating and Identity through the Ages*, 5.

besieged Jerusalem. Their names were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (Dan 1:6), and they were among those "without any physical defect, handsome, showing an aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace" (1:4). To be used as bureaucrats in Nebuchadnezzar's empire, they were to be trained as in the "language and literature of the Babylonians" (1:4b). As official men being trained for the king's purposes, all of their needs were to be met by the king's providence. Thus, these Jewish intellectuals under training were to be given "food and wine from the king's table" (1:5a).

In this story, one does not notice any refusal from these Jewish men to serve the foreign king as his officials, probably because they did not have any choice in this matter). However, one issue does seem to emerge problematic for these Jewish men: Daniel and his fellows decide that they will not receive "royal food and wine" (1:8) because such food and drink would cause defilement (1:8a). Twice, the term "defile" occurs in verse 8. However, the text remains silent about how the Jewish men would be defiled. At first, the official assigned to the four men shows reluctance at Daniel's proposal because he fears that Daniel's decision will ultimately get him into trouble (1:10). However, upon Daniel's suggestion of and insistence upon a ten-day trial, the official agrees to provide them "nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink" (1:12b). After a ten-day trial, the food supervisor witnesses the result as predicted by Daniel. The text says that the four Jewish men "looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food" (1:15). From that point forward, the royal official in charge of food provided them only vegetables and water instead of "choice food and the wine" (1:16).

Why did Daniel and his fellows show serious concern over ingesting the royal food? What does their rejection of specific food items suggest? Did they refuse the food mainly because it came from the king's rations? If so, then why did they request vegetables and water that came from the same kitchen? How was this cuisine different

from “choice food and wine”? The text, unfortunately, remains silent about these speculations, leaving readers with their own theories. The given narrative talks only about “the function of Daniel’s refusal (and its subsequent miraculous vindication), not about its motivation.”[45]

Whether the issue for Daniel was the royal food itself or that the food belonged to a foreign king is an important and legitimate question to explore. However, for the sake of my argument, I will emphasize another significant underlying reason that caused Daniel and his contemporaries to refuse to eat the royal food. Based on the details provided in the narrative, it would not be wrong to assume that both Daniel and his Jewish friends intentionally resolved to set themselves apart from others (i.e., probably from Israelites, Babylonians, and other foreigners) who were also under training (1:6). The core issue at stake for these faithful and observant Jewish young men was their distinct Jewish identity. After considering the possible reasons behind the refusal of the king’s food by Jewish men, W. Sibley Towner highlights the underlying issue by noting that “the refusal set out their identity in sharp relief, and because of their victory in the trial by vegetables, they became a distinct and special group.”[46] In a similar vein, discussing this particular narrative in its historical context, John E. Goldingay claims that “food, in particular, is determinant of identity; it is part of being ‘embodied.’”[47] In other words, what and how we eat, drink, dress, and speak signify “an outward expression of our self-identity and commitments.”[48] Furthermore, Goldingay deems that one of the essential aspects of Jewish dietary laws is establishing a sharp boundary line for Israelites

---

[45] W. Sibley Towner, *Daniel* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1984), 26.

[46] Towner, *Daniel*, 26.

[47] John E. Goldingay, *Daniel*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 30 (Dallas: Word Books, 1989), 25.

[48] Goldingay, *Daniel*, 19.

to set themselves apart from the surrounding nations.[49] Therefore, Daniel's self-restraint from consuming the Babylonian king's food implies his total rejection of assimilation into Babylonian life, culture, and norms.[50]

The theme of food as a symbol and its practices regarding what, how, and with whom one eats holds an essential place in the Hebrew Bible. Through distinct food items and practices, Jews, as God's chosen people, perceived and directed their social relationships among the communities around them and between them and their deity.

Before setting the Israelites free from the bondage of slavery under the Egyptians, Yahweh commands the Jewish community to observe the Passover meal, symbolizing food and its ingestion to show God's salvation of them from slavery (Exod 12). This communal meal had religious significance for the Israelites. Moreover, it distinguished them from their Egyptian neighbors as God's chosen people for whom God has brought salvation. Yahweh's freedom for the Israelites from Egyptian slavery led the chosen community to a promised land of independence. The Lord did not describe this promised land with geographical dimensions; instead, he called it "a land flowing with milk and honey" (Exod 3:8, 17)—a phrase that symbolizes material prosperity and fulfillment. Finally, upon entering and possessing the land, the Israelites were given specific laws concerning food, among many other instructions. These dietary laws instructed the Jewish nation about what they may or may not consume (Lev 11; Deut 14). The Jewish community must observe these laws to set themselves apart (Lev 11:44) as a holy community that belongs to the holy God (11:44–45). Furthermore, like food, the Old

---

[49] Freidenreich, (*Foreigners and Their Food*, 17) perceives that all biblical texts that deal with Jewish dietary laws are closely related to the issue of "Israel's distinctive identity." Cf. Goldingay, *Daniel*, 25.

[50] Goldingay, *Daniel*, 19. Note that this proposal of Daniel's rejection of pagan food does not necessitate that one discards other possibilities behind Daniel's rejection of the King's good. For example, it is likely that Daniel abhorred the King's food because of the food's association with idol sacrificial rites. In other words, since the King's food used to be sacrificed to pagan gods before being served to the court officials, therefore, Daniel considered it religiously detestable. This theory is possible. However, my main point is that whatever might have caused Daniel to reject the King's food, ultimately it was his distinct Jewish identity that led him to take the radical decision with regard to the court's food.

Testament portrays table-fellowship practices as relating to every aspect of life, including a distinct Jewish identity (Gen 14:18–20; 26:26–31; 29:22, 27–28; 31:44–46; Josh 9:3–15; Judg 9:26–28; 2 Sam 3:20; 9:7, 10–11; Prov 15:17; 17:1). Sharing a meal demonstrates acceptance, togetherness, and reconciliation (Gen 43:31–34). However, declining meal-sharing indicates a broken relationship (1 Sam 20:34).

In a sense, Jewish food and commensality regulations built a fence around the Israelites to accomplish two goals. Besides establishing an exclusive relationship between Yahweh and Jews through the pursuit of holiness, the Jews' eating practices also stamped a distinctive identity on them individually and communally.

Categorization of Restrictions on Jewish Food Practices

This study primarily discusses Jewish food and mixed table-fellowship practices in relation to Jewish identity; therefore, it will be helpful to develop different categories of table-fellowship restrictions that different Jewish texts demonstrate from the Second Temple period in the narratives of mixed table-fellowship between Jews and Gentiles.

Without imposing any rigid categorization, mixed table-fellowship rules and restrictions can be grouped into three main types: The first type is "food-based restrictions," which obligate Jews to avoid certain food based on the instructions provided by Yahweh in the Torah. In these instances, the issue at stake is mainly culinary. The second type is "commensality-based restrictions," which limits the sharing of a meal between Jews and Gentiles. In these restrictions, the issue is not primarily *what* one eats but *with whom* one eats; the focus of restrictions shifts from culinary to commensality. In this category, even if the *dinner* is not problematic, the *diner* with whom the food is being consumed becomes the center of contention from a Jewish

perspective.[51] Although in different ways and contexts, all of these food and commensal restrictions ultimately function as crucial means for Jews in the Second Temple period to establish a distinct Jewish identity.

Conclusion

This chapter argued that choosing what one eats and with whom one eats reveals more than a biological act. Food and table-fellowship practices serve as an important center of identity formation on the individual and communal levels. The specific dietary and commensal regulations and restrictions of any social group create both a sense of a social bond and a distinction from others outside the group. Furthermore, Jews indeed sought different ways and interpretations to express their Jewish identity in different historical circumstances. However, I argued that, in antiquity, Jewish food and table-fellowship practices, with all of their nuances and complexities, mainly functioned to express a distinct Jewish identity.

[51] For the sake of convenience for referencing, I have borrowed the other two categories from Freidenreich, *Foreigners and Their Food*, 6.

CHAPTER 3

FOOD, TABLE-FELLOWSHIP, AND IDENTITY IN SELECTED SECOND TEMPLE JEWISH TEXTS

Since the identity theme plays a significant role in my thesis, therefore, the previous chapter sought to highlight how food and table-fellowship regulations, in general, serve as an important center of identity formation on the individual and communal level. In this chapter, I will extend the argument to the role of food and its practices in the Second Temple Judaism in defining and constructing a distinct Jewish identity. Jewish culinary and commensal practices, particularly in the Second Temple period, neither originated in a vacuum nor were observed by Jews aimlessly. Rather, like other socio-religious and cultural customs (e.g., the Sabbath, circumcision, festivals), Jewish dietary and commensality regulations and restrictions served to accomplish a particular purpose for Jews in the Second Temple period. This chapter will focus on selected narratives from Second Temple Jewish texts (Let. Aris.; Jos. Asen.; Jdt.; Add Esth) in their respective contexts. It will argue that these ancient Jewish texts function to define and construct the notion of a distinct Jewish identity by depicting the Jews' observance of Jewish dietary and table-fellowship restrictions.

The Question of Jewish Identity: What Does It Mean to Be a Jew?

The issue of Jewish identity has direct relevance to my overall argument, and therefore, it will be helpful to briefly make some remarks on this subject. The question of "race" or "ethnicity," in general, has been complex and diverse in the recent scholarly

discussions of sociologists and anthropologists.[1] So, how should the term "ethnicity" be defined? What does it mean when one refers to the term "ethnic" or "ethnicity"?

The English word "ethnicity" has its root in the Greek term ἔθνος (*ethnos*) and is usually translated as "people," "nation," or "race." BDAG defines ἔθνος as "a body of persons united by kinship, culture, and common traditions, nation, people."[2] Because of its complexity and fluidity, it is difficult to provide a fixed and rigid definition or concept of ethnic identity. However, keeping in view the term's definitional flexibility and complexity along with the various nuances in its meanings, some have still attempted to define it more broadly. For instance, Kathryn A. Kamp and Norman Yoffee, based on the several definitions proposed by various sociologists and anthropologists, note that most social scientists perceive an ethnic group as "a number of individuals who see themselves as being alike by virtue of a common ancestry, real or fictitious, and who are so regarded by others."[3] Along similar lines, Raz Kletter, listing and highlighting more traits of an ethnic group, defines it as

> a group of people who share most—but not necessarily all—of the following: (1) a collective proper name; (2) a myth of common ancestry; (3) historical memories; (4) one or more differentiating elements of a common culture; (5) an association with a

---

[1] Mark G. Brett, ed., *Ethnicity and the Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 2002); John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, *Ethnicity* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1996); C. F. Keyes, "Ethnic Groups, Ethnicity," in *The Dictionary of Anthropology*, ed. Thomas Barfield (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997); Ann E. Killebrew, *Biblical Peoples and Ethnicity: An Archaeological Study of Egyptians, Canaanites, Philistines, and Early Israel, 1300–1100 B.C.E.*, ed. Andrew G. Vaughn, Archaeology and Biblical Studies 9 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005); Sergey Sokolovskii and Valery Tishkov, "Ethnicity," in *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, ed. Alan Barnard and Jonathan Spencer (London: Routledge, 1996); Kenton L. Sparks, *Ethnicity and Identity in Ancient Israel: Prolegomena to the Study of Ethnic Sentiments and Their Expression in the Hebrew Bible* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1998); Coleman A. Baker, "Social Identity Theory and Biblical Interpretation," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 42, no. 3 (2012): 129–38; Richard Jenkins, *Social Identity* (London: Routledge, 2004); Maykel Verkuyten, *The Social Psychology of Ethnic Identity* (Hove, UK: Psychology Press, 2005); J. C. Turner, "Some Current Issues in Research on Social Identity and Self-Categorization Theories," in *Social Identity: Context, Commitment, Content*, ed. Naomi Ellemers, Russell Spears, and Bertjan Doosje (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 6–34; Jan E. Stets and Peter J. Burke, "Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory," *Social Psychology Quarterly* 63, no. 3 (2000): 224–37.

[2] BDAG, 276. See these primary texts: Josephus, *Ant.* 18.85; 12.135; Philo, *Decal.* 96; Matt 24:7; Mark 13:8; Luke 21:10; John 11:48, 50; 18:35; Acts 8:9; 13:19; 17:26.

[3] Kathryn A. Kamp and Norman Yoffee, "Ethnicity in Ancient Western Asia during the Early Second Millennium B.C.: Archaeological Assessments and Ethnoarchaeological Prospectives," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 237 (1980): 88.

> specific homeland (which may be symbolic, without physical control of the homeland); and (6) a sense of solidarity among at least parts of the group.[4]

Of particular interest in this definition is that the group's proper title, common religion and lineage, and shared social and cultural values lay at the foundation of one's ethnic identity.

More particularly, since this study addresses ethnic identity regarding ancient Judaism, it is important to describe my perception of Jewish identity concisely. What is meant by Ἰουδαῖος? What does it mean for someone to be a Jew? Shaye J. D. Cohen proposes that Jewish identity in the ancient world "was elusive and uncertain" (Josephus, *Ant*. 13.257–58; 14:403; 20.173; *J.W*. 2.266).[5] He presents two reasons for this claim: First, he believes that the task of defining Jewishness is difficult because "there was no single or simple definition of *Jew* in antiquity."[6] Second, another obstacle in defining Jewish identity precisely comes from the fact it was a subjective matter. There was no fixed description of what it meant to be a Jew; rather, Jewish identity construction involved an individual, the Jewish community, non-Jews, and the empire under whose subjection Jews found themselves. Thus, Cohen maintains, "there were few mechanisms in antiquity that would have provided empirical or 'objective' criteria by which to determine who was 'really' a Jew and who was not."[7] It must be acknowledged that providing a precise fixed definition of Jewish identity is challenging since the concept of Jewish identity developed in different historical periods and circumstances. However, it

---

[4] Raz Kletter, "Can a Proto-Israelite Please Stand Up? Notes on the Ethnicity and Iron Age Israel and Judah," in *I Will Speak the Riddles of Ancient Times: Archaeological and Historical Studies in Honor of Amihai Mazar*, ed. Aren Maeir and Pierre de-Miroschedji (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 574.

[5] Shaye J. D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 3. Cohen illustrates his point by using Herod the Great as a test case in which he explains how Herod's Jewish identity was a matter of ambiguity (13–24).

[6] Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness*, 3.

[7] Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness*, 3.

would not be wrong to devise a working definition deduced from ancient Jewish literary sources.[8]

At its most basic level, the Hebrew label *Yehudi* ("Judahite") is employed to refer to someone who belongs to Judah's geographical location ("Yehuda"). Does this mean that the term merely signifies the geographical identity of a Jew? Or can it also denote Jewish ethnic as well as religious identity? Can these three entities (geographical, ethnic, and religious) be understood as separate entities in ancient Judaism?

In this study, I argue that these three categories were inseparable from each other in the ancient world (Esth 2:5; 3:6; Jer 40:11; 44:1). That is, these categories were intertwined closely in relation to Jewish identity. Contrary to the way we, as contemporaries, view entities in a dichotomized and systematic manner, the ancients did not. For instance, concerning the Diaspora, describing a Jewish identity only in terms of geographical identity is inadequate because Jews living outside Judah did not stop recognizing themselves as Jews or Judahites by disregarding their Jewish identity. Instead, the Jewish literature still refers to them as Jews or Judahites.[9] Likewise, one's ethnic and religious identities were not seen as dichotomous entities; instead, they were two sides of the same coin. Commenting on the inseparability of these two aspects of identity within the Jewish tradition, Lester L. Grabbe writes, "Ethnic identity naturally included religious peculiarities, and both insiders and outsiders regarded certain religious practices as characteristic of being a Jew. Yet Jewish identity was hardly exclusively a

---

[8] For example, the author of Deut 17:15 believes that the person who rules over the Israelite nation must have a common genealogical, ethnic, and religious background with regard to his identity. Furthermore, in *Ben Sira* 50:25-26, the author expresses his dislike for "the foolish nation that dwells in Shechem," namely, the Samaritans. Despite the fact that the Samaritans shared the Pentateuch and some socio-religious practices with the Judeans and thus considered themselves to have a legitimate part in Israelite ancestry, Jews still did not regard them as fully authentic Jews. These examples demonstrate that despite the fluidity in Jewish identity, certain characteristics of "what it meant to be a Jew" were established. See also Josephus, *Ant*. 12:261; 14:403.

[9] Lester L. Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period: The Coming of the Greeks: The Early Hellenistic Period (335-175 BCE)*, ed. Lester L. Grabbe, vol. 2, Library of Second Temple Studies 68 (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 153.

religious matter."[10] The fact that Jewish identity was not merely a matter of religious concern can be further authenticated by observing the example of Dositheus. The book of 3 Maccabees talks about Dositheus, who was Jewish by birth but later apostatized and voluntarily abandoned his Jewish religious customs (3 Macc 1:3). Despite showing aversion towards and disapproval of Dositheus's decision to leave his ancestral religion, the author of 3 Maccabees still calls him a Jew (7:10).

Furthermore, Cohen presents a careful analysis of the development of the term "Jew" and how it was defined and understood differently in various historical periods. He argues that before the end of the second century BCE, the term "Judean" only represented "an ethnic-geographical" association. A "Judean" represented a member of the Jewish community or nation (*ethnos*) who belonged to the land of Judaea.[11] However, according to Cohen, this specific connotation of the term changed in the Diaspora environment in which "to be a Jew" meant more than a mere geographical association with Judaea. That is, "a person might be a Judean even if he or she had not been born in Judaea or ever set a foot."[12] In light of the above observations, this study will approach Jewish identity as a combination of Jewish lineage and Jewish socio-religious and cultural practices. This definition of Jewish identity concurs with my description of the concept of identity discussed in chapter 2.[13]

---

[10] Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism*, 2:154.

[11] Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness*, 104.

[12] Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness*, 104–5. Moreover, the Jewish ethnic-geographical community also entailed a group of people who "have their language, customs, institutions, cuisine, religion, and so on." Put differently, Jewish identity represented both a geographical identity and a specific religious, cultural, and ethnic identity. See also John J. Collins (*Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora*, 2nd ed., Biblical Resource Series [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000], 2), who writes, "In the ancient world in general, and in Israel in particular, the dominant beliefs and institutions were explicitly religious and were embodied in traditions passed on from generation to generation."

[13] My conception of Jewish identity agrees with John Barclay's definition of this notion. He claims that "Jewish identity in the Diaspora was not merely a matter of ancestry nor simply a question of cultural practices but was based on a combination of these two interlocking factors." John M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE–117 CE)* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 402–3.

Food, Table-fellowship, and the Issue of Jewish Identity in the Second Temple Period

There is a large body of literature written on the Second Temple period due to the historical significance of this era. This period of Jewish history helps scholars to enhance their understanding of Judaism and the various developments within Judaism that arose during this period.[14] To provide a comprehensive survey of the Second Temple period is a daunting task, and it is beyond this project's scope. Therefore, this section will broadly analyze the direct relationship between table-fellowship practices and Jewish identity in the Second Temple period.

In addition to the historical facts and narratives of the nation of Israel, prophecies, poetry, and wisdom, the Hebrew Bible also contains plenty of laws on different issues. For instance, laws concerning Sabbath observance (Exod 20:8–11; 34:21; Lev 19:3; Num 15:32–36; 28:9; Deut 5:12–15; Neh 13:15–22; Jer 17:19–27), purity (Lev 12; 15), sacrifices and offerings (Lev 1; 4:1–5:13; 5:14–6:7; 6:8–13, 24–30; 7:1–10), tithes (Lev 27:30–32; Num 18:21–32; Deut 14:22–27; 26:12–13; Neh 10:37b–39), temple taxation (Exod 30:13–16), oaths and pledges (Exod 20:7; Lev 27:1–29; Deut

[14] Key primary sources that provide the literary material for the Second Temple period are 1 and 2 Maccabees and the writings of Philo and Josephus. However, many scholars do not consider these primary sources to be reliable for transmitting the historical accounts of the Jewish nation. See Simkovich, *Discovering Second Temple Literature*, 191, 194; Harold W. Attridge, "Josephus and His Works," in *The Literature of the Jewish People in the Period of the Second Temple and the Talmud*, vol. 2, *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period*, Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum (Leiden: Brill, 1984), 185–232; Robert Doran, *2 Maccabees: A Critical Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 1. For comprehensive survey of the Second Temple period in general and variegated Jewish religious, social, and cultural beliefs in particular during this period, see Lester L. Grabbe, *An Introduction to Second Temple Judaism: History and Religion of the Jews in the Time of Nehemiah, the Maccabees, Hillel, and Jesus* (London: T&T Clark, 2010); Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism; Grabbe, Judaic Religion in the Second Temple Period: Belief and Practice from the Exile to Yavneh* (London: Routledge, 2000); Seán Freyne, *Galilee, from Alexander the Great to Hadrian, 323 B.C.E. to 135 C.E.: A Study of Second Temple Judaism* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1980); Paolo Sacchi, *The History of the Second Temple Period*, *JSOT*Sup 285 (London: T&T Clark, 2004); David Flusser, *Judaism of the Second Temple Period*, vol. 1, Qumran and Apocalypticism (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007); Flusser, *Judaism of the Second Temple Period*, vol. 2, The Jewish Sages and Their Literature (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009); Daniel M. Gurtner, "The Historical and Political Contexts of Second Temple Judaism," in *T&T Clark Encyclopedia of Second Temple Judaism*, ed. Loren T. Stuckenbruck and Daniel M. Gurtner (New York: Bloomsbury, 2019); David A. deSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha: Message, Context, and Significance* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 42–62. Also, for an exhaustive survey of the early history of Hellenistic civilization in relation to the social, cultural, and religious development of Judaism, see Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period*, vol. 1, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1974.

5:11), and blasphemy (Lev 24:10–23) are widespread through the Old Testament. These laws sanctioned by the divine agent for his chosen nation reveal that God did not elect the Israelites and then leave them on their own. Instead, he considered it appropriate to provide them with specific ethical, religious, and moral guidance to regulate their relationship with him. Interestingly, God not only concerned himself with the Israelites' ethical, moral, and religious aspects of life, but he also showed attentiveness to the Israelites concerning their diet. One category that is missing in the above list is the laws or regulations concerning food.

The main regulations for Israelites concerning food are provided in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14. These two sections provide comprehensive details on what God had forbidden or permitted concerning the Israelites' diet. These Jewish dietary regulations are usually associated with purity laws since the prohibited food items were proclaimed "impure" (Lev 11:4). However, despite the overlap between food and purity laws, they are treated the same because of the same level of severity attached to food laws. Violating one of the food laws would make a person impure and was considered an abomination (Lev 11:10). Furthermore, food laws are also deemed more crucial than purity laws because no ritual can cleanse the religious contamination caused by unclean food (Lev 11). In other words, while there are methods available for purification for other things that can cause ritual defilement among Jews, there exists no purification rite that can cleanse either the impure food or the person who consumes it.[15]

On the subject of what Israelites can or cannot eat, it is important to keep in mind that the Hebrew Bible does not explicitly offer the rationale behind why certain animals are edible or inedible. Moreover, for this particular reason, scholars have shown interest in studying the relevant Old Testament biblical texts, attempting to explore not

[15] E. P. Sanders, *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah: Five Studies* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016), 32.

only what precisely has been forbidden but also the possible justification or basis behind those prohibitions.[16]

The developing conscientiousness of the Jewish nation in matters related to dietary and commensality practices in establishing and prioritizing its distinct identity became a serious matter of urgency during the Second Temple period. The literary evidence from the Second Temple period shows that the fall of the last Israelite kingdom by foreign empires and the demolition of Jerusalem and its temple must have put the Jewish exiled community in a serious socio-religious, ethnic, and cultural crisis (1 Macc; Josephus, *J.W*. 1.124–51, 309–16; 2.111, 117–18; *Ant*. 14.41; 17.149–67; 18.1–10). In such circumstances, if the Jewish nation were to uphold its identity as a distinct communal group under the influence of its pagan neighbors, then the Jews had to carry out this ambition by strictly following a set of distinctive socio-religious beliefs and practices. Thus, Jewish religious practices such as the Sabbath, circumcision, and dietary regulations functioned primarily as distinct Jewish boundary markers between Diaspora Jews and their Gentile neighbors.[17] Highlighting the same point, Rainer Albertz writes,

---

[16] My study primarily focuses on the Second Temple period and will deal only with the literature produced in that era. Therefore, I will not discuss the food laws and their role in the biblical period since it will be too much to be dealt with in a dissertation. So, for a comprehensive scholarly discussion of Jewish food laws in the Old Testament and the possible rationale behind them, see Jordan D. Rosenblum, *The Jewish Dietary Laws in the Ancient World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 8–27; David M. Freidenreich, *Foreigners and Their Food: Constructing Otherness in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Law* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 17–28; David C. Kraemer, *Jewish Eating and Identity through the Ages* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2007), 9–24; Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-6*, The Anchor Bible, vol. 3 (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 3–13; Mary Douglas, "Deciphering a Meal," in *Implicit Meanings: Selected Essays in Anthropology* (London: Routledge, 1975), 249–75; Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Ark, 1984); Douglas, *Leviticus as Literature* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1999), 134–75; Nathan MacDonald, *Not Bread Alone: The Uses of Food in the Old Testament* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2008), 47–99; Veronika E. Grimm, *From Feasting to Fasting, the Evolution of a Sin: Attitudes to Food in Late Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 1996), 14–20; Peter Altmann, Anna Angelini, and Abra Spiciarich, eds., *Food Taboos and Biblical Prohibitions: Reassessing Archaeological and Literary Perspectives* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020); Walter Houston, *Purity and Monotheism: Clean and Unclean Animals in Biblical Law*, *JSOT*Sup 140 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993); Elaine Adler Goodfriend, "Food in the Biblical Era," in *Feasting and Fasting: The History and Ethics of Jewish Food*, ed. Aaron S. Gross, Jody Myers, and Jordan D. Rosenblum (New York: New York University Press, 2020), 32–58.

[17] The reaction of Jews in the Diaspora towards non-Jewish inhabitants of the Hellenistic world was not at all monolithic. Based on some generalizations deduced from ancient Jewish literature (Aristob., Apocr. Ezek., Let. Aris., Philo, 3–4 Macc, Jos. Asen., Jub., Wis), although they are to be avoided,

> Alongside circumcision, during the exile the traditional dietary customs probably for the first time played a part in establishing identity, even if we know little about them in detail. Here too the development will have begun from the Babylonian exiles, who in a foreign land suddenly found that some of the dietary customs they had previously taken for granted were a peculiarity of their people. . . . Even if many dietary customs and regulations go well back into the pre-exilic period, and their original significance escapes us, it is probable that the detailed casuistry in the defining of clean and unclean animals to be found in Deut. 14 and in an even more refined form in Lev. 11 arose from this need in the exilic situation. They gave the exilic family an important mark of identity with the aid of which they could demonstrate in everyday life whether or not they still counted themselves among the people of Judah and held fast to their religious traditions.[18]

Albertz's remarks pinpoint the socio-cultural reality that the idea of distinction of any social group (i.e., "Us") becomes concretized and realized amid other competing identities (i.e., "Them"). Furthermore, the opinions above emphasize a strong realization of dietary practices for Jewish identity, particularly in the exilic and post-exilic settings. However, as has been recognized previously in my discussion, this observation should not be taken as suggesting that Jewish dietary customs played no role at all in Jewish identity in the pre-exilic, exilic, and post-exilic biblical periods. There is enough evidence in the Hebrew bible that demonstrates that Jews in the biblical era considered the prevailing dietary practices signifying a distinct Jewish identity (1 Sam 26:19; Ezek 4:9, 12–14; Hos 9:3; Amos 7:17). Indeed, Jewish eating practices and restrictions in the Old

---

especially in Jewish studies, it would be safe to claim that different levels of religious tolerance and social interaction existed among the Diaspora Jews in different places and historical circumstances. The Jewish texts from the Second Temple period mentioned above show different attitudes of the Jewish community towards their Gentile neighbors in the Diaspora in socio-religious and cultural areas. A broad range of attitudes that existed among Diaspora Jews towards the Hellenistic world can be seen in multiple layers of Jewish life. For instance, many literary sources (both Jewish and non-Jewish) suggest that Jews did not live among their non-Jewish neighbors in complete isolation. Rather, they participated in the wider Greco-Roman culture in different ways: they embraced citizenship from the cities endowed by the foreign government, bought property, took official roles in the empires, built religious places for worship, and participated in classical Greek education. These examples demonstrate that many Diaspora Jews were willing to assimilate into their present non-Jewish environments. Nevertheless, their acculturation with the Hellenistic world did not mean that Jews did not show concern for their distinct Jewish identity. Again, ancient Jewish and non-Jewish writings (Josephus, Ag. Ap. 2.73, 202; Let. Aris. 134–38; 3 Macc 5:13; 7:16; 4 Macc 12:17; Apocr. Ezek. 213; Jos. Asen. 7:3, 5; 11:10; Philo, Decal. 52–65; Spec. 1. 12–20, 67; Wis 13.10–15.17) suggest that most Jews in the Diaspora sought to prioritize their distinctive identity by observing their religious and traditional customs of circumcision, dietary regulations, Passover, and so on. For example, see Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*; Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World*; Barclay, introduction to *Negotiating Diaspora: Jewish Strategies in the Roman Empire*, ed. John M. G. Barclay (London: T&T Clark, 2004, 2.

[18] Rainer Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period*, vol. 2, *From the Exiles to the Maccabees* (London: SCM Press, 1994), 408.

Testament have served as essential boundary markers to prioritize a distinct Jewish identity to lesser or greater degrees. However, the historical reality that certain dietary and commensality practices gained prominence quite exceptionally in the Second Temple period holds true.[19] Concerning the development that occurred in Jewish dietary and commensal regulations in the Second Temple period, David C. Kraemer notes,

> During that long period, the eating laws of Jews, at least as recorded in the literature that has survived, underwent a significant change. And the direction of the change could not be more transparent. As those several centuries progress, the Torah's laws, pertaining exclusively to food sources from the animal kingdom, will be regularly reaffirmed.[20]

That "significant change" regarding Jewish food and table-fellowship practices concerning distinct Jewish identity finds its clearest expression in the narratives of selected Second Temple Jewish texts. Hence, the rest of the chapter examines the selected Jewish narratives, focusing specifically on how food and table-fellowship practices in Jewish narratives from the Second Temple period served to establish and prioritize a distinct Jewish identity.[21]

---

[19] See MacDonald, *Not Bread Alone*, 198–203; Freidenreich, *Foreigners and Their Food*, 31–46; Kraemer, *Jewish Eating and Identity through the Ages*, 25–37.

[20] Kraemer, *Jewish Eating and Identity through the Ages*, 24.

[21] I am aware of several Jewish texts from the Second Temple period that deal with the issue of food and mixed table-fellowship between Jews and Gentiles (for example, Jub. 22:16; 1 Macc 1:44–50; 2 Macc 6:18–7:42; 3 Macc 3:4; Josephus, *Ant.* 12.253, 13:243; *Ag. Ap.* 2.173–74; Philo, *In Flaccum* 95–96; *De Specialibus Legibus* 4.95–131; *Legat.* 361–62). All these Jewish texts deserve attention. However, it is beyond the scope of this current project, and therefore, I will only focus on selected Jewish texts for two main reasons: First, the Jewish texts, which I have chosen, fit well in the category of 'narratives.' And since this project is mainly concerned with a comparative analysis, the comparison of these selected Jewish narratives with Paul's narrative in Galatians 2:11–21 seems to be more legitimate. Second, I have chosen these particular narratives from Second Temple Jewish literature because they demonstrate Jewish-Gentile interaction at mixed table-fellowship with varying degrees of food and commensal restrictions in relation to the issue of distinct Jewish identity. Furthermore, within the scope of this study, I do not intend to resolve the issues of dating, composition, provenance, and extant textual variants. Not dealing with these issues does not suggest that these matters are of less importance. Rather, I put them aside because they do not bear direct relevance to the argument of this dissertation. Therefore, I will mainly concentrate on exegeting selected Jewish texts in their own historical and cultural contexts to illuminate the central theme of Jewish identity in relation to Jewish food and mixed table-fellowship regulations and restrictions.

Food, Table-fellowship, and the Issue of Jewish Identity in Selected Second Temple Jewish Narratives

The Letter of Aristeas

Introduction. A Jewish text known as the Letter of Aristeas is not a "letter" in the strict sense of the word, although the author presents it this way.[22] Scholars have recognized this purported letter as a "fictitious"[23] or "imaginative"[24] account of the formation of the Greek translation of the Hebrew Torah (a.k.a. the Septuagint [LXX]). Although the author of the narrative assumes the character of a Gentile figure who holds a prominent place in the court of Ptolemy II Philadelphus, king of Egypt, he is more likely to be perceived as an unknown Jew.[25] Furthermore, the issue of dating the Letter of Aristeas has been a point of contention among scholars and remains uncertain. Since the literary data in the text suggests a later date, it is highly unlikely that the letter was composed at the time when Ptolemy II Philadelphus was king.[26] For this reason, based on different theories, scholars have proposed different dates for the letter's composition.[27]

---

[22] Barclay (*Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 138) considers this Jewish text neither to be a letter nor to be written by the author, Aristeas, who identifies himself as a Gentile couturier of the Ptolemaic king. Cf. Gurtner, *Pseudepigrapha of Second Temple Judaism*, 328n36. For more information on the literary nature and structure of this letter in antiquity, see Abraham Wasserstein and David J. Wasserstein, *The Legend of the Septuagint: From Classical Antiquity to Today* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 21–24. Furthermore, for more specific details on the character of the alleged author of Let. Aris., see Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 139–41; Moses Hadas, ed. and trans., *Aristeas to Philocrates (Letter of Aristeas)* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1951), 3–4.

[23] Gurtner, *Pseudepigrapha of Second Temple Judaism*, 328.

[24] Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 138.

[25] Gurtner, *Pseudepigrapha of Second Temple Judaism*, 329; George W. E. Nickelsburg, "Stories of Biblical and Early Post-Biblical Times," in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period*, vol. 2, *Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus*, ed. Michael E. Stone, Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum (Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1984), 78; Hadas, *Aristeas to Philocrates*, 5–6; Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 138; Sylvie Honigman, *The Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria: A Study in the Narrative of the "Letter of Aristeas"* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 2.

[26] Gurtner, *Pseudepigrapha of Second Temple Judaism*, 331.

[27] H. St. J. Thackeray, *The Letter of Aristeas, Translated with an Appendix of Ancient Evidence of the Origin of the Septuagint*, Translations of Early Documents, Series II, Hellenistic-Jewish Texts 3 (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1917), xii–xiv; Hadas, *Aristeas to Philocrates*, 4–5, 9–54; Benjamin G. Wright, *The Letter of Aristeas: "Aristeas to Philocrates" or "On the Translation of the Law of the Jews"*, ed. Loren T. Stuckenbruck, CEJL (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 23–30; George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah: A Historical and Literary Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 196; Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2:8–9;

This text can most probably be dated from the 150s BCE to the end of the second century BCE.[28]

The author's apparent motive in composing this letter is to inform his brother, Philocrates, who seems to show serious interest in religious matters and thus the origins of the Septuagint (vv. 1–8). When read carefully, it becomes obvious that the author is trying to accomplish something more than simply narrating the story of the translation. It is interesting to note that the author provides very few details of the Greek translation process by the Jewish delegation. The briefing on this subject appears only in verses 9–12, 29–49, and 301–11 of the text. Due to this brevity of information, it is believed that, in reality, the story concerning the development of the origins of translation "is only the narrative framework within which the author can assemble a fascinating miscellany of material designed to illustrate the value of the Jewish religion."[29] Thus, this Jewish text is unique because although it is framed as a personal letter, it simultaneously highlights important features of Jewish beliefs and practices. This emphasis on the observance of Jewish customs can be authenticated by the longer "discourses" that the author employs within the narrative (vv. 8–92, 83–120, 130–71, 187–300).

Synopsis of the narrative. The following is a summary of the letter: The author, Aristeas, tells of the Egyptian king's order to his librarian, Demetrius, to gather books from around the world for his library in Alexandria. Upon the king's instruction, Demetrius informs the king of his desire to include a copy of the Jewish Torah in the Greek language. Demetrius's suggestion provides an avenue for discussing the relations

---

Elias J. Bickerman, "The Dating of Pseudo-Aristeas," in *Studies in Jewish and Christian History: A New Edition in English Including the God of the Maccabees*, ed. Amram Tropper, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 108–33.

[28] See Gurtner, *Pseudepigrapha of Second Temple Judaism*, 332; Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 445; Wright, *The Letter of Aristeas*, 27–28, 15–20, 30–74; Gurtner, *Pseudepigrapha of Second Temple Judaism*, 328–31; Shutt, "The Letter of Aristeas," 7–11 .

[29] Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 139.

between the Ptolemaic dynasty and the Jews in the court of Ptolemy II. This discussion further leads to the Ptolemaic king's dispatching a delegation to the high priest, Eleazar, in Jerusalem and to the lavish gifts the Egyptian king gave to the Jewish high priest as a token of respect and relationship-building (vv. 9–82). The author describes Judea and the temple worship in an idealized and glamorous way (vv. 83–120). Furthermore, the delegation from the court, which includes the author of this Jewish text, succeeds in its mission of obtaining the seventy-two Jewish well-educated, pious, and religious men who would undertake the task of translating the Hebrew Torah into the Greek language. In addition to engaging Jewish men for the task of translation, the author also presents Eleazar's long digression in which he explicates and exalts the importance of the Jewish law (vv. 130–71). After a brief description of the delegation's arrival in Egypt and the king's special welcoming protocol for them, the rest of the narrative focuses on the dialogue between the king and the translators that spans seven feasts. This discussion between the king and the translators entails different questions that the king asks of the Jewish delegation and the Jews' responses to the king (vv. 187–300).

Exegetical analysis: Food, table-fellowship, and Jewish identity in the Letter of Aristeas. While different scholars have discussed varying themes and interpretations in the Letter of Aristeas,[30] my interpretation of this narrative will explore the theme of Jewish identity and its construction and priority in Jewish food and mixed table-fellowship practices.

Numerous references in the narrative point out that the author wishes to

[30] E.g., Wasserstein and Wasserstein, *The Legend of the Septuagint*; Honigman, *The Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship*; Ekaterina Matusova, *The Meaning of the Letter of Aristeas: In Light of Biblical Interpretation and Grammatical Tradition, and with Reference to Its Historical Context*, ed. Jacqueline White, Forschungen Zur Religion Und Literatur Des Alten Und Neuen Testaments 260 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015); Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 138–50; Johann Cook and Arie van der Kooij, *Law, Prophets, and Wisdom: On the Provenance of Translators and Their Books in the Septuagint Version* (Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2012), 147–54; A. D. Macdonald, "The Seventy-Two Elders of Aristeas: An Evaluation of Speculation," *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 29, no. 1 (2019): 36–53.

promote mutual respect and positive social interaction between Jews and their Gentile neighbors. First, the way Aristeas portrays all of the characters (e.g., king, high priest, Jewish delegation, court philosophers) in the narrative depicts a sense of mutual deference for each other. In the author's mind, both Jews and Greeks value rationality over fleshly desires (vv. 5–8, 130, 321), choose the lifestyle of temperance and restraint (vv. 122, 222–23, 237, 256), and consider the justice of great value (vv. 18, 24, 125, 144–49, 168–69). It is also important to note that while the author, who disguises himself as a Gentile in the narrative, represents Gentiles as showing a positive and a reverential attitude towards the Jewish community in different ways (vv. 3–5, 10, 30–31, 99, 140, 170–71, 201, 235, 295–300), Jews equally signal respect to Gentiles. The Jewish delegation for the translation mission does not display any sign of disdain to others (v. 122). Eleazar's letter to the king entails the feeling of companionship and affection (v. 44). Furthermore, Eleazar offers sacrifices in the Jerusalem temple to petition divine protection for the king and his kingdom (v. 45). Besides offering favorable comments to the king (vv. 229, 233), the Jewish translators also pronounce divine blessings upon the king's family (v. 185).[31]

The Jewish assimilation to Hellenization and the positive social interaction between Jews and Gentiles highlighted above leads Barclay to put this Jewish text into the category of "cultural convergence" in his book. He examines the different levels of Jewish attitudes towards the Gentile environment in the Mediterranean Diaspora.[32] In advocating Jewish accommodation and assimilation to the Greek culture, does the author

---

[31] Noticing the elements of relaxed social integration and mutual respect between Jews and Gentiles portrayed by the author, Gurtner (*Pseudepigrapha of Second Temple Judaism*, 336) considers Let. Aris. as "unique in its sometimes-striking advocacy of the similarities between Jews and Gentiles." Cf. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 141–43; Victor Tcherikover, "The Ideology of the Letter of Aristeas," *Harvard Theological Review* 51, no. 2 (1958): 64–70.

[32] Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 125–27; See also Tcherikover, "The Ideology of the Letter of Aristeas," 63–70; John R. Bartlett, *Jews in the Hellenistic World: Josephus, Aristeas, the Sibylline Oracles, Eupolemus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 16; Gurtner, *Pseudepigrapha of Second Temple Judaism*, 330–31.

of the Letter of Aristeas recommend that Jews living in the Diaspora lose their religious and socio-cultural distinction altogether to be on good terms with their Gentile neighbors? Was Aristeas merely "a preacher of assimilation?"[33] Did he not have any concern for the notion of distinct Jewish identity? It seems very unlikely that Aristeas had no concern for such a critical issue. On the contrary, a careful examination of the text indicates that although the author of our text sought to establish an accommodating environment between Jews and Gentiles, he did not wish for this outcome of Jew-Gentile social harmony at the cost of losing the distinctiveness of Jewish identity. This observation is apparent in the "tension" in the narrative that, on the one hand, seeks "respect for Greek culture and learning" and, on the other hand, maintains "a tenacious insistence on the distinctiveness of Israel as God's people."[34]

How can these two different ideas of simultaneous Jewish assimilation and distinction go hand in hand? The answer to this question lies in the analysis of Aristeas's unique perception of Judaism. According to Aristeas's ideology, the Jews can concurrently partake in the cultural, social, political, linguistic, and literary aspects of the Hellenistic world and, at the same time, remain mindful of their distinctive religious and ethnic identity. They can do this by showing allegiance to the biblical laws of the Torah "that are uniquely theirs and that differentiate them from the gentiles."[35] Along similar lines, explaining the letter's historical and theological importance, R. J. H. Shutt observes that "some affinity" displayed by the text between Jews and Gentiles should not be understood as if the author of the letter considers Jewish and Greek identities as similar

---

[33] Tcherikover, "The Ideology of the Letter of Aristeas," 70.

[34] Gurtner, *Pseudepigrapha of Second Temple Judaism*, 130.

[35] Nickelsburg, "Stories of Biblical and Early Post-Biblical Times," 77–78; cf. Gurtner, *Pseudepigrapha of Second Temple Judaism*, 331.

entities.[36]

The two main sections in the text where the author highlights the notion of distinct Jewish identity in Jewish food and mixed table-fellowship practices are found in verses 128–71 and 174–86. Following the report of the seventy-two translators' educational, religious, and moral qualities described by the high priest Eleazar, the author shifts from this subject to Eleazar's exposition of Jewish food laws in response to the questions of Aristeas and his deputation.

In verse 128, the author shares his opinion on the subject of food by stating that "mankind as a whole shows a certain amount of concern for the parts of legislation concerning meats and drink and beasts considered to be unclean." From this statement, Aristeas conveys the message that the deliberate choice of certain food items by humankind as a whole is a universal socio-cultural practice. Then, the Egyptian delegation, of which Aristeas is a member, asks Eleazar why the distinction exists between clean and unclean food while "there is one creation only" (vv. 129–30). The following verses present Eleazar's response to this inquiry. Asserting it as the main principle for his allegorical elaboration of the food laws, Eleazar says that Jews' associations can determine the social distinction between different peoples because their relationships play an important role in shaping their identities (i.e., "who they are"). In other words, "men become perverted" and live miserable lives throughout because of bad associations (v. 130). However, when people associate with "wise and prudent companions, they rise above ignorance and achieve progress in life" (vv. 130–31a).

[36] Shutt, "The Letter of Aristeas," 9. See also Jacobs Naomi ("Biting off More Than They Can Chew: Food, Eating, and Cultural Integration in Tobit and Letter of Aristeas," in *The Eucharist—Its Origins and Contexts: Sacred Meal, Communal Meal, Table Fellowship in Late Antiquity, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity*, vol. 1, ed. David Hellholm and Dieter Sänger, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 376 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017], 174), who asserts that despite "its Greek dress and appeal to logic and virtue, " this narrative "is consistent with Jewish thought of the time." Naomi adds, "With an emphasis on separation, one would think the Jews and non-Jews have no meeting point."

That distinction of Jewish identity entails that both beliefs and practices can be observed in Eleazar's statement. In verses 134–35, he claims that all humanity—except the Jewish nation—believes in the plurality of divine beings and engages in idol worship. Eleazar's declaration emphasizes Jewish distinction of their belief in monotheism and their rejection of polytheism.[37] The Jewish distinction in beliefs is also visible in many other places in the text wherein the author tacitly seems to demonstrate "the sense of religious incommensurability" between the Jewish nation and other Gentile nations (vv. 135–37, 138, 151–52, 222–23). Eleazar's apology on the Jewish law suggests that Jewish acculturation to a Gentile environment ought not to be perceived as neglecting Jewish religious peculiarity and separateness. On the contrary, Eleazar's elaboration of Jewish law and customs based on that law, to some extent, serves both to accentuate "the superiority of Judaism over Hellenistic culture and religion" and to curb other syncretic elements present in the text. For instance, Erich Gruen considers Eleazar's statements as establishing "strong words and powerful sentiments, not to be obscured or suppressed in the warm glow of some alleged universalism."[38]

Furthermore, the text suggests that the notion of distinct Jewish identity is not merely a matter of discrete religious beliefs but also a matter of specific socio-religious practices based on the Torah. Elaborating on the rationale behind the Jewish food laws, Eleazar tells the Egyptian delegation that a Jewish legislator (viz., Moses) "surrounded us

---

[37] Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 144. Noting this bold apologetic claim against "the rest of mankind" by Eleazar, Barclay acknowledges that it "may be surprising in this eirenic document, which is otherwise at pains to portray mutual respect between Jews and Gentiles." See also Wright (*The Letter of Aristeas*, 248), who notes a sharp contrast between Eleazar's statements in this section and previous sections of the letter "that emphasize the commonalities between Jews and Gentiles." In other words, it appears that "Aristeas's otherwise eirenic and somewhat universalistic outlook seems contradicted to Eleazar's speech."

[38] Erich S. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 216. In similar vein, Barclay (*Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 145), interprets Eleazar's remarks as constituting the "sense of superiority, of the Jew's higher spiritual and moral class." See also Ellen Brinbaum, "Allegorical Interpretation and Jewish Identity among Alexandrian Jewish Writers," in *Neotestamentica et Philonica: Studies in Honour of Peder Borgen*, ed. David Edward Aune, Torrey Seland, and Jarl Henning Ulrichsen, *NovT*Sup 106 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 311–14.

with unbroken/unbreakable palisades and iron walls to prevent our mixing with any of the other peoples in any matter, being thus kept pure in body and soul, preserved from false beliefs, and worshipping the only God omnipotent over all creation" (vv. 139–40).[39] Eleazar explains that these divinely sanctioned "unbroken palisades and iron walls" function to protect the Jewish nation from the religious corruption of surrounding nations.

Additionally, Eleazar informs the delegation that even other nations, like the Egyptians, identify Jews as "men of God," a designation that refers "exclusively to those who worship the true God." Furthermore, in matters of food, God, in order "to prevent our being perverted by contact with others or by mixing with bad influences . . . , hedged us all in on all sides with strict observances connected with meat and drink and touch and hearing and sight, after the manner of the Law" (vv. 142–43). These statements by Eleazar, the high priest, demonstrate that both Jewish beliefs and practices, ordained by God through the medium of his legislator, function to construct and prioritize a distinct Jewish identity that exclusively relates Jews to God as his people. In one sense, identity is a boundary—or, in Eleazar's words, a hedge or a fence—that not only distinguishes Jews

[39] Eleazar's justification of Jewish permitted and prohibited animals is allegorical in nature. The high priest tells the delegation that they must be cautious lest they allow themselves to perceive of Moses's provision of these food laws as merely arbitrary because of his "excessive preoccupation with mice and weasels or suchlike creatures." On the contrary, all of the laws given to Jews were constituted with "natural reasoning" (v. 143). Moreover, these laws and their obedience ultimately serve to produce righteousness among Jews. Birds that have been proclaimed clean and are permitted for consumption are "domesticated" and symbolize "exceptional cleanliness" since their ingestion consists of clean food (i.e., permitted birds eat wheat and pulse). On the other hand, birds that have been proclaimed unclean and have been prohibited for consumption by the legislator are "wild and carnivorous kinds." They "dominate by their own strength and who find their food at the expense of the aforementioned domesticated birds"—thus, they symbolize "injustice." Eleazar's explanation of Jewish food laws suggests that our ingestion of the things we eat also cultivate in us the good or bad characteristics that the ingested food items possess. Since permitted clean birds or animals possess good characteristics in them, their ingestion will turn us into what they possess qualitatively. "By means of creatures like this the legislator has handed down (the lesson) to be noted by men of wisdom, that they should be righteous, and not achieve anything by brute force, not lord it over others in reliance upon their own strength" (vv. 148–51). That food laws symbolize deeper moral and religious reality can clearly be observed in Eleazar's apology on the law. According to him, the cloven—separate hoof of an animal—symbolizes Jewish separation and the Jews' being distinct from other people. Moreover, eating practices function to develop or degenerate human morals (vv. 140–50). Eleazar says, "All the regulations have been made with righteous in mind, and that no ordinances have been made in scripture without purpose or fancifully, but to the intent that through the whole of our lives we may also practice justice to all mankind in our acts, remembering the all-sovereign God" (vv. 168b–69). Ultimately, all regulations have been constituted for God's people to develop righteousness in them and to cultivate righteous human relationships (vv. 169–70). For reference, see Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 145–47.

from others around them but also protects them from bad influences, relationships, beliefs, and practices. Thus, Jewish religious and socio-cultural customs and practices serve to construct and prioritize a distinct Jewish identity. Explaining how Eleazar's discourse on the Jewish law relates to the notion of Jewish identity, Benjamin G. Wright III writes,

> Eleazar's speech works to construct and affirm Jewish identity, and evidence of cultural competition needs to be read in that light. . . . Part of that identity construction involves the setting and/or buttressing of ethnic boundaries via the identification of distinctive ethnic markers. . . . As a general matter, the essential ethnic markers to which Eleazar appeals in his speech serve to make clear the boundaries between Jews, Greeks and Egyptians, and one method for clarifying and reinforcing boundaries is to make a case for the surpassing value of one's own culture vis-à-vis those from whom one desires to be distinct.[40]

The metaphorical use of "hedges" and "iron walls" in Eleazar's speech indicates the identity boundary markers that safeguard distinct Jewish identities. These boundary markers make an implicit socio-religious statement that Jews do not engage in eating habits in which non-Jews partake. According to David. M. Freidenreich, Eleazar's exposition of Jewish food laws identifies Jews as "superior" to Gentiles because of their different dietary customs. Nevertheless, Freidenreich maintains that Eleazar's allegorical interpretation does not impose on Jews "either abstention from meat prepared by gentiles or the segregation of Jews and gentiles during meals."[41] Along similar lines, the motif of distinctive Jewish identity can further be seen at the mixed table-fellowship at the Ptolemaic palace between the Jewish translators and the Gentile king and other courtiers (vv. 180b–86).

Another instance in the narrative shows a symbolic socio-religious wall or boundary that distinguishes Jews and Gentiles. At the news of the Jewish translators'

---

[40] Wright, *The Letter of Aristeas*, 250–51; See also Stewart Moore, *Jewish Ethnic Identity and Relations in Hellenistic Egypt: With Walls of Iron?*, ed. Benjamin G. Wright III, Supplements to the *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 171 (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 221–31.

[41] Freidenreich, *Foreigners and Their Food*, 33.

arrival, the expression of the king's joy and respect is vivid in the special protocol he accords to them (vv. 174–80). The author assured his readers of his presence when all of these events happened in the court. The author's adoption of a Gentile character in the narrative implies that he desired to highlight the significance of Jewish beliefs and practices from a Gentile viewpoint.[42] Upon receiving his guests, as a token of hospitality, the king tells the delegation that

> it will therefore be my wish to dine with you. Everything of which you partake, he said, will be served in compliance with your habits; it will be served to me as well as to you. . . . The chief steward, Nicor, summoned Dorotheus, who was appointed in charge of these matters, and bade him complete preparations for each guest. "These," he said, "are the king's orders; some of them you will see now." The number of prominent delegates corresponds to the number of cities, all having the same customs in matters of drink and food and bedding. All preparations were made in accordance with these customs, so that when they came in the presence of the kings they would have a happy visit, with no cause for complaint. This was their experience. Dorotheus, who had the charge of such matters, was a most punctilious man. He arranged all the furniture of which he had charge, all reserved for this type of reception. He set out the couches in two lines, in accordance with the royal command, because the king had ordered that half should sit at his right hand, and the rest behind his royal couch, leaving no stone unturned in his desire to do these delegates honor. When they had taken places, he ordered Dorotheus to carry everything out in accordance with the customs practiced by all his visitors from Judea. (vv. 180b–84a)

The king here shows his desire to *dine* with the Jewish delegates. However, the offer of dining together has a qualification with it. The king considers it important to inform his guests that "everything of which you partake . . . will be served in compliance with your habits; it will be served to me as well as to you" (vv. 180–81). These details are most likely meant to communicate to the author's readers that even the prominent Gentile ruler is aware of exclusive Jewish dietary practices. Moreover, the king reveals the consciousness of food matters for his Jewish guests, and he also shows a willingness to accommodate his guests' eating customs. The author attempted to depict that even the most prominent and authoritative figures (such as the Ptolemaic king in our narrative) are aware of distinctive Jewish beliefs and practices that distinguish Jews from others.

---

[42] Wright, *The Letter of Aristeas*, 317.

Furthermore, although it is not explicitly mentioned in the text, the text may be implying that the Jewish translators, who have been portrayed as faithful and observant Jews (vv. 121–26), would not allow themselves to eat non-Jewish food. The directives given to Dorotheus for all of the mixed table-fellowship arrangements specify how Jews have "the same customs in matters of drink and food and bedding" (vv. 182–86).

Commenting on this particular episode of the narrative, Christine Elizabeth Hayes points out that the king's directives on dining preparations emphasized by the author do not seem to be concerned with "circumstantial impurity" arising from the commensality between Jews and Gentiles at the same dinner table. Instead, "the Jewish sages can dine and share food with the Egyptian king because it is *Jewish food*. It has been prepared according to Jewish dietary rules, and the king's presence and participation do not render the food impure."[43] On this issue, Freidenreich argues that Hayes is right in saying that no circumstantial impurity is at stake. However, he argues that Hayes is wrong in proposing that the food offered to the Jewish delegation is Jewish in nature. Freidenreich contends that the food is not Jewish per se but "foreign food" cooked by and shared with Gentiles.[44] In other words, in Freidenreich's mind, even if the food items are Jewish according to the Torah's dietary laws, the food remains foreign when prepared by and shared with Gentiles. Freidenreich's emphasis on the preparation and sharing of food is reasonable because both elements certainly play an important role in Jewish food and commensality practices.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to agree with Freidenreich because the textual data suggest that the food prepared for and offered to the Jewish translators was prepared according to the biblical dietary laws and thus was Jewish. Additionally, one might also

---

[43] Christine E. Hayes, *Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities: Intermarriage and Conversion from the Bible to the Talmud* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 140 (emphasis original).

[44] Freidenreich, *Foreigners and Their Food*, 34.

ask that if the food did not meet Jewish dietary standards, what does it mean to prepare food according to Jewish norms? What are those eating habits to which the king is willing to show compliance (v. 181)? What does the text mean when it says that "all preparations were made in accordance with these customs" (v. 182b)? The author's frequent mentioning to his readers that the food was prepared in accordance with Jewish customs emphasizes the point that the food was Jewish in nature, though it was prepared by, served by, and shared with the Gentiles.[45]

Remarkably, in conjunction with Jewish food matters, the text also briefly references a precise seating arrangement for the banquet. Following "the royal command," Dorotheus "set out the couches in two lines, in accordance with the royal command, because the king had ordered that half should sit at his right hand, and the rest behind his royal couch, leaving no stone unturned in his desire to do these delegates honor" (vv. 183b–84).[46] Some observations can be made in light of this information. First, this specific seating arrangement indicates that neither the king nor his subordinates sit with Jews at the banquet. In the king's case, it can be hypothesized that his royal status would not have allowed him to sit and eat with the Jews around the same couch. For example, in light of Hellenistic and Roman customs concerning classical banquets, Wright deems Aristeas's portrayal of this specific seating arrangement at the banquet as hierarchical.[47] However, it might be worth considering why Gentile attendants of the king

---

[45] See Wright (*The Letter of Aristeas*, 319), who also understand the Egyptian king's instructions as highlighting the food preparation "in accordance with Jewish food laws." However, like Freidenreich, Wright suggests that even if the food prepared is Jewish in its content, "Jewish practices are not a barrier to Jewish-Gentile interactions." Wright further adds, "Rather than erect a social boundary between the translators and the king, commensality is perfectly possible, even with the monarch, based on the restrictions of the food laws." See also Sanders, *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah*, 384.

[46] On the subject of the places, preparations, and manners of banquets in antiquity, see Birgitta Berquist, "Sympotic Space: A Functional Aspect of Greek Dining-Rooms," in *Sympotica: A Symposium on the Symposion*, ed. Oswyn Murray (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 37–65; Frederick Cooper and Sarah Morris, "Dining in Round Buildings," in Murray, *Sympotica*, 66–85; Katherine M. D. Dunbabin, *The Roman Banquet: Images of Conviviality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 46–52.

[47] Wright, *The Letter of Aristeas*, 320–21.

were made to sit behind the royal couch and not with the Jews? Did the author intend to implicitly signal something here? Does this locational separation of Gentiles (behind the royal king) from the mixed table-fellowship at the banquet simply denote the honor that the king endows upon the Jewish delegation? Or is it possible that, like his awareness of Jewish dietary laws (*what* to eat), the king was familiar with Jewish commensal practices as well (*with whom* to eat)? In providing the details of what happened, the author probably lets his readers infer the reasons behind these instances.[48]

Finally, the king's orders of providing his Jewish guests the food according to their customs resolve the issue related to food matters (*what* to eat). However, what about the issue of the one who eats? At the risk of reading too much into the text, one can still make the case that the royal orders concerning the seating arrangement might be taken to maintain a distinct Jewish identity.[49] Nevertheless, no final exegetical remarks can be made due to the text's silence and ambiguity on this matter. Therefore, it is much safer to place this narrative into the "food-based restrictions" category for the construction and priority of a distinct Jewish identity.

Joseph and Aseneth

Introduction. Narrating Joseph's rise to power by Pharaoh, the book of Genesis records that Pharaoh, renaming Joseph as Zaphenath-paneah, "gave him in marriage Aseneth, the daughter of Potiphera priest of On" (Gen 41:45). The narrative of Joseph and Aseneth expands on the above brief reference in Genesis to Joseph's marriage to Aseneth, an Egyptian woman. To determine the precise genre of the narrative is

---

[48] In my opinion, although the dietary restrictions (i.e., what one eats) are more prominent in the narrative, the possibility of commensal regulations (with whom one eats) portrayed through the specific seating arrangement of Jewish guests and Gentile hosts cannot be fully rejected. In other words, it is possible that the author is prescribing both Jewish food and commensal restrictions to his readers.

[49] It is striking to note that none of the demands concerning food and commensality at the banquet have been made by the high priest himself or the Jews themselves. One possible reason can be that the delegation did not have to make these demands on their own since it was assumed that the king would be well aware of these things.

difficult since it builds upon a scriptural reference and includes elements of the romantic novel that one finds in the Hellenistic culture.[50] Susan Docherty testifies that the narrative "demonstrates the ongoing interaction between Jewish and Greco-Roman culture."[51] Even though the narrative has only received scholarly attention within the last four decades in-depth to understand the historical, sociological, and religious aspects of early Judaism and Christianity, the literary work has been recognized for a long period. The significance and relevance of the narrative can be witnessed by the number of copies that have been well preserved in multiple languages (Greek, Syriac, Armenian, Slavonic).[52]

The narrative's genre, date, provenance, and background are tough to determine. Despite the uncertainty of provenance and the language in which the narrative was written, most scholars have shown consensus on the Egyptian origin of the Greek language document.[53] Furthermore, the date of the original composition of the document seems to be quite uncertain. However, within the parameters, it can be dated between 100 BCE and 115 CE.[54] Lastly, although without consensus, the narrative has been perceived as the work of a Jewish author who wrote for the Jewish community.[55]

---

[50] See Randall D. Chesnutt (*From Death to Life: Conversion in Joseph and Aseneth*, J*ournal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*, Supplements [Sheffield, UK: JSOT Press, 1995], 85–93), who discusses the scholarly debate concerning the genre of Joseph and Aseneth's narrative.

[51] Docherty, *The Jewish Pseudepigrapha*, 39.

[52] For a comprehensive discussion of current and historical research of the narrative, see Chesnutt, *From Death to Life*, 21–93.

[53] Chesnutt, *From Death to Life*, 69; Nickelsburg, "Stories of Biblical and Early Post-Biblical Times," 71; Docherty, *The Jewish Pseudepigrapha*, 40; Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism*, 92.

[54] Chesnutt, *From Death to Life*, 85; Terence L. Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles: Jewish Patterns of Universalism (to 135 CE)* (Waco, TX: 2007), 142. Others, such as Nickelsburg ("Stories of Biblical and Early Post-Biblical Times," 71), Docherty (*The Jewish Pseudepigrapha*, 40), and Barclay (*Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 204), estimate the date of the document between 100 BCE and 100 CE.

[55] Nickelsburg, "Stories of Biblical and Early Post-Biblical Times," 69; Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, 104; Docherty, *The Jewish Pseudepigrapha*, 40.

Synopsis of the narrative. In content, the narrative is composed of two different but related sections.[56] The first section is about Pentephres's daughter, Aseneth, and her conversion from idolatry to the Jewish religion through her marriage to Joseph, whom the narrative portrays as a pious and faithful Jew who accentuates his distinct Jewish identity (chaps. 1–21). At the very outset, the heroine's lifestyle seems to be richly luxurious and fanciful. Furthermore, the author portrays Aseneth as an arrogant virgin who despises all men in the world as potential marriage partners, including Joseph, whom her father wants her to marry (chaps. 1–4). Once she sees Joseph, however, her attitude changes, and she shows interest in marrying him. But to her disappointment, Joseph rejects her because of her idolatrous religion (chaps. 5–8). Upon repenting from idolatry to the God of Israel, she is accepted by a heavenly man (chaps. 9–17). Her conversion to Judaism ultimately leads her to marry Joseph (chaps. 18–21). The second section brings a twist in the narrative (chaps. 22–29) by relating how the son of Pharaoh plans to kill Joseph, abduct Aseneth and marry her, and then murder Pharaoh, his own father. His plot, however, is unsuccessful, resulting in his humiliation. The narrative concludes with Joseph's rising to power to rule Egypt for forty-eight years until Pharaoh's younger son becomes competent in assuming authority.

Exegetical analysis: Food, table-fellowship, and Jewish identity in Joseph and Aseneth. The narrative of Joseph and Aseneth contains elements of strong emotions and the romantic union of a couple and is in many respects considered a Jewish romantic novel (6; 15:1–10; 18–20. However, the author's ultimate goal in composing this Jewish text is not limited to entertaining his readers by merely invoking feelings of sentimentalism; it is much more than that.[57] Through this narrative, the author also seeks

---

[56] Johnson, *Historical Fictions and Hellenistic Jewish Identity*, 117.

[57] Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 205.

to accomplish specific ideological purposes for his audience. Several key themes the author wants to communicate to his audience are as follows: Gentile conversion/inclusion within Judaism (10–13; 14–17); the nature and character of God (8:9; 11:7–14, 18; 12:1, 8, 13–15); socio-cultural and ethical customs based on the Jewish law (7:1; 8:5, 9; 15:5; 16:16, 21); and the author's perception and attitude towards non-Jews (8:5, 9; 11:7–8, 16–18; 12:4–6; 21:11–20).[58] Besides these key ideas, one prominent theme that frequently shows up in the narrative is the notion of Jewish distinction regarding identity.[59]

The emphasis on a distinct Jewish identity in this text can be observed in numerous references. This emphasis by the author seeks to address (1) how Jews are to interact with Gentiles socially and religiously in the Diaspora and (2) how converts from Gentile religious backgrounds (i.e., proselytes) are supposed to live after their conversion to Judaism and inclusion into the Jewish community.[60] The author highlights the notion of a distinct Jewish identity by the way Aseneth's father, Pentephres, priest of Heliopolis, describes Joseph's moral and religious qualities. In Pentephres's perception, Joseph is a worshipper of God, a self-controlled virgin, powerful in wisdom and experience, and God's spirit and wisdom are upon him (4:5–8). The instances of Joseph's refusal to dine with Egyptians (7:1), associate with Gentile woman (7:5), and kiss Aseneth (8:5–7) serve to accentuate Jewish identity. Aseneth, in her experience of repentance and conversion, not only renounces the practice of idol-worship (9:1; 10:12) but also abandons unclean

[58] For a helpful survey on several major themes in the narrative, see C. Burchard, "Joseph and Aseneth," in Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2:190–94; See also Docherty, *The Jewish Pseudepigrapha*, 44–50.

[59] E.g., see Chesnutt, *From Death to Life*, 97–108; Burchard, "Joseph and Aseneth," 2:191; Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 205–9, 214–16; Johnson, *Historical Fictions and Hellenistic Jewish Identity*, 118; Docherty, *The Jewish Pseudepigrapha*, 45–47.

[60] Johnson, *Historical Fictions and Hellenistic Jewish Identity*, 118.

food (10:1, 13, 17).[61] Identifying the socio-ethnic distinction between Jews and Gentiles in Joseph and Aseneth and the conflict between two groups that arises from it, Randall D. Chesnutt states,

> The pervasiveness of this tension, the expression of Jewish self-identity in terms of it, the narrative of Aseneth's conversion in the context of it, and the obvious concern to regulate Jewish conduct within it, make it difficult to resist the conclusion that the tension is not merely literary but echoes social reality in the community of *Joseph and Aseneth*.[62]

In short, alongside telling the couple's romantic story, the author's belief of the distinction between Jews and Gentiles and how this distinction expresses itself through socio-religious beliefs and practices is widespread in the narrative.

Having established the argument for the presence of the notion of a distinct Jewish identity in Joseph and Aseneth's narrative in general, in the below section, I will discuss how this Jewish ethnic distinction manifests itself in the issue related to food and table-fellowship.

The author of Joseph and Aseneth portrays the Jewish community as distinct due to its appropriate use of food and table-fellowship regulations. Several references in the narrative suggest that Jews be observant in their choice of food and ointment and regarding the prohibition of mixed Jew-Gentile table-fellowship (7:1; 8:5, 9; 15:5; 16:16; 19:5; 21:13, 21).[63] Chesnutt, discussing the meaning and role of meal terminology within the narrative's literary and socio-religious context, suggests that the narrative presents "a high evaluation of meals and a strong concern to avoid defilement in connection with them. Indeed, for both, Jewish self-identity seems to have been largely determined by

---

[61] Johnson, *Historical Fictions and Hellenistic Jewish Identity*, 118; Chesnutt, *From Death to Life*, 97–108.

[62] Chesnutt, *From Death to Life*, 108.

[63] These references are typically labelled as "meal formula" whereby scholars debate whether the bread, cup, and anointing in these references allude to Jewish ritual meals in connection with conversion to Judaism, refer to temple worship of pagan and mystery religions, or simply reflect Jewish dietary practices highlighting a particular Jewish lifestyle in contrast to Gentile way of life. For a brief survey of this scholarly dispute, see Chesnutt, *From Death to Life*, 128–35.

this."[64] To illustrate, in the episode in which Aseneth comes to kiss Joseph, he denies a kiss from her, saying,

> It is not fitting for a man who worships God, who will bless with his mouth the living God and eat blessed bread of life and drink a blessed cup of immortality and anoint himself with blessed ointment of incorruptibility to kiss a strange woman who will bless with her mouth dead and dumb idols and *eat* from their table bread of strangulation and *drink* from their libation a cup of insidiousness and anoint herself with ointment of destruction. (Jos. Asen. 8:5–6; emphasis added)

Joseph's justification for refusing Aseneth a kiss lies both in his socio-religious beliefs and practices. A faithful Jew's identity is established both by his worshipping of the true God as well as by his consuming "the right kind of 'bread,' 'cup,' and 'ointment.'" The right choice of eating and drinking serves to distinguish Joseph from a Gentile.[65]

Another instance in the narrative that discusses the role of mixed table-fellowship in constructing and prioritizing a distinct Jewish identity is found in chapter 7. The author recounts that upon his arrival into the district of Heliopolis, Joseph sends his attendants to Pentephres, asking, "May I be your guest today, for it is near noon and time for the mid-day meal? The sun is overpowering, and I would enjoy some refreshment under your roof. When Pentephres heard this, he was overjoyed" (3:1–5a). Later, the author relates, "And Joseph came to Pentephres' house and sat down on a throne, and he washed his feet, and they placed a table in front of him separately, because he would not eat with the Egyptians, for this was an abomination to him" (7:1).

Joseph's decision to lodge at Pentephres's house (3:1–3a) and Pentephres's exciting reaction to Joseph's arrival at his place (3:3b–4) in this section of the narrative depicts a cordial relationship between a Jew and Gentile. Joseph voluntarily chooses to be

---

[64] Chesnutt, *From Death to Life*, 179; cf. Gillian Feeley-Harnik, *The Lord's Table: The Meaning of Food in Early Judaism and Christianity* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994), 95–96.

[65] Burchard, "Joseph and Aseneth," 2:212.

at the priest's house to have his mid-day meal, escaping the sun's scorching heat. Equally, at Joseph's request, Pentephres shows a friendly gesture by welcoming Joseph to his place, and not only that; he also goes so far as to suggest that his daughter, Aseneth, marry his guest, Joseph. At this point, positive social interaction is seen between persons of two different socio-religious backgrounds. However, this positive bilateral relationship between Joseph and Pentephres seems to disappear at Joseph's meal table. After entering Pentephres's house, Joseph makes himself comfortable by sitting and washing his feet. Then, the narrative relates that "they [probably Pentephres's house servants] placed a table" for Joseph "separately because he would not eat with the Egyptians" since "eating with the Egyptians" would be "an abomination to him" (7:1).

It is noteworthy that while Joseph does not hesitate to pay a visit to Pentephres's house or have his meal under Pentephres's roof, he is careful not to turn his meeting into mingling with a Gentile. For this reason, Joseph deliberately adopts separation at the meal table since he considers it abhorrent to have table-fellowship with the Egyptians.

Why does Joseph separate himself from the Egyptians (in particular) or Gentiles (in general) at the table-fellowship? What urges him to do so? Some scholars have identified a social distinction between Jews and Gentiles in Joseph and Aseneth's narrative, as already discussed above.[66] This social and religious barrier can be observed in broader as well as more specific ways. For instance, in a broader sense, the author prefers to compare Aseneth's beauty to the Israelite women instead of the Egyptians (1:5), gloriously portraying Joseph's entrance into Pentephres's house (5:4–7), and credits him with angelic status (6:1–8). More specifically, the socio-religious distinction vividly manifests itself in the narrative when Joseph does not share the table-fellowship

[66] Chesnutt, *From Death to Life*, 97–99; cf. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, 232–33; Docherty, *The Jewish Pseudepigrapha*, 45–47; Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 145.

with his hosts (7:1) and refuses to kiss Aseneth because "she blessed with her mouth dead and dumb idols and eats from their table" (8:5–7). Hence, Chesnutt correctly claims that this socio-religious distinction in the narrative "reinforces the reader's initial impression that the author wishes to set Joseph and his people qualitatively apart from all others and generates the expectation that the story will somehow revolve around this fundamental difference."[67]

Joseph's decision of not eating a mixed meal with the Egyptians has to do with his sense of a distinct Jewish identity. His distinct Jewish identity forces him not to associate with the Egyptians at the table-fellowship.[68] Although the author presents Joseph's Egyptian hosts as those who are welcoming and hospitable, "their sympathy for Judaism does not exempt them from Joseph's separation in table-fellowship, as they still worship the gods of the Egyptians."[69] The social and religious distinctions between Jews and Gentiles present in the narrative are not just literary details but also real and practical issues for the author's audience.[70]

Furthermore, it is significant to make two observations in the text: First, what seems to be problematic to Joseph in this incident is not the Egyptian *food* but *the company* of the Egyptians (διότι Ἰωσὴφ οὐ συνήσθιε μετὰ τῶν Αἰγυπτίων). It is probable that the food served to Joseph came from Pentephres's house since the text does not explicitly mention Joseph's bringing his own food with him.[71] Moreover, the text seems

---

[67] Chesnutt, *From Death to Life*, 98.

[68] I am aware that later in the narrative when Pharaoh arranges a wedding banquet for Joseph and Aseneth, Joseph does not demand any such segregation form the Egyptians. Barclay (*Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 211) rightly notes that "the missing reference to separation at table is a function of narrative necessity rather than religious laxity." Cf. Donaldson (*Judaism and the Gentiles*, 145–46), who thinks that "it is simply due to the constraints of the narrative."

[69] Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, 232.

[70] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 142; Chesnutt, *From Death to Life*, 99.

[71] Sanders (*Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah*, 383) correctly notes that Joseph's separation from Egyptians at the mixed table-fellowship does not necessarily imply that the issue at stake

to emphasize the social space, not the food items served. Joseph sat "separately" (κατ' ἰδίαν), which implies a lack of social intercourse. Second, Joseph shows no hesitancy in socially associating with the Egyptians on a general level. He rejects the company of the Egyptians, however, at the table-fellowship because sharing a table-fellowship with them is "an abomination to him" (βδέλυγμα ἦν αὐτῷ τοῦτο).

In his discussion of the role of food in Second Temple literature, E. P. Sanders calls the narrative of Joseph and Aseneth "a hard line work."[72] Sanders's designation is based on the fact that the author of this narrative intends to discourage social assimilation between Jews and Gentiles at the mixed table-fellowship. However, while Sanders finds this text to be "opposing some forms of social intercourse between Jew and Gentile," he thinks that the notion of Jewish exclusivism projected by the author in "the early part of the romance is not maintained through the story of the feast."[73] Sanders illustrates his point by referring to different events in the narrative that demonstrate this tension. First, Sanders points out that prior to Aseneth's conversion, the author makes Joseph refuse the mixed table-fellowship by sitting separately from Egyptians (7:1). However, he does not follow the same pattern at the wedding feast where one might expect the couple to sit and eat at a separate table to avoid Gentile contact (21:2–9). The author does not do that because "it would be too anti-social to say so."[74] Second, Sanders also highlights this inconsistency by arguing that Joseph denies Aseneth's kiss because she consumes Gentile meat and wine (8:4–7). However, the author fails to offer "practical help on how to avoid

---

was Jewish food. He argues, "When sat at his own table, we do not learn what he dined on or how it was supplied."

[72] Sanders, *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah*, 383. See also Barclay (*Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 181, 204–16), who puts Joseph and Aseneth under the category of Jewish texts "whose socio-cultural stance is predominantly oppositional and antagonistic."

[73] Sanders, *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah*, 383.

[74] Sanders, *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah*, 383.

Gentile food while not breaking off social relations, except the separate table of 7.1."[75]

In response to Sanders's objection to the text's inconsistency in maintaining Jewish exclusivity throughout the narrative, we should acknowledge this apparent tension since there are gaps in the narrative that seem to be inconsistent with the author's overall ideology. Nevertheless, it would equally be wrong to assume carelessness or negligence on the author's part because he fails to make specific comments on every single instance in the narrative. Barclay is right in claiming that the "depiction of friendly relations" that appears to be "out of step with the antagonistic spirit" in the narrative is not to be perceived as "a serious discrepancy."[76] Barclay views the hints of positive social relations of Joseph with Pharoah and Pentephres in the narrative as "to a large extent necessary for the narrative to work at all."[77] From this viewpoint, commenting on the mutual celebration of the couple's wedding feast, Barclay suggests,

> If the wedding is celebrated with common feasting, the missing reference to separation at table is a function of narrative necessity rather than religious laxity: while the earlier disjunction of Joseph at the meal table (7.1) was an important symbol of social alienation, it will not do to insert a jarring note of disharmony into an otherwise happy ending.[78]

Therefore, perhaps it is better to approach the apparent tension in the narrative related to Jewish food and commensality practices not as "inconsistency" or "discrepancy" but as the "necessity of the narrative."

Overall, the narrative of Joseph and Aseneth authenticates the possibility that there may have been Jews in the Diaspora who disapproved of the practice of eating with Gentiles. The reason for this is that such unrestricted Jew-Gentile interaction at the table-fellowship would break the social boundary of their Jewish distinctiveness. Considering

---

[75] Sanders, *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah*, 383–84.

[76] Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 210.

[77] Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 210.

[78] Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 211.

the explicit mentioning of Joseph's denial of partaking in the mixed table-fellowship with Gentiles (Egyptians in particular in this case), one can categorize this event as a depiction of Jewish "commensality-based restrictions." Furthermore, Joseph's act of separation at the meal table verifies the priority of his distinct Jewish identity.

The Tales of Two Jewish Heroines: Judith and Esther[79]

Judith. According to David A. deSilva, the narrative of Judith is "the story of a contest between the dominant Gentiles, with their claims about the gods, and the God of Israel—a prominent dynamic that runs throughout the history of Israel from the exodus through the Second Temple period."[80] This story primarily focuses on a pious Jewish widow named Judith. She determines to redeem God's people (i.e., the nation of Israel) and God's temple from the hands of an Assyrian military general, Holofernes, and his massive armed forces.[81]

Let us begin by summarizing the historical context of the narrative. The book of Judith begins by presenting Nebuchadnezzar as a powerful, prideful, and revengeful ruler who, in his desire to expand his authority and kingdom, declares war on Arphaxad, the king of the Medes. To carry out his ambition, Nebuchadnezzar demands aid from other surrounding subjects. While his eastern vassals decide to go along with his agenda, the western regions reject any alliance and refuse to go along with Nebuchadnezzar's

---

[79] Since the two ancient Jewish texts have already been discussed comprehensively to establish my argument in this chapter, due to space constraints, it is difficult to deal with other Jewish texts individually and with the same level of depth as the previous two texts. However, sufficient information will be provided in the analysis of these two narratives to make the overall argument of this chapter stronger.

[80] deSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha*, 85.

[81] For a brief survey of historical issues related to the text's historicity, dating, author, composition, and purpose, see Lawrence M. Wills, *Judith*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2019), 5–23; deSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha*, 90–95; Deborah Levine Gera, *Judith*, CEJL (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2014), 26–44; Helen Efthimiadis-Keith, *The Enemy Is Within: A Jungian Psychoanalytic Approach to the Book of Judith*, Biblical Interpretation Series (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 18–23; Carey A. Moore, *Judith: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1985), 38–63.

plan infuriates the king and push him to take revenge against these regions (1:1–16). After defeating Arphaxad, Nebuchadnezzar appoints Holofernes as commander-in-chief to battle the western regions and take revenge (2:1–13). After subjecting Persia, Cilicia, Libya, and the Midianites under his authority (2:14–3:4), Holofernes shifts his attention to the nation of Israel. In these circumstances, the Israelite community's major fear is protecting God's temple (4:1–3).[82]

At this moment of the Israelites' utter fear and worry, a Jewish heroine, Judith, whom the author portrays as morally and religiously noble, comes to the forefront of the story (8:1–8, 9–36). Although the story's champion in readers' eyes, Judith thinks of herself only as a weak and vulnerable instrument in God's hands who cares for the weak and lowly (9:11). Disguising and presenting herself as an ally of Holofernes (10:1–23; 11:1–19), she wins the confidence of the Assyrian commander and his army. On the fourth evening of her stay with the army camp, Judith seduces (12:10–13:2) and kills Holofernes by beheading him with his own sword (13:3–10). The terror of Holofernes's killing grips his vast army, causing them to flee. However, Jews seek the opportunity to pursue, kill, and plunder Holofernes's fleeing army (14:1–15:7). Judith's courage and victory over the Gentile nation lead the high priest, Joakim, and the Jewish elders to praise and bless her (15:8–16:17). Releasing her slave and distributing her inheritance among her relatives, Judith dies at the age of 105 (16:18–25).

---

[82] It is important to mention that the first half of the narrative of Judith (chaps. 1-7) is replete with geographical and historical details that scholars typically consider to be unreliable as well as irrelevant to the overall plot of the story. For a brief survey of the nature and aim of the book's initial sections, see Moore, *Judith*, 37–38, 46, 52–56, 123–24; L. Alonso-Schökel, "Narrative Structures in the Book of Judith," in *Narrative Structures in the Book of Judith: Protocol of the Eleventh Colloquy, 27 January 1974*, ed. W. Wuellner, Protocol Series of the Colloquies of the Center for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture 11 (Berkeley: Center for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture, 1975), 3–5; T. Carven, *Artistry and Faith in the Book of Judith*, SBL Dissertation Series 70 (Chico, CA: Society of Biblical Literature, 1983), 9, 47–48, 53–59; deSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha*, 92–95; Johnson, *Historical Fictions and Hellenistic Jewish Identity*, 25–29.

Exegetical analysis: Food, table-fellowship, and Jewish identity in Judith.

The narrative of Judith has been analyzed from various perspectives.[83] However, as in the case of the Second Temple Jewish texts examined above, I will mainly explore the notion of distinct Jewish identity constructed in food and mixed table-fellowship practices found in the narrative through my analysis of this text.

When Judith is carefully read, one can hardly ignore that Jewish distinctiveness, both on a communal and an individual level, holds an important place in the development of the narrative. For example, after seeing the possibility of being invaded by the foreign Assyrian army, the high priest, Joakim, directs the Israelites to fervent prayers and religious observances in order to seek God's favor in this situation. The author says that all Israelite men—along with their wives, children, cattle, alien residents, and slaves—"prostrated themselves before the temple and put ashes on their heads and spread out their sackcloth before the Lord" (4:6–11). Jewish prayers and different religious practices reflect their unique relationship with God, which entails their distinct identity as God's chosen people. They seek divine intervention in times of crisis.

Furthermore, Jews are aware of their distinct identity among other Gentile nations, but Gentiles themselves also recognize Jews' distinctiveness in their relationship with God. In response to Holofernes's inquiry of the Israelites' geographical, ethical, and political information, Achior, the Ammonite leader, presents an extensive discourse. His discourse essentially expresses the nature of a bilateral relationship between Yahweh and

---

[83] For example, the following list represents various approaches employed by scholarship in understanding the book of Judith: Efthimiadis-Keith, *The Enemy Is Within*; Benedikt Otzen, *Tobit and Judith* (New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002); Kevin R. Brine, Elena Ciletti, and Henrike Lähnemann, *The Sword of Judith: Judith Studies across the Disciplines* (Cambridge: Open Book, 2010); Géza G. Xeravits, ed., *A Pious Seductress: Studies in the Book of Judith* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2012); Gera, *Judith*; Edgar J. Burns, "The Genealogy of Judith," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 18 (1956): 19–22; Helen Efthimiadis-Keith, "Genealogy, Retribution and Identity: Re-Interpreting the Cause of Suffering in the Book of Judith," *Old Testament Essays* 27, no. 3 (2014): 860–78; Outi Lehtipuu, "'Receive the Widow Judith, Example of Chastity': The Figure of Judith as a Model Christian in Patristic Interpretations," in *Biblical Women in Patristic Reception/Biblische Frauen in Patristischer Rezeption*, ed. Agnethe Siquans, vol. 25, Reading Scripture in Judaism and Christianity (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017), 186–219; Michał Wojciechowski, "Moral Teaching of the Book of Judith," *Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies* 14 (2012): 85–96.

the Israelites. The words that the author of Judith put into Achior's mouth vividly speak to Jews' distinct identity that has been testified by the Gentiles as well. In Achior's speech, since the Israelite community "did not wish to follow the ways of their ancestors" (5:7) and "abandoned the ways of their ancestors" (5:8), God set them free from their worship of other gods (5:8b). Achior further adds that the Israelites' God made them dwell in the land of Canaan with much abundance (5:9–10), protected them from famine (5:10), and brought them out of Egyptian captivity when they suffered at the hands of an evil Egyptian king (5:11–16). It is noteworthy that the exaltation of the Israelites' God and the nation's unique relationship with him in Achior's speech is of such a nature that Holofernes and his officers get so infuriated that they wish to cut Achior into pieces (5:22–24). Moreover, at the end of the narrative, testifying that the Israelites' God finally saves them from the hands of the Assyrian army, Achior decides to adopt a Jewish identity through the rite of circumcision (14:10).[84]

The concept of distinct Jewish identity in the narrative becomes even more noticeable in Judith's strict adherence to dietary laws and her avoidance of mixed table-fellowship with a Gentile figure (10:5; 11:13; 12:2, 9, 19).[85]

After her long and fervent prayer to God (9:1–14), Judith finally gets ready for her mission to gain victory for her community. The author mentions that Judith, along with other preparations for her journey to the Assyrians' camp (10:3–4), "gave her maid a skin of wine and a flask of oil, and filled a bag with roasted grain, dried fig cakes, and fine bread; then she wrapped up all her dishes and gave them to her to carry" (10:5). What did the author of the narrative intend to communicate through this reference concerning food? Were the food items mentioned in the list simply telling readers of that

---

[84] Anne-Mareike Wetter, *On Her Account: Reconfiguring Israel in Ruth, Esther, and Judith*, Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 623 (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 156–68, 195–220.

[85] The author of the narrative, in his introduction of the character of Judith, has already described her moral, religious, and physical qualities that distinguishes her from other women. The narrative's heroine strictly observes the Sabbath and all the Jewish festivals (8:4–8).

era's staple diet, or do they signify something else? In his commentary on Judith, Lawrence M. Mills says, "The fact that they [the food items] are specified is suggestive."[86] The reason behind Judith's preparation must be ideological rather than merely a physical provision since the Jewish heroine not only takes her own food but utensils as well (10:5b). It is probably Judith's strict observance of Jewish dietary customs that motivated her to make these preparations to protect her distinct Jewish identity from the Gentiles among whom she would be dwelling.[87] Remarking on the role of Judith's overall preparation, Lawrence suggests,

> To the extent that the book of Judith tells the story of a heroic quest, the food, her bathing, and the lambskin on which she sits are almost like magical protections for her while she is in the wilderness. The food, bathing, and the lambskin together protect her, even though, like her extended mourning period, they may lie outside normal halakic restrictions.[88]

What kind of "protection" is Lawrence referring to here? Certainly, it would be an error to assume protection from starvation, thirst, or physical uncleanliness in the narrative's context. The protection Lawrence refers to here entails the protection of Judith's distinct Jewish identity that she strives to prioritize by observing socio-religious practices (including her abstinence from Gentile food).

Furthermore, in her attempt to convince Holofernes of Israel's incoming calamity and destruction, Judith informs the commander-in-chief of God's wrath upon Israel. The Lord will punish the Israelites because their lack of food and water has led them "to kill their livestock and have determined to use all that God by his laws has forbidden to eat" (11:12). In other words, Judith's explanation of God's punishment to Israel lies in their consumption of prohibited foodstuff. Her comment signifies the

---

[86] Lawrence Wills, *Judith*, 307.

[87] Lawrence Wills, *Judith*, 308. Furthermore, among other food items in the list that Judith took with her, the mentioning of wine and oil is of more importance because Jews avoided Gentile wine and oil, in particular, because of their extensive use by Gentiles in their religious activities. See Sanders, *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah*, 380–81.

[88] Lawrence Wills, *Judith*, 308.

importance of the observance of Jewish dietary regulations in God's sight.[89]

That Judith continues to prioritize her distinctive Jewish identity while dwelling amid Gentiles is further authenticated by her avoidance of partaking in mixed table-fellowship with the Gentile general, Holofernes (12:2). Having been pleased by Judith's speech against Israel (11:5–23), Holofernes orders his servants to set a meal table for Judith "with some of his own delicacies, and with some of his own wine to drink" (12:1). At Holofernes's offer of mixed table-fellowship, Judith replies, "I cannot partake of them, or it will be an offense; but I will have enough with the things I brought with me" (12:2). Judith's refusal could have easily offended the commander-in-chief and put her life at risk. However, Judith seems to be more concerned about not committing an "offense" against God than pleasing Holofernes by taking his meal-sharing offer. Just as surprising as Judith's rejection of Gentile food in the mixed table-fellowship is Holofernes's "graciousness in responding to her dietary restrictions. . . . He understands her requirements immediately as a Jewish boundary practice."[90] deSilva claims that Judith's consciousness in utilizing her own food and utensils at the table-fellowship with Holofernes represents a scenario in which a Jew and a Gentile might share the same table. However, "it is still in such a manner as allows the Jews to maintain his or her social distinctiveness from the Gentile(s) at the table."

In summary, several references in Judith's narrative analyzed above in their respective contexts verify the notion of distinct Jewish identity accentuated by observing Jewish dietary practices. Furthermore, the selected instances in the story do not consider commensality between a Jew and a Gentile to be the issue; instead, it is the Gentile food that seems to jeopardize a Jewish distinctiveness. For this reason, this narrative belongs

---

[89] Lawrence Wills (*Judith*, 320) perceives that Judith's information, although intended to dodge Holofernes, involves "a sin involving Jewish boundary markers."

[90]Lawrence Wills, *Judith*, 326.

to the category of Jewish "food-based restrictions."

Additions to Esther. The Greek version of Esther is an expansion of the book of Esther composed in the Masoretic text. In this expanded version, the author of the Greek version of the book adds six major blocks of information (Add A: 11:2–12:6; Add B: 13:1–7; Add C: 13:8–14:19; Add D: 15:1–16; Add E: 16:1–24; Add F: 10:4–11:1) with "smaller but significant modifications of Hebrew Esther."[91] The tale of Esther is about a daughter of Aminadab (2:7), whose parents have both died and who has been raised by Mordecai. In the king's search of "virtuous girls" (2:2) in the Persian empire, Esther is obliged to enter into a virginal contest and compete for queenship (2:5–8). After undergoing intense beauty treatment (2:12) for the selection, Esther stands out among all of the contestants, and "the king loved Esther, and she found favor beyond all the other virgins," followed by her securing the queen's position (2:17). Mordecai, who also serves in the courtyard (2:19), helps uncover a plot among the court's chief bodyguards to murder the king (2:21–22), informing Esther so that she can warn the king in time. His act of loyalty brings him honor in the king's sight (2:23).

After king Artaxerxes grants Haman, son of Hammedatha, a high official status in his empire, "all who were at court used to do obeisance to Haman"—except Mordecai

---

[91] deSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha*, 110. Also, to study the relationship between Greek and Masoretic texts of Esther, see David J. A. Clines, *Esther Scroll: The Story of the Story*, *JSOT*Sup 30 (Sheffield, UK: JSOT Press, 1984); Michael V. Fox, *The Redaction of the Books of Esther: On Reading Composite Texts* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991); Fox, *Character and Ideology in the Book of Esther*, 2nd ed. (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1991), 254–73; Linda Day, *Three Faces of a Queen: Characterization in the Books of Esther*, *JSOT*Sup 186 (Sheffield, UK: JSOT Press, 1995), 15–18. Furthermore, on the date of the Greek version of Esther, see deSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha*, 116–18; E. J. Bickerman, "The Colophon of the Greek Book of Esther," in Tropper, *Studies in Jewish and Christian History*, 1:218–37 (originally published in *JBL* 63 [1944]); C. A. Moore, *Daniel, Esther, and Jeremiah: The Additions* (New York: Doubleday, 1977), 250; B. Jacob, "Das Buch Esther Bei Den LXX," *Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 10 (January 1890): 241–98; Kristin De Troyer, "Esther in Text-and Literary-Critical Paradise," in *The Book of Esther in Modern Research*, ed. Leonard Greenspoon and Sidnie White Crawford, *JSOT*Sup 380 (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 31–49; Tsaurayi Kudakwashe Mapfeka, *Esther in Diaspora: Toward an Alternative Interpretive Framework*, vol. 178, Biblical Interpretation Series (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 199–201; Jon D. Levenson, *Esther: A Commentary* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 25–27. Furthermore, to survey different scholarly interpretive and methodological approaches used for the narrative of Hebrew and Greek versions Esther, consult Mapfeka, *Esther in Diaspora*, 13–51.

(3:1–3). Taking Mordecai's act as insolence against him, Haman plots to murder all the Jews in the Persian empire (3:4b–13). Haman's planning for the destruction of the Jewish nation sends Mordecai into grief and turmoil (4:1–8). However, Mordecai asks Esther to intervene on behalf of the Jews to save the lives of her community (4:1–17). In the third addition of the Greek version of Esther's narrative, the author highlights the Jewish religiosity through Esther and Mordecai's prayers (Add C: 13:8–14:19). After praying fervently (Add C: 14:1–19), Esther approaches the king (Add D: 15:1–16). Finding favor in the king's eyes through divine intervention (15:8), Esther is allowed to ask the king whatever she wants (5:3).

Esther arranges a banquet and requests the king's attendance along with Haman (5:4). After the king and Haman attend the first banquet, Esther asks them to participate in another banquet the following day (5:8). In the meantime, Haman's wife and friends advise him to prepare the gallows for Mordecai to hang him (5:13–14). Once again, the Lord intervenes in the situation (6:1) by reminding the king of Mordecai's action of saving his life (6:2), and then the king commands Haman to honor Mordecai (6:4–11). At the second banquet, Esther discloses Haman's evil plan to the king to kill her and her community (7:1–6). Esther's words infuriate the king towards Haman; thus, Haman is hanged to death on the same gallows that he built for Mordecai (7:7–10). The narrative ends with Esther and Mordecai being exalted by the king in his empire (8:1–12; Add E: 16:1–24).

Exegetical analysis: Food, table-fellowship, and Jewish identity in Additions to Esther. The author of this document did not add the additional material in the Greek version of Esther without purpose. Just as any sacred text of a given community aims to affect its intended audience by communicating certain lessons, principles, or imperatives, the text of Esther does the same. Discussing how modifications function in the Greek translation of Esther, deSilva points out two main

things: First, he believes that alterations by the author in the text serve "to make Esther an overtly religious tale in which the main characters embody the distinctive marks of Judaism (dedication to the One God, the observance of Torah in all its particulars as a way of life, and the practice of pious acts of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving)."[92] Second, deSilva thinks that while the text expresses the idea "symbiosis," whereby Jews and Gentiles live more or less in cooperation, it still explicitly reveals to its readers "the tension and animosity between Jew and Gentile."[93]

For instance, after winning the queen contest and finally getting married to King Artaxerxes (2:15–18), Esther begins her journey of dwelling in the palace as the king's wife. However, due to Mordecai's instructions to her, she hides her ethnicity (2:20a).[94] The narrative's overall plot suggests that Mordecai's instruction to Esther to hide her ethno-religious identity was most likely based on his fear of other people's animosity towards Jewish identity.[95] However, lest Esther's *hiding* of her Jewish identity in this instance be taken as her *disregarding* or *abandoning* her Jewish identity, the author considers it necessary to add an important note in 2:20. That is, while requiring Esther to hide her Jewish identity, Mordecai emphasizes that "she was to fear God and keep His laws, just as she had done when she was with him," and then the author concludes with a comment, "So Esther did not change her mode of life" (2:20). It would

---

[92] deSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha*, 110.

[93] deSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha*, 110. Cf. Collins (*Between Athens and Jerusalem*, 111–12), who thinks that "the rigid division between Israel and the nations and the exaggerated emphasis on the separatist piety of Esther" is "to reflect the Hasmonean milieu in which the translation was made."

[94] One might object that what Mordecai is asking Esther to hide is her national—not religious—identity because of the word "country" (2:20a). However, as has already been discussed at the beginning of this chapter in the section "The Question of Jewish Identity: What It Means to Be a Jew?" Jewish national, ethic, and religious identity cannot be seen as dichotomous entities in ancient Jewish beliefs and practices. Thus, in light of this argument, Haman's instruction for Esther not to disclose her country refers in general to hiding her national, ethnic, and religious identity.

[95] The author's representation of Haman's abhorrence towards the Jewish nation in the narrative (3:4–13; 5:9, 14) shows that Mordecai's fear and his instructions for Esther to hide her Jewishness were legitimate.

not be inappropriate to presume that Esther's observance of God's laws would have likely included Jewish dietary laws as well. Through this text, the author may have been seeking to communicate the ideology that even after her marriage with a Gentile king and her social upgrading, Esther remains loyal to her ethno-religious identity. She prioritizes her distinct Jewish identity by following Jewish beliefs (14:2–19) and practices (14:17). Perhaps, the author wanted his readers to understand that it is practically possible for Jews to live in a Gentile environment and still establish or prioritize their distinctive Jewishness.

Furthermore, having been notified of Haman's plot of the destruction of the Jews (3:8–13; 4:1–6) and Mordecai's appeal for saving the Jews in the Persian empire (4:7–17), Esther, in her overwhelming fear, runs to the Lord and prays (Add C: 14:1). In her prayer, after highlighting the Lord's steadfast faithfulness, mercy, and deliverance for the Israelite nation (14:3–15), Esther talks about her moral and religious piety to honor the Lord (14:16–19).

These distinctive Jewish features and the Jewish-Gentile socio-ethnic and religious tension that the author attempts to portray in the main characters of the narrative can particularly be realized in the Jewish food and commensality practices strictly observed by Esther.[96] For example, in one of the references where the author shows Esther praying to God, Esther proclaims, "And your servant has not eaten at Haman's table, and I have not honored the king's feast or drunk the wine of libations" (14:17).[97] In this prayer, Esther's statement expresses the establishment and priority of a distinct Jewish identity in her Jewish food and commensality practices. Her prayer specifies the

---

[96] Freidenreich, *Foreigners and Their Food*, 41.

[97] Moore (*Daniel, Esther, and Jeremiah*, 212) reads the reference to "the wine of libations" as denoting the wine offered to pagan gods. In this manner, Esther presents herself as uncorrupted from idol-worshipping. Moore also notes that in comparison with the Hebrew narrative of Esther, "where Esther apparently ate the delicacies from the king's cuisine (2:9), here she avoids eating the king's food, some of which was certainly not kosher."

consciousness of *what* and *with whom* she eats. Even though dwelling in a Gentile environment like a queen, she neither shared a table with a Gentile nor consumed a Gentile's food.[98] What is Esther's rationale behind observing these social practices? The overall content of her lengthy prayer demonstrates Esther's understanding of the peculiarity and priority of her Jewishness (14:5–15). Commenting on Esther's prayer concerning her religious piety in general and her observance of the prohibition against forbidden food and mixed table-fellowship with Gentiles in particular, Jon D. Levenson states, "Esther has been transformed into a self-consciously loyal Jewess, a woman of prayer, penitence, and religious observance, in bed and at table."[99] Therefore, her socio-religious practice concerning the dietary and mixed table-fellowship should also be understood as establishing and prioritizing a distinct Jewish identity.[100]

Another incident in the narrative might lead the reader to charge the author with inconsistency in his views concerning eating regulations. To brighten his wife's dismal spirit, the king tells the queen to ask him for whatever she wishes (5:3; 15:7b–12). Esther displays her desire to have the king and Haman's dinner prepared by her (5:5). The king fulfills the queen's desire and attends the banquet arranged by her. Additionally, the author writes, "While they were drinking wine, the king said to Esther, 'what is it, Queen Esther? It shall be granted to you'" (5:6). The text says that instead of asking anything special, Esther simply requests that both the king and Haman attend the dinner again tomorrow prepared by her (5:7–8). It is easier for readers to assume that Esther's

---

[98] Although he observes the idea of religious piety in Esther's prayer, Collins (*Between Athens and Jerusalem*, 111) still considers her declaration to be "most implausible in the context of the story."

[99] Levenson, *Esther*, 86.

[100] Jordan D. Rosenblum (*Food and Identity in Early Rabbinic Judaism* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010], 38–39, 44–45), after analyzing various Jewish Hellenistic sources (including this exclusivist statement from Esther's prayer in the narrative), writes, "Commensality regulations are part of a larger process of Jewish identity construction that starts roughly in the Hasmonean period." Cf. Erich S. Gruen, *The Construct of Identity in Hellenistic Judaism: Essays on Early Jewish Literature and History*, vol. 29, Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2016), 64 [who believes that Esther's insistence in her prayer of not sharing table with Haman suggests "her adherence to dietary laws"]; Fox, *Character and Ideology in the Book of Esther*, 271.

invitation to the king and Haman must have included her sharing both the food and the table-fellowship with them. Thus, this assumption might further lead readers to infer that there exists an apparent contradiction between the banquet prepared by Esther (5:3–8) and the statement in her prayer that claims her avoidance of this social practice.

Nevertheless, a close reading of the text suggests the absence of any contradiction. On this issue, two important observations are in order: First, while the author portrays Esther as actively involved in the course of *invitation* and *preparation* of the dinner (5:4), nowhere in the text does he explicitly display Esther as involved in *eating* the food and *sharing* the table with the banquet guests. The pronoun "they" in 5:6a ("while they were drinking wine") does not necessarily imply Esther's sharing of wine. Rather, it may simply refer to the king and Haman's consumption of wine. Second, since Esther was solely responsible for arranging and preparing the dinner, it is not inappropriate to assume that she may have prepared the food for her guests under the Jewish dietary laws, even if the king and Haman were unaware of it. With this postulation, Esther's consumption of food would not have been problematic. However, this conjecture does not resolve the issue of commensality. It is better not to approach this tension in the narrative as reflective of the author's discrepancy or incompetency. Instead, through this depiction, the author of the narrative demonstrated that the historical circumstances required Diaspora Jews to have some degree of acculturation. However, simultaneously, this acculturation also led Diaspora Jews to seek to establish and prioritize their distinct Jewish identity. The material in the narrative of Esther displays the character of the Jewish heroine who, like Judith, actively seeks to construct and prioritize her distinctive Jewish identity through her specific dietary and commensal practices. Thus, concerning Jewish food customs, this narrative reflects both "food-based and commensality-based restrictions."

Conclusion

Beginning with how to approach the concept of Jewish identity, this chapter understands Jewish identity as a combination of both Jewish lineage and religious and socio-cultural practices. Moreover, an attempt has been made to understand the relevance of Jewish identity within the historical context of the Second Temple period and the various ways Second Temple Jews sought to establish and prioritize their distinctiveness. More particularly, by examining selected narratives from Second Temple Jewish texts (Let. Aris.; Jos. Asen.; Jdt.; Add Esth) in their respective contexts, this chapter has argued that these ancient Jewish texts expressed the construction and priority of a distinct Jewish identity through the observance of Jewish dietary and table-fellowship restrictions. The exegetical analysis of these texts demonstrates that Jewish practices are not monolithic. Instead, categorically speaking, these texts follow different kinds of food and commensal restrictions: sometimes "food-based restrictions," other times "commensality-based restrictions," or both at the same time.[101] The detailed examination of these Jewish texts has shown that although the texts display different kinds of restrictions, the underlying basis for these restrictions highlights a distinctiveness of Jewish identity constructed and prioritized by means of Jewish food and commensality norms and restrictions.

[101] Here, I would like to clarify that even though different Jewish texts examined in this chapter demonstrated different kinds of restrictions with regard to food and commensality, they are not necessarily contradictory to each other. Instead, one should approach these narratives as highlighting different modes of food restrictions. The primary purpose of the authors of these narratives, however, is to show their audiences how these specific table-fellowship practices serve to define and construct distinct Jewish identity.

CHAPTER 4

FOOD, TABLE-FELLOWSHIP, AND AGENCY IN SELECTED SECOND TEMPLE JEWISH TEXTS

Whereas chapter 3 focused on Jewish eating practices and restrictions in relation to Jewish identity, this chapter will highlight the relevance of those dietary practices in relation to the issue of agency. I will approach the concept of agency in this discussion by establishing a relationship between table-fellowship, identity, and agency. Based on the exegetical conclusions drawn from selected Second Temple Jewish texts in the previous chapter, I will explore in what ways the specific Jewish food and table-fellowship restrictions that Jews observed in the Second Temple period were related to the food laws found in the Torah. This chapter develops a link between a distinct Jewish identity and the Torah. Then, it will argue that the Torah served as the main agent in defining and constructing a distinct Jewish identity by observing specific food and table-fellowship restrictions in selected Jewish texts from the Second Temple period. Moreover, I will argue that the narratives of selected Second Temple Jewish texts involving food and mixed table-fellowship practices present humans as the active agent in prioritizing their distinct Jewish identity through their obedience to the laws of the Torah.

Religious Significance of Jewish Food and Table-Fellowship Practices

The fact of choosing *what* and *with whom* one eats as functioning to distinguish one individual or social group from another has been established (chap. 2). More particularly, the previous chapter's discussion has shown how Jewish food and table-fellowship practices adopted in the Second Temple period served as boundary

markers to *distinguish* Jewish identity from the ethnic identity of those of other nations. However, it is important to ask what specific purpose this Jewish "distinction" served. In other words, why did the Jewish community seek *to be different* from their surrounding neighbors in matters of food and commensality? Did Jews observe specific food and commensal restrictions merely to establish a *social or geographical distinction*? This chapter will propose that the motif of Jewish identity distinction regarding food and table-fellowship practices did not merely have a social dimension but a religious one as well. Jewish identity's religious significance can be confirmed by the fact that God himself ordained it and provided the means for the Jewish nation to *sustain* it through the observance of the Torah.

The book of Exodus unfolds the historical narrative of Israel's deliverance from Egyptian slavery. God sends forth various plagues upon the nation of Egypt to manifest his sovereignty, glory, and will upon Pharoah (Exod 7:4b–5; 7:14–11:10). In describing the last divine plague that would cause the death of all firstborn sons of Egypt, Moses tells Pharoah, "Then you will know that the Lord makes a *distinction* between Egypt and Israel" (Exod 11:7b; emphasis added). Moses's statement to Pharoah illuminates the Lord's deliberate decision "to differentiate completely between the Egyptians and the Israelites" in the context of divine wrath and judgment.[1] The last plague makes a clear statement about Israel's distinction and thus its unique relationship with God. Moreover, it is important to observe that it is not the Israelite nation that creates this distinction for itself; instead, the divine agent pronounces it. Commenting on this verse, Eugene Carpenter remarks,

> The text is careful to say that Yahweh makes the distinction (יַפְלֶה). It is not first of all a man-made difference based on culture, wealth, language, biology, ethnicity—it is Yahweh's distinction. The distinction of God's people lies with God, not humankind; the combination of Yahweh's covenant and its laws that were "right in

[1] Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, New American Commentary, vol. 2 (Nashville: B&H, 2006), 267.

his eyes" were unique gifts to Israel and essentially unparalleled in the ancient Near East.[2]

In other words, the Israelite nation's distinction lies not in its own social or religious characteristic; instead, Jews are distinct because God chose them to be distinct. Furthermore, it is not only in this reference that one finds the notion of Israel's distinctiveness. Many other instances in the Old Testament authenticate this phenomenon that lies at the core of Jewish beliefs and customs (e.g., Num 23:9; Deut 4:7, 8; 7:6–8; 33:29; 2 Sam 7:23; Ps 147:20; Isa 44:1; Ezek 16:34).[3] The Jewish community sought to establish this religious distinction through their observance of God's laws provided in the Torah. One category under the laws constituted eating practices, which functioned to regulate the Jewish community's distinction and their relationship with God.

The theme of food and its symbolic practices hold an important place in the Hebrew Bible. The Jewish people perceived these eating customs as a means through which they regulated not only their relationship with other non-Jewish nations but mainly their relationship with Yahweh, who made a provision for these food laws.[4] For instance, before setting the Israelites free from the bondage of Egyptian slavery, Yahweh commands the Jewish community to observe the Passover meal, which by food and its ingestion symbolizes God's freeing them from slavery (Exod 12). This communal meal

---

[2] Eugene Carpenter, *Exodus 1–18*, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016), 433. Cf. P. Machinist, "The Question of Distinctiveness in Ancient Israel," in *Essential Papers on Israel and the Ancient Near East*, ed. Frederick E. Greenspahn (New York: New York University Press, 1991), 420–42, 424, 429–31.

[3] John M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE–117 CE)* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 1–4; Terence L. Donaldson, *Gentile Christian Identity from Cornelius to Constantine: The Nations, the Parting of the Ways, and Roman Imperial Ideology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020), 106–7.

[4] See Gillian Feeley-Harnik (*The Lord's Table: The Meaning of Food in Early Judaism and Christianity* [Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994], 72, 95), who claims that Jewish food customs and restrictions "had long been one of the most important languages in which Jews conceived and conducted social relations among human beings and between human beings and God." See also Norman Wirzba (*Food and Faith: A Theology of Eating* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011], 4), who thinks that "food is about the relationships that that join us to the earth, fellow creatures, loved ones and guests, and ultimately God." Developing a more general theological approach to food, Wirzba further writes, "A thoughtful, theological relation to food makes possible the discovery that eating is among the most intimate and pleasing ways possible for us to enter into the memberships of creation and find there the God who blesses and feeds us."

had religious significance for the Israelites. Moreover, it established them as God's chosen people for whom God has brought salvation and distinguished them from their Egyptian neighbors. Yahweh's freeing the Israelites from Egyptian slavery led the chosen community to a new promised land of independence. The Lord does not describe this promised land with geographical dimensions; instead, he calls it "a land flowing with milk and honey" (Exod 3:8, 17)—a phrase that symbolizes material prosperity and fulfillment. Finally, upon entering and possessing the land, the Israelites are given specific food laws, among many other instructions. These dietary laws instruct the Jewish nation about what they may or may not consume (Lev 11; Deut 14). The Jewish community must observe these laws to set themselves apart (Lev 11:44) as a religious community that belongs to the holy God (Lev 11:44–45). Furthermore, the Old Testament portrays table-fellowship practices, like food, as relating to every aspect of life, including a distinct Jewish identity (Gen 14:18–20; 26:26–31; 29:22, 27–28; 31:44–46; Josh 9:3–15; Judg 9:26–28; 2 Sam 3:20; 9:7, 10–11; Prov 15:17; 17:1). Sharing a meal demonstrates acceptance, togetherness, and reconciliation (Gen 43:31–34). In contrast, declining meal-sharing indicates a broken relationship (1 Sam 20:34).

These biblical references demonstrate that Jewish food and commensal practices carried out by the Jews functioned to accomplish two main goals: First, from a social standpoint, these practices served to build a fence around the Israelites to protect their distinct Jewish identity. Second, from a religious standpoint, Jews' distinct Jewish identity established a unique relationship between Yahweh and them.

The Role of the Torah in the Construction of Distinct Jewish Identity

In its social and religious dimensions, identity does not operate as something that one attains only as a heritage and then forgets about. Instead, identity is defined and

maintained by certain socio-religious and cultural practices.[5] This feature particularly holds true in the case of Judaism as a religion. Josephus, the Jewish historian, says that Moses believed "that it is not family ties alone that constitute a relationship, but agreement in the principles of conduct."[6] Furthermore, John J. Collins claims that although Jewish identity had a genealogical component to it, Jews "reinforced their identity by attendance at synagogue and observance of Sabbath, *kashrut*, and other distinctive Jewish observances."[7]

In light of this observation, this study has so far argued that Jewish food and table-fellowship practices in selected Second Temple Jewish texts served as one of the significant boundary markers to construct and prioritize distinct Jewish identity. Nevertheless, it is equally important to ask from where Jews attained these socio-religious Jewish eating practices. In other words, on what source were these food practices based? I will argue that the concept of distinct Jewish identity was directly tied to the Torah as the main agent that functioned both to define and construct Jews' distinctive identity and to regulate their relationship with God. By considering the Torah as the central agent in defining and prioritizing a distinct Jewish identity, I do not mean to deprioritize the role of the divine agent, Yahweh, who provides the Torah to his people as a gift of divine revelation. As noted above, the divine agent himself establishes the Jewish distinction. However, the means the divine agent chooses for Jews to maintain this distinction and ultimately their relationship with him is through the Torah. In this

---

[5] See the discussion on "Identity" in chap. 2, where I develop the connection between identity and practices.

[6] Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2.210. See also S. J. D. Cohen, "Religion, Ethnicity, and 'Hellenism' in the Emergence of Jewish Identity in Maccabean Palestine," in *Religion and Religious Practice in the Seleucid Kingdom*, ed. Per Bilde et al., Studies in Hellenistic Civilization 1 (Aarhus, Denmark: Aarhus University Press, 1990), 204–23.

[7] John J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora*, 2nd ed., Biblical Resource Series (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 19. Cf. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 402–18; Shaye J. D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 58–62.

way, the Torah functions as the key agent to which the Jewish community is bound to define and construct their distinct ethnic identity.

By the early Hellenistic period, Jews had possessed plenteous religious writings, among which the Torah held a prominent and authentic place in ancient Jewish tradition.[8] In postexilic Judaism, the Torah played a vital role in providing Jews "a common basis" for their ethnic and religious identity.[9] The Torah as a common heritage does not mean that Judaism was monolithic. Rather, this remark implies that all sects within Judaism, by some means or another, were associated with the Torah's authoritative text (1 Macc 2:26; Philo, *Mos*. 2.37; Apocr. Ezek.; Wis; Josephus, *Ag*. *Ap*. 2.171–78, 271–78).[10] Although different Jewish sects in the Second Temple period interpreted, practiced, and perceived the Torah in various ways, none denied its authority and significance (Josephus, *Ant.* 3.223; Philo, *Legat*. 210). In light of these general remarks on the Torah's role in Judaism, it would not be an exaggeration to claim that "the Torah was the basic component in the tradition, and those who would remain within in Judaism had to relate themselves to it in some way."[11]

The above discussion explicates the role of the Torah in general for Judaism. But how does the Torah and Jews' adherence to it relate to the notion of Jewish identity? More particularly, what function does the Torah play in defining and prioritizing a

---

[8] Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 424–26; cf. Feeley-Harnik, *The Lord's Table*, 35.

[9] Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, 20.

[10] Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, 19–20; cf. John J. Collins, "Before the Canon: Scriptures in Second Temple Judaism," in *Seers, Sibyls, and Sages in Hellenistic-Roman Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 3–21.

[11] Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, 23. Collins cautions the readers, however, by saying that Torah as a common religious heritage of Jews should not be taken as suggesting that all Jewish sects were "conformed to a single pattern. . . . Rather, a number of different approaches could be taken within the bounds of the tradition." Cf. Peter J. Tomson, *Paul and the Jewish Law: Halakha in the Letters of the Apostle to the Gentiles, Jewish Traditions in Early Christian Literature*, vol. 1, Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum, sect. 3 (Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1990), 151. Furthermore, for a comprehensive survey of the Mosaic law in the Diaspora, see John J. Collins, *The Invention of Judaism: Torah and Jewish Identity from Deuteronomy to Paul* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017); Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 424–26.

distinct Jewish identity via Jewish food and mixed table-fellowship practices? Do the narratives from selected Second Temple Jewish texts portray any implicit or explicit relationship between the Torah and Jewish eating practices? The section below will explore the answers to these questions by analyzing the relationship between Jewish food, commensality practices, and the Torah concerning distinct Jewish identity in the selected Second Temple Jewish texts.

Food Practices and Agency in Selected Second Temple Jewish Texts

This section will focus on the stories in the Jewish texts examined in the previous chapter from a slightly different angle. While the analysis of Jewish narratives in chapter 3 highlighted the role of distinct Jewish identity through Jewish food and table-fellowship practices, this section will investigate what those Jewish eating practices were based on. I will argue that Jewish observance of specific food and commensality regulations in the Second Temple period were related—in some texts directly and in other texts indirectly—to the Torah. It is important to note that the claim of Jews' reliance and observance of specific food and table-fellowship practices on the Torah by no means neglects the existence of diverse interpretive approaches to and expansions and modifications of Jewish texts that developed gradually in different historical circumstances. The main argument here will be that although different Jewish texts approached the food and table-fellowship practices in different ways, the Torah remained an authoritative source upon which all Jewish eating practices were ultimately based.[12] In this way, the Torah's role and Jews' dependence on the Torah for their eating practices will come to the forefront in these selected Jewish texts.

---

[12] See Jordan D. Rosenblum ("Justifications for Foodways and the Study of Commensality," in *Commensality: From Everyday Food to Feast*, ed. Susanne Kerner, Cynthia Chou, and Morten Warmind [New York: Bloomsbury, 2015], 189–90), who acknowledges the gradual development of the Jewish dietary practices within Judaism with regard to "interpretations, expansions, augmentations, and innovations of the biblical texts." Nevertheless, Rosenblum maintains that "biblical texts are used to justify every interpretation, expansion, augmentation, and innovation."

The Jewish texts chosen as case studies in this research highlight how the Torah functions as the basis for dietary and commensal restrictions practiced by observant Jews in the Second Temple period. Regarding the Torah's prominent role with reference to Jewish identity and food-related matters in the Second Temple period, David C. Kraemer states, "What is perhaps most notable about the literary record concerning Jewish eating practices during the period of the second Temple Jerusalem (fifth century BCE–first century CE) . . . is its conformity to the laws of the Torah."[13] The narratives in selected Second Temple Jewish literature support Kraemer's claim.

For instance, in the Letter of Aristeas, when the Egyptian delegation asks Eleazar, the high priest, about the rationale behind the Jewish food laws, Eleazar presents a long discourse on this issue. Eleazar's symbolic and philosophical explanation of Jewish food laws seeks to exemplify the Torah's remarkable role through which Jews attain spiritual and moral guidance (vv. 128–71). The detailed analysis of Eleazar's explanation in the previous chapter has demonstrated how Eleazar's interpretation of clean and unclean animals in the Jewish food laws is allegorical (vv. 139, 145–46). As highlighted in chapter 3, the author of the narrative presents Eleazar as declaring that the ultimate purpose of Mosaic legislation for Jews is to set them apart from other nations in order to mark their distinct Jewish identity (vv. 139–42). However, what is also important to note is that no matter what interpretive approach Eleazar takes in explaining the religious and moral significance of Jewish dietary customs, the regulations that Jews practiced were based on the Torah. Eleazar says that the food-related customs and restrictions that Jews observe are "after the manner of the law" (v. 142b).

Furthermore, according to the author, the Ptolemaic king's banquet for the Jewish translators was in accordance with Jewish food customs (vv. 181–82). It would

---

[13] David C. Kraemer, *Jewish Eating and Identity through the Ages* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2007), 33.

not be wrong to assume that the Jewish eating customs with which Egyptians were familiar were explicitly stated in the Torah. However, one should acknowledge that the author of the narrative does not inform his readers of how the Egyptians were aware of these Torah-based laws. Therefore, in the narrative of Letter of Aristeas, the mentioning of Jewish food laws, in both Eleazar's discourse and the king's arrangement of the banquet, refers to Jewish food customs that find their origin in the Torah.[14]

As discussed in the previous chapter, the prohibition against foreigners' food to construct one's distinct Jewish identity is one of the prominent themes in Judith. Becoming aware of general Holofernes's plan to kill the Jewish residents of Bethulia, Judith embarks on the mission to deliver her Jewish community from the evil plans of the Gentile empire. In her preparations for encamping with the Assyrian army, she takes her own wine, oil, food, and utensils (10:5). Furthermore, the Jewish heroine convinces Holofernes of his victory over the Israelite nation because Israelites have deliberately transgressed Jewish dietary laws (11:12–16). Having been pleased and convinced by Judith's words (11:5–19), Holofernes asks Judith to join him in meal-sharing (12:1). However, the author says that Judith refuses to partake in the general's offer of meal fellowship because this act "will be on offense" (12:2a). Later, when Holofernes again invites Judith to eat and drink with him to seduce her (12:10–12), Judith only eats the

---

[14] See Kraemer, *Jewish Eating and Identity through the Ages*, 34–35 [who, referring to Eleazar's interpretation of the Jewish law in Letter of Aristeas, says "the only laws regulating Jewish diet are those found explicitly in the Torah"]; Johann Cook and Arie van der Kooij, *Law, Prophets, and Wisdom: On the Provenance of Translators and Their Books in the Septuagint Version* (Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2012), 148–54; Ekaterina Matusova, *The Meaning of the Letter of Aristeas: In Light of Biblical Interpretation and Grammatical Tradition, and with Reference to Its Historical Context*, ed. Jacqueline White, Forschungen Zur Religion Und Literatur Des Alten Und Neuen Testaments 260 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 35–36; Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 146; R. J. H. Shutt, "The Letter of Aristeas," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, *Expansions of the "Old Testament" and Legends, Wisdom, and Philosophical Literature, Prayers, Psalms, and Odes, Fragments of Lost Judeo-Hellenistic Works*, ed. James H. Charlesworth, 6th ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1983), 9; Stewart Moore, *Jewish Ethnic Identity and Relations in Hellenistic Egypt: With Walls of Iron?*, ed. Benjamin G. Wright III, Supplements to the *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 171 (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 228 [who identifies several references made to the Torah in both explicit and implicit ways]; Wright, *The Letter of Aristeas: "Aristeas to Philocrates" or "On the Translation of the Law of the Jews"*, ed. Loren T. Stuckenbruck, CEJL (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 255 [who comments that Eleazar's discourse on Jewish food laws "relies on the laws given in Leviticus 11"].

food that her servant-maid has prepared (12:19). The previous chapter already demonstrated how the author of Judith employs the motif of Jewish food restrictions as prioritizing distinct Jewish identity. Here, what will be argued is that food restrictions highlighted and observed throughout the narrative by the pious Jewish woman, Judith, functioned to establish her distinct Jewish identity and were based on the Torah.

First, Judith's decision to take her food to the Assyrian army's camp demonstrates her serious attitude towards following the Torah's dietary laws. Even accomplishing the bigger mission of assassinating Holofernes could not lead Judith to dismiss the Jewish dietary norms. The food items she took with her (namely, "a skin of wine and a flask of oil, and filled a bag with roasted grain, dried fig cakes, and fine bread") (Jdt 10:5) were aligned with the dietary laws of the Torah. Judith's food supplies suggest her recognition of and concern for Jewish dietary standards based on the Torah.[15] Second, that Judith upholds the Torah's dietary laws and is conscious of their significance can be seen when she justifies God's punishment of the Israelites by referring to their transgression of biblical dietary laws (11:12).[16] Benedikt Otzen observes

---

[15] See Deborah Levine Gera (*Judith*, CEJL [Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2014], 333–34), who deems Judith's food preparation as "kosher." Furthermore, highlighting the significance of Judith's decision of taking her own food in the context of the overall preparation for her mission (10:1–5), Gera says, "While Judith's newly-seductive appearance suggests that she is leaving her piety and religious scruples behind, her concern with what she puts inside herself, her food, remains the same and reassures the readers that despite her glamorous exterior her piety remains intact." Cf. Benedikt Otzen, *Tobit and Judith* (New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 103–4 [who thinks that the author of the narrative portrays Judith's character not only as a figure of "unfailing belief who achieves the unbelievable" but also as "a law-abiding Jewess who tries to keep the Law of God down to the last particular"]; Lawrence M. Wills, *Judith*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2019), 307–8.

[16] Since nowhere in the narrative does the author mention the Israelites' exactly transgressing the biblical dietary laws, someone may question Judith's ethical integrity, wondering whether she is telling the truth while charging her community with dietary transgression. For example, on this issue, assuming that Israelites did not transgress dietary laws in reality, Geoffrey Miller ("A Femme Fatale of Whom 'No One Spoke Ill': Judith's Moral Muddle and Her Personification of Yahweh," *JSOT* 39, no. 2 [2014]: 231–32) argues that Judith did not *need* to lie to Holofernes concerning the Israelites' disobedience of biblical food laws. Cf. Gera, *Judith*, 371. However, from a literary perspective, this information helped her to succeed in her plot against the Assyrians. For the sake of my argument, I propose that, whether the Israelites committed this sin or not in reality, the fact that Judith mentioned dietary transgression particularly as the cause of divine judgment against the Jewish nation clearly displays the significance of Torah food laws in the author's mind. As Wills (*Judith*, 321) rightly notes, Judith's condemnation of Israelites with regard to the Torah food laws suggests the significance of "Jewish boundary markers" in her mind.

that although the role of moral and religious piety in Judaism runs throughout the narrative, it is only in this reference that the author employs the word νομος ("law").

Furthermore, Otzen thinks that Judith's information to Holofernes in this instance serves to underscore "Judith's deep insight into the Law of Moses," whereby she charges her community "with a severe conflict between the rules of the Law and the conduct of the people."[17] Third, twice in the narrative (12:2, 19), Judith rejects Holofernes's food and drink. Why does she take this radical action that may have even put her life at risk? Judith's complete rejection of Holofernes's food and drink most probably suggests her concern that she might consume a diet negated by the Torah's food laws.[18] It is worth noting that Judith was not forced to consume Holofernes's non-Jewish food but was given a choice. However, following the footsteps of Jewish exemplars (Gen 43:32; Dan 1:8; 1 Macc 1:62–63; 2 Macc 6:19), Judith deliberately chooses to refuse non-kosher food. More importantly, her refusal of Gentile food was not made in a vacuum; instead, it had important implications. Her decision substantiates her previous reference to God's punishment of Israelites for transgressing the food laws (Jdt 11:11–15) and thus demonstrates her devotion to a Torah-driven life. According to Deborah Levine Gera, Judith's perception and strict adherence to biblical food laws made a clear statement that in Judaism, "the keeping of dietary rules is a matter of life and death."[19]

---

[17] Otzen, *Tobit and Judith*, 104.

[18] Contra David M. Freidenreich (*Foreigners and Their Food: Constructing Otherness in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Law* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011], 43), who argues that Judith's denial of consuming Holofernes's food "does not stem from the ingredients of his food but rather from the "nationality" of those who acquire or prepare it." So, according to Freidenreich, "Judith does not specifically refuse foods that might contain prohibited ingredients"; instead, her refusal of Holofernes's food was based on the reality that it belonged to and was prepared by the Gentiles. Admittedly, there is a possibility that Judith refused foreign food because of its association with the Gentile nation. However, to claim boldly that it is the *only* reason for Judith's decision is an overstatement because the main references to food in the narrative do not explicitly state that Judith's rejection of foreign food was preparer-based. In fact, a careful reading of these references suggests that it is more likely that Judith shunned Gentile food because it might have contained ingredients prohibited in the Torah's food laws. On a balanced reading, it is more accurate to claim that both options are possible.

[19] Gera, *Judith*, 370–71. See also Otzen, *Tobit and Judith*, 105; Wills, *Judith*, 326; Robert Appelbaum, "Judith Dines Alone: From the Bible to Du Bartas," *Modern Philology* 111, no. 4 (2014): 686–87; Thomas Hieke, "Torah in Judith Dietary Laws, Purity and Other Torah Issues in the Book of Judith," in

Overall, in the narrative of Judith, the author intentionally reinforces the role of the Torah as a basis for Jewish food restrictions.

Additionally, the narrative of the Greek version of Esther, like Judith, presents a Jewish heroine who demonstrates her religious piety by observing Jewish food and table-fellowship practices. Upon hearing the report of Haman's plan to destroy the Jewish nation (4:7), Esther, filled with anxiety and grief, directs her attention to the Lord and prays (Add C: 14:1–19). In her prayer, she does not forget to emphasize her religious piety and reverence for the Lord by saying, "And your servant has not eaten at Haman's table, and I have not honored the king's feast or drunk the wine of libations" (14:17). I suggest that the author of this narrative, like the authors of Letter of Aristeas and Judith, considers the food restrictions of which Esther reminded God and observed herself as derived from the Torah. Concerning Esther's observance of Jewish dietary rules, Susanne Plietzsch compares the Masoretic variant of the narrative with the LXX. She argues while the Masoretic text does not directly justify Esther's attitude towards Jewish dietary laws (bMeg 10a–17b), the LXX version explicitly portrays her negative attitude towards non-Jewish food.[20]

Readers of the text may, at first, suppose that Esther's refraining from food comes from its association with the Gentile officer (i.e., Haman) and the king. It could be one of the reasons for Esther's rejection of Haman and the king's food. However, it is also probable that Esther refrained from eating from "Haman's table" and "the king's feast" because the food and the feast constituted ingredients prohibited by the Torah. One possible reason for this proposition comes from the reference where the narrative informs readers of Mordecai's instruction to Esther that "she was to fear God and keep his laws,

---

A Pious Seductress: Studies in the Book of Judith, ed. Géza G. Xeravits (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 97–109.

[20] Susanne Plietzsch, "Eating and Living: The Banquets in the Esther Narratives," in *Decisive Meals: Table Politics in Biblical Literature*, ed. Nathan MacDonald, Kathy Ehrensperger, and Luzia Sutter Rehmann, Library of New Testament Studies 449 (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 38–40.

just as she had done when she was with him. Esther did not change her mode of life" (2:20). Esther's adherence to God's "laws" and Jewish "mode of life" must have entailed her observance of dietary laws in the Torah as well. Moreover, eating according to Jewish dietary standards based on the Torah was an important component of the Jewish mode of life. Hence, from the author's perspective, Esther's upholding of her Jewish "mode of life" cannot dismiss her adherence to the biblical food laws.[21]

Finally, what does the narrative of Joseph and Aseneth speak about Jewish food practices in connection to the Torah? There is only one reference in the story in which Joseph explicitly observes the table-fellowship restriction. Arriving at Pentephres's house, Joseph receives a warm welcome from the high priest. However, after washing Joseph's feet, the author narrates that Pentephres's servants arrange a separate meal-table for Joseph because he "never ate with the Egyptians, for this was an abomination to him" (7:1).[22] Why did Joseph refuse to eat with the Egyptians? What would have caused "an abomination to him"—the Egyptians' food or their company? One does not need to choose an either/or option in this instance. Notwithstanding the text's ambiguity, it would not be improbable to synthesize both options with an assumption that the author, emphasizing Joseph's action, might be suggesting restrictions on both Gentile food and Jewish-Gentile commensality at the meal-table.[23]

---

[21] Cf. Linda Day (*Three Faces of a Queen: Characterization in the Books of Esther*, *JSOT*Sup 186 [Sheffield, UK: JSOT Press, 1995], 223), who, making points of comparing between Esther and Judith, points out that both Jewish women "obey dietary laws and refuse to eat with Gentiles in court."

[22] Note that the author reverses the sociological reality that the book of Genesis portrays. In Gen 43:32, Joseph and his brothers were served food separately "because the Egyptians could not eat with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination to the Egyptians." Unless otherwise indicated, all English Bible quotations come from the *English Standard Version*. Gideon Bohak (*Joseph and Aseneth and the Jewish Temple in Heliopolis*, Early Judaism and Its Literature 10 [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996], 42), thinks that the author of Joseph and Aseneth modified the Genesis text out of embarrassment.

[23] On the one hand, there are scholars who believe that the issue at stake in Joseph's segregation from Egyptians at the meal-table in Pentephres's house was mainly Jewish food. See Bohak, *Joseph and Aseneth and the Jewish Temple in Heliopolis*, 42; Collins, *The Invention of Judaism*, 139; Susan E. Docherty, *The Jewish Pseudepigrapha: An Introduction to the Literature of the Second Temple Period* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 47. On the other hand, C. Burchard ("Joseph and Aseneth," in Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2:210n7d) thinks that both food and mixed table-fellowship are involved in this reference. Citing other references from Second Temple Jewish texts, Burchard writes,

In the case of Joseph and Aseneth, on what were the food and table-fellowship restrictions in this narrative grounded? In what ways did these Jewish restrictions relate to the Torah? First, given Joseph's antagonistic attitude towards the Gentile food in the narrative (8:5), it is likely that Joseph may have adhered to the Jewish dietary laws of the Torah. The whole narrative portrays Joseph's character as showing devotion to the beliefs and practices of the Torah (4:7; 6:4–6; 7:5; 8:5; 10:13; 11:9, 16; 12:5; 21:1; 23:9; 29:3; 28:5, 14). Therefore, the idea that the author portrays Joseph as a devout Jew who followed the kosher laws should not surprise readers.[24] However, while it is easier to argue that Joseph's food restrictions were grounded in the Torah, what about his table-fellowship practice of sitting separately from Egyptians? Does this commensality restriction come from the Torah?

Though the Hebrew Bible contains numerous restrictions concerning the content of food, Jordon D. Rosenblum notes that "commensality restrictions are notably absent from biblical texts."[25] One expects that at least the books of Ezra and Nehemiah—the books that strongly encourage Jews to build socio-religious boundaries between themselves and Gentiles—would have included commensality laws governing mixed table-fellowship practices. However, no commensality restrictions are found in these biblical books. In fact, the book of Deuteronomy condemns the Ammonites and Moabites

---

"Abstention from heathen food and avoidance of table fellowship between Jews and pagans was one of the main issues of Jewish life in the Hellenistic, especially post-Maccabean period."

[24] Jordan D. Rosenblum (*The Jewish Dietary Laws in the Ancient World* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016], 71), discussing different commensality restrictions observed by Jews in the Hellenistic world, assumes that "Joseph consumes the Egyptian priest Pentephres' food," though he sits separately at his own table. While there is a possibility that Pentephres might have provided food to Joseph to show hospitality to him as his guest, it is very unlikely to believe that Pentephres offered Joseph non-kosher food and that Joseph consumed his host's Gentile food without any hesitation. Even if one admits that the food for Joseph came from Pentephres's kitchen, the case can still be made that Joseph's host may have arranged food for him according to Jewish dietary standards. Furthermore, the supposition that Joseph would have consumed Gentile food goes against the overall description of Joseph's character, for the author portrays Joseph as an observant Jew.

[25] Rosenblum, *Jewish Dietary Laws in the Ancient World*, 70.

for being unwilling to share a meal table with the Israelite community (Deut 23:4–5).[26] So, why and from where do the protagonists in the Jewish narratives follow the commensality restrictions?

It is important to realize that claiming that the Torah held a prominent place in Judaism throughout the centuries does not suggest that its interpretation remained monolithic in all historical circumstances. Like any other religious community, Jews, facing different political, theological, and sociological challenges in different historical periods, have also sought to understand the Torah's relevance through different interpretive approaches. These different approaches further gave rise to modified Jewish beliefs and practices. The same motif holds true for Jewish food and table-fellowship practices in the Second Temple period.[27] Rosenblum recognizes this modification in Jewish eating customs in the Second Temple Jewish texts and claims, "The refusal by a Jew to eat the food and/or sit at the table of a non-Jewish authority figure (e.g., a political, military, or religious ruler) becomes a trope in late Hellenistic-period texts."[28] Thus, in the Second Temple period, the concept of prioritizing distinct Jewish identity involved not only *what* one ate but also *with whom* one shared the table-fellowship.[29]

Identity, Torah, and Jewish Food and Table-Fellowship Practices in Light of Divine-Human Agency

In the above discussion, I have attempted to demonstrate the relevance of the Torah's role in Jewish food and table-fellowship practices. Except for commensality

---

[26] Rosenblum, *Jewish Dietary Laws in the Ancient World*, 70.

[27] E.g., see Rosenblum (*Jewish Dietary Laws in the Ancient World*, 74–75), who shows the gradual development of biblical food laws and their rationalization in the Second Temple period.

[28] Rosenblum, *Jewish Dietary Laws in the Ancient World*, 71; cf. Rosenblum, *Food and Identity in Early Rabbinic Judaism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 38–39. See also Martin Goodman (*Rome and Jerusalem: The Clash of Ancient Civilizations* [New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007], 276), who explains the extension and modification of the biblical laws in the Hellenistic era and writes, "Whatever the rationale of such taboos, there can be no doubt of their power, nor of their tendency, as a result, to expand far beyond the restrictions envisioned in the Bible."

[29] Rosenblum, *Jewish Dietary Laws in the Ancient World*, 73.

restrictions that gradually developed in the Hellenistic period, the analysis of selected Jewish texts revealed that Jewish eating practices in the Second Temple period were based on the Torah. The fact that the Torah played a fundamental role in all areas of Jewish life in general and Jewish food regulations in particular in the Second Temple period should not surprise readers. Because of the political, social, cultural, and religious uncertainty that Jews were facing in the Second Temple period, clinging strongly to their traditional beliefs and practices was critical to upholding their distinctive identity. Thus, the Torah functioned as a centrifugal force for Jews in this historical period. Kraemer calls this period in Jewish history "the *biblical* period proper."[30] Commenting further, he states,

> This was the period when, after centuries of formation and accretion, the Torah, along with the historical and classical prophets, had achieved their canonical form. This was the period when these books were accepted as authoritative by the majority of Jews. This was the period when the laws they describe defined the life of Jewry, individually and as a nation.[31]

In light of Kraemer's observation concerning the Torah's primary role in all aspects of Jewish life, the connection between Jewish eating practices and the Torah becomes stronger and more noticeable.

Chapter 3 of this study has already discussed how Jewish food and table-fellowship practices in selected Second Temple Jewish texts functioned to prioritize distinctive Jewish identity. In the present chapter, the examination of the Jewish texts at hand has elaborated upon the relationship between the Torah and Jewish food restrictions wherein the Torah served as the basis for Jewish food and table-fellowship practices that Jews observed in the selected Second Temple period. Since Jewish dietary practices

---

[30] Kraemer, *Jewish Eating and Identity through the Ages*, 35 (emphasis original).

[31] Kraemer, *Jewish Eating and Identity through the Ages*, 35; cf. E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1977), 195; Nathan MacDonald, *Not Bread Alone: The Uses of Food in the Old Testament* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2008), 198–203; Veronika E. Grimm, *From Feasting to Fasting, the Evolution of a Sin: Attitudes to Food in Late Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 1996), 15–18.

relate both to the Torah and Jewish identity, the link between the Torah and Jewish identity cannot be overlooked. To be precise, in light of the assessment of selected Jewish texts above, this study suggests that the Torah fundamentally *defined* Jews' distinct identity, which they sought to construct and prioritize through Jewish dietary and table-fellowship practices. The selected Jewish texts examined in this study frequently demonstrate how distinct Jewish identity established boundaries between Jews and other non-Jewish nations through specific Jewish dietary restrictions. The Torah, as a basis of those dietary restrictions, secured the distinctiveness of Jewish identity. Terence L. Donaldson reflects on the distinctive feature of Jewish ethnic identity in the context of the ethnic identity of other nations and asserts, "This sense of separation was reinforced by the pattern of life set out in the *Torah*, which functioned not merely as a compendium of common customs but as the divinely appointed means of preserving Israel's distinct identity."[32]

The Jews, whom the ancient authors present as paradigms to follow in the Second Temple period, affirm Donaldson's claim. The Jewish texts analyzed in this study demonstrate how Jews such as Eleazar, the Jewish delegation, Joseph, Judith, and Esther, sought to observe Jewish dietary and table-fellowship regulations in order to prioritize their distinct identity centered on the Torah.

If one follows the line of argument above, then how can this discussion concerning the relationship between Jewish food practices and distinct Jewish identity

---

[32] Donaldson, *Gentile Christian Identity*, 106. See also Kraemer (*Jewish Eating and Identity through the Ages*, 37), who states, "If any Judaism is, during this period, more normative than another, it is the Judaism that hews more closely to the Judaism of Hebrew Scriptures, and to the law of the Torah." Furthermore, he adds,

> A Jew in the late second Temple period was a person whose unique identity was defined by the law of the Torah of Moses. Her festivals were centered in the Temple, as the Torah commanded. His Sabbaths were shaped by the Torah's simple command ("thou shalt do no labor"), as elaborated in Jeremiah and Nehemiah (Jer. 17:21–22, Neh. 13:15–22). And her diet was circumscribed by the pure and impure species list of Leviticus-Deuteronomy, by the prohibition of consuming blood, and by the thrice-repeated prohibition concerning the mother and the kid.

defined by the Torah be framed in light of divine-human agency?[33] Having analyzed selected Second Temple Jewish texts in this study, I have observed that the concept of distinct Jewish identity, especially in the Second Temple period, was directly related to and defined by the Torah. Thus, obedience to the Torah plays the role of the main agent in constructing and prioritizing a distinct Jewish identity. Moreover, since the Torah obedience is carried out by the human agents (i.e., Jewish characters in these narratives), the human agency plays a decisive role within the larger framework of Jewish soteriology.

The Hebrews Scriptures portray the divine agent as the initiator of the relationship with the Israelite nation (Deut 7:7–9). However, after calling Israel His chosen nation, God then enters into a covenant relationship with it by means of the Torah. The Torah obedience or disobedience by the human agents played a vital role in the divine-human relationship. The faithful obedience/disobedience of the Torah could lead the human agents to life/death or blessings/curses (Deut 30:15–20). Indeed, the human agents' entrance into a covenant relationship with the divine agent was an act of divine grace. Nevertheless, the human agents had to show continual reliance upon the Torah to sustain that covenantal relationship with the divine agent. It is a unique way in which the divine agent interacts with the human agents.

For the sake of my thesis, I have sought to develop a connection between identity and divine-human agency. The Torah obedience by Torah-observant Jews of the

---

[33] This project presumes that selected Second Temple Jewish texts under consideration reveal the presence of the notion of divine and human agency in general. The following references from the primary Jewish texts under consideration demonstrate the presence the implied concept of divine-human agency: Let. Aris. 17–20, 131–34, 139–43, 142, 193–97, 200–201, 205, 207, 235 215, 229, 313–16; LXX Esth 2:19; Add C: 13:8–18; 14:1–15, 17–19; 15:8; Add F: 10:4–5, 10; Jdt 4:9–12, 13–15; 5:21; 6:1–10, 17–21; 8:11–17, 32–35; 9:5–14; 10:8–9, 11–16; 11:5–23; 12:10–13:3; 13:4–8, 14–16; 14:10; 16:1–5; Jos. Asen. 4:7; 7:1, 4; 8:5, 8, 9; 11:7–14, 18; 12:1, 5, 8, 13–15; 13:13; 15:5; 16:14, 16; 17:6; 19:5; 21:1, 11–21; 23:9, 11; 28:5, 14; 29:3). See Jarvis J. Williams, *For Whom Did Christ Die? The Extent of the Atonement in Paul's Theology*, Paternoster Biblical Monographs (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2012), 109–36; Jason Maston, *Divine and Human Agency in Second Temple Judaism and Paul: A Comparative Study* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 10–17. The main argument of both of these scholars are quite different from the argument of this dissertation. Nevertheless, they highlight the issue of divine and human agency in ancient Jewish literature.

Second Temple period was not an arbitrary act; rather, it was closely tied to the issue of distinctive Jewish identity. The relationship of observant Jews to the Torah in the Second Temple period simultaneously *defined* 'who they were and to whom they belonged' and *distinguished* them from other ethnicities, tribes, and nations. It is important to observe that, in the selected Jewish texts, while the idea of distinctive ethnic identity positively served to establish 'social cohesiveness' within the communal group, it also established imaginary ethnic fences or boundaries that functioned to treat other nations as outsiders and thus caused disharmony between the Jewish nation and other ethnic groups (i.e. 'Us' versus 'Them').

More particularly, in the context of mixed table-fellowship, Jewish narratives from the Second Temple period depict the human agent as playing the central role by observing Jewish food and table-fellowship practices based on the Torah. In other words, in the selected Second Temple Jewish texts examined in this study, the centrality of human agency lies in the fact that the human agent is actively involved in carrying out Jewish food and mixed table-fellowship practices for the construction and priority of his or her distinct identity. The observance of Jewish food and table-fellowship restrictions rooted in the Torah was carried out by the observant Jewish characters in selected mixed table-fellowship narratives to regulate their relationship with the divine agent. Whereas their obedience to these dietary and commensal regulations based on the Torah would bring blessings to their lives (both socially and spiritually), their disobedience could lead to punishment and possible instability in their relationship with the divine agent.

It should be noted that recognizing the active role of the human agent in specific Jewish texts surveyed here is not meant to disclaim the divine agency from these texts. It would be entirely erroneous to ignore the divine agent since he is the ultimate source who both provides the divine gift of the Torah and demands obedience to it from his people. The Jewish texts surveyed in this study fully recognize the divine agent as the giver of the Torah and the one who demands obedience to it (Lev 20:22, 24b; Deut

14:1a).[34] Nevertheless, although the selected Jewish texts in this study revealed the involvement of both the divine and human agents in different ways, the role of the human agents is more active because of their dynamic engagement in observing Jewish food and table-fellowship practices to establish and prioritize their distinct Jewish identity. While the divine agent initiated and endowed the gift of distinction to Jews in their ethnic identity, Jews still had the central role in prioritizing their distinctive identity through the Torah-based socio-religious practices, including Jewish food and table-fellowship practices.[35]

Framing this discussion within divine-human agency models by John M. Barclay introduced in chapter 1, I will place the selected Jewish narratives in this study under the "Non-contrastive transcendence" model. The selected Second Temple Jewish texts which have been examined in this study do not conceive the divine-human relationship in contrastive terms. That is, the divine and human agents are mutually

---

[34] On the subject of Jewish distinction, Roy H. Schoeman (*Salvation Is from the Jews: The Role of Judaism in Salvation History from Abraham to the Second Coming* [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003], 64–66), cautions that Jews' desire to accentuate social, cultural, and religious separateness should not be approached "in a negative light: as 'elitist' or 'separatist' or, at best, unfriendly." He argues that to perceive Jewish distinction this way is wrong because it was not the Jewish nation itself which sought this socio-religious and ethnic distinction. Instead, "It was God who restricted the covenant to the Jews and had them zealously protect it through rigid separation from all Gentiles; it was God who was the source of the Jewish laws in the Old Testament that defined ritual purity and impurity and prevented Jews from mingling with Gentiles."

[35] In contrast to this perspective, I am aware of a few Jewish texts that stress the priority of the divine agent. For instance, the Jewish texts such as 1QS (I.1–25; II.1–4; III.7–10, 16–20), Hodayot (1QH 3 V.17; 1QH 4 VI; VII.10–11; VII.11–14; VII.17–18; VII.20–25; VIII.2–4; VIII.5–9; IQH Hymn XVIII), 1 Esd (2:1–11; 4:58–60; 6:23–34; 8:25–27, 77–78, 84); Pr Man (1:1–15), 1 En. (46:1–8; 48:4–10; 51:3–5; 52:4–9; 61:8–9; 62:7–16), and 4 Ezra (3:13–14, 20; 5:22–30, 49; 6:1–6; 7:21, 61, 72–74) reflect the priority of the divine agency in divine-human relationship. The recognition that these texts highlight the role of the divine agent in the enterprise of divine-human agency reinforce the scholarly opinion that ancient Judaism was not monolithic in its viewpoints concerning how divine and human agents relate to each other in the soteriological phenomenon. Rather, the analysis of Jewish texts reveals that there existed a spectrum of religious beliefs among Jews in the Second Temple period—some prioritizing the role of the divine agent and others signifying the active participation of the human agent. Hence, acknowledging the diversity within Jewish beliefs concerning the issue of agency, the analysis of selected Jewish texts surveyed in this study suggests that the social phenomenon of Jewish food and table-fellowship practices in the Second Temple period plays a central role in attempting to define and prioritize one's distinct Jewish identity. Moreover, for Jews in these specific Jewish narratives examined here, this ethno-religious distinction with regard to identity prioritized through socio-religious practices plays an essential role in regulating their relationship with God. See Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 399–400; Maston, *Divine and Human Agency in Second Temple Judaism and Paul*, 176–77. Both monographs testify to the divergent socio-religious beliefs and practices in Second Temple Jewish literature.

exclusive in their relationship with each other; neither the divine agency obliterates human actions by turning the human agents into passive beings nor the human agents' freedom challenges the divine sovereignty. A careful analysis of selected Second Temple Jewish texts has shown that human agents are fully responsible for their actions. Their obedience to the table-fellowship norms and restrictions grounded in the Torah is decisive, signifying their active participation in defining and prioritizing their distinct Jewish identity. The human agents' reliance upon the laws of Torah in establishing their distinct Jewish identity prioritizes human agency since it ultimately regulates their relationship with the divine agent. However, their active participation in the divine-human relationship is ultimately rooted in divine authority.

Conclusion

Based on the exegetical work concerning selected Second Temple Jewish texts in chapter 3, this chapter has explored whether Jewish food and table-fellowship practices can provide some insights into the issue of agency. A careful evaluation of selected Jewish texts proved that the specific Jewish food and table-fellowship restrictions that Jews observed in the Second Temple period were grounded in the food laws found in the Torah. Furthermore, in approaching the Torah's role as a basis of Jewish dietary practices, the Torah's relationship with Jewish identity has also been explored. In establishing this relationship, the literary evidence suggested that the Torah defined Jews' distinct identity while they lived in the Second Temple period. Lastly, through establishing the connection between Jewish dietary practices and identity based on Torah in relation to divine-human agency, this chapter has argued that mixed table-fellowship narratives from selected Second Temple Jewish texts present humans (or Jews) as playing the role of the active agents in prioritizing their distinct Jewish identity. However, it has been argued that the active involvement of the human agents in the priority of their distinct ethnic identity must not suggest the ultimate denial of the role of the divine agent.

CHAPTER 5

TABLE-FELLOWSHIP AND IDENTITY IN GALATIANS 2:11–21

Whereas the chapters in the previous section (chaps. 3–4) have discussed the theme of identity and divine-human agency in the Jewish literature in relation to Jewish table-fellowship practices in the Second Temple period, the following part (chaps. 5–6) will focus on the relevance of mixed table-fellowship between Jews and Gentiles in the early church with regard to the issues of identity and agency.

Numerous New Testament passages highlight the socio-religious significance of social interaction between Jews and Gentiles at mixed table-fellowship (Mark 2:13–17; Acts 10:28; 11:2–3; 1 Cor 10:23–29). However, the existence of Jewish-Gentile interaction at mixed table-fellowship in the New Testament writings should not give the impression that this social practice was without challenges. A few biblical references affirm how the early church faced challenges concerning Jewish-Gentile interaction at mixed table-fellowship (Rom 14:1–15:13; Gal 2:11–14). This chapter will focus on the mixed table-fellowship conflict at Antioch recorded by Paul in Galatians 2:11–21. Further, this chapter will address some major exegetical and contextual issues relevant to the argument of this study and present different theories raised by New Testament scholarship to understand the Antiochene crisis in Galatians 2:11–21. Finally, this chapter will explore whether the core issue at stake in the conflict between Paul and Peter at the mixed table-fellowship between Jews and Gentiles can be understood in light of the theme of identity.

The Crisis at Antioch in Galatians 2:11–21

Translation[1]

> But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to [his] face because he stood condemned. For before certain people came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles. But when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, to the extent that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not walking straightforwardly with the truth of the gospel, I spoke with Cephas in the presence of all, "If you, being a Jew, [are] living like a Gentile and not like Jews, how are you compelling the Gentiles to live like Jews?" We are Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles; however, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Jesus Christ, and we ourselves believed in Jesus Christ so that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the Law because by works of the Law, no flesh will be justified. But if, while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves were found [to be] sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? May it never be! For if I build again the things what I [once] destroyed, I show myself [to be] a transgressor. For I died to the law through the law in order that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ. And I myself no longer live but Christ lives in me. And [the life] which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and delivered himself on behalf of me. Let no one nullify the grace of God. For if righteousness [is] through the Law, then Christ died for no purpose (Gal 2:11–21).

The Crisis in Galatia

In his letter written "to the churches in Galatia" (Gal 1:2), Paul addresses the Galatians who have abandoned God's authentic gospel of his Son Jesus Christ for an alternative gospel.[2] For Paul, this "alternative gospel" is a fake gospel advanced by troublemakers or agitators who have distorted the true message of the gospel (1:6–9).[3]

---

[1] Unless otherwise indicated, all the translations of the text from Galatians are mine. For this task, I have used the Greek text from the *Novum Testamentum Graece: Nestle-Aland*, 28th ed. (Stuttgart, Germany: German Bible Society, 2012).

[2] Concerning the matter of who wrote the letter to the Galatians, Paul's authorship is well established among scholars and not a matter of significant dispute. Almost all prominent scholars recognize Paul as the author of Galatians. See, e.g., J. B. Lightfoot, *Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians: With Introductions, Notes, and Dissertations*, Classic Commentary Library (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1957), 57–62; Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 1; Craig S. Keener, *Galatians*, New Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 4; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Galatians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 22; Douglas J. Moo, *Galatians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 1; Ben Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 1.

[3] I am aware of the scholarly debate concerning the schemes and intentions of the agitators in Galatia to whom Paul refers in his letter. Due to the ambiguous nature of specific data in the letter about the agitators' identity and the particular task in which they were involved, all proposed scholarly theories will

Even though these agitators' specific identity is vague (3:1; 5:10), several references in the letter portray what goal they were trying to achieve among the Galatian churches. The references illuminate that the agitators tried to persuade the Galatians of the necessity and significance of the rite of circumcision and Torah observance (4:10, 21; 5:2–12; 6:12–13). The troublemakers probably perceived these two entities as playing a significant role in the Galatians' religious life and in the gospel message.[4] S. A. Cummins thinks that the agitators' demand that the Galatians submit to the rite of circumcision and observe the Torah was not without any basis. In their minds, the requirement for circumcision and Torah observance entailed both theological and sociological implications. First, the prerequisite for circumcision was both theologically and sociologically vital. The reason is that through that ritual, the Galatians would attain membership into the Abrahamic covenant (Gen 17:3–14) and thus adopt a distinct Jewish identity in order to regulate their relationship with God. Second, Torah observance was equally significant because "Torah and covenant were inextricably interrelated."[5]

Whatever the precise nature of the agitators' identity and message, Paul's stance towards them concerning their proclamation is reactionary and disapproving. The apostle boldly makes the Galatian churches aware of the agitators' deceitful motives by

---

remain disputable. However, for informative survey on this subject, besides consulting the standard commentaries on Galatians, see Robert Jewett, "The Agitators and the Galatian Congregation," *NTS* 17, no. 2 (1971): 198–212; John M. G. Barclay, "Mirror-Reading a Polemical Letter: Galatians as a Test Case," *JSNT* 31 (1987): 86–90; Barclay, *Obeying the Truth: A Study of Paul's Ethics in Galatians*, Studies of the New Testament and Its World (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), 36–74; Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 21–25; Stephen Anthony Cummins, *Paul and the Crucified Christ in Antioch: Maccabean Martyrdom and Galatians 1 and 2*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 114 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 95–98; Keener, *Galatians* (2018), 12–21; Nikolaus Walter, "Paul and the Opponents of the Christ-Gospel in Galatia," in *The Galatians Debate: Contemporary Issues in Rhetorical and Historical Interpretation*, ed. Mark D. Nanos (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 362–66; Francis Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles: Beyond the New Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 112–18; Ian J. Elmer, *Paul, Jerusalem and the Judaisers: The Galatian Crisis in Its Broadest Historical Context*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 131–44; A. Andrew Das, *Galatians*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 2014), 3–17.

[4] Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, 45–74; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 49–51; Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia*, 24–25; John M. G. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 333–37; J. Louis Martyn, "A Law-Observant Mission to Gentiles," in Nanos, *The Galatians Debate*, 353–58.

[5] Cummins, *Paul and the Crucified Christ in Antioch*, 97.

informing them that their promotion of the agitators' message helps them avoid affliction for the cross of Christ (Gal 5:7–12; 6:12–14). By condemning the agitators' preaching of a false gospel, Paul attempts to help his congregations in Galatia escape the trap that puts their eternal destiny in Christ in jeopardy (5:4). Throughout his letter, Paul painstakingly explains to the Galatians that their membership in the Abrahamic family and covenant is no longer defined and maintained by their affiliation with the rite of circumcision and their observance of the Torah. Instead, their relationship with the God of Abraham is entirely determined by their identity in and association with Jesus Christ (Gal 2:19–21; 5:11; 6:12–14, 17). Moreover, none of the socio-religious features of Judaism will secure their relationship with God and, ultimately, their eternal salvation. Rather, the Holy Spirit in the new covenant empowers and sustains believers in all ethical and spiritual dimensions of their lives (Gal 3:1–5; 4:6, 29; 5:16–26).[6]

Literary and Chronological Issues

New Testament scholarship has shown deep interest in exploring whether the letter to the Galatians was written to the believers living in northern or southern regions of Galatia. Because the debate is concerned with the geographical locations of Galatia, scholars have called it the North or South Galatian theories.[7] More generally, the North and South Galatian theories try to understand the relevance of Paul's autobiographical accounts in Galatians 1–2 in light of the narratives recorded in the book of Acts. Hence, the continuing debate among scholarship revolves around whether Paul's letter was

[6] For the main contents of Paul's overall theological argumentation in Galatians, see Moo, *Galatians*, 22–31; Keener, *Galatians* (2018), 3–4.

[7] It is crucial to ask why it matters whether the letter was written to north or south Galatia. As Moisés Silva notes, "The fundamental question here is not one of *place* but of *time*?" That is, the letter's specific location helps scholars determine not only its timeframe in history but also its dating. On this connection between a North or South Galatian theory and the dating of the letter that most scholars attempt to make, Silva has argued that "it is crucial to realize that the dating of the epistle is not totally dependent on whether the Galatian churches were in the northern or southern region of the Roman province of Galatia." See Moisés Silva, *Interpreting Galatians: Explorations in Exegetical Method*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 129.

addressed to the Galatians residing in the north or in the south.[8] Admitting that several arguments are found in the scholarly literature for and against these two theories and that this debate is ongoing and subjective, this study considers the South Galatian theory more plausible. It thus assigns the earliest date to the Galatians' letter (AD 48–50s).[9]

Furthermore, in connection to the crisis at Antioch in Galatians 2, scholars show concern with two related chronological issues: First, New Testament scholarship has attempted to explore whether the Jerusalem council recorded in Acts 15 took place before or after the incident at Antioch. Scholars determine the relationship between the Antioch incident and the Jerusalem council by establishing the relationship between Galatians 2:1–10 and the book of Acts. Since it is believed that the historical origin of Paul's autobiographical account in Galatians 2:1–10 is found in Acts, exegetes try to speculate whether this account is to be understood in light of Acts 11:27–30 or Acts 15:1–29.[10] Second, scholars have shown interest in determining the date of the Antioch

---

[8] The debate is perennial and complex with many nuances, so below I briefly highlight some major points of disagreement between the two theories. For instance, whereas the proponents of the South Galatian theory propose that the Antiochene conflict between Paul and Peter occurred before the Jerusalem council of Acts 15, the advocates of the North Galatian theory suggest that the conflict between the two apostles took place after the council. Furthermore, the North Galatian theory argues that Paul sent his letter to the believers in Galatia who lived in the northern regions of the province. However, the South Galatian hypothesis maintains that Paul intended this letter for the cities that he toured on his first missionary journey found in Acts 13–14. In connection to dating, on the one hand, the supporters of the South Galatian theory suggest an earlier date for the composition of Galatians; on the other hand, the advocates of the North Galatian theory assign a later date to the letter. For those who believe that Paul most probably addressed those living in the northern regions (i.e., the North Galatian theory), see Betz, *Galatians*, 1–5; Philip Francis Esler, *Galatians*, New Testament Readings (London: Routledge, 1998), 32–36; Lightfoot, *Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians*, 4–15; James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, Black's New Testament Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), 5–8; Dunn, *Christianity in the Making*, vol. 2, *Beginning from Jerusalem* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 720–25; Frank J. Matera, *Galatians*, Sacra Pagina Series 9 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 19–26; G. Walter Hansen, *Galatians*, IVP New Testament Commentary 9 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 16–22. Those who argue in favor of the South Galatian theory are as follows: Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 41 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), lxiii–lxxxvii; Richard Bauckham, "James, Peter, and the Gentiles," in *Missions of James, Peter, and Paul*, ed. Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans, *NovT*Sup 115 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 135–36; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 26–29; Silva, *Interpreting Galatians*, 131–32; Moo, *Galatians*, 7–8. Additionally, for an instructive survey concerning the North-versus-South debate, see Longenecker, *Galatians*, lxi–lxxii; Das, *Galatians*, 23–30; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 22–29; F. F. Bruce, "Galatian Problems 2: North or South Galatians?," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 52, no. 2 (1970): 243–66.

[9] cf. Das, *Galatians*, 43–47; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 31.

[10] There exists an enormous amount of scholarly literature on this issue. On one side of the spectrum are those who equate Galatians 2:1–10 with Acts 15. For example, see Charles Kingsley Barrett,

incident.[11]

The literary and chronological issues mentioned above are not trivial; they play a crucial role in many interpretations of the Antiochene crisis. However, I believe that the discussion concerning the letter's destination (whether north or south), the relationship of the Antioch incident with Acts 15, and the precise dating of the incident do not bear direct relevance to my argument. Since the nature of my main argument is conceptual, the interpretation of Galatians 2:11–21 in this study can be maintained regardless of these literary and chronological issues.[12]

Exegetical Analysis of the Crisis at Antioch in Galatians 2:11–21

Structurally, Galatians 2:11–21 falls into the first main section of the letter body (1:11–2:21). In his first two autobiographical narratives (1:11–17 and 1:18–24), Paul demonstrates the origin of his gospel that he preached to the Galatians. He assures his Galatian readers that he did not receive his gospel through human agency but through

---

A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, vol. 2, International Critical Commentary 34 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), xxxviii–xxxix; Robert H. Stein, "The Relationship of Galatians 2:1—10 and Acts 15:1—35: Two Neglected Arguments," *JETS* 17 (1974): 239–42; Nicholas Taylor, *Paul, Antioch and Jerusalem: A Study in Relationships and Authority in Earliest Christianity*, *JSNT*Sup 66 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 52–54; James D. G. Dunn, "The Incident at Antioch (Gal 2:11–18)," in Nanos, *The Galatians Debate*, 201–203; Silva, *Interpreting Galatians*, 129–39; Elmer, *Paul, Jerusalem and the Judaisers*, 86–104; Dunn, *Beginning from Jerusalem*, 446–54. On another side of the spectrum are those deny to identify the relationship between Galatians 2:1–10 and Acts 15. These scholars argue that the connection between Galatians 2:1–10 and Acts 11–12 seem to be more viable in light of historical and theological analysis. Frederick F. Bruce, "Galatians Problems 1: Autobiographical Data," *BJRL* 51 (1968): 292–309; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 43–56; Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, vol. 2 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 987–92; Bauckham, "James, Peter, and the Gentiles," 135–39; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 29; Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 13–18; Das, *Galatians*, 43. For a more detailed analysis of this issue, see also Longenecker, *Galatians*, lxii–lxxxviii; Das, *Galatians*, 36–43.

[11] For different scholarly views that hypothesize when the Antioch incident would have occurred, see Dunn, *Beginning from Jerusalem*, 512; Gerd Luedemann, *Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles: Studies in Chronology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 172; Robert Jewett, *A Chronology of Paul's Life* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 99; Johannes Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*, trans. Frank Clarke (Richmond, VA: SCM Press, 1959), 74–75, 100–103; Jack J. Gibson, *Peter between Jerusalem and Antioch: Peter, James and the Gentiles*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2, Reihe 345 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 216–19.

[12] Cf. Das (*Galatians*, 23), who asserts that the destination of the letter "does not impact how the letter is read in any major way." However, he thinks that this issue has relevance for determining Paul's chronology and the letter's dating. See also Schreiner, *Galatians*, 22, 29.

divine calling. Even the other apostles did not contribute anything to the divine calling that he received. Furthermore, preceding the Antioch incident, Galatians 2:1–10 introduces Paul's third autobiographical narrative, where he highlights the acceptance and credibility of his gospel by the apostles of Lord Jesus Christ. In their meeting in Jerusalem, the pillars of the church (viz., James, Cephas, and John) fully acknowledged Paul's gospel, which he proclaimed among the Gentiles. The apostles accepted his gospel and commissioned him and Barnabas to continue to preach the gospel among the Gentiles.

Galatians 2:11–14 is the concluding *narratio*[13] of the first major section of the letter (1:11–2:21). The brief episode at Antioch,[14] which marks a conflict between two key figures of early Christianity (viz., Paul and Peter), has received enormous attention in New Testament scholarship.[15] The narrative speaks of Peter's social interaction with the Gentiles at the meal-table without any hesitation. However, with the arrival of "certain people from James," Peter withdraws and separates himself from the Gentiles, leading his other fellow Jews to do the same. Seeing Peter's changing behavior, Paul rebukes him because his attitude is not consistent with the truth of the gospel. After finishing the narrative (2:11–14), Paul provides its theological elucidation, which would help his

---

[13] Witherington, *Grace in Galatia,* 148.

[14] For a detailed exploration of Antioch's geographical, religious, sociological, and political significance, see Longenecker, *Galatians*, 65–70; Betz, *Galatians*, 104–5; Daniel K. Eng, "The Antioch Assumption: Did Jews and Gentiles Actually Worship Together in Antioch?," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 42, no. 3 (July 2018): 268–79.

[15] For instance, Nanos, "What Was at Stake in Peter's 'Eating with Gentiles' at Antioch?," in Nanos, *The Galatians Debate*, 282–318; Dunn, "The Incident at Antioch (Gal. 2:11–18)," 199–234; Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity*, 2nd ed. (London: SCM Press, 1990), 253–54; E. P. Sanders, "Jewish Association with the Gentiles and Galatians 2:11–14," in *The Conversation Continues: Studies in Paul & John in Honor of J. Louis Martyn*, ed. Robert T. Fortna and Beverly R. Gaventa (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 170–87; Das, *Galatians*, 216–32; Magnus Zetterholm, *The Formation of Christianity in Antioch: A Social-Scientific Approach to the Separation between Judaism and Christianity* (London: Routledge, 2003); Zetterholm, "The Antioch Incident Revisited," *Journal for the Study of Paul and His Letters* 6, no. 2 (2016): 249–59; Cummins, *Paul and the Crucified Christ in Antioch*, 161–88; Peter J. Tomson, *Paul and the Jewish Law: Halakha in the Letters of the Apostle to the Gentiles*, *Jewish Traditions in Early Christian Literature*, vol. 1, Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum, sect. 3 (Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1990), 222–36; Esler, *Galatians*, 117–40.

Galatian readers understand its significance in their setting (2:15–21).[16]

Magnus Zetterholm claims that all historical reconstructions necessitate "certain assumptions" irrespective of whether a historiographer employs them with or without any intent. In providing the reason for "this unfortunate state of affairs," Zetterholm thinks that historians cannot escape making assumptions because of the lack of historical details required to comprehend the historical situation.[17] For this reason, scholars come up with a divergent hypothesis in order to create a historical reconstruction that makes sense to the readers and is more or less close to the real historical reality.[18] This observation is validated in the case of the Antioch incident. Due to the paucity of historical data involved in the Antioch incident in Galatians 2:11–14, New Testament exegetes offer many different historical reconstructions. Based on several presuppositions, all theories seek to understand the nature of the conflict at the mixed table-fellowship at Antioch.

To be more precise, Galatians 2:11–21 presents the concluding section of Paul's autobiographical account, where he confronts Peter and other Christ-believing Jews for "not walking straightforward towards the truth of the gospel" (2:14a). The Antioch incident is considered one of the most interesting but simultaneously controversial incidents in church history.[19] Despite its importance, however, this short

---

[16] Although Paul's overall argument is understandable in Galatians 2, Martinus C. de Boer (*Galatians* [Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011], 129) rightly notes the strange transition that occurs in 2:15. It is unclear where Paul stops after he directly addresses Peter in v. 14 because in vv. 15–16, he merges his quotation that is directed at Peter with the statements he intends for his Galatian audience.

[17] Zetterholm, "The Antioch Incident Revisited," 249.

[18] It is noteworthy that Zetterholm ("The Antioch Incident Revisited," 251–52) does not argue against making use of certain assumptions in developing historical reconstructions from the textual data because he admits, "We must take certain things for granted; this is just a natural part of all historical scholarship." However, Zetterholm believes that what is essential is "to pick the *right set of assumptions*" (emphasis original).

[19] For a brief historical survey of the Antioch incident, see the sect. "Historical Summary of the Research" in chap. 1 of this dissertation.

narrative leaves its readers with so many puzzling questions. For instance, the text does not explicitly answer the following questions: When and why did Peter come to Antioch? Who were the certain anonymous men from James, and with what agenda did they come to Antioch? What part did they play in causing Peter's withdrawal and separation from the Gentiles? Who were "those of the circumcision"? Paul's decision to leave these crucial questions unanswered has led Ben Witherington III to label the Antioch incident as "the most elliptic and frustrating."[20]

Notwithstanding the perplexing questions posed above, what is certain in the text is that the whole matter revolves around, first, Peter and his fellow Jews' *eating with the Gentiles* and, second, their intentional withdrawal and separation from the meal-table caused by the fear of people whom Paul designates as "those of circumcision." The text suggests that both parties (viz., Paul and the circumcision party)[21] find something objectionable in Peter's behavior. So, the overall scenario at Antioch prompts readers to ask: What was really at stake at Antioch?

The broader question above leads to two other related questions, which this dissertation will attempt to answer through the task of exegesis. The first and primary question is: What did "certain men from James" find objectionable in Peter's eating with the Gentiles? The second question, equally important as the first, deals with Paul's objection to Peter's withdrawing and separating himself from the table-fellowship at Antioch. In his confrontation, Paul reproaches Peter concerning his hypocrisy (2:13) and his attempt to compel the Gentiles to Judaize (2:14). So, the question is: What was at stake that caused Paul to treat Peter so harshly "in front of all"? The answer to these

---

[20] Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 148. Along similar lines, Dunn (*Unity and Diversity in the New Testament*, 253) also describes the Antioch incident as "one of the most tantalizing episodes in the whole of the NT." See also Barclay (*Paul and the Gift*, 366), who recognizes how "Paul's narrative is reduced to the minimum necessary, leaving many details uncertain."

[21] In this chapter, I will employ the terms "those of the circumcision" and "the circumcision party" interchangeably.

questions will clarify the overall context of Galatians 2:11–21 and demonstrate how this passage fits into Paul's overall argument in the letter to the Galatians.[22]

The post-positive δὲ functions as a mild adversative in verse 11, marking both the diversion between verses 7–10 and verses 11–14 as well as the continuity of Paul's theme of signifying his non-dependence on other apostles for his gospel message and ministry.[23] The unspecified Ὅτε[24] in verse 11 neither informs the readers about when precisely Cephas[25] came to Antioch nor tells for what purpose, with whom, and under what circumstances he did so. Perhaps, Paul's concern in relating this incident to his Galatian audience lies not in its exact historical happening but in the lesson learned from it. Paul simply states that he opposed Peter "to his face"[26] because "he stood condemned."[27] In a shame and honor culture, personal confrontation is avoided in

---

[22] I am indebted to the essay of Nanos ("What Was at Stake in Peter's 'Eating with Gentiles'?," 283), which helped me to frame these two questions in order to accomplish the task of exegesis effectively.

[23] Longenecker, *Galatians*, 71; Das, *Galatians*, 196; Ernest DeWitt Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1971), 102.

[24] Remarkably, whereas Paul begins the preceding three autobiographical accounts with Ἔπειτα, he chooses to narrate the Antioch episode with the temporal particle Ὅτε ("when"). Paul's decision to begin the narrative with Ὅτε rather than Ἔπειτα has led some scholars to suggest that Paul has not recorded the event in strict chronological order and thus that the incident at Antioch precedes the incident recorded in 2:1–10. See Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*, 100–103; Luedemann, *Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles*, 75–77. This proposal, however, has two flaws. First, the two events deal with two different issues. While the Jerusalem meeting recorded in vv. 1–10 endeavors to resolve the issue of circumcision, vv. 11–14 deals with an issue of mixed table-fellowship of Jews and Gentiles. Second, Paul, in vv. 11–14 takes the circumcision issue one step further by telling his fellow Jews that the dawn of a new age in Christ has not only abolished the circumcision's obligation for Gentiles but also broken the Jew-Gentile distinction. See Matera, *Galatians*, 88; Das, *Galatians*, 204; Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 149. It seems more probable to favor Paul's chronology of events in this section (1:18–2:14). Therefore, along with the majority of commentators, such as Longenecker (*Galatians*, 63–64), Schreiner (*Galatians*, 138–39), Bruce (*The Epistle to the Galatians*, 128), Matera (*Galatians*, 88–89), Witherington (*Grace in Galatia*, 149), Moo (*Galatians*, 141), Boer (*Galatians*, 130n186), and Betz (*Galatians*, 104), this dissertation opts for the option of the occurrence of the Antioch incident *after* the incident recorded in vv. 1–10—that is, in accord with the way Paul orders the two events.

[25] Here, Paul chooses to call Peter by his Aramaic name. Note, however, that this dissertation will use the designation of Peter rather than Cephas.

[26] This phrase can be used in idiomatic sense implying the idea of "face to face." See Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 151; Das, *Galatians*, 205.

[27] Other than in 1 John 3:20–21, κατεγνωσμένος (the perfect passive participle) is only used here in Gal 2:11. In the text, Paul says that Peter stood condemned, but "by whom?" is another issue. While many commentators, such as Das (*Galatians*, 205), Longenecker (*Galatians*, 72), Witherington (*Grace in*

general. If an elderly and respectable figure of the community is found to be in error in a certain situation, then people prefer to talk about him behind his back rather than confront him personally. So, a situation where someone is confronted or opposed face to face reveals the seriousness of the matter. Moreover, if the person being confronted or opposed is someone who holds an honorable status in his community, then the public confrontation endangers his honor in his community. Being aware of Peter's prestige in the Christian community, Paul still confronts him to his face, going against the cultural trend, which indicates the gravity of the issue at Antioch.[28] In the next verses (vv. 12–13), Paul goes into further details of the narrative in order to help the Galatians understand the matter's nature more clearly. The explanatory γὰρ in verse 12 provides further clarification of (1) why Paul confronted Peter and (2) why Peter stood condemned. Paul says that before the arrival of "certain people from James," Peter was actively engaged in *eating with the Gentiles* at Antioch.[29] When the group from James came,[30] however, Peter chose to withdraw and separate (ὑπέστελλεν καὶ ἀφώριζεν) from the table-fellowship of Gentile believers, which caused other Jewish Christians to do the same.

Galatia, 151), and Moo (*Galatians*, 145), suggest that in Paul's mind, Peter stood condemned by God, I agree with Matera (*Galatians*, 85), who thinks that "the reason for Peter's condemnation" was "his hypocritical behavior." Matera's suggestion is more convincing for two reasons: First, if Paul wanted to bring Peter under divine tribunal, he would explicitly state that Peter stood condemned by God. It seems hard to believe that Paul's readers would have understood Peter's condemnation by God when Paul does not state that in the text. Second, in 2:12–14, Paul concerns himself mainly with Peter's hypocritical action. Thus, Peter's own action brings him under a verdict. To equate Peter's hypocrisy with divine condemnation seems a bit strong since Peter's fault at Antioch mainly lied in "hiding" his religious convictions but "rejecting" those convictions.

[28] As I am a resident of a shame and honor culture, these observations are based on my firsthand experience. See also Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 151; Das, *Galatians*, 205. Both scholars have understood this verse in light of the sociological background.

[29] The imperfect Greek term συνήσθιεν indicates that Peter's activity of eating with the Gentile believers at Antioch is habitual and not just one-time act. See Das, *Galatians*, 197; Betz, *Galatians*, 107; Bruce, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 129.

[30] The Greek verb ἦλθον is third-person plural. The implied "they" in this verb most probably refers to "certain people from James." See Matera, *Galatians*, 86.

Major Interpretational Issues in the Incident at Antioch

Before delving into the ensuing exegesis of Galatians 2:11–21 for my main argument in which I will seek to understand the crisis at Antioch through the perspective of identity, it may be helpful, in this section, to address some of the main concerns involved in the table-fellowship conflict at Antioch. Verses 12–13 have led New Testament scholarship to offer many theories due to the paucity of details involved in the narrative.[31]

The identity and agenda of "certain men from James." Concerning the association of the anonymous group with James, the group's identity, and its purpose in verse 12, the text remains silent. Thus, the question of who these men were and why they came to Antioch is debatable. In this debate, several scholars propose that these men from James were certainly his emissaries who carried his message to Antioch and conveyed it faithfully to Peter, who acted accordingly.[32] Contrary to this view, some have argued that there was no association between James and "the certain ones" who came to Antioch. In other words, James did not officially send this delegation to Antioch to observe the situation between Jews and Gentiles.[33] Furthermore, J. B. Lightfoot argues that James dispatched the group of "certain ones" from Jerusalem. However, this anonymous group abused James's authority by conveying the wrong message to the people involved in the conflict at Antioch.[34]

---

[31] In this regard, Das (*Galatians*, 216) observes that "Many readers, even scholars, come to 2:11–14 with preconceptions about the issue at Antioch that may or may not be justified."

[32] See Betz, *Galatians*, 108; Matera, *Galatians*, 89; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 140; Boer, *Galatians*, 133; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 73; Elmer, *Paul, Jerusalem and the Judaisers*, 104–5; J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible, vol. 33A (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 233.

[33] See, e.g., Joachim Rohde, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Galater* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1989), 107.

[34] Lightfoot, *Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians*, 112.

More recently, Mark D. Nanos has proposed that τινας ἀπὸ Ἰακώβου neither represented James's views nor opposed them. Nanos claims that, instead, the reference to this anonymous group "may have functioned as a trigger for the events that followed or merely as a time marker in Paul's retelling of the story for the Galatian addressees."[35] In Nanos's opinion, since the text does not explicitly state that James *sent* this group (it simply mentions that they were from him), the arriving party's association with James cannot be determined conclusively. Thus, it should not have any relevance to the incident. According to Nanos, there is a possibility that this group came to Antioch merely because they were just traveling through. Despite the fact that Nanos's theory is unique from other traditional viewpoints, it is highly dubious since Paul did not have to mention James and the arriving party if the mention was only to be used for a time-marker of the Antioch incident. The reference to James and "certain ones" from him must carry more weight in the text than merely functioning as a time-marker of the event. Also, the vague allusion to "certain ones" in the text as well as the negative consequences they have brought on the incident have caused some scholars to associate them with the "false brothers" of Jerusalem (Gal 2:4–5).[36] This is an unconvincing proposition because, as A. Andrew Das notes, "Paul does not denigrate these people as he does the 'false brothers' in 2:4–5."[37]

A possible conclusion about who "the certain ones from James" were and what they advocated can only be construed by examining the whole Antioch narrative in context.[38] In light of the textual data, one can only suggest that the specific reference to

---

[35] Nanos, "What Was at Stake in Peter's 'Eating with Gentiles'?," 291–92.

[36] Hans Joachim Schoeps, *Paul: The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History*, trans. Harold Knight (London: Lutterworth Press, 1961), 67–68, 74–75.

[37] Das, *Galatians*, 206; Nanos, "What Was at Stake in Peter's 'Eating with Gentiles'?," 292; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 73; Betz, *Galatians*, 108.

[38] Matera, *Galatians*, 85.

James by Paul and the way the group's presence at Antioch impacted Peter's action and created a controversy at the mixed table-fellowship verifies a strong link between James and this anonymous group.[39] Had the arriving group in Antioch not been associated with James, it is hard to imagine Peter's abandoning the table-fellowship with Gentile believers merely because of the presence of these men.[40] Moreover, if "certain ones" had no connection with James, then Paul would have mentioned this more explicitly because then his argument "would have been strengthened to say as much or to leave James out of the narration entirely."[41]

Relationship between the anonymous groups. Verse 12 presents another anonymous group involved in the controversy at Antioch whom Paul labels as "those of the circumcision." For convenience, scholars typically refer to this group as the circumcision party or group. The text does not inform of anything concerning this group except that Peter's separation and withdrawal (ὑπέστελλεν καὶ ἀφώριζεν ἑαυτόν) from the mixed table-fellowship at Antioch was based on his fear (φοβούμενος) of this anonymous group. The problem of identifying "those of the circumcision" is generally coupled with the issue of identifying the "certain ones from James." It is asked whether "those of the circumcision" relate to James's men who arrived at Antioch in any way. In other words, were these two groups—although designated differently by Paul in the text—the same? A survey of the scholarship on this issue reveals that the answer to this question depends on how a scholar views "those of the circumcision" in terms of their socio-religious ethnicity. That is, were the people in this group Christ-believing Jews? If so, does it mean that they are somehow associated with James's men? Or is it possible that the

---

[39] D. Francois Tolmie, *Persuading the Galatians: A Text-Centred Rhetorical Analysis of a Pauline Letter*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 190 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 185.

[40] Das, *Galatians*, 206.

[41] Das, *Galatians*, 206; cf. Frank J. Matera, *Galatians*, 89.

circumcision party was comprised of Jews who were not Christ-believers?

Contrary to the scholarly opinion that argues that all Pauline references to ἐκ περιτομή denote Jewish community in general,[42] the phrase "those of the circumcision" (τοὺς ἐκ περιτομῆς) that Paul employs in the text occurs in five other places in the New Testament writings. The phrase has been used differently depending on the context (Acts 1:45; 11:2; Rom 4:12; Col 4:11; Titus 1:10). In some texts (Acts 10:45; 11:2; Titus 1:10), this phrase refers to Christian Jews. For example, the same phrase in Acts 10:45 describes Jewish Christians who went along with Peter to visit Cornelius's house. Also, the phrase refers to Jewish believers who objected to Peter's decision of eating and associating with Gentiles in Acts 11:2. Finally, in Colossians 4:11, the phrase refers to Jewish Christians who were co-workers of Paul for God's kingdom. However, in some instances, the same phrase refers to Jews in general who were not Christ-believers (Rom 4:12; Titus 1:10).[43] For this reason, Thomas Schreiner rightly cautions exegetes that "the meaning of the phrase 'those of the circumcision' must be discerned contextually, for it is used in different ways depending on the situation addressed."[44]

Due to the variation of the usage of this phrase in the New Testament references, two major positions are present in New Testament scholarship concerning this phrase in Galatians 2:12. Whereas some commentators have viewed these two groups as similar in identity and agenda,[45] others have argued that mention of the circumcision

---

[42] Walter Schmithals and Dorothea M. Barton, *Paul and James*, Studies in Biblical Theology (Naperville, IL: Alec. R. Allenson, 1965), 67; Gregory Dix, *Jew and Gentile: A Study in the Primitive Church* (London: Dacre, 1953), 42.

[43] Some variants of τοὺς ἐκ περιτομῆς also refer to Jews in general (see, e.g., Rom 3:30; 4:9; 15:8; Eph 2:11; Col 3:11).

[44] Schreiner, *Galatians*, 143.

[45] Burton, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 107–8; Betz, *Galatians*, 108–9; James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 121; Tomson, *Paul and the Jewish Law*, 226; Hansen, *Galatians*, 63; Martyn, *Galatians*, 236–40; Zetterholm, "The Antioch Incident Revisited," 257; Tolmie, *Persuading the Galatians*, 86.

group refers to Jews who were not followers of Christ.[46] Scholars in this camp have perceived the circumcision group as non-Christ-believing Jews who belonged to the Jewish group recognized as 'the zealots.' According to this theory, this Jewish sect pressured James in Jerusalem against the practice of Jewish-Gentile mingling at the mixed table-fellowship in Antioch. The pressure was so strong that James felt compelled to send a group of Christian Jews to Antioch reporting to Peter about the zealots' activity in Jerusalem and also asked Peter and other Jewish believers to stop mingling with the Gentiles at the mixed table-fellowship. Furthermore, even though this hypothesis considers men from James as different from the circumcision party, it suggests that both parties involved in the conflict at Antioch had shared interests.[47]

It is true, to some extent, that the proposal that deems "those of the circumcision" to be referring to Jewish Christians makes the text smoother and easier to understand.[48] However, the text does not seem to provide any hint of considering James's group and the circumcision group as the same. Therefore, the decision to view these two groups as distinct seems to be more credible.[49]

---

[46] Jewett, "The Agitators and the Galatian Congregation" (1971), 98–212; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 74; Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 156–57; Bruce, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 131; Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles*, 106–7; Das, *Galatians*, 207; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 144; Moo, *Galatians*, 148.

[47] Das, *Galatians*, 207; Dix, *Jew and Gentile*, 42–44; Jewett, "The Agitators and the Galatian Congregation" (1971), 340–41; Bruce, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 131; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 73–75; Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 154–56; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 144. Contra Nanos ("What Was at Stake in Peter's 'Eating with Gentiles'?," 291), who finds this reconstruction historically problematic for two main reasons: "It assumes at this time the existence of a party in Judea that is attested later, during the revolt. And it assumes that any such group, if it existed, would have had an interest in, or the ability to effect, the circumcision of Gentiles in Antioch, which would seem to be counterintuitive for Judean anti-Roman political-interest groups anyway."

[48] Nanos, "What Was at Stake in Peter's 'Eating with Gentiles'?," 289.

[49] Nanos, "What Was at Stake in Peter's 'Eating with Gentiles'?," 291; Das, *Galatians*, 207; Bruce, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 131; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 74; Moo, *Galatians*, 148. All of these scholars have argued that "certain ones from James" should not be identified as similar to "those of the circumcision." Within the context, these two parties are to be understood as separate groups of people. With this approach, however, some scholars have shown willingness in considering the possibility of some intersection between the two groups. For instance, Das argues that James's delegation and the circumcision party "are most likely separate, but perhaps partially overlapping, groups." He further adds, "Perhaps the arriving party from James was representing the interests of the Jerusalem circumcision party ('those of the circumcision')." Das, *Galatians*, 207.

The nature of the mixed table-fellowship at Antioch. As the above section demonstrates, the alternative scholarly opinions on the issue of the identification of the circumcision party exist because the text (Gal 2:12) does not share specific details of who these people were with its readers. However, what it explicitly tells is that this group's fear caused Peter to leave the table-fellowship of the Gentiles. Hence, it is fair to ask To what would James's party possibly have objected concerning Peter? Or, put differently, what was the rationale behind Peter's withdrawal from the table-fellowship of Gentile believers at Antioch? The debate on this issue is complex, and therefore, in this project, only those proposals will be reviewed that are prominent among scholarly discussions.

On the one hand, holding the traditional view, most scholars have understood the issue at Antioch as focusing on the nature of food being utilized at the table-fellowship. It has been proposed that the food consumed by Peter, Gentiles, and other fellow Jews at the table-fellowship was not according to the biblical dietary laws (Lev 11:1–47; Deut 14:3–21).[50] However, in recent decades, some New Testament interpreters have approached the issue from a different angle. They have argued that the food served at the mixed table-fellowship between Jews and Gentiles at Antioch was kosher to some extent. However, according to the circumcision party whom Peter feared, it did not follow the strict Jewish dietary restrictions.[51] Alternatively, some have suggested that the circumcision party objected to the mixed Jewish-Gentile meal-sharing because they feared that proximity to Gentiles could lead Peter to compromise on Jewish food laws and, ultimately, to idolatry.

---

[50] Matera, *Galatians*, 85; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 139; Lightfoot, *Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians*, 112–14; Burton, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 106; Betz, *Galatians*, 112; Bruce, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 129; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 75; Martyn, *Galatians*, 232; Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 153; Leon Morris, *Galatians: Paul's Charter of Christian Freedom* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 77; Gordon D. Fee, *Galatians: Pentecostal Commentary* (Dorset, UK: Deo, 2011), 73.

[51] James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul, and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians* (Louisville, KY: Westminster Press, 1990), 154–48; Dunn, "The Incident at Antioch (Gal. 2:11–18)," (2002) 225–29. Dunn argues that at Antioch what concerned the circumcision party and James's delegation was strict ritual purity and tithing. See also Dunn, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 121–24; Dunn, *Beginning from Jerusalem*, 470–82; Matera, *Galatians*, 89.

Another key debate that has gained scholarly attention is whether the meal-sharing at Antioch was Eucharistic,[52] regular,[53] or both[54] in nature. While the nature of the conflict at the mixed table-fellowship at Antioch could have had a religious significance (viz., the Lord's Supper), this prospect is unlikely for several reasons. First, that the practice of the Lord's Supper in the early church was conducted in ways similar to sharing ordinary meals (1 Cor 11:17–22) makes the distinction between two types of meals superfluous.[55] Second, the lack of explicit reference to the Lord's Supper by Paul in the Galatians text (2:11–14) makes the possibility doubtful that Paul had a Eucharistic meal in mind in the context of the Antioch incident.[56]

Markus Bockmuehl's stance on this matter is unique. Bockmuehl argues for the geographical significance of the land of Israel and how it contributed to the Antiochene crisis. According to him, the region of Antioch existed within the boundaries of Israel. For this reason, Jewish Christians found the social interaction between Christ-believing Jews and Gentiles at the table-fellowship in Antioch improper within the consecrated boundary of Israel.[57]

Though these scholars present their theories with nuances in approaching the incident from different angles, almost all of these scholarly propositions emphasize that

---

[52] Heinrich Schlier, *Der Brief an die Galater*, KEK 17 (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1971), 83; Esler, *Galatians*, 101–2; Cummins, *Paul and the Crucified Christ in Antioch*, 169–73.

[53] Dunn, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 117–19; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 73; Das, *Galatians*, 208–9.

[54] See, e.g., Martyn, *Galatians*, 232.

[55] Tolmie, *Persuading the Galatians*, 85.

[56] Das, *Galatians*, 208–9. Furthermore, Das downplays the authenticity of this suggestion by arguing that "whereas Paul openly refers to the Lord's Supper elsewhere (1 Cor. 10:16–17, 21; 11:20–26), he does not mention it here. . . . The point is not that the Antiochene Christians were avoiding the Eucharist but that the Lord's Supper is simply not the referent of the 'eating' in 2:12." However, one should be aware of the fact that, in the early church, ordinary and Eucharist meals for fellowship among congregants were not seen as two different practices (1 Cor 11:17–22). Therefore, it is possible that the meal-sharing at Antioch was both regular and Eucharistic.

[57] Markus Bockmuehl, *Jewish Law in Gentile Churches: Halakhah and the Beginning of Christian Public Ethics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 61–70; See also Traugott Holtz, "Der Antiochenische Zwischenfall (Galater 2.11–14)," *NTS* 32, no. 3 (1986): 354–55.

what the circumcision party might have found objectionable concerning Peter was his transgression of Jewish dietary laws. The advocates of the proposal, which considers non-kosher food to be an issue at stake at Antioch, argue that the food that was being consumed at the table-fellowship at Antioch was not in accordance with the Jewish dietary laws. Therefore, both anonymous parties at Antioch disapproved of Peter's action severely to the extent that he stopped transgressing the Old Testament dietary laws any further. For instance, F. F. Bruce begins his commentary on verse 12 by asserting that Peter at Antioch enjoyed "unreserved table-fellowship with the Gentile members of the Antiochene church."[58] The "unreserved table-fellowship" implies that the table-fellowship did not follow the Mosaic food laws.

Furthermore, J. B. Lightfoot, in his commentary, argues that Peter saw nothing wrong in living like a Gentile before his withdrawal and separation from them. Thus, he mingled "freely with the Gentiles and thus of necessity disregard the Jewish Law of meats."[59] So, for Lightfoot, Peter was engaged in eating non-kosher food before escaping the table-fellowship with the Gentiles at Antioch. Likewise, in his commentary, Schreiner affirms that the issue at Antioch involved "Peter regularly eating food forbidden by the OT law."[60] Explaining Paul's ideology of Jewish-Gentile relations in Christ, Sam K. Williams writes,

> His [i.e., Paul's] condemnation of Cephas' withdrawal amounts to a demand that Christian Jews continue to eat with Gentiles even though continued table fellowship would mean abandoning the observance of Torah laws and Jewish custom. In effect, then, Paul was insisting that Cephas and Barnabas and other Christian Jews make themselves Gentiles. When the oneness of God's new inclusive Israel was at stake, Paul would have *everyone* be Gentile.[61]

---

[58] Bruce, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 129.

[59] Lightfoot, *Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians*, 114.

[60] Schreiner, *Galatians*, 139.

[61] Sam K. Williams, *Galatians* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 60.

Articulating Paul's thought, Williams has assumed that Paul condemned Peter because Peter stepped back from "abandoning the observance of Torah and Jewish custom." By "the observance of Torah and Jewish custom," Williams means the food that was not according to the Jewish dietary customs. Additionally, explaining the possible scenario at Antioch that might have caused fear in Peter by the circumcision party, Hans Dieter Betz writes, "The point of concern is the Jewish purity requirement which must be observed whatever meals were involved. The issue at stake was not Cephas' breaking of fellowship by first participation in and subsequent withdrawal from the meal, but his shifting attitude with regard to the Jewish dietary and purity laws."[62]

Along similar lines, admitting the difficulty in determining the precise nature of the matter at Antioch, Frank J. Matera considers several possibilities that may have given rise to the issue at Antioch. Although Matera's theory differs slightly from other scholarly theories on exploring the issue at stake at Antioch, he still lands on the same conclusion, spotting food as the problematic matter of the incident. Like James D. G. Dunn, Matera argues that the table-fellowship at Antioch did not abandon the Mosaic food laws altogether. Even though they observed some form of the Mosaic food laws, "the real difficulty for the people from James was not the behavior of the Gentiles but the fact that Jewish Christians like Peter were no longer following all of the dietary prescriptions of the Law. They demanded that Peter and other Jewish Christians return to the full discipline of these prescriptions."[63]

The above instances are ample evidence to show that most scholars maintain that the charge of the circumcision party against Peter and other Jewish Christ-followers was mainly based on their consummation of food that was not non-kosher. On the other hand, some have refuted this traditional approach by arguing that the issue at Antioch had

---

[62] Betz, *Galatians*, 107.

[63] Matera, *Galatians*, 89; cf. Dunn, "The Incident at Antioch (Gal. 2:11–18)," (2002) 225–29.

nothing to do with food but the company of Gentile believers at the mixed table-fellowship.[64]

Certainly, the strict observance of the Mosaic dietary laws had always been central for Jews in upholding their distinction from their pagan surroundings. Among other Jewish identity-markers, such as circumcision, the Sabbath, and the temple (Gen 17:9–14; Exod 20:8–11; Lev 12:3; Deut 5:12–15; 1 Kgs 6:11–13; Josephus, *Ant*. 14.237; 20.49–50; CD 10.14–11.18; Tacitus, *Hist*. 5.5.1; Philo, *Mos*. 1.254; *Spec*. 1.153–54), the avoidance of non-kosher food remained "a central and defining aspect of Judaism" (Lev 11:1–47; Deut 14:3–21; 2 Macc 7; Tob 1:10; 3 Macc 3:4–7; Josephus, *Ant*. 12.120; Jdt 10:5; 12:2; 13:8).[65] Along a similar vein, Das highlights the important role that food played in the lifestyle of the Jewish community by referring to the historical evidence. His data testifies that "the Jews suffered mightily in the course of their history in order to maintain the Mosaic strictures regarding clean and unclean foods."[66] Moreover, the selected Second Temple Jewish texts examined in the previous chapters affirm how clean and unclean food was central to Judaism.[67] Therefore, given the urgency of retaining Jewish dietary restrictions for the Jewish community, it becomes obvious why many scholars consider the food items consumed at the mixed table-fellowship in Antioch to be

---

[64] For those scholars who argue that Peter and other Jews' withdrawal from the mixed table-fellowship at Antioch was not based on their abhorrence of the Gentiles' food but on their company, see Michael F. Bird, *An Anomalous Jew: Paul among Jews, Greeks, and Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 186–87; Esler, *Galatians*, 93–116, 130–40; Esler, "Making and Breaking an Agreement Mediterranean Style: A New Reading of Galatians 2:1–14," in Nanos, *The Galatians Debate*, 262; Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts: The Social and Political Motivations of Lucan Theology* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 87–89; Jarvis J. Williams, *Galatians* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2020), 53–54; George Howard, *Paul: Crisis in Galatia: A Study in Early Christian Theology*, 2nd ed., Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990), xx; Richard B. Hays, *The Letter to the Galatians*, in vol. 11 of *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 232.

[65] E. P. Sanders, *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah: Five Studies* (London: SCM Press: 1990), 27; cf. Das, *Galatians*, 216–17. For a more comprehensive discussion of the topic, see Tomson, *Paul and the Jewish Law*, 151–76.

[66] Das, *Galatians*, 216–17.

[67] In addition to the primary Jewish literature analyzed in chap. 3, see also Josephus, *Ant*. 14.10.24 § 261, 12.3.1 § 120; 1 Macc 1:62–63; 4 Macc 5–6; 8–12; Jub. 22:16–19; Acts 10:14–28; 11:2–3.

the primary cause of the circumcision party's complaint towards Peter.

Nevertheless, despite the significant role that dietary laws played in the social and religious aspects of Jewish life, some scholars have argued that the crux of the conflict at Antioch was not grounded in the consumption of Gentile food but in the Gentile company present at the table-fellowship. These scholars refute the claims that consider food or the menu to be the core issue for the following reasons: First, it is noteworthy that Paul does not even make a single reference to food while he narrates the Antioch incident.[68] Had unclean food been the core issue at Antioch in the mixed table-fellowship, Paul would not have shied away from explicitly stating that "Peter was eating *unclean food* with the Gentiles." Thus, Paul's intentional use of the term συνήσθιεν (without mentioning the food menu with it) denotes that the circumcision party confronted Peter not for *what he ate* but for *the company he kept*.

Second, do those who perceive food as the main cause of contention at Antioch assume that the mixed table-fellowship at Antioch had no access to kosher food? The negative response to this question would be suspicious since the historical investigations have shown the availability of kosher food for the Jewish community (Josephus, *Ant*. 14.226, 259–61). The Jews at Antioch had access to shops to buy food items based on the Mosaic stipulations. Therefore, it seems likely that if the mixed meals at Antioch were being conducted in Gentile homes, then the Christian Gentiles would have fulfilled the food requirements according to the Jewish dietary customs.[69]

Third, scholars who think that the issue at Antioch revolved around unclean food have argued that Peter was wrong because he showed no hesitation in eating unclean food in the Jewish-Gentile gathering. Moreover, he acted so because of the special

---

[68] Das, *Galatians*, 218. See also Jarvis Williams, *Galatians*, 2020, 53.

[69] Sanders, *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah*, 385–86; Das, *Galatians*, 217–18; Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 121–22.

revelation he had received in Acts 10.[70] For the sake of argument, even if one assumes that Peter did eat unclean food with the Gentiles at Antioch because of the divine revelation (Acts 10:9–16), it would still be hard to explain why other Jewish Christians at Antioch followed Peter's action and ate non-kosher food unreservedly. To suggest that they followed Peter's lead irrationally is implausible.[71]

Fourth, it has been suggested that Jewish-Gentile table-fellowship at Antioch consumed non-kosher food because the gathering could not afford to buy the expensive Jewish food from the market.[72] This argument is an unconvincing reconstruction because (1) it reads too much into the text and (2), as noted by Das, it presumes "significant socio-economic differences between Christ-believers and non-Christ believers."[73]

Furthermore, in more recent debates, James Dunn's and E. P. Sanders's work on the issue at Antioch have gained scholarly attention. Providing a thorough analysis of the issue at Antioch in his article "The Incident at Antioch (Gal 2:11–18)," Dunn has suggested that the meal-table at Antioch did not obliterate the observance of the Jewish dietary laws. Instead, the issue at stake was that the food being consumed at Antioch was not "properly tithed" and that the partakers at the table-fellowship were engaged in an eating activity with ritual contamination. With the aid of the Rabbinic sources, Dunn argues that the Pharisees viewed the Gentiles as impure people, and thus they tried to persuade other fellow Jews not to associate with the Gentiles. Dunn admits, however, that the Jews' perception of the Gentiles as ritually unclean people did not exterminate the

---

[70] For instance, in commenting on 2:12, Lightfoot (*Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians*, 112) attempts to show Peter's breakage from the Jewish traditions and argues that his "vision had taught him the worthlessness of these narrow traditions." According to Lightfoot, Peter had no issue in living like a Gentile.

[71] Das, *Galatians*, 218.

[72] Taylor, *Paul, Antioch and Jerusalem*, 126.

[73] Das, *Galatians*, 218.

association between the two groups completely.[74] The way Dunn approaches the issue from a different angle with the help of several primary Second Temple Jewish writings is appreciable. Nevertheless, his thesis has not gone unchallenged.[75]

First, Dunn employs four texts from the Jewish writings to show how Diaspora Jews maintained the custom of tithing their food before consuming it.[76] After re-examining the same primary texts used by Dunn, Sanders strongly criticizes Dunn by arguing that none of the texts provides any evidence of food-tithing in the Diaspora. He deduces that "Dunn has no evidence at all for tithing in the Diaspora."[77] He adds, "This is not surprising, since none exists."[78] Assessing Dunn's position, Sanders rightly argues that no one in the Diaspora expected that his food needed to be tithed before he could eat it. No data shows that priests made such demands from the Jews living in the Diaspora.[79] Second, Dunn thinks that another possibility that might have been the issue at Antioch is the ritual impurity of the Gentiles. The circumcision party found the mixed meals at Antioch to be obnoxious because they understood the Gentiles partaking in the meal as ritually unclean.[80] Here again, Sanders opposes Dunn's position by arguing that the Jewish material that reflects Jews who viewed the Gentiles as ritually contaminated is dated much later and should not be forced into the Antiochene issue.[81] Sanders further maintains that although there is evidence that portrays Jews as concerned about their

---

[74] Dunn, "The Incident at Antioch (Gal. 2:11–18)," (2002) 212–14.

[75] For a helpful critique of Dunn's thesis, see Sanders, "Jewish Association with the Gentiles," 172–80; cf. Nanos, "What Was at Stake in Peter's 'Eating with Gentiles'?," 306–14.

[76] Dunn, *Jesus, Paul, and the Law*, 139–40.

[77] Sanders, *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah*, 285.

[78] Sanders, *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990), 285. See also Das (*Galatians*, 220), who, in his readings of the texts that Dunn uses, also thinks that "the four texts do not carry the weight of Dunn's argument."

[79] Sanders, *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah*, 307; cf. Das, *Galatians*, 220.

[80] Dunn, "The Incident at Antioch (Gal. 2:11–18)," (1983) 3–57.

[81] Sanders, "Jewish Association with the Gentiles," 173.

ritual purity in the Diaspora, their concern for ritual purity does not suggest the utter rejection of their association with the Gentiles.[82] Sanders concludes, "There is no reason to suppose that in Antioch Jews were under pressure from Pharisees to raise purity standards. The evidence is that Pharisees did *not* try to impose their special rules on others."[83] Therefore, it seems mistaken to believe that the Jewish community showed reluctance in associating with the unclean Gentiles merely due to their purity concerns. Dunn's proposal of understanding the circumcision group's objection to Peter at Antioch regarding food-tithing and Jewish ritual purity fails to accurately understand the nature of Antioch's matter.

Along with his lengthy critique of Dunn's work, Sanders has also presented his own view concerning the issue at Antioch. Arguing that none of the Jewish food laws was disobeyed at Antioch, Sanders says that the objection of the circumcision party at Antioch had to do with their fear. They feared that too much fraternization of the Christian Jews with the Gentiles at the table-fellowship at Antioch "might lead to contact with idolatry or transgression of one of the biblical food laws."[84] In the context of Galatians 2:11–14, James suggests to Peter that he should avoid the table-fellowship with the Gentiles since such fellowshipping might cause him to abominate the Jewish food laws. So, in Sanders's overall estimation of the issue, "food," though meanderingly, "still defines the concern"—as Nanos correctly points out.[85]

Furthermore, Nanos presents his novel reconstruction of the situation at Antioch. He thinks that, in the social-cultural and historical context, whenever Gentiles ate with Jews at the same table, they partook in the meals either as guests or proselytes.

---

[82] Sanders, "Jewish Association with the Gentiles" 185.

[83] Sanders, "Jewish Association with the Gentiles," 185; cf. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift,* 367n42.

[84] Sanders, "Jewish Association with the Gentiles," 186.

[85] Nanos, "What Was at Stake in Peter's 'Eating with Gentiles'?," 298.

This designation served to bring distinction between distinct Jewish identity as people of God and Gentiles. Nanos argues that this identity distinction was not maintained at the mixed table-fellowship at Antioch. Hence, the delegation from James objected to the fact that Peter and other Jewish Christians were treating Gentiles neither as "guests" nor as "proselytes." In this way, the Gentiles were being "identified" as equals with the people of God.[86] Despite his attempt to identify the core issue at stake at Antioch from a different angle, Nanos's reconstruction is unconvincing for two main reasons: First, Nanos goes far away from the simple reading of the text. When Paul states that Peter "was eating with the Gentiles," this phrase has nothing to do with how the Gentiles were supposed to eat (i.e., a specific posture or a seating arrangement), implying their unequal status with Jews. Second, Barclay rightly objects to Nanos's proposal by noting that "there is no evidence that Jewish meal-practice accorded different status to proselyte and non-proselyte Gentiles."[87]

As the above discussion indicates, most of the prevailing scholarly opinions on the issue of "what was at stake at Antioch" emphasize the food being consumed at the table-fellowship at Antioch. Very few voices among contemporary scholars have argued in favor of Peter's *eating with the Gentiles* (viz., the venue or the company) to be problematic at the mixed table-fellowship at Antioch. Due to the lack of sufficient information given in Galatians 2:11–14 concerning why Peter might have separated himself from the Gentile table-fellowship, an interpreter must show some degree of reluctance in making conclusive remarks on this issue. Nevertheless, my own belief is that the brief (and somewhat vague) information on the Antioch incident suggests that it was the venue or company of the Gentiles that most likely would have been the reason

[86] Nanos, "What Was at Stake in Peter's 'Eating with Gentiles'?," 300–11.

[87] Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 367n42.

for Peter's withdrawal from the mixed table-fellowship.[88]

One viable approach towards the solution is to avoid the opposing extremes on this issue and frame the question differently: How can we understand the socio-religious dynamics of mixed table-fellowship between Jews and Gentiles in the New Testament period? More specifically, Did Jews eat with the Gentiles during the Second Temple period? A concise answer to these questions is that the phenomenon of Jewish-Gentile social interaction over table-fellowship was not monolithic. Instead, a wide range of social interactions existed between Jews and Gentiles over mixed table-fellowship in the biblical era. That is, while some Jews showed no hesitation in eating with Gentiles but avoided their food (Jdt 10–12; Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll.* 5.33; 'Abod. Zar. 5.3–7; Jos. Asen. 8:5; 21:14–15; Let. Aris. 142, 182–85), others strictly avoided the practice of dining *with* the Gentiles (Jos. Asen. 7:1; *Ag. Ap.* 2.14.148, 36.258; Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.5.2; Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll.* 5.33; Add Esth 14:17). Furthermore, some Jews abhorred both Gentiles' company and food (4 Macc 5:2; Acts 10:11–20, 28–29; 11:2–3; Jub. 22:16; 30:7, 14–17). These primary texts from the Second Temple period demonstrate a broad range of Jewish-Gentile social interactions at the table-fellowship. Although Jewish-Gentile interaction in the Diaspora varied with respect to different aspects of Jewish life, Jews' reservations concerning their interaction with the Gentiles are evident, particularly in the table-fellowship practices between Jews and Gentiles.[89] Barclay declares, "In the contemporary Diaspora, Jews could associate freely with non-Jews in many spheres of

[88] For a helpful and detailed survey of this issue, see Gibson, *Peter between Jerusalem and Antioch*, 252–75; cf. Zetterholm, *The Formation of Christianity in Antioch*, 130–34. Gibson (*Peter between Jerusalem and Antioch*, 271–72) discusses six different scholarly theories that have sought to explain possible reasons behind Peter's withdrawal from the Gentiles' table-fellowship. His own stance on this issue is that Peter's fear of the circumcision party (2:13) was based on sociological factors. That is, his fear "most likely consisted of a fear that his Jewish Christian brethren would be persecuted by non-Christian Jews, either by Jews in general or by the Jewish leadership, which had already demonstrated its willingness to persecute the Jewish Christian church."

[89] Das, *Galatians*, 226; Esler, *Galatians*, 100; Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 368; Jordan D. Rosenblum, *Food and Identity in Early Rabbinic Judaism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 36.

life, but were known to set limits to this association in certain sensitive spheres, such as cultic practice, marriage, and meals."[90]

The Issue at Stake at Antioch from James's and Peter's Perspective

The above discussion sought to address some main interpretational complexities involved in the crisis at Antioch concerning the issues of the identity and purpose of the anonymous groups involved in the Antiochene controversy and the nature of the mixed table-fellowship. This section offers a possible scenario of what these persons might have found problematic in Peter's table-fellowship with Gentile believers and what would have caused Peter to give in to their pressure.[91]

A scenario that I consider to be more credible requires consideration of the broader historical, political, and socio-religious background of the Jewish and Greco-Roman world in order to better understand the context of the Antiochene crisis. A few scholars have hypothesized that the historical period (AD 40–50s) during which the Antioch incident might have occurred[92] was quite a testing point for the Jewish community regarding the socio-religious and political crisis it was facing by the Roman empire. From a political and religious point of view, Jews were struggling to prioritize their socio-religious distinction with regard to their Jewish identity (Josephus, *Legat*. 29–42; *Ant*. 18.8.2–9; 19.5.2; 20.1.1, 5.1; *J.W*. 2.10.1–5, 12.1; 20.6.1; Acts 21:38; Tacitus, *Hist*. 5.9; Philo, *Flacc*. VI–VIII.41–54; *Legat*. 20.132–37; John Malalas, *Chron*.

---

[90] Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 368; see also Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts*, 73–86; Esler, *Galatians*, 93–116; Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE–117 CE)* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 434–37.

[91] It is to be recognized that with so little textual data available on this narrative, no historical reconstruction offered by any exegete can be definitive. What one can aim to accomplish is to provide a possible historical situation that makes more sense in light of the text in Galatians and the broader historical context in which this incident occurred.

[92] Although this proposal assumes that the Antioch incident most probably took place during the AD 40s–50s, determining the precise date of this event is almost impossible. All suggested dates assigned to this incident are approximations. For the issue of the dating of the Antioch incident, see Gibson, *Peter between Jerusalem and Antioch*, 216–19, 270–71.

10.2.244–45).[93]

These historical, political, and socio-religious affairs forced the Jewish community to become more conscious and stricter concerning their distinct religious identity. For instance, in his article, Dunn surveys the socio-political atmosphere in which Jews lived in the first century. He identifies different socio-religious and political challenges that Jews faced from the foreign empire and their neighbors. He observes that during the period of AD 40–50, "many Jews, no doubt a growing proportion within the Jewish territories, must have believed their distinctive religious and national prerogatives were under increasing threat."[94] This Jewish consciousness in relation to Jewish religious identity was also exhibited in Jewish-Gentile relations. That is, Jews, both in Jerusalem and in the Diaspora, sought to erect mental or symbolic boundaries between them and their Gentile neighbors in order to establish and prioritize their distinct religious identity. This Jewish conduct was practiced in Jews' relationships with Gentiles and those within Jewish sects. For example, even the early Christian church, which was perceived to be a sect within Judaism in its initial stages of history, could not escape this tension from the non-Christ-believing Jewish community (Acts 12:1–3; 15:1–5; 21:17–24; 22:3; Gal 1:14; 2:4–5; 1 Thess 2:14–16). Viewing the incident at Antioch in light of this socio-political background in which first-century Jews were living, Dunn writes,

> During the period in which the Antioch incident took place Jews had to be on their guard against what were or were seen to be repeated threats to their national and religious rights. Whenever such a threat was perceived their reaction was immediate and vigorous. In Palestine itself more and more were resorting to open violence and guerilla warfare. The infant Christian sect was not exempt from this unrest . . . .

---

[93] My historical understanding of the Antioch incident agrees with and has been influenced by the works of the following scholars: Hays, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 232–33; Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 155–56; Das, *Galatians*, 229–30; Gibson, *Peter between Jerusalem and Antioch*, 263–71; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 79; Moo, *Galatians*, 148–49; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 144; James D. G. Dunn, "The Incident at Antioch (Gal. 2:11–18)," (2002) 204–7; Robert Jewett, "The Agitators and the Galatian Congregation," in Nanos, *The Galatians Debate*, 340–42; Craig S. Keener, *Galatians: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), 152; David A. deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 197–98.

[94] Dunn, "The Incident at Antioch (Gal. 2:11–18)," (2002) 204.

> *[W]herever this new Jewish sect's belief or practice was perceived to be a threat to Jewish institutions and traditions, its members would almost certainly come under pressure from their fellow Jews to remain loyal to their unique Jewish heritage*.[95]

In consideration of the primary text in Galatians 2:11–14 (though somehow vague) and the broader historical background examined above, it is possible to imagine that James might have understood the incident at Antioch in the following manner. Peter came to Antioch. Paul recounts that during his stay at Antioch, Peter regularly shared the table-fellowship with Gentile believers. Somehow, the report of this mixed table-fellowship practice between Jewish and Gentile believers at Antioch reached James, the elder. This report concerned James. Upon hearing what was happening at Antioch, James sent out a group of people, bearing his authority and message, to Antioch (2:12a) in order to deliver a message to Peter. What could be the content of the message that James sent to Peter? Did he communicate his change of mind concerning the Gentiles' inclusion in the early church (Gal 2:1–10)? Or was he upset about the mixed table-fellowship between Jews and Gentiles at Antioch, which he did not expect to occur with the inclusion of Gentiles into the early church?

In light of the historical background reviewed above, this study proposes that James's disruption of the mixed table-fellowship between Jews and Gentiles that led Peter (2:12b) and other Jewish believers (2:13) to cease eating with the Gentiles arose from his concern of the unstable socio-political circumstances of that era. In other words, through his message delivered from his appointed delegation directly to Peter at Antioch, James communicated his concern(s) for Peter's missional activities among non-believing Jews. Moreover, he reminded Peter of the negative consequences of his behavior on Christ-believing Jews in Judea if he continued associating with Gentiles at the table-fellowship at Antioch. Supposing that James viewed the scenario at Antioch from this perspective, his demand that Peter should separate himself from the Gentile table-

---

[95] Dunn, "The Incident at Antioch (Gal. 2:11–18)," (2002) 206 (emphasis original); cf. Das, *Galatians*, 230–31.

fellowship does not seem to be theologically motivated. Rather, it was rooted in a sociological concern. That James would have objected to Peter's behavior on theological grounds seems to be unlikely. At the Jerusalem council, when there was a dispute over the matter of circumcision and adherence to the Mosaic law (Acts 15:1–5), James, as an integral part of the council and in agreement with Peter, does not require circumcision for the inclusion of Gentiles into the church (15:13–22). The only requirement for refraining "from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood" (Acts 15:20) does not obliterate the possibility of mixed table-fellowship between Jews and Gentiles. The major issue that entailed the rite of circumcision was settled without any ambiguity left.

Furthermore, in one of his visits to Jerusalem, Paul tells his Galatian congregations that he and Barnabas did not give in to the pressure of the "false brothers" who were seeking to compel Titus to be circumcised (Gal 2:1–4). In this instance, it appears that the apostles (including James) took the side of Paul and Barnabas rather than of the "false brothers." These references demonstrate that James supported Paul by not making Gentiles undergo the Jewish rite of circumcision.[96] It is noteworthy to observe that if James had complied with Paul concerning the issue of circumcision, which is a weightier matter than the issue of food laws from a theological viewpoint, why would he show a theological disagreement with Paul and Peter on the matter of the mixed table-fellowship at Antioch. Das claims, "James does not seem concerned with the Jewish Christians' meals with gentiles at Antioch. Instead, he sends word exclusively to Peter (Gal 2:11–12)."[97]

From James's perspective, his request for Peter to abandon the table-fellowship

---

[96] Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Keys to Galatians: Collected Essays* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012), 62, 64.

[97] Das, *Galatians*, 231.

with Gentiles was realistic. Just as the apostles have affirmed Paul's divine call "to the uncircumcised" (τῆς ἀκροβυστίας), so also has Peter been entrusted with taking the gospel "to the circumcised" (τῆς περιτομῆς). James's delegation most likely communicated two main things to Peter. First, they might have reminded him of the socio-religious and nationalistic crisis that the Jewish community was confronting and how Peter's meal-sharing with Gentiles could lead zealous Jews to persecute the Jewish Christians. Second, they might have warned him of the repercussions of his behavior on his ministry with the circumcised (i.e., Jews). Thus, the men from James who arrived at Antioch might have simply told Peter that James expected him to stop sharing table-fellowship with the Gentiles.[98] Peter, heeding his fellow apostle's advice and concern, withdraws and separates himself (ὑπέστελλεν καὶ ἀφώριζεν ἑαυτόν) from the Gentile table-fellowship (2:12b), and then other Jewish believers do the same (2:13).[99] Moreover, in the framework of this reconstruction of the Antioch incident, Peter's reasoning for leaving the Gentile table-fellowship was, like James, not based on the change of theological beliefs regarding the notion of Gentile salvation (Acts 15:6–11). Instead, as the text in Galatians clarifies, it was his fear of "those of the circumcision" (φοβούμενος τοὺς ἐκ περιτομῆς) that led him to abandon the mixed table-fellowship with Gentiles (Gal 12:b). Additionally, in his confrontation with Peter, Paul does not accuse him of apostasy but hypocrisy (συνυπεκρίθησαν).[100] Craig S. Keener writes, "Whatever Peter's motives . . . , Paul does not indicate a *theological* difference with Peter here. This is a disagreement

[98] Das, *Galatians*, 231; cf. Sanders, "Jewish Association with the Gentiles," 186; Gibson, *Peter between Jerusalem and Antioch*, 271.

[99] Das, *Galatians*, 232.

[100] deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 203; Das, *Galatians*, 210; Gibson, *Peter between Jerusalem and Antioch*, 271; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 145; Keener, *Galatians* (2019), 158; Oscar Cullmann, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953), 65; Mark D. Nanos, *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul's Letter* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 354, 358n45.

over behavior, not over the content of the gospel message."[101]

Zetterholm remarks that the diversity of scholarly interpretations on the issue of the Antiochene conflict is "to some extent a result of assumptions or perspectives on a meta-level, which have arisen from the interpretation of other ancient sources or are the result of modern approaches or models."[102] This observation is accurate because most of the theories that scholars suggest on this subject depend on the ancient Jewish texts, particularly from the Second Temple period, or utilize socio-scientific models to interpret the mixed table-fellowship conflict at Antioch. Viewing all other interpretations of the Antioch incident as viable solutions to the Antioch problem, I propose that the narrative of the mixed table-fellowship crisis at Antioch can also be read through the interpretive lens of the theme of identity. In other words, from the perspective of both the circumcision party whom Peter feared and consequently abandoned the mixed table-fellowship with the Gentiles and Paul, who condemned Peter for his action, what was really at stake at Antioch was the issue of identity. Interpreting the Antioch incident in light of the theme of identity offers a better understanding of Galatians 2:11–21 because it addresses the root cause of the issue and not just the peripheral issues around which scholarly discussions revolve.[103]

---

[101] Keener, *Galatians* (2019), 158. For a detailed and informative discussion on this subject, see Gibson (*Peter between Jerusalem and Antioch*, 252–75), who presents six different theories in scholarship that seek to explore possible reasons behind Peter's decision of abandoning the table-fellowship of the Gentiles. Concerning the possible cause behind Peter's withdrawal from the table-fellowship of Gentile believers, Gibson's own argument is that Peter ceased eating with the Gentile believers at Antioch because he "was concerned that his actions would cause Jewish believers in Judea to undergo persecution after reports reached the Jewish leadership in Jerusalem that he, a key Christian leader, was eating with Gentiles" (262). Furthermore, in his overall argument, Gibson goes to great lengths to demonstrate how Peter's decision of separating himself from the Gentiles at the meal-table at Antioch should be seen pragmatically and with a sympathetic attitude in consideration of the historical realities of that period. For example, he says, "While Peter almost certainly did not fear for himself (he had, on multitude occasions, faced persecution fearlessly: Acts 4:3–20; 5:29–32, 41–42), he had good reason to fear for his fellow Jewish Christians back in Jerusalem" (263).

[102] Zetterholm, *The Formation of Christianity in Antioch*, 135.

[103] My proposal of connecting the mixed table-fellowship conflict at Antioch with the issue of identity is not original. Recent New Testament scholarship has already argued how the incident at Antioch should be considered in view of the concept of identity. See, e.g., Atsuhiro Asano, *Community-Identity Construction in Galatians: Exegetical, Social-Anthropological, and Socio-Historical Studies* (London:

The Motif of Identity and the Mixed Table-Fellowship in Galatians 2:11–21

Supposing that one argues that Peter's decision to withdraw and separate himself from the Gentiles' mixed table-fellowship was based on his pragmatic reasoning (as argued above), how did Paul understand the whole scenario? Did he seriously consider Peter and other Jewish believers' position and explain why they did what they did? More precisely, did Paul view the crisis at Antioch the same way as his Jewish contemporaries? In other words, what was the issue at stake at Antioch from Paul's perspective?

As numerous references in the New Testament writings affirm, the early Christian church did not emerge as a novel religious movement without any historical roots. Rather, it had deep religious roots within Judaism (Matt 1; 5:17; Acts 2:14–41; 14:1; Gal 3:15–29; 4:21–31). However, within a few decades, the early church started to gain attention from Gentiles living in the Diasporan environment (Acts 10; 11:19–20). With the admittance of the Gentile community into the early church, which primarily consisted of Jewish believers, the apostles encountered a unique crisis of a serious nature. Having been established as a religious group within Jewish boundaries, the early church leaders had to figure out how Gentiles should relate to Jewish beliefs and practices (viz., Torah) that mainly functioned to promote a distinct Jewish identity (Acts 11:1–3; 15:1–

T&T Clark, 2005), 116–46; Asano, "Galatians 2.11–14 as Depiction of the Church's Early Struggle for Community-Identity Construction," in *T&T Clark Handbook to Social Identity in the New Testament*, ed. J. Brian Tucker and Coleman A. Baker (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 311–31; Bengt Holmberg, "Jewish versus Christian Identity in the Early Church?," *Revue Biblique* 105, no. 3 (1998): 397–425; Esler, *Galatians*, 37–38; Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts*, 87–89; Nanos, "What Was at Stake in Peter's 'Eating with Gentiles'?," 303–18; Nanos, "The Question of Conceptualization: Qualifying Paul's Position on Circumcision in Dialogue with Josephus's Advisors to King Izates," in *Paul within Judaism: Restoring the First-Century Context to the Apostle*, ed. Mark D. Nanos and Magnus Zetterholm (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 150; Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 367–70; Robert Jewett, "Gospel and Commensality: Social and Theological Implications of Galatians 2.14," in *Gospel in Paul: Studies on Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans for Richard N. Longenecker*, ed. L. Ann Jervis and Peter Richardson, *JSNT*Sup 108 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 240–52; Dragutin Matak, "Another Look at the Antioch Incident (Gal 2:11–14)," *Kairos: Evangelical Journal of Theology* 6, no. 2 (2012): 57; Cornelis Bennema, "The Ethnic Conflict in Early Christianity: An Appraisal of Bauckham's Proposal on the Antioch Crisis and the Jerusalem Council," *JETS* 57, no. 4 (2013): 762–63; Jae Won Lee, *Paul and the Politics of Difference: A Contextual Study of the Jewish-Gentile Difference in Galatians and Romans* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014), 107–35.

29; Gal 2:3–4).[104] Among other Jewish practices, the ones that held a prominent place in defining and constructing the distinctness of Jewish identity were Torah observance, the rite of circumcision, and the social practice of table-fellowship. These Jewish practices had a socio-religious significance and primarily served as identity-markers for the Jewish community. Hence, the inclusion of Gentiles within the early church raised an issue of whether Christ-believing Gentiles needed to adopt a distinct Jewish identity to gain membership into people of God (Acts 11:1–18; Gal 2:1–10).

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul seeks to address whether Christ-believing Gentiles are required to show allegiance to the Jewish identity in order to gain the status of the people of God (cf. Rom 1:16; 2:10; 3:30; 4:9–12; 10:12; 1 Cor 1:24; 12:13; Gal 3:28; Eph 2:11–13; Phil 3:3; Col 3:11). In his overall argument in the letter, Paul attempts to persuade the Galatians that in Christ, they are under no obligation to assume a Jewish identity through the rite of circumcision and Torah observance in order to gain access into the Abrahamic family of God (Gal 3:6–29; 4:21–31; 5:2–3; 6:12–13). In other words, neither distinct Jewish identity nor Jewish identity-markers play any role in the Gentiles' relationship with other believers and God.

The letter to the Galatians has numerous references that highlight the theme of identity. For instance, Paul declares to his Galatian addressees that his identity as an apostle originated from "Jesus Christ and God the Father" (1:1). Furthermore, Paul informs the Galatians of his previous identity in Judaism by telling them how he used to persecute the church, trying to destroy it (1:13a), and how he advanced in Judaism by

---

[104] Bennema, "The Ethnic Conflict in Early Christianity," 753–56; James S. McLaren, introduction to *Attitudes to Gentiles in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. David C. Sim and James S. McLaren (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 2. For more comprehensive treatment of this subject, see Terence L. Donaldson, *Gentile Christian Identity from Cornelius to Constantine: The Nations, the Parting of the Ways, and Roman Imperial Ideology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020), 151–243; Matthew Thiessen, *Contesting Conversion: Genealogy, Circumcision, and Identity in Ancient Judaism and Christianity* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2011), 111–41; James D. G. Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways: Between Christianity and Judaism and Their Significance for the Character of Christianity* (London: SCM Press, 2006); Giorgio Jossa, *Jews or Christians? The Followers of Jesus in Search of Their Own Identity*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 202 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006).

being extremely zealous for the traditions (1:14). However, he notifies the Galatian believers of how God's calling and revealing of his Son (1:15–16) transformed his previous identity in terms of his religious direction. Paul's revelatory experience on the road to Damascus redefined his identity in Christ by altering his previous lifestyle, religious goals, and behavior. Consequently, it also led him to bring the gospel to the Gentiles (1:16; 2:8) and actively proclaim the faith he previously opposed (1:23). In addition, in his letter, Paul highlights how believers' identity has been redefined in Christ. For example, according to Paul, believers have died to the law (2:19) and have been crucified with Christ (2:20). Thus, they no longer live for themselves; instead, Christ lives in them. Moreover, because of their faith in Jesus Christ, believers have become members of the Abrahamic family (3:9); they have been redeemed to attain Abrahamic blessings (3:14) and are no longer under slavery and the supervision of the law (3:22–23, 25).

Furthermore, believers are sons of God through faith in Jesus Christ (3:26), and through baptism, they have clothed themselves with Christ (3:27). Believers' new identity in Christ allows for no discrimination based on one's gender or ethnic, social, or cultural identity; instead, the Galatians are all one in Christ Jesus (3:28). Believers' new identity status in Christ has qualified them to be the "seed" and "heirs" of Abraham according to the promise (3:29), and thus they are now the recipients of "the full rights of sons" (4:4–6). Also, Paul reminds the Galatian believers of their status as heirs of God through Jesus Christ and that they are no longer slaves but sons (4:7–8). Like Isaac, the Galatian believers are children of promise and free women (4:28, 31). Through the person and work of Jesus Christ, the Galatian believers have gained freedom (5:1). The Jewish rite of circumcision has no socio-religious significance in establishing their identity and relationship with God (5:6). They are called to be free (5:13) and to live by the Spirit (5:16) by crucifying their passions and desires that originate from their sinful nature (5:24). Paul admonishes the believers in the churches at Galatia—in their new

identity in Christ—not to boast in anything except the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ (6:14). Finally, believers' identity in Christ has made them "a new creation," and this status has invalidated all previous socio-religious features within Judaism (particularly the rite of circumcision) that served as identity-markers relating Israel to God (6:15).

Along the same lines, Philip F. Esler, in his Galatians commentary, rightly notes Paul's usage of expressions for his audience "which are always plural and largely collective in nature"[105] (1:2, 11; 2:16–17; 3:15, 26, 29; 4:6, 12, 21–31; 5:11, 13, 18, 24; 6:1, 10, 15–16, 18). All of these specific designations that Paul employs for his congregations at Galatia connect particularly with the question of identity. In making this observation, Esler claims that the descriptions used by Paul in his letter

> serve to highlight aspects of the identity of the members of the congregations, since identity essentially refers to that which makes us distinctive human beings, in other words, our sense of who we are. The rich array of language and argument relating to identity, here presented in collective forms, is one of the most striking features of this letter.[106]

The above discussion shows how Paul is at pains to eradicate discrimination between Jews and Gentiles based on their distinct ethnicities among his churches in Galatia.[107] Among other Jewish socio-religious practices, one of the major areas where the discrimination between Jews and Gentiles was noted most clearly was Jewish table-fellowship practices (see chaps. 2–3 for a comprehensive analysis on this subject). Although the early Christ-believing community had adopted many new modes of beliefs and practices that were different from its ancestral religion (i.e., Judaism), it had not yet completely resolved all the socio-religious issues related to the beliefs and customs rooted in Judaism. One such Jewish norm that caused tensions within the Christian

---

[105] Esler, *Galatians*, 37.

[106] Esler, *Galatians*, 38.

[107] My argument for highlighting the theme of identity in Galatians does not mean to claim that identity is the only issue for which Paul is arguing in this letter. Rather, I argue that the issue of identity is among one of the central issues in Galatians.

groups of the early church was the practice of mixed table-fellowship between Jews and Gentiles (Acts 10:24–28; 11:1–3). The narrative in Galatians 2:11–21 is one of the instances illustrating (1) the Jewish-Gentile conflict over mixed table-fellowship due to the clash of different and conflicting ethnic identities and (2) Paul's attitude towards and evaluation of this conflict with particular attention to the theological analysis of this issue.

The Issue at Stake at Antioch from Paul's Perspective

Paul's viewpoint on what was the issue at stake in the Antiochene crisis over the mixed table-fellowship between Jewish and Gentile believers can be understood by analyzing the nature and significance of his severe rebuke to Peter based on his theological reflection on the nature of the conflict (Gal 2:14–16).[108] In this study, I propose that Paul's direct and stern rebuke in reaction to Peter's behavior at the mixed table-fellowship at Antioch, which also had a negative impact on other Jewish believers, relates precisely to the issue of disorientation of identity status.

More precisely, I suggest that from the viewpoint of all of the people involved in the mixed table-fellowship conflict at Antioch (viz., James, Peter, Jewish believers, and Paul), the core issue at stake was the clash between two different notions of identity. In the crisis at Antioch, all of the parties involved—except Paul—saw the practice of communal eating between Jew and Gentile believers as jeopardizing distinct Jewish identity based on the Torah allegiance.[109] Paul himself understood the conflict concerning the concept of identity. However, his understanding of identity clashed with how his

---

[108] Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 366.

[109] Nanos, "What Was at Stake in Peter's 'Eating with Gentiles'?," 303–18. I would like to mention that I agree with Nanos's approach on the Antioch incident that argues that Peter's behavior at the mixed table-fellowship "symbolizes a challenge to identity conventions" and that the real issue at stake involved the Gentiles' status. However, I disagree with Nanos's position whereby he suggests that the objection to Peter from the circumcision party was neither non-Jewish food nor Gentile company. "Rather, it was the way that these Gentiles were being *identified* at these meals" (300–3).

Jewish contemporaries viewed it because of his perception of divine action that has redefined the believer's identity in Christ. According to Paul, the construction of the believer's new identity in Christ is no more tied to or dependent on the Torah's allegiance or observation. Instead, the establishment of the believer's identity is determined solely by his faith in Jesus Christ. Thus, viewed from this perspective, there are two main agents at play in the construction of ethnic identity in Galatians 2:11–21 that function antithetically in Paul's perception. First, the Torah that defines and constructs distinct ethnic identity through the observation of socio-religious laws. And secondly, believers' "faith in Jesus Christ" that has redefined the believer's identity because of the divine action through Jesus' death, resurrection, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

How does the textual data in the primary text at hand support the proposition that the practice of mixed table-fellowship at Antioch relates directly to the issue of identity? There are many hints in the text that affirm that in Paul's evaluation of the crisis at Antioch, the underlying issue at stake was identity. First, from a socio-anthropological point of view in general, the act of engaging in or avoiding the practice of table-fellowship with others corresponds to the idea of individual or communal identity; table-fellowship practices and restrictions within a given society characterize social bond and boundaries (chap. 2).[110] Second, the interruption of the mixed table-fellowship occurred mainly due to the issue of different ethnicities. In other words, *Jewish* believers (viz., Peter and his contemporaries) stopped sharing the table with the Gentile believers due to their different ethnicity (Gal 2:12). Third, in Paul's response to Peter based on his theological evaluation of the scenario (2:14–16), Paul's terminology (e.g., Ἰουδαῖος ὑπάρχων, ἐθνικῶς, Ἰουδαϊκῶς, ἔθνη, ἀναγκάζεις, Ἰουδαΐζειν, Ἰουδαῖοι, ἐθνῶν) demonstrates that the point of contention in the Antiochene crisis involved the issue of conflicting socio-ethnoreligious identities. Fourth, Paul's usage of the phrase "works of the law"

[110] Cf. Holmberg, "Jewish versus Christian Identity in the Early Church?," 398.

(ἔργων νόμου) twice in the text (2:16) also indicates that the idea of *Jewishness* played a key role in the conflict since Torah observance mainly functioned to establish and prioritize a distinct Jewish identity. For this reason, the incident of the mixed table-fellowship conflict at Antioch should also be approached in relation to the notion of identity.[111]

So far, I have sought to establish the argument that the incident at Antioch that caused the mixed table-fellowship conflict between Jews and Gentiles can reasonably be seen through the lens of the theme of identity. Hereafter, I will focus on Paul's criticism of Peter and the other Jewish believers' behavior at Antioch in light of his theological reasoning in Galatians 2:14–21. My exegetical analysis of Galatians 2:14–21 below will demonstrate that Paul's theological argumentation in light of the crisis at Antioch relates directly to the issue of identity.

At the outset of narrating the Antioch incident, Paul tells the Galatians that he "opposed" (ἀντέστην) Peter "because he stood condemned" (ὅτι κατεγνωσμένος ἦν; 2:11). In verses 12–13, Paul describes what happened with a few historical details of the incident. In verse 14, Paul resumes his dialogue from verse 11 to explain his declaration against Peter.

At the beginning of verse 14, Paul uses an adversative particle ἀλλά in order to put himself in contrast to what other Jewish believers had done. After carefully perceiving what was going on at Antioch (ὅτε εἶδον), Paul blames all Jewish believers for "not walking straightforwardly with the truth of the gospel" (οὐκ ὀρθοποδοῦσιν πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου). In Paul's view, "the truth of the gospel" (τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου) was compromised by Peter and other Jewish believers when they decided to

[111] Since I am emphasizing on the issue and role of ethnic identity in my discussion, I find it necessary to clarify that when I highlight the issue of ethnic identity in the context of the mixed table-fellowship at Antioch, my discussion of identity is very much tied to the role of the Torah in the establishment of distinct Jewish identity.

break off their table-fellowship with other believers because of their different ethnic identity. "Walking straightforwardly with the truth" in this case would imply upholding the harmony at the table-fellowship with Gentiles, not prioritizing a distinct ethnic identity.

In verse 14b, Paul goes on to flesh out the significance of "the truth of the gospel" by recounting his public confrontation of Peter (εἶπον τῷ Κηφᾷ ἔμπροσθεν πάντων) in order to reveal in what way Peter compromised on "the truth of the gospel" (v. 14a). Paul asked Peter, "If you, being a Jew, [are] living like a Gentile and not like Jews," then "how are you compelling the Gentiles to live like Jews?" (2:14b). As an observation, it is important to note that Paul's rhetorical question posed to Peter is loaded with the terminology related to ethnic identity (e.g., Ἰουδαῖος, ἐθνικῶς, Ἰουδαϊκῶς, ἔθνη, Ἰουδαΐζειν). This indicates that in Paul's understanding, the issue of Jewish-Gentile distinction based on different ethnicities was at the core of the mixed table-fellowship conflict. Paul's question also raises two important questions: First, in the context of this passage, how does Peter's behavior at the table-fellowship at Antioch reflect that he was "living like a Gentile"? Second, what does Paul mean when he accuses Peter of "compelling the Gentiles to live like Jews" (τὰ ἔθνη ἀναγκάζεις Ἰουδαΐζειν)? In other words, was Peter requiring the Gentile believers to adopt a Jewish way of life?

Concerning the issue of "living like a Gentile," Paul neither clarifies explicitly what the term ἐθνικῶς connotes in this instance nor tells in what manner Peter was living "Gentilishly." However, it is clear that in the immediate context, the usage of this term must have some correlation to Peter's table-fellowship with the Gentiles.[112] In this connection, some scholars have argued that Paul's reference to Peter as "living like a Gentile" denotes that Peter and other Jewish believers were engaged in sharing non-

[112] Caroline Johnson Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs: A Study of Kinship and Ethnicity in the Letters of Paul* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2007), 122. I have borrowed the term "Gentilishly" from Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs*, 121.

kosher food. These Jewish believers participated in the mixed table-fellowship with the Gentile believers who did not follow Jewish dietary restrictions based on the Torah. However, with the arrival of men from James complemented by the fear of the circumcision party (2:12), the Jewish believers resumed their observance of the Jewish dietary regulations.[113]

Alternatively, some scholars have argued that "there is no reason to jump to the conclusion that Cephas (and Paul) abandoned the Law (even if temporarily) to eat like Gentiles."[114] Scholars in this camp consider the interpretation that presents Paul and Peter as non-observant Jews problematic. Instead, they have sought to understand and place Paul and his writings within the Jewish tradition, arguing that Paul remained an observant Jew and never left Judaism. Within this framework, when approaching the Antioch incident, these scholars argue that none of the Jewish dietary laws based on the Torah was broken at the Antioch incident.[115] For example, in presenting his alternative interpretation of "what was at stake at Antioch," Nanos says that "the truth of the gospel" to which Paul refers

> had nothing to do with the food being eaten or with the fact that it was being eaten with Gentiles, and it was not the threat of impurity or idolatry either. Rather, it was the way that these Gentiles were being *identified* at these meals. These Jews were not "eating with" these Gentiles according to prevailing norms for eating with Gentiles: on the one hand, as pagan guests or, on the other hand, as proselyte candidates. The food was Jewish, and the Gentiles were eating it Jewishly, that is, as deemed appropriate for non-Jews to eat with Jewish people.[116]

---

[113] E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 20, 100–1; Don Garlington, *An Exposition of Galatians: A Reading from the New Perspective*, 3rd ed. (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007), 125; Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 155n199; Holtz, "Der Antiochenische Zwischenfall (Galater 2.11–14)," 344–61; Martyn, *Galatians*, 232, 239, 244–45. See also Nanos ("What Was at Stake in Peter's 'Eating with Gentiles'?," 292–96), who provides an overview of this traditional view in the scholarship.

[114] Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs*, 122; cf. Nanos, "What Was at Stake in Peter's 'Eating with Gentiles'?," 300–1.

[115] See Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs*, 122–23; Nanos, "What Was at Stake in Peter's 'Eating with Gentiles'?," 300–3.

[116] Nanos, "What Was at Stake in Peter's 'Eating with Gentiles'?," 300–1.

Therefore, in Nanos's reading of the text, Paul's remark concerning Peter's "living like a Gentile" does not indicate Peter's eating non-kosher food at Antioch. Nanos's alternative approach is novel and compelling in the sense that it recognizes that the underlying issue at stake at Antioch was "identity." However, it is not without its flaws. On the one hand, the recognition of the identity theme does not necessitate the exclusion of the option of Gentile food or company. On the other hand, Nanos's argument that what was objectionable at Antioch was Jewish believers' meal-sharing with the Gentiles against "the prevailing norms" of eating is questionable for two reasons. First, whether the Jewish mixed table-fellowship practice conferred a different status upon "pagan guests" or "proselytes" is hard to prove.[117] Second, this theory reads too much into the text. According to the text, the Jewish believers ceased eating with Gentiles because they were *Gentiles*; whether the Jewish parties expected them to be "pagan guests" or "proselytes" cannot be determined with an absolute answer.

So, how did Peter live or conduct himself Gentilishly at the mixed table-fellowship at Antioch? Should this phrase be taken as Peter's deliberate denunciation of Jewish dietary or commensality regulations or something else? It is to be conceded that Paul does not explicate what precisely the Greek adverb ἐθνικῶς entails when he uses it for Peter.[118] Although it is possible, Paul's use of the phrase "living like a Gentile" for Peter does not necessarily require that Peter must have eaten non-Jewish food since "Paul states nothing specific about the kind of food they were eating."[119] In any case, whether this phrase refers to Peter's eating habits or commensality restrictions, I concur with Barclay's assessment, which claims, "All that matters is that something other than his

[117] Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 367n42.

[118] Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 367.

[119] Jarvis Williams, *Galatians*, 2020, 53–54.

ethnic identity has to come to determine his behavioral norms."[120] In other words, from Paul's perspective, Peter's behavior initially showed social audacity by challenging the traditional Jewish ways of table-fellowship at Antioch. He shared a meal with the Gentile believers as a *Gentile* in the sense that he did not let his distinct Jewish identity set a boundary between him and Gentile believers. According to Barclay, at this behavior of Peter, "Paul notes and applauds his capacity to challenge his inherited structure of values."[121]

Furthermore, rebuking Peter and other Jewish believers in response to abandoning the mixed table-fellowship with Gentile believers in Galatians 2:14b, Paul then questions Peter, asking why he is "compelling the Gentiles to live like Jews" (πῶς τὰ ἔθνη ἀναγκάζεις Ἰουδαΐζειν). Scholars debate the meaning of this phrase. The Greek term Ἰουδαΐζειν used in the text is a *hapax legomena*, meaning that this Greek word only appears in the New Testament here in Galatians 2:14b. However, outside the New Testament writings, this term appears in other Jewish texts. In most Jewish writings, this word denotes the phenomenon of Jewish conversion (Add Esth 8:17; Josephus, *J.W.* 2.454, 463; Plutarch, *Cic*. 7.5). The meaning of Ἰουδαΐζειν differs in different Jewish texts depending on the contexts. Whereas in some texts, this verb signifies the implementation of a Jewish manner of life, in other texts, the same verb denotes a full religious conversion to Judaism through the rite of circumcision. Commenting on the use of this verb in the context of Galatians 2:11–14, Dunn argues that Ἰουδαΐζειν need not be associated with the final rite of circumcision. Instead, the term could refer to the

[120] Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 367.

[121] Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 367. Cf. Gibson (*Peter between Jerusalem and Antioch*, 249–50), who argues that Peter has not only changed "his dining practices for the sake of unity with Gentiles, but has generally adopted, and continues to adopt, a lifestyle which is far more typical of a Gentile than a Jew, though not one which necessarily rejects every distinctively Jewish custom or practice." Cf. Longenecker, *Galatians*, 78; Dunn, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 128.

observance of Jewish dietary laws by the Gentile believers at Antioch.[122] However, Dunn's suggestion is problematic since the primary texts he uses to substantiate his assertion entail the rite of circumcision as a way to "judaize."[123] Challenging Dunn's view, Michael F. Bird correctly notes,

> Although "judaize" can mean to generally adopt the Jewish way of life, the terminus of judaizing was always circumcision . . . . [C]ircumcision was the final threshold to be crossed in judaizing . . . . A compulsion to judaize has to mean a compulsion to be circumcised because Ἰουδαΐζειν most usually appears in a context involving circumcision under duress. Thus, if the issue was the equality of Gentiles in the Antioch congregation, then "judaize" probably carries this fuller meaning of conversion to Judaism via the ritual of circumcision. In this environment compelling Gentiles to "judaize" meant compelling them to become Ἰουδαῖοι ("Jews").[124]

Furthermore, as far as ἀναγκάζεις is concerned, the term is also found in the Jewish texts, where it refers to the act of compulsion (or use of pressure or force) in order to bring religious change in one's conduct. For example, in 2 and 4 Maccabees, ἀναγκάζεις is used to portray Antiochus Epiphanes IV's behavior in compelling Jews to embrace the Greek lifestyle. Antiochus threatens Jewish people in these Jewish writings, warning them that their lives will be at risk if they reject the Greek way of life (2 Macc 6:18–31; 4 Macc 5:2, 27).[125] Hence, some argue that Peter's action would have demanded that the Gentile believers convert to Judaism with this term's connotation in mind.[126] Paul's use of the same verb for Peter's separation from the Gentile table-fellowship (Gal

---

[122] Dunn, "The Incident at Antioch (Gal. 2:11–18)," (2002) 220. Dunn argues, "Evidently one could 'judaize' without going the whole way (circumcision). It must therefore describe that range of conduct covered by the term 'God-fearer' (or within Palestine also the term 'resident alien') and signify an embracing of much that characterized the Jewish way of life, enough at any rate for the judaizing individual to be acceptable to devout Jews." Cf. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul, and the Law*, 149–50.

[123] Bird, *An Anomalous Jew*, 196–97; cf. Gibson, *Peter between Jerusalem and Antioch*, 251n134.

[124] Bird, *An Anomalous Jew*, 197. See also Esler, *Galatians*, 137; Nanos, "What Was at Stake in Peter's 'Eating with Gentiles'?," 306–12; Moo, *Galatians*, 151; Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs*, 56.

[125] Jarvis Williams, *Galatians*, 2020, 54–55; Gibson, *Peter between Jerusalem and Antioch*, 250–51.

[126] See, e.g., Longenecker (*Galatians*, 78), who argues that, grammatically, the verb ἀναγκάζεις is conative "refers not to an accomplished result but to the intention or tendency of Cephas' action" in an unconscious way. Therefore, "instead of treating [the Gentiles] as true believers in Jesus and full members of the Christian church, his action would have resulted in their becoming converts to Judaism."

2:14b) in connection with the "false brothers" is not coincidental. Two observations are in order. First, the incident reported by Paul does not explicitly say that Peter compelled the Gentile believers at Antioch to adopt a Jewish way of life via circumcision by use of force. Paul simply states that Peter compelled the Gentiles to Judaize.[127] Second, as observed by Barclay, "We do not know how far this pressure extended."[128]

Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that in the immediate context of Galatians 2, in which this verse falls, this is not the first time Paul employs this term. This verb occurs in another autobiographical account of Paul (2:1–10). In this narrative, Paul recounts his visit to Jerusalem accompanied by Barnabas and Titus (2:1). He tells the Galatians that in his correspondence with the esteemed leaders of the church, Titus was not "compelled to be circumcised" (ἠναγκάσθη περιτμηθῆναι) even though his ethnic identity was based on Greek origin (2:3). Although certain "false brothers," metaphorically speaking, tried to endanger believers' "freedom in Christ" in order to enslave them, Paul and his group stood firm in their convictions so that "the truth of the gospel might be preserved" for the Galatians (2:4–5). Likewise, in the final section of the letter, Paul mentions the agitators at Galatia, who are seeking "to compel" (οὗτοι ἀναγκάζουσιν) the Galatian believers to undergo circumcision in order to escape some sort of "persecution for the cross of Christ" (6:12). These references indicate the connection between Ἰουδαΐζειν and the rite of circumcision. Bird observes this correlation among these references and infers, "Compulsion to be circumcised is the theme that links together the Jerusalem council, the incident at Antioch, and the problem in Galatia caused by the intruders."[129] Therefore, Paul's remark in Galatians 2:14 intended for Peter to

---

[127] Jarvis Williams, *Galatians*, 2020, 55.

[128] Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 367.

[129] Bird, *An Anomalous Jew*, 197; cf. Betz, *Galatians*, 112; Tomson, *Paul and the Jewish Law*, 226; Cummins, *Paul and the Crucified Christ in Antioch*, 185; Zetterholm, *The Formation of Christianity in Antioch*, 135–36; Boer, *Galatians*, 136–38; Gibson, *Peter between Jerusalem and Antioch*, 251; Jarvis

understand the implication of his scandalous action at the mixed table-fellowship at Antioch. Whether Peter intended it or not, his behavior would eventually put the Antiochene Gentile believers under compulsion, suggesting that they ought to transform their socio-religious ethnic identity (i.e., take on a Jewish way of life) to be united at the table-fellowship with Jewish believers.

Analyzing Paul's statement in relation to the identity theme, Francis Watson writes that through his practice of mixed table-fellowship,

> Cephas had (according to Paul) renounced his Jewish identity by living "like a Gentile and not like a Jew" (2:14). If Jewish identity is *constituted* by the opposition of Jew and Gentile, circumcision and uncircumcision, then Cephas's previous praxis was fundamentally un-Jewish. Now, however, he has reverted to an insistence on Jewish identity as constituted by the circumcision/uncircumcision divide, thereby "building up" the barrier between Jew and Gentile that he had previously "torn down," and so admitting that in his previous course of action he had been a "transgressor" (2:18).[130]

Watson's analysis is accurate insofar he understands Peter's action in terms of the issue of ethnic identity. However, the only point where I disagree with him is the assumption that Peter's eating with the Gentile believers required him to renounce his Jewish identity completely. I propose that instead of saying that Peter "renounced" his Jewish identity, it might be more appropriate to say that in his meal-sharing with the Gentile believes at Antioch, he *prioritized* his Jewish identity. Outside the context of Jewish-Gentile relations, it is hard to imagine that Paul would demand Peter to renounce his Jewish identity entirely. It is to be kept in mind that Paul is not anti-Semitic. He is not *against* the Jewish identity per se; instead, he opposes the priority of distinct ethnic identity (in this case, Jewish identity) when it disrupts the unity of believers in Christ. Thinking along similar lines, Nanos affirms that "the question before these Gentiles, as

---

Williams, *Galatians*, 2020, 197; Bauckham, "James, Peter, and the Gentiles," 126; Nanos, *The Mystery of Romans*, 367n59.

[130] Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles*, 127.

Paul sees the matter, is one of identity"[131] because what Peter did at the mixed table-fellowship revealed his longing for the entitlement of a distinct Jewish identity.[132] However, Nanos simultaneously contends,

> This does not mean that Peter should not continue to behave like a Jew in the sense of observing Jewish dietary and other halakhic conventions . . . , but he should not behave as though the identity of these Gentiles in Christ as equals threatens the value of his identity as a Jew, for he too is identified in Christ, thus in the same way as a Gentile.[133]

Therefore, Paul's challenge to Peter and other Jewish believers for their hypocritical behavior at the mixed table-fellowship was grounded in the issue of the *prioritization* of Jewish identity rather than the *renunciation* of Jewish identity.[134]

The conflict of identity that arose at the table-fellowship between Jews and Gentiles at Antioch continues in Galatians 2:15, where Paul once again speaks about the

---

[131] Nanos, "What Was at Stake in Peter's 'Eating with Gentiles'?," 311.

[132] Nanos, "What Was at Stake in Peter's 'Eating with Gentiles'?," 311.

[133] Nanos, "What Was at Stake in Peter's 'Eating with Gentiles'?," 311–12. Contra Holmberg ("Jewish versus Christian Identity in the Early Church?," 414, 419), who argues that due to their faith in Jesus, "the Christian Jews had to give up (the marking of) their Jewish identity, for the sake of the church's unity."

[134] I am aware of the 'Paul within Judaism' perspective whose proponents, including Mark D. Nanos, seek to move beyond the 'New Perspective on Paul' debate by placing Paul within Judaism in the first-century context. On a broader perspective, this perspective has sought to emphasize the continuity between Paul and his Jewish heritage. Furthermore, with regard to the issue of the rite of circumcision for the inclusion of Gentiles within Christian movement, an advocate of this perspective, Mark D. Nanos ["The Question of Conceptualization: Qualifying Paul's Position on Circumcision in Dialogue with Josephus's Advisors to King Izates" in *Paul within Judaism: Restoring the First-Century Context to the Apostle*, eds. Mark D. Nanos and Magnus Zetterholm (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 106], holds the position that "Paul opposed Christ-following non-Jews becoming Jews (i.e., "converting" to Jewish identity), but he did not oppose, and instead promoted, them practicing Judaism. (i.e., converting" into a Jewish way of living), alongside of Jews who did so, such as himself." I agree with Nanos that Paul opposed to the idea of Gentiles' adoption of 'Jewish ethnic identity.' However, to say that he "promoted" a Jewish way of life among both Jewish and Gentile believers is taking the argument too far. In Nanos' understanding, 'Jewish ethnic identity' and 'Jewish way of living' are two different entities. According to Nanos' statement above, Paul rejected the adoption of Jewish ethnic identity by Gentile believers, but he advanced or promoted 'Jewish way of life.' I argue that 'Jewish ethnic identity' and 'Jewish way of living' are complementary. The adoption of Jewish ethnic identity by someone requires him to follow a Jewish mode of life. Overall, this study maintains that Paul was not against Jewish ethnic identity or Jewish socio-religious heritage for Jewish Christians, who wanted to follow their socio-religious rites, as long as their Jewish way of living did not hinder the Gentile believers' inclusion into the Christian community. However, simultaneously, Paul's religious experience on the Damascus road and his transformation and understanding of Christ-event ultimately led him to prioritize the believers' common identity in Christ over all ethnic identities.

distinctions based on ethnic identities within the early church.[135] In verse 15, Paul differentiates two groups; he includes himself and other Christ-believing Jews in the first group,[136] and in the second group, he includes the Gentiles. Paul's distinction is not limited to social categorization (i.e., race or ethnicity) alone but also includes a religious connotation. In his understanding, sociologically speaking, "Jews" as an ethnic group have a genealogical relation within Judaism (φύσει Ἰουδαῖοι) and, religiously speaking, they "are not sinners from among the Gentiles" (οὐκ ἐξ ἐθνῶν ἁμαρτωλοί). For Peter and other Jewish believers present at Antioch, this assertion by Paul would be agreeable.[137] This difference of ethnic identity between a Jew and Gentile hindered a joint mixed table-fellowship between Jewish and Gentile believers at Antioch by characterizing the Gentile believers' identity as "sinners."[138] However, even though this characterization of Gentiles

---

[135] The problem of how to connect Gal 2:15–21 with the preceding section (vv. 11–14) is well known among scholars. Scholars note a slight shift in Paul's argument in vv. 15–21 from a historic narrative that occurred in Antioch to abstract theological argumentation. Some scholars think that vv. 15–21 are a continuation of Paul's address to Peter. See Betz, *Galatians*, 113–14; Esler, *Galatians*, 139–40; Scot McKnight, *Galatians*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 115. However, others have argued that Paul's discourse with Peter finishes at v. 14 and thus that vv. 15–21 do not reflect Paul's direct address to Peter but his theological evaluation of the mixed table-fellowship conflict at Antioch. See Matera, *Galatians*, 98; Hays, *The Letter to the Galatians* 231; Nanos, "What Was at Stake in Peter's 'Eating with Gentiles'?," 135; deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 213–14; Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, 77; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 150; Das, *Galatians*, 238; Moo, *Galatians*, 153. My own position on this matter is that vv. 15–21 should be seen as an extension of Paul's argument from vv. 11–14. Thus, I agree with the scholarly opinion that is of the view that vv. 15–21 should be read in light of the preceding narrative (i.e., vv. 11–14). Whether Paul presented his theological argumentation in vv. 15–21 to Peter in person or not does not really matter since both units (vv. 11–14 and vv. 15–21) were ultimately written by Paul for instructing his Galatian addressees. For instance, Jae Won Lee (*Paul and the Politics of Difference*, 70) strongly argues for a close literary linkage between vv. 11–14 and vv. 15–21. According to him, Pauline theological abstraction in vv. 15–21 aligns well with vv. 11–14 "as the concluding argument recapitulating the significance of the equal standing of Gentiles with Jews at table-fellowship." Moreover, it is incorrect to focus on vv. 15–21 solely as an abstract theological argument without connecting it to "any concrete community context." Hence, Lee presumes that having witnessed the identity crisis at the mixed table-fellowship at Antioch, "Paul must have felt a strong need to justify why his position is different from that of Peter and other Jewish believers, and why he defends and sides with Gentile believers at Antioch." Cf. Barclay (*Paul and the Gift*, 366), who says, "Our uncertainty about how much (if any) of 2:14–21 Paul actually spoke to Peter should not obscure the fact that 2:11–21 is a single literary-rhetorical unit. The Antioch dispute is important for Paul not merely as a historical datum, but because it allows him to explicate 'the good news' in precisely these terms."

[136] In the immediate context, "we" in vv. 15–17 could only include the Jewish believers involved in the mixed table-fellowship conflict at Antioch. See Das, *Galatians*, 238.

[137] Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, 77.

[138] Holmberg, "Jewish versus Christian Identity in the Early Church?," 414.

concerning their identity might be correct from a purely Jewish perspective, it is a completely wrong characterization of Gentiles' identity from the perspective of Christ-believing Jews. Paul reminds his Jewish contemporaries that justification (δικαιοῦται) is not determined by "the works of the law" (ἔργων νόμου) but by "faith in Jesus Christ" (πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ; 2:16). In other words, the criterion for divine justification for anyone belonging to any ethnicity is the same, and that is "fundamentally the same Christ-determined identity, won by faith."[139] Bengt Holmberg rightly observes that "the truth of the gospel" to which Paul refers (2:14a) loses its efficacy and significance "if the Jewish Christians hold on to their ethnicity markers and put their Jewish identity above the Christian identity common to all believers in Christ Jesus."[140] Similarly, commenting on Pauline faith/works antithesis in Galatians 2:16, Barclay claims that

> justification by faith in Christ modifies the standard Jewish distinction between "Jews" and "Gentile sinners". The immediate context of the Antioch dispute makes clear that "works of the law" are equivalent to "living like a Jew", and Paul's point is that this distinctively Jewish pattern of behaviour is not an essential feature of justification, either for Jews or for anyone else (ἄνθρωπος . . . πᾶσα σάρξ).[141]

Paul's censure of Peter (Gal 2:14b–17) is justified because, according to Paul, Peter's withdrawal from the table-fellowship of Gentiles (regardless of his motives) suggested to the Gentile Christ-followers that the Jewish way of life (i.e., the Torah) still holds a priority over believer' redefined identity in Christ. In order to resume the table-fellowship with their Jewish brothers, the Gentiles must be drawn to adopt a Jewish pattern of life for themselves. What Peter did at the mixed table-fellowship ran against the "truth of the gospel." Therefore, Paul's theological argument (in Gal 2:14b–21) in response to the table-fellowship conflict at Antioch sought to clarify the notion of two

---

[139] Holmberg, "Jewish versus Christian Identity in the Early Church?," 415.

[140] Holmberg, "Jewish versus Christian Identity in the Early Church?," 415.

[141] Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, 78.

conflicting ethnic identities.[142] Analyzing the crisis at Antioch in light of identity, Barclay makes three helpful observations that are worth noting: First, he notices that the Antioch mixed table-fellowship conflict is primarily related to the issue of "the identity of Jewish believers in Christ." So Paul's reaction to this crisis at Antioch pursued "to redefine that identity in ways which contradicted some standard Jewish assumptions but are based on what he calls 'the truth of the gospel' and focuses primarily on the cross."[143] Second, Barclay observes that Paul's use of the phrase "the works of the law" (2:16) has a direct connection with distinct "Jewish identity." This connection links the Antiochene crisis with the situation that Paul is confronting in his churches at Galatia. The commonality between Paul and his opponents at Galatia (Gal 5:12) is that both parties believe that "what the law demands is a sign of adopting the Jewish way of life."[144] Third, Barclay thinks that the mixed table-fellowship conflict between Jews and Gentiles provided Paul an avenue for a "redefinition of Jewish-Christian identity" that involved redefining the "appropriate patterns of behavior."[145]

From James's and Peter's viewpoint, what they did was the need of the hour. That is, Peter's eating with the Gentile believers regularly at Antioch not only put Jewish believers' lives in jeopardy due to the critical socio-political circumstances of that period but could also have negative consequences for Peter's ministry among the Jewish nation. Both leading apostles (i.e., James and Peter) might have justified their decision, and thus, one may consider Peter and the other Jewish believers' decision of separating themselves

---

[142] Note that my emphasis on the issue of distinct ethnic identity in the crisis at Antioch is connected with the subject of Torah since I have argued that the notion of Jewish identity in the Second Temple period was deeply linked to the socio-religious beliefs and practices based on the Torah. Hence, I have approached the issue of Jewish ethnic identity and the Torah-observance as two entities complementing each other.

[143] Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, 81–82.

[144] Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, 82.

[145] Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, 82; cf. Holmberg, "Jewish versus Christian Identity in the Early Church?," 416.

from the mixed table-fellowship of Gentiles to be a purely pragmatic choice from a sociological viewpoint. However, irrespective of the rationale that led Jewish believers to abandon the table-fellowship with the Gentiles, "Paul, it seems, did not agree with this Realpolitik of James and with Peter's compliance with it."[146] Paul's evaluation of the crisis at Antioch was different from how the other two apostles understood the situation. In some circumstances, even good intentions could lead to unreasonable outcomes. At the crisis in Antioch, Paul preferred to focus on the effects of Peter and the other Jewish believers' action of separation and not primarily on the motivation(s) behind their actions.

Furthermore, according to Paul, none of the sociological, cultural, religious, or political factors should supplant the efficacy of the "truth of the gospel" (2:14a). At one instance in his letter to the Galatians, Paul condemns those who sought to persuade Gentiles to undergo the rite of circumcision for the sake of escaping "persecution for the cross of Christ" (6:12). Bird writes that in response to this, "Paul would not adhere to the demand of anyone who wanted to use the foreskins of Gentile converts to save their own skins from the sword."[147] Put differently, Paul despises favorable circumstances if they come at the cost of negotiating with the "truth of the gospel" (cf. Gal 5:11; 2 Cor 11:21–33; 2 Tim 3:10–12).

For Paul, what was at stake in Antioch was the issue of the perception of distinct ethnic identity. Paul, as an observer, sees Peter's shifting behavior at the arrival of James's party accompanied by the fear of the circumcision party and understood his pretense (ὑπόκρισις). Paul understood that Peter was not "playing the part of a pro-Gentile Jewish Christ-believer in Antioch"; instead, he was "playing the part of a zealous Jew to

---

[146] Bird, *An Anomalous Jew*, 200.

[147] Bird, *An Anomalous Jew*, 200.

placate those of the circumcision party."[148] In Paul's assessment, the mixed table-fellowship conflict was essentially the conflict between two different notions of identity (i.e., distinct Jewish identity and Christian identity). Framing this argument differently but with the same theory, Barclay calls the issue at Antioch "a clash between two regulative structures, one defined by the norms of the Jewish tradition, the other oriented to 'the truth of the good news.'"[149] Barclay refers to the gospel truth (Gal 2:14a) "'as a *superior norm*' that has been established by the divine action in Christ through which 'the Jewish way of life' is no longer an unqualified standard of righteous behavior, *even for Jews*."[150]

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the crisis at Antioch at the mixed table-fellowship between Jewish and Gentile believers as reported by Paul in Galatians 2:11–14. After providing a brief broad review of the crisis in the congregations at Galatia, I dealt with the prominent literary and chronological issues relevant to my main argument. Furthermore, due to the plethora of theories related to the incident at Antioch among New Testament scholars, I comprehensively discussed some of the key interpretive issues in the passage at hand. My discussion aimed to clarify the contextual issues involved in the primary text due to the lack of precise details in the narrative and set the stage for the thesis for which I have mainly argued. Overall, in this chapter, I have tried to establish the main argument that the mixed table-fellowship conflict reflects an underlying conflict of ethnic identity. Furthermore, in the section of the chapter that offered the exegetical analysis of Galatians 2:11–21, I focused on the two different perspectives of the

---

[148] Bird, *An Anomalous Jew*, 200.

[149] Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 367–68.

[150] Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 368; cf. Nanos, "What Was at Stake in Peter's 'Eating with Gentiles'?," 315–16.

interested parties involved in the dispute at Antioch (viz., Peter and Paul). Overall, I have argued that Paul's direct rebuke of Peter for separating himself from the table-fellowship of Gentiles and Paul's theological analysis of the Antiochene crisis demonstrates that Paul understood the incident at Antioch in light of the issue of identity. Peter and other Jewish believers' *action* of separation from the table-fellowship of Gentile believers suggested the priority of a distinct Jewish identity by implementing a Jewish way of life. But Paul's reaction sought to establish and prioritize the believers' identity in Christ by standing firm on "the truth of the gospel."

CHAPTER 6

TABLE-FELLOWSHIP AND AGENCY IN GALATIANS 2:11–21

The previous chapter focused on exploring the crisis at Antioch over the mixed table-fellowship between Jews and Gentiles (Gal 2:11–14) in light of the notion of identity. The main argument was that the mixed table-fellowship conflict between Paul and Peter was essentially the conflict between different ethnic identities (viz., Jewish versus Gentile identity). Moreover, I argued that Paul's direct rebuke of Peter (vv. 14–16) functioned to oppose Peter's behavior at Antioch because his withdrawal from the table-fellowship of the Gentiles suggested the establishment and priority of a distinct Jewish identity.

This chapter seeks to build on the argument from the last chapter by establishing the link between identity and divine-human agency in the context of table-fellowship. To be more precise, I will argue that Paul and Peter's table-fellowship conflict over ethnic identity signifies a conflict between two competing notions of agency. Peter's behavior at the mixed table-fellowship at Antioch suggests the priority of human agency for prioritizing a distinct Jewish identity through the prevalent socio-religious table-fellowship practices in Judaism. However, Paul's criticism of Peter's behavior in rejecting the Gentile believers' company at the meal-sharing indicates the priority of the divine agency. That is to say, Peter's action signified *his* central role in prioritizing a distinct Jewish identity, which ultimately caused disunity among believers of different ethnic identities. But Paul's response to the situation at Antioch demonstrates the centrality of the divine agency because believers' identity has been redefined and transformed into a new identity (i.e., in Christ) by the death and resurrection of Jesus and

the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The salvific divine action in Christ has reversed the perceptions of identity. The believers' identity in Christ is no more defined and characterized by their allegiance to the Torah; rather, it is their "faith in Christ" alone that endows them with membership into the family of God.

The Antiochene Crisis and Divine-Human Agency in Galatians 2:11–21

Since the previous chapter (chap. 5) argued that the table-fellowship conflict at Antioch (Gal 2:11–21) deals primarily with the issue of the conflict of different ethnic identities, consequently, someone may be prone to characterize the Antiochene crisis as merely a sociological problem with which Paul dealt. Viewed from this angle, the crisis at Antioch was no more than an issue of sociological (Jew-Gentile) ethnic discrimination that Paul painstakingly sought to eradicate, and thus it had no theological significance attached to it. However, I argue that Paul's understanding of identity is not constrained to a sociological aspect alone; rather, his perception of identity involves a theological dimension. The believers' interaction in the Christian community (i.e., sociological relations) functions to provide a theological statement concerning the divine agent's action.[1] The primary text (Gal 2:14–21) has many clues that substantiate the claim

[1] Both the Old and New Testament writings affirm the strong affiliation between sociology and theology. In other words, there does not exist any artificial dichotomy between the sociological and theological aspects in the canonical writings. Both sociological and theological entities are tied together and express themselves in their proper contexts. E. Guy Talbott considers theology and sociology in the biblical writings as "complementary" and argues that "the whole content of the Scriptures indicates this vital relationship." For instance, the subject matter of the commandments of the Torah depicts not only humans' relationship with God (theological aspect) but also humans' relationship among themselves (sociological aspect; Exod 20:12–17; Ps 15; Isa 3:14–15; 10:1–2; Amos 5:11–12; Zech 7:9–12). See E. Guy Talbott, "The Relation between Theology and Sociology," *Biblical World* 46, no. 3 (1915): 162, 163–65. Likewise, the same complementarian relation between sociology and theology is also evident in the New Testament writings. There are numerous references in the Gospels and the letters that demonstrate how the sociological and theological aspects of the early community of believers were inseparable. The relationships of believers with people surrounding them are of vital importance because although Jesus admonished his followers not to be "of the world," he still expected them to be "in the world," where social interactions were going to be indispensable (John 17:4–15). Being asked about the greatest commandment in the Mosaic law, Jesus cited two references from the Hebrew Scriptures that show how people relate to their God and their neighbors (Matt 22:34–40; cf. Lev 19:18; Deut 6:5). Furthermore, in Paul's writings, sociological and theological facets are tied together. Paul's theological discourses originate from concrete contexts of his churches in order to address specific sociological issues (Rom 14; 1 Cor 11:17–34). For instance, the nature of the issue of women's head-coverings that Paul had to deal with in 1 Corinthians

concerning the theological nature of the issue at Antioch. For example, Paul's disapproval of Peter and other Jewish believers' behavior at Antioch lies in the fact that these Jewish believers acted contrary to the "truth of the gospel" (v. 14a). The "truth of the gospel" has two key theological implications: first, the content of the gospel of Jesus entails what God has done for sinful humans through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and second, the gospel's truth signifies God's relationship with those who are now in Christ. Therefore, Paul's objection to Peter's behavior towards the Gentile believers at the mixed table-fellowship (sociological issue) has theological relevance.[2]

The Notion of Divine-Human Agency in the Letter to the Galatians

In this section, it will be helpful to briefly survey the letter to the Galatians as a whole to confirm the existence of the concept of divine-human agency.

Paul's congregations in Galatia have reverted from the true content of the gospel (1:6) because of certain people (τινές) who are "troubling" (ταράσσοντες) Paul's churches and distorting (μεταστρέψαι) the genuine message of the gospel of Jesus Christ

---

11:1–16 is sociological. It is tied to a certain historical context in the Greco-Roman world of the first century. Nevertheless, when Paul addresses this issue within his church in Corinth, he offers theological reasoning to resolve the issue (1 Cor 11:3, 7–12). This example thus indicates that Paul did not have separate categories for the sociological and theological issues with which he dealt. He viewed everything with his theological lens and sought to address sociological matters within his churches with a theological framework. Another way to understand the association between sociological and theological elements in Paul's mind is through his use of indicatives and imperatives in his writings. That is, Paul's theological declarations (indicatives) and his expectations for how believers ought to live in light of their theological beliefs (imperatives) are linked together (Acts 16:14–16; Rom 3:23–24; 6:12–14, 18–19; 1 Cor 5:7; Gal 3:26; 4:4–5; 5:13–6:10; Eph 5:1–2b; Phil 2:12–14; Col 3:1–5).

[2] Paul's evaluation of the incident at Antioch (2:15b–21) has theological connotations (vv. 16, 17, 19b, 20–21). For example, Paul links the issue of Jewish and Gentile identity (v. 15) with the notion of righteousness/justification (δικαιόω) that is achieved by either "the works of the law" (ἔργων νόμου) or "faith in Jesus Christ" (πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ; 2:16; cf. Gal 2:18–21). Moreover, for Paul, the believer's identity in Christ is not his or her own social construct; instead, God's salvific action has played a significant role in redefining and transforming that person's identity. For this reason, Paul's use of ἔργων νόμου and πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ highlights the notion of the dynamic divine-human relationship in the issue at Antioch. Hence, based on this analysis, I argue that a closer look at the incident at Antioch in its entirety shows that from Paul's perspective, the believer's identity in Christ addresses both sociological and theological aspects in the communal life of the early church. This understanding of the socio-theological nature of the mixed table-fellowship conflict at Antioch has inspired this study to explore the concept of divine-human agency in Galatians 2:11–21. The rest of the chapter will focus on how the mixed table-fellowship conflict at Antioch can provide insight into divine and human agency in relation to identity.

(1:7). But the authenticity of the gospel message that Paul entrusted to the Galatians is deeply tied to his apostleship (1:15). Consequently, at the outset of the letter, Paul authenticates the validity of his apostolic vocation (1:1–2). He claims to the Galatian churches that he did not receive his apostleship through any human agency but through Jesus Christ and God (divine agency; 1:1). Paul reminds the Galatian churches that they were not rescued from the bondage of their sins and "the present evil age" by their efforts (human agency; 1:3–4). Instead, their deliverance came through the death of Jesus Christ, "who gave himself on behalf of our sins" and "delivered us from the present evil age" (divine agency; 1:3–4). Furthermore, although Paul was progressing in Judaism (1:14), God's action in his life turned him around from his former manner of life. God not only "separated" Paul from his mother's womb but also "called" him "by his grace" (divine agency); It was God who "was pleased to reveal his Son" on Paul (divine agency) for the proclamation of the gospel to the Gentiles through Paul (1:15–16). God's action is not without any purpose; whatever he wills or chooses to do has a specific reason or purpose behind it. Put differently, God's actions are not arbitrary and static. Rather, they always have meaning and always make human agents active. Thus, God's calling conversion of Paul (1:15–16a; divine action) led Paul to actively participate in bringing the good news to the Gentiles (1:16b; human action).

When Paul received this revelation of God through Jesus Christ and not from any human agent, he did not rush to discuss his revelatory experience with "flesh and blood" (1:16–17). Paul's decision of not "consulting flesh and blood" is significant since (from a human perspective) it could be a pragmatic decision on Paul's part to consult his Jewish contemporaries who could assist him in understanding this supernatural phenomenon. However, contrary to all of these possibilities, Paul's decision not to consult any human agency validates the legitimacy of his revelatory experience that changed his religious direction forever (1:16b–17). Paul's calling and mission among the Gentiles was not his personal preference, decision, or something for which he felt the

need (human agency). Rather, Paul knows that he had been "entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised" (divine agency).

James, Peter (i.e., Cephas), and John, "recognizing the grace given" to Paul, extended "a right hand of fellowship" to him and Barnabas so that they both could continue their ministry among the Gentiles (1:18–2:10). Here, χαριν ("grace") given to Paul (divine agency; 2:9) refers not to any spiritual gift (cf. 1 Cor 12) but to Paul's apostleship. The only thing the pillars of the church recommended that Paul and Barnabas do in carrying out their ministry was to remember the poor, which was "the very thing" that Paul claims he was already enthusiastic to practice in his ministry (Gal 2:9–10).

Later in his letter, Paul asks the Galatians a critical question: Did they receive the Spirt by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith? I think the Galatians knew the answer to Paul's rhetorical question, realizing that they first received the Spirit by the hearing of faith (Gal 3:1–6). Most probably, the Galatians showed enthusiasm for doing "the works of the law" to relate to the God of Israel. However, Paul purposefully relates the works of the law with the subject of the Holy Spirit (3:5). He criticizes the Galatians by arguing that "the works of the law" did not give them the Spirit. Rather, it was their faith in Jesus Christ, whom they received as their Savior, that granted them the Spirit of God (3:1–14). Paul's explanation helps the Galatians to realize that the Spirit's indwelling in them is enough to assure them that they belong to God as his people.

Paul again tells the Galatians that they are foolish because while they began the journey of their salvation by the Spirit, they are now trying to finish it by the flesh (i.e., by doing "the works of the law"; 3:3). The Galatians not only received the Spirit (divine agency) by the hearing of faith but also witnessed the miracles of God amid them by the hearing of faith (3:5). Abraham's righteousness came through his faith in God. In other words, Abraham's credibility did not come from any of his righteous works (human agency); instead, Abraham was reckoned/counted (ἐλογίσθη) righteous before God. Likewise, all of those who possess Abraham's trait of faith are his sons; that is, they

relate to him and thus to the nation of Israel (3:6–9). God, as recorded in the Scriptures, had already promised Abraham that a blessing would flow from him to "all those of faith" because God desired that the Gentiles be justified by faith. God always wanted to relate to the Gentiles (τὰ ἔθνη) and justify them by faith alone and not by the works of the law (3:8–9).

The idea of the divine-human agency shows up again in Galatians 3:10–14. In this section, Paul says that humans' reliance on "works of the law" brings them under the curse because of their incompetency to "abide by all things written in the book of the law" (3:10). For this reason, God's righteousness cannot be attained through the medium of the law (human agency; 3:11–12). Instead, only the divine agent can bring redemption to his people through the person and work of Christ Jesus (3:13). Paul tells the Galatians that because of humans' failure to fully obey the Torah and thus fulfill God's requirements of attaining righteousness, God, in his salvific plan, put his Son under the curse on their behalf (3:13–14). Thus, God's action through his Son Jesus Christ (divine agency) brought the Abrahamic blessings to the Gentiles. Moreover, Paul emphasizes that the Gentiles' sharing in the blessings of Abraham is not the result of Torah obedience (human agency; 5:15–20). Rather, the Gentiles received these spiritual blessings only by God's salvific action in Christ through the Gentiles' faith in Jesus (3:21–4:7).

Next, Paul employs the narrative of Abraham and his household and explains it to the Galatians with its true spiritual meaning (4:21–31). Abraham had two sons: Isaac, who was born by a free woman (Sarah), and Ishmael, who was born by a female slave (Hagar). The one born by a female slave came "according to the flesh" (4:23a), whereas the one born by a free woman came "through the promise" (4:23B). Paul then (allegorically speaking) equates the two sons with two covenants having two different natures and purposes (4:24). Whereas the old covenant that was made on Mount Sinai represents those old covenant people who were to be slaves under the law (like Hagar), those under the new covenant that comes from "Jerusalem above" were to be not slaves

but free (like Sarah) (4:25–26). The one who was born from a slave woman "according to the flesh" might refer to human agency, but the one who was born from a free woman "through the promise" refers to divine agency because the divine agent was at work behind his birth.

Overall, I think Paul's main point in this illustration is to highlight the supremacy of the son who came "through the promise" (divine agency) in contrast to the son who came "according to the flesh" from Abraham and Sarah's scheming and doing (human agency). Again politely addressing the Galatians as his "brothers," Paul reminds them that, like Isaac, they are "children of promise" (4:28). The Galatians seem to be oblivious of their identity as "children of promise." They are reverting to slavery because of their desire to submit to the Torah. Paul encourages the Galatians by concluding that we all (including Paul) belong to a free woman to whom the son was born through the promise (4:30–31). Paul himself was once a child of flesh when he lived according to and showed allegiance to the law (human agency). Nevertheless, now he is a child through the promise through Jesus Christ (divine agency).

Paul's arguments function to show the Galatians their ignorance of the true nature and significance of the Torah (3:15–25). Paul believes that the Galatians have a zeal for the Torah without knowing its nature and ultimate purpose. He tries to show the Galatians that they desire something inferior (viz., allegiance to the Torah through circumcision) by ridding themselves of something superior (viz., their faith in Christ Jesus that comes through the promise and the Spirit) (3:15–18). Paul's illustration of Hagar and Sarah (4:21–31) indicates that Galatians are adopting a false route to attain the status (or identity) they already have through their faith in Jesus Christ. In other words, through their faith in Jesus Christ, the Galatians are already the promised children of God. In the final section of his letter, Paul reminds the Galatians that even though God's action in Christ Jesus has set them free (divine agency; 5:1a), they must "stand firm" and not be "subjected to the yoke of slavery" (human agency; 5:1b). Again stressing the

human agent's role (5:16–6:10), Paul exhorts the Galatians to "walk by the Spirit" (πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε; 5:16) and to "conform to the Spirit" (πνεύματι καὶ στοιχῶμεν; 5:25b).

The Notion of Divine-Human Agency in Galatians 2:11–21

In his section, I will focus on Galatians 2:11–21 to explore whether the mixed table-fellowship conflict between Jews and Gentiles at Antioch can be understood in light of divine and human agency. Also, since the relationship between identity, the Torah, and justification plays a significant role in the table-fellowship narrative in Galatians, I will seek to develop a coherent connection between these entities in the framework of divine and human agency.

More precisely, I will argue that in addition to the identity conflict (chap. 5), the mixed table-fellowship crisis at Antioch between Paul and Peter concurrently represents the conflict between two different notions of agency. That is, Peter's refusal to share a meal with the Gentile believers at Antioch suggests the priority of human agency (Gal 2:11–13). Peter's action signified the priority of a distinct Jewish identity based on the Torah. However, Paul's direct rebuke of Peter and disapproval of Peter's behavior at Antioch suggests the priority of divine agency (Gal 2:14–16, 17–21). In his theological assessment of the crisis at Antioch, Paul explains how God's salvific action has redefined the believer's identity through Jesus's death and resurrection as well as the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life. Consequently, this redefinition of the believer's identity in Christ is no longer marked by the "works of the law" (i.e., the Torah; human agency) but by the believer's faith in Jesus Christ alone (divine agency).

Paul's theological remarks in Galatians 2:15–21 demonstrate Peter and the other Jews' double standards at the table-fellowship at Antioch.[3] Whether Peter realized it or not, his behavior with Gentile believers at the table was not neutral. For Paul, the explanation of Peter's motivation for taking this action would not have made any difference among Gentiles because his behavior had already conveyed a specific message to them. Therefore, in Galatians 2:15–21, "Paul's ironic dig brings to the surface that Peter's attempt to behave in a manner that *masks* his true convictions, when that behavior is in conflict with his claims for the gospel, undermines the meaning of the very truth for which Christ died and for which Paul and Peter now live."[4]

What were those "true convictions" that Peter held, though fear of "those of the circumcision" (2:12b) led him to compromise on those convictions? Paul, in Galatians 2:15–21, mentions those religious convictions that both Paul and Peter held. However, the only difference is that Paul stood firm on his religious convictions even amid intense external pressure (cf. Gal 2:1–5; 5:11), while Peter did not. Hence, because Peter was not able to stand firm at Antioch, Paul "opposed" (ἀντέστην) and "condemned" (κατεγνωσμένος) him (2:11b). In Galatians 2:15–21, Paul's theological argument develops the connection between three important and interconnected elements, namely the subject of identity, the Torah, and justification. In developing the relationship

---

[3] Galatians 2:15–16 is a continuation of Paul's argument in response to the Jewish-Gentile dissension at Antioch's mixed table-fellowship (2:11–14). To find an absolute answer to whether Paul said these things directly to Peter or wrote these things to the Galatians to address their situation is immaterial because both prospects are feasible. In his commentary on Galatians, Jarvis Williams argues that Paul does not use any "textual clue" in 2:15 (as he does in Gal 3:1, 15) to indicate a transition from one addressee to another. Therefore, the section 2:15–21 in Galatians suggests Paul's direct dialogue with Peter. See Jarvis J. Williams, *Galatians*, New Covenant Commentary (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2020), 63. I agree with Williams's conclusion. However, even if Paul's theological discourse in this section were referring to Peter, then I would only add that Paul expected his Galatians' congregants to reflect on this narrative (2:11–21) and apply it to their situation. Thus, Peter J. Tomson thinks both 2:11–14 and 2:15–21 "are equally designed for Galatian readers." Peter J. Tomson, *Paul and the Jewish Law: Halakha in the Letters of the Apostle to the Gentiles, Jewish Traditions in Early Christian Literature*, vol. 1, Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum, sect. 3 (Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1990), 226.

[4] Mark D. Nanos, "What Was at Stake in Peter's 'Eating with Gentiles' at Antioch?," in *The Galatians Debate: Contemporary Issues in Rhetorical and Historical Interpretation*, ed. Mark D. Nanos (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 310.

between these themes, Paul also seeks to show how his understanding of these notions differs from that of Peter and the other Jewish believers.

In verse 15, Paul begins his argument by stating a common belief with which both he and Peter would agree; the belief concerned the affirmation of their socio-religious identity. Referring to himself and Peter, Paul states, "We are Jews by nature" (Ἡμεῖς φύσει Ἰουδαῖοι) and "not sinners from among the Gentiles" (οὐκ ἐξ ἐθνῶν ἁμαρτωλοί). Interestingly, Paul's statement reveals a Jewish mindset in which one's socio-ethnic identity cannot be separated from his or her religious identity. Paul's assertion implies that not being a Jew by birth makes someone a "Gentile" and thus a "sinner" (cf. Rom 2:27; 11:1; Phil 3:5). Whether Jewish ideology shares this belief with Paul or not depends on which Jewish texts one employs. For example, a few Second Temple Jewish texts believe in a Gentile conversion into Judaism (Add Esth 8:17; Jos. Asen. 14:17; 2 Macc 9:1–17; Josephus, *J.W.* 7.44). However, other references found in the Jewish texts resemble Pauline thought (3 Macc 1:3; 4 Macc 18:1; Sir 41:5–11).[5]

Galatians 2:15 also raises the question of why Paul labeled all Gentiles as sinners? Did Jews categorize them as inherently sinful only because of their descent or because of something else? The subject of how Jews held different ideologies as well as expressed various attitudes regarding Gentiles' uncleanness or impurity in the ancient world has functioned as an *idée fixe* in the NT scholarship.[6]

---

[5] Williams, *Galatians*, 64.

[6] In the past, scholars have approached the issue of biblical and early Jewish purity laws in terms of two main categories: ritual and moral. In the first category, the impurity entails uncleanness that emerges from usually unavoidable impurities (for example, birth, death, sex, disease and other circumstances). These contaminations, however, are not permanent and can be removed through laws and rituals of purification. The second category (i.e., moral purity) involves contamination that basically results from immoral acts such as sexual sins, idolatry, unethical behavior, bloodshed, etc. The impurity of this kind can only be alleviated through the acts of repentance and punishment. For different scholarly views on this subject, See Gedalyahu Alon, "The Levitical Uncleanness of Gentiles," in *Jews, Judaism, and the Classical World: Studies in Jewish History in the Times of the Second Temple and Talmud*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem, Israel: The Magnes Press, 1977), 146–89; Christine Hayes, *Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities: Intermarriage and Conversion from the Bible to the Talmud* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2002); Jonathan Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Klawans, "Notions of Gentile Impurity in Ancient Judaism," *American Journal of*

Concerning the notion of Gentile impurity expressed by various Jews in ancient Judaism, a nineteenth-century scholar, Emil Schürer, argued that both the Israelite nation and Pharisaic Jews perceived Gentiles to be ritually impure in late antiquity. They considered Gentiles to be ritually unclean because of their inability to observe Jewish purity laws. Consequently, Gentiles' failure to observe the biblical laws of ritual purity caused a severe separation between Jews and Gentiles.[7] This view concerning the Gentile ritual impurity remained prominent in twentieth-century scholarship. However, Gedaliah Alon challenged this proposal through his work published in 1977 by arguing that the concept of Gentile ritual impurity was not late-antiquity development. Rather it was the first-century invention, and the Jewish perception of Gentile uncleanness was grounded in the Hebrew Scriptures. Alon's main thesis was that Gentiles were labeled by Jews as ritually unclean, not mainly because of their incapacity to observe Jewish purity laws. Instead, Gentile impurity was considered intrinsic. In other words, Gentiles were inherently ritually impure (*M. Tohorot* v.8; *M. Makhshirin* ii, 3; *M. Pesahim* viii, 8; Jdt 10:5; 12:1–4; 12:5–8; Acts 10:28; Josephus, *Jewish Wars* 2.21.2; *Antiquities* 12.3.1; Jub. 22:16).[8]

Alon's theory that advocated Gentiles' inherent ritual impurity was widely held by the scholars of the Bible and ancient Judaism. But a publication of an important article in 1995 authored by Jonathan Klawans challenged the idea of intrinsic ritual impurity of Gentiles. In his article, Klawans argues against the popular view held by a majority of scholars and mainly seeks to differentiate between the conceptual notions of

---

Sociology Review 20:2 (1995), 285–312; David C. Sim and James S. McLaren, eds., *Attitudes to Gentiles in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013); Terence L. Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles: Jewish Patterns of Universalism (to 135 CE)* (Waco, TX: 2007).

[7] See Emil Schürer, *Geschichte Des Judischen Volkes Im Zeitalter Jesu Christi: Das Judentum in Der Zerstreuung Und Die Judische Literatur*, vol. 2 (Leipzig, Germany: J. C. Hinrichs, 1886–1890), 48.

[8] Gedalyahu Alon, "The Levitical Uncleanness of Gentiles," 146–89.

moral and ritual impurity — the distinction that the Hebrew Bible itself makes.[9] Refuting Alon's argument, which portrays Jews' perception of Gentiles as intrinsically impure, Klawans argues that the biblical data do not provide the grounds for identifying Gentiles as ritually unclean people (Josh 6:25; 1 Chr 22:2; 2 Chr 2:16; Num 15:14–16; Neh 13:16; Ex 22:20; Ezek 47:21–23; Job 22:16–22; 30:7; Jos. Asen. 8:5, 7; 19:5, 10; Let. Aris. 139, 142, 149–151, 181–186; Josephus, *Antiquities* 12:145; *Jewish War* 5:193).[10]

Klawans deals with the issue of Gentile impurity more comprehensively in his recent book titled as *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism*. In this monograph, Klawans seeks to distinguish between two kinds of impurity expressed in the Hebrew Bible: ritual impurity (RI) and moral impurity (MI). For each category, Klawans highlights its source, effect, and remedy.[11] Furthermore, in tracing the development of ritual and moral impurities in the ancient Jewish literature, Klawans demonstrates that the categorical differentiation between moral and ritual impurities can serve as a "developer" to describe various Jewish sects within Judaism.[12] Finally, Klawans highlights the contribution that his study makes to NT scholarship. He says that his thesis has both positive and negative aspects. That is, the negative aspect demonstrates how the common misunderstandings

---

[9] See Klawans, "Notions of Gentile Impurity in Ancient Judaism," *American Journal of Sociology Review* 20, no. 2 (1995): 286 where the author writes,

> Ancient Jewish sources reflect two conflicting tensions. On the one hand, both biblical and rabbinic law(considered Gentiles to be exempt from the laws of ritual purity. On the other hand, Gentiles ate impure foods, came into regular contact with impure substances, and—what is worse—committed idolatry and defiling sexual acts. Ultimately, some rabbinic sources do state that Gentiles are, in fact, ritually impure (e.g., T. Zabim 2:1). The goal of this paper is to analyze, distinguish, and trace the history of these tensions and developments in ancient Judaism.

[10] Klawans, "Notions of Gentile Impurity in Ancient Judaism," 288. In light of the biblical and Jewish textual data, Klawans asserts,

> Ritual impurity did not generally apply to Gentiles at all until the tannaitic period, and even during that period, the notion did not take hold on a widespread basis. Though Gentiles were considered to be morally impure from a much earlier date, this conception did not cause Jews to consider contacts with Gentiles to be ritually defiling. Thus, it is an error to assume that Jews in ancient times generally considered Gentiles to be ritually defiling, and it is even more of an error to assume that such a conception would have been an impediment to Jewish-Gentile interaction.

[11] Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism*, 21–42.

[12] Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism*, 43–117.

of NT scholarship in regard to the issue of the Jewish purity system. From a positive perspective, Klawans argues that, in the teachings of John the Baptist, Jesus, and Paul, one observes only the emphasis on the relevance of moral impurity of Gentiles, not ritual impurity.[13]

With these different scholarly considerations on this issue of Gentile impurity, how are we to understand Paul's assertion in Galatians 2:15 where he tags Gentiles as sinners? In proclaiming Gentiles "sinners," is Paul referring to their ritual or moral impurity? Following Klawans' argument, A. Andrew Das maintains that Gentiles' identification tag of being sinners does not refer to their ritual contamination or ceremonial transgressions.[14] The reason the Jewish ritual or ceremonial violations would not make Gentiles sinners is that "The Law simply did not require Jewish ritual and food laws of the gentiles" (Deut 5:12–14; 14:21; Exod 12:43–48).[15] Therefore, Das argues that Gentiles were regarded as sinners "in a moral sense."[16] In other words, Gentiles were sinners because they did not possess the Mosaic law to regulate the social, cultural, ethical, or religious aspects of their lives. The unavailability of the divine law would naturally lead Gentiles to a sinful lifestyle (1 Sam 15:18–19; Jub. 22:16–22; 23:23–24; 4 Ezra 3:28–36; 4:23; 1 Macc 1:34; 2:44; 2 Macc 2:44; 3 Macc 2:17–18).[17] My own position on this issue is similar to Klawans and Das. In Galatians 2:15, Paul's reference to Gentiles as "sinners" suggests their moral impurity. This position bears direct

---

[13] Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism*, 136–57.

[14] A. Andrew. Das, *Galatians*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 2014), 239–40.

[15] Das, *Galatians*, 240.

[16] Das, *Galatians*, 240.

[17] Das, *Galatians*, 240. Cf. Jarvis Williams, *Galatians*, 64. See also, Moo, *Galatians*, 156, who suggests that, by designating Gentiles as sinners, Paul echoes "the typical Jewish perspective" that thought of Gentiles as people who have not been privileged by God in participating in Israelite ancestral heritage and covenant binding (Eph 2:12; 1 Cor 6:9–11; cf. Jub. 23:23–24). Cf. Paula Fredriksen, "Paul, Purity, and the Ekklesia of the Gentiles," in *The Beginnings of Christianity: A Collection of Articles*, eds. Jack Pastor and Menachem Mor (Jerusalem, Israel: Yad Ben-Zvi press, 1997), 206–17.

relevance to my thesis since, in this project, I have argued that Peter withdrew from the mixed table-fellowship of Gentiles at Antioch not because he found something problematic in a meal per se but because of *the association with Gentiles*.

Going back to our discussion of the primary text, Paul, in Galatians 2:15, acknowledges the privilege of distinctive Jewish identity (i.e., Jews by nature) for himself and Peter. Nevertheless, based on his theological convictions (with which Peter would have agreed but could not put into practice at Antioch), Paul claims that Peter is at fault. Why is that? Because the justification of human agents is no longer dependent on one's distinct socio-religious Jewish identity established and heightened by one's allegiance to the Torah (i.e., "works of the law"). Rather, human agents' relationship with the divine agent is determined by their "faith in Jesus Christ." For this reason, Paul tells Peter, "However, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, and we ourselves believed in Jesus Christ so that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law, no flesh will be justified" (2:16). Paul begins the verse with εἰδότες, assuming "common knowledge shared by all Christians."[18] The content of the mutual understanding among Christ-believing Jews is that the divine justification of humans is not achieved by "works of the law" (ἔργων νόμου) but "through faith in Jesus Christ" (πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ).[19]

---

[18] D. Francois Tolmie, *Persuading the Galatians: A Text-Centred Rhetorical Analysis of a Pauline Letter*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 190 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 88.

[19] Both the overall idea and the phrases (ἔργων νόμου, πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δικαιόω) in Galatians 2:16 are matters of considerable scholarly debate. Concerning the issue of justification, Paul uses the passive forms (δικαιοῦται, δικαιωθῶμεν, δικαιωθήσεται) of the Greek word δικαιόω translated as "justified" thrice in 2:16 (cf. Rom 2:13; 3:4, 20, 24, 26, 28, 30; 4:2, 5; 5:1, 9; 6:7; 8:30 (2x), 33). According to BDAG, the Greek noun δικαιοσύνη refers to "quality or state of juridical correctness with focus on redemptive action, righteousness." See BDAG, 247. In light of this definition, most interpreters among traditional and evangelical Protestant scholarship have understood the Pauline concept of justification in terms of forensic/juridical and soteriological aspects. For instance, see Stephen Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The "Lutheran" Paul and His Critics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 263–73, 277–84; Richard B. Hays, *The Letter to the Galatians*, in vol. 11 of *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 237; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Galatians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 155–57; Tolmie, *Persuading the Galatians*, 89; Douglas J. Moo, "Justification in Galatians," in *Understanding the Times: New Testament Studies in the 21st Century: Essays in Honor of D. A. Carson on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, ed. Andreas J.

Köstenberger and Robert W. Yarbrough (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 163–95; Jarvis Williams, *Galatians*, 66–69; Das, *Galatians*, 243–45; Paul A. Rainbow, *The Way of Salvation: The Role of Christian Obedience in Justification* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2012), 155–74; Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 41 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 84–85; Michael F. Bird, *The Saving Righteousness of God: Studies on Paul, Justification and the New Perspective* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007), 12–18; Ben Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 173–74; Jeanette Hagen Pifer, *Faith as Participation: An Exegetical Study of Some Key Pauline Texts* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019), 134–36. However, some scholars, from a different theological background, argue in favor of a transformative/ethical meaning of justification in addition to a forensic feature. According to this group of scholars, both the noun (δικαιοσύνη) and the adjective (δίκαιος) must be taken into consideration in analyzing the nature of justification. Thus, they argue that the forensic sense of justification should not disregard the ethical or transformative aspect (i.e., moral uprightness) of the term. For example, See Tuomo Mannermaa, *Christ Present in Faith: Luther's View of Justification* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005); Michael J. Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul's Narrative Soteriology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009); Don Garlington, "'Even We Have Believed': Galatians 2:15–16 Revisited," *Criswell Theological Review* 7 (2005): 9–15; Douglas A. Campbell, *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009); Longenecker, *Galatians*, 84–85. This study prefers the scholarly argument that understands the Pauline use of justification language as referring to forensic and eschatological elements. Put simply, it means that God's justification makes people right in their relationship with God (i.e., a verdict—"made righteous"), and it entails their reception of eschatological redemption (Rom 1:17; 2:13; 3:22, 26; 4:3, 5, 9, 13; 8:33; 9:30; 10:4; 1 Cor 4:4; Gal 2:16; 3:6, 11; 5:5; Phil 3:9; 1 Tim 3:16). See Jarvis Williams, *Galatians*, 67–69; Das, *Galatians*, 243–45. For a comprehensive study of the spectrum of different scholarly positions on the subject of justification in Paul, see Wright, *Justification: God's Plan & Paul's Vision* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009); Michael J. Gorman, *Participating in Christ: Explorations in Paul's Theology and Spirituality* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019); Mark Husbands and Daniel J. Treier, eds., *Justification: What's at Stake in the Current Debates* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004); Olli-Pekka Vainio, *Justification and Participation in Christ: The Development of the Lutheran Doctrine of Justification from Luther to the Formula of Concord (1580)*, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions 130 (Leiden: Brill, 2008); Charles Lee Irons, *The Righteousness of God: A Lexical Examination of the Covenant-Faithfulness Interpretation*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament II/386 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015); James B. Prothro, "The Strange Case of Δικαιόω in the Septuagint and Paul: The Oddity and Origins of Paul's Talk of 'Justification,'" *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 107, no. 1 (2016): 48–69.

Furthermore, scholars have attempted to understand the controversial phrase "works of the law" (ἔργων νόμου) in a variety of ways. For instance, in traditional scholarship, some scholars, mostly from the Reformed tradition, have understood the phrase ἔργων νόμου as referring to moral works or deeds in general. According to this conventional view, the phrase expresses a Jewish legalistic and self-righteous attitude through which Jews strived to earn God's favor for their ultimate salvation. See Martin Luther, *A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (Bristol: Burleigh, 1953), 128; William Perkins, *A Commentary on Galatians*, ed. Gerald T. Sheppard, Pilgrim Classic Commentaries (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1989), 102; Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953), 99–100; Daniel P. Fuller, "Paul and 'the Works of the Law'," *Westminster Theological Journal* 38, no. 1 (1975): 28–42; Leon Morris, *Galatians: Paul's Charter of Christian Freedom* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 85–86; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 137–38; Ernest DeWitt Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1971), 120. However, since the publication of two groundbreaking scholarly works by Krister Stendahl (Krister Stendahl, "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West," *Harvard Theological Review* 56, no. 3 (1963): 199–215) and E. P. Sanders (E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1977), Pauline scholarship has strongly reacted against this traditional interpretation of ἔργων νόμου by arguing that such a reading has mischaracterized both Judaism and Paul. Scholars in this camp contend that the Greek phrase ἔργων νόμου does not refer to meritorious works in general but to specific works within the Torah. For example, see John Eadie, *Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1894), 164–65; R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1937), 105–6; Donald Guthrie, *Galatians*, New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 87; Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 117; G. Walter Hansen, *Galatians*,

IVP New Testament Commentary 9 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 69; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 86; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 161. Furthermore, in a more recent scholarly development on this issue, scholars from "the new perspective on Paul" (NPP) school of thought have offered a novel perspective on the meaning of the phrase ἔργων νόμου in Galatians 2:16. To become familiar with the different theological view(s) of the proponents of "the new perspective on Paul," see James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 355; Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 360–62; Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, Black's New Testament Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), 136–37; cf. Wright, *Justification*, 117. This issue is complex, and it can take this study beyond the limits of my main research question. For the purposes of this study, it will suffice to say that NPP advocates' new reading has some merits since it has rightly corrected some aspects of conventional interpretations regarding Paul's theology and Judaism in general. I argue that it is true that Paul uses the phrase ἔργων νόμου in connection with his "earlier comment about whether or not Peter 'lives Jewishly' (2:14)," and thus the phrase refers to the Jewish code of life in accordance with the laws of the Torah. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 373. However, as Das argues, "to claim that 'works of the Law' (ἔργων νόμου) *always* highlights the law's boundary-marking aspects overextends the evidence." Das, *Galatians*, 248. Das cites two biblical references (Rom 4:4–5; Gal 3:10) to show how Paul does not use the phrase (ἔργων νόμου) in a restricted sense. Likewise, Barclay avers, "There is no reason to restrict the referent of ἔργων νόμου 'primarily' or 'in practice' to those rules that created boundaries between Jews and Gentiles . . . . Rather, Paul uses the Antioch incident to speak about Torah-observance in general: the issue is the validity of the Torah in grounding and defining 'righteousness.'" Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 374. See also Das, "Paul and Works of Obedience in Second Temple Judaism: Romans 4:4–5 as a 'New Perspective' Case Study," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 71, no. 4 (2009): 795–812; Craig S. Keener, *Galatians: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), 186; Francis Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles: Beyond the New Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 128–29; Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 374; Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 176–77; Jarvis Williams, *Galatians*, 72–73; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "Paul's Jewish Background and the Deeds of the Law," in *According to Paul: Studies in the Theology of the Apostle* (New York: Paulist Press, 1993), 18–35; Craig A. Evans, "Paul and 'Works of Law' Language in Late Antiquity," in *Paul And His Opponents*, ed. Stanley E. Porter, Pauline Studies 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 201–26.

Another controversial issue in Galatians 2:16 that has received scholarly attention is the interpretation of the phrase διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Some scholars argue that this phrase should be translated and interpreted as "faith *in* Jesus Christ" (objective genitive). For example, see Roy A. Harrisville, "ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ: Witness of the Fathers," *NovT* 36, no. 3 (1994): 233–41; James D. G. Dunn, "Appendix 1: Once More, ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ," in *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1–4:11*, by Richard B. Hays, Biblical Resource Series (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 253; Gordon D. Fee, *Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 24–25; Moisés Silva, "Faith versus Works of Law in Galatians," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, vol. 2, *The Paradoxes of Paul*, ed. D. A. Carson, Peter Thomas O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 228–30; R. Barry Matlock, "Detheologizing the ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ Debate: Cautionary Remarks from a Lexical Semantic Perspective," *NovT* 42, no. 1 (2000): 1–23; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 164–66; Das, *Galatians*, 252; Tolmie, *Persuading the Galatians*, 90; Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 380. Alternatively, other scholars have proposed that the phrase makes more sense if it is translated as "faith *of* Jesus Christ" (subjective genitive). For a comprehensive survey and varying scholarly positions on this issue, see Michael F. Bird and Preston M. Sprinkle, eds., *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2009); Mathew C. Easter, "The *Pistis Christou* Debate: Main Arguments and Responses in Summary," *Currents in Biblical Research* 9, no. 1 (2010): 33–47. While the former reading focuses on the person of Jesus Christ as the object of believers' faith, the later reading emphasizes Jesus Christ's work as a *faithful* servant of God who accomplished God's redemptive plan through his death on the cross. For an in-depth study of the concept of "faith" in recent Pauline studies, see Kevin W. McFadden, *Faith in the Son of God: The Place of Christ-Oriented Faith within Pauline Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021); Nijay K. Gupta, *Paul and the Language of Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020). Grammatically speaking, both Greek constructions of the phrase are viable. For this reason, the meaning of διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ must be determined contextually rather than merely based on grammatical construction. Consequently, instead of opting for an either/or option with regard to objective or subjective reading, it seems more appropriate to explore the meaning of this specific phrase in its own context. Cf. Williams, *Galatians*, 74; Das, *Galatians*, 252–53 [who cautions that "the arguments for either translation are not ultimately decisive. Individual verses and texts must be weighed on their own terms insofar as they offer insight into the debate"]. To my way of thinking, I am convinced that the interpretation of διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in the context of Galatians 2:16 favors the objective reading (i.e., "faith in Christ Jesus"). My preference for the objective genitive

The scholarly discussions on Galatians 2:16 (highlighted above in the footnotes) are extensive. Concerning the disputes on this verse in the NT scholarship, Barclay has correctly pointed out that New Testament interpreters have overemphasized the issues in Galatians 2:16 because "they improperly isolated that verse from its argumentative context." He thinks that "the exegetical difficulties of 2:16 are resolvable if we trace the argumentative flow of 2:14–21."[20] I fully agree with Barclay's approach, and thus, following his advice, in the remaining part of the chapter, I will primarily seek to explore the relationship between identity, the Torah, and justification in light of the concept of divine and human agency by outlining Paul's theological argumentation in Galatians 2:15–21.

A careful analysis of Galatians 2:11–21 demonstrates a close relationship between the notions of identity, the Torah, and justification. The mixed table-fellowship conflict between Jews and Gentiles at Antioch signifies the issue of identity (2:11–14) wherein Peter's separation from the table-fellowship of Gentiles suggested the priority of a distinct Jewish identity. Paul's subsequent rebuke of Peter because of this behavior at Antioch (2:14b–15) and his theological assessment of the incident (2:16–21) indicate the connection between identity, the Torah, and justification. From Paul's perspective, two different conceptions of identity are established from two different agencies (viz., divine and human agency). In using Paul's terminology from the text, humans can rely on two different agents to attain justification/righteousness: either they can rely on the justification that comes by "works of the law" (the Torah), or they can rely on the

---

reading of the Greek phrase is based on the following reasons. First, the references where Paul employs the phrase διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ are juxtaposed with the phrase ἔργων νόμου (Rom 3:28; 4:5, 13–16; 9:32; 10:4; Gal 2:16; 3:2, 5, 11–12, 23–26; Eph 2:8; Phil 3:9). Therefore, διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, in contrast to doing "works of the law," features Jesus as the object of one's faith for attaining salvation. Second, Paul's choice in Galatians 2:16 of using the Greek noun πίστις rather than the adjective πιστός ("faithful") suggests that he meant to depict Jesus to the believers as the object in whom they put their faith. Third, unlike the book of Hebrews, where the author explicitly talks about the notion of Jesus's faithfulness (Heb 2:13; 3:2; 5:7–9; 12:1–3), Paul's letter to the Galatians does not address this aspect explicitly.

[20] Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 371.

justification that comes through their "faith in Jesus Christ" (2:16a).

In response to Peter's action, Paul associates the soteriological concept of justification (Gal 2:16) with the sociological issue of identity (2:15). In his understanding, believers' justification by faith constitutes their vertical relationship with God and reconfigures their horizontal relationship with other humans. In explicating the social or horizontal aspect of justification, Barclay asserts that the faith/works antithesis in Galatians 2:16 "emphasize[s] the way that justification by faith in Christ modifies the standard Jewish distinction between 'Jews' and 'Gentile sinners.'"[21] The "works of the law" (i.e., the Torah) established a mode of Jewish life (i.e., Jewish identity) through which Jews regulated their relationship with God. However, Paul reminds Peter that "this distinctively Jewish pattern of behavior is not an essential feature of justification either for Jews or for anyone else."[22] From a Jewish perspective, it would have been a sinful act to share a meal with Gentiles since doing so signals a compromise with one's Jewish identity. However, from Paul's standpoint, the old Jewish soteriological and sociological modes have been shifted. Because of the reality that justification is entirely determined by "faith in Christ," eating with the Gentile believers at the same table is no longer a sinful thing (2:17).[23] Justification by "faith in Jesus Christ" (2:16) and "the truth of the gospel" (2:14) correspond to the same reality. That is, the essence of "the truth of the gospel" is that the divine act of justification for humans is no longer tied to Torah observance. Instead, "faith in Jesus Christ" alone determines one's relationship with God—the reality that, in turn, regulates believers' relationships with other human beings. In this way, the gospel truth "establishes a new pattern and standard of life. Jewish

---

[21] John M. G. Barclay, *Obeying the Truth: A Study of Paul's Ethics in Galatians*, Studies of the New Testament and Its World (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), 78.

[22] Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, 78.

[23] Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, 80.

believers no longer live simply Ἰουδαϊκῶς (2:14)."[24]

Furthermore, in Galatians 2:18–20, Paul elucidates the inefficacy of the law in comparison to God's redemptive plan of salvation for humans through Christ. He illustrates his point by referring to his own life experience.[25] First, in light of the Christ event, Paul professes that sharing the table with Gentile believers whom God has justified through their "faith in Jesus Christ" is not a transgression. Rather, he (in this instance, Paul) would be transgressing (παραβάτην ἐμαυτὸν συνιστάνω) if he reverts to the old pattern and standard of life (i.e., the Torah and its obligations; 2:18). For him to seek to "build again the things" that he has "destroyed" (κατέλυσα) would be like living "under a curse" (3:10). Verse 19 clarifies that Paul's metaphor for the "building and destroying" of things refers to the "dying and living to/for the law." He writes, "For I died to the law through the law in order that I might live to God." What this verse means is that Paul's judgment of rendering the Torah ineffectual (νόμῳ ἀπέθανον) was determined by his purpose of "living for God." Paul's aspiration for not relying on the Torah was not aimless; instead, his choice for "dying to the law" was generated from his desire "to live to/for God" (2:19b). Next, Paul once again brings Christ into the discussion. Galatians 2:20 informs that "to live to/for God" (2:19b) is to be "crucified with Christ" (Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι). Metaphorically speaking, Paul's crucifixion with Jesus suggests that he does not live his life for himself but that Christ directs his life by living in him (2:20a). Moreover, in an earthly body, Paul's "living" is centered on his "faith in the Son of God" (2:20b), who sacrificially offered himself on the cross (παραδόντος ἑαυτὸν) because of his love for Paul (τοῦ ἀγαπήσαντός με; 2:20c).

Barclay thinks that Paul's remarks in Galatians 2:18–20 on his life in Christ

---

[24] Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, 81.

[25] For example, Paul uses many first-person singulars in these verses: κατέλυσα, οἰκοδομῶ, συνιστάνω, ἐγὼ ἀπέθανον, ζήσω, συνεσταύρωμαι, ζῶ (2x).

"clearly echo his comment on Peter's life (2:14)."[26] What Peter did at Antioch suggested that the Torah's wall of division between Jews and Gentles is still there and thus that "living to the law" is still valid. However, Paul's disapproval of Peter's behavior reinforced the idea that believers' identity and behavior are no longer exemplified by their allegiance to the Torah and its laws but by their "faith in Jesus Christ" alone. In his final remark on the incident at Antioch, Paul highlights the incompatibility of "righteousness through the law" and "the grace of God" (2:21). According to Paul, God has displayed his grace to his people through the death of his Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus's death on the cross accomplished what the Torah failed to. The purpose of Jesus's death was to attain righteousness for all peoples apart from the Torah. God made his Son die on the cross because the Torah could not achieve what it was supposed to, and so, Jesus's death reveals the inadequacy of the Torah for attaining the righteousness that God requires for people to be in a right relationship with him. Hence, if anyone proclaims that he has been "crucified with Christ" and lives by faith in Jesus (2:20) but still pursues the law for attaining "righteousness," then he invalidates the significance of Jesus's death (2:21).

The exegetical analysis of the Galatians text at hand highlights two important observations: First, several references validate the concept of divine-human agency in the passage (Gal 2:14, 16, 21). Second, the passage suggests the *priority* of divine agency over human agency concerning the issue of the identity of believers in Christ.

One of the main arguments of this study is that Paul and Peter's conflict at Antioch (Gal 2:11–14) directly relates to the issue of identity (chap. 5). Peter and the other Jewish believers' decision of leaving the table-fellowship of the Gentile believers

[26] Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, 81. Furthermore, Barclay deems Paul's remarks on his own life in vv. 18–20 as "more than a personal confession." What Paul believes on the personal level should be considered seriously on the communal level in the context of the church because in God's redemptive plan for humanity, what is true for Paul also holds true for all believers in Christ (81n16).

communicated the privileging and prioritizing of a distinct Jewish identity.[27] From Paul's perspective, the Jewish believers at Antioch discriminated against their Gentile brothers through the practice of separation based on the "works of the law"; their action suggested the priority of a distinctive Jewish identity (2:16). In the words of Williams, "When Peter withdrew from table-fellowship with the Gentiles, he was erecting the wall of Torah between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians. Consequently, he was placing himself and them under the law, which only leads to a curse (3:10), not to life (3:21)."[28]

The way Paul understood the incident at Antioch was different from how Peter saw it. According to Paul, the Jewish believers' "withdrawal and separation" (2:12b) from the table-fellowship of the Gentile believers at Antioch emphasized the centrality of the human agent in prioritizing distinct Jewish identity. Peter's action suggested that the human agent must live Jewishly (2:14b), be justified by the "works of the law" (2:16), and show faithful allegiance to the Torah in order to not be "a transgressor" (2:18–19; human agency). All of these elements highlight the role of the human agent in prioritizing a distinct Jewish identity for attaining divine justification. In their desire to be *right* (i.e., "justified") with the divine agent through the "works of the law," the Jewish believers went wrong in their relationship with their non-Jewish brothers in Christ. Their concern for maintaining their distinct Jewish identity in order to be "justified by works of the law" required social isolation from the Gentile believers. However, Paul's recounting of what happened at Antioch informs his churches at Galatia that he condemned the behavior of Peter and the other Jewish believers.

---

[27] See David C. Kraemer (*Jewish Eating and Identity through the Ages* [New York: Taylor & Francis, 2007], 124), who states that "the distinction demanded by the law with respect to foods require that parallel distinctions be made between peoples. The moment the Jew (Peter) wants to overcome the boundaries that divide 'us' from 'them,' the eating restrictions must be compromised or eliminated."

[28] Jarvis Williams, *Galatians*, 50. This "wall of the Torah between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians" which Jarvis Williams points out directly related to the notion of distinct Jewish identity.

Paul's critique of Peter at Antioch was not personal. What provoked Paul to rebuke Peter was Peter's "hypocrisy" (2:13) that made him act contrary to "the truth of the gospel" (2:14). Regardless of Peter's inner motives and rationale behind his separation from the Gentile table-fellowship, Paul understood that Peter's reluctance to eat with the Gentile believers would confuse the Gentile believers at Antioch. The Gentile-background Antiochene believers might be driven to adopt a Jewish identity to feel privileged among their Jewish brothers. Paul's consequent theological discussion of the matter (2:15–21) provides the content of "the truth of the gospel," which Peter and other Jewish believers did not consider. The essence of the "truth of the gospel" is that God's salvific action in Christ (divine agency) has eradicated the previous socio-religious Jewish standard of attaining righteousness by prioritizing a distinct Jewish identity. Instead, God has redefined and transformed the believers' identity through the death and resurrection of Jesus and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. To put it differently, Paul prioritizes the role of the divine agent over the human agent in redefining the believers' identity in Christ.

In Galatians 2:15–21, Paul argues that neither Jewish identity (Ἰουδαῖος ὑπάρχων, φύσει Ἰουδαῖοι; 2:14b–15a) nor Torah observance (ἔργων νόμου; 2:16) plays any role in one's being justified in the sight of God. What justifies a man (ἄνθρωπος) is his (or her) "faith in Jesus Christ" (2:16). This verse deemphasizes the role of the human agent (οὐ δικαιοῦται ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ἔργων νόμου) and prioritizes the divine agent (ἐὰν μὴ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ; ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιωθήσεται πᾶσα σάρξ). Paul admonishes the Galatian believers not to "nullify the grace of God" (οὐκ ἀθετῶ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ; divine agency) by attaining "righteousness through the law" (human agency). The divine agent has justified believers through the death of his Son (2:21).[29]

[29] Williams, *For Whom Did Christ Die?*, 178–79.

Furthermore, Paul ties the concept of justification to the notion of believers' new identity that denounces the previous Jewish socio-religious standards ("works of the law") and accentuates the role of divine grace (i.e., "faith in Jesus Christ"). It has already been argued above how Paul associates the notion of identity (2:15) with his argument concerning justification and the Torah (2:16). However, 2:15–16 is not the only place where one finds the relationship between believers' identity and justification by divine grace; 2:19–21 is another important unit in the passage that highlights the link between the notion of identity and justification by divine grace.

In the monograph *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment*, Barclay analyzes the similarities and differences between Paul and Philo's understanding of divine grace. In his section on Paul, Barclay employs Galatians 2:19–21 to show the "subversive" nature of grace in Paul. Nevertheless, in commenting on Galatians 2:19–21, Barclay says that this passage is a "pragmatic statement about the formation of the believers' new identity."[30] The observation made by Barclay reinforces the idea that Paul's ideology of "justification by faith" is not an abstract idea. Rather, it has practical implications for those who have put their "faith in Jesus Christ." Paul's statements in verses 19–21 insinuate the redefining of his identity in Christ. For instance, Paul's realization of the truth of justification by faith (divine agency) made him "die to the law"—the decision that enabled him "to live to/for God" (new identity; 2:19). Additionally, Paul's salvation by his "faith in Jesus Christ" (divine agency) also made him partake in Jesus's crucifixion. His newly defined identity has become so immersed in Christ that it is no longer Paul who lives "but Christ [who] lives" in him (2:20a). Moreover, since Christ has overtaken Paul's life (2:20a), Paul's life "in the flesh" is entirely characterized "by faith in the Son of God" (2:20b). Paul's claims communicate

[30] John M. G. Barclay, "'By the Grace of God I Am What I Am': Grace and Agency in Philo and Paul," in *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment*, ed. Simon J. Gathercole and John M. G. Barclay (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 152.

how God's salvific action through the person and work of his Son Jesus Christ redefines and transforms believers' identity. Barclay's exposition on this section from Galatians (2:19–21) concerning the notion of the believers' identity is insightful:

> So fundamental is the recreation of the self that it can be described as a 'co-crucifixion' with Christ, and this participation means also the first subject of the new life is emphatically declared to be Christ, *not* 'I'. But then, at least in a certain sphere, or in a certain sense, the 'I' can be said to live, yet (whether the genitive be objective or subjective) it has its new identity focused on Christ, whose work of self-giving and loving is paradoxically precisely 'for me'! The self here is not obliterated or hijacked by another agency, but neither is it simply informed of a new possibility, or instructed into a new world. It is reconstituted in such a fashion that one has to speak thereafter of dual agency, and not simply of one operating in partnership with the other, but of Christ operating 'in' the human agent.[31]

Hence, three elements (identity, the Torah, and justification) are at work in Galatians 2:15–21, and all of them are interconnected. Moreover, as has been argued, Paul's discussion of these three entities is *not* disconnected from the narrative of the crisis at Antioch (2:11–14). According to Paul, people can choose between two modes of justification: one mode offers justification through the medium of Torah observance (ἔργων νόμου), and the other mode offers justification through the medium of believing in the person and work of Jesus Christ (2:16). The observance of the Torah ("works of the law") tied to the notion of divine justification served to establish and prioritize a distinct Jewish identity for Jews to maintain their relationship with God. Paul, having understood the underlying nature of the mixed table-fellowship conflict at Antioch, opposed Peter and other Jewish believers because he foresaw that their action would ultimately suggest that the Gentile believers left behind at the table-fellowship need to adhere to the "works of the law" to regulate their relationship with God.

For this reason, Paul argues, believers' relationship with God (whether they are Jews or Gentiles) is no longer determined by their distinctive ethnic identity through Torah observance but *only* by their relationship with Jesus Christ ("faith in Jesus Christ").

---

[31] Barclay, "'By the Grace of God I Am What I Am'," 152.

This saving act of God through Jesus Christ (divine agency) justifies believers and redefines and transforms their identity into a new common identity that they find in Christ. According to Paul, the sociological issue of disrupted table-fellowship caused by the tension between different ethnic identities might have caused apprehension among Gentile believers that a distinct Jewish identity through Torah observance is vital for regulating their relationship with God and their relationships with the people of God. Thus, Paul's response to Peter clarifies that believers' redefined *common identity* in Christ supplants all other ethnic identities due to their *common faith* in the Son of God.

In essence, the conflict between Paul and Peter at the mixed table-fellowship between Paul and Peter at Antioch represents "a clash between two regulative structures, one defined by the norms of the Jewish tradition, the other oriented to 'the truth of the gospel.'"[32] I further extend this assertion by arguing that this "clash between two regulative structures," observed by Barclay, also signifies a clash between two different notions of agency. From Paul's angle, Peter's action at Antioch suggested the re-establishment of prevalent socio-religious Jewish norms "with the effect of requiring other believers to adopt his Jewish rule of life."[33] This phenomenon that entailed prioritizing a distinct Jewish identity at the table-fellowship incident represented the priority of human agency since Peter (the human agent) appears to play the central role in this instance for acquiring justification through Torah observance. However, Paul's reaction towards Peter in the crisis at Antioch emphasized the divine agent who justifies humans because of Jesus's death and resurrection and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Gal 1:1, 4; 2:16, 17–21; 3:1–8, 12, 13–14, 29; 5:5, 16, 21, 22–24). "For those aligned to the Christ-event, 'the Jewish way of life' is no longer an unqualified standard of

[32] Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 367–68.

[33] Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 368.

righteous behavior, *even for Jews*."[34] To put it differently, the antithesis between "works of the law" and "faith in Jesus Christ" corresponds to two different notions of agency. Francis Watson's statement clarifies the difference between these two conflicting notions of agency in light of the framework of faith/Torah contrast:

> To seek to be justified by the works of the law is to (re-)identify oneself with the community into which one was born (cf. Ἡμεῖς φύσει Ἰουδαῖοι, v.15) by practicing the appropriate way of life (cf. Ἰουδαϊκῶς, v.14; ἔργων νόμου, v.16). "Works of the law" does not refer to circumcision or other "characteristically and distinctively Jewish" observances per se, but to the entire communal way of life that corresponds to the model of Jewish identity to which Cephas has now reverted. "Faith of Jesus Christ" represents an alternative model of communal life. It is, precisely, an *alternative*, constituted as such by the Pauline antithesis in opposition to the assimilation sought by Cephas at Antioch.[35]

What happened at Antioch certainly involved the clash between Jewish and Gentile ethnic identities. However, the incident was not merely constrained to the issue of identity but had deeper implications. From Paul's perspective, Peter's action at the table-fellowship suggested that he minimized the divine action in Christ that has unified believers from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Gal 1:16; 3:26–28). Whether Peter himself held this conviction or not, his action suggested to the Gentile believers at Antioch that their role as the human agents is still crucial in being identified as people of God through obedience to the Torah ("works of the law"). However, Paul's confrontation with Peter and the other Jewish believers suggested that the divine action condemns the Jewish believers' action because it undervalues what Jesus Christ has already accomplished by his death and resurrection by creating a dividing wall between the believers from different ethnicities. With Jesus's death and resurrection and the

---

[34] Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 368.

[35] Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles*, 128. I agree with Watson's overall analysis of the core issue at stake at Antioch in this statement, except for his preference of interpreting the phrase πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ as a subjective genitive. This study has stated that it is not necessary to opt for the objective or subjective reading of this phrase as an either/or option. In addition to considering different possibilities of grammatical constructions, one must also seriously consider the contextual matters. Therefore, keeping in mind the argument and context of Gal 2:11–21, this study prefers the objective reading of the phrase ("faith in Jesus Christ").

indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the unifying factor among all believers is not their ethnic identity-markers (human agency) but only their "faith in Jesus Christ" (divine agency).

Based on the exegetical analysis of the Galatians text at hand, if I have to categorize Galatians 2:11–21 in Barclay's three models of agency, I will place Paul's text with the third agency model, that is "non-contrastive transcendence." According to this model, the relationship between the divine and human agents is not inversely proportional. Instead, "God's sovereignty does not limit or reduce human freedom, but is precisely what grounds and enables it. The two agencies thus stand in direct, and not inverse proportion: the more the human agent is operative, the more (not the less) may be attributed to God."[36] Nonetheless, although both the Galatians text (2:11–21) and Second Temple Jewish texts (Let. Aris.; Jos. Asen.; Jdt.; Add Esth) can be categorized in "non-contrastive transcendence" model of agency, there exists a difference in terms of a priority of the main agent. In other words, whereas selected Second Temple Jewish suggests the priority of human agency in the establishment and primacy of a distinct Jewish identity without downplaying divine agency, Paul's text (Galatians 2:11–21) suggests the priority of divine action (i.e., divine agency) in the establishment of the believer's identity that has been redefined and transformed because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Based on the divine action in Christ, the believer's redefined identity is no more dependent on his allegiance to the Torah but solely on his faith in Jesus Christ. Moreover, the believers' faith in Jesus Christ has broken off walls of ethnic discrimination built by the Torah between different ethnic identities. To put it differently, because of Jesus' person and work, the way the divine agent now interacts with His people is not based on one's Jewish ethnic identity based on the "works of the law" (i.e., Torah). Rather, in the new covenant, the only

[36] John M. G. Barclay, introduction to *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment*, ed. Simon J. Gathercole and John M. G. Barclay (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 7.

identity marker for God's people is their faith in and allegiance to Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the relationship between identity, table-fellowship, and divine-human agency in Galatians 2:11–21. After establishing the link between sociological and theological aspects in biblical literature on a broader level, I argued that sociological and theological aspects, particularly in the context of Galatians 2:11–21, should not be dichotomized. My argument tried to show that Paul's understanding of believers' identity does not *only* deal with humans' relations with other humans (sociological aspect) but also deals with humans' relationship with God (theological aspect). Furthermore, through a detailed exegetical analysis of Galatians 2:15–21 in connection with the crisis at Antioch (Gal 2:11–14), this chapter has argued that Paul and Peter's table-fellowship conflict over ethnic identity signifies the conflict between two competing notions of agency. Peter's behavior at the mixed table-fellowship at Antioch suggested the priority of human agency for prioritizing a distinct Jewish identity through the observance of socio-religious Jewish table-fellowship practices that were prevalent in Judaism in that era. However, Paul's reaction to the crisis at Antioch suggested the priority of the divine agent. Paul strongly disapproved of Peter's action at Antioch because his action undervalued God's salvific action in Christ. According to Paul's understanding, Jesus's death and resurrection have demolished the dividing wall created by the Torah among believers belonging to different ethnicities. Consequently, the defining factor that unifies all believers in the Christ-following community is not believers' ethnic identity (human agency) but their "faith in Jesus Christ" alone. Their "faith in Jesus" entails that God has accomplished his redemptive plan for humanity through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit in the believers' lives (divine agency).

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Main Argument of the Study and Summaries of the Chapters

This dissertation intended to demonstrate that one of the ways to analyze the mixed table-fellowship conflict between Paul and Peter at Antioch in Galatians 2:11–21 is through the lens of the divine and human agency model. The thesis of this dissertation claimed that the mixed table-fellowship conflict at Antioch basically reveals a conflict between two competing understandings of agency—one based on the primacy of the human agent and the other based on the priority of the divine agent. I presented my argument by establishing the relationship between identity, agency, and mixed table-fellowship through a careful exegetical analysis of the crisis at Antioch in Galatians 2:11–21 in conversation with selected Second Temple Jewish texts.

Chapter 2 of this dissertation argued that food and table-fellowship practices should be seen as more than a biological act. They primarily serve as an important center of identity formation on the individual and communal levels. Moreover, the specific dietary and commensal regulations and restrictions of any social group create a social bond and distinction from others outside the group. In light of this argument, I contended that Jewish food and table-fellowship practices in antiquity, with their nuances and complexities, mainly functioned to express a distinct Jewish identity.

Methodologically, this research project concerned itself with a comparative analysis of two different categories of ancient texts. Therefore, this study has been categorized into two main parts: the first part (chaps. 3–4) focused on selected Jewish texts from the Second Temple period, and the second part (chaps. 5–6) focused on Paul's

letter to the Galatians, with particular attention given to 2:11–21. Although the ultimate purpose of analyzing selected Second Temple Jewish texts has been to help readers better understand the mixed table-fellowship conflict at Antioch in Galatians 2, the Jewish texts under consideration have not merely been utilized as a background for Paul. Rather, I have examined the Jewish texts on their own terms, and I have tried my best to avoid projecting Pauline concerns and ideologies onto non-Pauline texts. For this reason, my analysis of the mixed table-fellowship narratives found in the Second Temple Jewish texts was limited to each distinct, individual Jewish text's historical and theological context.

After exploring the notion of Jewish identity in its broader sense, chapter 3 thoroughly examined four different narratives from Second Temple Jewish literature that involved mixed table-fellowship between Jews and Gentiles (Letter of Aristeas, Joseph and Aseneth, Judith, and Additions to Esther). In this chapter, analyzing selected Jewish texts in their respective contexts, I argued that these ancient Jewish texts functioned to construct and maintain the notion of a distinct Jewish identity by depicting the Jews' observance of Jewish dietary and table-fellowship restrictions.

Chapter 4 explored the relationship between Jewish food and table-fellowship practices and divine-human agency. First, the evaluation of selected Jewish texts proved that the specific Jewish food and table-fellowship restrictions that Jews observed in the Second Temple period were grounded in the dietary laws found in the Torah. Second, in establishing the relationship between Jewish identity and the Torah, this chapter revealed that the Torah defined Jews' distinct identity in the Second Temple period. Third, through establishing the connection between Jewish dietary practices and identity based on the Torah in relation to divine-human agency, this chapter argued that mixed table-fellowship narratives from selected Second Temple Jewish texts present humans (or Jews) as playing the role of the active agents in prioritizing their distinct Jewish identity. However, in making this argument, this study argued that the active participation of the

human agents in accentuating their distinct Jewish identity does not suggest that the divine agent's role is diminished completely.

In chapter 5, I focused on the crisis at Antioch at the mixed table-fellowship between Jewish and Gentile believers as reported by Paul in Galatians 2:11–14. After dealing with major literary, chronological, and key interpretational issues in the passage, this chapter argued that the mixed table-fellowship conflict at Antioch reveals an underlying conflict over ethnic identity. Overall, I argued that Paul's direct rebuke of Peter for separating himself from the table-fellowship of the Gentiles and his (i.e., Paul's) theological remarks on the incident suggest that Paul understood the incident at Antioch in light of the issue of identity. I maintained that Peter and the other Jewish believers' *action* of separation from the table-fellowship of Gentile believers suggested the priority of a distinct Jewish identity through the implementation of a Jewish way of life. However, Paul's disapproval of Peter and the others' action sought to prioritize believers' identity in Christ by standing firm on "the truth of the gospel."

Finally, chapter 6 established the relationship between identity, table-fellowship, and divine-human agency in Galatians 2:11–21. Through the exegesis of Galatians 2:15–21 in connection with the crisis at Antioch (Gal 2:11–14), I argued that Paul and Peter's table-fellowship conflict over ethnic identity denotes a conflict between two competing notions of agency. That is, Peter's behavior at the mixed table-fellowship at Antioch suggested the priority of human agency for prioritizing a distinct Jewish identity through the observance of socio-religious Jewish table-fellowship practices that were prevalent in Judaism at that time. But Paul's reaction to Peter and his Jewish contemporaries suggested the priority of the divine agent. From Paul's perspective, Jesus's death and resurrection have demolished the dividing wall created by the Torah among believers belonging to different ethnicities. Consequently, the defining factor that unifies all the believers in the Christ-following community is not believers' ethnic identity (human agency) but their "faith in Jesus Christ" alone (divine agency).

A Comparative Analysis

A thorough discussion of Galatians 2:11–21 in conversation with a selection of four Second Temple Jewish texts has aimed to illuminate the meaning of the historical event that occurred at Antioch and to identify some key points of similarities and dissimilarities between those ancient texts. Based on my analysis of these texts, I have drawn these conclusions.

First, the survey of the Jewish texts under consideration affirmed the idea that Second Temple Jews showed great concern for what and with whom they ate. Both Jewish dietary and commensality restrictions played a fundamental role in Second Temple Judaism (Let. Aris. 128–71, 174–86; Jos. Asen. 7:1; 8:5, 9; 10:1, 13, 17; 15:5; 16:16; 19:5; 21:13, 21; Jdt 10:5; 11:13; 12:2, 9, 19; Add Esth 14:17). Whereas some Jewish authors in these narratives portrayed observant Jews as showing a high degree of reservation in the matters of food that belonged to Gentiles (Let. Aris. 128–71, 174–86; Jdt 10:5; 11:13; 12:2, 9, 19), other Jewish authors presented the faithful Jews as avoiding a meal with Gentiles at the same table (Jos. Asen. 7:1; 8:5, 9; 10:1, 13, 17; 15:5; 16:16; 19:5; 21:13, 21; Add Esth 14:17). These narratives from selected Second Temple Jewish texts indicate how the issue of mixed table-fellowship between Jews and Gentiles was fundamental for Judaism, specifically Judaism in the Second Temple period. These Jewish dietary and commensal restrictions based on the laws in the Torah primarily served to establish and prioritize a distinct Jewish identity of Second Temple Jews.

As the New Testament writings affirm, the emergence of the early Christian church was not the result of some novel movement or ideology. Instead, the early Christian church found its historical and religious roots within Judaism. Thus, when one enters the New Testament world, one sees that the followers of Jesus encountered the same issue of social interaction between Jews and Gentiles at the table-fellowship (Acts 11:1–18). Paul faced the same issue in his confrontation with Peter and other Jewish believers in Galatians 2:11–21. The early church leaders re-evaluated many Jewish socio-

religious and cultural practices grounded in Jewish religion because of their Christological and eschatological beliefs. However, they still could not fully escape the tensions and crises that emerged due to the early church's affiliation with Judaism. Thus, both Jewish and Pauline texts analyzed in this study express a similar concern that involved the mixed table-fellowship between Jews and Gentiles.

Second, for convenience, this study proposed different categories for mixed table-fellowship practices (chap. 2). In the analysis of selected Second Temple Jewish texts (chap. 3), I demonstrated that while some texts recommended "food-based restrictions" to the Jewish community for prioritizing its distinctive Jewish identity, other texts advised observing "commensality-based restrictions." Also, this study noticed that some Jewish texts, because of the ambiguous textual data, prescribed both "food-based and commensality-based restrictions." In the narrative of Galatians 2:11–21, this study considered "commensality-based restrictions" to be more probable, although the possibility of "food-based restrictions" cannot be fully denied. Based on the textual data in Galatians 2:11–21, it seems more likely that Peter separated himself from the table-fellowship of Gentiles mainly because of their *company*. In this regard, the mixed table-fellowship conflict in Galatians 2 is similar to the mixed table-fellowship narratives found in Joseph and Aseneth (Jos. Asen. 7:1; 8:5, 9; 10:1, 13, 17; 15:5; 16:16; 19:5; 21:13, 21) and LXX Esther (Add Esth 14:17). Through these Jewish narratives, the authors caution other Jews to avoid the company of Gentile at the table-fellowship.

Third, this study showed that as a point of similarity, the Jewish mixed table-fellowship restrictions observed by Jews in selected Jewish texts and by Peter (and other Jewish believers) at Antioch were based on the laws of the Torah. The textual data of the Jewish texts and Galatians inform readers that Jewish observance of mixed table-fellowship practices and restrictions was grounded in the divine agent's Mosaic law in the old covenant era.

Fourth, in the analysis of the crisis at Antioch in comparison with selected Second Temple Jewish texts, I observed that Peter's action at Antioch, whereby he separated himself from the table-fellowship of Gentile believers, bears a resemblance to that of Second Temple Jews. Like the actions of Second Temple Jews, Peter's behavior at the table-fellowship at Antioch suggested that he sought to construct and prioritize a distinct Jewish identity through Torah observance. Moreover, like that of his Jewish contemporaries, Peter's action highlighted the role of the human agent in the priority of a distinct Jewish identity that in Judaism functioned to regulate Jews' relationship with God.

However, this study has found a substantial difference in the way Paul dealt with the crisis at Antioch in comparison with Peter and other Jewish believers. Paul's direct rebuke of Peter (Gal 2:11–15) and his theological stance towards the mixed table-fellowship of Jews manifest a sharp contrast between him, Peter, and his other Jewish contemporaries of that period. Paul's radical action in the crisis at Antioch resulted from his deep reflection upon the divine action in Christ. Therefore, within Paul's theological framework, the way Peter acted at Antioch suggested the primacy of the human agency in playing an active role in prioritizing distinct Jewish identity.

It should be noted that this study was not concerned with exploring Peter's ultimate motives for breaking off the table-fellowship with the Gentile believers at Antioch except that he stopped eating with them because of his fear of the circumcision party. So, I acknowledge that my interpretation of the crisis at Antioch is based on Paul's perspective of the incident. However, on this issue, my own opinion is that the question of Peter's rationale, whatever it may have been, would not have had a significant impact on how Paul dealt with the situation at hand. The reason is that Paul's main interest did not lie mainly in *why* Peter would do such a thing but *how* his action would affect the Gentile believers' understanding of divine salvation through Christ.

In light of this argument, Paul's strong disapproval of Jewish believers' behavior at the mixed table-fellowship at Antioch suggested the priority of the divine action in Christ (Gal 2:11–15). In other words, God's salvific action has broken the walls of ethnic discrimination among his people by giving believers a common identity in Christ as the people of God through Jesus's death and resurrection and the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives (Gal 2:16–21). According to Paul, the right relationship of humans with God and other humans is no longer determined by humans' active participation (human agency) in Torah observance to construct and prioritize their ethnic identity. Rather, what regulates humans' relationship with God and their community is their "faith in Jesus Christ."

It has been clarified that Paul's priority of divine agency in the context of the mixed table-fellowship does not mean to suggest that Paul understood Jewish allegiance to the Torah as inherently evil, for it would be utterly wrong to draw this conclusion from Paul's writings since Paul believed in the divine providence of the Torah (cf. Gal 3:15–24). What Paul argued in Galatians 2:11–21 is that because of the Christ-event, believers' relationship with God and other humans is not determined and regulated by their allegiance to the Torah and priority of ethnic identities (human agency) but by their faith in and allegiance to Jesus Christ alone (divine agency).

Towards Clarifying Some Misconceptions

Paul's Understanding of the Relationship between Divine and Human Agency

The previous chapter (chap. 6) mainly sought to show that the subject of identity as a central theme in the Antioch incident correlates directly to the issue of divine-human agency. It has been argued that Paul's argument in Galatians 2:11–21 reveals the primacy of the divine action in redefining believers' identity through their "faith in Jesus Christ" because of Jesus's death and resurrection and the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Due to my argument's emphasis on divine agency in redefining

believers' identity into a new identity (i.e., their identity in Christ), readers may suppose that my assertion of Paul's *emphasis* on divine agency *discards* or *ignores* the human agency involved in establishing believers' identity in Christ. In response to this, I would like to clarify that Paul's priority of the divine agent in Galatians 2:11–21 does not make humans passive agents who function as puppets. A serious study of Paul's theology in general and his letter to the Galatians in particular vividly demonstrates the active role that human agents play in and through God's redemptive plan.

For instance, although Paul openly professes the active role of the divine agent in releasing believers from "the present evil age" (1:4) and in revealing Jesus to him (i.e., to Paul; 1:16), it is still Paul who actively preaches the gospel among the Gentiles (1:16) and defends it when required (2:1–10). Furthermore, as argued in chapter 6, the centrality of the divine agent in justifying humans only through their "faith in Jesus Christ" apart from the efficacy of ethnic identity and "works of the law" is evident in Galatians 2:15–17. However, Paul's active role in destroying (καταλύω) the things that he once built (οἰκοδομῶ), dying to the law (νόμῳ ἀπέθανον) and living to God (θεῷ ζήσω), and no longer living "in the flesh" but "by faith in the Son of God (2:18–20) is simultaneously noticeable in the same passage. Interestingly, Paul's final cautionary remark in this section highlights the possibility for believers to be the effective agents who can "nullify the grace of God" (οὐκ ἀθετῶ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ) due to incorrect theological beliefs and behaviors (2:14–17).

Furthermore, pertaining to the role of the human agent concerning believers' identity in Christ, a recent article by Grant Buchanan has argued for the active involvement of human agents in God's salvific work through their deeds and behaviors in the community of God's people. Buchanan claims that God, through his Son Jesus Christ, has launched a community of people who are God's children (3:26; 4:4–5). Therefore, in light of this eschatological reality,

> according to Paul, this new community does not consist of slaves, controlled by Sin/Flesh (ἁμαρτία/σάρξ). On the contrary, it consists of children born in freedom, into the eschatological realm of the Spirit (πνεῦμα), who are *actively* responsible for their actions and responses towards others. In other words, human agency is part of actively being children of God, not just in status but also in behavior.[1]

Thus, Buchanan focuses primarily on Galatians 5–6 to analyze the centrality of the human agent in the context of his or her new identity in Christ. To develop his argument, Buchanan argues that "imperative and hortatory subjunctive verbs" in Galatians 5–6 "indicate that living as children of God is not the purview of divine agency alone but that responsibility for living out this identity is clearly placed with the believing community."[2] What Buchanan has argued for is correct in light of the textual data. Paul's ethical instructions in Galatians 5–6 portray the human agent's active participation in God's salvific work. In this section, Paul admonishes the Galatians to "stand firm" (στήκετε), to wage war against their fleshly desires, to walk by the Spirit (πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε; 5:16–18; cf. 5:25), and to crucify their "passions and desires" (τοῖς παθήμασιν καὶ ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις) that belong to the fleshly realm (5:24). Additionally, several references in Galatians 6:1–10 instruct the Galatians about the Christian practices (human agency) that teach them how to regulate their relationships in the community of believers as children of God.

Based on the textual data in Galatians (particularly in Gal 5–6), Buchanan's argument might seem to contradict what I am arguing for. However, when these references by Paul are examined in their proper context, it is evident that they do not refute the claim of Paul's priority of divine agency that I made in chapter 6. First, the conception of believers' identity that has been redefined by the divine action in Christ (Gal 2:14–21) for which I am arguing should not be perceived as contradictory to believers' identity that is further reinforced by their own conduct of life (5:16–26) and

---

[1] Grant Buchanan, "Identity and Human Agency in Galatians 5–6," *Australian Biblical Review* 68 (2020): 54–55.

[2] Buchanan, "Identity and Human Agency in Galatians 5–6," 55, 57–65.

socio-ethical actions towards other believers in the community of faith (6:1–10). The active participation of human agents in the context of their ethical life (5:13–6:10) neither determines their relationship with God (i.e., "justification"; 2:15–16) nor contributes anything in gaining their new status of a redefined identity in Christ as children of God (3:14, 26; 4:4–5, 28–31). Rather, human agents' socio-ethical behavior fundamentally expresses how "to live out who they are, in light of who they are of."[3]

Buchanan, while emphasizing the role of active human agents in the establishment of their new identity in Christ through "their actions and responses towards others," affirms that he is not "suggesting human agency in the process of salvation, but in the subsequent activity of living out of that salvation."[4] Second, in the ethical section of the letter (Gal 5–6), Paul suggests that the Galatians' conduct of life (i.e., their socio-ethical practices) is significant because their ethical or moral actions highlight the active participation of human agency. Nevertheless, even where human agency seems to be prominent in the ethical section of Galatians (2:18–19; 5.:1; 5:13–6:10), Paul's qualifying remarks aim to prioritize divine agency without eliminating human agency (2:20; 5:1, 16, 25; 6:14).

My argument operates within the framework of this divine-human agency paradigm. It claims the priority of the divine agent in constructing believers' new identity in Christ for their relationship with God and other believers within the faith community. However, this prioritization of the divine agent does not necessarily negate the human agents' active role in God's salvific plan. Based on the text from Galatians (2:11–21), I have argued that, from Paul's perspective, the only identity-marker for believers that makes them the members of God's family and regulates their relationship with God is their "faith in Jesus Christ" (Gal 2:11–21). Nevertheless, Paul's exhortations within the

---

[3] Buchanan, "Identity and Human Agency in Galatians 5–6," 55.

[4] Buchanan, "Identity and Human Agency in Galatians 5–6," 55n2.

letter also demonstrate the expectation of active obedience from the human agents to express their newly defined identity in Christ and to regulate their relationships with other children of God (Gal 5:13–6:10). Arguing for the same point in his comment on the faith/works antithesis in Galatians 2 in light of the concept of divine-human agency, Jason Maston writes,

> In Paul's broader conception of salvation, the contrast between faith and works that is fundamental to the justification passages cannot be read so as to exclude the human agent from acting within the salvation process. Faith cannot be disconnected from obedience since for Paul faith entails obedience. He tells the Galatians that neither circumcision nor un-circumcision matter. What has value is "faith working through love" (Gal 5.6). The goal of Paul's missionary work is to produce among the Gentiles "the obedience of faith" (Rom 1.5; 16.26). However the genitival relationship be understood, there is a link between faith and obedience, and this connection is fundamental to Paul's soteriology. Faith, in Paul's thought, functions as the source, from the human perspective, for good deeds. Genuine faith must reveal itself in obedience to Christ's law.[5]

Paul's Understanding of Believers' Redefined Identity in Christ

In chapter 5, I argued that Paul's theological argumentation in Galatians 2:15–21 was intended to clarify that believers' identity has been *redefined* because of the divine action through Jesus's death and resurrection. Therefore, due to this reality, believers' identity in Christ supersedes all ethnic identities. Does this mean that Paul expects believers in Christ to negate or eradicate their distinct ethnic identities? My reading of Galatians 2:11–21 (cf. Rom 2:28–29; Gal 3:28; Phil 3:3–9) is that Paul's claim of believers' identity that has been redefined in Christ is not equivalent to the complete eradication of believers' own ethnic identities.

In the context of the table-fellowship dispute at Antioch, when Paul opposed Peter and other Jewish believers at Antioch for leaving the table-fellowship of Gentile

---

[5] Jason Maston, *Divine and Human Agency in Second Temple Judaism and Paul: A Comparative Study* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 174. See also Francis Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles: Beyond the New Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 212–13; Kyle B. Wells, *Grace and Agency in Paul and Second Temple Judaism: Interpreting the Transformation of the Heart* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 297–301; Nijay K. Gupta, *Paul and the Language of Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020), 153–54.

believers (Gal 2:12), nothing in the text suggests that he wanted them to forsake their Jewish identity. In fact, in his response to Peter, Paul concedes both his own and Peter's *Jewishness* (Gal 2:15, 16b). Based on Paul's conflict with Jewish believers at Antioch, it would be wrong to presume that Paul expected his Christ-believing Jewish contemporaries to stop being Jews.[6] In Galatians 2:11–21, Paul did not intend to argue against "Jewish identity" per se. Instead, in the case of the Antiochene crisis, he stood against the imposition of Jewish identity upon the Gentile believers. Outside the context of Jewish-Gentile interaction in churches, if Jewish believers wanted to observe the Torah, then Paul would have no objection to their doing so; Jewish believers in Christ had the freedom to do so. However, if Jewish believers sought to prioritize their distinct Jewishness in the presence of Gentile believers, then Paul would have said that "tradition [is] subordinate to the demands of a higher allegiance, which is always potentially, and sometimes actually, at odds with the requirements of the Torah (cf. Gal 2:19–20, on Paul's paradigmatic 'death to the Law')."[7]

Therefore, just as Paul did not require Gentile believers to stop being Gentiles, so also he did not require Jewish believers to stop being Jews. In essence, Paul did not oppose *ethnic distinctions*; instead, he mainly objected to *ethnic discrimination* among Christ-followers. During a clash in a mixed communal setting, Paul encouraged believers of different ethnicities to dwell on their common *redefined* identity in Christ that supersedes all ethnic particularism. It would not be wrong to claim that Paul, in his churches, preferred *diversity* of ethnic identities in order to bring *unity* among believers.[8]

---

[6] Mark D. Nanos, "What Was at Stake in Peter's 'Eating with Gentiles' at Antioch?," in *The Galatians Debate: Contemporary Issues in Rhetorical and Historical Interpretation*, ed. Mark D. Nanos (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 313n101; John M. G. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 368n45.

[7] Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 368n45.

[8] See William S. Campbell, *Unity and Diversity in Christ: Interpreting Paul in Context* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2013), 102–5; Campbell, *Paul and the Creation of Christian Identity*, Library of New Testament Studies 322 (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 156–58; Caroline Johnson Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs: A Study of Kinship and Ethnicity in the Letters of Paul* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press,

Contribution, Further Research, and Application

New Testament scholars have examined the historical incident at Antioch in Galatians 2:11–21 from various angles to explore the issue at stake. This claim is evident from the comprehensive review of secondary scholarly literature that this dissertation conducted to introduce its unique contribution. For example, whereas James D. G. Dunn has focused on "the level of Torah observance," E. P. Sanders has considered "the food" to be the core issue at stake in Antioch. In addition, on the one hand, Philip Esler has understood "the company of Gentile believers," "the role of the Jewish rite of circumcision," and therefore the matter of the socio-religious "status of Gentiles" to be the root cause of the issue at Antioch. In his overall analysis, Esler explores the Antiochene crisis through the lens of Mediterranean anthropological and cultural contexts. On the other hand, Mark D. Nanos has argued that the conflict at Antioch had nothing to do with either the food or company of the Gentile believers; rather, it was the issue of "the identification of Gentile believers" at the mixed table-fellowship.

Furthermore, while Bengt Holmberg has understood the mixed table-fellowship conflict as "the conflict of Jewish versus Christian identity," John Barclay has explained the meaning of the Antioch incident in light of Paul's understanding of the divine gift. Additionally, whereas S. A. Cummins has illuminated the conflict of the

---

2007), 125–31. Contra Love L. Sechrest (*A Former Jew: Paul and the Dialectics of Race*, Library of New Testament Studies 410 [London: T&T Clark, 2009], 163–206, 226–28), who rejects the idea of "ethnic diversity" within the Pauline community of believers and thinks that believers' new identity in Christ eradicates their distinct ethnic identity. In her argument, Sechrest acknowledges that "Paul assumes a greater emotional attachment between Christians who share a biological or geographic origin than between Christians with different origins (Phlm 16; Rom 9:2–3)" and that Paul's and Peter's different fields of missions "recognize that evangelists may be called to preach to different ethnic or racial groups (Gal 2:7–9)." But she maintains, "None of this, however, indicates that Paul perceives diverse ethnic identity *within* the new creation identity in Christ (Gal 3:28)." Along similar lines, Sechrest adds, "Even though Paul recognized the persistence of what moderns identify as ethnic differences on the other side of Christian conversion, these differences vanish in importance compared to what constituted racial difference in his eyes—the worship of God διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Gal 2:15–21; 3:28)." My interpretation of these Pauline references from his letters disagrees with Sechrest because I think that Paul's perception of identity as defined by the believers' faith in Jesus Christ neither negates the ethnic diversity of believers within Christian communities nor suggests an eradication of believers' particular ethnic identity. It is true that God has redefined and transformed believers' identity through their faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. However, this newly defined faith-oriented identity does not compel or require believers to get rid of their distinct ethno-cultural ties unless believers' distinct ethnic identities cause disunity among them. In this case, believers should give preference to their redefined common identity in Christ.

Antioch incident within the framework of "a Maccabean martyr model of Judaism," Magnus Zetterholm has approached the incident through the lens of "the eschatological status of Gentile adherents" in the early church. Further, on one end of the spectrum, scholars from a Reformed background (Thomas Schreiner, Andrew A. Das) have emphasized the subject of the faith/works antithesis in the context of attaining divine justification. On another end of the spectrum, scholars from the "New Perspective on Paul" (James Dunn, N. T. Wright) have provoked a discussion of approaching the incident at Antioch from "a sociological perspective" and not "a soteriological perspective." They have argued that the main issue at stake for Paul at Antioch was 'the inclusion of Gentile believers in the church community. As this outline indicates, previous scholarly work has investigated the Antioch incident from various and divergent angles. However, to my knowledge, no New Testament monograph has devoted attention to an in-depth exegetical analysis of the mixed table-fellowship crisis at Antioch in light of divine-human agency as a possible paradigm of interpretation.

A few prominent biblical scholars have contributed to a recent monograph entitled *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment*. In his introduction to the book, Barclay highlights the relevance of the concept of divine-human agency in Paul's writings. He affirms that "agency issues are neither stale nor uninteresting, and that fresh light can be shed on this central issue in Pauline theology by adopting a well-tuned comparative approach."[9] Furthermore, in order to avoid the imposition of the divine-human agency template on the religious texts of antiquity, he acknowledges at the very outset that "not all the ancient texts wrestle with the question of divine and human agency as a *problem*."[10] Nevertheless, with this caution, Barclay also positively states that many ancient texts "do reflect interestingly on the roots and

[9] Barclay, introduction to *Divine and Human Agency in Paul*, 2.

[10] Barclay, introduction to *Divine and Human Agency in Paul*, 7–8.

structures of agency, and among those, with their own particular contribution, stand the letters of Paul."[11] I have conducted this research with the belief that the crisis at Antioch reported by the apostle Paul in Galatians 2:11–21 sheds light on "the roots and structures"[12] of divine and human agency.

This study has endeavored to benefit the Pauline studies by contributing to the scholarly debate concerning the crisis at Antioch in Galatians 2:11–21 in particular and to the conversation of Paul's soteriology in Galatians in general. Furthermore, this study has distinguished itself from other scholarly works in three main ways. First and foremost, whereas previous scholarly works have applied the notion of divine-human agency onto various Pauline texts, they have not addressed the issue of divine-human agency within the framework of mixed table-fellowship between Jews and Gentiles. Thus, this study has attempted to fill the gap by exploring the issue of agency in the context of mixed table-fellowship of Jews and Gentiles found in the narratives of Galatians 2 and selected Second Temple Jewish texts. Throughout this research, I have argued that the narratives involving the sociological issue of mixed table-fellowship between Jews and Gentiles, both within Pauline and selected Second Temple Jewish texts, offer some insights into the soteriological issue of divine and human agency.

Second, this project has also established a unique relationship between identity and agency in relation to the Torah in the context of mixed table-fellowship. In making this connection, I have argued that human identity can be established through two competing notions of agency: one based on the active participation of the human agent in prioritizing his or her distinct ethnic identity, and the other based on the primacy of the divine agent who redefines and transforms believers' identity in Christ through the death and resurrection of his Son Jesus Christ.

---

[11] Barclay, introduction to *Divine and Human Agency in Paul*, 8.

[12] Barclay, introduction to *Divine and Human Agency in Paul*, 8.

Third, this study has conducted a comparative analysis between Paul's text of Galatians 2:11–21 and selected Jewish texts from the Second Temple period. This analysis sheds new light on the way in which the mixed table-fellowship crisis at Antioch can be understood in relation to the issue of divine-human agency.

This dissertation has particularly focused on exploring the notion of divine and human agency in the context of the mixed table-fellowship conflict at Antioch in Galatians 2:11–21. However, I think this research can be expanded to the texts in the New Testament that deal with the issue of Jewish-Gentile conflict at mixed table-fellowship to investigate the relationship between identity and divine-human agency. Furthermore, in terms of comparative analysis, while this project has shed light on Galatians 2:11–21 in conversation with selected Second Temple Jewish texts, entire monographs could be written exploring the issue of table-fellowship and agency with a specific focus on either ancient Jewish or ancient Muslim texts.

Additionally, this project has offered insight into the theme of identity in Pauline thought. This research can be applied to my indigenous context in which Pakistani Christians who are living as a minority group in an Islamic country face the issue of an identity crisis.[13] I think that the issue of identity crisis among Pakistani Christians is principally due to a misconception of believers' identity in Christ. The influence of Islamic Christianity in Pakistan can be vividly seen in Christians' misunderstanding of the relationship between the Old and New Testament, wherein the majority of Christians adopt specific rituals and customs of the Old Testament in order to relate to Islamic ideologies (e.g., prohibition of pork, tithing obligation). Consequently, a significant number of Pakistani Christians get involved in various cultural and religious

[13] Linda S. Walbridge, *The Christians of Pakistan: The Passion of Bishop John Joseph* (London: Routledge, 2003), 185–92; Kor Grit, "'Christians by Faith, Pakistani by Citizenship': Negotiating Christian Identity in Pakistan" (PhD diss., Utrecht University, 2019), 52–57, 65–69; John O'Brien, *The Unconquered People: The Liberation Journey of an Oppressed Caste* (Karachi, Pakistan: Oxford University Press, 2012), 15–17.

practices that seem to be impacted directly by Islamic ideologies. At a practical level, this study can be helpful in offering the correct biblical understanding of the believers' redefined and transformed identity in Christ that is not based on any socio-religious or cultural affiliation but is grounded only in God's salvific action in Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit in believers' lives.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Albertz, Rainer. *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period: From the Exiles to the Maccabees*. Old Testament Library, vol. 2. London: SCM Press, 1994.

Alcock, Joan P. *Food in the Ancient World, Food through History*. London: Greenwood Press, 2006.

Alon, Gedalyahu. "The Levitical Uncleanness of Gentiles." In *Jews, Judaism, and the Classical World: Studies in Jewish History in the Times of the Second Temple and Talmud*, translated by Israel Abrahams, 146–89. Jerusalem, Israel: The Magnes Press, 1977.

Alonso Schökel, L. "Narrative Structures in the Book of Judith." In *Narrative Structures in the Book of Judith: Protocol of the Eleventh Colloquy, 27 January 1974*, edited by W. Wuellner, 1–20. Protocol Series of the Colloquies of the Center for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture 11. Berkeley: Center for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture, 1975.

Altmann, Peter, Anna Angelini, and Abra Spiciarich, eds. *Food Taboos and Biblical Prohibitions: Reassessing Archaeological and Literary Perspectives*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020.

Amit, Yaira. *Reading Biblical Narratives: Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001.

Appelbaum, Robert. "Judith Dines Alone: From the Bible to Du Bartas." *Modern Philology* 111, no. 4 (2014): 686–87.

Asano, Atsuhiro. *Community-Identity Construction in Galatians: Exegetical, Social-Anthropological, and Socio-Historical Studies*. London: T&T Clark, 2005.

_____. "Galatians 2.11–14 as Depiction of the Church's Early Struggle for Community-Identity Construction." In *T&T Clark Handbook to Social Identity in the New Testament*, edited by J. Brian Tucker and Coleman A. Baker, 311–31. London: Bloomsbury, 2014.

Attridge, Harold W. "Josephus and His Works." In *The Literature of the Jewish People in the Period of the Second Temple and the Talmud*, vol. 2, *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period*, edited by Michael Stone, 185–232. Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum. Leiden: Brill, 1984.

Baker, Coleman A. "Social Identity Theory and Biblical Interpretation." *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 42, no. 3 (2012): 129–38.

Barclay, John M. G. "'By the Grace of God I Am What I Am': Grace and Agency in Philo and Paul." In *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment*, edited by Simon J. Gathercole and John M. G. Barclay, 140–57. London: T&T Clark, 2006.

_____. "Grace and Transformation of Agency in Christ." In *Redefining First-Century Jewish and Christian Identities: Essays in Honor of Ed Parish Sanders*, edited by Fabian E. Udoh, Susannah Heschel, Mark Chancey, and Gregory Tatum, 372–89. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008.

_____. Introduction to *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment*, edited by Simon J. Gathercole and John M. G. Barclay, 1–8. London: T&T Clark, 2006.

_____. *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE–117 CE)*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996.

_____. "Mirror-Reading a Polemical Letter: Galatians as a Test Case." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 10, no. 31 (1987): 73–93.

_____, ed. *Negotiating Diaspora: Jewish Strategies in the Roman Empire*. London: T&T Clark, 2004.

_____. *Obeying the Truth: A Study of Paul's Ethics in Galatians*. Studies of the New Testament and Its World. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988.

_____. "'O Wad Some Pow'r the Giftie Gie Us, To See Oursels as Others See!': Method and Purpose in Comparing the New Testament." In *The New Testament in Comparison: Validity, Method, and Purpose in Comparing Traditions*, edited by John M. G. Barclay and B. G. White, 9–22. London: T&T Clark, 2020.

_____. *Paul and the Gift*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015.

_____. *Pauline Churches and Diaspora Jews*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011.

Barclay, John M. G., and B. G. White. "Introduction: Posing the Questions." In *The New Testament in Comparison: Validity, Method, and Purpose in Comparing Traditions*, edited by John M. G. Barclay and B. G White, 1–8. London: T&T Clark, 2020.

Barrett, C. K. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*. The International Critical Commentary 34, vol. 2. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994.

_____. *Freedom and Obligation: A Study of the Epistle to the Galatians*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985.

Barth, Karl. *Church Dogmatics*. Vol. 3, *The Doctrine of Creation*. Translated by G. W. Bromiley. London: T&T Clark, 1961.

Bartlett, John R. *Jews in the Hellenistic World: Josephus, Aristeas, the Sibylline Oracles, Eupolemus*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Bauckham, Richard. "James, Peter, and the Gentiles." In *The Missions of James, Peter, and Paul*, edited by Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans, 91–142. Supplements to *Novum Testamentum* 115. Leiden: Brill, 2005.

Baur, Ferdinand Christian. *The Church History of the First Three Centuries*. Vol. 1. Translated by Allan Menzies. London: Williams & Norgate, 1878.

_____. "Die Christuspartei in Der Korinthischen Gemeinde, Der Gegensatz Des Petrinischen Und Pauli-Nischen Christenthums in Der Ältesten Kirche, Der Apostel Petrus in Rom." *Tübinger Zeitschrift Für Theologie* 5, no. 4 (1831): 61–206.

Bennema, Cornelis. "The Ethnic Conflict in Early Christianity: An Appraisal of Bauckham's Proposal on the Antioch Crisis and the Jerusalem Council." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 57, no. 4 (2013): 753–63.

Berquist, Birgitta. "Sympotic Space: A Functional Aspect of Greek Dining-Rooms." In *Sympotica: A Symposium on the Symposion*, edited by Oswyn Murray, 37–65. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.

Betz, Hans Dieter. *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia*. Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979.

Bickerman, E. J. "The Colophon of the Greek Book of Esther." In *Studies in Jewish and Christian History: A New Edition in English Including the God of the Maccabees*, vol. 1, edited by Amram Tropper, 218–37. Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity 63. Leiden: Brill, 2007.

_____. "The Dating of Pseudo-Aristeas." In *Studies in Jewish and Christian History: A New Edition in English Including the God of the Maccabees*, vol. 1, edited by Amram Tropper, 108–33. Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity 63. Leiden: Brill, 2007.

Bird, Michael F. *An Anomalous Jew: Paul among Jews, Greeks, and Romans*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016.

_____. *The Saving Righteousness of God: Studies on Paul, Justification and the New Perspective*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007.

Bird, Michael F., and Preston M. Sprinkle, eds. *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2009.

Bockmuehl, Markus. *Jewish Law in Gentile Churches: Halakhah and the Beginning of Christian Public Ethics*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000.

Boer, Martinus C. de. *Galatians*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011.

Bohak, Gideon. *Joseph and Aseneth and the Jewish Temple in Heliopolis*. Early Judaism and Its Literature 10. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996.

Brett, Mark G., ed. *Ethnicity and the Bible*. Leiden: Brill, 2002.

Brillat-Savarin, Jean Anthelme. *Physiologie du Gouˆt: Premi`ere E´dition Mise Ordre et Annot´ee avec une Lecture de Roland Barthes*. Paris: Hermann, 1975.

_____. *The Physiology of Taste: Or Meditations on Transcendental Gastronomy*. Translated by Fisher Mary F. K. New York: Heritage Press, 1949.

Brinbaum, Ellen. “Allegorical Interpretation and Jewish Identity among Alexandrian Jewish Writers.” In *Neotestamentica et Philonica: Studies in Honour of Peder Borgen*, edited by David Edward Aune, Torrey Seland, and Jarl Henning Ulrichsen, 311–14. Supplements to *Novum Testamentum* 106. Leiden: Brill, 2003.

Brine, Kevin R., Elena Ciletti, and Henrike Lähnemann, eds. *The Sword of Judith: Judith Studies across the Disciplines*. Cambridge: Open Book, 2010.

Bruce, F. F. *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982.

_____. “Galatians Problems 1: Autobiographical Data.” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 51, no. 2 (1969): 292–309.

_____. “Galatian Problems 2: North or South Galatians?” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 52, no. 2 (1970): 243–66.

Buchanan, Grant. “Identity and Human Agency in Galatians 5–6.” *Australian Biblical Review* 68 (2020): 54–66.

Bultmann, Rudolf. “The Problem of Ethics in Paul.” In *Understanding Paul’s Ethics: Twentieth Century Approaches*, edited by Brian S. Rosner, 195–216. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.

Burns, Edgar J. “The Genealogy of Judith.” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 18, no. 1 (1956): 19–22.

Burton, Ernest DeWitt. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*. International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1971.

Calvin, John. *Commentary on Galatians and Ephesians*. Translated by William Pringle. Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1854.

Campbell, Douglas A. *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.

Campbell, William S. *Paul and the Creation of Christian Identity*. Library of New Testament Studies 322. New York: T&T Clark, 2006.

_____. *Unity and Diversity in Christ: Interpreting Paul in Context*. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2013.

Carey A. Moore. *Judith: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. New York: Doubleday, 1985.

Carpenter, Eugene. *Exodus 1–18*. Evangelical Exegetical Commentary. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016.

Carven, T. *Artistry and Faith in the Book of Judith*. SBL Dissertation Series 70. Chico, CA: Society of Biblical Literature, 1983.

Charlesworth, James H. *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. Vol. 2. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1985.

Chesnutt, Randall D. *From Death to Life: Conversion in Joseph and Aseneth*. *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*, Supplements. Sheffield, UK: JSOT Press, 1995.

Chiffolo, Anthony F., and Rayner W. Hesse. *Cooking with the Bible: Biblical Food, Feasts, and Lore*. London: Greenwood Press, 2006.

Chrysostom, John. *Commentary on Galatians*. In *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Series 1, vol. 13, *Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, edited by Philip Schaff. Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature, 1889. Christian Classics Ethereal Library, https://ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf113/npnf113/Page_Index.html.

Claude Grignon, "Commensality and Social Morphology: An Essay of Typology." In *Food, Drink and Identity: Cooking, Eating and Drinking in Europe since the Middle Ages*, edited by Peter Scholliers, 23–31. Oxford: Berg, 2001.

Clines, David J. A. *Esther Scroll: The Story of the Story*. *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, Supplement Series 30. Sheffield, UK: JSOT Press, 1984.

Cohen, S. J. D. *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.

_____. "Religion, Ethnicity, and 'Hellenism' in the Emergence of Jewish Identity in Maccabean Palestine." In *Religion and Religious Practice in the Seleucid Kingdom*, edited by Per Bilde, Troels Engberg-Pedersen, Lise Hannestad, and Jan Zahle, 204–23. Studies in Hellenistic Civilization 1. Aarhus, Denmark: Aarhus University Press, 1990.

Cole, R. Alan. *Galatians*. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1989.

Collins, John J. *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora*. 2nd ed. Biblical Resource Series. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000.

_____. *The Invention of Judaism: Torah and Jewish Identity from Deuteronomy to Paul*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2017.

_____. *Seers, Sibyls, and Sages in Hellenistic-Roman Judaism*. Vol. 5. Supplements to the *Journal for the Study of Judaism*. Leiden: Brill, 1997.

Coogan, Michael David, Marc Z. Brettler, Carol A. Newsom, and Pheme Perkins, eds. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha: New Revised Standard Version*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Cook, Johann, and Arie van der Kooij. *Law, Prophets, and Wisdom: On the Provenance of Translators and Their Books in the Septuagint Version*. Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2012.

Cooper, Frederick, and Sarah Morris. "Dining in Round Buildings." In *Sympotica: A Symposium on the Symposion*, edited by Oswyn Murray, 66–85. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.

Counihan, Carole, and Penny Van Esterik, eds. *Food and Culture: A Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2013.

Cullmann, Oscar. *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953.

Cummins, Stephen Anthony. *Paul and the Crucified Christ in Antioch: Maccabean Martyrdom and Galatians 1 and 2*. Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 114. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Das, A. Andrew. *Galatians*. Concordia Commentary. St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 2014.

_____. "Paul and Works of Obedience in Second Temple Judaism: Romans 4:4–5 as a 'New Perspective' Case Study." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 71, no. 4 (2009): 795–812.

Day, Linda. *Three Faces of a Queen: Characterization in the Books of Esther*. *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, Supplement Series 186. Sheffield, UK: JSOT Press, 1995.

de Boer, Martinus C. *Galatians: A Commentary*. The New Testament Library. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011.

deSilva, David A. *Introducing the Apocrypha: Message, Context, and Significance*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002.

_____. *The Letter to the Galatians*. New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018.

Diner, Hasia R., and Simone Cinotto, eds. *Global Jewish Foodways: A History*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2018.

Dix, Gregory. *Jew and Gentile: A Study in the Primitive Church*. London: Dacre, 1953.

Docherty, Susan E. *The Jewish Pseudepigrapha: An Introduction to the Literature of the Second Temple Period*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015.

Donahue, John F. *Food and Drink in Antiquity*. *Readings from the Graeco-Roman World: A Sourcebook*. Bloomsbury Sources in Ancient History. New York: Bloomsbury, 2015.

Donaldson, Terence L. *Gentile Christian Identity from Cornelius to Constantine: The Nations, the Parting of the Ways, and Roman Imperial Ideology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020.

_____. *Judaism and the Gentiles: Jewish Patterns of Universalism (to 135 CE)*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007.

Doran, Robert. *2 Maccabees: A Critical Commentary*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012.

Douglas, Mary. *Implicit Meanings: Selected Essays in Anthropology*. London: Routledge, 1975.

_____. *Leviticus as Literature*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1999.

_____. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. London: Ark Press, 1984.

Dunbabin, Katherine M. D. *The Roman Banquet: Images of Conviviality*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Dunn, James D. G. *Beginning from Jerusalem*. Christianity in the Making, vol. 2. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.

_____. *The Epistle to the Galatians*. Black's New Testament Commentary. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993.

_____. "The Incident at Antioch (Gal. 2:11–18)." In *The Galatians Debate: Contemporary Issues in Rhetorical and Historical Interpretation*, edited by Mark D. Nanos, 199–234. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002.

_____. "The Incident at Antioch (Gal. 2:11–18)." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 15, no. 18 (1983): 3–57.

_____. *Jesus, Paul, and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians*. Louisville, KY: Westminster Press, 1990.

_____. "Once More, ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ." In *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1–4:11*, edited by Richard B. Hays, 249–71. Biblical Resource Series. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.

_____. *The Partings of the Ways: Between Christianity and Judaism and Their Significance for the Character of Christianity*. London: SCM Press, 2006.

_____. *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.

_____. *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity*. 2nd ed. London: SCM Press, 1990.

Eadie, John. *Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1894.

Easter, Mathew C. "The *Pistis Christou* Debate: Main Arguments and Responses in Summary." *Currents in Biblical Research* 9, no. 1 (2010): 33–47.

Eastman, Susan. "The Legacy of J. Louis Martyn: Questions of Agency." *Journal for the Study of Paul and his Letters* 17, no. 1–2 (2017): 119–128.

Efthimiadis-Keith. Helen. *The Enemy Is Within: A Jungian Psychoanalytic Approach to the Book of Judith*. Biblical Interpretation Series. Leiden: Brill, 2004.

_____. "Genealogy, Retribution and Identity: Re-Interpreting the Cause of Suffering in the Book of Judith." *Old Testament Essays* 27, no. 3 (2014): 860–78.

Elmer, Ian J. *Paul, Jerusalem and the Judaisers: The Galatian Crisis in Its Broadest Historical Context*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009.

Eng, Daniel K. “The Antioch Assumption: Did Jews and Gentiles Actually Worship Together in Antioch?” *Evangelical Review of Theology* 42, no. 3 (2018): 268–79.

Engberg-Pedersen, Troels. “Once More a Lutheran Paul? Francis Watson, Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith.” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 59, no. 4 (2006): 439–60.

_____. “Response to Martyn.” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 24, no. 4 (2002): 103–14.

_____. “Self-Sufficiency and Power: Divine and Human Agency in Epictetus and Paul.” In *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment*, edited by Simon J. Gathercole and John M. G. Barclay, 117–39. London: T&T Clark, 2006.

Erdkamp, Paul. “Jews and Christians at the Dinner Table: A Study in Social and Religious Interaction.” *Food and History* 9, no. 2 (2012): 71–107.

_____. *The Routledge Handbook of Diet and Nutrition in the Roman World*. New York: Routledge, 2019.

Esler, Philip Francis. *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts: The Social and Political Motivations of Lucan Theology*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

_____. *Galatians*. New Testament Readings. London: Routledge, 1998.

_____. “Making and Breaking an Agreement Mediterranean Style: A New Reading of Galatians 2:1–14.” In *The Galatians Debate: Contemporary Issues in Rhetorical and Historical Interpretation*, edited by Mark D. Nanos, 261–81. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002.

_____. “An Outline of Social Identity Theory.” In *T&T Clark Handbook to Social Identity in the New Testament*, edited by J. Brian Tucker and Coleman A. Baker, 13–39. London: Bloomsbury, 2014.

_____. “Sectarianism and the Conflict at Antioch.” In *The First Christians in Their Social Worlds: Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation*, 50–67. New York: Routledge, 1994.

Evans, Craig A. “Paul and ‘Works of Law’ Language in Late Antiquity.” In *Paul and His Opponents*, edited by Stanley E. Porter, 201–26. Pauline Studies 2. Leiden: Brill, 2005.

Fee, Gordon D. *Galatians: Pentecostal Commentary*. Dorset, UK: Deo, 2011.

_____. *Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007.

Feeley-Harnik, Gillian. *The Lord’s Table: The Meaning of Food in Early Judaism and Christianity*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994.

Feldman, Louis H. *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993.

Fischler, Claude. “Food, Self and Identity.” *Anthropology of Food* 27, no. 275 (1988): 275–92.

Fitzmyer, Joseph A. *According to Paul: Studies in the Theology of the Apostle*. New York: Paulist Press, 1993.

Flandrin, Jean-Louis, and Massimo Montanari. *Food: A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present*. Translated by Albert Sonnenfeld. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.

Flusser, David. *Judaism of the Second Temple Period*. Vol. 1, *Qumran and Apocalypticism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007.

_____. *Judaism of the Second Temple Period*. Vol. 2, *The Jewish Sages and Their Literature*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.

Foer, Safran. *Eating Animals*. New York: Back Bay Boys, 2010.

Fox, Michael V. *Character and Ideology in the Book of Esther*. 2nd ed. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1991.

_____. *The Redaction of the Books of Esther: On Reading Composite Texts*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991.

Fredriksen, Paula. “Paul, Purity, and the Ekklesia of the Gentiles.” In *The Beginnings of Christianity: A Collection of Articles*, edited by Jack Pastor and Menachem Mor, 206–17. Jerusalem, Israel: Yad Ben-Zvi Press, 1997.

Freidenreich, David M. *Foreigners and Their Food: Constructing Otherness in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Law*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011.

Freyne, Seán. *Galilee, from Alexander the Great to Hadrian, 323 B.C.E. to 135 C.E.: A Study of Second Temple Judaism*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1980.

Fuller, Daniel P. “Paul and ‘the Works of the Law.’” *Westminster Theological Journal* 38, no. 1 (1975): 28–42.

Furnish, Victor Paul. *Theology and Ethics in Paul*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968.

Garlington, Don. “‘Even We Have Believed’: Galatians 2:15–16 Revisited.” *Criswell Theological Review* 7, no. 1 (Fall 2009): 9–15.

_____. *An Exposition of Galatians: A Reading from the New Perspective*. 3rd ed. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007.

Garnsey, Peter. *Food and Society in Classical Antiquity*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Gathercole, Simone. “Sin in God’s Economy: Agencies in Romans 1 and 7.” In *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment*, edited by Simon J. Gathercole and John M. G. Barclay, 18–72. London: T&T Clark, 2006.

Geiger, Michaela, Christl Maier, and Uta Schmidt, eds. *Essen Und Trinken in Der Bibel: Ein Literarisches Festmahl Für Rainer Kessler Zum* 65. Gütersloh, Germany: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2009.

Gera, Deborah Levine. *Judith*. Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2014.

Gibson, Jack J. *Peter between Jerusalem and Antioch: Peter, James and the Gentiles*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe 345. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013.

Gnilka, Joachim. *Petrus Und Rom: Das Petrusbild in Den Ersten Zwei Jahrhunderten*. Freiburg, Germany: Herder, 2002.

Goldingay, John E. *Daniel*. Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 30. Dallas: Word Books, 1989.

Goodfriend, Elaine Adler. "Food in the Biblical Era." In *Feasting and Fasting: The History and Ethics of Jewish Food*, edited by Aaron S. Gross, Jody Myers, and Jordan D. Rosenblum, 32–58. New York: New York University Press, 2020.

Gorman, Michael J. *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul's Narrative Soteriology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.

_____. *Participating in Christ: Explorations in Paul's Theology and Spirituality*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019.

Grabbe, Lester L. *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period*. Vol. 2, *The Coming of the Greeks: The Early Hellenistic Period (335-175 BCE)*. Edited by Lester L. Grabbe. Library of Second Temple Studies 68. London: T&T Clark, 2008.

_____. *An Introduction to Second Temple Judaism: History and Religion of the Jews in the Time of Nehemiah, the Maccabees, Hillel, and Jesus*. London: T&T Clark, 2010.

_____. *Judaic Religion in the Second Temple Period: Belief and Practice from the Exile to Yavneh*. London: Routledge, 2000.

Grimm, Veronika E. *From Feasting to Fasting, the Evolution of a Sin: Attitudes to Food in Late Antiquity*. London: Routledge, 1996.

Grit, Kor. "'Christians by Faith, Pakistani by Citizenship' Negotiating Christian Identity in Pakistan." PhD diss., Utrecht University, 2019.

Gruen, Erich S. *The Construct of Identity in Hellenistic Judaism: Essays on Early Jewish Literature and History*. Vol. 29. Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2016.

_____. *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998.

Gupta, Nijay K. *Paul and the Language of Faith*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020.

Gurtner, Daniel M. “The Historical and Political Contexts of Second Temple Judaism.” In *T&T Clark Encyclopedia of Second Temple Judaism*, edited by Loren T. Stuckenbruck and Daniel M. Gurtner, 21–90. New York: Bloomsbury, 2019.

_____. *Introducing the Pseudepigrapha of Second Temple Judaism: Message, Context, and Significance*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020.

Guthrie, Donald. *Galatians*. New Century Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973.

Hadas, Moses. ed. and trans. *Aristeas to Philocrates (Letter of Aristeas)*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1951.

Hansen, G. Walter. *Galatians*. IVP New Testament Commentary 9. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994.

Harland, Philip A. *Dynamics of Identity in the World of the Early Christians*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2009.

Harrisville, Roy A. “ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ: Witness of the Fathers.” *Novum Testamentum* 36, no. 3 (1994): 233–41.

Hawthorne, Gerald F., and Ralph P. Martin. *Philippians*. Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 43. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004.

Hayes, Christine E. *Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities: Intermarriage and Conversion from the Bible to the Talmud*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Hays, Richard B. *The Letter to the Galatians*. In vol. 11 of *The New Interpreter’s Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000.

Hengel, Martin. *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period*. Vol. 1. Translated by John Bowden. London: SCM Press, 1974.

Hieke, Thomas. “Torah in Judith Dietary Laws, Purity and Other Torah Issues in the Book of Judith.” In *A Pious Seductress: Studies in the Book of Judith*, edited by Géza G. Xeravits, 97–110. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2012.

Hill, Craig C. *Hellenists and Hebrews: Reappraising Division within the Earliest Church*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992.

Hodge, Caroline Johnson. *If Sons, Then Heirs: A Study of Kinship and Ethnicity in the Letters of Paul*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Hodgson, Peter C. “F. C. Baur’s Interpretation of Christianity’s Relationship to Judaism.” In *Is There a Judeo-Christian Tradition? A European Perspective*, edited by Emmanuel Nathan and Anya Topolski, 269–86. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016.

Holmberg, Bengt, and Mikael Winninge, eds. *Identity Formation in the New Testament*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008.

_____. “Jewish versus Christian Identity in the Early Church?” *Revue Biblique* 105, no. 3 (1998): 397–425.

Holtz, Traugott. “Der Antiochenische Zwischenfall (Galater 2.11–14).” *New Testament Studies* 32, no. 3 (1986): 344–61.

Honigman, Sylvie. *The Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria: A Study in the Narrative of the “Letter of Aristeas”*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

Houston, Walter. *Purity and Monotheism: Clean and Unclean Animals in Biblical Law*. *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, Supplement Series 140. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993.

Howard, George. *Paul: Crisis in Galatia: A Study in Early Christian Theology*. 2nd ed. Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Hunsinger, George. *Philippians*. Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2020.

Husbands, Mark and Daniel J. Treier, eds. *Justification: What’s at Stake in the Current Debates*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004.

Hutchinson, John, and Anthony D. Smith. *Ethnicity*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Irons, Charles Lee. *The Righteousness of God: A Lexical Examination of the Covenant-Faithfulness Interpretation*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament II/386. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015.

Jacob, Benno. “Das Buch Esther Bei Den LXX.” *Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 10 (1890): 241–98.

Jenkins, Richard. *Social Identity*. London: Routledge, 2004.

Jerome. *Commentary on Galatians*. Translated by Andrew Cain. Baltimore: Catholic University of America Press, 2010. ProQuest Ebook Central.

_____. *St. Jerome’s Commentaries on Galatians, Titus, and Philemon*. Translated by Thomas P. Scheck. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010.

Jewett, Robert. “The Agitators and the Galatian Congregation.” In *The Galatians Debate: Contemporary Issues in Rhetorical and Historical Interpretation*, edited by Mark D. Nanos, 334–47. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002.

_____. “The Agitators and the Galatian Congregation.” *New Testament Studies* 17, no. 2 (1971): 198–212.

_____. *A Chronology of Paul’s Life*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979.

_____. “Gospel and Commensality: Social and Theological Implications of Galatians 2.14.” In *Gospel in Paul: Studies on Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans for Richard N. Longenecker*, edited by L. Ann Jervis and Peter Richardson, 240–52. *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, Supplement Series 108. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994.

Johnson. Sara Raup. *Historical Fictions and Hellenistic Jewish Identity: Third Maccabees in Its Cultural Context*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005.

Jossa, Giorgio. *Jews or Christians? The Followers of Jesus in Search of Their Own Identity*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 202. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006.

Kamp, Kathryn A., and Norman Yoffee. “Ethnicity in Ancient Western Asia during the Early Second Millennium B.C.: Archaeological Assessments and Ethnoarchaeological Prospectives.” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 237 (1980): 85–104.

Keener, Craig S. *Galatians: A Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019.

_____. *Galatians*. New Cambridge Bible Commentary. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

Kerner, Susanne, Cynthia Chou, and Morten Warmind, eds. *Commensality: From Everyday Food to Feast*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2015.

Keyes, C. F. “Ethnic Groups, Ethnicity.” In *The Dictionary of Anthropology*, edited by Thomas Barfield, 152–54. Oxford: Blackwell, 1997.

Killebrew, Ann E. *Biblical Peoples and Ethnicity: An Archaeological Study of Egyptians, Canaanites, Philistines, and Early Israel, 1300–1100 B.C.E*. Edited by Andrew G. Vaughn. Archaeology and Biblical Studies 9. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005.

Klawans, Jonathan. *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

_____. “Notions of Gentile Impurity in Ancient Judaism.” *American Journal of Sociology Review* 20, no. 2 (1995): 285–312.

Kletter, Raz. “Can a Proto-Israelite Please Stand Up? Notes on the Ethnicity and Iron Age Israel and Judah.” In *I Will Speak the Riddles of Ancient Times: Archaeological and Historical Studies in Honor of Amihai Mazar*, edited by Aren Maeir and Pierre de-Miroschedji, 573–86. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006.

Kobel, Esther. *Dining with John: Communal Meals and Identity Formation in the Fourth Gospel and Its Historical and Cultural Context*. Leiden: Brill, 2011.

Kraemer, David C. *Jewish Eating and Identity through the Ages*. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2007.

Lee, Jae Won. *Paul and the Politics of Difference: A Contextual Study of the Jewish-Gentile Difference in Galatians and Romans*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014.

Lehtipuu, Outi. "'Receive the Widow Judith, Example of Chastity': The Figure of Judith as a Model Christian in Patristic Interpretations." In *Biblical Women in Patristic Reception/Biblische Frauen in Patristischer Rezeption*, vol. 25, edited by Agnethe Siquans, 186–219. Reading Scripture in Judaism and Christianity. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017.

Lenski, R. C. H. *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1937.

Levenson, Jon D. *Esther: A Commentary*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997.

Levy, Ian Christopher, ed. and trans. *The Letter to the Galatians: The Bible in Medieval Tradition*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011.

Lightfoot, J. B. *Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians: With Introductions, Notes, and Dissertations*. Classic Commentary Library. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1957.

Longenecker, Bruce. *Triumph of Abraham's God: The Transformation of Identity in Galatians*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998.

Longenecker, Richard N. *Galatians*. Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 41. Dallas: Word Books, 1990.

Luedemann, Gerd. *Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles: Studies in Chronology*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984.

Luther, Martin. *A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*. Bristol: Burleigh, 1953.

_____. *Galatians*. Crossway Classic Commentaries. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1998.

Macdonald, A. D. "The Seventy-Two Elders of Aristeas: An Evaluation of Speculation." *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 29, no. 1 (2019): 36–53.

MacDonald, Nathan. *Not Bread Alone: The Uses of Food in the Old Testament*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2008.

_____. *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat? Diet in Biblical Times*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008.

Machinist, P. "The Question of Distinctiveness in Ancient Israel." In *Essential Papers on Israel and the Ancient Near East*, edited by Frederick E. Greenspahn, 420–42. New York: New York University Press, 1991.

Mannermaa, Tuomo. *Christ Present in Faith: Luther's View of Justification*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005.

Mapfeka, Tsaurayi Kudakwashe. *Esther in Diaspora: Toward an Alternative Interpretive Framework*. Biblical Interpretation Series, vol. 178. Leiden: Brill, 2019.

Martyn, J. Louis. "Epilogue: An Essay In Pauline Meta-Ethics." In *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment*, edited by John M. G. Barclay and Simon Gathercole, 173–83. London: T&T Clark, 2006.

_____. “Afterword: The Human Moral Drama.” In *Apocalyptic Paul: Cosmos and Anthropos in Romans 5–8*, edited by Beverly R. Gaventa, 157–66. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2013.

_____. “The Apocalyptic Gospel in Galatians.” *Interpretation* 54, no. 3 (2000): 246–66.

_____. *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. The Anchor Bible, vol. 33A. New York: Doubleday, 1997.

Maston, Jason. *Divine and Human Agency in Second Temple Judaism and Paul: A Comparative Study*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010.

Matak, Dragutin. “Another Look at the Antioch Incident (Gal 2:11–14).” *Kairos: Evangelical Journal of Theology* 6, no. 1 (2012): 49–59.

Matera, Frank J. *Galatians*. Sacra Pagina Series 9. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992.

Matlock, R. Barry. “Detheologizing the ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ Debate: Cautionary Remarks from a Lexical Semantic Perspective.” *Novum Testamentum* 42, no. 1 (2000): 1–23

Matusova, Ekaterina. *The Meaning of the Letter of Aristeas: In Light of Biblical Interpretation and Grammatical Tradition, and with Reference to Its Historical Context*. Edited by Jacqueline White. Forschungen Zur Religion Und Literatur Des Alten Und Neuen Testaments 260. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015.

McFadden, Kevin W. *Faith in the Son of God: The Place of Christ-Oriented Faith within Pauline Theology*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021.

McKnight, Scot. *Galatians*. NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995.

McLaren, James S. *Introduction to Attitudes to Gentiles in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, edited by David C. Sim and James S. McLaren. London: Bloomsbury, 2013.

Milgrom, Jacob. *Leviticus 1–6*. The Anchor Bible, vol. 3. New York: Doubleday, 1991.

Moo, Douglas J. *Galatians*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013.

_____. “Justification in Galatians.” In *Understanding the Times: New Testament Studies in the 21st Century: Essays in Honor of D. A. Carson on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*. Edited by Andreas J. Köstenberger and Robert W. Yarbrough, 163–95. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011.

Moore, C. A. *Daniel, Esther, and Jeremiah: The Additions*. New York: Doubleday, 1977.

Moore, Stewart. *Jewish Ethnic Identity and Relations in Hellenistic Egypt: With Walls of Iron?* Edited by Benjamin G. Wright III. Supplements to the *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 171. Leiden: Brill, 2015.

Morris, Leon. *Galatians: Paul's Charter of Christian Freedom*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996.

Munck, Johannes. *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*. Translated by Frank Clarke. Richmond, VA: John Knox, 1959.

Murphy-O'Connor, Jerome. *Keys to Galatians: Collected Essays*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012.

Nanos, Mark D. *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul's Letter*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996.

_____. "The Question of Conceptualization: Qualifying Paul's Position on Circumcision in Dialogue with Josephus's Advisors to King Izates." In *Paul within Judaism: Restoring the First-Century Context to the Apostle*, edited by Mark D. Nanos and Magnus Zetterholm, 105–52. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015.

_____. "What Was at Stake in Peter's 'Eating with Gentiles' at Antioch?" In *The Galatians Debate: Contemporary Issues in Rhetorical and Historical Interpretation*, edited by Mark D. Nanos, 282–318. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002.

Naomi, Jacobs. "Biting off More Than They Can Chew: Food, Eating, and Cultural Integration in Tobit and Letter of Aristeas." In *The Eucharist—Its Origins and Contexts: Sacred Meal, Communal Meal, Table Fellowship in Late Antiquity, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity*, vol. 1, edited by David Hellholm and Dieter Sänger, 157–79. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 376. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017.

Neel, Douglas E., and Joel A. Pugh. *The Food and Feasts of Jesus: Inside the World of First-Century Fare, with Menus and Recipes, Religion in the Modern World*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012.

Nickelsburg, George W. E. *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah: A Historical and Literary Introduction*. 2nd ed. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005.

_____. "Stories of Biblical and Early Post-Biblical Times." In *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period*, vol. 2, *Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus*, edited by Michael E. Stone, 33–87. Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum. Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1984.

Nielsen, Inge, and Hanne Nielsen. *Meals in a Social Context: Aspects of the Communal Meal in the Hellenistic and Roman World*. 2nd ed. Aarhus Studies in Mediterranean Antiquity. Aarhus, Denmark: Aarhus University Press, 2001.

O'Brien, John. *The Unconquered People: The Liberation Journey of an Oppressed Caste*. Karachi, Pakistan: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Otzen, Benedikt. *Tobit and Judith*. New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002.

Perkins, William. *A Commentary on Galatians*. Edited by Gerald T. Sheppard. Pilgrim Classic Commentaries. New York: Pilgrim Press, 1989.

Petrini, Carlo. Foreword to *Diner and Cinotto, Global Jewish Foodways*, edited by Hasia R Diner and Simone Cinotto, xi–xii. At Table Series. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2018.

Pifer, Jeanette Hagen. *Faith as Participation: An Exegetical Study of Some Key Pauline Texts*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019.

Plietzsch, Susanne. "Eating and Living: The Banquets in the Esther Narratives." In *Decisive Meals: Table Politics in Biblical Literature*, edited by Nathan MacDonald, Luzia Sutter Rehmann, and Kathy Ehrensperger, 27–41. Library of New Testament Studies 449. London: T&T Clark, 2012.

Porter, Stanley E., and Andrew W. Pitts. "Πίστις with a Preposition and Genitive Modifier: Lexical, Semantic, and Syntactic Considerations in the Pistis Christou Discussion." In *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies*, edited by Michael F. Bird and Preston M. Sprinkle, 33–53. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2009.

Prothro, James B. "The Strange Case of Δικαιόω in the Septuagint and Paul: The Oddity and Origins of Paul's Talk of 'Justification.'" *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 107, no. 1 (2016): 48–69.

Rabens, Volker. "'Indicative and Imperative' as the Substructure of Paul's Theology-and-Ethics in Galatians? A Discussion of Divine and Human Agency in Paul." In *Galatians and Christian Theology: Justification, the Gospel, and Ethics in Paul's Letter*, edited by Mark W. Elliot, Scott J. Hafemann, N. T. Wright, and John Frederick, 285–305. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014.

Rainbow, Paul A. *The Way of Salvation: The Role of Christian Obedience in Justification*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2012.

Riches, John. *Galatians through the Centuries*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013.

Ridderbos, Herman N. *The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia*. New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953.

_____. *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*. Translated by John Richard De Witt. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975.

Ritschl, Albrecht. *Die Entstehung Der Altkatholischen Kirche: Eine Kirchen-Und Dogmengeschichtliche Monographie*. Bonn, Germany: Adolph Marcus, 1857.

Rohde, Joachim. *Der Brief des Paulus an die Galater*. Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1989.

Rosenblum, Jordan D. *Food and Identity in Early Rabbinic Judaism*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

_____. "Food and Identity in Early Rabbinic Judaism." In *Meals in Early Judaism: Social Formation at the Table*, edited by Susan Marks and Hal Taussig, 59–69. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

_____. *The Jewish Dietary Laws in the Ancient World*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

_____. “Justifications for Foodways and the Study of Commensality.” In *Commensality: From Everyday Food to Feast*, edited by Susanne Kerner, Cynthia Chou, and Morten Warmind, 189–94. New York: Bloomsbury, 2015.

Rudolph, David J. *A Jew to the Jews*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2.304. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011.

Russell, A. Sue. “A Genealogy of Social Identity Theory.” In *T&T Clark Social Identity Commentary on the New Testament*, edited by J. Brian Tucker and Aaron Kuecker, 1–24. New York: Bloomsbury, 2020.

Sacchi, Paolo. *The History of the Second Temple Period*. *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, Supplement Series 285. London: T&T Clark, 2004.

Sanders, E. P. “Jewish Association with the Gentiles and Galatians 2:11–14.” In *The Conversation Continues: Studies in Paul & John in Honor of J. Louis Martyn*, edited by Robert Tomson Fortna and Beverly Roberts Gaventa, 170–87. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990.

_____. *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah: Five Studies*. London: SCM Press: 1990.

_____. *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah: Five Studies*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016.

_____. *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1977.

Scacewater, Todd. “Galatians 2:11–21 and the Interpretive Context of ‘Works of the Law.’” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 56, no. 2 (2013): 307–23.

Schatzki, Theodore R. *The Site of the Social: A Philosophical Account of the Constitution of Social Life and Change*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania, 2000.

Schlier, Heinrich. *Der Brief an die Galater*. Kritisch-Exegetischer Kommentar Über Das Neue Testament 17. Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1971.

Schmithals, Walter, and Dorothea M. Barton. *Paul and James*. Studies in Biblical Theology. Naperville, IL: Alec. R. Allenson, 1965.

Schnabel, Eckhard J. *Early Christian Mission*. Vol. 2. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004.

Schoeman, Roy H. *Salvation Is from the Jews: The Role of Judaism in Salvation History from Abraham to the Second Coming*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003.

Schoeps, Hans Joachim. *Paul: The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History*. Translated by Harold Knight. Cambridge: James Clark, 1959.

_____. *Paul: The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History*. Translated by Harold Knight. London: Lutterworth Press, 1961.

Scholliers, Peter. “Meals, Food Narratives, and Sentiments of Belonging in Past and Present.” In *Food, Drink and Identity: Cooking, Eating and Drinking in Europe since the Middle Ages*, edited by Peter Scholliers, 3–22. New York: Berg, 2001.

Schreiner, Thomas R. *Galatians*. Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010.

Schürer, Emil. *Geschichte Des Judischen Volkes Im Zeitalter Jesu Christi: Das Judentum in Der Zerstreuung Und Die Judische Literatur*. Vol. 2. Leipzig, Germany: J. C. Hinrichs, 1886–1890.

Sechrest, Love L. *A Former Jew: Paul and the Dialectics of Race*. Library of New Testament Studies 410. London: T&T Clark, 2009.

Shafer-Elliott, Cynthia. *Food in Ancient Judah: Domestic Cooking in the Time of the Hebrew Bible*. BibleWorld. Sheffield, UK: Equinox, 2013.

Shutt, R. J. H. “The Letter of Aristeas.” In *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, *Expansions of the “Old Testament” and Legends, Wisdom, and Philosophical Literature, Prayers, Psalms, and Odes, Fragments of Lost Judeo-Hellenistic Works*, edited by James H. Charlesworth, 7–34. 6th ed. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1983.

Silva, Moisés. “Faith versus Works of Law in Galatians.” In *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, vol. 2, *The Paradoxes of Paul*, edited by D. A. Carson, Peter Thomas O’Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid, 217–48. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004.

_____. *Interpreting Galatians: Explorations in Exegetical Method*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001.

Sim, David C., and James S. McLaren, eds. *Attitudes to Gentiles in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*. London: Bloomsbury, 2013.

Simkovich, Malka Z. *Discovering Second Temple Literature: The Scriptures and Stories That Shaped Early Judaism*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2018.

Slee, Michelle. *The Church in Antioch in the First Century CE: Communion and Conflict*. *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, Supplement Series 244. New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2004.

Smith, Dennis E., and H. Taussig, eds. *Meals in the Early Christian World: Social Formation, Experimentation, and Conflict at the Table*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Smith, W. Robert. *The Religion of the Semites: The Fundamental Institution*. New York: Meridian Books, 1957.

Sokolovskii, Sergey, and Valery Tishkov. “Ethnicity.” In *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, edited by Alan Barnard and Jonathan Spencer, 190–93. London: Routledge, 1996.

Soler, Jean. “The Semiotics of Food in the Bible.” In *Food and Drink in History: Selections from the Annales: Economies, Societies, Civilizations*, vol. 5, edited by R. Foster and O. Ranum, 126–38. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1979.

Sparks, Kenton L. *Ethnicity and Identity in Ancient Israel: Prolegomena to the Study of Ethnic Sentiments and Their Expression in the Hebrew Bible*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1998.

Sprinkle, Preston M., and Stephen Westerholm. *Paul and Judaism Revisited: A Study of Divine and Human Agency in Salvation*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013.

Stein, Robert H. "The Relationship of Galatians 2:1–10 and Acts 15:1–35: Two Neglected Arguments." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 17, no. 4 (1974): 239–42.

Stendahl, Krister. "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West." *Harvard Theological Review* 56, no. 3 (1963): 199–215.

Stets, Jan E., and Peter J. Burke, "Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 63, no. 3 (2000): 224–37.

Stuart, Douglas K. *Exodus*. New American Commentary, vol. 2. Nashville: B&H, 2006.

Tajfel, Henri. *Human Groups and Social Categories: Studies in Social Psychology*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

Tajfel, Henri, and John C. Turner. "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict." In *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, edited by W. G. Austin and S. Worchel, 33–47. Monterey, CA: Brooks-Cole, 1979.

Talbott, E. Guy. "The Relation between Theology and Sociology." *Biblical World* 46, no. 3 (1915): 162–73.

Taylor, Nicholas. *Paul, Antioch and Jerusalem: A Study in Relationships and Authority in Earliest Christianity*. *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, Supplement Series 66. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992.

Tcherikover, Victor. "The Ideology of the Letter of Aristeas." *Harvard Theological Review* 51, no. 2 (1958): 64–70.

Thackeray, H. St. J., trans. *The Letter of Aristeas, Translated with an Appendix of Ancient Evidence of the Origin of the Septuagint*. Translations of Early Documents, Series II, Hellenistic-Jewish Texts 3. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1917.

Thiessen, Matthew. *Contesting Conversion: Genealogy, Circumcision, and Identity in Ancient Judaism and Christianity*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Tolmie, D. Francois. *Persuading the Galatians: A Text-Centred Rhetorical Analysis of a Pauline Letter*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 190. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005.

Tomson, Peter J. *Paul and the Jewish Law: Halakha in the Letters of the Apostle to the Gentiles*. *Jewish Traditions in Early Christian Literature*, vol. 1. Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum. Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1990.

Towner, W. Sibley. *Daniel*. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1984.

Trebilco, Paul. *Self-Designations and Group Identity in the New Testament*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Troyer, Kristin De. "Esther in Text-and Literary-Critical Paradise." In *The Book of Esther in Modern Research*, edited by Leonard Greenspoon and Sidnie White Crawford, 31–49. *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, Supplement Series 380. London: T&T Clark, 2003.

Turner, J. C. "Some Current Issues in Research on Social Identity and Self-Categorization Theories." In *Social Identity: Context, Commitment, Content*, edited by Naomi Ellemers, Russell Spears, and Bertjan Doosje, 6–34. Oxford: Blackwell, 1999.

Vainio, Olli-Pekka. *Justification and Participation in Christ: The Development of the Lutheran Doctrine of Justification from Luther to the Formula of Concord (1580)*. Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions 130. Leiden: Brill, 2008.

Verkuyten, Maykel. *The Social Psychology of Ethnic Identity*. Hove, UK: Psychology Press, 2005.

Visser, Margaret. *The Rituals of Dinner: The Origins, Evolution, Eccentricities, and Meaning of Table Manners*. New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1991.

Walbridge, Linda S. "An Islamic Christianity." In *The Christians of Pakistan: The Passion of Bishop John Joseph*, 185–92. London: Routledge, 2003.

Walter, Nikolaus. "Paul and the Opponents of the Christ-Gospel in Galatia." In *The Galatians Debate: Contemporary Issues in Rhetorical and Historical Interpretation*, edited by Mark D. Nanos, 362–66. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002.

Warren, Meredith J. C. *Food and Transformation in Ancient Mediterranean Literature*. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2019.

Wasserstein, Abraham, and David J. Wasserstein. *The Legend of the Septuagint: From Classical Antiquity to Today*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Watson, Francis. "Comparing Like with Like? The New Testament within Its Christian Literary Environment." In *The New Testament in Comparison: Validity, Method, and Purpose in Comparing Traditions*, edited by John M.G. Barclay and Benjamin G. White, 159–72. Library of New Testament Studies 600. London: T&T Clark, 2020.

_____. "Constructing an Antithesis: Pauline and Other Jewish Perspectives on Divine and Human Agency." In *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment*, edited by Simon J. Gathercole and John M. G. Barclay, 99–116. London: T&T Clark, 2006.

_____. *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles: Beyond the New Perspective*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007.

_____. *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles: A Sociological Approach*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Weeks, J. “The Value of Difference.” In *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*, edited by J. Rutherford, 88–100. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990.

Wells, Kyle B. *Grace and Agency in Paul and Second Temple Judaism: Interpreting the Transformation of the Heart*. Leiden: Brill, 2015.

Westerholm, Stephen. “Paul’s Anthropological ‘Pessimism’ in Its Jewish Context.” In *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment*, edited by Simon J. Gathercole and John M. G. Barclay, 71–98. London: T & T Clark, 2006.

_____. *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The “Lutheran” Paul and His Critics*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.

Wetter, Anne-Mareike. *On Her Account: Reconfiguring Israel in Ruth, Esther, and Judith*. Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 623. London: Bloomsbury, 2015.

Wilkins, John F., David Harvey, and Michael J. Dobson, eds. *Food in Antiquity*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1995.

Williams, Jarvis J. *For Whom Did Christ Die? The Extent of the Atonement in Paul’s Theology*. Paternoster Biblical Monographs. Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2012.

_____. *Galatians*. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2020.

Williams, Sam K. “Again *Pistis Christou*.” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 49, no. 3 (1987): 431–47.

_____. *Galatians*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997.

Wills, Lawrence M. *Judith*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2019.

Wirzba, Norman. *Food and Faith: A Theology of Eating*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Witherington, Ben, III. *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on St. Paul’s Letter to the Galatians*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.

Wojciechowski, Michał. “Moral Teaching of the Book of Judith.” *Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies* 14 (2012): 85–96.

Wright, Benjamin G. *The Letter of Aristeas: “Aristeas to Philocrates” or “On the Translation of the Law of the Jews”*. Edited by Loren T. Stuckenbruck. Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015.

Wright, N. T. *Justification: God’s Plan & Paul’s Vision*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009.

Xeravits, Géza G., ed. *A Pious Seductress: Studies in the Book of Judith*. Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2012.

Zahl, Simeon. “The Drama of Agency: Affective Augustinianism and Galatians.” In *Galatians and Christian Theology: Justification, the Gospel, and Ethics in Paul’s Letter*, edited by Mark W. Elliot, Scott J. Hafemann, N. T. Wright, and John Frederick, 335–52. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014.

Zetterholm, M. “The Antioch Incident Revisited.” *Journal for the Study of Paul and His Letters* 6, no. 2 (2016): 249–59.

_____. *The Formation of Christianity in Antioch: A Social-Scientific Approach to the Separation between Judaism and Christianity*. London: Routledge, 2003.

ABSTRACT

IDENTITY AND AGENCY IN THE CRISIS AT ANTIOCH: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GALATIANS 2:11–21 AND SELECTED SECOND TEMPLE JEWISH TEXTS

Keneth Pervaiz, PhD
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2021
Chair: Dr. Jarvis J. Williams

This dissertation examines the mixed table-fellowship conflict between Paul and Peter at Antioch in Galatians 2:11–21 in light of the divine and human agency model. This project argues that Paul's confrontation with Peter at the mixed table-fellowship at Antioch should be understood as a conflict between two competing understandings of agency. That is, Peter's withdrawal from the mixed table-fellowship between Jews and Gentiles at Antioch suggested the priority of a distinct Jewish identity constructed by the human agent through the observance of Jewish table-fellowship practices based on the Torah, and thus minimized the divine action in Christ (Gal 2:14). However, Paul's direct rebuke to Peter suggested the priority of divine agency (Gal 2:11, 14, 15–21). Paul's remarks in Gal 2:15–21 teach that the believer's distinct ethnic identity has been redefined because of God's saving action in Christ. This study establishes the relationship between mixed table-fellowship, identity, and agency through a careful exegetical analysis of the crisis at Antioch in Galatians 2:11–21 in conversation with selected Second Temple Jewish texts.

Chapter 1 introduces the main thesis, methodology of the project, and surveys the history of interpretation. Chapter 2 argues that food and table-fellowship practices primarily serve as an important center of identity formation on the individual and

communal levels, creating a social bond within the group and a distinction from others outside the group.

The next part of the dissertation (chaps. 3–4) focuses on selected Jewish texts from the Second Temple period (Letter of Aristeas, Joseph and Aseneth, Judith, and Additions to Esther). Chapter 3 argues that mixed table-fellowship restrictions observed by the Second Temple Jews in these ancient Jewish texts function to construct and prioritize a distinct Jewish identity through Jewish observance of food and table-fellowship practices. Chapter 4 further enhances the argument by establishing the relationship between mixed table-fellowship, the Torah and divine-human agency in selected Second Temple Jewish texts.

The final section of the dissertation (chaps. 5–6) focuses on Paul's letter to the Galatians, with particular attention given to Galatians 2:11–21. Chapter 5 examines the Antiochene crisis in light of the identity theme by arguing that the mixed table-fellowship conflict at Antioch fundamentally reveals an underlying conflict of ethnic identity. Chapter 6 establishes the relationship between the mixed table-fellowship, identity, and divine-human agency in Galatians 2:11–21. This chapter argues that Paul and Peter's table-fellowship conflict over ethnic identity signifies a conflict between two competing notions of agency.

Chapter 7 summarizes the previous chapters and offers a comparative analysis of Galatians 2:11–21 and selected Second Temple Jewish texts based on the exegetical conclusions drawn from both Pauline and Jewish texts discussed in this study. Finally, this chapter highlights the scholarly contribution made in this study, areas of possible further research, and an application of this research in a Pakistani context.

VITA

Keneth Pervaiz

EDUCATION

BS (Honors), Forman Christian College (A Chartered University), 2009
MTh, Queen's University Belfast, 2012

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

Teacher, St. Anthony's High School, Lahore, Pakistan, 2009–2010
Lecturer, Forman Christian College, Lahore, Pakistan, 2012–2015

MINISTERIAL EMPLOYMENT

Pastoral Intern, Seymour Hill Methodist Church, Belfast, Northern Ireland, UK, 2010–2011
Pastoral Intern, Trinity Presbyterian Church, Bangor, Northern Ireland, UK, 2011–2012
Youth Pastor, International Christian Fellowship Church, Lahore, Pakistan, 2013–2015
Pastoral Intern, Redemption Hill Baptist Church, Louisville, Kentucky, 2017–2021