



BIBLICAL INSIGHTS COMMENTARY



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BIC Volume 09
Romans



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Letter Body 03

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THE ESCHATOLOGICAL JUDGMENT OF GOD ROMAN 2:1-29

Throughout the chapter Paul discusses final judgment of all humanity. He targets here the moral elitist who falsely thinks he has a loophole around final judgment.

JUDGMENT & CIRCUMCISION Rom. 2:25-29

JUDGMENT OF THE JEWISH MORALIST Rom. 2:17-24

JUDGMENT OF THE OBEDIENT Rom. 2:12-16

JUDGMENT OF THE MORALIST Rom. 2:1-11

FINAL JUDGMENT OF ALL Rom. 2:1-29

10.3.3.2.2 God's Condemnation upon Human Sinfulness, 2:1-16

The next segment of unpacking τὸ εὐαγγέλιον comes in vv. 1-16 as Paul addresses a self-righteous humanity that feels no need of acknowledging its depravity nor rebellion against God. This targets largely the religious Jews but in no way is limited to them. The God-fearer Gentiles in the synagogues who haven't adopted Christianity also come into range here. The secular moralists in the non-Jewish Greco-Roman world of the mid first century are in his cross hairs as well.

In other words, the 'do-gooders' of the world who feel moral superiority from their behavior, whether religious based or not, are included in the targeted audience of Paul in this material. To be sure, the primary target is the religious synagogue Jew who rejected the Gospel. But the others are within sight of Paul's words.

The internal arrangement of vv. 1-16 falls into a two fold division of vv. 1-11 with the focus on the one to be judged and vv. 12-16 emphasizing the general principle of doing rather than mere hearing.

10.3.3.2.2.1 Piling up God's wrath for that Day, 2:1-11

2.1 Διὸ ἀναπολόγητος εἶ, ὃ ἄνθρωπε πᾶς ὁ κρίνων· ἐν ᾧ γὰρ κρίνεις τὸν ἕτερον, σεαυτὸν κατακρίνεις, τὰ γὰρ αὐτὰ πράσσεις ὁ κρίνων. 2 οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστὶν κατὰ ἀλήθειαν ἐπὶ τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντας. 3 λογίζῃ δὲ τοῦτο, ὃ ἄνθρωπε ὁ κρίνων τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντας καὶ ποιῶν αὐτά, ὅτι σὺ ἐκφεύξῃ τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ; 4 ἢ τοῦ πλοῦτου τῆς χρηστότητος αὐτοῦ καὶ τῆς ἀνοχῆς καὶ τῆς μακροθυμίας καταφρονεῖς, ἀγνοῶν ὅτι τὸ χρηστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς μετάνοιάν σε ἄγει; 5 κατὰ δὲ τὴν σκληρότητά σου καὶ ἀμετανόητον καρδίαν θησαυρίζεις σεαυτῷ ὀργὴν ἐν

ἡμέρα ὀργῆς καὶ ἀποκαλύψεως δικαιοκρισίας τοῦ θεοῦ
 6 ὃς ἀποδώσει ἐκάστω κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ· 7 τοῖς
 μὲν καθ' ὑπομονὴν ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ
 ἀφθαρσίαν ζητοῦσιν ζωὴν αἰώνιον, 8 τοῖς δὲ ἐξ ἐριθείας
 καὶ ἀπειθοῦσιν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πειθομένοις δὲ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ ὀργὴ
 καὶ θυμός. 9 θλιψὶς καὶ στενοχωρία ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ψυχὴν
 ἀνθρώπου τοῦ κατεργαζομένου τὸ κακόν, Ἰουδαίου τε
 πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλλήνος· 10 δόξα δὲ καὶ τιμὴ καὶ εἰρήνη
 παντὶ τῷ ἐργαζομένῳ τὸ ἀγαθόν, Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον
 καὶ Ἑλληνι· 11 οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν προσωπολημψία παρὰ τῷ
 θεῷ.

2.1 Therefore you have no excuse, whoever you are, when you judge others; for in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, are doing the very same things. 2 You say, "We know that God's judgment on those who do such things is in accordance with truth." 3 Do you imagine, whoever you are, that when you judge those who do such things and yet do them yourself, you will escape the judgment of God? 4 Or do you despise the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience? Do you not realize that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? 5 But by your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. 6 For he will repay according to each one's deeds: 7 to those who by patiently doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; 8 while for those who are self-seeking and who obey not the truth but wickedness, there will be wrath and fury. 9 There will be anguish and distress for everyone who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, 10 but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. 11 For God shows no partiality.

The internal structure of ideas in vv. 1-11 is built around the accusation of accountability in vv. 1-4 and is then followed by assertion of the eschatological Day of Judgment (ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὀργῆς, v. 5b) being the moment when God's wrath is poured out upon this guilty person (vv. 5-11, one Greek sentence).¹ The second person forms consistently in this unit of text (vv. 1-11) are singular and signal the use of the ancient Greek diatribe method of argumentation.² This indicates that Paul car-

¹Greek sentences in vv. 1-11: 1) in v. 1; 2) in v. 2; 3) in v. 3 as rhetorical question; 4) v. 4 as another rhetorical question; 5) in vv.5-11 as Paul's own response to the rhetorical questions. Thus the question and answer structure dominates this diatribe expression.

²"Indicative of Paul's rhetorical skill is the diatribe style (Stowers, *Diatribes*, 93-96), with its repeated personal address to a single individual in vv 1-5, and the ABBA structure of vv 7-10 (Jeremias, "Chiasmus," 282; Grobel's suggestion of a larger chiasm, vv 6-11, becomes less persuasive with its greater complexi-

ties on a monologue conversation with an imaginary person who typifies an elitist considering himself to be morally superior than the pagans depicted before in vv. 18-32.³ The apostle's contention is that such a person will fare no better on the Day of Judgment than the raw pagan in vv. 18-32.⁴

ty). Bassler, "Romans," justifiably emphasizes the pivotal role of v 11 in the whole argument, but her own claim that 2:11 closes the unit 1:16-2:11 (Divine Impartiality, 121-37) makes too much of a break in the developing indictment of chap. 2 itself. She does also demonstrate that v 11 serves as the thematic introduction to vv 12-29 (Impartiality, 137, 152), but the lack of clear identification of the one indicted in vv 1-11 suggests that it would be better to see 2:1-11 as an overlapping section binding the two more specific indictments of 1:18-32 and 2:12-3:8 together." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 78-79.]

³"*Diatribes* (i.e., a lively dialogical style that makes use of direct address to an imaginary interlocutor, hypothetical objections, and false conclusions). The clearest and most sustained instances of diatribe in the NT are in Romans, particularly in 2:1-5 and 2:17-24, where, as Stanley Stowers observes, "Paul seems to stop speaking directly to the recipients of the letter and begins to speak as if he were addressing an individual."⁷ Diatribe styling has also been seen in such passages as 3:1-8 (perhaps including v. 9), 27-31 (perhaps including 4:1-2); 9:19-21; 11:17-24; and 14:4-11, though with varying degrees of certainty. 2:1-5 and 17-24 are, however, clearly and most demonstrably in the style and form of a Greek diatribe, with each of these two diatribe passages beginning a fairly discrete subsection in Paul's presentation."⁸ [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 236.]

⁴"What exactly was a diatribe?⁸ It was a dialogical form of argumentation developed by ancient teachers such as Teles, Dio of Prusa, and Maximus of Tyre in the Cynic and Stoic schools of philosophy. It may also have some origins even further back in the Socratic dialogues as presented in the works of Plato. The format was one of vigorous debate on some important topic 'peppered with apostrophes, proverbs and maxims, rhetorical questions, paradoxes, short statements, parodies, fictitious speeches, antitheses, and parallel phrases."⁹

"Paul uses diatribal form especially in Rom. 2:1-6, 17-24; 3:1-9, 3:27-4:25; 9:19-21; 10:14-21; 11:17-24; 14:4, 10-11.¹⁰ Among characteristic elements of diatribe we see in Romans are dramatic exclamations such as *mē genoito* (3:4, 6, 31; 6:2, 15; 7:7, 13; 9:14; 11:1, 11)¹¹ and the language of drawing inferences — for example, *ti oun*, 'what then?' (3:1, 9; 4:1; 6:1, 15; 7:7; 8:31; 9:14, 30; 11:7). Paul's form of diatribe is most like that of Epictetus, which makes us aware that he is using the diatribe in a pedagogical manner, not for polemics or to attack opponents.¹²

"The diatribal style, with one exception (14:4, 10-11), is confined to the theological portion of the discourse. This may suggest that Paul felt that there would be more debate about the theological underpinnings of his parenetic advice than about the ethical advice itself. More importantly, the diatribe was one form of speaking which rhetoricians embraced and took up into their arsenals as part of the art of persuasion. Paul's prevalent use of this form in this particular letter tells us something important about what Paul



2.1
21 Διὸ **ἀναπολόγητος εἶ,**
 ὧ̃ ἀνθρώπε πᾶς ὁ κρίνων·
 γὰρ
 ἐν ᾧ κρίνεις τὸν ἕτερον,

22 **σεαυτὸν κατακρίνεις,**
 γὰρ

23 **τὰ αὐτὰ πράσσεις ὁ κρίνων.**

2.2
24 **οἶδαμεν**
ὅτι τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστίν
 κατὰ ἀλήθειαν
 ἐπὶ τοῦς τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντας.

2.3
25 **λογίζη τοῦτο,**
 ὧ̃ ἄ|νθρώπε
 | ὁ κρίνων τοῦς τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντας καὶ ποιῶν αὐτά,
 ὅτι σὺ ἐκφεύξῃ τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ;

2.4
26 **τοῦ πλούτου τῆς χρηστότητος αὐτοῦ**
 καὶ
τῆς ἀνοχῆς
 καὶ
τῆς μακροθυμίας
καταφρονεῖς, εἰς μετάνοιάν
 ἀγνοῶν ὅτι τὸ χρηστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ...σε ἄγει;

2.5
27 **θησαυρίζεις σεαυτῷ ὀργὴν**
 ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὀργῆς
 καὶ
 ἀποκαλύψεως δικαιοκρισίας τοῦ θεοῦ

2.6
28 **(ἔσται) ζώην αἰώνιον,**
 ὅς ἀποδώσει ἐκάστῳ
 κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ·
 μὲν
 καθ' ὑπομονὴν ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ
 τοῖς...δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν ζητοῦσιν

2.7
28 **(ἔσται) ζώην αἰώνιον,**

2.8
29 **(ἔσονται) ὀργὴ καὶ θυμός.**
 ὅς ἐξ ἐριθείας
 καὶ
 τοῖς... ἀπειθοῦσι
 ὅς
 ----τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πειθομένοις
 τῇ ἀδικίᾳ

is about in this document. He believes that he must pull out all the rhetorical stops not only to make an impression on his Roman audience but to change their settled habits of thinking about the relationships of Jews and Gentiles in and out of the church, among

The literary context of vv. 1-11 is set largely by Διὸ other subjects. The careful and competent use of rhetoric and the diatribal style is part of his means to establish his authority and ethos in relationship to an audience that lives in a rhetoric-satu-



2.9 **θλιψις**
καὶ

30 **στενοχωρία (ἔσονται)**
ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ψυχὴν ἀνθρώπου
| τοῦ κατεργαζομένου τὸ κακόν,
| τε
| Τουδαίου πρῶτον
| καὶ
| Ἑλληνος·

2.10 δὲ

δόξα
καὶ

τιμὴ
καὶ

31 **εἰρήνη (ἔσονται)**
παντὶ τῷ ἐργαζομένῳ τὸ ἀγαθόν,
| τε
| Τουδαίῳ πρῶτον
| καὶ
| Ἑλληνι·

2.11 γάρ

32 **οὐ ἔστιν προσωποληψία**
παρὰ τῷ θεῷ.

ἀναπολόγητος εἶ, **Wherefore without excuse are you**, in v. 1. The coordinate conjunction διό draws an inference from the previous 1:18-32. It functions in a similar role to διό in 1:24 which draws the conclusion of how God responded to human rejection of His self-revelation in creation. This conjunction also shows up again in 4:22; 13:5; and 15:7 in Romans. The predicate adjective ἀναπολόγητος, **without excuse**, repeats ἀναπολόγητος in 1:20 given in regard to depraved humanity who rejected God's self-revelation in creation. In 2:1 it references the moralist with the same accusation of being no better off than depraved humanity in general.

The vocative case ὦ ἄνθρωπε, **o person who judges** (πᾶς ὁ κρίνων) shifts now over to a second person singular from the third person plural frame of reference in 1:18-32. It is repeated again in v. 3 in fuller expression: ὦ ἄνθρωπε ὁ κρίνων τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντας rated environment and so persuade them on a whole variety of things ranging from his gospel to his mission to the collection, and also in regard to their own beliefs and behavior. Paul thus believes that to be an effective communicator and apostle in relationship to Romans, one must do as the Romans do. Furthermore, by the use of this distancing technique, Paul could more successfully critique his audience and their flaws in reason and praxis. Thus Paul can set about the business of 'discriminating undesirable attitudes or sentiments through a fictive device, without directly confronting (and possibly alienating) the real audience.'¹³ Failure to recognize that Paul is using such rhetorical techniques in Romans has led to all sorts of false conclusions, for example, that he is combating actual Jewish or Judaizing opponents in his audience¹⁴ or that he is describing himself and his struggles as a Christian in ch. 7."

[Ben Witherington III and Darlene Hyatt, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), 75–76.]

καὶ ποιῶν αὐτά, **o person who judges those practicing such things and doing them yourself**. This repetition in v. 3 keeps the focus on the diatribe person while allowing a slight shift in the accusations to move into rhetorical questions rather than the declarations in vv. 1-2. The declarations assert guilt in actions while the rhetorical questions address false assumptions of escaping judgment for these actions.

The person shift beginning in v. 7 moves to the third person plural thus signaling broad general principles of divine judgment. Then vv. 12-16 somewhat continue that general principles of judgment them but pushes the emphasis to obedience to rather than mere possession of high moral standards.

Then vv. 17-29 shift back to the second singular but with the moralist Jew clearly in mind. Blunt warnings that mere possession of divine law -- whether Torah or something else -- is not acceptable to God. Here those who taught morality are brought to the forefront for strong condemnation of their failure to obey even what they understood.

Thus 2:1-16 stand as a narrowing of Paul's focus which began as a condemnation of depraved humanity in general in 1:18-32. In this first segment of chapter two it narrows to the moralist who felt superior for possessing a high standard of morality but was guilty of disobedience of even what he possessed. In 2:17-29 this theme of obedience rather than possession is narrowed further to center on the Jewish moralist as the person most despicable of all moralists because of the

**THE ESCHATOLOGICAL JUDGMENT OF GOD
ROMAN 2:1-29**

Throughout the chapter Paul discusses final judgment of all humanity. He targets here the moral elitist who falsely thinks he has a loophole around final judgment.

JUDGMENT & CIRCUMCISM Rom. 2:25-29

JUDGMENT OF THE JEWISH MORALIST Rom. 2:17-24

JUDGMENT OF THE OBEDIENT Rom. 2:12-16

JUDGMENT OF THE MORALIST Rom. 2:1-11

FINAL JUDGMENT OF ALL Rom. 2:1-29

opportunities of having access to the Torah of God. And horror or all horrors, the Gentile moralist who obeys the inner law of God finds acceptability with God above the disobedient Jewish moralist.

10.3.3.2.2.1.1 Accusations, 2:1-4

2 Διὸ ἀναπολόγητος εἶ, ὃ ἄνθρωπε πᾶς ὁ κρίνων· ἐν ᾧ γὰρ κρίνεις τὸν ἕτερον, σεαυτὸν κατακρίνεις, τὰ γὰρ αὐτὰ πράσσεις ὁ κρίνων. 2 οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστὶν κατὰ ἀλήθειαν ἐπὶ τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντας. 3 λογίζη δὲ τοῦτο, ὃ ἄνθρωπε ὁ κρίνων τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντας καὶ ποιῶν αὐτά, ὅτι σὺ ἐκφεύξῃ τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ; 4 ἢ τοῦ πλοῦτου τῆς χρηστότητος αὐτοῦ καὶ τῆς ἀνοχῆς καὶ τῆς μακροθυμίας καταφρονεῖς, ἀγνοῶν ὅτι τὸ χρηστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς μετάνοιάν σε ἄγει; 2 *Therefore you have no excuse, whoever you are, when you judge others; for in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, are doing the very same things. 2 You say, "We know that God's judgment on those who do such things is in accordance with truth."* 3 *Do you imagine, whoever you are, that when you judge those who do such things and yet do them yourself, you will escape the judgment of God? 4 Or do you despise the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience? Do you not realize that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?*

The central interpretive question is Who is this person in the diatribe? Several answers have surfaced over the centuries of interpretive history since these words were first composed in the beginning of the Christian era. Usually the answer is the religious Jew in the synagogue who rejected the Gospel preaching of Paul. Yet, it would be a mistake to limit the understanding to a synagogue Jew with religious orientation.⁵ One should

⁵That in 2:17ff Paul is apostrophizing the typical Jew is clear; but there is no explicit indication before v. 17 that it is the Jews whom he has in mind. So the question arises: At what point does he turn his attention to them? Is it at v. 17? Or has he the Jews already in mind from the beginning of the chapter? Some interpreters maintain that in vv. 1ff Paul is thinking of the morally superior among the Gentiles,¹ others that the thought is quite general, embracing all, whether Jews or Gentiles, who are inclined to judge

not overlook that the first clear mention of Jewish is in v. 17, Εἰ δὲ σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ἐπονομάζῃ, *But since you call yourself a Jew....* Even in the synagogue were the God-fearer Gentiles and outside were the philosophical moralists who clearly felt both moral and religious superiority to the masses in their world.⁶ The broader, more inclusive language of Paul here should be understood to apply to these additional groups as well as the religious synagogue Jew, although the primary target was the synagogue Jew. The NRSV captures the expression ὃ ἄνθρωπε well with *whoever you are*.

One must not overlook the parallelism of 2:1-4 with 1:18-23. Both passages lay out the charges first their fellows.² But there are weighty reasons for thinking that Paul had the Jews in mind right from 2:1. The following may be mentioned:

(i) The notable points of contact between 2:1ff and chapters eleven to fifteen of Wisdom (see the notes on the verses) strongly suggest that Paul was thinking of just such Jewish assumptions as are expressed in those chapters.

(ii) While Paul certainly believed that the heathen also were recipients of God's mercy, the emphatic nature of the language of v. 4 suggests the probability that he had in mind the special privileges of Israel and the extraordinary patience of God in the face of His chosen people's unfaithfulness and stubbornness.

(iii) The references to Jews and Greeks (that is, in the contexts, Gentiles) in 1:16; 2:9, 10; 3:9 suggest that in the construction of 1:18-3:20 Paul would be likely to keep to this twofold division of mankind: a brief reference in passing to the morally superior among the Gentiles might be understandable, but scarcely the lengthy treatment which 2:1ff would be.

(iv) The way in which the name 'Jew' is introduced in v. 17 does not suggest that Paul is at this point turning his attention to a different group of people.

(v) An attitude of moral superiority toward the Gentiles was so characteristic of the Jews (as vv. 18ff themselves indicate), that, in the absence of any indication to the contrary, it is natural to assume that Paul is apostrophizing the typical Jew in 2:1ff.

(vi) A confident expectation of special indulgence (see v. 3) was equally characteristic of them.

(vii) If our understanding of the purpose of 2:12-16 is correct, then those verses are a further pointer in the same direction."

[C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 137-138.]

⁶Pelagius, who (p. 24), commenting on 2:21, says: 'similiter [ut] gentibus dixerat: "qui enim alium iudicas, te ipsum condemnas"', and Leenhardt, p. 74 (Fr.: 44), who argues that, if vv. 1-11 were addressed to the Jews, they would interrupt the flow of the discourse from 1:18 to 2:16 (he understands 1:18-32 to refer to mankind in general, including the Jews, and 2:14-16 to refer to the natural man), and would also duplicate several things said in vv. 17ff; and that the vocabulary used in vv. 1-11 is different from that used where Paul is definitely addressing or speaking about the Jews (e.g. there is no mention of the law)." [C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), fn 1, p. 137.]

2.1
21 Διὸ ἀναπολόγητος εἶ,
 ὧ ἄνθρωπε πᾶς ὁ κρίνων·
 γὰρ
 ἐν ᾧ κρίνεις τὸν ἕτερον,
22 σεαυτὸν κατακρίνεις,
 γὰρ
23 τὰ αὐτὰ πράσσεις ὁ κρίνων.

2.2
24 οἶδαμεν
 ὅτι τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστίν
 κατὰ ἀλήθειαν
 ἐπὶ τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντας.

2.3
25 δὲ
 λογίζῃ τοῦτο,
 ὧ ἄνθρωπε
 | ὁ κρίνων τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντας καὶ ποιῶν αὐτά,
 ὅτι σὺ ἐκφεύξῃ τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ;

2.4
 ἢ
 τοῦ πλούτου τῆς χρησιότητος αὐτοῦ
 καὶ
 τῆς ἀνοχῆς
 καὶ
 τῆς μακροθυμίας
26 καταφρονεῖς, εἰς μετάνοιάν
 ἀγνοῶν ὅτι τὸ χρηστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ...σε ἄγει;

against depraved humanity in chapter one and now against moralist superiority in chapter two. The literary technique is different but the literary objective is the same: to make a basic case of guilt for disobedience to what God has revealed to humanity.⁷ What has depraved humanity done to deserve God walking away from him in expressing divine wrath? What has the moralist done that deserves the wrath of God in the Day of Judgment? Thus the two passages inform one another in the interpretive process.

Within the framework of the literary device of a diatribe where Paul is talking to an imaginary opponent by making charges against him, this monologue in 2:1-4 goes two specific directions in both literary form and content. In statements #s 21-24 a declaration of accountability is made in # 21 which is then backed up

by two sets of reasons introduced by γὰρ: a) # 22 and b) #s 23-24. Statement #24 gives an axiomatic principle as the ultimate foundation for being without excuse. The charge of hypocrisy is central to both #s 22 and 23. The hypocrisy is delineated through the verb sets of κρίνεις/ κατακρίνεις/ κρίνων and πράσσεις. That is, the moralist is condemned by doing what he criticizes the pagan for doing. So #24 then summarizes by the universal principle of God's judgment (τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ) condemns those doing the things the moralist criticizes the pagans for doing and does himself.

Then in the two rhetorical questions (#s 25 and 26) the blunt accusations against the moralist is that no escaping the judgment of God is possible (# 25) and that the moralist has horribly misinterpreted the patience of God in not condemning him immediately (# 26). The next segment in a long Greek sentence in vv. 5-11 develops the idea that accountability on the Day of Wrath means that the moralist's disobedience will bring down even more severe divine wrath on him.

Now let's look closer at the details of vv. 1-4.

Διὸ ἀναπολόγητος εἶ. This opening accusation bursts forth to the readers in something of an explosion. Nothing leading up to this statement prepares the reader to expect this sudden shift. The second person singular

⁷Side note: I use the term 'guilt' as Paul's objective. In reality, no Greek or Hebrew word in the Bible specifically means guilt and such was not a concept in the ancient world either legally or popularly. What the writers of both the Old and New Testaments speak of is accountability. God holds the humanity He created strictly accountable for obeying what He has revealed as His will. Guilt technically implies legal liability for actions that can be accumulated at varying levels depending on the nature and the quantity of disobedience. But such thinking is not present in the Bible and in fact is specifically denied in James 2:10 and Gal. 3:10. More biblical is the idea of accountability before God than guilt before God.

form εἶ shifts away from the readers and anticipates the subsequent vocative case ὦ ἄνθρωπε πᾶς ὁ κρίνων, *o person who is judging*. To be sure the narrative flow in 1:18-32 somewhat reaches a climax in the relative clause in v. 32. This creates some anticipation of 'what next' for the reader. Paul's utilization of the rather common Greek pattern of the diatribe here reflects a sudden shift of emphasis in which the diatribe would signal a new topic emphasis.⁸

⁸What differentiates 2:1-16 from what precedes is that here for the first time in Romans Paul uses the rhetorical technique known as *prosopopoeia*, impersonation, or better said, speech in character. We have a shift to direct address and the second person singular.² It has been recognized at least since the time of Origen and Chrysostom that Paul uses a variety of rhetorical figures and techniques in this discourse, including dialogue with an imaginary interlocutor (in diatribal format),³ as well as impersonation. We actually find both of these techniques in Romans 2, as has been amply demonstrated by S. Stowers.⁴

"There are two types of speech in character technique.⁵ In the first type, the character of a known person is impersonated. In the second, a particular type of person (a husband, a general, a farmer, or the like) as well as his ethos or character is impersonated. In other words, both the person and his character are fictive in the second form of this technique. Various writers on rhetoric, including Cicero, Quintilian, Theon, Hermogenes, and Aphthonius discuss this rhetorical technique at some length, but, as is usually the case, Quintilian is the best summarizer of the collective wisdom on the matter:

I regard impersonation as the most difficult of tasks, imposed as it is in addition to the other work involved by a deliberative theme. For the same speaker has on one occasion to impersonate Caesar, on another Cicero, or Cato. But it is a most useful exercise because it demands a double effort.... For orators of course it is absolutely necessary. [Types of persons as well as real persons are impersonated such as] sons, parents, rich men, old men ... misers, superstitious persons, cowards, and mockers.... All these roles may be regarded as part of impersonation, which I have included under deliberative themes, from which it differs merely in that it involves the assumption of a role. (Instit. Or. 3.8.49-52)⁶

This technique adds wonderful variety and animation to oratory. With this figure we present the inner thoughts of our adversaries as though they were talking with themselves.... Or without diminishing credibility we may introduce conversations between ourselves and others, or of others among themselves, and give words of advice, reproof, complaint, praise, or pity to appropriate persons ... peoples may find a voice ... or [we may] pretend that we have before our eyes things, persons, or utterances. (9.2.30-33)

"Diatribe, that is, dialogue with an imaginary interlocutor, is a tool of deliberative rhetoric, not surprisingly since the original setting for deliberative rhetoric was the assembly where one would have dialogue or debate over the course of action to pursue or policy to enact. The *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 4.65 sees the diatribe as a deliberative figure in the form of amplification. The primary setting of diatribe was the school where the teacher employed the Socratic method."⁷

[Ben Witherington III and Darlene Hyatt, *Paul's Letter to the*

Yet the conjunction Διὸ with its strong inferential nature alerts the reader / listeners that what follows has connection to what preceded. What is it?

Already in the discussion of depraved humanity, the charge ἀναπολογήτους, *without excuse*, had been leveled at those rebelling against God's self revelation in creation (v. 20c). Now this individual being targeted in 2:1 is charged with the same failure and accountability before God. So who is this person? Does he reside inside the Christian community? Or, outside it? Naturally, the question rushes to the surface: who is this person? What has he done to leave him inexcusable before God? The raw pagan refused to accept the revelation of God made accessible to him in creation. And this opened a world of ruinous evil into his life. Is such true of this individual Paul is now talking to directly?⁹

ὦ ἄνθρωπε πᾶς ὁ κρίνων, *o man, the very one who is criticizing*.¹⁰ With the vocative case expression, Paul begins to identify his imaginary partner in the conversa-

Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), 73-74.]

⁹"Such an imaginary interlocutor, however, was hardly 'imaginary' for Paul in the sense of 'fictitious' or 'lacking factual reality.' In his missionary journeys he must have frequently encountered Gentiles who claimed to follow the enlightened teaching of the philosophers, but who also practiced some of their well-known vices. The Greek satirist Lucian of Samosata (c. A.D. 120-200) was famous for mocking the philosophers of various schools for the wide gap between their lofty teachings and their vile practices²⁶ — that is, for being models of sobriety and wisdom by day but given to drink and debauchery at night.²⁷ Likewise, Paul probably knew Jews who claimed to be religiously and morally superior to Gentiles — but in feigned piety applauded the prayer of Asaph to God in Ps 79:6 with respect to all such outcast Gentiles: 'Pour out your wrath on the nations that do not acknowledge you, and on the kingdoms that do not call on your name.' So Paul's interlocutor represents everyone — not just Jews but both Jews and Gentiles — who agrees with all that is written in 1:18-32 about God's wrath as rightfully coming on all the idolatries, immoralities, and injustices of humanity, but who, while knowing God's truth and moral principles, fails to act in accordance with them — and so, under the guise of other expediencies and definitions, continues to practice the same vices." [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 245-246.]

¹⁰"With εἶ, ὦ ἄνθρωπε, 'you sir,' Paul deliberately adopts the haranguing style of the popular preacher (so also 2:3; cf. 9:20; for examples of the reproachful vocative in rhetorical address see BGD, ἄνθρωπος ἰαγ, and Stowers, *Diatribe*, 85-93; used also by James 2:20). Perhaps he is here following a line of argument which had already taken shape in preaching and debating in the synagogue and marketplace (Barrett). The imaginary interlocutor is envisaged not as objecting to what Paul had said but as agreeing with it very strongly." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 79.]

tion being set up. The impact of this very limited identification of the imaginary opponent is to create apprehension within his readers.¹¹ Is he targeting me? Is our house group whom he is talking about? By this point, Paul's readers / listeners have realized that the old, well used Greek / Latin diatribe is being used by this Jewish Christian writer. Impressive!

The ambiguity of the imaginary dialogue partner begins at a high level to provoke curiosity. Gradually more details are given about him and then the questions focus increasingly on the reader / listeners learning about him. In the house church meetings (see chap. 16 for listing of many of these group leaders) across the city where this letter was initially read the group discussion and debate that was woven into the reading of the letter most certainly gave attention to this imaginary partner's ID. And in the process it led to reflection on whether included were any members of the group of believers. Or, any friends, family, or acquaintances in the surrounding society outside the Christian community.

The first clue of identification of this imaginary partner is simply πᾶς ὁ κρίνων, [the individual who is judging](#). Of course, this will be expanded momentarily in v. 3 but initially the point is to stress individuals who criticize in a condemning way the raw paganism of the masses of individuals just described in 1:18-32. Their inclination would be a resounding "Amen" to how Paul had depicted paganism. In no way does this within itself become a condemnation of this imaginary partner, since it's not the criticizing that is wrong and thus condemned by Paul. But in the literary cleverness of the diatribe Paul begins with a teaser bound to catch attention by his readers / listeners. Faint echoes of several famous Greek and Latin orators skillful use of diatribe possibly [stand in the background](#) of Paul's expression here.¹²

¹¹The fuller ID comes in the third sentence (v. 3): λογίζῃ δὲ τοῦτο, ὃ ἄνθρωπε ὁ κρίνων τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντας καὶ ποιῶν αὐτά, ὅτι σὺ ἐκφεύξῃ τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ; [And do you consider, o person who is judging those practicing such things and doing them yourself that you will escape the judgment of God?](#)

¹²Possibly in view here is the sophisticated Greek like Juvenal, *Sat.* 15.1 ff., who could mock the animal idols of the Egyptians as heartily as the Jews (1:23); or the Stoic who would agree that such vices as those listed in 1:29-31 were 'unfitting' (cf. Bruce; Stowers draws attention to the philosophical treatment of the theme of inconsistency — in particular, Epictetus, *Diss.* 2.21.11-12 and 3.2.14-16 providing a good parallel — *Diatribe*, 103-4). But the degree to which 1:18-32 echoes Hellenistic Jewish polemic against idolatry and its outworkings confirms that it is probably a Jewish interlocutor whom Paul has primarily in mind (so most commentators today); though at this stage the discussion relates more to a difference determined by response to what is known of God, which to some extent cuts across the more clear-cut ethnically determined

ἐν ᾧ γὰρ κρίνεις τὸν ἕτερον, σεαυτὸν κατακρίνεις, τὰ γὰρ αὐτὰ πράσσεις ὁ κρίνων. Immediately a twofold defense of the charge against this imaginary partner is put on the table. In the public arena of ancient Roman tradition the diatribe was useful in very intense oratorical debate. So this is standard methodology here. The second statement grows out of the first one.

ἐν ᾧ γὰρ κρίνεις τὸν ἕτερον, σεαυτὸν κατακρίνεις.¹³ Now the problem of the imaginary partner surfaces. It is hypocrisy. The things this fellow criticizes others for he ends up doing them himself.¹⁴ Thus his criticism rings hollow. Clearly this fellow has the opposite stance of the pagans who encourage others in immorality, idolatry, and injustice. But it is a deplorable stance of condemning publicly but privately engaging in the same kind of wrongful conduct. Paul echoes here the stinging rebukes of several secular philosophers of that time such as Lucian of Samosata in his *Auction of Philosophers*. [This imaginary fellow is the elitist moralist who](#)

Jew/Gentile distinction (cf. Dabelstein, 64-73, 87). As an example of the attitude attacked here Schlier appropriately cites 4 Ezra 3:32-36; see also on 14:3. The contrast between human and divine judgment becomes a key theme in the remainder of the indictment (2:1-3, 12, 16, 27; 3:4, 6-8). The idea of 'measure for measure' was probably already an old one at this time (cf. Mark 4:24 pars. with m. *Soṭa* 1.7), but the particular expression of it in terms of the one who judges being condemned by his own judgment is too similar to Matt 7:1-2 to be accidental; that is to say, Paul's formulation probably shows the influence of (or interaction with) the Jesus tradition at this point (see further on 12:14)." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 79-80.]

¹³"ἐν ᾧ κρίνεις τὸν ἕτερον, 'in that you judge the other,' not ἐν τῷ κρίνεις, 'in and by the act of judgment.'" [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 80.]

¹⁴"ἐν ᾧ γὰρ⁵ κρίνεις τὸν ἕτερον, σεαυτὸν κατακρίνεις. τὰ γὰρ αὐτὰ πράσσεις ὁ κρίνων is naturally taken to mean that the man who judges his fellow man is thereby condemning himself because he himself is guilty of the same sorts of wrong-doing as the man he judges. Barrett has objected to this interpretation on the ground of the real moral superiority of the Jews and also of Gentile moral philosophers (he does not accept that this is addressed exclusively to the Jews), and suggested that Paul's point is rather that the act of judging is itself an attempt to put oneself in the place of God, and so the same idolatry essentially as is manifested in the sins referred to in the latter part of chapter 1.6 But this is surely a very forced interpretation of Paul's Greek. Barrett's objection is answered, if we recognize that τὰ ... αὐτὰ need not imply that the judge sins in precisely the same ways. There are, for example, more ways than one of breaking the seventh commandment, as is made clear in Mt 5:27f. On the verb πράσσειν (used here and also in vv. 2 and 3) and the distinction between it and ποιεῖν (used in v. 3) see on 7:15 (cf. also 1:32)." [C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 142.]

considers himself superior to these pagans. Whether this hypocrisy comes out of Jewish religious bias or out of Greco-Roman philosophy is immaterial to Paul's point here.

The play on the verbs κρίνεις and κατακρίνεις is important here. The first in the use here references the hypocritical criticism of pagans by this fellow while κατακρίνεις denotes the condemnation of God for his hypocrisy.

τὰ γὰρ αὐτὰ πράσσεις ὁ κρίνων. This second defending statement comes back with the accusation against this fellow of actually living like a pagan while criticizing pagans. The repeating of ὁ κρίνων with the second singular verb πράσσεις heightens the identification unmistakably back to the imaginary dialogue partner with the clear accusation of participation in pagan actions: **you the one judging are privatizing....**

The direct object τὰ αὐτὰ should not be taken to mean that this diatribe partner is accused of doing all the very same things that he criticizes others for doing. Rather it is the sense of he is doing the same kinds of things that he is criticizing in others.¹⁵ This object in 2:1 plays off τὰ τοιαῦτα and αὐτὰ in 1:32, clearly with the qualitative meaning.

So the imaginary partner is critiqued by Paul at two inner connected points. He is living like the very pagans that he condemns as base and inferior.

οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστὶν κατὰ ἀλήθειαν ἐπὶ τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντας. This statement in v. 2 seems to come from Paul's on creative hand rather than be following the standard diatribe pattern.¹⁶ Thus the

¹⁵τὰ ... αὐτὰ need not imply that the judge sins in precisely the same ways. There are, for example, more ways than one of breaking the seventh commandment, as is made clear in Mt 5:27f." [C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 142.]

¹⁶οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστὶν κατὰ ἀλήθειαν ἐπὶ τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντας is not intended to be taken as the imagined reply of the representative Jew whom Paul is addressing, as Dodd for example understands it,¹ but is Paul's own statement of what he knows to be common ground between himself and the person addressed. There are similar occurrences of οἶδαμεν δὲ in 3:19; 8:28; 1 Tim 1:8, and of οἶδαμεν γὰρ in 7:14; 8:22; 2 Cor 5:1. In each case οἶδαμεν introduces a statement which the writer can assume will meet with general acceptance on the part of those to whom he is writing or whom he has in mind. The use of οἶδαμεν (without a conjunction) in 1 Cor 8:1 and 4 is somewhat different, but in these verses too it introduces a statement of common ground (Paul is admitting that these Corinthians do have knowledge, before proceeding to point out that knowledge breeds conceit, and admitting that idols have no real existence, before proceeding to remind them that, since not all men understand this, one ought to be careful not to exercise one's freedom in such a way as to injure

NRSV gets it wrong with their rendering: **You say, "We know that God's judgment on those who do such things is in accordance with truth."** The shift from the second person singular to the first person plural verb of knowing οἶδαμεν signals an introduction of a generally held principle by both Paul and his Roman readers (cf. also 3:19; 7:14; 8:22, 28).¹⁷ The imaginary partner would probably agree only if coming from a Jewish heritage. But if secular Roman or Greek, he most likely would not concur with the theological maxim that Paul expresses here. There would be no concern for or awareness of God's judgment and how it works for such an individual.

The content of what is commonly known surfaces in ὅτι τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστὶν κατὰ ἀλήθειαν ἐπὶ τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντας, **that God's judgment is according to Truth upon those practicing such things.** This is stated as basic theological maxim, that is, a foundational principle of the Gospel. Out of the OT Hebrew tradition comes a strong emphasis upon the judgment of God upon nations and His disobedient people during this life. Divine judgment and divine wrath are very inner related concepts.¹⁸ The παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς... action of God in 1:24, 26, 28 is reflecting ὀργὴ θεοῦ (1:18). But also the eschatological Day of Judgment, cf. ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὀργῆς, is in view at 2:5 as well.

The concept τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ, **God's judgment**, is not just an action by God at differing points of time,

a weak brother). κατὰ ἀλήθειαν here means, of course, not 'truly' but 'according to truth'. What is being said of the divine judgment² is not that it truly is (that there truly is such a thing), but that it is in accordance with the facts (i.e., is just). The same point is expressed negatively in v. 11." [C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 142–143.]

¹⁷"The appeal to the idea of divine judgment ('the judgment of God') would indeed meet with general acceptance: it was familiar in Greek thought, but particularly prominent in the Jewish tradition (e.g., Isa 13:6–16; 34:8; Dan 7:9–11; Joel 2:1–2; Zeph 1:14–2:3; 3:8; Mal 4:1; Jub. 5.10–16; 1 Enoch 90.20–27; see further TDNT 3:933–35); and the mixed congregations at Rome would certainly assent readily to Paul's assertion." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 80.]

¹⁸"κρίμα, 'Judgment,' or more specifically, 'judicial verdict' in an unfavorable sense, 'condemnation' (TDNT 3:942; see also on 3:8 and 11:33). The appeal to the idea of divine judgment ('the judgment of God') would indeed meet with general acceptance: it was familiar in Greek thought, but particularly prominent in the Jewish tradition (e.g., Isa 13:6–16; 34:8; Dan 7:9–11; Joel 2:1–2; Zeph 1:14–2:3; 3:8; Mal 4:1; Jub. 5.10–16; 1 Enoch 90.20–27; see further TDNT 3:933–35); and the mixed congregations at Rome would certainly assent readily to Paul's assertion." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 80.]

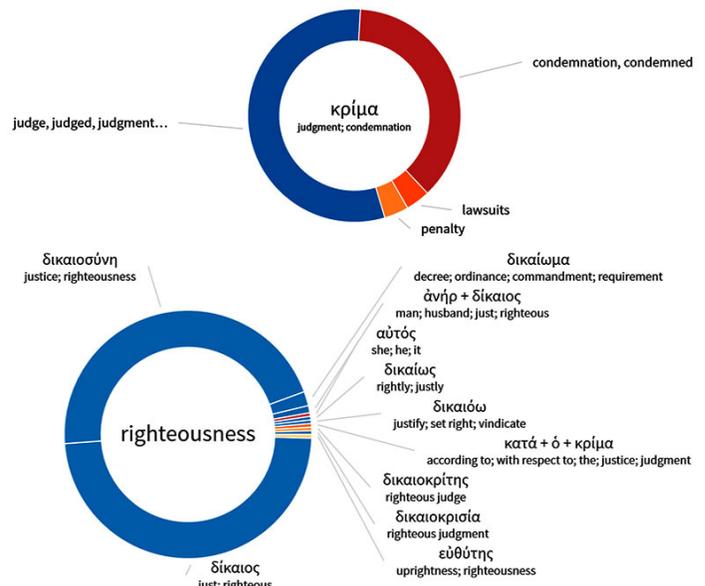
and especially at the end of time. But it is also a principle defining how God works in holding humanity accountable for its actions etc. It touches on the tension between the utterly pure holiness of God and His deep compassion for His creation. The holy side makes it impossible for sinful corruption, like with humans, to come into the very presence of God. Yet His compassionate side yearns for contact and fellowship with His creation. Judgment, judging, verdict etc., all of which are caught up in κρίμα and its cognate words,¹⁹ define how God brings this tension into solution so that the demands of both holiness and compassion are satisfied properly.²⁰

¹⁹κρίνω, κρίσις, κρίμα, κριτής, κριτήριο, κριτικός, ἀνακρίνω, ἀνάκρισις, ἀποκρίνω, ἀνταποκρίνομαι, ἀπόκριμα, ἀπόκρισις, διακρίνω, διάκρισις, ἀδιάκριτος, ἐγκρίνω, κατακρίνω, κατάκριμα, κατάκρισις, ἀκατάκριτος, αὐτοκατάκριτος, πρόκριμα, συγκρίνω [Friedrich Büchsel and Volkmar Hertrich, “Κρίνω, Κρίσις, Κρίμα, Κριτής, Κριτήριο, Κριτικός, Ἀνακρίνω, Ἀνάκρισις, Ἀποκρίνω, Ἀνταποκρίνομαι, Ἀπόκριμα, Ἀπόκρισις, Διακρίνω, Διάκρισις, Ἀδιάκριτος, Ἐγκρίνω, Κατακρίνω, Κατάκριμα, Κατάκρισις, Ἀκατάκριτος, Αὐτοκατάκριτος, Πρόκριμα, Συγκρίνω,” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:921.]’

²⁰“The word [κρίνω] is related in root to the Lat. cerno: 'to sunder.'¹¹ In the basic sense 'to part,' 'to sift,' it occurs in Hom. Il., 5, 500: ὄτε τε ξανθὴ Δημήτηρ κρήνη ... καρπὸν τε καὶ ἄχνας (chaff). This leads to the sense 'to divide out,' 'to select,' Il., 1, 309: ἐς δ' ἐρέτας ἔκρινεν ἐέικουσιν, 'to value,' κρίνοντες τὸν Ἀπόλλω ... πρὸ Μαρσίου, Plat. Resp., III, 399e. The most common meaning is 'to decide,' νεῖκα κρίνειν, Hom. Od., 12, 440; 'to judge,' 'to assess,' and in the mid. 'to go to law, to dispute with,' Τιτήνεσσι κρίναντο, Hes. Theog., 882; also 'to seek justice,' or 'to be accused,' θανάτου δίκη κρίνεσθαι, Thuc., III, 57, 3, also, from the sense 'to assess,' 'to expound,' ὁ γέρον ἐκρίνατ' ὄνειρους, Hom. Il., 5, 150; ὄνειροκρίτης, the interpreter of dreams, and, from the more general sense of 'judge,' 'to believe,' 'to decide,' 'to resolve,' Isoc., 4, 46: τὰ γὰρ ὑφ' ἡμῶν κριθέντα τοσαύτην λαυβάνει δόξαν. Hence, though the word is most commonly found in legal terminology, it does not belong here either exclusively or by derivation.

“The LXX uses κρίνειν for predominantly legal words, esp. שפן, more rarely דין and דין. Hence κρίνειν means judging, even when this means deliverance or salvation for the oppressed, ψ 71:2: κρίνειν τὸν λαόν σου ἐν δικαιοσύνη καὶ τοὺς πτωχοὺς σου ἐν κρίσει, Zech. 7:9: κρίμα δίκαιον κρίνατε καὶ ἔλεος καὶ οἰκτιρμὸν ποιεῖτε. In keeping with the sense of שפן → infra κρίνειν can also have the more general meaning 'to rule,' Ju. 3:10; 4:4 etc.; 1 Βασ. 4:18; 4 Βασ. 15:5.2 At this point the LXX goes beyond ordinary Gk. usage.

“In the NT³ κρίνειν means esp. 'to judge,' e.g., the judgment of God, R. 2:16; 3:6, of men, Ac. 23:3; Jn. 18:31 etc. It is used not merely for official judgment but also for personal judgments on others, Mt. 7:1, 2; Lk. 6:37; R. 2:1, 3; R. 14:3, 4, 10, 13; Jm. 4:11, 12. The mid. is used for 'to be accused,' Ac. 23:6; 26:6, 'to seek justice,' 'to be engaged in a legal suit,' Mt. 5:40; 1 C. 6:6. The sense 'to resolve,' 'to determine,' occurs at Ac. 16:4: τὰ δόγματα τὰ κεκριμένα ὑπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων, 20:16; 25:25; 27:1; 1 C. 2:2; 7:37: τοῦτο δὲ κέκρικεν ... τηρεῖν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ παρθένον. The sense 'to value' is found at R. 14:5: ὃς μὲν κρίνει ἡμέραν παρ' ἡμέραν, ὃς



A strong judicial tone is present here where justice is sought, thus δικαιοσύνη and its cognates come into the picture defining how God reaches a verdict, a κρίμα, enabling both holiness and compassion. The idea of fairness and equitable treatment are central here. God acts in justice, and not in any other way.

Such an idea of divine judgment / judging was not present in the non-Christian world of Paul's day. For the Greeks and Romans, no deity could be trusted to act with δικαιοσύνη like this. The human courts and judges they knew were notorious for corruption and demanding bribes for a favorable verdict. The gods were little different. For most of Paul's Jewish readers, the idea of τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ centered on the divine holiness side and God's uncompromising demands to make oneself presentable to this holy God through Torah obedience. Paul's challenge was to explain τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ to this mixed audience properly and in line with divine revelation through Christ, which was a radically different idea

δὲ κρίνει πᾶσαν ἡμέραν, 'the one esteems one day higher than another, the other esteems every day.' We also find the meanings 'to assess,' 'to regard as,' Ac. 13:46; 16:15; 26:8, 'to think,' Ac. 15:19; 2 C. 5:14, in the aor. 'to form an opinion or judgment,' Lk. 7:43; Ac. 4:19; 1 C. 10:15; 11:13. The sense 'to rule' rather than 'to judge' occurs at Mt. 19:28; Lk. 22:30.4 This usage goes back to the LXX and ultimately to the Heb. שפן.⁵ Since it is alien to non-biblical Gk., we have here another instance of 'biblical' Gk. From the theological standpoint the most important sense is 'to judge,' esp. of God."

[Friedrich Büchsel and Volkmar Hertrich, “Κρίνω, Κρίσις, Κρίμα, Κριτής, Κριτήριο, Κριτικός, Ἀνακρίνω, Ἀνάκρισις, Ἀποκρίνω, Ἀνταποκρίνομαι, Ἀπόκριμα, Ἀπόκρισις, Διακρίνω, Διάκρισις, Ἀδιάκριτος, Ἐγκρίνω, Κατακρίνω, Κατάκριμα, Κατάκρισις, Ἀκατάκριτος, Αὐτοκατάκριτος, Πρόκριμα, Συγκρίνω,” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:922–923.]

from anything in either's background. Thus the concept of God judging humanity looms large throughout Romans.²¹ The entire idea of the δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (1:17) cannot otherwise be comprehended.

Thus Paul, with this 'interruption' to the diatribe, solicits his readers / listeners to agree with this basic spiritual truth that God's judgment will indeed be against all people who practice a lifestyle of wickedness. Pressure is put on the imaginary partner to agree also. This means pressure on the moral supremacist among his readers.

Two traits of this divine judgment are asserted in this theological maxim here: 1) κατὰ ἀλήθειαν, and 2) ἐπὶ τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντας. That is, its character and its target.

First divine judgment measure up to Truth. And who is Truth itself? God alone! So how He metes out judgment is consistent with who He is. It's just that simple, and yet that profound. The rabbit chashing for explanations by so many commentators is a waste of time. The fundamental Jewish and early Christian perspective is beautifully simple: God is Truth and what corresponds to His being and actions represents Truth.²² The prior use of ἀλήθεια in 1:18 and 25 underscore this understanding dramatically.²³ And in particular, when an action of God is being depicted, as is the case here, with divine judgment being imposed, the meaning κατὰ ἀλήθειαν clearly depicts this action of judgment as reflecting God Himself in who He is and how He takes action. Thus ἀλήθεια gives meaning to both ὀργή θεοῦ (1:18) and δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (1:17). Because of who

²¹Thus κρίμα six times; κρίνω eighteen times; κατακρίνω four times; κατάκριμα three times, et als.

²²"The phrase could have a depth of meaning: 'rightly' (BGD), or 'in terms of the real state of affairs'; but also, and more likely in view of its thematic importance, 'in terms of God's reliability' (cf. 1QS 4.19–20; CD 20.30; 4 Ezra 7:34; 2 Apoc. Bar. 85.9; m. .Abot 3.16 as given in Str-B, 3:76; other references in Schlier). In expressing himself thus Paul may well be 'playing his imagined opponent along,' since a pious Jew would readily think of God's judgment 'according to truth' as judgment in which God displayed his choice of and commitment to Israel. It is precisely this presupposition of divine bias towards Israel which in Paul's eyes becomes the excuse and cloak for practices among Jews which they would condemn in Gentile society (2:17–24)." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 80–81.]

²³**Rom. 1:18**, τῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικία κατεχόντων, of those suppressing the Truth by their wickedness.

Rom. 1:25, οἵτινες μετέλλαξαν τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ ψεύδει, those who exchanged the Truth regarding God with a lie.

25 **λογίζη τοῦτο,**
ὃ ἄ|νθρωπε

| ὁ κρίνων τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντας καὶ ποιῶν αὐτά, ὅτι σὺ ἐκφεύξῃ τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ;

God is (ἅγιος) and how He functions (δικαιοσύνη / ὀργή) it is to be expected that He would take severe actions against individuals living wicked lives. This is κατὰ ἀλήθειαν. In this punishment action we discover ὀργή θεοῦ, **God's wrath**. Remember the controlling verbal action for this entire section is ἀποκαλύπτεται in 1:17 and 1:18, an uncovering to create understanding. ἀλήθεια is the discovery of God in observing the pouring out of His wrath upon wickedness. This is reality 101! Whether wicked humanity cries, "Faul" or not in suffering under God's wrath is irrelevant. The reality is that God is holy and will punish wickedness. No objection to this is possible.

Second, the target of this divine judgment is ἐπὶ τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντας, **against those practicing such things**. The preposition ἐπὶ used here with the accusative case object marks the posture of opposition toward someone or something. Thus the inherent nature of divine judgment against wicked people is fundamentally negative and hostile. This is consistent with Paul's presentation of this τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ as an expression of ὀργή θεοῦ (1:18).

The object of the preposition ἐπὶ is the substantial participle phrase τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντας, **those practicing such things**. The verb πράσσω is used 10 times in Romans and denotes especially in the present tense form ongoing actions that constitute a lifestyle of activity. Its use here with the qualitative demonstrative pronoun τὰ τοιαῦτα, **such things**, as the direct object, goes back to 1:32 with their parallel use in reference to the vice list, homosexuality and idolatry in view from vv. 24-31. The qualitative nature means not just these items of sinfulness but everything similar to them as well. This inclusive designation avoids trying to give an exhaustive listing of wrong actions and instead designates everything that has some connection to these mentioned items as well.

Rhetorical Question One. This 'interruption' provides background for returning to the diatribe in v. 3 with an exertion to his imaginary dialogue partner: λογίζη δὲ τοῦτο, ὃ ἄνθρωπε ὁ κρίνων τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντας καὶ ποιῶν αὐτά, ὅτι σὺ ἐκφεύξῃ τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ; **But do you suppose this, o man who is judging those practicing these things and you are doing the same things, that you can escape the judgment of God?** This rhetorical question

2.1	Διὸ	
21	ἀναπολόγητος εἶ,	
	ὧ̃ ἀνθρώπε πᾶς ὁ κρίνων·	
	γὰρ	ἐν ᾧ κρίνεις τὸν ἕτερον,
22	σεαυτὸν κατακρίνεις,	
	γὰρ	
23	τὰ αὐτὰ πράσσεις ὁ κρίνων.	
2.2	δὲ	
24	οἶδαμεν	ὅτι τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστίν
		κατὰ ἀλήθειαν
		ἐπὶ τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντας.
2.3	δὲ	
25	λογίζῃ τοῦτο,	
	ὧ̃ ἀ νθρώπε	ὁ κρίνων τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντας καὶ ποιῶν αὐτά,
		ὅτι σὺ ἐκφεύξῃ τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ;
2.4	ἢ	
	τοῦ πλούτου τῆς χρηστότητος αὐτοῦ	
	καὶ	
	τῆς ἀνοχῆς	
	καὶ	
	τῆς μακροθυμίας	
26	καταφρονεῖς,	εἰς μετάνοιάν
	ἀγνοῶν ὅτι τὸ χρηστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ...σε ἀγει;	

posed by Paul to the imaginary partner presses a false assumption that superior morality exempts one from divine judgment. Paul likes to use this verb λογίζομαι with 19 total uses and two of them in rhetorical questions (2:3, 26). The condemnation of those thinking they had a loophole around divine judgment is an important theme in Romans.²⁴ The style of rhetorical questioning here mimicks that of Isa. 57:3-4 followed by 57:5-13 assertions.²⁵ The blunt criticism of the moral supremacist

ἄδρα σου καὶ ἀπέστρεψας καὶ ἐταπεινώθης ἕως ἄδου.† 10 ταῖς πολυδοταῖς σου ἐκοπίασας καὶ οὐκ εἶπας Παύσομαι ἐνισχύουσα ὅτι ἐπραξας ταῦτα, διὰ τοῦτο οὐ κατεδεήθης μου† 11 σύ. τίνα εὐλαβηθεῖσα ἐφοβήθης καὶ ἐψεύσω με καὶ οὐκ ἐμνήσθης μου οὐδὲ ἔλαβες με εἰς τὴν διάνοιαν οὐδὲ εἰς τὴν καρδίαν σου; κἀγὼ σε ἰδὼν παρορῶ, καὶ ἐμὲ οὐκ ἐφοβήθης.† 12 κἀγὼ ἀπαγγελῶ τὴν δικαιοσύνην μου καὶ τὰ κακὰ σου, ἃ οὐκ ὠφελήσουσίν σε.† 13 ὅταν ἀναβοήσης, ἐξελέσθωσάν σε ἐν τῇ θλίψει σου· τούτους γὰρ πάντας ἄνεμος λήμψεται καὶ ἀποίσει καταγίγς. οἱ δὲ ἀντεχόμενοι μου κτήσονται γῆν καὶ κληρονομήσουσιν τὸ ὄρος τὸ ἅγιόν μου.†

3 But as for you, come here, you children of a sorceress, you offspring of an adulterer and a whore. 4 Whom are you mocking? Against whom do you open your mouth wide and stick out your tongue? Are you not children of transgression, the offspring of deceit — 5 you that burn with lust among the oaks, under every green tree; you that slaughter your children in the valleys, under the clefts of the rocks? 6 Among the smooth stones of the valley is your portion; they, they, are your lot; to them you have poured out a drink offering, you have brought a grain offering. Shall I be appeased for these things? 7 Upon a high and lofty mountain you have set your bed, and there you went up to offer sacrifice. 8 Behind the door and the doorpost you have set up your symbol; for, in deserting me, you have uncovered your bed, you have gone up to it, you have made it wide; and you have made a bargain for yourself with them, you have loved their bed, you have gazed on their nakedness. 9 You journeyed to Molechd with oil, and multiplied your perfumes; you sent your envoys far away, and sent down even to Sheol. 10 You grew weary from your many wanderings, but you did not say, "It is useless." You found your desire rekindled, and so you did not weaken. 11 Whom did you dread and fear so that you lied, and did not remember me or give me

²⁴"λογίζῃ; 'do you think, entertain the opinion, suppose?' — the first appearance of an important word, particularly in chap. 4 (2:26; 3:28; 11 times in chap. 4; 6:11; 8:18, 36; 9:8; 14:14; see on 3:28); but also used in diatribe (Stowers, *Diatribes*, 229, n. 67)." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 81.]

²⁵Isaiah 57:3-13. **3 ὑμεῖς δὲ προσαγάγετε ὧδε, υἱοὶ ἄνομοι, σπέρμα μοιχῶν καὶ πόρνης·† 4 ἐν τίνι ἐνετρυφήσατε; καὶ ἐπὶ τίνα ἠνοιξάτε τὸ στόμα ὑμῶν; καὶ ἐπὶ τίνα ἐχαλάσατε τὴν γλῶσσαν ὑμῶν; οὐχ ὑμεῖς ἐστε τέκνα ἀπωλείας, σπέρμα ἄνομον;† 5 οἱ παρακαλοῦντες ἐπὶ τὰ εἶδωλα ὑπὸ δένδρα δασέα, σφάζοντες τὰ τέκνα αὐτῶν ἐν ταῖς φάραγγιν ἀνά μέσον τῶν πετρῶν.† 6 ἐκεῖνη σου ἡ μερίς, οὗτός σου ὁ κλῆρος, κάκεινους ἐξέχεας σπονδάς κάκεινους ἀνήνεγκας θυσίας· ἐπὶ τούτοις οὖν οὐκ ὀργισθήσομαι;† 7 ἐπ' ὄρος ὑψηλὸν καὶ μετέωρον, ἐκεῖ σου ἡ κοίτη, κάκεῖ ἀνεβίβασας θυσίας.† 8 καὶ ὀπίσω τῶν σταθμῶν τῆς θύρας σου ἔθηκας μνημόσυνά σου· ᾧου ὅτι ἐὰν ἀπ' ἐμοῦ ἀποστῆς, πλεῖόν τι ἐξεῖς· ἠγάπησας τοὺς κοιμωμένους μετὰ σοῦ† 9 καὶ ἐπλήθυνας τὴν πορνείαν σου μετ' αὐτῶν καὶ πολλοὺς ἐποίησας τοὺς μακρὰν ἀπὸ σοῦ καὶ ἀπέστειλας πρέσβεις ὑπὲρ τὰ**

here reflects the condemnation of the same thinking among the Israelites by the prophet Isaiah.²⁶ And similar themes are found among the intertestamental Hellenistic Jewish Greek writings, such as the *Psalms of Solomon* 15:8.²⁷ The Jewish Christian and former synagogue God-fearer Gentiles in the Christian assemblies around the city of Rome would have possessed a solid background for understanding Paul's point. It reflects also a similar declaration of Jesus found in Matt. 3:8-

a thought? Have I not kept silent and closed my eyes, and so you do not fear me? 12 I will concede your righteousness and your works, but they will not help you. 13 When you cry out, let your collection of idols deliver you! The wind will carry them off, a breath will take them away. But whoever takes refuge in me shall possess the land and inherit my holy mountain.

²⁶"The question repeats in condensed fashion the accusatory style and judgments of Isa 57:3–13 against a people who judge others but continue to do the same evil things themselves. For the prophet begins in Isa 57:3–4 as follows: 'But you—come here, you sons of a sorceress, you offspring of adulterers and prostitutes! Whom are you mocking? At whom do you sneer and stick out your tongue?' — and then the prophet goes on throughout 57:5–13 to set out a litany of practices of God's people just as evil as those being done by the people they were judging. Thus Paul's first question here in Rom 2:3 probably echoes the prophet's denunciatory statements of Isa 57:3–13—as well, it seems, the sentiment of the writer of Pss Sol 15:8, which was presumably well-known to pious Jews and earnest Jewish Christians: "Those who commit lawlessness will not escape the condemnation of the Lord" (τὸ κρίμα κυρίου)." [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 248.]

²⁷"There is a striking parallel between this verse and Pss. Sol. 15:8.

Pss. Sol.

καὶ οὐκ ἐκφεύξονται οἱ ποιοῦντες ἀνομίαν τὸ κρίμα κυρίου
Rom

καὶ ποιῶν αὐτά, ὅτι σὺ ἐκφεύξῃ τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ;

Pss. Sol.

And those who do lawlessness shall not escape the judgment of the Lord.

Rom

(Do you suppose you) who do the same things that you shall escape the judgment of God?

"The attitude that Paul hits out against is just that expressed in Psalms of Solomon and in almost the precise words used by Paul. The implication, which comes to clear expression in Psalms of Solomon, is that the law was a critical factor in Jewish "judging" of the Gentiles; but Paul implies also that Jewish pride in the law (2:17–20) obscured the degree to which Jews themselves failed to "do" the law (2:21–29). Not surprisingly, the law soon enters the discussion and becomes the dominant factor (2:12 ff.), confirming that it lies in the back of Paul's mind here. But at this point he keeps the indictment open and of more general application. Cf. the critique in Matt 3:8–9 and Justin, Dial. 140."

[James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 81.]

9.²⁸

The vocative direct address expression here merely expands the shorter one in v. 1.

v. 1. ὦ ἄνθρωπε πᾶς ὁ κρίνων, o every person who judges

v. 3. ὦ ἄνθρωπε ὁ κρίνων τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντας καὶ ποιῶν αὐτά, o person who judges those practicing such thing and you do the same things,

This second instance serves to reconnect back to the diatribe after the interruption in v. 2. But it also serves to clarify just who this imaginary dialogue partner is in Paul's analogy. It essentially repeats in summarizing fashion the assertion in verse one: ἐν ᾧ γὰρ κρίνεις τὸν ἕτερον, σεαυτὸν κατακρίνεις, τὰ γὰρ αὐτά πράσσεις ὁ κρίνων, for with what you judge the other person you condemn yourself for you who judge are practicing the same things.

The picture is of the ancient moralist who prided himself on living by a much higher standard of morality than the masses of pagans around him. But in reality such a person was living a lie since he was himself also guilty of committing most of the sinful actions that he condemned in those around him. Don't absolutize this! Not every pagan committed every one of the types of sins -- idolatry, sexual misbehavior, vice list -- described in 1:18-32. Neither did any of the moral supremacists here condemned by Paul. This is not Paul's point! Rather it is that the moralist is a depraved sinner along side those pagans that he condemns. The psychological mind-set of such individuals led them to the deadly deception that possessing high morality counted favorably with God. Adherence to it was not so terribly important. Such is not uncommon in modern western society where 'do-gooders' often are very critical of 'sinners' but frequently get caught publicly in some of the most rotten and degrading sins imaginable. Their hypocrisy gets exposed and destroys their image in society.

One should also note the inclusive nature of Paul's identifying of this moralist thus far. He includes both Jewish and Gentile moralists who felt superior to the rest of humanity because of their higher standards of morality. Many of them were teachers of morality both secular and religious.

The heart of the question is ὅτι σὺ ἐκφεύξῃ τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ which stands as the antecedent of the demon-

²⁸Matt. 3:8-9. 8 ποιήσατε οὖν καρπὸν ἄξιον τῆς μετανοίας 9 καὶ μὴ δόξητε λέγειν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς· πατέρα ἔχομεν τὸν Ἀβραάμ. λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι δύναται ὁ θεὸς ἐκ τῶν λίθων τούτων ἐγεῖραι τέκνα τῷ Ἀβραάμ.

8 Bear fruit worthy of repentance. 9 Do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.



2.5 δὲ
κατὰ τὴν σκληρότητά σου
καὶ
ἀμετανόητον καρδίαν

27 **θησαυρίζεις σεαυτῷ ὀργὴν**
ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὀργῆς
καὶ
ἀποκαλύψεως δικαιοκρισίας τοῦ θεοῦ

2.6 ὃς ἀποδώσει ἐκάστω
κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ·
μὲν
καθ' ὑπομονὴν ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ

2.7

28 **τοῖς...δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν ζητοῦσιν**
(ἀποδώσει) ζωὴν αἰώνιον,

2.8 δὲ
ἐξ ἐριθείας
καὶ
τοῖς... ἀπειθοῦσι
δὲ
---τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πειθομένοις
τῇ ἀδικίᾳ

29 **(ἔσονται) ὀργὴ καὶ θυμὸς.**

2.9 **θλίψις**
καὶ

32 **στενοχωρία (ἔσονται)**
ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ψυχὴν ἀνθρώπου
| τοῦ κατεργαζομένου τὸ κακόν,
| τε
Τουδαίου πρῶτον
| καὶ
Ἑλληνος·

2.10 δὲ

δόξα
καὶ
τιμὴ
καὶ

33 **εἰρήνη (ἔσονται)**
παντὶ τῷ ἐργαζομένῳ τὸ ἀγαθόν,
| τε
Τουδαίῳ πρῶτον
| καὶ
Ἑλληνι·

2.11 γάρ

34 **οὐ ἐστὶν προσωποληψία**
παρὰ τῷ θεῷ.

strative pronoun τοῦτο. That is, the thought flow moves along these lines: **do you consider this? That you will escape God's judgment?** The moral supremacist assumes that his possession of higher standards of morality will exempt him from divine judgment, in contrast to his pagan neighbor.

The verb ἐκφεύγω, a intensifying compound from ἐκ + φεύγω, stresses running away from impending danger. The figurative use here emphatically stresses the absolutely false assumption that moral supremacists can somehow run away from God's wrath being poured

out on them in judgment. To make such assumptions amounts to spiritual suicide.

Rhetorical Question Two. ἡ τοῦ πλοῦτου τῆς χρηστότητος αὐτοῦ καὶ τῆς ἀνοχῆς καὶ τῆς μακροθυμίας καταφρονεῖς, ἀγνοῶν ὅτι τὸ χρηστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς μετάνοιάν²⁹ σε ἄγει;

²⁹μετάνοια, 'repentance,' is a concept not prominent but well enough known in Greek, not least in Stoic thought, though in the less weighty sense of 'change of mind,' or, more commonly, 'remorse' (TDNT 4:978–79; BGD). In the earliest Christian tradition, however, it is the more pregnant sense of 'conversion' which dominates, with the verb μετανοέω, 'repent, convert,' being used as the equivalent of the Hebrew שׁוּב, 'turn back, return.' Paul's use here



Or do you despise the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience? Do you not realize that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? The NRSV used two sentences for the single Greek sentence due to its complexity. This second long rhetorical question via the conjunction ἢ defines more precisely the first one above in v. 3. The reasoning here at first glance may seem unusual, but careful analysis reveals a profoundly important spiritual dynamic at work in the false assumption of the moral supremacist.

His elitist stance reflects in reality disdain for God's τῆς χρηστότητος αὐτοῦ καὶ τῆς ἀνοχῆς καὶ τῆς μακροθυμίας. The verb καταφρονέω stresses treating something or someone with intense contempt as having little or no value. God's graciousness, τὸ χρηστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, is intended to lead the moral supremacist to repentance, εἰς μετάνοιαν σε ἄγει. But instead this elitist treats God and His graciousness with contempt. Instead of acknowledging his sinfulness to God and then turning away from it, the supremacist refuses to acknowledge having done anything wrong. In so doing he belittles τοῦ πλούτου τῆς χρηστότητος αὐτοῦ καὶ τῆς ἀνοχῆς καὶ τῆς μακροθυμίας, **the riches of His graciousness and forbearance and patience.**

These three traits of God's character τῆς χρηστότητος αὐτοῦ καὶ τῆς ἀνοχῆς καὶ τῆς μακροθυμίας are summa-

is notable for two reasons. (a) Repentance held a very important place within Jewish teaching on salvation. It was a fundamental tenet for the pious Jew of Paul's time that God had provided a way of dealing with sin for his covenant people through repentance and atonement (e.g., Lev 4–5 with the repeated refrain, 'and he shall be forgiven' — 4:20, 26, 31, 35, etc.; Ps 116; Isa 1:27; Jer 3:12–14, 22; Sir 17:24–26; Jub. 5.17–18; Pss. Sol. 9; T. Gad 5.3–8; see further TDNT 4:991–92, 995–99, and Sanders, *Paul*, index, particularly 157). Paul thus seems here to turn one of the Jewish interlocutor's own key beliefs against him. Somewhat similar is the warning of Sir 5:4–7 (Zeller). (b) Although common enough as an important element in the preaching and teaching of John the Baptist (Matt 3:2, 8, 11; Mark 1:4) and of Jesus (Matt 11:20–21; 12:41; Mark 1:15; etc.), as of the first disciples (Mark 6:12; Acts 2:38; 3:19; etc.), the concept of 'repentance' appears in only two other passages in the undisputed Paulines (2 Cor 7:9–10; 12:21; cf. 2 Tim 2:25; and nowhere in the Gospel or Epistles of John!). Its strongly Jewish and covenant character might provide the reason here too: 'repentance' as a concept was too much bound up with the accepted understanding of God's covenant goodness, so that Paul prefers the more widely embracing concept of 'faith' as one through which he can develop his (Christian) reinterpretation of the covenant more readily (see on 1:17). Hence it is the more 'Jewish' language of goodness and repentance (χρηστότης, μετάνοια) which Paul uses here rather than the more distinctively 'Christian' language of grace (see on 1:5) and faith (χάρις, πίστις; see also on 4:7–8."

[James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 82.]

rized by the action oriented τὸ χρηστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ. These traits are depicted as being in great abundance with God by τοῦ πλούτου.

The concepts presented are as follows:

a) τῆς χρηστότητος αὐτοῦ

The noun χρηστότης (5x in Rom) denotes upright actions toward others that express helpfulness and benefit. The qualities of kindness and generosity are denoted by such actions. The personal pronoun in the genitive of possession usage here αὐτοῦ simply goes back to τοῦ θεοῦ and thus is translated as **His**. Thus God is poised to act beneficially toward humanity, if it will let Him.

b) καὶ τῆς ἀνοχῆς

But also present is God's ἀνοχή (2x in Rom) which denotes God's action of being forbearing toward His enemies. Although He could immediately completely annihilate them in a single act of wrath, He holds back until full opportunity is given for repentance.

c) καὶ τῆς μακροθυμίας

Finally these above traits come together in μακροθυμία (2x in Rom), which denotes the ability to remain tranquil under provocation. Although the urge to strike back is present, the stronger trait is the ability to restrain oneself from doing so until the proper moment.

All three of these traits are defined as τοῦ πλούτου, from πλοῦτος. This noun in literal meaning references material wealth. But the figurative use here denotes abundance in large quantities. These three traits of God are present in abundant quantity with God. He is not stingy at any of these points.

d) τὸ χρηστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ

The three traits are now summarized under the one label of the substantival adjective χρηστὸν from χρηστός, -ή, -όν. This quality of kindness is explained by Jesus in Luke 6:35 in the loving your enemies pericope (vv. 27–36) of the Sermon,

πλὴν ἀγαπᾶτε τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ὑμῶν καὶ ἀγαθοποιεῖτε καὶ δανίζετε μηδὲν ἀπελπίζοντες· καὶ ἔσται ὁ μισθὸς ὑμῶν πολὺς, καὶ ἔσθε υἱοὶ ὑψίστου, **ὅτι αὐτοὺς χρηστός ἐστὶν ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀχαρίστους καὶ πονηροὺς.**

But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.

This in no way implies that God will not take punishing actions against sinners. But it does underscore that God's disposition is to hold off as long as possible in order to give maximum opportunity for repentance. But

the disdain of the moral supremacist for God's delay in pouring out His wrath merely compounds the problems for the elitist. He mistakenly assumes that he is exempt from this wrath, perhaps basing his thinking on God's delay in pouring out punishment. Thus the elitist treats the qualities of God with contempt, as having no value or legitimacy, as καταφρονεῖς asserts.

10.3.3.2.1.2 Accountability, 2:5-11

5 κατὰ δὲ τὴν σκληρότητά σου καὶ ἀμετανόητον καρδίαν θησαυρίζεις σεαυτῷ ὀργὴν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὀργῆς καὶ ἀποκαλύψεως δικαιοκρισίας τοῦ θεοῦ 6 ὃς ἀποδώσει ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ· 7 τοῖς μὲν καθ' ὑπομονὴν ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν ζητοῦσιν ζῶν αἰώνιον, 8 τοῖς δὲ ἐξ ἐριθείας καὶ ἀπειθοῦσιν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πειθομένοις δὲ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ ὀργὴ καὶ θυμός. 9 θλίψις καὶ στενοχωρία ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ψυχὴν ἀνθρώπου τοῦ κατεργαζομένου τὸ κακόν, Ἰουδαίου τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλλήνος· 10 δόξα δὲ καὶ τιμὴ καὶ εἰρήνη παντὶ τῷ ἐργαζομένῳ τὸ ἀγαθόν, Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλληνι· 11 οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν προσωποληψία παρὰ τῷ θεῷ.

5 But by your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. 6 For he will repay according to each one's deeds: 7 to those who by patiently doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; 8 while for those who are self-seeking and who obey not the truth but wickedness, there will be wrath and fury. 9 There will be anguish and distress for everyone who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, 10 but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. 11 For God shows no partiality.

This pericope, vv. 5-11, contextually stands as a rebuttal to the false assumptions behind the two rhetorical questions in vv. 3-4. They focus upon ὀργὴ θεοῦ, God's wrath, but center now on the eschatological Day of wrath, ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὀργῆς. The internal thought flow moves in the two Greek sentences (vv. 5-8 and v. 9-11). The imaginary diatribe partner is still the main target of Paul's comments and here he seeks to instruct this person regarding this eschatological day of wrath. Of course, this imaginary person is merely the moral supremacist who might be a part of the house church groups and beyond that to those outside the church in the city whom the members knew as family and acquaintances.

But the flow of thought moves from the initial emphasis on the repercussions of this disdain for God's kindness will mean for the elitist on the day of judgment (v. 5). This leads to the relative clause modifier ὃς

ἀποδώσει ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ, *who will pay back each person according to his deeds*, in v. 6.

The rest of this long sentence (vv. 7-8) and the following one in vv. 9-11 are devoted to amplifying the detailed meaning of this relative clause statement. The remainder of the first sentence in vv. 7-8 is severely complex grammatically and does things impossible to do in literal translation into any modern western language. Extreme ellipsis characterizes these expressions, but the highly inflectional nature of ancient Greek makes relatively clear what goes with what. The pair of dative case participles standing in tandem but in contrast provide the main signal of what is being said.

First, there is τοῖς μὲν καθ' ὑπομονὴν ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν ζητοῦσιν, *on the one hand to those seeking glory and honor and immortality by patiently doing good* (v. 7). This participle phrase reaches back to the pronoun ἐκάστῳ, *each one*, in the relative clause. The positive side of sincere reaching out to God means that God will ἀποδώσει, *give back*, ζῶν αἰώνιον, *life eternal*.

Second, the opposite side, as established in the μὲν... δὲ contrast, is τοῖς δὲ ἐξ ἐριθείας καὶ ἀπειθοῦσιν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πειθομένοις δὲ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ, *but to those out of self-seeking who disobey the truth and obey wickedness*. But instead of two accusative case nouns matching the ζῶν above, there come ὀργὴ καὶ θυμός, *wrath and anger*, in the nominative case. Instead of ἀποδώσει with ὀργὴ καὶ θυμός as objects, they are now subjects of another verb, most likely the future form ἔσονται, *there will be*. Thus the two contrastive pairs of expression amplify what comes to each person based on their actions. But the parallel is uneven with a clear distinction in the nature of receiving actions from God on the day of wrath. Eternal life becomes ἀποδώσει, while ὀργὴ καὶ θυμός happen.³⁰

Now let's look at the details.

Getting ready for the day of wrath, vv. 5-6.

First, with the diatribe elitist in clear view, Paul describes the significance of his elitist actions for the day of wrath. κατὰ δὲ τὴν σκληρότητά σου καὶ ἀμετανόητον καρδίαν θησαυρίζεις σεαυτῷ ὀργὴν, *but in accordance to your hardness and unrepentant heart you are piling up for yourself wrath*. The preposition κατὰ with accusative case objects in this context defines the norm that determines the intensity of divine wrath poured out on the individual. The greater the norm the greater what is

³⁰The NRSV does a good job in catching this distinction.

7 to those who by patiently doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, *he will give eternal life*; 8 while for those who are self-seeking and who obey not the truth but wickedness, *there will be wrath and fury*.



measured out.³¹ Thus the greater the resistance by the moralist to the kindness of God, the more intense will be God's wrath on that individual.

The resistance of the moralist is here depicted as **hardness and unrepentance**: *τὴν σκληρότητά σου καὶ ἀμετανόητον καρδίαν*. The noun σκληρότης is only used here inside the NT but is a part of a larger word group used often in the NT and the Greek OT.³² The literal sense is of hardening of some substance.³³ This particular category of third declension Greek nouns designates a state that some process has reached, thus σκληρότης then denotes hardness. Largely due to the influence of the Luther Bibel ("nach deinem verstockten und unbußfertigen Herzen", 1545), the English expression "according to thy hardened and impenitent heart" has become a common translation pattern of *κατὰ τὴν σκληρότητά σου καὶ ἀμετανόητον καρδίαν*.³⁴ The prob-

³¹This sense is the more dominant one for the 50 uses of *κατὰ* inside Romans.

³²*παχύνω, πωρόω (πηρόω), πώρωσις (πήρωσις), σκληρός, σκληρότης, σκληροτράχηλος, σκληρύνω** σκληροκαρδία → III, 613, 25 ff. [Karl Ludwig Schmidt and Martin Anton Schmidt, "Παχύνω, Πωρόω (πηρόω), Πώρωσις (πήρωσις), Σκληρός, Σκληρότης, Σκληροτράχηλος, Σκληρύνω," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 5:1022.]

³³This group of words, which come from different stems, has to do with the so-called hardening of unbelievers, of enemies of the chosen people Israel, then of Israel itself, also of Jews as opposed to Christians, and finally of Christians themselves. The somewhat archaic word "to harden" has become especially at home, and has remained so, in this sphere of God's dealings with His people as the *ἐκκλησία* → III, 501, 20 ff.2

While the simple intr. "to harden" is common in a concrete sense, esp. physiological and medical, the intensive and mostly trans. "to harden" with its derivatives is most familiar in Bible translation and with a transf. spiritual meaning. It can also be used in pedagogical and psychological circles.3 We thus find, if less directly, the same connection between the physiological and the psychological, the medical and the ethical use, as in the Gk. equivalents.

"Luther uses 'to harden' or 'hardening' for the above group of words and their derivatives with a consistency which is hardly true of any other translation either in German or any other language:4 so *παχύνω* at Mt. 13:15 and Ac. 28:27, *πωρόω* at Jn. 12:40; R. 11:7; 2 C. 3:14; cf. also Mk. 3:5 (*πώρωσις*), *σκληρύνω* Ac. 19:9; R. 9:18; Hb. 3:8, 13, 15; 4:7; also R. 2:5 (*σκληρότης*).5 Most of the passages are OT quotations. Luther is justified in using a single word for many Greek stems by the fact that the material reference is the same, as the many variations in the textual tradition show."

[Karl Ludwig Schmidt and Martin Anton Schmidt, "Παχύνω, Πωρόω (πηρόω), Πώρωσις (πήρωσις), Σκληρός, Σκληρότης, Σκληροτράχηλος, Σκληρύνω," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 5:1022–1023.]

³⁴This deviates from the KJV tradition beginning earlier with the Geneva Bible (1560, "after thine hardness and heart that can not repent"), KJV (1900 ed, "after thy hardness and impenitent

lem here is that a Greek noun is wrongly turned into an English adjective (and German one also), despite the Vulgate's use of the Latin noun *duritiā*, *hardness*, for σκληρότητα.³⁵ The hardness of the moralist includes much more than just the deciding part, the heart. It is all encompassing of his entire life, his thinking, his deciding, his talking, his doing et als. This is Paul's point. Out of this hardness then comes the ἀμετανόητον καρδίαν, **impenitent heart**. The general hardness produces an unwillingness by the moralist to repent and acknowledge his failures to live the high moral life.

The figurative significance of σκληρότητα thus designates here a rigidity and brittleness about life and behavior. The so-called legalists and moral 'do gooders' easily come into view here, as well as the 'judgmentalists.' These are life encompassing maladies, not just decision making problems. The LXX use of this noun in Deut. 9:27 provides a good backdrop for understanding Paul's meaning here.³⁶

The phrase ἀμετανόητον καρδίαν stresses the unwillingness of the moralist to turn to God.³⁷ The ad-

heart"). The latest Luther Bibel (1984 ed., the 2017 revision is not yet complete enough to include Romans) still follows the same pattern of the 1545 LB translation with "mit deinem verstockten und unbußfertigen Herzen."

³⁵To be sure, the particular grammar structure has been taken to signify article + noun modifier + adjective modifier + noun. But this is highly unlikely and incorrectly limits the scope of σκληρότητα to impact only the heart. Clearly it is wider than this.

³⁶Deu. 9:27, LXX. μνήσθητι Αβρααμ καὶ Ἰσαακ καὶ Ἰακωβ τῶν θεραπόντων σου, οἷς ὤμοσας κατὰ σεαυτοῦ· μὴ ἐπιβλέψῃς ἐπὶ τὴν σκληρότητα τοῦ λαοῦ τούτου καὶ τὰ ἀσεβήματα καὶ τὰ ἀμαρτήματα αὐτῶν,

Remember your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; pay no attention to **the stubbornness of this people**, their wickedness and their sin,

³⁷Koine adj., firmly attested only from the imperial period, mostly in the pass. sense 'exposed to no change of mind,' 'beyond repentance or recall,' 'unshakable,' e.g., Luc. Abdicatus, 11: ἀμετανόητον ... τὴν ἀνάληψιν καὶ τὴν διαλλαγὴν βέβαιον εἶναι προσήκει, Plot. Enn., 6, 7 and 26; Vett. Val., 7 (p. 263, 16, Kroll); P. Grenf., II, 68, 3 f.: ὁμολογῶ χαρίζεσθαι σοὶ χάριτι ἀναφαιρέτω καὶ ἀμετανοήτω P. Strassb., 29, 30 f.: ὁμολογοῦμεν ... διηρησθαι (that the inheritance will be divided) πρὸς ἀλλήλους ... αὐθαρέ[τ]ως καὶ ἀμετανοήτως, and other legal pap.1 Act. in the sense of 'free from remorse' and to denote the Stoic ideal of never repenting (→ 980), Epict. Diss. Fr., 25: οὐδὲν ἄγριον δράσας ἀμετανοήτος καὶ ἀνεύθυνος διαγενήσῃ. As here the philosophical understanding of μετανοεῶ and μετάνοια gives the adj. a new meaning, so the religious understanding in Judaism (→ 991–999) and primitive Christianity (→ 999–1006) conveys to it the sense of 'one who does not convert,' 'impenitent.' Cf. on the one hand Test. G. 7:5: ἀμετανοήτος τηρεῖται εἰς αἰωνίαν κόλασιν, and on the other R. 2:5: κατὰ δὲ τὴν σκληρότητά σου καὶ ἀμετανοήτον καρδίαν θησαυρίζεις σεαυτῷ ὀργὴν ...2 The antithesis between Stoicism and Judaism or primitive Christianity in the understanding of μετάνοια (→ 980; 991 ff.; 999 ff.) is also reflected in the positive



jective ἀμετανόητος, -ον with the alpha privative prefix denotes the opposite of μετανόητος, that is, **repenting**. Note μετάνοιάν, **repentance**, in the previous verse. This word for repent from μετανοέω, i.e., the compound μετα + νοέω, emphasizes the turning around of one's thinking, in contrast to ἐπιστρέφειν with the emphasis upon turning around one's life and living. These work in tandem. This adjective with the ἀ- prefix means the opposite. But beyond the etymological meaning, the functional meaning goes deeper to defining an 'unturnable stance' in life. It's more than a momentary saying no to God. And this deep resistance to God is centered in the part of us that makes decisions, i.e., καρδίαν.

Next, **θησαυρίζεις σεαυτῷ ὀργήν, you are storing up for yourself wrath**. The core verb θησαυρίζεις, from θησαυρίζω, gives a distinctive picture of stacking up or storing up for a future day of need. The moralist is treasuring up his sense of superior morality for the day of divine wrath. His expectation is that he will have ample supply to get him through that final judgment of all humanity. But as the amplifications in vv. 7-11 will explain, that's not what is going to happen. His sense of moral superiority motivating his good works will instead turn into increased divine wrath pouring down on him as well as on his raw pagan neighbors. To put it more bluntly, Hell will burn hot for him as well as for the others. Instead of him by his good deeds storing up divine blessing in that day, what will come down on him is ὀργήν. His 'righteous deeds' will turn into God's wrath on that day. Not only will they be worthless. To his horror, they will become the means of condemning him to eternal damnation.

The general topic of ὀργή θεοῦ, **God's wrath**, introduced in 1:18 as one of the primary underlying themes in 1:18-3:31, is mentioned twelve times in Romans with five of them in these three chapters. This amounts to a third of the 36 instances of ὀργή in the NT with only six referring to human anger.³⁸ When ὀργή alludes to God in the NT, it most always references Him pouring out His wrath in final judgment upon humanity. To

assessment of ἀμετανόητος in the one case, and the negative in the other." [Johannes Behm and Ernst Würthwein, "Νοέω, Νοῦς, Νόημα, Ἀνόητος, Ἄνοια, Δυσνόητος, Διάνοια, Διάνοημα, Ἔννοια, Εὐνοέω, Εὐνοια, Κατανοέω, Μετανοέω, Μετάνοια, Ἀμετανόητος, Προνοέω, Πρόνοια, Ὑπονοέω, Ὑπόνοια, Νουθετέω, Νουθεσία," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 4:1009.]

³⁸In contrast, the alternative word θυμός is more common in the NT with 85 uses. Interestingly ὀργή is never used in the LXX but θυμός shows up 242 times translating a wide range of Hebrew words denoting both God's wrath and human anger. The likely reason is that in this earlier period of Greek ὀργή often carried a sense of revenge with it, while θυμός didn't. Gradually, however, over time this sense of revenge in ὀργή faded out of the picture.

be sure, in the OT divine wrath is not eschatological, but temporal. The Day of the Lord is an image for God judging repeatedly the nations, and His people Israel, collectively in this world.

During the intertestamental era, the concept in Judaism is extended to a last day of time judgment in connection with the anticipated Messiah. It then was merged with the concept of it becoming the transition point between this world and the coming world, either of eternal blessing for God's covenant people or of eternal condemnation for everyone else. The teaching of Jesus and of the apostles build on this core idea, but with numerous significant modifications. Thus the Jewish Christians and God-fearer Gentiles who had become Christians among Paul's initial readers would have had a clear sense of the idea of God's wrath when this letter was read in their house church gatherings.

But the Gentile Christians in the Roman church without the synagogue background would not be clueless about the idea of God's wrath. The tragic events of nature such as storms, pestilence, sickness etc. became for these folks expressions of the wrath of the gods which they had worshiped prior to become Christians.³⁹ Thus sacrifices must be made to the offended

³⁹"Wrathful deities are so vividly present to the consciousness of all peoples that attempts have even been made to explain every cult as an effort to anticipate or soften the anger of the gods. This factor is present in pre-Homeric religion.¹⁴ The pre-Greek gods of earth and of cursing, like the Furies, show by their very name ('the wrathful ones') that wrath is their nature.¹⁵ Unswerving, pitiless and terrible as nature itself, they appear always where the unbreakable ties of nature — especially of blood and family, later of law too¹⁶ — are violated and call for retribution. From the time of Homer divine wrath is in Greek mythology and poetry 'a powerful force in the interplay of the powers which determine destiny,'¹⁷ i.e., the reality which seeks to enforce itself. This anger appears in two forms in so far as it may be either anger between the gods or anger directed against man. In both cases it is a form of self-assertion and protest, whether in the clash of specific divine claims which conflict with one another (Hom. Il., 8, 407 and 421) or as a reaction against transgressions on the part of men, perhaps as arrogance in face of the gods (Il., 24, 606), the neglect of sacrifices (5, 177 f.; 9, 533–538), disregard for the priest (1, 44 and 75), for hospitality (Od., 2, 66 f.; 14, 283 f.), for honouring the dead (Il., 22, 358; Od., 11, 73) etc. All such things evoke divine wrath, which is hard to placate, which leads to no good result (Od., 3, 135 and 145) and before which it is best to yield (Il., 5, 443 f.). Anger and resentment are not here anthropomorphic characteristics but for the most part something to which the god has a kind of right in virtue of the infringement of a claim. By it order is restored, assertion made good and destiny achieved. Hence the wrath of the gods is not just blind rage. It is seeing anger, and even in regard to man, via negationis, it confers dignity on him by marking him out or putting him in the limits set for him, thus making him what he is.

"At first this was not expressed by ὀργή, which is not a Homeric word, but by χόλος,¹⁸ κότος,¹⁹ and especially by a word which comes from the sacral sphere and is almost exclusively reserved for it, namely, μῆνις²⁰ and its associated verbs.²¹ Only in



tragedy does ὀργή come to be used for the wrath of the gods.²² It is frequently used by Euripides in this sense: ὅταν γὰρ ὀργή δαιμόνων βλάβητινά, | τοῦτ' αὐτὸ πρῶτον, ἐξαφαιρεῖται φρενῶν | τὸν νοῦν τὸν ἐσθλόν· εἰς δὲ τὴν χεῖρῳ τρέπει | γνώμην, ἵν' εἰδῆ μηδὲν ὦν ἀμαρτάνει, Adespota Fr., 296 (TGF, 896).²³ Whereas in Hesiod (Op., 47, 53) Zeus in his anger against Prometheus causes the punishment to follow the fault immediately, for Solon it is a sign of the power and greatness of the god that he does not punish at once. There is a distinction between divine and human wrath: τοιαύτη Ζητὸς πέλεται τίσις, οὐδ' ἐφ' ἐκάστῳ ὥσπερ θνητὸς ἀνὴρ γίγνεται ὀξύχολος, Solon Fr., 1, 25 f. (Diehl).²⁴ With reference to ὀργαί (though this is used here in the broad sense a. → 383), Eur. Ba., 1348 says that it is not seemly that gods should resemble mortals: ὀργὰς πρέπει θεοῦς οὐχ ὁμοιοῦσθαι βροτοῖς. The ethical rational concept of θεοπρεπές, which was discovered by Xenophanes, is directed especially against the μυθεύματα of the poets, who depict the dwelling-place of the gods ὡς τοιαύτης τινὸς τῷ μακαρίῳ καὶ ἀθανάτῳ διαγωγῆς μάλιστα προπούσης, αὐτοὺς δὲ τοὺς θεοὺς ταραχῆς καὶ δυσμενείας καὶ ὀργῆς ἄλλων τε μεσοῦς παθῶν ἀποφαίνοντες οὐδ' ἀνθρώποις νοῦν ἔχουσι προσηκόντων, Plut. Pericl., 39 (I, 173 d–e).²⁵ Criticism of myth is raised especially in the philosophical demand that by its true nature the θεῖον must be free from every πάθος: δόγμα μέντοι φιλοσόφων ... ἀπαθὲς εἶναι τὸ θεῖον, Sext. Emp. Pyrrh. Hyp., I, 162. Cicero can thus say that freedom from anger is common to the concept of God in all the philosophical schools: *num iratum timemus Iovem? At hoc quidem commune est omnium philosophorum ... numquam nec irasci deum nec nocere*, Off., III, 102.26 Epicurus begins the Κύρια δόξα in 1. with the affirmation (Fr., 139): τὸ μακάριον καὶ ἄφθαρτον ... οὔτε ὀργαῖς οὔτε χάρισι συνέχεται· ἐν ἀσθενεῖ γὰρ πᾶν τὸ τοιοῦτον.²⁷ The same contrast between ὀργή and χάρις (Demosth. Or., 19, 92) may be seen in Plut. Suav. Viv. Epic., 22 (II, 1102e): οὐ τοίνυν ὀργαῖς καὶ χάρισι συνέχεται τὸ θεῖον ἅμα, ὅτι χαρίζεσθαι καὶ βοηθεῖν πέφυκεν, ὀργίζεσθαι δὲ καὶ κακῶς ποιεῖν οὐ πέφυκεν. The distinction from Epicurus is that while the Stoic, too, denies ὀργή, he clings to the χαρίζεσθαι and βοηθεῖν, the εὐμένεια of deity: θεὸς τὸν πάντα κόσμον διοικεῖ μετ' εὐμενείας καὶ χωρὶς ὀργῆς ἀπάσης, Ep. Ar., 254.²⁸

"We should not allow the teachings of the philosophical schools to create a false impression. In fact, they show how widespread must have been the idea, not only in poetry but also in popular belief, that the wrath of the gods demands expiation and expresses itself especially in punishments. Plato speaks of particularly severe sicknesses and sufferings which for various reasons fell on this or that race as a result of ancient divine wrath, and which could be healed only by the μανία of consecrated priests who had recourse to vows and prayers, to ministerial acts, to rites of expiation and dedication.²⁹ Otherwise Lucretius would not have contended so passionately for liberation from the related anxiety, cf. De Rerum Nature, V, 1194 ff.; VI, 71 f.; Cic. Nat. Deor., I, 17 (45): *metus omnis a vi atque ira deorum pulsus esset*, nor would Plutarch have needed to wrestle with the sceptical question: αἱ δὲ τῶν θεῶν ὀργαὶ τίνοι λόγῳ παραχρημα δύομεναι καθάπερ ἔνιοι τῶν ποταμῶν εἶθ' ὕστερον ἐπ' ἄλλους ἀναφερόμεναι πρὸς ἐσχάτας συμφορὰς τελευτῶσιν; (Ser. Num. Pun., 12 [II, 557e]). For even if God punishes, He does not act out of anger: οὐ γὰρ ἀμύνεται τὸν ἀδικήσαντα κακῶς παθῶν οὐδ' ὀργίζεται τῷ ἀρπάσαντι βιασθεῖς οὐδὲ μισεῖ τὸν μοιχὸν ὕβρισθεῖς, ἀλλ' ἰατρείας ἕνεκα ... κολάζει³⁰ πολλάκις, Plut. Ser. Num. Pun., 20 (II, 562d). Plutarch's main attack is on the popular mythological tradition, but he is also against cultic ideas in which ὀργή and ὀργίζεσθαι have a firm place as

the judgment of the gods in spite of philosophical criticism. Hence Paus. can say of the primitive period: οἱ γὰρ δὴ τότε ἄνθρωποι ξένοι καὶ ὁμοτράπεζοι θεοῖς ἦσαν ὑπὸ δικαιοσύνης καὶ εὐσεβείας, καὶ σθισιν ἐναργῶς ἀπῆντα παρὰ τῶν θεῶν τιμὴ τε οὖσιν ἀγαθοῖς καὶ ἀδικήσασιν ὁσαύτως ἢ ὀργή (VIII, 2, 4); his reference is to the judicial ὀργή of the gods, but the expressions alternate, with no very clear distinction of meaning, when he goes on to say in 5 that later it was different because οὔτε θεὸς ἐγίνετο οὐδεὶς ἐτι ἐξ ἀνθρώπου, ... καὶ ἀδίκους τὸ μῆνιμα τὸ ἐκ τῶν θεῶν ὄψε τε καὶ ἀπελθοῦσιν ἐνθὲνδε ἀπόκειται. The same alternation of ὀργή and μῆνιμα or μῆνις, which is the true word for the wrath of deity that demands cultic propitiation,³¹ may be seen, e.g., in the aetiological myth of Demeter Erinys in Oncaï, with whom Poseidon lived in the form of a stallion: τὴν Δήμητρα ἐπὶ τῷ συμβάντι ἔχειν ὀργίλως,³² χρόνῳ δὲ ὕστερον τοῦ τε θυμοῦ παύσασθαι ... ἐπὶ τούτῳ καὶ ἐπικλήσεις τῇ θεῷ γεγόνασι, τοῦ μνημίματος μὲν ἕνεκα Ἐρινύς, ὅτι τὸ θυμῷ χρῆσθαι καλοῦσιν ἐρινύειν οἱ Ἀρκάδες, Paus., VIII, 25, 6.³³ ὀργίζεσθαι is an equivalent of δαιμόνιος χόλος in Dio Chrys. Or., 33, 50: Λημνίων ταῖς γυναῖξιν τὴν Ἀφροδίτην ὀργισθεῖσαν λέγουσι διαφθεῖραι τὰς μασχάλας.

"On the one side, then, the ὀργή θεοῦ is an essentially mythological concept, e.g., when it is said of Artemis in relation to Actaion: ὁμολογουμένη καὶ δικαίαν ὀργὴν ἔσχε πρὸς αὐτὸν ἢ θεός (Diod. S., 4, 81, 5), or when it is told of Orpheus: τὸν μὲν Διόνυσον οὐκ ἐτίμα ... ὅθεν ὁ Διόνυσος ὀργισθεὶς αὐτῷ ἔπεμψε τὰς Βασσαρίδας who tore Orpheus in pieces.³⁴ On the other side, however, the equation with the tt. μῆνιμα or μῆνις in aetiological legends, and statements like Apollodor. Bibliotheca, II, 1, 3 (οὐκ ἐπισπᾶσθαι τὴν ἀπὸ τῶν θεῶν ὀργὴν γινομένουσ ὄρκους ὑπὲρ ἔρωτος) in later Gk. show at least that there were solid connections with the cultus.³⁵ Paus., I, 32, 4 tells of an appearance by night at the grave of Miltiades. Anyone who goes there deliberately ἐς ἐναργὴ θέαν does not come away unpunished, ἀνηκόῳ δὲ ὄντι καὶ ἄλλως συμβᾶν οὐκ ἔστι ἐκ τῶν δαιμόνων ὀργή.³⁶ In a burial ordinance on a 3rd cent. inscr. any who offend against it are threatened for their ἀσεβεῖν with the ὀργή μεγάλη τοῦ μεγάλου Διός, Ditt. Syll.3, 1237, 5. With a similar reference to the δαιμόνων ὀργή καὶ θεῶν ἀπάντων King Antiochus of Commagene (1st cent. B.C.) seeks to protect for all time the cultic statute issued by him, Ditt. Or., 383, 210.

"Especially in extraordinary natural events like pestilence, storm and hail, deformity and sickness, popular belief sees the operation of the ὀργή of gods and demons: λέγουσι δ' οὖν τινες λοιμοὺς τε καὶ χαλάζας καὶ θυέλλας καὶ τὰ παραπλήσια ... κατὰ τινα δαιμόνων ἢ καὶ ἀγγέλων οὐκ ἀγαθῶν ὀργὴν φιλεῖν γίνεσθαι, Cl. Al. Strom., VI, 3, 31, 1. Thus in Cleonai magi can avert such disasters by sacrifices and magical songs. Cl. Al., who tells us this (ibid., 2; cf. Plut. Ser. Num. Pun., 12 [II, 557 a–e]), naturally accepts the philosophical view: οὐκ ὀργίζεται τὸ θεῖον, Paed., I, 8, 68, 3, and censures the Greeks for whom the gods καθάπερ ὀξύχολον γραῖδιον³⁷ εἰς ὀργὴν ἐρεθιζόμενον ἐκπικραίνονται ἢ φασί (Hom. Il., 9, 533–538) τὴν Ἄρτεμιν δι' Οἰνέα Αἰτωλοῖς ὀργισθῆναι (Strom., VII, 4, 23, 2), so that men δεισιδαίμονες περὶ τοὺς εὐοργήτους (sc. θεοῦς) γινόμενοι πάντα σημεῖα ἡγούοντα εἶναι τὰ συμβαίνοντα καὶ κακῶν αἰτία (ibid., 24, 1; cf. Tac. Historiae, II, 1). The final thought displays a religious attitude such as is found especially among the Romans in their understanding of the *ira deum*."

[Hermann Kleinknecht, Grether Oskar, "Ὀργή, Ὀργίζομαι, Ὀργίλος, Παροργίζω, Παροργισμός," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 5:385–389.]



deity in order to placate his wrath. This starting point of perception of the anger of deities, of course, would undergo significant modification in Christian teaching. But this concept gave to these Roman Christians special interest in Paul's words about God's wrath. None of the believers in the church would have been inclined to deny the idea of God's wrath. But Paul's defining it as part of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ brought a refreshingly new idea into the picture. God's pouring out His wrath is an affirmation of His just way of treating sinful humanity.

Now what is this punishment based on? In 1:18-32, it comes upon wickedness expressed in the forms of idolatry, sexual misbehavior and a long list of wrong actions. But now in 2:1-11, it comes upon the moralist in their midst who by a higher standard of morality considers himself superior to raw humanity and thus exempt from any divine wrath. It makes no difference whether this sense of moral elitism is derived from philosophy or from the Jewish Torah. Such individuals have no way to escape the same wrath of God as is coming to the fully pagan neighbors around them.

Further, *ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὀργῆς καὶ ἀποκαλύψεως δικαιοκρισίας τοῦ θεοῦ ὃς ἀποδώσει ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ, in the day of wrath and uncovering of the righteous decree of God who will pay back to each one accord to his deeds.* This lengthy expression completes the first half of the sentence in vv. 5-6, with vv. 7-11 completing the sentence. The focal point here is the day of wrath which at the same time is an uncovering of the righteous decree of God. The structuring of the prepositional phrase, with *preposition + dative noun + genitive noun + genitive noun*, sets up the idea of one concept viewed two ways for the genitive nouns.

The phrase ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὀργῆς projects an eschatological day of judgment. This specific phrase is especially prominent in Zephaniah.⁴⁰ He mixes together both a

⁴⁰Zeph. 1:15-18. 15 ἡμέρα ὀργῆς ἢ ἡμέρα ἐκείνη, ἡμέρα θλίψεως καὶ ἀνάγκης, ἡμέρα ἁωρίας καὶ ἀφανισμοῦ, ἡμέρα σκότους καὶ γνόφου, ἡμέρα νεφέλης καὶ ὀμίχλης,† 16 ἡμέρα σάλπιγγος καὶ κραυγῆς ἐπὶ τὰς πόλεις τὰς ὄχυράς καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς γωνίας τὰς ὑψηλάς.† 17 καὶ ἐκθλίψω τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, καὶ πορεύσονται ὡς τυφλοί, ὅτι τῷ κυρίῳ ἐξήμαρτον· καὶ ἐκχεεῖ τὸ αἷμα αὐτῶν ὡς χοῦν καὶ τὰς σάρκας αὐτῶν ὡς βόλβιτα.† 18 καὶ τὸ ἀργύριον αὐτῶν καὶ τὸ χρυσιον αὐτῶν οὐ μὴ δύνηται ἐξελεῖσθαι αὐτοὺς ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὀργῆς κυρίου, καὶ ἐν πυρὶ ζήλους αὐτοῦ καταναλωθήσεται πᾶσα ἡ γῆ, διότι συντέλειαν καὶ σπουδὴν ποιήσει ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς κατοικοῦντας τὴν γῆν.†

15 That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, 16 a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements. 17 I will bring such distress upon people that they shall walk like the blind; because they have sinned against the Lord, their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung. 18 Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to save them on the day of the Lord's wrath; in the fire of his passion the whole

temporal judgment, the destruction of Judah, and a last day destruction of the nations of the world.⁴¹ But the prophet's very graphic portrayal of the pouring out of God's wrath (also cf. Zeph. 2:2-3; 3:8) provides a vivid backdrop for Paul's depiction here in Romans. Added also are Isa. 13:9; 37:3; Lam 1:12, et als.

A variety of labels are used for the core concept of the Day of the Lord by the apostle Paul. In 2:8 with the negative amplification of ἀποδώσει ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ (v.6), *he will repay each one according to his deeds*, Paul declares to the wicked there will be ὀργὴ καὶ θυμὸς, *wrath and anger*. Then in the chiasmic sequencing of continued emphasis on the negative side of that coming experience Paul declares θλίψις καὶ στενοχωρία ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ψυχὴν ἀνθρώπου τοῦ κατεργαζομένου τὸ κακόν, *an-*

earth shall be consumed; for a full, a terrible end he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.

⁴¹"The form of 1:7-2:3 is that of a judgment oracle made up of several small segments. Kapelrud and Sabottka believe that it was given in one speech by Zephaniah. Kapelrud identifies some phrases such as 'in that day,' or 'in that time' in 1:8, 9, 10, 12 as being added by a disciple. But for the most part the whole passage (1:7-2:3) was delivered by Zephaniah on one occasion. Some scholars such as Gunkel and Wolff want to isolate the smallest unit of speech and see some redactor weaving them together. Kapelrud says, 'Our interest is not directed towards finding the least, indissoluble elements of his message. Instead we want to see this message in its life situation, see what it meant and how it worked' (Message 29).

"Concerning the idea that the prophet spoke only isolated and disjointed sentences Kapelrud remarks, 'It is about time now to get rid of the picture of the prophet as some kind of a maniac, appearing on the temple square or the market place more or less in ecstasy, crying out a few words and then disappearing again. If we were to believe most of the literary analyses of the prophet's books, this is what would have appeared to have happened' (Message 29).

"Even though 1:7-2:3 was probably all one speech, there are divisions within it. It has one dominating and unifying theme: 'the day of Yahweh.' It opens with an appeal for silence before the Lord God יהוה יהי אדני (the only place the combined name occurs in the book). The appeal for silence is followed by a warning that the day of Yahweh is near. Although it will come on everyone, certain groups in Jerusalem will make up Yahweh's sacrifice: the princes and the king's sons; those who have adopted foreign customs and religions; and the indifferent and stagnant men (1:12). A fuller description of the day of Yahweh is given in 1:14-18. It will be a day of darkness, distress, and gloom. It will be a day of war, blaring trumpets and battle cries, bloodshed, helplessness and death. In 2:1-3 Zephaniah calls on his people to gather together and seek the Lord, but he has no word of assurance for them. He says, 'Perhaps, if you seek righteousness and humility you may be hidden in the day of wrath' (2:3).

"What is the setting of this oracle? Gaster may be correct in assuming that it was delivered at the temple in Jerusalem during the feast of harvest (âsif), but we should not consider Zephaniah a cultic prophet even though he used cultic language such as sacrifice, priests, 'cut off,' and so on (cf. Kapelrud, 51)."

[Ralph L. Smith, *Micah-Malachi*, vol. 32, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 129-130.]



guish and distress will be upon every individual of humanity who is doing evil (v. 9). Then in 3:5b, again when speaking of the coming judgment (3:6) Paul asks the rhetorical question expecting a no answer: μή ἄδικος ὁ θεὸς ὁ ἐπιφέρων τὴν ὀργήν; **God who inflicts wrath is not unjust, is He?** In 5:9, in speaking of the deliverance of believers, he depicts it in part as deliverance from God's wrath, intending the Day of Judgment and eternal damnation: πολλῶ οὖν μᾶλλον δικαιοθέντες νῦν ἐν τῷ αἵματι αὐτοῦ σωθησόμεθα δι' αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς ὀργῆς, **Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God.** In 9:22 as a part of a long rhetorical question (vv. 22-23) Paul speak of God withholding His wrath until the day of judgment as a sign of His patience with the wicked: εἰ δὲ θέλων ὁ θεὸς ἐνδείξασθαι τὴν ὀργὴν καὶ γνωρίσαι τὸ δυνατὸν αὐτοῦ ἦνεγκεν ἐν πολλῇ μακροθυμίᾳ σκευὴ ὀργῆς κατηρτισμένα εἰς ἀπώλειαν, **What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience the objects of wrath that are made for destruction;** It is very clear that in Paul's thinking just within the letter to the Romans that he had a clearly developed understanding of the day of wrath linked as an event at the end of human history in which the wicked will become objects of the overwhelmingly severe outpouring of His wrath. Related to this is his comment in 2:16 about that day: ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὅτε κρίνει ὁ θεὸς τὰ κρυπτὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου διὰ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, **on the day when, according to my gospel, God, through Jesus Christ, will judge the secret thoughts of all.**

And this thinking about God's wrath in this letter is consistent with his comments elsewhere in his letters.

1 Cor. 1:8, ὃς καὶ βεβαιώσει ὑμᾶς ἕως τέλους ἀνεγκλήτους **ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ**, who [Christ] will also strengthen you to the end so that you may be blameless **in the Day of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

1 Cor. 5:5, παραδοῦναι τὸν τοιοῦτον τῷ σατανᾷ εἰς ὄλεθρον τῆς σαρκός, ἵνα τὸ πνεῦμα σωθῇ **ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου**, to hand such a one over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that the spirit may be save **in the Day of the Lord.**

Phil. 1:6, πεποιθῶς αὐτὸ τοῦτο, ὅτι ὁ ἐναρξάμενος ἐν ὑμῖν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἐπιτελέσει **ἄχρι ἡμέρας Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ**, being very confident of this very thing, that the one who began in you a good work will carry it through **to the Day of Christ Jesus.**

Phil. 1:10, εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς τὰ διαφέροντα, ἵνα ᾗτε εἰλικρινεῖς καὶ ἀπρόσκοποι **εἰς ἡμέραν Χριστοῦ**, to help you determine the best things so that you may be pure and blameless **to the Day of Christ.**

Phil. 2:16, λόγον ζωῆς ἐπέχοντες, εἰς καύχημα ἐμοὶ **εἰς ἡμέραν Χριστοῦ**, ὅτι οὐκ εἰς κενὸν ἔδραμον οὐδέ

εἰς κενὸν ἐκοπίασα, holding fast to the Word of life for me to be able to boast **on the Day of Christ** that I did not in vain run nor had run in vain.

1 Thess. 1:10, καὶ ἀναμένειν τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν, ὃν ἤγειρεν ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν, Ἰησοῦν τὸν ῥυόμενον ἡμᾶς **ἐκ τῆς ὀργῆς τῆς ἐρχομένης**, and to await His Son out of Heaven whom He raised out of the dead, Jesus the one who rescued us **from the coming wrath.**

1 Thess. 5:2, αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἀκριβῶς οἶδατε ὅτι **ἡμέρα κυρίου** ὡς κλέπτῃς ἐν νυκτὶ οὕτως ἔρχεται, for you yourself know very well that **the Day of the Lord** will come thusly like a thief in the night.

1 Thess. 5:9, ὅτι οὐκ ἔθετο ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς **εἰς ὀργὴν** ἀλλ' εἰς περιποίησιν σωτηρίας διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, **because God has not destined us for wrath** but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The return of Christ signals the final judgment of humanity for the determination of eternal destinies. For those outside Christ this means divine wrath which translates into eternal damnation.

The picture then emerges very clearly. Paul's Jewish heritage, particularly the prophetic section of the Hebrew Bible, and Zephaniah in particular, provides the foundation for his thinking about the wrath of God. It is both a temporally experienced reality and a last day of time experience. In the first three chapters of Romans the same perspective is set forth, but with a shifting emphasis to the eschatological side of the emphasis. The uniquely Christian aspect is that this day of wrath at the end is an integral part of Paul's Gospel message as is set forth in 1:16-17. It demonstrates clearly the righteousness of God (1:17) in that God's just treatment of the wicked is affirmed unquestionably. Wonderfully liberating for the righteous believer is the message that a holy God does indeed deal with evil and wickedness and through faith commitment to Christ provides a marvelous deliverance from this all consuming wrath at the end to this faithful believer.

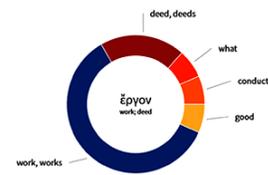
Also **καὶ ἀποκαλύψεως δικαιοκρισίας τοῦ θεοῦ, and of uncovering of the righteous decree of God.** This second genitive case noun ἀποκαλύψεως means **a day of uncovering.** The noun ἀποκαλύψεως from ἀποκάλυψις is connected to the verb ἀποκαλύπτω found in 1:17, 18 in the present passive ἀποκαλύπτεται. The present tense verb set up the uncovering process as ongoing discovery of both God's righteousness and God's wrath. The use of the noun here in 2:5 projects the climax of this discovery as the day of wrath in eschatological final judgment.

What is discovered via God's uncovering action is δικαιοκρισίας τοῦ θεοῦ, **God's righteous decree.** This sin-

gle use of δικαιοκρισία⁴² in the entire NT is a part of the word group δίκη, δίκαιος, δικαιοσύνη, δικαίω, δικαίωμα, δικαίωσις, δικαιοκρισία, which means that δικαιοκρισία is related to δικαιοσύνη (32x in Rom), δίκαιος (7x in Rom), δικαίω (15x in Rom), δικαίωμα (5x in Rom), and δικαίωσις (2x in Rom). Add to this list should also be ἄδικος, -ον (1x in Rom), ἐκδικέω (1x in Rom), and ἐκδίκησις (1x in Rom). The extensive role of this word group throughout the letter dramatically underscores the rightness of every action of God in judging and punishing wicked humanity. This very late and seldom used word in ancient Greek δικαιοκρισία is a compound form made up of δικαιο + κρισία literally meaning **just judgment**. This is the sense of the use in 2 Thess. 1:5 of the two words with ἔνδειγμα τῆς **δικαίας κρίσεως** τοῦ θεοῦ. It captures well in a single word the depiction of 2:2 with τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστὶν κατὰ ἀλήθειαν ἐπὶ τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντας, **the judgment of God is according to Truth upon those practicing such things**. This most likely accounts for Paul's use in 2:5 of this rare word in ancient Greek. Thus δικαιοκρισία here links the thinking back to the central point in 2:2. The return of Christ setting up the Day of Judgment will be the discovering of the correctness of God's judgment in pouring out His wrath upon the unbelieving wicked of humanity. For the moral elitist who has spurned the patience of God in calling him to repentance there will be the shocking discovery that his hypocrisy and contempt for the pagans around him will bring down God's wrath upon him in appropriate severity as well. No escaping this divine wrath is possible.

For one living in a first century Roman society such affirmation had essentially a positive tone. The human court systems were notoriously corrupt and verdicts rendered by almost all magistrates all the way to the emperor as the court of final appeal always depended upon how much bribe money the defendants could

⁴²"δικαιοκρισία is righteous judgment as the quality of a δίκαιος κριτής.¹ The word is very rare and late. The earliest examples occur in Jewish Hellenistic literature. a. Test. L. 3:2: ἐν τῇ δικαιοκρισίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ; 15:2: λήψεσθε αἰσχύνην αἰώνιον παρὰ τῆς δικαιοκρισίας τοῦ θεοῦ; both with reference to the last judgment. Cf. materially from the same background, En. 27:3; 60:6; 93:14, except that here κρίσις is not expressly presented as a divine quality, as in δικαιοκρισία. On the other hand, God is personally called δικαιοκρίτης: 2 Macc. 12:41; Sib., 3, 704. The same word is found in P. Ryl., 113, 35 (2nd cent. A.D.). b. Hos. 6:5 E 1 (quinta of the Hexapla) (for τῷ πῶ). LXX B τὸ κρίμα μου.² c. The remaining examples are from a later period: Hephæstio Astrologus, III, 34 (4th cent. A.D.).³ P. Oxy., I, 71 col. 1, 3 (written request, 303 A.D.): εὐελπις ὦν τῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ σοῦ μεγέθους δικαιοκρισίας τυχεῖν; VI, 904, 2 (petition, 5th cent. A.D.); P. Flor., I, 88, 26 (3rd cent. A.D.)." [Gottlob Schrenk, "Δίκη, Δίκαιος, Δικαιοσύνη, Δικαίω, Δικαίωμα, Δικαίωσις, Δικαιοκρισία," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:224–225.]



work | 9 of 15
 Ro 2:27 Then what becomes of boasting? It is excluded. By what law? By that of works? No, but by the law of faith.
 Ro 2:28 For we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law.
 Ro 4:2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.
 Ro 4:6 So also David speaks of the blessedness of those to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works:
 Ro 9:12 not by works but by his call she was told; "The elder shall serve the younger."
 Ro 9:32 Why not? Because they did not strive for it on the basis of faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone.
 Ro 11:6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace would no longer be grace.
 Ro 13:12 The night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light;
 Ro 14:20 Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for you to make others fall by what you eat;
 deed | 3 of 15
 Ro 2:26 For he will repay according to each one's deeds.
 Ro 2:20 For "no human being will be justified in his sight" by deeds prescribed by the law, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin.
 Ro 15:18 For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to win obedience from the Gentiles, by word and deed,
 what | 1 of 15
 Ro 2:15 They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, to which their own conscience also bears witness; and their conflicting thoughts will accuse or perhaps excuse them
 conduct | 1 of 15
 Ro 13:2 For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Do you wish to have no fear of the authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive its approval;

muster together. True justice, i.e., fairness and equitable treatment, hardly existed in the human courts.⁴³ In the Greek and Roman religious traditions the gods were little better in their treatment of humanity than the human judges. For the peasants and slaves who made up well over 80% of the population, just treatment was not something to be expected, by either humans or deities. Thus Paul's assertion of the absolute justness of God's sentencing of 'defendants' in the Day of Judgment was essentially a positive message, particularly for the believers in the house church groups in Rome where these words were read and extensively discussed. One of the historic appeals of the Jewish religion to non-Jewish in the ancient world was the emphasis upon God's righteousness and the much higher standard of living by those devoted to this God.⁴⁴ To those out of this background, Paul's words were indeed τὸ εὐαγγέλιον as δύναμις θεοῦ (1:16).

Finally, **ὅς ἀποδώσει ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ, who will give back to each one according to his deeds.** This adjective modifying relative clause that is attached

⁴³One must remember that no system of prisons existed in the ancient world among any ethnic group. Only jails as holding tanks for individuals scheduled to appear before some judge were found. Thus sentences in the trials of defendants meant either acquittal or a guilty verdict which almost always meant execution. Aristocrats with lots of money normally bribed their way into acquittal verdicts. Peasants and slaves most of the time were sentenced to execution. For just a small segment of the super rich and powerful, a sentence of banishment to remote islands off the Greek coast such as Patmos became a rare option. But such was very expensive to the government and meant the confiscation of the defendants property and wealth in order to cover the costs of such banishment. The apostle John's imprisonment on Patmos tells you a lot about the financial resources of his very wealthy Jewish family.

⁴⁴Consequently this message of God's righteousness has a very different meaning to Christians in Iraq and Syria trying to survive in the ISIS controlled regions. To know of God's justice in the face of the extreme injustice being meted out by their ISIS rulers enables them to grasp far better Paul's words than most of us in western society can.

to θεοῦ via the masculine singular pronoun ὅς functions to set up the lengthy expansion elements found in vv. 7-11. The relative clause asserts in axiomatic expression the foundational principle of God's righteous judgment. Then the expansion elements in vv. 7-11 build a detailed elaboration of this core principle.⁴⁵

The background of this stated principle comes from Psalm 62:12 (LXX 61:13)⁴⁶ and Proverbs 24:12.⁴⁷ It had been extensively cited across Hellenistic Jewish writings by Paul's day.⁴⁸ Likely it was that which the Jewish moralist would have appealed to in the understanding that τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ, *his deeds*, meant Torah obedience. But the very detailed amplification in vv. 7-11 reveals a different understanding of this principle by the apostle Paul. The apostle repeats this principle elsewhere in his writings:

2 Cor 5:10, τοὺς γὰρ πάντας ἡμᾶς φανερωθῆναι δεῖ ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ βήματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἵνα *κομισῆται*

⁴⁵The very complex literary structure and literary setting of v. 6 with vv. 7-10 and v. 11 will be explored in the exegesis below.

⁴⁶Ps. 62:11b-12 (LXX, 61:13). ὅτι τὸ κράτος τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ σοί, κύριε, τὸ ἔλεος, *ὅτι σὺ ἀποδώσεις ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ*. *that power belongs to God, and steadfast love belongs to you, O Lord. For you repay to all according to their work.*

⁴⁷Prov. 24:12. ἐὰν δὲ εἴπῃς Οὐκ οἶδα τοῦτον, γίνωσκε ὅτι κύριος καρδίας πάντων γινώσκει, καὶ ὁ πλάσας πνοὴν πᾶσιν αὐτὸς οἶδεν πάντα, *ὃς ἀποδίδωσιν ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ*. † if you say, "Look, we did not know this" — does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who keeps watch over your soul know it? *And will he not repay all according to their deeds?*

⁴⁸"This is intended as a direct quotation of an established principle of Jewish faith, with the formulation of Ps 62:12 (LXX 61:13) and Prov 24:12 at the forefront of Paul's mind:

Psalms	σὺ ἀποδώσεις	
Proverbs	ὃς ἀποδίδωσιν	ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ.
Romans	ὃς ἀποδώσει	

but see also Job 34:11; Jer 17:10; Hos 12:2; Sir 16:12–14; 1 Enoch 100.7; Jos. As. 28.3; Ps-Philo, Lib. Ant. 3.10. It is important to note that the principle is embraced no less by the first Christians (cf. Matt 16:27; 2 Cor 5:10; Col 3:25; 2 Tim 4:14; 1 Pet 1:17; Rev 2:23; etc.; see further Heiligenthal, 172–75). As such it provides an interesting example of how the same principle could be read differently within a different framework or pattern of religious thought. Paul's typical Jewish interlocutor would probably assume that in his own case the works in question were his faithful practice of his covenant obligations, including his acts of charity and his observance of the ritual law (cf. again Tob 4:9–11; Pss. Sol. 9:3–5) — precisely the presupposition which Paul wants to challenge in this chapter, whereas Paul would understand the principle in terms of what he would see and intend as the more universal and more fundamental 'work' of trusting in God through Jesus Christ ('the obedience of faith' — 1:5). In contrast, simply to deny that Paul demonstrates here 'a rabbinic works theology' (as in Synozik, 81) is to miss the point and to force Paul's dialectic between grace and judgment into an antithesis which throws his theology into confusion (as the typical confusion regarding the function of chap. 2 within Paul's theology clearly shows)."

[James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 85.]

ἕκαστος τὰ διὰ τοῦ σώματος πρὸς ἃ ἔπραξεν, εἴτε ἀγαθὸν εἴτε φαῦλον. For all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that *each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body*, whether good or evil.

Col 3:23-25, 23 ὃ ἐὰν ποιῆτε, ἐκ ψυχῆς ἐργάζεσθε ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ οὐκ ἀνθρώποις, 24 εἰδότες ὅτι ἀπὸ κυρίου ἀπολήψεσθε τὴν ἀνταπόδοσιν τῆς κληρονομίας. τῷ κυρίῳ Χριστῷ δουλεύετε· 25 *ὁ γὰρ ἀδικῶν κομισεται ὃ ἠδίκησεν, καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν προσωπολημψία* 23 Whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord and not for your masters, 24 since you know that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; you serve the Lord Christ. 25 *For the wrongdoer will be paid back for whatever wrong has been done, and there is no partiality.*

2 Tim 4:14, Ἀλέξανδρος ὁ χαλκεὺς πολλὰ μοι κακὰ ἐνεδείξατο· *ἀποδώσει αὐτῷ ὁ κύριος κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ*. Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; *the Lord will pay him back for his deeds.*

And other Christian writers use the idea as well, with some using virtually the identical phrase of Paul:

1 Pet 1:17, καὶ εἰ πατέρα ἐπικαλεῖσθε τὸν *ἀπροσωπολήμπτως κρίνοντα κατὰ τὸ ἐκάστου ἔργον*, ἐν φόβῳ τὸν τῆς παροικίας ὑμῶν χρόνον ἀναστράφητε, If you invoke as Father the one *who judges all people impartially according to their deeds*, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile.

Rev 2:23, καὶ τὰ τέκνα αὐτῆς ἀποκτενῶ ἐν θανάτῳ. καὶ γνώσονται πᾶσαι αἱ ἐκκλησίαι ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ἐραυνῶν νεφροὺς καὶ καρδίας, *καὶ δώσω ὑμῖν ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα ὑμῶν*, and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am the one who searches minds and hearts, *and I will give to each of you as your works deserve.*

Rev 20:12-13, 12 καὶ εἶδον τοὺς νεκροὺς, τοὺς μεγάλους καὶ τοὺς μικροὺς, ἐστῶτας ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου. καὶ βιβλία ἠνοιχθησαν, καὶ ἄλλο βιβλίον ἠνοιχθη, ὃ ἐστὶν τῆς ζωῆς, *καὶ ἐκρίθησαν οἱ νεκροὶ ἐκ τῶν γεγραμμένων ἐν τοῖς βιβλίοις κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν*. 13 καὶ ἔδωκεν ἡ θάλασσα τοὺς νεκροὺς τοὺς ἐν αὐτῇ καὶ ὁ θάνατος καὶ ὁ ἄδης ἔδωκαν τοὺς νεκροὺς τοὺς ἐν αὐτοῖς, *καὶ ἐκρίθησαν ἕκαστος κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν*. 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Also another book was opened, the book of life. *And the dead were judged according to their works, as recorded in the books.* 13 And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, *and all were judged according to what they had done.*

Rev 22:12, Ἴδου ἔρχομαι ταχύ, καὶ ὁ μισθός μου μετ' ἐμοῦ *ἀποδοῦναι ἐκάστῳ ὡς τὸ ἔργον ἐστὶν αὐτοῦ*.

See, I am coming soon; my reward is with me, **to repay according to everyone's work.**

These uses play off Jesus' words in Matt. 16:27. μέλλει γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἔρχεσθαι ἐν τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ μετὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων αὐτοῦ, **καὶ τότε ἀποδώσει ἕκαστῳ κατὰ τὴν πράξιν αὐτοῦ.** For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, **and then he will repay everyone for what has been done.** And this statement of Jesus builds off the earlier declaration in Matt. 7:21, Οὐ πᾶς ὁ λέγων μοι· κύριε κύριε, εἰσελεύσεται εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν, ἀλλ' ὁ ποιῶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρὸς μου τοῦ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς. **Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.** And in the Sermon beginning in 5:1, Jesus has defined the will of God for followers of Christ very clearly.

Consistently through out Jesus and the apostles, the understanding is that God's judgment centers on the actions of people. What they do affirms their commitment to God or not. It's sincerity or phoniness. Its genuineness or hypocrisy. If one is authentically committed to God then its proof is found in that person's actions. Much of modern Christianity has little understanding of this central teaching of the New Testament. As Paul will go on to amplify in the first eight chapters of Romans this commitment-verified-by-actions is the heart of the Gospel that he preached. On Judgment Day this is what God will expose from the lives of those being judged. Thus the quality -- not quantity -- of our actions are critical in determining our eternal destiny.

The moral elitist here being primarily targeted in 2:5-11 needs desperately to understand the falseness and thus worthlessness of his good deeds. They verify not repentance and true commitment to God, but self-centered sinful egotism. And as such will bring down the wrath of God upon all such individuals.

The distributive pronoun ἕκαστῳ not only individualizes the 'pay back' from God to every individual. But in this context, it best serves to set up the plus and minus sides that are set forth in two pairs of contrasting perspectives below: τοῖς...τοῖς δὲ... (vv. 7-8) and θλιψίς καὶ στενοχωρία...δόξα δὲ καὶ τιμὴ καὶ εἰρήνη... (vv. 9-10). Every individual who has been born throughout history will face this divine evaluation in that experience at the end of time. No one has an end around on this experience.

The the common criteria for judging all will be the same: κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ, according to his deeds. Contrary to much evangelical preaching in the modern world, the issue in final judgment won't be Have you believed in Jesus? Just the beginning point of commitment to Christ does not meet God's standards. What deter-

mines eternal destiny is how a life has been lived out from beginning to end! This alone determines whether that life is authentic or not. But τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ do not mean just doing good. Paul will make this abundantly clear in chapter four just as he earlier did in Galatians chapters 2-3. Instead τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ means a God produced activity enabled by surrender to Christ as Lord. Doing good means serving one's ego, while allowing God to do good through you means serving God. The former was the Judaism that Christ delivered Paul the Pharisee from on the Damascus road. The latter was the good done through Paul's life from the Damascus road onward. The former is death while the latter is life.

This phrase κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ is found frequently both inside the NT as well as in the OT and the surrounding Jewish Hellenistic writings of Paul's time. The concept expressed by κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ can be positive or negative, or neutral in the 167 instances of ἔργον inside the NT alone, including the 15 uses in Romans. Context determines how it is used by individual writers. The core idea of ἔργον is "that which displays itself in activity of any kind."⁴⁹ This can be either positive or negative activity. Thus the appropriateness of the term here in this header declaration setting up both positive and negative actions that will be evaluated by God in final judgment.

In order to correctly understand Paul's distinctive meaning on ἔργον here one should first examine the immediate context. Verses 7 and 10 provides critically important definers of the intended positive meaning of ἔργον.

Verse 7: τοῖς μὲν καθ' ὑπομονὴν ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν ζητοῦσιν, **to those on the one hand who seek glory and honor and immortality by patently doing good.** As the exegesis below will validate, what is sought is not something for oneself. The δόξαν sought after is the Divine Presence in one's life. The τιμὴν is what gives honor to God. And the ἀφθαρσίαν is the incorruptibility of life with God in eternity. The avenue of accomplishing these things is καθ' ὑπομονὴν ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ. This means living in such a way of obedience to God so that He is indeed exalted in your life. Preserving in good work is the key.

Verse 10: δόξα δὲ καὶ τιμὴ καὶ εἰρήνη παντὶ τῷ ἐργαζομένῳ τὸ ἀγαθόν, **but glory and honor and peace to everyone doing what is good.** The verbal participle ἐργαζομένῳ plays off the same stem as ἔργα and thus further defines ἔργον. It is ongoing practicing τὸ ἀγαθόν, i.e., what God defines as good activity for His people to be engaged in. In other word, on judgment day the

⁴⁹Arndt, William, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000, S.V. ἔργον, ου, τό.



divine spotlight will illuminate a life time to see whether it has consistently participated in God's good actions. This is but another way of defining the quality of our obedience to Him in our living throughout our lives. Together verses seven and ten make it clear that what ultimately matters for our eternal destiny is how consistently and authentically we seek Him and the doing of His will throughout our life.

As vv. 12-16 will continue to amplify, this is starkly different from mere claiming moral superiority either as a Jew or as a Gentile moralist. God in creation built into every human an urging to do what is right.⁵⁰ Even though severely corrupted by human depravity, it sometimes surfaces in some individuals motivating them to do what the divine Law requires. God turns toward such individuals favorably with a Gospel message providing insight into how then to live in authentic obedience.

Verses 17-29 continue this idea with a stinging condemnation of Jews whose false sense of superiority to Gentiles centers on possessing the Torah of God and having been circumcised. True Jewishness is not determined by God this way. Rather it is determined spiritually by authentic obedience to God.

Paul's delineation of the precise meaning of κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ will continue all the way through the letter and is repeated often with reference to τὰ ἔργα: 3:20, 27, 28; 4:2, 6; 9:12, 32; 11:6; 13:3, 12; 14:20; 15:18.⁵¹

One particularly important negative perspective on τὰ ἔργα comes in chapters three and four, beginning at 3:20, διότι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιοθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, διὰ γὰρ νόμου ἐπίγνωσις ἁμαρτίας, wherefore "out of works of law there will not be justified any flesh before Him," for through law comes understanding of sin. Paul coins an expression ἐξ ἔργων νόμου that will resurface in 3:28 (χωρὶς ἔργων νόμου, *apart from works of law*); 4:2 (ἐξ ἔργων, *out of works*); 4:6 (χωρὶς ἔργων). Much of this discussion was presented earlier by Paul in Galatians chapters two and three using most of the same terminology: 2:16 (3x), ἐξ ἔργων νόμου, *out of works of law*; 3:2, ἐξ ἔργων νόμου; 3:5, ἐξ ἔργων νόμου; 3:10, ἐξ ἔργων νόμου. With this expression the apostle is referencing his pre-Christian experience in a version of Judaism that prided itself on self accomplishment in obeying the Torah as the means of salvation. The ἔργα produced

here represent human effort, not divine empowerment, and thus possessed no legitimate validity before God. The Jewish moralist targeted in Rom. 2:12ff. is the individual seeking divine acceptance through ἔργων νόμου. Such is doomed since it does not reflect authentic surrender to God that enables God to empower the individual to doing good.

Thus Paul's header expression ὃς ἀποδώσει ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ in 2:6 plays a critically important role in delineating the particulars of the outpouring of God's wrath on the eschatological day of judgment. All humanity will come under profound scrutiny by Almighty God and the central focus of that examination will be the actions of every individual. What God discovers from this analysis will determine one's eternal destiny.

Experiencing the day of wrath, vv. 7-11.

7 τοῖς μὲν καθ' ὑπομονὴν ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν ζητοῦσιν ζωὴν αἰώνιον, 8 τοῖς δὲ ἐξ ἐριθείας καὶ ἀπειθοῦσιν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πειθομένοις δὲ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ ὀργὴ καὶ θυμὸς. 9 θλίψις καὶ στενοχωρία ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ψυχὴν ἀνθρώπου τοῦ κατεργαζομένου τὸ κακόν, Ἰουδαίου τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἕλληνας. 10 δόξα δὲ καὶ τιμὴ καὶ εἰρήνη παντὶ τῷ ἐργαζομένῳ τὸ ἀγαθόν, Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἕλληνας. 11 οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν προσωποληψία παρὰ τῷ θεῷ.

7 to those who by patiently doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; 8 while for those who are self-seeking and who obey not the truth but wickedness, there will be wrath and fury. 9 There will be anguish and distress for everyone who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, 10 but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. 11 For God shows no partiality.

First the literary context for this pericope. The two sentence segments stand in amplification of the details intended by Paul in the previous relative clause ὃς ἀποδώσει ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ. The moral elitist in the diatribe remains the targeted person in the presentation. But in vv. 7-11 the broad, axiomatic nature of the materials stress timeless truths that Paul is applying to his imaginary discussion partner. Of course, this diatribe partner is a symbol of moral elitists both Jewish and Gentile who consider themselves superior to the pagans around them by virtue of possessing superior moral standards of living. Throughout the diatribe that extends through v. 29 (the consistent use of the second person singular σὺ, *you*, is the signal here), Paul addresses both Gentile and Jew, although the broad inclusive language through v. 11 begins to narrow to the Jewish moralist in vv. 12-29 as the primary target and especially in vv. 17-29.

⁵⁰This is not the modern western idea of conscience. Paul's very limited use of the term συνείδησις, often translated as 'conscience' has virtually no connection to the modern idea. For Paul, συνείδησις meant the human capacity to make choices of every kind, not just moral ones. For a very detailed presentation of this see my "[THE WESTERN INTROSPECTIVE CONSCIENCE: A Biblical Perspective on Decision Making](http://cranfordville.com)" at cranfordville.com.

⁵¹The usage of ἔργων in Romans is also consistent with the 67 total uses of the word in all of his writings.

2.7		μὲν
		καθ' ὑπομονὴν ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ
28	τοῖς...δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν ζητοῦσιν	
	(ἔσται) ζῶν αἰώνιον,	
2.8	δὲ	
	ἐξ ἐριθείας	
	καὶ	
	τοῖς... ἀπειθοῦσι	
	δὲ	
	----τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πειθομένοις	
	τῇ ἀδικίᾳ	
29	(ἔσονται) ὀργὴ καὶ θυμὸς.	
2.9	θλίψις	
	καὶ	
30	στενοχωρία (ἔσονται)	
	ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ψυχὴν ἀνθρώπου	
	τοῦ κατεργαζομένου τὸ κακόν,	
	τε	
	Ἰουδαίου πρῶτον	
	καὶ	
	Ἕλληνοσ·	
2.10	δὲ	
	δόξα	
	καὶ	
	τιμὴ	
	καὶ	
31	εἰρήνη (ἔσονται)	
	παντὶ τῷ ἐργαζομένῳ τὸ ἀγαθόν,	
	τε	
	Ἰουδαίῳ πρῶτον	
	καὶ	
	Ἕλληνι·	
2.11	γάρ	
32	οὐ ἐστὶν προσωποληψία	
	παρὰ τῷ θεῷ.	

Second the internal literary structure of vv. 7-11. The material is a part of two sentences. Verses 7-8 actually continue the long sentence of vv. 5-8 as the final section of it. Then vv. 9-11 comprise a single sentence first with the contrastive pair of declarations in vv. 9-10. A justifying declaration introduced by the causal coordinate conjunction γάρ (v. 11) provides the rationalé for the Ἰουδαίου τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἕλληνοσ, both first to the Jew and to the Greek, attached to each strophe of the pair in vv. 9-10.

Additionally, the contrastive pair in vv. 7-8 signaled by the pre-position of the article τοῖς define the core elements of ἀποδώσει ἐκάστω κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ (v. 6). This contrastive pair is then repeated in vv. 9-10 with new insights being added. Important to Paul's strategy

here is the use of the chiasmus (ab//b'a') sequence:

- a positive amplification (v. 7)
- b negative amplification (v. 8)
- b' negative amplification (v. 9)
- a' positive amplification (v. 10)⁵²

This structuring of the parallelism serves to place primary emphasis upon the b // b' set, which stresses the negative judgment of God upon the moral elitist. The overarching theme of ὀργὴ θεοῦ is preserved that began in 1:18. He is not losing sight of his targeted audience of the diatribe partner at all, as he presents the axiomatic principles in each pair of contrasts on the day of judgment.

Third, now the exegesis of the details. The compo-

⁵²In the block diagram the id is as follows: a-#28 / b-#29 // b'-#30 / a' - #31.

nent elements of the header ὅς ἀποδώσει ἑκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ are presented in the contrastive pairs:

v. 6 ὅς ἀποδώσει ἑκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ

v. 7	ζωὴν αἰώνιον	τοῖς μὲν	καθ' ὑπομονὴν ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ
	δόξαν καὶ		
	τιμὴν καὶ		
	ἀφθαρσίαν	ζητοῦσιν	

v. 8 ὀργὴ καὶ θυμὸς τοῖς δὲ ἐξ ἐριθείας καὶ ἀπειθοῦσιν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πειθόμενοι δὲ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ

v. 9 θλιψὶς καὶ στενοχωρία ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ψυχὴν ἀνθρώπου τοῦ κατεργαζομένου τοῦ κακόν

v. 10	δόξα δὲ	παντὶ
	καὶ τιμὴ	τῷ ἐργαζομένῳ
	καὶ εἰρήνη	τὸ ἀγαθόν

Hopefully from the above charting you can notice the contrastive parallels more clearly in the + v. 7, - v. 8, - v. 9, + v. 10 pattern. Almost all are lost in the translation process.

Verse 7: τοῖς μὲν καθ' ὑπομονὴν ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν ζητοῦσιν ζωὴν αἰώνιον. The ἑκάστῳ, to each one, from verse six in verse seven becomes the lengthy participle phrase τοῖς μὲν καθ' ὑπομονὴν ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν ζητοῦσιν, to those on the one hand by perserving in good work are seeking glory and honor and immortality. The κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ in verse six becomes now καθ' ὑπομονὴν ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ (v. 7). What God pays back, ὅς ἀποδώσει, now becomes ζωὴν αἰώνιον, life eternal.

The subjects of the divine 'pay back' are depicted as τοῖς...δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν ζητοῦσιν, to those seeking glory and honor and immortality. Are they seeking something for themselves? A literal translation would seem to point this direction. But careful analysis of the three direct objects, δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν, of the participle verbal ζητοῦσιν would point a different direction. To seek glory biblically is to seek the overpowering [Shekinah](#) presence of Almighty God. It has nothing to do with seeking prominence among people, although many commentators mistakenly understand it this way. The individual gaining God's approval is the person who passionately seeks God's overpowering and enabling presence in his / her life. Clearly it

is not the person craving attention and prominence for himself in this life. This was the goal of the Pharisees who falsely assumed that prominence among people equalled God's approval, cf. Matt. 6:1-18. Such craving is soundly condemned by Jesus and the apostles.

This individual also seeks τιμὴν, honor. The ancient background to the noun τιμή and the verb τιμάω provides important perspectives usually not connected to the English word honor / honour. The secular Greek history saw τιμή not just as value meriting esteem from others, but as bound up in the achieving of extraordinary ἀρετή, virtue.⁵³ Thus the concepts of value,

⁵³τιμή has in the first instance a strong material orientation. Odysseus' honour is inseparably bound up with the restoration of control of his possessions, Hom. Od., 1, 117. Achilles' honour is functionally dependent on the number of gifts brought to him to persuade him to take part in the battle, II, 9, 605.9 Here bodily soundness, the undisputed exercise of social influence and unfringed enjoyment of one's property are the basis of esteem,¹⁰ Later the noun is used in a more strongly ethical context. A certain type of moral conduct is prerequisite for the esteem a man enjoys. Gradually τιμή detaches itself from real possessions and becomes an abstract concept of honour. That the original elements in the meaning of the word were never wholly lost can be seen in the fact that in the koine τιμή can mean both 'honour' and 'price.' If in the early Greek period¹¹ honour as esteem by society on account of concrete circumstances was one of the highest values among the nobility of the 8th cent. B.C. (Hom.), in the city states, esp. Sparta and Athens, the honour of the individual was also that of the polis. When under the influence of Sophism the individual came to be increasingly detached from the polis the concept of honour became much more individualistic, esp. in Isocrates. But Plato was the first to establish the personal ethical element in honour, or 'inward honour,' though without absolutely rejecting 'outward honour' (the distinctions accorded a man by the world around). In relation to this wise moderation is to be commended.¹² Plato, then, finally anchored honour in the moral person. The most significant attempt to provide a scientifically grounded ethics of honour was that made by Aristot. The discussion in Eth. Nic., IV, 7, p. 1123b, in which he speaks of μεγαλοψυχία, is basic here. The high-minded man must be virtuous, for there is no honour without virtue. He thus possesses honour on the basis of inner worth. By reason of his ἀρετή honour is then shown him from without, by his fellow-citizens. If at bottom the high-minded man can only give himself the honour worthy of his virtue, he is in the last analysis above 'outward honour.' But there is no honour worthy of perfect virtue. In the Aristot. concept of honour, there is thus a strong individualistic tendency, though the solidarity of the polis is not destroyed, for man is by nature a creature destined for political society. Finally Stoicism brought the individualistic concept of honour to its full development. In it 'inward honour,' the sense of one's own worth, is decisive. Stoic philosophy was not against every kind of outward honour, but the wise man is relaxed in relation to it; he does not chase it and can do without it. This attitude corresponds to the inner freedom which rules his thought. From the various standpoints the teaching of honour was of great importance among the Greeks and Romans." [Johannes Schneider, "Τιμή, Τιμάω," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans,

worth, esteem, and virtue come to be bound together in the purely Greek concept. Ancient Hebrew had no word that closely intersected the Greek idea of honor in the words τιμή and τιμάω. These two words are not uncommon in the LXX, but almost exclusively are used in the LXX documents not contained in the Old Testament.⁵⁴ One of the primary senses of τιμή / τιμάω in LXX usage for a number of Hebrew words, mostly יְקָרָה, יְקָרָה, עֲרָבָה, כְּבוֹד, is to designate what men are obligated to show toward God. That is, value and esteem are to be given to God in their lives.⁵⁵ God also gives honor to

1964–), 8:170–171.]

⁵⁴The OT requirement to honour parents (Ex. 20:12), and more broadly to act morally in accordance with Yahweh's commandments (Gn. 38:23; 1 S. 15:30; 2 S. 6:20), is not unlike the Gk. concept of τιμή (→ 169, 11 ff., 25 ff.), but this is an exception, and it is no surprise that in Hbr. there is no exact equivalent to τιμάω κτλ. Through the influence of the Alexandrian school the Gk. terms penetrated increasingly into the world of ideas developed by Judaism. In the LXX they are most common in the later writings which do not belong to the Hbr. canon.¹³¹ [Johannes Schneider, "Τιμή, Τιμάω," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 8:171.]

⁵⁵1. τιμή is used for 12 Hbr. words, mostly כְּבוֹד, יְקָרָה, יְקָרָה, יְקָרָה.¹⁴ The most important meanings are a. "honour." In the first instance this is the honour which is due to God and which is to be and is shown Him; men are commanded to bring Him δόξα and τιμή ψ 28:1; 95:7; cf. Job 34:19. Then it is the honour which comes to man from God. God has crowned δόξα καὶ τιμή 'with glory and honour' the man whom He created in His image, ψ 8:6. Earthly goods are almost always connected with honour. Sacred garments help to honour and adorn the high-priest, Ex. 28:2. In the description of the resplendent appearance of Aaron in Sir. 45:12 the headpiece which adorns him is called καύχημα τιμῆς. In Job 40:10 Job is challenged to come forward in divine majesty and deck himself with glory and pomp (δόξα καὶ τιμή). In the Wisdom lit. there is a stronger ethical emphasis. Thus to do good is to gain the esteem of others. Association with wisdom esp. confers praise among men and regard among the elders, Wis. 8:10. Sir. 3:11 declares that the fame a man has depends on the honour his father possesses. But in Sir. 10:28 the son is admonished humbly to render to himself only the honour he deserves. The fool has no honour, Prv. 26:1. Finally τιμή means showing honour to others. Wives owe respect to their husbands, Est. 1:20. The word also means b. 'payment,' Job 31:39, esp. honorarium for services (the doctor), Sir. 38:1, 'price,' Gn. 44:2; Nu. 20:19; Ep. Jer. 24 (the senseless acquisition of idols at a price), 'compensation,' 'damages,' Gn. 20:16, 'ransom,' τιμή τῆς λυτρώσεως, ψ 48:9, 'payment' for the redemption of the firstborn, Ex. 34:20. Lv. 5:15, 18 gives instructions on assessing faults with a view to fixing the price of expiation. In Lv. 27:2–27 there are precise rulings on the estimation of vows and dues. Here τιμή is used for יְקָרָה. We then find c. 'valuables,' 'treasure,' e.g., Ez. 22:25 the unlawful taking of valuables; on Sir 45:12 → line 7 f. d. The sense 'tax' occurs once in 1 Macc. 10:29: the letter of king Demetrius assures the Jews that the tribute, the salt tax (τιμή τοῦ ἁλόος) and the crown tax are remitted, e. In Da. we find the following combinations with similar terms: τιμή καὶ χάρις, 1:9; βασιλεία, ἰσχύς, τιμή and δόξα are given to the king by God, 2:37; similar-

people which means that He grants them the capacity and obligation to show esteem and respect to others around them. This Jewish heritage provides the proper definitional framework for Paul's use of τιμή here. The person receiving God's approval is the individual seeking to show divinely approved esteem and respect to others, and also to God Himself.

Thirdly, this person whom God approves seeks ἀφθαρσίαν.⁵⁶ The clear sense of ἀφθαρσία with the al-

ly 5:18 Θ: God has given Nebuchadnezzar τὴν βασιλείαν καὶ τὴν μεγαλωσύνην καὶ τὴν τιμὴν καὶ τὴν δόξαν, cf. δόματα, δωρεαὶ and τιμή, 2:6 Θ. To the Son of Man was given ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ ἡ τιμή καὶ ἡ βασιλεία, 7:14 Θ, cf. also δόξα καὶ τιμή, 1 Macc. 14:21; votive offerings πρὸς αὐξήσιν καὶ δόξαν τοῦ τόπου καὶ τιμὴν, 2 Macc. 5:16; Nebuchadnezzar declares Babylon is built εἰς τιμὴν τῆς δόξης μου, Δα.4:30 (27); cf. also τιμή καὶ εὐνοια, 2 Macc. 9:21. f. Another sense is 'royal dignity,' Da. 5:20 Θ. g. Finally one finds 'honourable conduct,' i.e., martyrdom in 4 Macc. 1:10. 2 Macc. 4:15 tells how the high-priest Jason caused the priests to attend games contrary to the Law, 'regarding native honours (τὰς μὲν πατρώους τιμάς) 15 as nought but viewing Greek glories (τὰς δὲ Ἑλληνικὰς δόξας) as very splendid.'

⁵⁶2. τιμάω¹⁶ occurs for 6 Hbr. words,¹⁷ chiefly כָּבַד pi and pu, יְקָרָה hi and יְקָרָה, in the sense a. 'to honour,' e.g., God, Is. 29:13; Prv. 3:9 etc., the king, Wis. 14:17, parents, Ex. 20:12; Dt. 5:16, the old man, Lv. 19:32, the poor, Prv. 14:31, the loyal slave, Prv. 27:18, the doctor, Sir. 38:1, the temple, 2 Macc. 3:2, 12; 13:23; 3 Macc. 3:16. The commandment to honour parents is esp. pressed in Sir. 3:3, 5, 8 with a ref. to the blessing resting on observance of this commandment, cf. also Tob 4:3. Prv. 3:9 stresses the Law's demand that one should honour the Lord with gifts from one's substance and with first-fruits of the whole harvest. Wis. 6:21 admonishes the rulers of the world to honour wisdom, cf. Prv. 4:8; 'Exalt wisdom, and she shall bring thee to honour.' Wis. 14:15, 17 warns against honouring the picture of a man, esp. the earthly king, as a god. 4 Mac. 17:20 says of martyrs that they are honoured not merely with heavenly honour but also by the fact that for their sakes the enemy has no further power over God's chosen people. Special note should be taken of ψ 138:17 where the pass. τιμῶμαι means 'to be valuable.' The HT is לִי מַחְשָׁבֹתַי כִּי אֵלֵיךָ יְיָ, לֹא, 'how precious (weighty, hard to grasp) are thy thoughts for me, O God'; LXX runs: ἐμοὶ δὲ λίαν ἐτιμήθησαν οἱ φίλοι σου, ὁ θεός.¹⁸ τιμάω then means b. 'to appraise,' 'determine the worth,' Lv. 27:8–14 → 172, 21. It can also mean c. 'to honour with money,' 'reward,' Nu. 22:17, 37, and d. 'to grant support,' Est. 9:3."

[Johannes Schneider, "Τιμή, Τιμάω," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 8:172–173.]

⁵⁶This is a part of the word group † φθείρω, † φθορά, † φθαρτός, † ἀφθαρτός, † ἀφθαρσία, † ἀφθορία, † διαφθείρω, † διαφθορά, † καταφθείρω. Note the core idea of perishability followed by ἀφθαρτός, ἀφθαρσία, ἀφθορία with the alpha privative prefix denoting the opposite.

[Günther Harder, "Φθείρω, Φθορά, Φθαρτός, Ἀφθαρτός, Ἀφθαρσία, Ἀφθορία, Διαφθείρω, Διαφθορά, Καταφθείρω," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 9:93.]

pha privative prefix is the opposite of perishable and temporal. The objective sought after is an existence not subject to the decay and dissolution of this life. In later Greek though φθορά denoted the state of humanity while ἀφθαρσία denoted the state of the gods. While φθείρω, I **perish**, is used mainly for πνῦ in its various forms, ἀφθαρσία does not surface in the OT canonical documents of the LXX. But among Hellenistic Jewish writers such as Philo ἀφθαρσία and related terms begin surfacing as the Greek ideas of imperishability attributed to the gods in Greek authors comes to be applied to God and then to things associated closely with God in the heavenly sphere. It is out of the Hellenistic Jewish thinking that Paul makes use of these terms.⁵⁷ His

⁵⁷The group is often used to denote the corruptibility of man, his subjection to death. Paul has in view the outward man who experiences death in himself (2 C. 4:16), not as a once-for-all event, but as an ongoing process, as the ἀνακαινοῦται ἡμέρα καὶ ἡμέρα shows. The fact that the body is given up to death and destruction is often stated in Greek and later Jewish writings (→ VII, 102, 13 ff.; 116, 4 ff.).⁴⁴ Man is φθαρτός (R. 1:23) precisely in antithesis to the ἀφθαρτος θεός. But the wreath sought in worldly contests (→ I, 137, 24 ff.) is also φθαρτός as distinct from the eternal goal of the Christian life, 1 C. 9:25. τὸ φθαρτόν is man's existence in the world as this is controlled by the σάρξ. ἀφθαρσία, a new mode of being, must be imparted to him, 1 C. 15:53. Christians are not redeemed with φθαρτοῖς ('corruptible') means such as ἀργυρίῳ ἢ χρυσίῳ, but by the blood of Christ, which is indestructible, which is a divine means, and which is thus said to be τίμιος, 1 Pt. 1:18.⁴⁵ Opposed to the σπορά φθαρτή is the ἀφθαρτος λόγος by which Christians are begotten as new men, 1 Pt. 1:23.⁴⁶ In this connection φθορά (R. 8:21) means 'corruptibility,' and it elucidates the ματαιότης of v. 20. φθορᾶς is a *gen. qualitatis*, not obj., in relation to δουλεία, so that we have a counterpart of ἐλευθερία τῆς δόξης.⁴⁷ φθορά is the 'corruptibility' which must pass away, as flesh and blood must also pass away, 1 C. 15:50. Yet the concept is not merely that of decay and subjection to it.⁴⁸ As ζῶη corresponds to πνεῦμα, so φθορά does to σάρξ, and in Gl. 1:8 this means 'eternal destruction' (→ I, 396, 18 ff.) and undoubtedly much more than mere decay.⁴⁹ Both φθορά and ζῶη are to be understood eschatologically,⁵⁰ so that only the parousia brings the corruptible to light as such. φθορά is displayed in its quality as corruptibility only with the manifestation of the incorruptible and not in the daily experience of the natural man. In both the instances in 2 Pt. (1:4; 2:19) φθορά again means 'corruptibility' and not moral corruption.⁵¹ What is meant seems to be the world of the φθαρτόν, in the late Hell. sense → 96, 8 ff. Moral failure consists in succumbing ἐν ἐπιθυμίᾳ (1:4) to corruptibility as though this were the one essential thing: δοῦλοι ὑπάρχοντες τῆς φθορᾶς, 2:19.

⁵²The dead will rise again as ἀφθαρτοι, changed and belonging to a new world, 1 C. 15:52. In the later epistles of the Pauline corpus there is increasing reference to the ἀφθαρτον and ἀφθαρσία under developing Hell. influence. God is lauded here as the ἀφθαρτος (→ 96, 15 ff.), 1 Tm. 1:17⁵³ → III, 112, 9 ff.; cf. R. 1:23. Also ἀφθαρτος is the κληρονομία into which Christians will one day enter. The adjectives ἀμίαντος, ἀμάραντος and ἀφθαρτος show that this belongs to God, 1 Pt. 1:4.⁵⁴ The ἀφθαρτον can be more precisely defined in terms of πνεῦμα: ἐν τῷ ἀφθάρτῳ⁵⁵ τοῦ

non-Jewish readers would have a basic grasp of its meaning just from their Greek and Roman background. But the richer framework of meaning clearly originates in the Hellenistic Jewish writings.

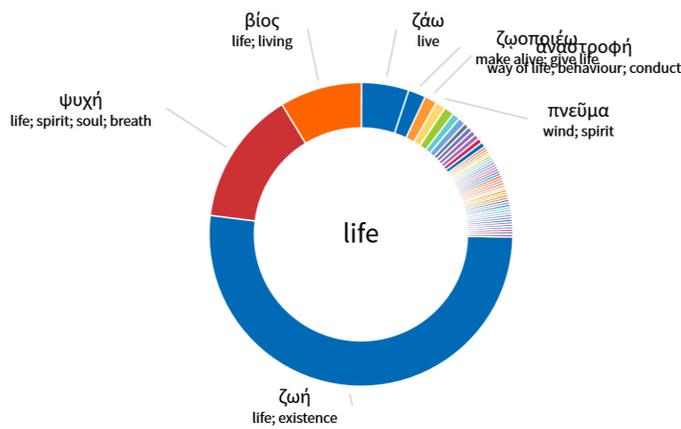
To aspire to be in the presence of the immortal God in Heaven is Paul's point here. "Mostly for Paul ἀφθαρσία is a strictly future blessing of salvation which is understood in exclusively eschatological terms."⁵⁸

Thus the person qualifying as ἐκάστῳ (v. 6) on the positive side is the individual seeking God's presence, God's honor, and being with God eternally. His focus is centered on God. And how can we identify such individuals?

Paul's answer is very simple: καθ' ὑπομονὴν ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ, **by preserving in good work**. This amplifies the previous κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ (v. 6) on the positive side of divine judgment. Two qualities are connected to the deeds of those seeking after God: a) perseverance, and b) good deeds. The noun ὑπομονή is a compound built from the verb stem μένω that has the active orientation to **vigorously remaining in position against pres-**πραεὸς καὶ ἡσυχίου πνεύματος, 1 Pt. 3:4. Here again τὸ ἀφθαρτον denotes the sphere, environment and mode of being in which man moves with a meek and quiet spirit⁵⁶ in contrast to that governed by the φθαρτόν. ἀφθαρσία as well as ἀφθαρτον stands in antithesis to the φθαρτόν. Eph. 6:24 is difficult to expound (→ VII, 778, 16 ff.): ἡ χάρις μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἀγαπώντων τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐν ἀφθαρσία. If one takes ἐν ἀφθαρσία with χάρις,⁵⁷ the meaning is: 'with incorruptibility,' and both ἀφθαρσία and χάρις characterise the mode of being in supraterrrestrial life. But there is not much to commend this. If instead one takes it with Χριστός or ἀγαπώντες, then it denotes the new and heavenly mode of existence of Christ or Christians.⁵⁸ If one does not relate it to Χριστόν as the nearest word, and there is much to be said for this, then the whole verse must be understood as a concluding liturgical salutation. In this case ἐν ἀφθαρσία amounts to much the same as 'in eternity' and shows that the wish is one that is to be fulfilled in eternity: 'Grace be in incorruptibility, unceasingly, with those who love Jesus Christ.' With ζῶή, ἀφθαρσία is the 'future eternal life' which Christ has brought as a light into the dark, corruptible world, 2 Tm. 1:10. Mostly for Paul ἀφθαρσία is a strictly future blessing of salvation which is understood in exclusively eschatological terms → 104, 16 ff., It will be manifested only with the parousia, 1 C. 15:42, 50, 53 f. Like the divine δόξα and τιμή, it is still to be sought after here on earth and it always remains hidden (R. 2:7). There is similarity here to the way in which apocalyptic speaks of the incorruptibility we are to wait for.⁵⁹

[Günther Harder, "Φθείρω, Φθορά, Φθαρτός, Ἄφθαρτος, Αφθαρσία, Ἀφθορία, Διαφθείρω, Διαφθορά, Καταφθείρω," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 9:103–105.]

⁵⁸Günther Harder, "Φθείρω, Φθορά, Φθαρτός, Ἄφθαρτος, Αφθαρσία, Ἀφθορία, Διαφθείρω, Διαφθορά, Καταφθείρω," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 9:105.



sures to move it off center. Two of the several compound forms, ὑπομένω and ὑπομονή, heighten that central concept with the sense of standing firm under the weight of pressure being brought to bear to move the person off center.⁵⁹ The first century Koine significance of ὑπομονή stressed remaining firm against evil, and this stands behind Paul's use here.⁶⁰ Although

⁵⁹The larger word group is μένω, ἐμ-, παρα-, περι-, προσμένω, μονή, ὑπομένω, ὑπομονή.

[Friedrich Hauck, "Μένω, Ἐμ-, Παρα-, Περι-, Προσμένω, Μονή, Ὑπομένω, Ὑπομονή," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:574.]

⁶⁰In the first instance ὑπομένειν is ethically neutral. It simply means 'to hold out.' But as ὑπομονή later came to hold a prominent place in the list of Greek virtues, so there predominates in ὑπομένειν the concept of the courageous endurance which manfully defies evil. Unlike patience, it thus has an active content. It includes active and energetic resistance to hostile power, though with no assertion of the success of this resistance. It is plainly distinguished from synonyms like πάσχειν (cf. Mt. 16:21; 1 Pt. 2:21, 23; 4:1), which is a pure antonym to δρᾶν (in the good and bad sense), Plat. Euthyphr. 11a. In the syn. φέρειν (cf. R. 9:22), which depicts the bearing of a burden more from the standpoint of movement and success (Xenoph. Cyrop., VIII, 2, 21; Isoc., 6, 60f.), the element of standing firm is less prominent. ὑποφέρειν (cf. 1 C. 10:13; 2 Tm. 3:11; 1 Pt. 2:19) depicts one who bears a burden, and is used of physical and spiritual ability (Isoc., 1, 30; Plat. Leg., IX, 879c). ἀνέχεσθαι is close to ὑπομένειν (cf. Mt. 17:17; 2 C. 11:1, 4, 20; Eph. 4:2; 2 Th. 1:4), but suggests standing erect against an external factor without being disturbed or unsettled by it, so primarily in the physical sense, e.g., of the wounded who bear their pains (Od., 11, 375 f.), then in a moral connection of staying calm, without excitement, fear, or passion, in face of the assaults of destiny, Hom. Il., 24, 549; Od., 19, 27; Thuc., I, 122, 3. Thus ἀνέχεσθαι is used for the Stoic attitude, Epict. Fr., 10, 34; M. Ant., V, 33, 6. → καρτερεῖν (κάρτος = κράτος from καρτερός = κρατερός, "strong") again contains the element of strong, courageous and brave resistance and endurance (Plat. La., 194a). The poetic τλῆναι, from the root τάλ "to bear," denotes the endurance of pains and afflictions with a steadfast spirit, without being bowed down by them, Hom. Od., 5, 362; Il., 19, 308; 5, 382. In prose the content of τλῆναι goes beyond that of ὑπομένειν, which means above all perseverance in face of hostile forces. This may be against attacks (πολιορκίαν, Polyb., 1, 24, 11), fate (συμφοράς, Isoc., 6, 86), or bodily torments

pressure comes to abandon doing good, this individual seeking after God stands firm in his commitment by resisting that pressure. Some six times in Romans Paul will stress the important role of ὑπομονή: 2:7; 5:3, 4; 8:25; 15:4, 5. Our problem is in the translating of ὑπομονή with either 'patience' or 'endurance.' These are essentially passive concepts while the Greek ὑπομονή is dynamical in meaning.

This dynamism in ὑπομονή produces the objective genitive case function of ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ. Thus the translation "perserving in good work." What then is meant by ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ? The phrase in both the singular (here) and plural spellings is common to both Paul and the rest of the NT writers: 2 Cor. 9:8; Eph. 2:10; Col. 1:10; 2 Thess. 2:17; 1 Tim. 2:10; 2 Tim. 2:21; 3:17; Titus 2:7; 3:1, 8, 14. Also with a similar meaning is τὰ καλὰ ἔργα: 1 Tim. 5:10, 25; 6:18; Jhn. 10:32. The expression παντὶ τῷ ἐργαζομένῳ τὸ ἀγαθόν, to everyone doing good, in 2:10 is an identical idea to ὑπομονὴν ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ in 2:7, as they stand in parallel structure to each other. The use of τὸ ἔργον ἀγαθόν is especially appropriate in the context of a divine evaluation on judgment day. The adjective ἀγαθόν stresses that which is inherently good not just in appearance (τὸ ἔργον καλόν) but inwardly down to the inner core of one's being.

Thus to those whose κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ (v. 6) comes up in final judgment as καθ' ὑπομονὴν ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ (v. 7) there is the reception of ζωὴν αἰώνιον, life eternal.⁶¹ The concept of ζωὴν αἰώνιον in the NT is expansive and contains numerous aspects. First the terminology.⁶²

(βασάνους, Plut. Apophth. Lac. [II, 830c]), or it may be a kind of heroism in face of bodily chastisement (Aristophon Fr., 4, 6 [CAF, II, p. 277], cf. 1 Pt. 2:20), or the power to resist attempts at bribery, which a whole man repels (Demosth. Or., 21, 93: οὐχ ὑπεμείναμεν).¹¹

[Friedrich Hauck, "Μένω, Ἐμ-, Παρα-, Περι-, Προσμένω, Μονή, Ὑπομένω, Ὑπομονή," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:581–582.

⁶¹Cf. 5:21; 6:22, 23; also Gal 6:8; 1 Tim 1:16; 6:12; Tit 1:2; 3:7; Mt 19:29; 25:46; Mk 10:17, 30; Lk 10:25; 18:18, 30; Jn 3:15, etc. The noun ζωή occurs here for the first time in Romans: it occurs also four times in chapter 5, three times in chapter 6, four times in chapter 8, and once each in chapters 7 and 11, while the verb ζῆν, which we have already had in 1:17, is used in all twenty-three times in Romans." [C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004).]

⁶²Occasionally Paul clearly uses *zōē*, 'life,' and related forms to refer to present, earthly existence (Rom 5:10; 7:1–2, 9; 8:12–13; 1 Cor 3:22; 7:39; 15:19, 45; Phil 1:20, 22; 1 Thess 4:15, 17; 1 Tim 5:6; 2 Tim 4:1). *Bios*, 'daily life,' or 'material existence,' occurs twice, and then only in the Pastorals (1 Tim 2:2; 2 Tim 2:4). More frequently *zōē* is used in Paul to mean something other than mere



The noun followed by the adjective sequence -- ζῶή αἰώνιος -- with no article is favored by Paul in Rom. 2:7; 5:21; 6:22, 23; Gal. 6:8; 1 Tim. 1:16, Titus 1:2 and 3:7.⁶³ In John 17:2 the reversed sequence shows up with the article: ἡ αἰώνιος ζωῆ. Note τῆς αἰωνίου ζωῆς in Acts 13:46. In 1 John 1:2; 2:25 a slight variation with articles: τὴν ζωὴν τὴν αἰώνιον. Then in 1 John 5:20 another variation: ὁ ἄληθινὸς θεὸς καὶ ζωὴ αἰώνιος, where the true God and life eternal are virtually equated. Overwhelmingly throughout the NT the anarthrous construction ζωὴ αἰώνιος is preferred when the adjective αἰώνιος for **eternal / everlasting** is used. This qualitative construction stresses not just duration but a certain quality of life basically projected beyond death for the people of God but something that can lap over into this life for God's people in this life.⁶⁴ To be sure, the primarily

physical existence; it refers to a unique quality of life which comes through faith in and union with Christ (see In Christ). Nine times it is combined with *aiōnios* to mean 'eternal life,' a life qualitatively different from life as it is presently known, a life bestowed by God as part of the age to come (Rom 2:7; 5:21; 6:22, 23; Gal 6:8; 1 Tim 1:16; 6:12; Tit 1:2; 3:7; see Eschatology). 'Eternal life' or 'life' (2 Tim 1:10) can also be used as a synonym for 'immortality' (*aphtharsia*, Rom 2:7; cf. 1 Tim 1:16, 17) or an antonym for 'corruption,' or 'decay' (*phthora*, Gal 6:8).

Psychē can be employed in a variety of senses which are often difficult to distinguish from one another (see Psychology). Paul uses it in referring to physical existence (e.g., Rom 11:3; 16:4; 1 Cor 15:45; Phil 2:30), although in Philippians 2:30 it may mean more than physical life: Epaphroditus risked his 'very being.' *Pneuma* can also refer to physical life (as it clearly does in Rev 11:11; 13:15), but Paul does not seem to use it in this way (but cf. *pneuma* and *sarx* in 2 Cor 2:13 and 7:5, where the words seem to refer to inner and outer aspects of the whole person). Nevertheless, the new spiritual life is life by and in the Spirit of God (Rom 7:6; 8:3–13; 1 Cor 15:45; 2 Cor 3:6; Gal 5:16, 25; 6:8; Phil 1:27)."

[Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 554.]

⁶³"On the other hand, of eternal life (Maximus Tyr. 6, 1d θεοῦ ζωῆ αἰ.; Diod S 8, 15, 3 life μετὰ τὸν θάνατον lasts εἰς ἅπαντα αἰῶνα; Da 12:2; 4 Macc 15:3; PsSol PsSol 3:12; OdeSol 11:16c; JosAs 8:11 cod. A [p. 50, 2 Bat.]; Philo, Fuga 78; Jos., Bell. 1, 650; SibOr 2, 336) in the Reign of God: ζωῆ αἰ. (Orig., C. Cels. 2, 77, 3) Mt 19:16, 29; 25:46; Mk 10:17, 30; Lk 10:25; 18:18, 30; J 3:15f; 36; 4:14, 36; 5:24, 39; 6:27, 40, 47, 54, 68; 10:28; 12:25, 50; 17:2f; Ac 13:46, 48; Ro 2:7; 5:21; 6:22f; Gal 6:8; 1 Ti 1:16; 6:12; Tit 1:2; 3:7; 1J 1:2; 2:25; 3:15; 5:11, 13, 20; Jd 21; D 10:3; 2 Cl 5:5; 8:4, 6; IEph 18:1; Hv 2, 3, 2; 3, 8, 4 al." [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 33.]

⁶⁴"Afterlife and eternal life become an essential part of Christian preaching in virtue of Jesus' resurrection from the dead. That survival of death enjoyed a variety of interpretations: it was the vindication of the Son of man (Mark 14:62), echoing God's vindication of the Maccabean martyrs in Dan. 7; it was a new creation in which the new Adam, who is sinless, is restored to deathlessness

discussions using the eternal life terminology surface in the fourth gospel, rather than in Paul.⁶⁵ Yet Paul's

(Rom. 5:12-21); and it was a heavenly exaltation, an ascent like that predicted in Ps. 68:18 (see Eph. 4:6-8). NT authors regularly speak of the prophecy of the resurrection in the Scriptures (see Luke 24:44-46), alluding to Psalms 110 and 16 as well as Hos. 6:1-3. But this is surely Christian commentary (midrash) on those texts.

"In Christian preaching, Jesus is said to offer his followers eternal life, not just in the future, but now: 'he who hears my word...has eternal life; he does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life' (John 5:24). In John, this mode of discourse is related to the claim that Jesus' truth, sacraments, and rites are superior to those of the synagogue: 'This is the bread which came down from heaven, not such as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live for ever' (John 6:58). Thus, Christian baptism allows one to 'have eternal life' (John 3:15); unlike Jacob's well, Jesus' waters will become a spring welling up to eternal life (John 4:14); unlike those who ate Moses' manna, those who eat Jesus' bread of life 'have eternal life' (John 6:40, 47).

[Paul J. Achtemeier, Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature, *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 283.]

⁶⁵"The definitive discussions of eternal life come from John's Gospel. John's purpose delineates the crucial significance of the concept: 'But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life' (Jn 20:31). The earliest Johannine reference to eternal life is found in John 3:15.

"John clearly shared in the Jewish expectation of the age to come with its anticipated blessings (e.g., Jn 3:36; 4:14; 5:29, 39; 6:27; 12:25). Eternal life is defined by the special gifts of the messianic age when it arrives at consummation. Lazarus' resurrection (Jn 11) was a living parable demonstrating the future life available to those who trust in Christ. Martha, before her brother's actual resurrection, asserted her belief that Lazarus would be raised on the last day (Jn 11:24). Jesus responded that he himself is the resurrection and the life, and that those who believe in him will never die, even if they die physically (Jn 11:25, 26).

"The central emphasis of John's Gospel, however, does not lie in the anticipated future, but in the present experience of that future life. The life of the age to come is already available in Christ to the believer. The metaphors with which Jesus defined his own mission emphasize the present new life: living water that is 'a spring of water welling up to eternal life' (Jn 4:14); living bread that satisfies the world's spiritual hunger (Jn 6:35–40); the light of the world who leads his followers into the light of life (Jn 8:12); the good shepherd who brings abundant life (Jn 10:10); the life giver who raises the dead (Jn 11:25); the way, the truth, and the life (Jn 14:6); and the genuine vine who sustains those who abide in him (Jn 15:5).

"Jesus was very careful to note that the accomplishment of his mission did not rest in his own nature and ability, but in the Father who sent him. Jesus' submission to the Father highlights again the fact that life is a gift of God. Those who are obedient to the Father through Christ are recipients of the life that God alone gives—eternal life. Thus the promise of resurrection for all believers, made explicit in Lazarus' resurrection and guaranteed in Christ's resurrection as the 'first fruit' (in Pauline terminology), is the natural consequence of God's gift (Jn 5:26–29).

"Jesus added further content to the concept of eternal life



use of ζωή some 14 times with 13 of them referencing spiritual life in Christ that includes both the here and the eschatological future underscores the idea as a major theme in Romans.

The idea of ζωή αἰώνιος would have been challenging to many of Paul's Roman readers. For the non-Jews with a pure pagan background, the idea of an existence in eternity was well established but it only was available to the gods. Material humanity had no possibility of achieving such apart from having a divine nature such as the emperors etc. But this eternity nature must have already been embedded in them prior to their physical birth. For Paul's Jewish and Gentile God-fearer readers, the concept would have made more sense. In the teaching of the Pharisees, the idea of God's people existing in an afterlife in the presence of Almighty God had emerged in the intertestamental era between the Old and New Testament eras.⁶⁶

by connecting it with knowing the true God (Jn 17:3). In Greek thought knowledge referred to the result of either contemplation or mystical ecstasy. In the OT, however, knowledge meant experience, relationship, fellowship, and concern (cf. Jer 31:34). This connotation of knowledge as intimate relationship is underlined by the usage of the verb form to designate sexual relations between male and female (cf. Gn 4:1). Jesus stated, 'I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, as the Father knows me and I know the Father' (Jn 10:14, 15). The intimate and mutual relationship of Father and Son is the model for the relationship of the Son and his disciples. This knowledge does not come by education or manipulation of the mind, but by revelation through the Son (Jn 1:18; cf. 14:7).

"Closely related to the concept of knowledge of God as the definition of eternal life is Jesus's reference to truth: 'And you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free' (Jn 8:32). Again the primary content of 'truth' in the OT is faithfulness, reliability, and stability. Truth is frequently used to describe God's essential character. God's continuing covenant love for Israel was now definitively revealed in Christ. Knowledge of that utterly trustworthy God brings freedom and eternal life. Thus Jesus is the 'true light' (Jn 1:9) who spoke of the 'true God' (Jn 17:3). From that base doing the truth (Jn 3:21) is the proper response to the faithful God.

"A brief survey of the primary elements in the concept of eternal life clearly shows that it is not simply an endless or everlasting life. Although there are no final boundaries to eternal life, the Bible's primary emphasis is on the quality of life, especially its redemptive elements. Eternal life is the importation of the qualities of the age to come into the present through the revelation of a faithful God in Christ, and brings knowledge of God's relationship with him."

[Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, "Eternal Life," *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 724–725.]

⁶⁶"However, this era was a time of oppression and suffering for Israel. Martyrdom was common. Therefore a shift occurs from the experience of life in this world to life in the world to come. A good example occurs in 2 Macc 7:9 during a dramatic martyrdom story. While one of seven brothers is tortured, he cries out to the

Clearly here via the immediate context ζῶν αἰώνιον in 2:7 references the eschatological aspect of eternal life, and is then defined in the parallel of 2:10 as δόξα καὶ τιμὴ καὶ εἰρήνη that can be experienced now as well as in eternity. The δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν ζητοῦσιν, *glory and honor and immortality seeking*, by some in Paul's world is met by God with granting ζῶν αἰώνιον which is a different kind of existence than the one sought after. Indeed it is for certain the eschatological life of the coming messianic age but this quality of life can lap back into this present evil age for those who are in Christ. And this clearly means experiencing both now, and in eternity, δόξα καὶ τιμὴ καὶ εἰρήνη, *glory and honor and peace*.

Verse 8: τοῖς δὲ ἐξ ἐριθείας καὶ ἀπειθοῦσιν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πειθομένοις δὲ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ ὀργὴ καὶ θυμὸς. *while for those who are self-seeking and who obey not the truth but wickedness, there will be wrath and fury.*

2:8 δὲ
 ἐξ ἐριθείας
 καὶ
 τοῖς... ἀπειθοῦσι τῇ ἀληθείᾳ
 δὲ
 ---- πειθομένοις τῇ ἀδικίᾳ
 29 (ἔσσονται) ὀργὴ καὶ θυμὸς.

This antithetical parallel presents the opposite view of what is going to happen to those following the alternative path of disobedience. The picture again is eschatological and set for the Day of Judgment at the end of time. The elliptical omission of the verb shifts somewhat from the implied ἀποδώσει, *He will give back*, in the header of v. 6 which was picked up in the ellipsis in v. 7. The signaling of this shift comes in the subject nominative case spellings of ὀργὴ καὶ θυμὸς, *wrath and anger*, in v. 8 over against the accusative of direct object spelling Greek tormentor, 'You accursed wretch, you dismiss us from this present life, but the King of the universe will raise us up to an everlasting renewal of life, because we have died for his laws.' The experience of this life is thus provisional, and obedience even amid torture will lead to a blessed life hereafter.

"The conscious development of this thought can be seen in 4 Macc 18. The writer cites Prov 3 and Ezek 37 as proof of eternal life: 'There is a tree of life for those who do his will' and 'Shall these dry bones live?' Rabbinic Judaism made the same use of Deut 32:39, 'I kill and I make alive.' In most cases, a future life is directly linked to a life of obedience to the law.

"However, widespread popular belief in an afterlife seems limited. Early Jewish burial inscriptions refer to life but only with reference to the quality of the life of the deceased. But by the 2nd or 3rd cent. CE, Jewish belief in life beyond the grave was common."

[Gary M. Burge, "Life," ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006–2009), 2:658.]

of ζῶν αἰώνιον in v. 7. Thus a more generalized verbal expression such ἔσονται, **there will be**, must be filled in for the statement to be a complete statement.

The parallelism of v. 8 with vv. 6 and 7 is important to the exegeting of the text unit. Verse six is the header setting up the two paths of day of judgment experience.

ὃς ἀποδώσει (v. 6) =:

+ (ὃς ἀποδώσει) v. 7

- (ἔσονται) v. 8

ἐκάστω (v. 6) =:

+ τοῖς μὲν...δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν ζητοῦσιν (v. 7)

- τοῖς...καὶ ἀπειθοῦσιν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πειθομένοις δὲ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ

κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ (v. 6) =:

+ καθ' ὑπομονὴν ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ (v. 7)

- ἐξ ἐριθείας (v. 8)

(ἀποδώσει) ?? (v. 6) =:

+ ζῶν αἰώνιον (v. 7)

- ὀργὴ καὶ θυμὸς (v. 8)

Now for the details of v. 8. The objects of this divine wrath are defined, with the dative of reference usage, as τοῖς δὲ ἐξ ἐριθείας καὶ ἀπειθοῦσιν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πειθομένοις δὲ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ. The article τοῖς at the beginning functions in tandem with τοῖς at the beginning of verse seven. It connects to both participles ἀπειθοῦσιν and πειθομένοις, in defining the two actions as the flip side of one coin: **disobeying and obeying**. These opposite meaning verbals make sense by the addition of the dative case objects τῇ ἀληθείᾳ and τῇ ἀδικίᾳ, **Truth and wickedness**. Simultaneously these individuals **disobey Truth and obey wickedness**. This is presented as a single action that has these two dimensions inherently in it. What they are doing is both disobeying God's Truth and at the same time obeying wickedness. One entails the other automatically. To disobey God's truth is to obey wickedness and to obey wickedness means to disobey God's truth. Note the present tense middle voice forms of both participles ἀπειθοῦσιν and πειθομένοις. The picture is a lifestyle pattern of actions reflecting this dual character.

The verb πείθω carries a wide range of meanings with each dependent on how the verb is spelled in specific contexts. The middle voice use here carries the idea of being won over as the result of persuasion. The one exception is the use of the perfect tense forms which kick the verb over into entirely different meanings. Out of this grows the idea of obeying and following someone or some ideology. This meaning is found in Rom. 2:8; Gal 3:1 v.l.; 5:7; Heb. 13:17 and Jas. 3:3 (5x

in Rom).

The opposite can be expressed either by using the negative with πείθω as in Gal. 5:7 [τῇ] ἀληθείᾳ μὴ πείθεσθαι, **so that you do not obey the truth**. Or, the antonym spelling of ἀπειθέω, **I disobey**, can be used (5x in Rom). Paul does not use the οὐ πείθομαι, **I do not obey**, construction in Romans. In the 14 NT uses, ἀπειθέω always means disobeying God in some manner.

Therefore the actions defined by the participles connote the idea of being persuaded by something and thus giving oneself over to following and obeying it. What is it that one either follows or doesn't follow?

The dative case nouns that are attached to the two verbs provide the answer to this question. ἀπειθοῦσιν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ **disobeying the Truth** and πειθομένοις δὲ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ, **but obeying wickedness** -- these put the contrast into sharp focus. Divine Truth which is defined and established by who God is and how He takes actions is rejected by these people. Perhaps consciously, but mostly unconsciously. Conversely they also follow τῇ ἀδικίᾳ. The complexity of this noun defies translation by a single English word. ἀδικία is part of a triad of words using the alpha privative -- ἀδικέω, ἀδικημα, ἀδικία -- that denotes the opposite of justice and fair treatment of others. They typically denote criminal activity defined as such by legal standards or religious / moral standards. Here via context by ἀδικία, Paul means the opposite of ἀλήθεια. With Truth defined by God's being and character, ἀδικία as its opposite then means all that is contrary to God and what He stands for. Plus, ἀδικία contains the inherent interpersonal aspect of treatment of other people. Thus what is being obeyed are ways of treating others that are contrary to how God treats them with **justice**, δικαιοσύνη.

With Paul's targeted readers at Rome, this meant the pure pagan Gentiles with a philosophically based higher moral standard than was usually the case in that society at large, e.g., the Stoics. These people had absolutely no knowledge of or awareness of the God of Jews and Christians. And many of these individuals were religiously skeptical of the existence of any deity. But it also included both religiously oriented Jews and Gentile God-fearers, who held to the moral standards of the Jewish Torah. But both groups felt themselves to be superior to the raw pagans in their world simply because they held to a higher standard of morality. Consequently they often were very critical of everyone around them who did not hold to their 'higher standards.' Paul bluntly challenges their elitism here with a reminder that they face the same judgment of a wrath-

ful God that their pagan neighbors do. They have no exemption just because of their higher morality.

What it is that both these elitists along with their 'pagan' neighbors face is God's ὀργή και θυμός. 27 of the 36 instances of ὀργή mean God's anger and thus is translated by the English word 'wrath.' All 12 instances of ὀργή inside Romans mean God's wrath. The larger implications for this word were set forth in 2:5, θησαυρίζεις σεαυτῷ ὀργήν ἐν ἡμέρα ὀργῆς και ἀποκαλύψεως δικαιοκρισίας τοῦ θεοῦ, *you are storing up upon yourself wrath in a day of wrath, even the disclosure of God's righteousness.*

The seeming unusualness of combing ὀργή και θυμός is not really strange.⁶⁷ The combining of two words with essentially the same meaning in ancient Greek has roughly the same impact as putting a word today in bold face type. In other words, that day of judgment will bring the full force of God's fury down upon all those engaging in sinful conduct. It should be noted that this is the only use of θυμός in Romans of the 18 NT uses.⁶⁸

This completes the first pair of positive / negative expansions off the header of v. 6. This pair stands as secondary participle phrase expansions. The second pair in vv. 9-10 is primary in a complete compound sentence form. The informal chiasmus pattern is followed with the positive / negative // negative / positive sequencing of the two pairs.

Verse 9: θλίψις και στενοχωρία ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ψυχὴν ἀνθρώπου τοῦ κατεργαζομένου τὸ κακόν, Ἰουδαίου τε πρῶτον και Ἕλληνος. *There will be anguish and distress for everyone who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek.*

One of the important interpretive issues is to identify the nature of the connection between the two pairs of expansions (vv. 7-8 and 9-10) off the header in verse six.

They are set up as somewhat unevenly focused

⁶⁷"The two nouns are probably used simply as synonyms, the second having the effect of strengthening and emphasizing the first. The divine wrath is of course meant." [C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 149.]

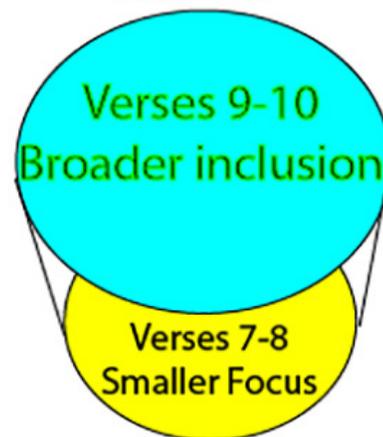
This observation by Cranfield is based upon a footnote: "If any distinction were intended, ὀργή would probably be used of the inner feeling of wrath and θυμός of its outward expression (cf. LSJ, s.v. θυμός, 11:4); but it is not at all likely that this distinction was intended here." [C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), fn. 2, p. 149].

⁶⁸The derivative verb form θυμῶω is only used once in the entire NT (i.e., Matt. 2:16) and there of intense human anger.

Romans 2:6-10

Literary Arrangement

Verse 6
Header



units. The first pair is tied more closely to the header element ἐκάστῳ as a continuation of the sentence in vv. 5-8. The second pair receives the greater emphasis due to its grammar structure as separate sentence.

The divine judgment actions are significant grammatically at this point also. In the first strophe in v. 7 the divine action ζωὴν αἰώνιον is expressed as a direct object of the implied repetition of the header verb ἀποδώσει (v. 6) in the post field. But in the second strophe in v. 8 the divine action ὀργή και θυμός shifts to the subject nominative of the implicit verb ἔσονται, but also in the post field. This same implied verb ἔσονται is repeated for the subject nominative θλίψις και στενοχωρία in the first strophe of v. 9 in the pre field. It is the same for δόξα και τιμὴ και εἰρήνη in the second strophe of v. 10. In the first pair the focus is mainly upon the individuals receiving the divine actions as is signified by the pre field position of the two articles τοῖς. Thus the indirect object ἐκάστῳ in the header (v. 6) receives dominant emphasis in the expansions here. The implicit main verbs come in the post field. But in the second pair the two sets of subjects to the implied verbs come in the pre fields of each main clause of the compound sentence. Therefore the divine actions in judgment rise to the dominant emphasis level in this second set. Perhaps this is somewhat triggered by the post field position of ὀργή και θυμός in the second strophe of the first set, which is followed immediately by the listing of divine actions in the pre field of the first strophe of the second set. At minimum, the two 'negative' strophes in vv. 8-9 are tied close-

2.9
θλιψις
καὶ
30 **στενοχωρία (ἔσονται)**
ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ψυχὴν ἀνθρώπου
| τοῦ κατεργαζομένου τὸ κακόν,
| τε
Τουδαίου πρῶτον
| καὶ
Ἑλλήνος·

2.10
δὲ
δόξα
καὶ
τιμὴ
καὶ
31 **εἰρήνη (ἔσονται)**
παντὶ τῷ ἐργαζομένῳ τὸ ἀγαθόν,
| τε
Τουδαίῳ πρῶτον
| καὶ
Ἑλληνι·

ly together through this with the chiasmic sequence of **AB//B'A'** giving sequential definition.

Also the divine actions should be noted grammatically:

ζωὴν αἰώνιον (v. 7)

ὀργὴ καὶ θυμὸς (v. 8)

θλιψις καὶ στενοχωρία (v. 9)

δόξα δὲ καὶ τιμὴ καὶ εἰρήνη (v. 10)

Note the building crescendo here with 1 to 2 to 2 to 3 actions. Additionally what is sought from God in v. 7, δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν, now turns into what is given by God, δόξα δὲ καὶ τιμὴ καὶ εἰρήνη in v. 10.

What should we make of this structural arrangement by Paul here? First, as noted in the discussion of the relative clause header unit in v. 6, Paul's emphasis expands from just targeting the elitist for final judgment to the broader timeless axioms regarding the overall nature of that eschatological experience for all humanity. The elitist remains a target but as a broader segment including all humanity that is scheduled for that day. Second

to be sure, the divine actions are specified as subjects of the implied verb ἔσονται. These play off the header verb ἀποδώσει, *he will pay back* (v. 6). The indirect object ἐκάστῳ, *to each one* in the header (v. 6) now becomes ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ψυχὴν ἀνθρώπου τοῦ κατεργαζομένου τὸ κακόν, *upon every human life who is doing evil* (v. 9) with the repeated addendum Ἰουδαίου τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλλήνος, *both first of the Jew and then of the Greek*. The header phrase κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ (v. 6) is incorporated into the accusative of reference expansion of ἐκάστῳ by the attached participle τοῦ κατεργαζομένου τὸ κακόν, *of the one doing evil*. Thus all the segments of the header in v. 6 are

expanded, although in new and creative ways. These nuanced meanings in the arrangement and structuring of the Greek text cannot be preserved at all in the translation process due to receptor language grammar rules controlling the structuring of the finished translation. Third, one strong implication coming out of this grammar assessment is the necessity to carefully observe the differences and the similarities between the two pairs as the exegesis proceeds to the details of the second set.

2.10
δὲ
δόξα
καὶ
τιμὴ
καὶ
31 **εἰρήνη (ἔσονται)**
παντὶ τῷ ἐργαζομένῳ τὸ ἀγαθόν,
| τε
Τουδαίῳ πρῶτον
| καὶ
Ἑλληνι·

Thus v. 9 stands as the first strophe in the second pair of affirmations about judgment day. But also it is in parallel to the second strophe of the first pair in v. 8. Both define those who have devoted themselves to evil rather than to following God.

v.8 **τοῖς ἐξ ἐριθείας καὶ ἀπειθοῦσιν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ
πειθομένοις δὲ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ
ὀργὴ καὶ θυμὸς.**

v.9 **θλιψις καὶ στενοχωρία
ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ψυχὴν ἀνθρώπου
τοῦ κατεργαζομένου τὸ κακόν,
Ἰουδαίου τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλλήνος**

In interpretation these two strophes must be considered in close connection to each other. Note some of the connections:

a) ὀργή καὶ θυμός emphasizing God's actions now become θλίψις καὶ στενοχωρία emphasizing what is felt by those being judged.

b) The dative of reference use of the participles τοῖς...καὶ ἀπειθοῦσιν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πειθομένοις δὲ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ emphasizing the collective actions of those facing judgment now becomes the individualized ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ψυχὴν ἀνθρώπου, upon every human life, thus personalizing the first collective reference.

c) the motivating source of the evil actions ἐξ ἐριθείας, out of self-seeking greed, now becomes the action τοῦ κατεργαζομένου τὸ κακόν, of the one doing evil.

Clearly in this second strophe in v. 9 we see the expansion of emphasis from what God does to how it impacts both individuals and groups. Their collective disobeying / obeying turns into the individualized doing of raw evil. τὸ κακόν is broader and inclusive of τῇ ἀδικίᾳ in its general designation of evil inclusively. The doing of evil, τοῦ κατεργαζομένου τὸ κακόν, defines and includes τοῖς...καὶ ἀπειθοῦσιν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πειθομένοις δὲ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ. The very emphatic ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ψυχὴν ἀνθρώπου, upon every human life, stresses the inclusiveness of the τοῖς...καὶ ἀπειθοῦσιν...πειθομένοις δὲ. Not a single person has a loophole around this accountability for their actions.

Now for the detailed analysis of v. 9.

θλίψις καὶ στενοχωρία, affliction and anguish. Whereas the parallel strophe emphasizes ὀργή καὶ θυμός (v. 8) as the divine actions in judgment, here it becomes θλίψις καὶ στενοχωρία. God's wrath and anger become affliction and anguish when unleashed upon sinful humanity in judgment. Perhaps the most dramatic portrayal of this dread surfaces in Rev. 6:15-16,

15 Καὶ οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς καὶ οἱ μεγιστᾶνες καὶ οἱ χιλιάρχοι καὶ οἱ πλούσιοι καὶ οἱ ἰσχυροὶ καὶ πᾶς δοῦλος καὶ ἐλεύθερος ἔκρυψαν ἑαυτοὺς εἰς τὰ σπήλαια καὶ εἰς τὰς πέτρας τῶν ὀρέων 16 καὶ λέγουσιν τοῖς ὄρεσιν καὶ ταῖς πέτραις· πέσετε ἐφ' ἡμᾶς καὶ κρύψατε ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ καθημένου ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς ὀργῆς τοῦ ἀρνίου, 17 ὅτι ἦλθεν ἡ ἡμέρα ἡ μεγάλη τῆς ὀργῆς αὐτῶν, καὶ τίς δύναται σταθῆναι;

15 Then the kings of the earth and the magnates and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, 16 calling to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of the one seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb; 17 for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is

able to stand?"

The two terms θλίψις καὶ στενοχωρία surface together in OT LXX usage in 5 out of the 6 uses of στενοχωρία.⁶⁹ The oracle of doom given by Moses to the Israelites depicts a gruesome picture of cannibalism under the label of θλίψις καὶ στενοχωρία as God's punishment upon disobedient Israel.⁷⁰ This image is projected by Paul to eschatological judgment upon sinful humanity. It provides out of the past some comprehension of what lies ahead for those disobeying God. For the Roman Christians with Jewish influence this image was doubly important as an allusion to the words of Moses given

⁶⁹As with the preceding phrase, these two words are also linked in the OT (in 5 out of the 6 uses of στενοχωρία) — Deut 28:53, 55, 57; Isa 8:22; 30:6. Judgment is depicted by evoking those experiences of life where outward circumstances put the individual under pressure and stress and cause personal distress; the stronger word is στενοχωρία = hemmed in with no way out (cf. particularly 8:35; 2 Cor 6:4; 12:10 — the other occurrences of στενοχωρία in the NT, the first two also in association with θλίψις; also 2 Cor 4:8). See also TDNT 7:607; and on 5:3." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 88.]

⁷⁰Deut. 28:53-57 LXX. 53 καὶ φάγη τὰ ἔκγονα τῆς κοιλίας σου, κρέα υἱῶν σου καὶ θυγατέρων σου, ὅσα ἔδωκέν σοι κύριος ὁ θεός σου, ἐν τῇ στενοχωρίᾳ σου καὶ ἐν τῇ θλίψει σου, ἣ θλίψει σε ὁ ἐχθρός σου.† 54 ὁ ἀπαλὸς ἐν σοὶ καὶ ὁ τρυφερός σφόδρα βασκανεῖ τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ τὸν ἀδελφὸν καὶ τὴν γυναῖκα τὴν ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰ καταλειμμένα τέκνα, ἃ ἂν καταλειφθῇ,† 55 ὥστε δοῦναι ἐνὶ αὐτῶν ἀπὸ τῶν σαρκῶν τῶν τέκνων αὐτοῦ, ὧν ἂν κατέσθη, διὰ τὸ μὴ καταλειφθῆναι αὐτῷ μηθὲν ἐν τῇ στενοχωρίᾳ σου καὶ ἐν τῇ θλίψει σου, ἣ ἂν θλίψωσίν σε οἱ ἐχθροὶ σου ἐν πάσαις ταῖς πόλεσίν σου.† 56 καὶ ἡ ἀπαλὴ ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ ἡ τρυφερὰ σφόδρα, ἣς οὐχὶ πείραν ἔλαβεν ὁ πούς αὐτῆς βαίνειν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς διὰ τὴν τρυφερότητα καὶ διὰ τὴν ἀπαλότητα, βασκανεῖ τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ αὐτῆς τὸν ἄνδρα αὐτῆς τὸν ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ αὐτῆς καὶ τὸν υἱὸν καὶ τὴν θυγατέρα αὐτῆς† 57 καὶ τὸ χόριον αὐτῆς τὸ ἐξεληθὸν διὰ τῶν μηρῶν αὐτῆς καὶ τὸ τέκνον, ὃ ἂν τέκη· καταφάγεται γὰρ αὐτὰ διὰ τὴν ἔνδειαν πάντων κρυφῆ ἐν τῇ στενοχωρίᾳ σου καὶ ἐν τῇ θλίψει σου, ἣ θλίψει σε ὁ ἐχθρός σου ἐν πάσαις ταῖς πόλεσίν σου.†

53 In the desperate straits to which the enemy siege reduces you, you will eat the fruit of your womb, the flesh of your own sons and daughters whom the Lord your God has given you. 54 Even the most refined and gentle of men among you will begrudge food to his own brother, to the wife whom he embraces, and to the last of his remaining children, 55 giving to none of them any of the flesh of his children whom he is eating, because nothing else remains to him, in the desperate straits to which the enemy siege will reduce you in all your towns. 56 She who is the most refined and gentle among you, so gentle and refined that she does not venture to set the sole of her foot on the ground, will begrudge food to the husband whom she embraces, to her own son, and to her own daughter, 57 begrudging even the afterbirth that comes out from between her thighs, and the children that she bears, because she is eating them in secret for lack of anything else, in the desperate straits to which the enemy siege will reduce you in your towns.

to the Israelite people. The apostle Paul will use both of these words, although not linked together as here in Romans, several times in reference of the hardships he had suffered as a Christian minister: θλίψις (24x) and στενοχωρία (4x).

The picture of θλίψις καὶ στενοχωρία here with its eschatological projection gives some insight into Paul's understanding of eternal damnation for the disobedient. For Paul's non-Jewish readers at Rome, this pair of terms θλίψις καὶ στενοχωρία conveyed a harsh picture of that coming day just out of their secular meaning. θλίβω inherently denotes the idea of pressing together hard with considerable pain. Thus life with its challenges presses the individual harshly and ultimately with death.⁷¹ Closely related is στενοχωρία with an emphasis upon being pushed into narrow confines by life's problems.⁷² These real life experiences of θλίψις

⁷¹"While the terms θλίβειν and θλίψις are not elsewhere very common in the philosophical terminology of Hellenism, they play a certain role in Epict. in his doctrine of the self-assertion of man. τὰ θλίβοντα (Diss., IV, 1, 45), τὸ θλίβον (I, 27, 2 f.) and the θλιβῆναι ὑπὸ τῶν γενομένων (I, 25, 17; III, 13, 8), the afflictions of life, of which the last and strongest is death, must be overcome by the philosopher. And they are overcome when we see that we bring this θλίψις on ourselves by our δόγματα (Diss., I, 25, 28: καθόλου γὰρ ἐκείνου μέμνησο, ὅτι ἑαυτοὺς θλίβομεν, ἑαυτοὺς στενοχωροῦμεν, τοῦτ' ἔστιν τὰ δόγματα ἡμᾶς θλίβει καὶ στενοχωρεῖ, cf. Epict. Ench., 16; 24, 1). It seems that in this general and figurative sense θλίβειν and θλίψις represent a popular concept. As examples show, στενοχωρεῖν, στενοχωρία are synon. with θλίβειν, θλίψις. Cf. Luc. Nigrinus, 13: ὀχληρὸς ἦν θλίβων τοῖς οἰκέταις καὶ στενοχωρῶν τοὺς ἀπαντῶντας; Artemid. Oneirocr., I, 66: πάσης θλίψεως καὶ στενοχωρίας λύσιν ὑπισχνεῖται; II, 4: θλίψεις καὶ στενοχωρίας καὶ τοῖς δικάζομένοις καταδίκην μαντεύεται, cf. I, 79; II, 37, 50." [Heinrich Schlier, "Θλίβω, Θλίψις," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:139–140.]

⁷²"Attic στενός, Ionic στεινός (στενρός) mean 'narrow,' 'thin,' 'paltry,' 'poor,' 'wretched.' We find τὸ στεῖνος 'narrow place' in Hom. Il., 8, 476; 12, 66, 'press' in battle 15, 426, 'narrow pass' 23, 419 etc. From Thuc. we find the noun στενοχωρία 'narrow place,' and later the verb στενοχωρέω 'to be squeezed, pressed,' more commonly 'to confine,' 'to compress.' In the lit. sense the word is often used in topographical descriptions, Thuc., VII, 51, 2; 70, 6; Plat. Tim., 25a; Aesch. Pers., 413. In a transf. sense it is found from the Hell. period, medically in Hippocr. Praecepta, 8 (Littré, IX, 262) and in astrological texts, and as a value concept it can denote the paltriness of a question or narrow-mindedness of exposition.² Finally it is used for the 'straits' or 'stresses' of inner or outer problems and difficulties. The exact meaning cannot always be given. Thus in Ps.-Plat. Ep., III, 319c it is not clear whether the ref. is to an external threat to the author on his departure or whether he feared the inner stress of a relation disrupted by his utterance.³ Sometimes we find θλίψις, θλίβω with στενοχωρία, στενοχωρέω. Antonyms are πλατύς, εὐρύς εὐρυχωρία, ἄνεσις etc., Aesch. Pers., 875; Hdt., II, 8, 3; VIII, 60, 2; Plat. Leg., V, 737a; Plut. Quaest. Conv. V, 6 (II, 679e–f).

καὶ στενοχωρία thus provide a helpful picture of what is coming on judgment day from God's wrath.

ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ψυχὴν ἀνθρώπου, upon every human life.

Those who will suffer this punishment are defined very inclusively as every human life.⁷³ This somewhat different expression reflects a Hebrew mind-set expressed in Greek. ψυχή here denotes the Hebrew concept of life at its core level on the inside of a person, rather than just the outward aspect. The shortened expression of παντὶ in verse ten stresses also the inclusive tone. This is a pointed reference to the moral elitist who felt his possession of a higher standard of morality somehow exempted him from facing God's wrath.

τοῦ κατεργαζομένου τὸ κακόν, of the one doing evil.

This adjective participle modifier of ἀνθρώπου defines the limitation of the reference. That is, every human being doing evil will suffer the punishments of God's wrath. Of the 22 total uses of the verb κατεργάζομαι in the entire NT, 11 of them are found in Romans.⁷⁴ The prominence of people doing things -- either good or bad -- is very significant for Paul in this letter. This verb is very close to the much more frequently used ποιέω. It has a similar meaning in the 1048 total NT uses, includ-

"Materially important here are esp. the statements of Hell. philosophy, namely. Stoicism, e.g., Ceb. Tab.,⁴ a work of morality from the 1st cent. A.D. wrongly ascribed to a Pythagorean of the 4th cent. B.C. Ceb. Tab., 15, 1–3 speaks of a narrow door, a little trodden way and a difficult ascent to true culture, ἀνάβασις στενή πανυ ... πρὸς τὴν ἀληθινὴν παιδείαν.⁵"

[Georg Bertram, "Στενός, Στενοχωρία, Στενοχωρέω," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 7:604.]

⁷³"ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ψυχὴν ἀνθρώπου, 'on every single person,' reflects the Semitic understanding of man as (not simply having) a soul (ψῆ), as a living being (given life by God — Gen 2:7; 1 Cor 15:45; cf. also Acts 2:41, 43; 3:23; 7:14; 27:37; 1 Pet 3:20; 1 Clem 64; see BGD with bibliography, and on 13:1; against Lagrange). The parallel element in v 10 is simply παντὶ. In both cases the πᾶσαν and the παντὶ add emphasis, stressing the final phrase ('Jew first and also Greek')." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 88.]

⁷⁴"In the NT the word is used particularly in R. and 2 C. Elsewhere it occurs only once each in 1 C., Eph., Phil. and 1 Pt., and twice in Jm. In all these passages it has a religious and ethical sense. It is used in *malam partem* at R. 1:27: κατεργάζεσθαι ἀσχημοσύνην; 2:9: τὸ κακόν;³ 1 C. 5:3: κατεργάζεσθαι, 'to commit an offence' in an obviously negative sense. 1 Pt. 4:3: τὸ βούλημα τῶν ἔθνῶν with reference to a wrong action ('to fulfil'); R. 4:15: ὀργήν; 7:13; 2 C. 7:10: θάνατον, with reference to evil consequences ('to cause'). The subject of sinful human action is the sin which causes ἐπιθυμία (R. 7:8, 15, 17, 20)." [Georg Bertram, "Κατεργάζομαι," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:635.]

ing the 23 uses inside Romans. Although the action of *κατεργάζομαι* can produce good,⁷⁵ mostly it is used to designate bad actions.

What it does here is τὸ κακόν, *the evil*. In 1:27 with regard to homosexual activity, the verbal has the direct object: τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην κατεργαζόμενοι, *doing the utterly shameful*. The adjective κακός, -ή, -όν, here used as a noun τὸ κακόν, is also prominent in Romans with 15 of the 50 total uses in the NT.⁷⁶ The term is a part of a large word group specifying that which is evil and bad: κακός (15x Rom), ἄκακος (1x Rom), κακία (1x Rom), κακῶ (0x Rom), κακῶργος (0x Rom), κακοήθεια (1x Rom), κακοποιέω (0x Rom), κακοποιός (3x Rom), ἐγκακιέω (0x Rom), ἀνεξίκακος (0x Rom).⁷⁷ The inherent idea of the word group is designating something lacking or being missing. The idea of weakness grows out of this. Essentially what is miss-

⁷⁵"The opposite use of *κατεργάζεσθαι* in *bonam partem* is found in R. 7:18: *κατεργάζεσθαι τὸ καλόν*; 5:3; Jm. 1:3: *ὑπομονήν*; 2 C. 7:10a: *μετάνοιαν εἰς σωτηρίαν*; cf. 7:11: *σπουδὴν, ἀπολογίαν κτλ.*; Phil. 2:12: *σωτηρίαν*; 2 C. 9:11: *εὐχαριστίαν*; 4:17: *βάρος δόξης*; in a warning sense, Jm. 1:20: *δικαιοσύνην*.⁴ Whether Eph. 6:13: *ἅπαντα κατεργασάμενοι*, refers to full preparation for the battle or to the overcoming of all opposition is an open question.⁵ That the final subject behind *κατεργάζεσθαι*, as behind → *ἔργον, ἐργάζεσθαι*, is God or Christ, may be seen in R. 15:18 and 2 C. 12:12 with reference to the work of the apostle. The latter verse refers to the validation of the message and person of the apostle by the wonderful acts of power wrought by God. We should thus supply *διὰ θεοῦ* along with *κατεργάσθη*.⁶ Self-evidently God is also the One who effects all the gifts of salvation of which we read in the passages mentioned. *θεὸς γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ ἐνεργῶν* (Phil. 2:12, 13) stands behind all *κατεργάζεσθαι*. God it is who has fashioned us to salvation, for the glory of the heavenly body:⁷ 2 C. 5:5. In this passage the aor. part. *κατεργασάμενος* refers to the new creation which has taken place in baptism,⁸ and the pres. *κατεργαζόμενος* of the vl. D G lat to present *θλίμεις* (cf. 4:17; R. 5:3)." [Georg Bertram, "Κατεργάζομαι," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:635.]

⁷⁶"κακός, ἦ, ὄν basically, denoting a lack of something *bad, not as it ought to be*, opposite *καλός* (sound, good) and *ἀγαθός* (good); (1) morally, of persons characterized by godlessness *evil, bad* (MT 24.48); substantively *evildoer* (RV 2.2); (2) as moral conduct, attitudes, plans of godless people *evil, base, wicked* (MK 7.21); (3) neuter as a substantive τὸ κακόν *evil* as being present in the world (RO 13.3); plural *κακά evil deeds* (RO 1.30); (4) of circumstances and conditions that come on a person *harmful, evil, injurious* (RV 16.2); substantively τὰ κακά *ruin, harm, misfortunes, evils* (LU 16.25); (5) as characterized by reprehensible lack of accuracy *wrong, incorrect* (JN 18.23)." [Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Baker's Greek New Testament Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 213.]

⁷⁷Walter Grundmann, "Κακός, ἄκακος, Κακία, Κακῶ, Κακῶργος, Κακοήθεια, Κακοποιέω, Κακοποιός, Ἐγκακιέω, Ἀνεξίκακος," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:469.

ing is ἀγαθός, *an essential goodness*. Thus the individual τοῦ κατεργαζομένου τὸ κακόν is *the one engaging in things devoid of any goodness or value* as determined by God. He stands opposite to τῷ ἐργαζομένῳ τὸ ἀγαθόν, *the one doing what is good* (v. 10).⁷⁸

Ἰουδαίου τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἕλληνας, first of the Jew and then of the Greek. This is the second time for this expression, with *Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἕλληνι* first surfacing in 1:16 specifying those who have access to the Gospel. The repeating of the exact phrase in verse 10 lays the foundation for not on the discussion in 2:12-29. Paul returns somewhat to this principle in 3:1-4 and especially chapters 9 through 11.

By using it here with both the negative judgment of the disobedient -- and then for the opposite in v. 10 -- Paul underscores the universal application of principles of divine judgment for all humanity, including the moral elitists both Gentile and Jewish. The principle stated here traces itself back to his calling from God to be a Gospel messenger to Gentiles that we note in Acts 9, especially vv. 15, and 19b-22. As a Jew, the apostle felt a first obligation to his own people, but God's calling stressed inclusion of the non-Jewish world. The unique relationship of the Israelite people in the covenant with Abraham underscores God's concern. One should note that this standard Jewish way of dividing humanity into two groups, that the second designation Ἕλληνας references not just Greeks, but all non-Jews.

But in this first instance in v. 9 of *Ἰουδαίου τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἕλληνας*, the application of the principle is powerfully attached to those who are disobedient. The disobedient Jew faces God's wrath first, but the disobedient Gentile also faces that same wrath. By this attachment of *Ἰουδαίου τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἕλληνας*, Paul makes it abundantly clear to his Roman readers that merely being Jewish in no way exempts one from God's wrath on the day of judgment. To the contrary, it heightens the responsibility, as based on Jesus' principle *to whom much is given much will be required* (e.g., Matt. 25:29; Mk. 4:25; Lk. 6:38; 8:18; 12:48*; 19:26).

⁷⁸"τὸ κακόν/τὸ ἀγαθόν, 'the bad thing/the good thing.' The use of the adjectives as substantives would be very familiar to Greek ears, including the antithesis between 'the bad' and 'the good,' particularly to Stoics (TDNT 3:473; see also LSJ). But the contrast would be quite familiar to Jewish ears too (see particularly Deut 30:15; 1 Kgs 3:9; Job 2:10; Pss 34:14 [LXX 33:15]; 37 [LXX 36]:27; Lam 3:38; Ep Jer 34; Sir 12:5; 13:25; 17:7; 18:8; 33:14; 37:18). In Romans Paul makes repeated use of the antithesis—3:8; 7:19, 21; 12:21; 13:3; 16:19; see also 1 Pet 3:11 (citing Ps 33:15 LXX [34:14]); 3 John 11." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 88.]

Verse 10: δόξα δὲ καὶ τιμὴ καὶ εἰρήνη παντὶ τῷ ἐργαζομένῳ τὸ ἀγαθόν, Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλληνι· *but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek.*

Just as v. 9 expands and clarifies v. 8, so v. 10 follows suit with an amplification of v. 7. This creates the informal chiasmic structure of AB//B'A' (+ - // - +). All of which build their core structure off the header elements in v. 6. Thus the blessing of divine judgment in v. 7 is now expanded in v. 10.

The parallelism of v. 10 with v. 7 is important for exegesis:

=====		
v. 6	ὃς ἀποδώσει	(divine action)
	ἐκάστῳ	(recipient of divine action)
	κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ	(basis of divine action)
=====		
v. 7	καθ' ὑπομονὴν ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ	
	<i>τοῖς μὲν...δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν ζητοῦσιν</i>	
	<i>ζωὴν αἰώνιον</i>	
v. 10	<i>δόξα δὲ καὶ τιμὴ καὶ εἰρήνη</i>	
	<i>παντὶ</i>	
	<i>τῷ ἐργαζομένῳ τὸ ἀγαθόν,</i>	
	<i>Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλληνι·</i>	

In this charting the similarities and differences should be easier to spot. Notice several interesting aspects in comparison.

a) What is being sought (v. 7) is now realized in divine judgment: *τοῖς...δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν ζητοῦσιν, to those seeking glory and honor and immortality.* These become divine actions realized in v. 10: *δόξα δὲ καὶ τιμὴ καὶ εἰρήνη, but glory and honor and peace will be given.* The privilege of dwelling with Almighty God that was being sought while on earth (v. 7) is granted on the day of judgment for all eternity (v. 10). *εἰρήνη, peace* (v. 10), compares to *ἀφθαρσίαν, immortality* (v. 7). Living in harmony with God (*εἰρήνη*) for eternity is closely connected to *ἀφθαρσία*, which is the desired life apart from the chaotic, stress filled life of mortals on earth. The Hebrew background of peace in *דִּילְשׁוּ (šā·lōm)* that stands behind NT usage of *εἰρήνη* stresses the positive relationship with God and the blessings coming out of it.

The blessings of Heaven are not elaborated upon here beyond affirming that that which was sought after for eternity -- to live in the holy presence of God in blessing for eternity -- is realized on Judgment Day by those obeying the will of God in their living. These three traits of Heaven, *δόξα καὶ τιμὴ καὶ εἰρήνη*, are indeed packed full of rich and profound meaning and implications for

the people of God. As John makes so abundantly clear in Revelation, everything centers around the splendor and fullness of God's presence and blessing.

For Paul's non-Jewish readers, these positive qualities were not usually associated with the Greek idea of eternity. The alternative invisible world of eternity for Greeks was reserved only for the gods, and not human beings. But it was not a perfect world since the immoral actions of the gods was mimicked by mortals on earth. So the Jewish then Christian teachings about Heaven as the dwelling place of a perfectly holy God were new ideas. Yet, they most assuredly were attractive ideas. The possibility of escaping the violent, chaotic life on earth would have been appealing, not to mention the thought of this perfect life in God's presence as extending throughout the unceasing ages.

For Paul's Jewish readers at Rome, these qualities were very understandable. While the OT has no concept of eternal life for mortals, the emerging Judaism of the intertestamental era formulated thinking that being in the presence of God after death could be possible via a resurrection experience. For most Jews of Paul's days whether this was realized or not depended upon one's obedience to the Torah of God. Christian teaching shifted this idea to obedience to God based upon surrender of one's life to Christ, rather than Torah.⁷⁹ But

⁷⁹"The idea of eternity, like the idea of immortality, was probably beyond the range of early Jewish thought. It arose after the Exile, partly through a natural development of the Hebrew conception of God, and partly through the force of circumstances. (1) The pious Jew, turning away more and more from the anthropomorphism of cruder religions, strove to differentiate the infinite God from finite man. God is transcendent — above the limitations of earthly existence. Hence He is eternal, from everlasting to everlasting. A thousand years in His sight are but as yesterday. (2) With the Exile came a decay of national ideals, and the Jew began to consider more his own personality and its relation to this eternal God. This thought developed slowly, and was mixed with various elements. The Jew found himself in an evil world. His own nation was oppressed, almost blotted out. Good men suffered; wicked men seemed to prosper. If the eternal, omnipotent God ruled the world, then all this must surely end. The Day of the Lord would come for oppressed Israel, for the oppressors, for the whole world, and (in Apocalyptic literature, Ps-Sol 3:16, 13:9 etc.) for the Jew himself. Then the present evil world (עוֹלָם הַהַיּוֹרָה) would give place to a new and glorious era (עוֹלָם הַבְּרָאָה, see GENERATION). Whether this עוֹלָם הַבְּרָאָה would be endless the Jew did not at first stop to inquire. Sufficient for him that it would come with countless blessings in 'the end of the days' (קֵץ הַיָּמִים; cf. Mt 13:39, 24:3). In the Book of Enoch, however, 'Time' is followed by 'Eternity' in the עוֹלָם הַכּוֹלֵל. Later Judaism developed the idea, probably borrowed from the Zend religion, of a series of world epochs (cf. the world empires of Daniel's vision), followed by the Messianic age.

"In the time of Christ, Jewish thought on the future had developed very much, and had assumed many forms (see ESCHATOLOGY). Jesus must have sifted the various elements. He retained



the central idea of a blissful eternity remained centered on everything connected to living in the full presence of a holy God.

b) The recipients of this divine blessing are individualized into the singular παντι, to each one, from the collective plural τοις, to those (v. 7). This is appropriate contextually so that the moral elitists at Rome reading this will grasp that they also are included among those facing God in final judgment. They have no loophole around it. Thus the universal inclusion is of every person who will have been born across time and will stand before God on judgment day with no exceptions. This clearly is Paul's point here.

c) This inclusiveness is then made even more emphatic by the addendum Ιουδαίω τε πρώτον και Ἑλληνι also written in the dative singular forms matching παντι. The twofold division of humanity becomes a way of stressing all humanity. Just as disobedient Jews face initial condemnation (v. 9), the obedient Jew experiences initial blessing from God on Judgment Day. The unbelieving synagogue communities in Rome faced the awesome wrath of God, while those in these communities who turned to Christ in obedient surrender could anticipate divine blessing on Judgment Day.

Verse 11: οὐ γάρ ἐστιν προσωποληψία παρὰ τῷ θεῷ, For God shows no partiality.

^{2.11} γάρ
32 οὐ ἐστιν προσωποληψία
παρὰ τῷ θεῷ.

The causal conjunction γάρ signals that this declaration is the conceptual basis for the preceding, especially the parallel addendum Ιουδαίου τε πρώτον και Ἑλληνος // Ιουδαίω τε πρώτον και Ἑλληνι. Contrary to dominant Jewish thinking in Paul's day, the contention is that God makes absolutely no distinction between Jew and

and perhaps developed the view of a new age (אָפּן עוֹלָם) about to dawn on the world as opposed to the present (הַיּוֹם עוֹלָם; Mt 12:32, cf. 13:39, 28:20). Then 'the kingdom of heaven' (מַלְכוּת הַשָּׁמַיִם) would be established. Jesus endeavoured to concentrate the thoughts of His hearers on their personal relation to this kingdom, and the desirability of sharing it (see LIFE, ETERNAL LIFE). Doubtless this kingdom would be for ever and its members live for ever (cf. Dn 12:2 עוֹלָם חַיִּים 'eternal life'). The vexed question of the absolute endlessness of this kingdom, with its rewards and punishments, would probably never be raised in the minds of Jesus' hearers. At the same time, there is no evidence in the teaching of Jesus of any limit to the אָפּן עוֹלָם, and while the frequent adjective αἰώνιος, 'eternal,' must be taken in the Gospels as referring in the first place to this coming kingdom, it may, so far as we know, be taken as implying also that quality of absolute permanence with which that kingdom has always been associated in the minds of men."

[G. Gordon Stott, "Eternity," ed. James Hastings, *A Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels: Aaron-Zion* (Edinburgh; New York: T&T Clark; Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), 1:542-543.]

Gentile, especially on Judgment Day. All are treated exactly the same way and judged by the exact same standards.

The literal idea of προσωποληψία is 'receiving the face.'⁸⁰ This strange Hebraism would have been challenging for the non-Jewish reader in Rome to have understood, since it was based on unfamiliar middle eastern customs and not Greco-Roman ones. The noun προσωποληψία is used by Paul three times -- Rom. 2:11; Eph. 6:9; Col. 3:25 -- to assert in axiomatic form that such προσωποληψία does not exist with God. James 2:1 asserts that professing Christians possessing προσωποληψία are false Christians without knowledge of God.⁸¹ The core meaning of the idiom is to show favoritism to some and discrimination against others. The negative denial of οὐ ἐστιν προσωποληψία adamantly denies that God treats some a favorable way while treating others unfavorably. The reverse concept affirmed is that all people are treated exactly the same way by God. In all three Pauline uses the idiom is stated negatively that there is no partiality with God. This not only reflects the dominate OT framing of the idea but also highlights the contrast of God with corrupt humans, particularly those functioning as judges giving

⁸⁰"The expressions פָּנֵי אִשָּׁה = λαμβάνειν πρόσωπον or θαυμάζειν πρόσωπον and פָּנֵי רִיבֵי = γινώσκειν πρόσωπον are common in the OT. They are to be explained in terms of the respectful oriental greeting in which one humbly turns one's face to the ground or sinks to the earth. If the person greeted thus raises the face of the man, this is a sign of recognition and esteem. The translation of פָּנֵי אִשָּׁה by λαμβάνειν πρόσωπον is modelled closely on the Hebrew expression.¹ In secular Greek, of course, λαμβάνειν means only 'to take,' 'to accept,' never 'to raise up.' But since אִשָּׁה can mean 'to take' as well as 'to lift,' λαμβάνειν was used for it in Greek. This rendering must have been virtually unintelligible to the Greek.² In the phrase θαυμάζειν πρόσωπον, θαυμάζειν means 'to esteem,' → III, 30, 1 ff., 41, 12 ff.

"God does not respect persons: οὐ θαυμάζει πρόσωπον (Dt. 10:17; cf. 2 Ch. 19:7). Men, however; honour one another by humble greeting and lifting of the face. Thus Jacob before his meeting with Esau hopes: ἴσως γάρ προσδέξεται τὸ πρόσωπόν μου, Gn. 32:21. But λαμβάνειν πρόσωπον may be partial when regard is hard for the person and there is unjust preference. Judges in particular are warned: οὐκ ἐπιγνώση πρόσωπον ἐν κρίσει, Dt. 1:17, cf. also Lk. 19:15; Dt. 16:19. As there is no respect of persons with God, so the earthly judge must be incorruptible and return just verdicts."

[Eduard Lohse, "Πρόσωπον, Εὐπροσωπέω, Προσωποληψία, Προσωπολήμπτως, Προσωπολημπτέω, Αποσωπολήμπτως," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 6:779.]

⁸¹The limited Christian use of προσωποληψία after the apostolic era centers on the perspective in James with this being forbidden to followers of Christ: Barnabas 19.4; Didache 4:3; Polycarp 6:1; 1 Clement 1:3.

human verdicts in a court setting.

Bribery and corruption were notorious all through the various legal systems across the Roman empire of Paul's day. That God would not function on judgment day like a human judge was encouraging to those coming into His judgment with a life of obedience. Particularly reassuring would this be since no bribes would be necessary or needed in order to gain a just verdict. Of course, it would be terrifying to those anticipating a negative judgment since there would be no possible way to avoid the negative verdict.

2.12 γὰρ ἀνόμως Ὅσοι . . . ἤμαρτον, ἀνόμως καὶ ἀπολοῦνται, καὶ ἐν νόμῳ ὅσοι . . . ἤμαρτον, διὰ νόμου κριθήσονται .

2.13 γὰρ οὐ οἱ ἀκροαταὶ νόμου δίκαιοι (ἔστι) παρὰ [τῷ] θεῷ, ἀλλ' οἱ ποιηταὶ νόμου δικαιωθήσονται.

2.14 γὰρ τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα φύσει ὅταν ἔθνη . . . τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν, νόμον μὴ ἔχοντες οὗτοι . . . ἑαυτοῖς εἰσὶν νόμος .

2.15 οἵτινες ἐνδείκνυνται τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου γραπτὸν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν, συμμαρτυρούσης αὐτῶν τῆς συνειδήσεως καὶ μεταξὺ ἀλλήλων τῶν λογισμῶν κατηγορούντων ἢ καὶ ἀπολογουμένων,

2.16 ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὅτε κρίνει ὁ θεὸς τὰ κρυπτὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου διὰ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ.

====Summary=====

Thus in vv. 1-11, Paul turns to the moral elitists of his time, particularly those in Rome, to pointedly remind them that they have no advantage on judgment day over their purely pagan neighbors. Mere possession of a higher standard of morality regardless of its origin, either in philosophy or Jewish Torah sources, does not matter or count before God in judgment. That day will be a day of divine wrath being poured out on the disobedient to God. What will make the decisive different is a life of surrendered obedience to God so that acts of righteousness originate with God and flow through the life of the individual. Even limited adherence to the higher standard of morality is worthless before God in final judgment.

The reality of such elitism is that its false sense of superiority and criticism of the wickedness of those

without such a standard betrays a life of actual disobedience itself (vv. 1-4). When God judges all humanity His standard will be the Truth of His own character and essence as the criteria for measuring human actions. But the elitist condemnation of their pagan neighbors actually means an intensification of divine wrath that will come upon them on judgment day (vv. 5-8).

The basic contours of judgment day for all are given in vv. 6-11.⁸² The core elements of this picture are set forth in the relative clause functioning at a header for the two sets of plus and minus judgments to be rendered on that day. The collective plural references are first set forth in vv. 7-8. Then in vv. 9-10, the plural is shifted to the singular individualized perspective

⁸²Note the overlapping of the two dominant themes in vv. 1-8 and 9-11. The sentences of the Greek text reflect this: a) v. 1; b) v. 2; c) v. 3; d) v. 4; e) vv. 5-8; f) vv. 9-11. The judgment of the elitist is dominant in vv. 1-8 but the shift to the judgment of all begins in v. 6 at the end of the fifth sentence and continues through v. 11.

Throughout the chapter Paul discusses final judgment of all humanity. He targets here the moral elitist who falsely thinks he has a loophole around final judgment.

JUDGMENT & CIRCUMCISM Rom. 2:25-29

JUDGMENT OF THE JEWISH MORALIST Rom. 2:17-24

JUDGMENT OF THE OBEDIENT Rom. 2:12-16

JUDGMENT OF THE MORALIST Rom. 2:1-11

FINAL JUDGMENT OF ALL Rom. 2:1-29

underscoring absolute inclusion of every single human being. The threefold header elements of divine action, recipient of divine action, and basic of divine action are developed in the two sets -- vv. 7-8 and 9-10 -- in the chiasmic sequence of AB // B'A'. That is *positive judgment / negative judgment // negative judgment / positive judgment*. In this very Hebraistic thought structure, primary emphasis falls upon the negative judgment to be rendered by God on judgment day. This targets primarily the moral elitist whom Paul has in view throughout vv. 1-11. The foundation for how God will judge all humanity is set forth in v. 11 as there being absolutely no partiality with God toward any group or individual. Every person will be treated exactly the same way on judgment day. The deciding criteria determining eternal destiny will be surrendered obedience lived out in this life. Those with it will spend eternity in the glorious presence of Almighty God; those without it will be hit with the full fury of God's wrath in eternal damnation.

What Paul presents here should form a wake up call to all humanity in our world. Folks, judgment day is coming and there is no escaping it. Every person will face a holy God on that day to be evaluated as to whether their life has been lived in surrendered obedience to God. Claims of godness, demands for favorable treatment, flippant professions of faith without obedience etc. -- all will fall on the deaf ears of the God who will show no partiality to anyone on that day. Your eternal destiny hangs in the balance. Now is the time to prepare yourself for that coming day!

10.3.3.2.2 Doing not possessing matters, 2:12-16

12 Ὅσοι γὰρ ἀνόμως ἤμαρτον, ἀνόμως καὶ ἀπολοῦνται, καὶ ὅσοι ἐν νόμῳ ἤμαρτον, διὰ νόμου κριθήσονται· 13 οὐ γὰρ οἱ ἀκροαταὶ νόμου δίκαιοι παρὰ τῷ θεῷ, ἀλλ' οἱ ποιηταὶ νόμου δικαιωθήσονται. 14 ὅταν γὰρ ἔθνη τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα φύσει τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν, οὗτοι νόμον μὴ ἔχοντες ἑαυτοῖς εἰσὶν νόμος· 15 οἵτινες ἐνδείκνυνται τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου γραπτὸν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν, συμμαρτυρούσης αὐτῶν τῆς συνειδήσεως καὶ μεταξύ ἀλλήλων τῶν λογισμῶν κατηγορούντων ἢ καὶ ἀπολογουμένων, 16 ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὅτε κρίνει ὁ θεὸς τὰ κρυπτὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου διὰ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ.

12 All who have sinned apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. 13 For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous in God's sight, but the doers of the law who will be justified. 14 When Gentiles, who do not possess the law, do instinctively what the law requires, these, though not having the law, are a law to themselves. 15 They show that what the law requires is written on their

hearts, to which their own conscience also bears witness; and their conflicting thoughts will accuse or perhaps excuse them 16 on the day when, according to my gospel, God, through Jesus Christ, will judge the secret thoughts of all.

Literary Context. With this next unit of vv. 12-16 the apostle picks up on the negative judgment set forth in vv. 8-9. Here he amplifies the none partiality factor in how God will arrived at the negative verdict and impose then an appropriate punishment in Hell upon these individuals. He is still targeting the moral elitist in vv. 1-11. But he deliberately reaches back to the raw pagan of 1:18-32. His experience of eschatological wrath rather than temporal wrath is pictured. But the contrast centers around the Jewish Torah of the OT and accessibility to it. Thus to his Roman Christian audience this advancement in Paul's discussion is reasonable and not surprising.

At another thought structure level, a second informal chiasmic pattern is unfolding. With the Jew first and then the Gentile addendum in vv. 9 and 10, Paul now develops his amplification treating first the Gentiles (vv. 12-16) and then the Jews (vv. 17-29). Thus vv. 12-16 and then vv. 17-29 represent logical advancements of Paul's discussion of eschatological judgment. Thus the AB//B'A' sequence unfolds with A being Jews and B Gentiles.

Literary Structure. The internal arrangement of ideas is presented clearly in the above block diagram. The casual conjunction γὰρ presents vv. 12-16 as foundational also the previous discussion in vv. 1-10. What is implied in the none προσωπολημψία παρὰ τῷ θεῷ? One of the underpinnings of it can be seen in how it plays itself out in the judging of the disobedient and the obedient individuals, regardless of whether or not they are Jews.

Verse 12 contains two parallel axioms regarding sinning and being judged for it (#s 33 & 34):

Ὅσοι γὰρ ἀνόμως ἤμαρτον,
ἀνόμως καὶ ἀπολοῦνται,
 καὶ

ὅσοι ἐν νόμῳ ἥμαρτον,
διὰ νόμου κριθήσονται·
 For as many as sin lawlessly
lawlessly will also perish,
 and
 as many as sin in law
through law will be judged.

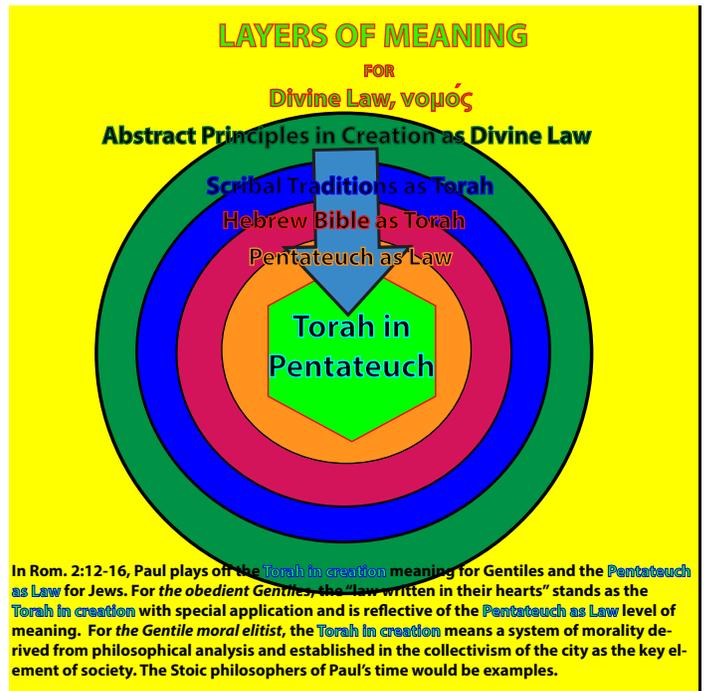
In v. 13, this pair of axioms in v. 12 is supported via γὰρ with a pair of axioms affirming the critical role of doing law over hearing law (#s 35-36). This completes the sentence in vv. 12-13. This is followed by a second supporting (via γὰρ) amplification found in a single sentence encompassing vv. 14-16 (# 37). All of this leads to the climatic declaration of that Day of Judgment in v. 16. This second supportive declaration in vv. 14-16 stresses the advantage of obedient Gentiles over disobedient Jews with a curious assertion in v. 14b, οὗτοι νόμον μὴ ἔχοντες ἑαυτοῖς εἰσιν νόμος, *these law not possessing are for themselves a law*. This will be their advantage on judgment as non-Jews.

Axioms, v. 12. Ὅσοι γὰρ ἀνόμως ἥμαρτον, ἀνόμως καὶ ἀπολοῦνται, καὶ ὅσοι ἐν νόμῳ ἥμαρτον, διὰ νόμου κριθήσονται. *All who have sinned apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law.*

These two axioms are set in contrast to one another as parallel declarations of timeless spiritual principle. The quantitative relative clauses introduced by ὅσοι serve as the clause subjects of the main clause verbs ἀπολοῦνται // κριθήσονται. The verbs character divine action on judgment day as both causing some to perish, ἀπολοῦνται, and putting others through divine scrutiny, κριθήσονται. The consistent principle of divine judging is simple. Sin outside of awareness of divine law and you will be judged on that basis. But sin in awareness of divine law and you will be strictly judged by that very law. But note sinning ἀνόμως means perishing ἀνόμως. Sinning ἐν νόμῳ means being judged διὰ νόμου. What does that imply? Most importantly it illustrates not only God's avoidance of προσωποληψία (v. 11), but also God's judging each κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ (v. 6). This in turn affirms δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (1:17). God is a just God and will mete out punishment as punishment is deserved. Sinning brings eternal damnation, but the severity of that is determined by how the sinning was done, in or without awareness of divine law.

First supporting axioms, v. 13. οὐ γὰρ οἱ ἀκροαταὶ νόμου δίκαιοι παρὰ τῷ θεῷ, ἀλλ' οἱ ποιηταὶ νόμου δικαιοθήσονται, *for it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous in God's sight, but the doers of the law who will be justified.*

Again interlocking contrastive principles are put on the table by Paul:



*οὐ οἱ ἀκροαταὶ νόμου δίκαιοι παρὰ τῷ θεῷ,
 ἀλλ' οἱ ποιηταὶ νόμου δικαιοθήσονται*

Even without reading the Greek text, the contrasts as highlighted above should be clear to every reader. The essential contrast is between *hearing the law*, οἱ ἀκροαταὶ νόμου, and *doing the law*, οἱ ποιηταὶ νόμου. Here the moral elitist is clearly targeted. Mere awareness of divine law is not enough. It is obedient action that matters with God. The *not this...but that* structure with οὐ... ἀλλ' creates a contrastive framework for the expression. But the main clause expressions are essentially synonymous with δίκαιοι παρὰ τῷ θεῷ, *just with God*, emphasizing status while δικαιοθήσονται, *will be justified*, stresses divine action taken. The first is sought after, but the second is experienced on judgment day. This slight shift in focus is appropriate to the context of the moral elitist situation. And it implies none achievement on his part. The reason is that he stands as one of the οἱ ἀκροαταὶ νόμου, *hearers of law*, but not as one of the οἱ ποιηταὶ νόμου, *doers of law*.

The interpretive temptation here is to 'jewicize' the word νόμου, *law*, as used here. But the absence of the Greek article τοῦ before νόμου raises a red flag against this. Contextually it's clear from vv. 14-16 that the Gentile moralist is still in the picture even though the Jewish moralist is the primary target.⁸³

⁸³The Gentile / Jew defining of the issue here as reflected in the WBC comments by Dunn below is a woefully inadequate assumption that overlooks most of the signals offered by Paul of what he actually means by the term νόμος in the passage. See above exegesis for these signals and what they actually point to. This overly simplistic approach ends up distorting the text falsely. And for Dunn, this distortion screws much of the rest of his commentary on

A fundamental question here is how the axioms in v. 13 offer support for those in v. 12? The causal coordinate conjunction γάρ in v. 13 unquestionably links them to the preceding statements in v. 12 in a supportive relationship. Conceptually the core idea of “doing” supplies the connecting link.

2.14 γάρ τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα φύσει
 ὅταν ἔθνη...τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν, νόμον μὴ ἔχοντες
 οὗτοι...ἑαυτοῖς εἰσιν νόμος·
 2.15 οἵτινες ἐνδείκνυνται τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου
 γραπτὸν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν, συμμαρτυροῦσης αὐτῶν τῆς συνειδήσεως
 καὶ μεταξὺ ἀλλήλων τῶν λογισμῶν κατηγορούντων
 ἢ καὶ ἀπολογουμένων,
 2.16 ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὅτε κρίνει ὁ θεὸς τὰ κρυπτὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου διὰ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ.

the first eight chapters of Romans.

The thrust of Paul’s argument becomes still more clear in vv 12–16 where the law enters the discussion for the first time, to dominate the rest of the chapter (νόμος—19 times in 16 verses; 9 times in vv 12–16; ἀνόμως twice), and to serve as the major counterpoint in the argument thereafter (see further Introduction §5.2). The terms in which it is introduced are significant. For Paul is seeking to deny any false distinction between Jew and Gentile (vv 9–10), and the law is introduced as providing just such a distinction—Gentiles being characterized as those “without the law,” “not having the law” (vv 12, 14), and Jews as those “within the law,” “hearers of the law” (vv 12, 13). The point is that there is no advantage in merely having the law, that is, in belonging to the people who hear the law sabbath by sabbath (cf. Acts 15:21). The possibility of a “doing” of the law acceptable to God is not dependent on such an understanding of covenant status but on an obedience from the heart unrestricted by ethnic boundaries (vv 13–15). As Snodgrass rightly argues, Paul does clearly believe here in “Judgment according to works,” and is expounding an essentially Jewish view of judgment (in which mercy and judgment were held together without any thought of incongruity), but radicalized to warn against Jewish overconfidence in election.

[James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 94–95.]

For a much better and more honest approach, see Longenecker, Richard N. *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. Edited by I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner. New International Greek Testament Commentary. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 151-157, 260-283. Prof. Longenecker lays out the issues well and methodically works his way through each possibility for interpreting vv. 12-16. His weakness is being too trapped by his evangelical theological background with its conversionist theology. It is not ‘the beginning’ that God is most interested in both now and on Judgment Day. Instead, it is the ‘living out in surrendered obedience’ this beginning that ultimately counts for determining eternal destiny. Thus δικαιωθήσονται is the bottom line, in that God makes us acceptable to Himself through Christ. Aspiring to being δίκαιοι παρὰ τῷ θεῷ will doom us to eternal damnation.

In verse 12 the doing is ἥμαρτον, **sinning**, by the individual. But in v. 13 doing is **obeying law**, ποιηταὶ νόμου. It is this latter approach that brings justification before God on judgment day, while ἥμαρτον brings condemnation. And that either ἀνόμως or ἐν νόμῳ. So doing law is what brings God’s acceptance. Disobeying law brings God’s wrath. This principle of doing law thus supports the principle that disobeying law brings God’s wrath, and not His acceptance.

The subsequent question then is who genuinely does law? Obviously the pagan does not. But Paul’s point here is that neither does the moralist either Gentile or Jewish. And vv. 14-16 develop that point dramatically in a way very surprisingly to his Roman readers.⁸⁴

To adequately set this up contextually, some points in v. 13 need more amplification.

a) Status before God verses divine action of acceptance. As already alluded to above, δίκαιοι παρὰ τῷ θεῷ, **just before God**, pictures the quest of the moralist, especially the Jewish moralist. Of the 7 uses of the adjective δίκαιος, -αία, -ον in Romans, 5 of them -- 1:17; 2:13; 3:10; 5:7; 5:19 -- allude to a posture of being δίκαιος before God in some way, or not. In 7:12, the Law is δίκαιος, and in 3:26 God Himself is δίκαιος. As a derivative of δικαιοσύνη, the core idea is that of being fair and equitable in the treatment of others. Coming out of this then is the idea of acceptance by another because of one’s δίκαιος character. For the Jewish moralist thus to achieve the status of being δίκαιοι παρὰ τῷ θεῷ was

⁸⁴And also to modern Protestants, due to our heritage of justification by faith without works of law from Luther. This heritage, mostly the twisting of it into a distortion of Paul’s teachings, raises frustrating obstacles against clear and easy understanding of Paul’s ideas here.

the ultimate goal to be accomplished through one's personal adherence to the Mosaic Torah as interpreted by the scribes. But mere possessing access to this Torah -- οἱ ἀκροαταὶ νόμου -- came to signify virtual acceptance by God as His special covenant people. The failure of the moralist to even obey significantly, Paul has already targeted in 2:1-4.

For the Gentile moral elitist being considered δίκαιος παρὰ τῷ θεῷ was largely to staying on the good side of the gods in order to avoid their wrath. For most, however, the aspiration was to be considered a δίκαιος man by others in the community. This was essential to personal success in a collective society.

For the apostle Paul, aspiring to being δίκαιος essentially dooms the individual particularly before God, and most assuredly on judgment day. The exclusive hope for all in final judgment is δικαιοθήσονται, *being made righteous* before God and by God. The verb δικαίω is used 15 times in Romans out of the 39 total uses in the NT. But one must never detach it from the larger word group δίκη, δίκαιος, δικαιοσύνη, δικαίω, δικαίωμα, δικαίωσις, δικαιοκρισία.⁸⁵ Already this entire section has been placed under the thematic umbrella of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, *God's righteousness*, as defined by τὸ εὐαγγέλιον (1:16-17). Additionally it stands as a disclosure of ὀργή θεοῦ, *God wrath*, in chapters one through three (1:18). Thus δικαιοθήσονται, the future passive 3rd plural of δικαίω, alludes to divine action which transforms the individual into acceptability with God. Therefore God reflects His δίκαιος character in transforming the οἱ ποιηταὶ νόμου, *doers of law*, into an acceptable status before Himself on judgment day. The aspiration of seeking it via one's personal morality dooms. But faith surrender to obeying what God says opens the door for the divine action in making one acceptable. Obedience then becomes not personal achievement morally and religiously. Instead, it becomes surrender to the presence and leadership of God working His will inside and through us.

This is Paul's point both to his initial readers and to all who would read this letter subsequently. And upon this spiritual foundation he will build the ideas of what δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, *God's righteousness*, will ultimately mean in the remaining chapters of the letter.

Second supporting affirmation, vv. 14-16. 14 ὅταν γὰρ ἔθνη τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα φύσει τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν, οὗτοι νόμον μὴ ἔχοντες ἑαυτοῖς εἰσιν νόμος· 15 οἵτινες ἐνδείκνυνται τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου γραπτὸν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν, συμμαρτυρούσης αὐτῶν τῆς συνειδήσεως καὶ μεταξὺ ἀλλήλων τῶν λογισμῶν κατηγορούντων ἢ καὶ

⁸⁵Gottlob Schrenk, "Δίκη, Δίκαιος, Δικαιοσύνη, Δικαίω, Δικαίωμα, Δικαίωσις, Δικαιοκρισία," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 2:174.

ἀπολογουμένων, 16 ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὅτε κρίνει ὁ θεὸς τὰ κρυπτὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου διὰ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ. 14 When Gentiles, who do not possess the law, do instinctively what the law requires, these, though not having the law, are a law to themselves. 15 They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, to which their own conscience also bears witness; and their conflicting thoughts will accuse or perhaps excuse them 16 on the day when, according to my gospel, God, through Jesus Christ, will judge the secret thoughts of all.

This single sentence is complex both in form and in its nature. Thus careful analysis is mandated.

Literary Context. The use of γὰρ to introduce this lengthy sentence of vv. 14-16 sets it up as supportive of the axioms found in v. 12, and additionally as growing out of the initial supportive declaration in v. 13. The causal nature of γὰρ establishes this connection clearly. Thus the scenario depicted in this sentence undergirds the principles of divine judging on the day of judgment. But further it illustrates what Paul has in mind with the phrase οἱ ποιηταὶ νόμου, *the doers of law*, in the first supportive declaration in v. 13. So this sentence is deeply linked sequentially to both v. 12 and the v. 13.

Literary Structure. The internal arrangement of ideas inside the sentence is set forth in the above diagram. The core foundational statement (#37) is οὗτοι... ἑαυτοῖς εἰσιν νόμος. *these are law within themselves*. Everything else in the sentence builds off this declaration and defines more precisely the intent of the apostle in this declaration.

οὗτοι... ἑαυτοῖς εἰσιν νόμος. Several interpretive issues emerge from this core declaration which in part depend on one or more of the modifying elements for clarification. For example, who are the οὗτοι, *these*? By way of the antecedent of this demonstrative pronoun it refers back to ἔθνη in the adverbial temporal clause that begins the sentence. Interesting the neuter plural ἔθνη is now referenced by the masculine plural in order to 'humanize' the collective reference to Gentiles with ἔθνη. The masculine pronoun οὗτοι will establish a masculine plural frame of reference for the remainder of the sentence.

One subsequent issue then is who are these Gentiles? Are they Christians? Or, are they people sensitive to God via creation (cf. 1:19-20) who responded positively to divine revelation in creation, rather than rejecting God? A fuller picture emerges in the modifying elements which then will help answer this question of identity.

More intriguing is the remainder of this core declaration: ἑαυτοῖς εἰσιν νόμος. Is the reflexive pronoun ἑαυτοῖς merely referencing the assertion of existence in the dative of reference function? Or, is something

τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα
φύσει

ὅταν ἔθνη...τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν,
νόμον μὴ ἔχοντες

37 οὗτοι...ἑαυτοῖς εἰσιν νόμος·

more going on here like advantage with the sense of 'for themselves' rather than simply 'in reference to themselves'? Given the wide ranging possible functions of the Greek dative case with verbs of being such as εἰσιν here, several different possible meanings can be deduced from just the syntax. But given a rather extension use of very similar phraseology in Greek, Latin, and Aramaic sources in Paul's world, the more likely understanding for ἑαυτοῖς is a dative of advantage with the sense of 'for themselves'.⁸⁶ That is, their experiencing of divine law comes from God, perhaps via creation, but reflects the essence of the written Torah of Moses given to the Israelites through Moses.

Further, what is νόμος? The clear backdrop is that ultimately it is divine law given to people. To the Israelites it came through Moses on Mt. Sinai and formed the basis of the Jewish Torah. But here in vv. 12-16, the word νόμος shows up nine times in these two sentences.

⁸⁶The statement ἑαυτοῖς εἰσιν νόμος ('they are a law for themselves') is a statement that has deep roots in the religious philosophies of Paul's day. Fitzmyer cites some of the more prominent Greek, Roman, and Jewish religious philosophers of that day and their statements:

The Stoic Chrysippus [c. 280–207 BC] in Plutarch, *De stoicorum repugnantis* 9.1035C: "It is not possible to find any other beginning or source of justice (dikaiosynē) than from Zeus and universal nature (ek tēs koinēs physeōs)." Cicero [106–43 BC], *De legibus* 1.6.18: "Law is the highest reason implanted in Nature, which commands what ought to be done and forbids the contrary. This reason, when firmly fixed and perfected in the human mind, is Law." Cf. Philo [c. 30 BC–AD 45], who also attests such philosophical thinking, *De Abr.* 46.276: *nomos autos ὄν και thesmos agraphos*, "[the Sage], being himself a law and an unwritten statute"; *Quod omnis probus liber* 7.46: "Right reason is an infallible law engraved not by this mortal or that, and thus perishable, nor on lifeless scrolls or stelae, and thus lifeless, but by immortal nature on the immortal mind"; *De Josepho* 6.29: "This world, the Megalopolis, has one polity and one law, and this is the word of nature, dictating what must be done and forbidding what must not be done." Cf. 1 Enoch 2:1–5.122

"The dative plural reflexive pronoun ἑαυτοῖς in the phrase ἑαυτοῖς εἰσιν νόμος (;they are a law for themselves;) is not to be taken as ;to themselves,; as though whatever Gentiles may do becomes the norm for their lives. Rather, it should be understood as ;for themselves; in the sense that, as Ernst Käsemann has expressed it, Gentiles ;experience the transcendental claim of the divine will,; which comes to them ;from outside;—and yet, ;paradoxically,; which they experience ;in their inner beings..¹²³"

[Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, *New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 276.]

es, plus the derivative ἀνόμως is used twice. Unquestionably the concept of νόμος is very central to these two

sentences. It is something not just to be heard when read (οἱ ἀκροαταὶ νόμου) but to be heard and obeyed (οἱ ποιηταὶ νόμου) [vv. 12-13].

Although Gentiles do not possess the law (ἔθνη τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα), it is possible for them to obey it (φύσει τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν). In so doing they become law for themselves (οὗτοι νόμον μὴ ἔχοντες ἑαυτοῖς εἰσιν νόμος). Thus they demonstrate τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου γραπτὸν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν, *what the law requires written in their hearts*. Thus this written law existing inwardly in the decision making part of the individual (συμμαρτυρούσης αὐτῶν τῆς συνειδήσεως) provides divine direction for making correct decisions about obeying God. It subjects the individual's thinking to critical evaluation as to each thought being correct or wrong. And this evaluation process comes to fruition on judgment day when what is truly inside every person will be publicly exposed in divine judgment.

In light of what Paul asserts here about νόμος, it becomes clear that the written Law of Moses possessed by the Jews via covental agreement, comes out of a deep 'abstract' law in the mind of God but accessible to some who have no access to the written codes in the Pentateuch. Paul is not talking here about the post-enlightenment 'conscience' built on modern psychological principles. His use of the very rare and late Greek word συνείδησις references not a conscience but instead the inner mechanism enabling decision making to be done in the καρδιά.⁸⁷ The essence of what God expects of humanity is accessible through this inwardly written law. When the non-Jew responds positively to this inwardly written code, God opens doors of opportunity to such individuals to discover the full code of divine expectation revealed in the Christian Gospel. And judgment day will bring to full public disclosure how the individual has handled this inward written code.⁸⁸

⁸⁷The Greek word συνείδησις is usually translated into English as 'conscience' but this is because no comparable term relates directly to Paul's idea of συνείδησις. For an exhaustive treatment of this and its background, see my article "The Western Introspective Conscience: A Biblical Perspective on Decision Making" in [volume 37](#) of the BIC commentary series at [cranfordville.com](#).

⁸⁸One must remember clearly the historical context of these words of Paul. At his writing of Romans the Gospel was an oral message, not a written message. The only written message were the Hebrew scriptures. This oral message labeled Gospel was built on the orally handed down teachings of Jesus at this point in time. Bits and small segments of this were circulated in written form but not in any authoritative document. The four canonical gospels do



So νόμος is divine law whether existing in external written code in the Jewish Torah, or, whether the essence of this code is reflected inwardly as written by God on the heart of the individual. In either case, what is important is not possessing this law, but obeying it. This is Paul's point in criticism of the moral elitist's claim of mere possession.

ὅταν ἔθνη τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα φύσει τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν, whenever Gentiles in spite of not possessing what the law requires do what the law requires. This adverbial indefinite temporal clause in the sentence pre-field position set up a hypothetical scenario to be addressed in the main clause (see above).

The adverbial dependent conjunction ὅταν (121x in NT; 2x in Rom) possesses a contingency aspect as a temporal conjunction. The use of the present tense subjunctive mood verb ποιῶσιν with this conjunction conveys two important ideas. a) the action in the dependent clause takes place at the same time as the in time frame in the main clause verb εἶπω. b) Normally this simultaneous action is a repeated action, rather than a one time happening. Thus the sense is that every time Gentiles do what the law requires they are law for themselves.

The apostle sets up a possible situation that is defined with intention vagueness. This would argue against the assumption by a few commentators that he has Gentile Christians in mind as his example. Such a scenario would require either the first class condition protasis with εἰ or the definite temporal dependent clause with ὅτε. In both instances the indicative mood verb would also be mandated. What Paul more likely had in mind are Gentiles such as Cornelius (Acts 10:22) or included in the statement at the end of the first Christian century in 4 Ezra 3:36, "You may indeed find individuals who have kept your commandments, but nations you will not find." At least realistic candidates in Paul's day can be documented to suggest what kind of non-Jews the apostle may have had in mind here. But his wording of the scenario strongly implies that no specific individual or individual group of Gentiles were in mind.

To be certain, the scenario projected here is not very different from that sometimes advocated in intertestamental Hellenistic Judaism, e.g. Sirach 24:23; Baruch 4:1.⁸⁹ That is, the wisdom of God is a universal wisdom that has been given to covenant Israel in

not come into written form until after Paul's death in AD 68.

So when Paul speaks of a νόμος distinct from the written Jewish Torah but reflecting the very essence of it, whatever he conceptualized here as νόμος would not be very distinct from his orally preached Gospel message, also oral and not yet in written form.

⁸⁹**Sirach 24:23** All this is the book of the covenant of the Most High God, the law that Moses commanded us as an inheritance for the congregations of Jacob.

Baruch 4:1. She is the book of the commandments of God, the law that endures forever. All who hold her fast will live, and those who forsake her will die.

the Torah. As an abstract concept it has the possibility of being understood by non-Jews in some very limited ways. But what can be known becomes incorporated in the Jewish Torah and the Torah reflects this universal wisdom of God.

This is not the same approach as found in the Jewish philosopher Philo who contended a century before Christ that God's wisdom was reflected in the writings of the Greek philosophers beginning with Homer and extending down to his own time just before the beginning of the Christian era. And that, for example, Plato and Moses were in full agreement with one another regarding God's will and revelation. To be sure, harmonizing the writings of these two required the massive use of allegorical interpretation which has evolved into modern spiritualizing of biblical texts. Thus by hunting for deeper hidden meanings, the reader can make both sets of texts -- Moses and Plato -- say essentially the same thing, or at least complementary things with one another. Yet in reality, the reader is doing nothing but injecting his own externally derived biases into both sets of texts with no textual basis for his interpretation of either set of texts.

One of the details in Paul's statement that appears to often be overlooked is precisely how Paul frames the issue. What is not possessed but followed by non-Jews is no νόμος, but τὰ μὴ νόμον. In this main clause and temporal dependent clause, Paul moves from the label "what the law requires" (τὰ μὴ νόμον) to (a) law (νόμος). Clearly Paul begins with the abstract of what the law requires to a codified written law or set of laws. What the Gentiles do not possess is a codified expressed of what the law requires. Yet some of the Gentiles manage to obey this law. And in the process τὰ τοῦ νόμου which they do becomes νόμος.

Without doubt, this will need some explanation to Paul's targeted readers. This he will provide in the subsequent qualitative relative clause in vv. 15-16 which amplifies the meaning of οὗτοι, the demonstrative pronoun subject of the main clause.

But first let's be sure we note all of the details in the adverbial temporal ὅταν clause at the beginning of this lengthy sentence.

First, the projected scenario centers on ἔθνη, Gentiles (161x NT). Clearly the contrast here is the standard Jews / Gentiles (Ἰουδαῖοι / ἔθνη), rather than the earlier Ἰουδαίω / Ἑλληνι (1:16), Ἰουδαίου / Ἑλληνοσ (2:9); and Ἰουδαίω / Ἑλληνι (2:10). This latter set has essentially the same meaning as the former but is more appropriate to a Roman targeted readership. This Ἰουδαῖοι / ἔθνη contrast is more appropriate to a dominantly Jewish scenario that Paul is moving toward at this point in his narrative.

Interestingly here Paul is taking serious issue with the standard Jewish demand of Jewish separation from Gentiles as advocated for example in Jubilees 22:16-18.⁹⁰ This rigid Jewish writing, produced in the 2nd century B.C., demands no contact of Jews with Gentiles at all.⁹¹ This Jewish writer could not see any possibility that any Gentile could somehow discover the law of God and obey it in any way, apart from proselyte conversion. Yet the nature of this blunt exhortation was give warning to the 'sons of Jacob' in his day who evidently were making extensive contact with non-Jews.

In the 29 uses of ἔθνος inside Romans the apostle is very clear about the term referencing non-Jews. By the time the congregational readers in the house church groups at Rome got to this point in the letter Paul already had indicated his divine calling to Gentiles to lead them to faith obedience by as many as possible (cf. 1:5, 13). And beyond this point in the letter some 26 times references to Gentiles will surface. Obviously Paul is alluding in 2:14 to some Gentiles would would turn this direction in their lives. There is no universal moral thermostat in every human being. Instead, God in creation has given all humanity the capitivity for making choices, including moral ones. None are inherently turned toward good choices, as Paul so contends in 1:18-23. This capability for decision making is what Paul labels as συνείδησις.

Second, what is positively experienced by a few Gentiles is interestingly described in this clause along with the main clause conclusions. Gentile are people τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα, *not possessing what the law requires*. That it, clearly when God gave the Torah to Moses on Mt. Sinai, the focal group was covenant Israel. Gentiles were not included. But over time guess what happened

⁹⁰Jubilees 22:16-18. 16 And you also, my son, Jacob, remember my words, and keep the commandments of Abraham, your father. Separate yourself from the gentiles, and do not eat with them, and do not perform deeds like theirs. And do not become associates of theirs. Because their deeds are defiled, and all of their ways are contaminated, and despicable, and abominable. 17 They slaughter their sacrifices to the dead, and to the demons they bow down. And they eat in tombs. And all their deeds are worthless and vain. 18 And they have no heart to perceive, and they have no eyes to see what their deeds are, and where they wander astray, saying to the tree 'you are my god,' and to a stone 'you are my lord, and you are my savior'; and they have no heart.

[James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the New Testament: Expansions of the "Old Testament" and Legends, Wisdom, and Philosophical Literature, Prayers, Psalms and Odes, Fragments of Lost Judeo-Hellenistic Works*, vol. 2 (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1985), 2:98.]

⁹¹The narrational perspective of the writer who pretends to be Moses is that of Abraham speaking to Jacob -- something that never happened according to the canonical scriptural record. This unit of text is a part of the Abraham stories found in chapters 11 through 23:8.

among some Gentiles: φύσει τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν, *instinctively they do what the law requires*. Very critical to Paul's idea here is the term φύσει from φύσις. The previous discussion of φύσις in 1:27-27 is relevant here. 7 of the 14 uses of this noun are found in Romans: 1:26; 2:14, 27; 11:21, 24 (3x). The label φύσις is not Jewish in usage but Greek and especially Roman. The core idea is to designate actions, being etc. that are recognizable via how the living entities are formed and exist. Trees are trees φύσει. Some people φύσει are prone to make good choices including moral ones. Although Paul does overtly assert it, from the context of chapter one it would seem that this idea of proper choices φύσει has some connection to divine creation. To be sure, in 2:15 the expression τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου γραπτὸν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν, *the work of the Law written in their hearts*, implies with the adjective γραπτὸν a divine 'writing' action placing this mechanism for making good decisions in the decision making part of human beings.

In chapter eleven, Paul makes multiple use of φύσις that can throw some light on the usage here in chapter two. Jews ethnically are labeled τῶν κατὰ φύσιν κλάδων, *the natural branches* (v. 21). But in v. 24, Gentiles are labeled as those who ἐκ τῆς κατὰ φύσιν ἐξεκόπτης ἀγριελαίου, *out of a by nature wild olive tree*. The metaphorical contrast to the wild olive tree is the cultivated olive tree, i.e., covenant Israel. Gentiles then naturally as branches of a wild olive tree can be grafted on to the cultivated olive tree of God's people. At the end of this sentence Paul speaks of broken natural branches being grafted back into this cultivated tree: πὸς ὡς μᾶλλον οὗτοι οἱ κατὰ φύσιν ἐγκεντρισθήσονται τῇ ἰδίᾳ ἐλαίᾳ. Clearly in Romans Paul sees nothing 'natural' about the make-up of Gentiles. They are a wild olive tree by their very composition (ἀγριελαῖος ὢν, 11:17). But some branches can be cut off of the wild tree and then be grafted on to the 'natural' olive tree, i.e., God's people. This grafting activity of God depends upon the faith commitment of both the Gentiles and Jews who have been disobedient.

When the Gentiles φύσει τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν, by nature do what the Law requires, they stand as a branch broken off the wild olive tree being grafted into the cultivated tree of God's people. This divine grafting of the wild branches into His tree is not natural: παρὰ φύσιν ἐνεκεντρίσθη εἰς καλλιέλιον. But God in His awesome power can accomplish such a miracle.

Thus the occasional Gentile in spite of not having had direct access to the divine Torah of Moses, can do what the Law requires φύσει, *instinctively*. This English adverb is probably about as close to Paul's idea as is possible in translation.

νόμον μὴ ἔχοντες. This participle phrase also modi-

fies the verb εἶναι. Very importantly it shifts the emphasis from the specific demands of law to the general idea of law as a structured set of divine demands. Gentiles do not possess the Torah, that is, a structured set of laws.⁹² But via obeying what the law requires constitutes the formation of a νόμος, which in vv. 15-16 becomes a mirror reflection of the written Torah of Moses to these Gentiles.

The absence of the article τὸν / ὁ with νόμον / νόμος casts the noun as either indefinite or qualitative. That is, **not having a law**, or more likely **not having law**. The sense of the latter is that Gentiles are without the qualitative idea of divine law. Basically they are lost regarding the direction and contours of the will of God. Yet, in spite of this huge gap in their existence, some manage to overcome this gap in obeying the requirements of divine law anyway. This they do φύσει, according to v. 14a. And in them so obeying, their obedience formulates νόμος, **divine law, for them**, ἑαυτοῖς. One should not take this to imply that their obedience creates a divine law for them to follow. Instead, as becomes clear in v. 15, their obedience opens a path of divine revelatory action in making His Torah known to them. God thus influences their decision making apparatus, their τῆς συνειδήσεως, which is located ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν, **in their hearts**.

The depiction by Luke of the Gentile Cornelius in Acts 10:1-48 seems to characterize what Paul is pointing toward, at least to a fairly large degree. In Luke's characterization of this Gentile Roman soldier in vv. 1-3, he notes prominently that Cornelius was εὐσεβὴς καὶ φοβούμενος τὸν θεὸν σὺν παντὶ τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ, **pious and fearing God together with all his household** (v. 2a). This was confirmed by the obedient actions of ποιῶν ἐλεημοσύνας πολλὰς τῷ λαῷ καὶ δεόμενος τοῦ θεοῦ διὰ παντός, **giving alms numerous times to the people and praying to God constantly** (v. 2b). This inner reaching out

⁹²If you lived in one of the outlying provinces like Asia or Macedonia, this would have been very clearly understood. Even better than for those living in the city of Rome. The Romans possessed written law codes but without virtually any systematization or structural organization. And they only applied to those officially in the status of citizen of Rome. In the provinces a duke's mixture of differing legal codes, not usually in written form, would be found depending upon the dominating ethnic groups in the different regions. Even more significant the attitude and approach of the provincial governor in proclaiming laws and then spotty enforcement of them usually followed. They often contradicted one another. But government including the courts centered on the personality of the government official and not on a written set of legal codes. Usually he followed traditional patterns as long as it suited his interests. But he could just as easily proclaim new laws at will. So when Paul speaks here of Gentiles νόμον μὴ ἔχοντες, **a law not having**, the expression was packed with meaning hard for people used to constitutional law to grasp.

in obeying God had led Cornelius to the Jewish synagogue where he began discovering the written Torah that explains God's requirements. This in turn prompted Peter to be sent by God to Cornelius in order to explain the way of Christian conversion in the Gospel. And this Roman soldier came to Christ in salvation. One should be cautious about linking these two scripture texts together, but the Acts narrative does seem to illustrate at least one possible example of what Paul is describing here in 2:12-16.

οἵτινες ἐνδείκνυνται τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου γραπτὸν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν. This relative clause, through the qualitative relative pronoun οἵτινες, **who are of such a kind**, reaches back to the demonstrative pronoun οὗτοι, **these**, which itself goes back to ἔθνη, **Gentiles**. Prominently antecedents are the clue here. As noted in the above discussion, οὗτοι 'personalizes' its neuter plural antecedent ἔθνη by using the masculine plural spelling. This masculine plural is then followed by οἵτινες, which ties the relative pronoun directly to the demonstrative pronoun.⁹³

Thus the function of this lengthy relative clause is to amplify who these particular Gentiles are, as well how this process is working in anticipation of the coming day of judgment that Paul defines in v. 16. In this role the clause is vital for understanding implications present in the initial depiction in vv. 12-14. And especially the intended meaning of the core clause, οὗτοι...ἑαυτοῖς εἰσὶν νόμος, of this lengthy sentence in vv. 14-16.

These obeying-the-law Gentiles in becoming a law thus ἐνδείκνυμι τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου γραπτὸν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν, **demonstrate the written work of the law in their hearts**. This literalistic translation attempts to highlight that the adjective γραπτὸν, written, belongs with ἔργον and not with νόμου. But grammatically the adjective is a 'double accusative' used predicate adjective. The core sense of the verb and the object is 'to show something to be something' as a quality or characteristic of the direct object. Thus the work of the law has the quality of having been written in their hearts.

One of the challenges here is that the adjective γραπτός, -ή, -όν is only used here inside the entire NT, **and is not a frequently used term in the Greek litera-**

⁹³This particular relative pronoun ὅστις, ἥτις, ὃ τι, with 135 NT uses and 10 uses in Romans, is especially challenging to the English oriented reader. It conveys a qualitative tone which has no comparative equivalent form in English.

Also the neuter nominative singular ὃ τι is sometimes challenging to spot. In the printed Greek testament used through the English speaking world, this spelling was written ὃ τι through the Westcott-Hort tradition in the early 1900s. But the German tradition that spells it ὅτι took over beginning with the UBS editions in the middle 1900s. The difficulty here is potential confusion with the subordinate conjunction ὅτι meaning either 'that' or 'because.' Context is the key to proper identification of ὅτι.

2.14

γὰρ

τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα
φύσει

ὅταν ἔθνη...τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν,
νόμον μὴ ἔχοντες

37 οὗτοι...ἑαυτοῖς εἰσιν νόμος·

2.15

οἵτινες ἐνδείκνυνται τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου

| γραπτὸν

| ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν,

| συμμαρτυροῦσης αὐτῶν τῆς συνειδήσεως

| καὶ

| μεταξὺ ἀλλήλων

| τῶν λογισμῶν κατηγορούντων

| ἢ

| καὶ

----- ἀπολογουμένων,

2.16

| ἐν ἡμέρᾳ

ὅτε κρίνει ὁ θεὸς τὰ κρυπτὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων

κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου

διὰ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ.

ture of this era. The literal background in the language is that γραπτός denotes letters or paintings inscribed on a surface like a monument etc. At the etymological level of meaning, the apostle may very well be conveying the metal image of God’s chiselling the Ten Words on two tablets of stone on Mt. Sinai for Moses to give to the Israelites. But instead God is now chiselling His words on the hearts of selected Gentiles. Such an image brings to mind God’s words to the prophet **Jeremiah in 31:31-34**.⁹⁴ To be sure, these words from God

⁹⁴**Jeremiah 38:31-34 (LXX)**. 31 Ἰδοὺ ἡμέραι ἔρχονται, φησὶν κύριος, καὶ διαθήσομαι τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰσραὴλ καὶ τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰουδα διαθήκην καινὴν,† 32 οὐ κατὰ τὴν διαθήκην, ἣν διεθέμην τοῖς πατράσιν αὐτῶν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐπιλαβομένου μου τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῶν ἐξαγαγεῖν αὐτοὺς ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου, ὅτι αὐτοὶ οὐκ ἐνέμειναν ἐν τῇ διαθήκῃ μου, καὶ ἐγὼ ἠμέλησα αὐτῶν, φησὶν κύριος.† 33 ὅτι αὕτη ἡ διαθήκη, ἣν διαθήσομαι τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰσραὴλ μετὰ τὰς ἡμέρας ἐκεῖνας, φησὶν κύριος **Διδούς δώσω νόμους μου εἰς τὴν διάνοιαν αὐτῶν καὶ ἐπὶ καρδίας αὐτῶν γράψω αὐτούς· καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτοῖς εἰς θεόν, καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔσονται μοι εἰς λαόν**.† 34 καὶ οὐ μὴ διδάξωσιν ἕκαστος τὸν πολίτην αὐτοῦ καὶ ἕκαστος τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ λέγων Γνώθι τὸν κύριον· ὅτι πάντες εἰδήσουσίν με ἀπὸ μικροῦ αὐτῶν καὶ ἕως μεγάλου αὐτῶν, ὅτι ἴλεως ἔσομαι ταῖς ἀδικίαις αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν ἀμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν οὐ μὴ μνησθῶ ἔτι.†

=**Jeremiah 31:31-34 (NRSV)**. 31 *The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. 32 It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt — a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. 33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: **I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.** 34 No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the LORD,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.*

through Jeremiah were spoken to “the house of Israel and the house of Judah” (v. 31). This language is found also in Isaiah 51:7, ἀκούσατέ μου, οἱ εἰδότες κρίσιν, λαός μου, **οὗ ὁ νόμος μου ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν**. Listen to me, you who know righteousness, you people **who have my teaching in your hearts**.

So Paul’s idea of the law written in the hearts of obedient people is not new in Jewish thinking. What is different is Paul’s focusing of this happening among Gentiles rather than with covenant Jews. Paul’s thinking comes off the assumption of God’s universal control of His universe, and thus His insistence upon a prescribed pattern of obedience to Him from the humans that He has created. This universal law was incorporated into the written Torah of Moses and presented to His covenant people Israel. But God has additional ways of communicating at least essential elements of this law to non-Jews. Paul sees this option as having come not necessarily through creation, although creation has been used as a vehicle to communicate important aspects of who God is (cf. 1:19-20). The communication of what He expects from humanity has come about differently, through His shaping the decision making apparatus of humans, their συνειδήσις located in their καρδιά.

The ancient Israelite prophets envisioned a day when the communication of God’s Law in a new covenant would be thus communicated to covenant Israel so that full comprehension of the divine demands would take place. In 2:29, the signal of this is the gift of the Holy Spirit who does the ‘circumcising’ of the heart. That is, the Spirit brings the heart, the decision maker,⁹⁵

⁹⁵**Rom. 2:29**. ἀλλ’ ὁ ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ Ἰουδαίος, καὶ περιτομή Page 50

into line with what God requires. Compare 2 Cor. 3:3, 6 and Phil. 3:3 for further details on Paul's thinking.

Another important interpretive matter in this phrase is the different wording of the direct object: τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου. Later on in chapter three a seemingly similar expression, ἔργων νόμου (3:20, 28) is presented as having no capacity to make one acceptable before God.⁹⁶

καρδίας ἐν πνεύματι οὐ γράμματι, οὐδ' ὁ ἔπαινος οὐκ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ

Rather, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is **a matter of the heart—it is spiritual** and not literal. Such a person receives praise not from others but from God.

⁹⁶For related concepts see:

Rom. 4:2. εἰ γὰρ Ἀβραὰμ ἐξ ἔργων ἐδικαιώθη, ἔχει καύχημα, ἀλλ' οὐ πρὸς θεόν. For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.

Rom. 4:6. καθάπερ καὶ Δαυὶδ λέγει τὸν μακαρισμὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ᾧ ὁ θεὸς λογίζεται δικαιοσύνην χωρὶς ἔργων. So also David speaks of the blessedness of those to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works:

Rom. 9:11-12a. 11 μήπω γὰρ γεννηθέντων μηδὲ πραξάντων τι ἀγαθὸν ἢ φαῦλον, ἵνα ἢ κατ' ἐκλογὴν πρόθεσις τοῦ θεοῦ μένη, 12 οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦντος, ἐρρέθη αὐτῇ, 11 Even before they had been born or had done anything good or bad (so that God's purpose of election might continue, 12 not by works but by his call) she was told,

Rom. 9:31-32. 31 Ἰσραὴλ δὲ διώκων νόμον δικαιοσύνης εἰς νόμον οὐκ ἔφθασεν. 32 διὰ τί; ὅτι οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως ἀλλ' ὡς ἐξ ἔργων· προσέκοψαν τῷ λίθῳ τοῦ προσκόμματος, 31 but Israel, who did strive for the righteousness that is based on the law, did not succeed in fulfilling that law. 32 Why not? Because they did not strive for it on the basis of faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone,

Rom. 11:6. εἰ δὲ χάριτι, οὐκέτι ἐξ ἔργων, ἐπεὶ ἡ χάρις οὐκέτι γίνεται χάρις. But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace would no longer be grace.

Gal. 2:16. εἰδότες δὲ ὅτι οὐ δικαιοῦται ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἐὰν μὴ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν, ἵνα δικαιωθῶμεν ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου, ὅτι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιωθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ. yet we know that a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. And we have come to believe in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by doing the works of the law, because no one will be justified by the works of the law.

Gal. 3:2. τοῦτο μόνον θέλω μαθεῖν ἀφ' ὑμῶν· ἐξ ἔργων νόμου τὸ πνεῦμα ἐλάβετε ἢ ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως; The only thing I want to learn from you is this: Did you receive the Spirit by doing the works of the law or by believing what you heard?

Gal. 3:5. ὁ οὖν ἐπιχορηγῶν ὑμῖν τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἐνεργῶν δυνάμεις ἐν ὑμῖν, ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἢ ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως; Well then, does God supply you with the Spirit and work miracles among you by your doing the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard?

Gal. 3:10-12. 10 Ὅσοι γὰρ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου εἰσίν, ὑπὸ κατάραν εἰσίν· γέγραπται γὰρ ὅτι ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὃς οὐκ ἐμμένει πᾶσιν τοῖς γεγραμμένοις ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τοῦ νόμου τοῦ ποιῆσαι αὐτά. 11 ὅτι δὲ ἐν νόμῳ οὐδεὶς δικαιοῦται παρὰ τῷ θεῷ δῆλον, ὅτι ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται. 12 ὁ δὲ νόμος οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ πίστεως, ἀλλ' ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὰ ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς. 10 For all who rely on

The anarthrous plural spelling ἔργων with or without the preposition ἐξ signals a very different concept from the singular articular τὸ ἔργον used here. In the English translation, the difference between 'work of law' and 'works of law' would seem minimal at best. But conceptually the Greek expressions, as Paul employs them, carry huge differences of idea.

The phrase containing the plural ἔργων stands as a code expression signaling not just the cognitive content of the phrase but an entire system of religious approach to life. At its core was the teaching of the Pharisees of the first century that through proper Jewish circumcision and successful obedience to the Jewish Torah one could earn his way into eternal salvation with God. The individual's eternal destiny depended entirely upon the determination of the individual to follow these two requirements for salvation. As a former Pharisee, Paul had placed his hope for eternal salvation in this system of religious practice. But his encounter with the risen Christ on the road just outside Damascus completely changed his understanding. Such a path was to put oneself in an impossible situation of trying to achieve something that no mortal is ever capable of accomplishing. And thus this path dooms one to eternal damnation. Thus his use of the expression τὰ ἔργα τοῦ νόμου with the variations of it is in the context of asserting that such an approach to finding acceptability with God is utterly doomed to failure.

On the other hand, his use of the expression τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου here with the singular ἔργον carries a significantly different idea. All the spellings of ἔργον constitute 167 uses in the NT. It is in conformity to the singular use of the term throughout the entire NT where ἔργον with a qualifier referencing God in some way denotes something legitimate and as coming from God. The plural spelling, however, tends to refer to something man-made and evil, apart from a few instances with the plural spelling which are seen positively. John 4:34 captures the heart of the singular ἔργον as dominantly used inside the NT:

λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· ἐμὸν βρῶμά ἐστιν ἵνα ποιήσω τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πέμψαντός με καὶ τελειώσω αὐτοῦ τὸ ἔργον.

Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete **his work**."

Paul's phrase τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου in Rom. 2:15 underscores the same core idea of a divine activity being reflected in the obedience of the Gentile to God apart

the works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the things written in the book of the law." 11 Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law; for "The one who is righteous will live by faith." 12 But the law does not rest on faith; on the contrary, "Whoever does the works of the law will live by them."



from access to the written Law of Moses.

The predicate adjective expression as the predicate object of the verb is γραπτὸν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν, *written in their hearts*. Paul defines this τὸ ἔργον as a divine action which God has written, γραπτὸν, in the interior of some Gentiles at the point of the place where they make all decisions, including moral and ethical decisions. That is, ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν. The use of this single NT used adjective γραπτός, rather than the more standard perfect passive participle form, γεγραμμένον, gives the idea a heightened level of permanency with the sense closer to ‘chiseled into their hearts.’

Don’t overlook that it is the work of the law that is chiselled into their hearts by God, not the law itself. This is important since *the law*, τοῦ νόμου, alludes back to that which typifies God Himself in terms of patterns of character and actions coming out of His being. What God chisels is not a copy of a book of rules and regulations! Indeed, it is actions and decisions that follow and reflect His ways and will. These reflect His law, but do not equal it.

συμμαρτυρούσης αὐτῶν τῆς συνειδήσεως καὶ μεταξύ ἀλλήλων τῶν λογισμῶν κατηγορούντων ἢ καὶ ἀπολογουμένων. These two Genitive Absolute constructions in Greek attach to the verb ἐνδείκνυται as adverbial modifiers denoting the idea of accompanying actions produced by a subject different from the verb subject οἵτινες. The producers of the actions are τῆς συνειδήσεως, *conscience*, and τῶν λογισμῶν, *reasonings*. The normally used present tense form of the two participles signals actions occurring at the same time as ἐνδείκνυται. The modal function of the adverbial participles indicates that the observer of the ‘showing’ action senses this demonstration of τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου as being γραπτὸν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν through what the conscience and the reasonings do. That is, the Gentile who decides and then follows the prompting to avoid bad and to follow good demonstrates that God is active inside his life. In the larger context of 2:1-29 Paul’s point is that such demonstrates God’s presence and activity in the lives of these Gentiles in contrast to the disobedient Jews with access to the written Torah of Moses. This had a stinging bite for such Jewish readers of Paul’s letter.

The action produced by τῆς συνειδήσεως is συμμαρτυρούσης, *giving witness*. The verb συμμαρτυρέω is used only three times in the NT and all three of these are in Romans: 2:15; 8:16; and 9:1.⁹⁷ The other two uses

⁹⁷To be clear, this verb is a part of a larger word group with extensive use throughout the NT: μάρτυς, μαρτυρέω, μαρτυρία, μαρτύριον, ἐπιμαρτυρέω, συμμαρτυρέω, συνεπιμαρτυρέω, καταμαρτυρέω, μαρτύρομαι, διαμαρτύρομαι, προμαρτύρομαι, ψευδόμαρτυς, ψευδομαρτυρέω, ψευδομαρτυρία.

[Hermann Strathmann, “Μάρτυς, Μαρτυρέω, Μαρτυρία,

beyond 2:15 are very instructive. In them Paul makes it very clear that the συνειδήσις is the tool of the Holy Spirit to communicate God’s desires to the individual. As discussed above, the συνειδήσις, as Paul defines the concept, is the mechanism given to humanity in creation to enable people to make decisions of every kind. Where does this capacity reside inside the individual? In ancient Jewish thinking, such was found ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ, *in the heart*. The use of this rare compound form most likely enabled Paul to indicate that the divine source of this action of decision making came from God through the Holy Spirit. At least this perspective is directly asserted in Rom. 9:1, where συνειδήσις and συμμαρτυρέω are used together, and also in a Genitive Absolute construction.

The second Genitive Absolute construction is καὶ μεταξύ ἀλλήλων τῶν λογισμῶν κατηγορούντων ἢ καὶ ἀπολογουμένων. Here we encounter a more detailed syntactical grammar construction. The genitive case ‘subject’ τῶν λογισμῶν is in the pre- position before two contrastive verbal expressions κατηγορούντων ἢ καὶ ἀπολογουμένων with the different perspectives of accusing and excusing. But the prepositional phrase μεταξύ ἀλλήλων stands at the very beginning of the construction in order to signal the coming contrastive perspectives to be introduced. That is, between the differing τῶν λογισμῶν, some of the thinking would go the accusing direction while other parts of the thinking would go the excusing direction.

In attempting to make detailed sense of this Genitive Absolute construction, the first issue is to clearly understand what Paul means by τῶν λογισμῶν, and especially then what the connection of τῶν λογισμῶν is to τῆς συνειδήσεως in the first segment of this larger twin Genitive Absolute construction. Answering these concerns is more difficult by far than just laying out the nature of the concern. This is one place where ana-

Μαρτύριον, Ἐπιμαρτυρέω, Συμμαρτυρέω, Συνεπιμαρτυρέω, Καταμαρτυρέω, Μαρτύρομαι, Διαμαρτύρομαι, Προμαρτύρομαι, Ψευδόμαρτυς, Ψευδομαρτυρέω, Ψευδομαρτυρία,” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:474.]

One should note that the compound verb forms ἐπι-, συμ-, συνεπι-, κατα-, δια-, προ- largely have the impact of intensifying the meaning of the root verbs μαρτυρέω and μαρτύρομαι. " The meaning of these compounds is closely related to the popular sense of μαρτυρεῖν."

[Hermann Strathmann, “Μάρτυς, Μαρτυρέω, Μαρτυρία, Μαρτύριον, Ἐπιμαρτυρέω, Συμμαρτυρέω, Συνεπιμαρτυρέω, Καταμαρτυρέω, Μαρτύρομαι, Διαμαρτύρομαι, Προμαρτύρομαι, Ψευδόμαρτυς, Ψευδομαρτυρέω, Ψευδομαρτυρία,” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:508.]

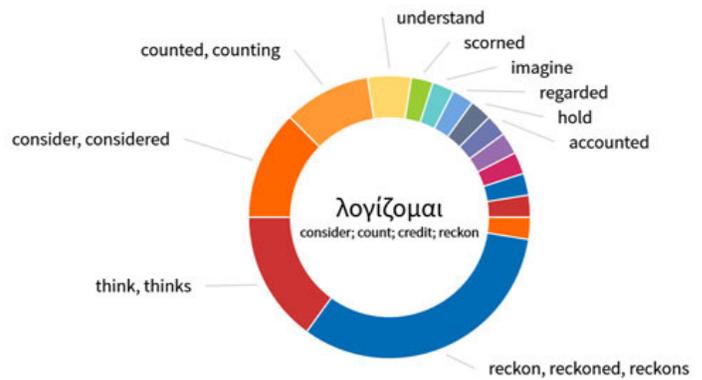
lyzing this as Koine Greek is more challenging than it would be had the ideas been cast in classical Greek which is significantly more precise than Koine Greek tends to be. Adding to the challenge is that the conceptualization of what the mind is and how it functions in Paul's world bears hardly any resemblance at all to modern psychological based perceptions. Additionally the ancient Jewish perspective here is dramatically more primitive and fluid than even the Greek and Roman views, as primitive as they themselves are. Further challenge surfaces with just two instances of this noun λογισμός in the entire NT: Rom. 2:15 and 2 Cor. 10:4. The companion verb λογίζομαι with 40 NT uses is more common and 34 of those are in Paul's writings. But the range of meaning for the verb is substantial as reflected in the charting of the NRSV translating of it.

Now let's jump into the pool hoping we don't drown in the process. We begin with τῶν λογισμῶν. What are these? While τῆς συνειδήσεως is singular and thus denotes a mechanism for producing things in ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν, that is common to all humanity, τῶν λογισμῶν on the other hand, is plural and contextually defines the products of the functioning of τῆς συνειδήσεως in the hearts of these Gentiles.⁹⁸

By definition λογισμός is the label for the mental action of the verb λογίζεσθαι.⁹⁹ But typically in secular

⁹⁸Modern western based perspective would never every describe the functioning of the mind in such ways. Thoughts are formed and evaluated on occasion either negative or positively in the mind which is located in the head, not the middle torso of the body. Conscience would come into play only with moral and ethical kinds of constructs. All other decisions and perspectives would be analyzed by the mind itself. But all decisions regardless of their nature are the composite result of the mind putting them together using culture, personal history, belief systems et als. Collectively this process is what the Germans label Weltanschauen or the product of Weltanschauung. World view is about as close as one can come to this in English, and it's not very close. But these modern conceptualizations are derived largely from post-enlightenment scientific research and observation -- something not existing in Paul's world.

⁹⁹"The noun denotes the actual fulfilment of λογίζεσθαι, and it thus has the par. meaning 'reckoning,' 'charging to' (esp. pap.), 'thought,' 'consideration.' But the specific content of the term lies elsewhere, a. In secular Gk. the idea of counting causes it to be used even in class. Gk. as a specialised term for arithmetic (Plat. Prot., 318e). The general logical sense is important in the diatribe. In Aristot. (Metaph., I, 1, p. 980b, 28) λογισμός is the supreme activity which constitutes man as such, and in Stoicism there is an ethical orientation. As the supreme function it controls all others, including impulses. Cf. in 4 Macc. the sermon περί αὐτοκράτορος λογισμοῦ: ὁ γὰρ λογισμὸς τῶν μὲν ἀρετῶν ἐστὶν ἡγεμών, τῶν δὲ παθῶν αὐτοκράτωρ (1:30). More precisely: λογισμὸς μὲν δὴ τοίνυν ἐστὶν νοῦς μετὰ ὀρθοῦ λόγου προτιμῶν τὸν σοφίας βίον (1:15). λογισμός, then, is not just reason in general (the νοῦς). It is reason in its concrete form in the consciousness and worked out in life as action. The norm of λογισμός: — here the preacher seems



Greek and intertestamental Jewish Greek usage, it designated more than what we would mean by English words like reasoning, thinking etc. But these English terms actually are closer to the Greek idea of νοῦς. The LXX uses λογισμός to incorporate beyond mental processes the emotional and volitional elements into the producing of something closer to a plan or strategy which is called λογισμός. Here in Romans Paul seems to be playing off the broader, earlier secular Greek designations of λογισμός rather than the more defined Jewish Greek perspectives.

The λογισμοί then are the thoughts evaluated by filtering them through the συνείδησις which determines whether they are correct or incorrect.¹⁰⁰ On the one side, some of these thoughts κατηγορούντων, accuse. That is, decisions, actions etc. being contemplated are evaluated as wrong actions that will incur God's anger on the day of judgment (ἐν ἡμέρᾳ). Therefore the individual to differ from Stoicism — is the Mosaic Law (2:6, 14). But for him this is identical with the principle of reason, the νοῦς. b. In the LXX λογισμός, like λογίζεσθαι, takes from ψῆ, and its derivatives תַּשְׁחֵם, יִבְשֵׁת, תַּשְׁחֵם, an emotional and volitional emphasis, and it denotes 'plan' in the neutral sense (ψ 32:10), good when used of God's plan to save (Ἱερ. 36:11), but usually bad (Ez. 38:10). In the same sense we also find διαλογισμός in ψ 39:5, βουλή in Job 5:12, and ἐνθύμημα in 1 Ch. 28:9. The formula λογίζεσθαι λογισμὸν, which is modelled on the Heb., is not good Gk. (though cf. the purely logical use in Plat. Tim., 34a b). In Wis. λογισμός is the concept of self-glorious reason apart from God: σκολιοὶ γὰρ λογισμοὶ χωρίζουσιν ἀπὸ θεοῦ (1:3, cf. v. 5; 9:14 etc.)."

[Hans Wolfgang Heidland, "Λογίζομαι, Λογισμός," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:286.]

¹⁰⁰It is a serious mistake to drive conceptual distance between these two Genitive Absolute constructions. The plain sense of the grammar is that they are profoundly linked to one another with the second one advancing the thought of the first one. The first one sets up the decision making function of the συνείδησις with the joint action of συμμαρτυρέω. Here is the divine link to the inner person of the Gentile. How that then functions inwardly is explained by the second Genitive Absolute construction. τῶν λογισμῶν and τῆς συνειδήσεως are deeply linked together. The divine source of understanding correct and incorrect actions then plays itself out in the inner debate that takes place when assessing the correctness or incorrectness of a possible action labeled λογισμῶν.

ual should not engage in such actions etc. But, on the other side, other thoughts evaluated by the συνείδησις provide ἀπολογουμένων, defend. And thus the individual should avoid these actions etc.

One cannot escape the judicial, court room tone of these two participles. Clearly they point to that day in v. 16, but their present tense, linked grammatically to the present tense core verb ἐνδείκνυνται, speak of something taking place now in an ongoing manner. The accusing / excusing participle actions become the demonstrating of the impact of divine law among the Gentiles. But this is no endorsement of any kind of 'realized eschatology' as a few have tried to argue.

The explanation actually is rather simple. Eschatological judgment day will not scrutinize what is done merely on that final day. Rather it will gather up a life time of actions and decisions by the individual over the duration of his or her life for divine evaluation on that final day which then determines eternal destiny. What is happening in the life of some Gentiles is that, in responding positively to the divine impulses, their decision evaluator linked to their συνείδησις is anticipating the divine evaluation on that coming day in a manner similar to a genuinely religious Jew responding to the written Torah. Both individuals have a clear sense that God approves of certain things but disapproves of other things. And that moment of divine evaluation of every individual is in front of every person. Particularly of the critical moral elitists who are still the primary target of Paul's point.

What is the role of ἢ καὶ? Should it be translated "or even"? Or "or also"? These are the only two legitimate possibilities.¹⁰¹ The conjunction ἢ denotes contrasting opposites. The adverbial function of καὶ denotes either addition or ascension, i.e., also or even. In the assumptions underlying the translation choice stands the possible role of the so-called 'bad conscience' in some streams of Greco-Roman philosophy that was perceived to dominate the decision making process. But such is not clear with Paul. What is clear that the majority of decisions made by humans generally are bad choices. The 'also' translation pattern simply stresses

¹⁰¹NIV_ and at other times even

NirV_ At other times	ESV_ or even
ASV_ or else	BBE_ or even
HSB_ or	TEV_ and sometimes
KJV_ or else	LEB_ or even
LB_ or	Message_ and
NASB_ or else	NLT_ or
NRSV_ or perhaps	RSV_ or perhaps
SE 1569_ y también	BRV_ y también
BA_ y otras	BJ2000_ y también
NTV_ o bien	NVI_ y otras
EB 1905_ oder auch	LB 1912_ oder
Ostervald_ ou	Segond 1910_ ou

that good choices are possible which some Gentiles were making in Paul's observation.

What is the meaning of μεταξύ ἀλλήλων? Here the meaning is less clear.¹⁰² The choices are inward or external perspective. That is, are the conflicts between inner thoughts or among relations with other people? The masculine gender of ἀλλήλων matches the masculine gender of λογισμῶν, but also the masculine gender of αὐτῶν as well. The context favors λογισμῶν as the link via antecedency of the reciprocal pronoun. The adverbial preposition μεταξύ denotes reciprocal interaction of entities with differences. The common translation of μεταξύ ἀλλήλων as 'conflicting' is reasonably close to the Greek idea. The contrasting participles κατηγορούντων ἢ καὶ ἀπολογουμένων points this same direction.

Thus within the thinking of some Gentiles is the inner struggle with doing what is correct or incorrect. And some vague sense of this being done before a God who will hold them accountable for their choices is present also. Paul sees this as a product of the working of the Spirit in their lives: γραπτὸν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν.

ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὅτε κρίνει ὁ θεὸς τὰ κρυπτὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου διὰ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ. One of the more vigorously debated issues with this expression in verse sixteen is the connection of the prepositional phrase ἐν ἡμέρᾳ to some previous expression.¹⁰³ Yet,

¹⁰²"A fourth matter to note is that the prepositional phrase μεταξύ ἀλλήλων (literally 'between one another') is extremely difficult to interpret. Some have quite literally translated it 'in their dealings with one another,' and so have understood it as referring to the criticism or defense of the actions of others.¹²⁷ It is probably best, however, to understand the phrase as referring to the inner debate that goes on within the conscience of a person — that is, 'within themselves,' especially here within Gentiles — regarding right and wrong in their own conduct. Also to be noted in 2:14–15 is the fact that the structure, language, and syntax of these two verses (as pointed out at various places in the discussion above) seem rather convoluted — and increasingly so as the passage develops — with at least one redundancy, two or three hapax legomena of expression and usage, and rather difficult syntax, especially in the latter half of 2:15." [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 278.]

¹⁰³The textual history of 2:16 suggests that this verse is best viewed as beginning with the words ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὅτε, 'in/on the day when' (see the 'Textual Notes' above). Thus this verse is best understood as directly connected with what comes before, either (1) with what has been said in 2:15b, (2) with what has been said in 2:14–15, or, perhaps, reaching even further back, (3) with all that has been said in 2:12–15. Yet there is a real problem in connecting 2:16 with what is said in the verse or verses before it — a problem with which every commentator since Origen has struggled. Jouette Bassler states the problem concisely: 'Since the eschatological tenor of this verse [i.e., 2:16] is unmistakable, a problem arises concerning the logical connection between this reference to the



the most defensible solution grammatically and theologically is the one reflected in the above diagram, in which the prepositional phrase ἐν ἡμέρᾳ is attached naturally to the verb ἐνδείκνυται in v. 15a. The core idea then is that of these Gentiles demonstrating their work in connection to the coming day of judgment. The value of what they are doing now is to be measured against the standard of how God will view it on judgment day. Its true nature will be disclosed in that eschatological event. This is consistent with the idea of final

final judgment and the participial phrases of v. 15b, which seem to describe instead the present ongoing activity of the inner conscience.¹²⁸

"A myriad of solutions have been proposed.

One is that God's judgment referred to in 2:16 should probably not be understood as his final, eschatological day of judgment, but rather as a present, earthly day of encounter with the word of God¹²⁹ or as the day of one's conversion.¹³⁰

A second proposal is that the material of 2:14–15 was originally a marginal gloss in some ancient manuscript that a later scribe incorporated into the text.¹³¹

A third view is that when Paul addressed Jewish audiences, he likely used the bulk of the material that now appears in Rom 2—which original sermonic material probably had his final statement of v. 16 following immediately after his statements of vv. 12–13—but that when he wrote to the Christians at Rome and used that earlier material he "inserted verses 14–15 parenthetically" in a letter "meant for Gentile as well as Jewish readers."¹³²

A fourth position is that, while 2:14–15 may be considered too long for a parenthesis by Paul, 2:15b, which speaks about the human conscience and conflicting human thoughts, should probably be seen as parenthetical material inserted by Paul, with the primary flow of the apostle's logic moving from 2:15a to 2:16.¹³³

A fifth understanding is that 2:16 is a marginal gloss that has somehow found its way into the text.¹³⁴

A sixth proposal is to delete the noun ἡμέρα ("day") and connect the phrase ἐν ἡ ("in the") preceding it in 2:16 with the noun συνείδησις ("conscience") in 2:15b, thereby reading "their consciences bearing witness when God judges everyone's secrets."¹³⁵

A seventh suggestion is that 2:14–16 is best understood as "a polemic against Jewish claims of an eschatological advantage" in God's judgment of people, with 2:14–15a speaking about the impartiality of God's present judgment and 2:15b–16 speaking about the impartiality of God's future judgment.¹³⁶

And an eighth view is that the third person plural present indicative active verb ἐνδείκνυται ("they show") of 2:15a, like the third person singular future indicative active verb κρινεῖ ("he will judge," whose final syllable is best accented with a circumflex accent) of 2:16, should be understood futuristically ("they will show"), so that both 2:15 and 2:16 refer to a future judgment of God through Christ Jesus.¹³⁷

[Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 278–280.]

judgment universally in the rest of Romans as well as the NT itself.

Out of the 11 uses of ἡμέρα inside Romans, 4 have to do with eschatological judgment day: 2:5, 16, 13:12, 13. Rom. 13:13a is most helpful to 2:16, ὡς ἐν ἡμέρᾳ εὐσημόνως περιπατήσωμεν, *let us live honorably as in the day*. The sense of a future 'day' giving tone and atmosphere for patterns of living in the present is clear in 13:13. And the parallel prepositional phrase construction ἐν ἡμέρᾳ between the two uses argues for a similar understanding of both uses.

The adverbial temporal dependent clause introduced by the definite temporal conjunction ὅτε sets up the qualification of ἡμέρα: ὅτε κρίνει ὁ θεὸς τὰ κρυπτὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου διὰ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, *when God judges the secrets of people according to my Gospel through Christ Jesus*.

The day is defined as final judgment day. Up to this point this event has been depicted by Paul as

- τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ, *God's judgment* (2:2, 3)
- ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὀργῆς καὶ ἀποκαλύψεως δικαιοκρισίας τοῦ θεοῦ, *in a day of wrath and disclosure of the righteous judgments of God* (2:5)
- τοῖς δὲ ἐξ ἐριθείας καὶ ἀπειθοῦσιν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πειθόμενοι δὲ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ ὀργὴ καὶ θυμὸς, *but for those out of self-seeking both disobey the Truth but obey iniquity, there will be wrath and fury* (2:8)
- θλίψις καὶ στενοχωρία ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ψυχὴν ἀνθρώπου τοῦ κατεργαζομένου τὸ κακόν, Ἰουδαίου τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλλήνος, *Affliction and distress will be upon the very existence of every person doing evil, to the Jew first and then to the Gentile* (2:9)
- Ὅσοι γὰρ ἀνόμως ἤμαρτον, ἀνόμως καὶ ἀπολοῦνται, καὶ ὅσοι ἐν νόμῳ ἤμαρτον, διὰ νόμου κριθήσονται, *for as many as sin apart from law will also perish apart from law, and as many as sin in law through law will be condemned* (2:12)

Beyond 2:16, the references to judgment day are more generalized but frequent:

- τί ἐροῦμεν; μὴ ἄδικος ὁ θεὸς ὁ ἐπιφέρων τὴν ὀργήν; κατὰ ἄνθρωπον λέγω, *What shall we say? God is not unjust to inflict wrath, is He? I speak humanly* (3:5b)
- ἐπεὶ πῶς κρινεῖ ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον; *For then how will God judge the world?* (3:6)
- ὁ γὰρ νόμος ὀργὴν κατεργάζεται, *for Law brings wrath.* (4:15a)
- πολλῶ ὄν μᾶλλον δικαιωθέντες νῦν ἐν τῷ αἵματι αὐτοῦ σωθησόμεθα δι' αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς ὀργῆς, *much more then having been justified now in His blood we will be saved through Him from God's wrath* (5:9)
- εἰ δὲ θέλων ὁ θεὸς ἐνδείξασθαι τὴν ὀργὴν καὶ

γνωρίσαι τὸ δυνατόν αὐτοῦ ἤνεγκεν ἐν πολλῇ μακροθυμίᾳ σκευὴ ὀργῆς κατηρησιμένα εἰς ἀπώλειαν, *But since God wanting to display His wrath and to make known His power has held back with much patience on the object of wrath which are destined for destruction* (9:22)

- f) μὴ ἑαυτοὺς ἐκδικοῦντες, ἀγαπητοί, ἀλλὰ δότε τόπον τῇ ὀργῇ, *don't avenge yourselves, but give place for God's wrath* (12:19a)
- g) ἡ νύξ προέκοψεν, ἡ δὲ ἡμέρα ἤγγικεν, *the night is far spent, but that day is near* (Rom. 13:12a)
- h) ὡς ἐν ἡμέρᾳ εὐσχημόνως περιπατήσωμεν, *let us live honorably as in the day* (Rom. 13:13a)

When seen together contextually, one cannot conclude anything but that judgment day as a day of God's wrath is a significant theme throughout the letter to the Romans. Chapters one and two center on the announced theme in 1:18 of ὀργὴ θεοῦ, *God's wrath*, first disclosed as temporal judgments imposed in this life (chapter 1) and then as eschatological judgment day (chapter 2). Here Paul presents the greatest detail and then in the remainder of the letter he makes frequent allusion to God judging, God's wrath, and the coming day of judgment.

The temporal clause here in 2:16 provides unique insight into a few details of that coming day. The temporal subordinate conjunction ὅτε introduces an adverbial dependent clause which specifies action taking place at the same time of what the clause is attached to, here the noun ἡμέρα, *day*. This is particularly the case when the clause verb, here κρίνει, is in the present tense as is this instance. Thus what happens on the ἡμέρα, *day*? The basic answer is clear: κρίνει ὁ θεὸς τὰ κρυπτά τῶν ἀνθρώπων, *God judges the secrets of people*. By what parameters? κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου, *according to my Gospel*. By who will do the judging? διὰ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, *by Christ Jesus*. These are new insights for the Roman readers not presented up to this point in the letter.

Now let's look at the details. **First, κρίνει ὁ θεὸς τὰ κρυπτά τῶν ἀνθρώπων, *God judges the secrets of people*.**

With the indirect agency prepositional phrase διὰ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ attached to the core verb κρίνει, the precise sense of the verb becomes *God does the judging through Christ Jesus who is the functioning judge* on that day. In the apocalyptic Judaism of Paul's day, which was virtually exclusive Hellenistic Diaspora Jewish thinking, as opposed to Hebraistic Palaestina Jewish thinking, a common thread regarding final judgment was that God was the one who judged humanity. A few alternative claims exist in the literature which speculate on God's use of a representative to do the actual judging of humanity.¹⁰⁴ But Paul affirms the uniform early

Christian view that Christ Jesus, as the divine Son of God, will do the actual judging in representation of Almighty God. In the earlier written letter of Second Corinthians, the apostle had spoken of the judgment seat of Christ:

τοὺς γὰρ πάντας ἡμᾶς φανερωθῆναι δεῖ ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ βήματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἵνα κομισθῆται ἕκαστος τὰ διὰ τοῦ σώματος πρὸς ἃ ἔπραξεν, εἴτε ἀγαθὸν εἴτε φαῦλον.

For all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil.

The sense of κρίνει is the ancient royal palace in which the king renders sentences on those against whom charges have been brought.¹⁰⁵ In chapter two Paul uses κρίνω seven times but only three reference the eschatological judgment: vv. 12, 16, 27.¹⁰⁶ The other fourment of all people will be carried out not just by God, as was the standard Jewish understanding, but specifically by Christ Jesus. Various nonconformist Jews of Paul's day had speculated about God's use of some heavenly representative to serve as the eschatological judge of all humanity — as, for example, the 'elect one,'¹⁴¹ Melchizedek,¹⁴² or Abel.¹⁴³ The earliest Jewish believers in Jesus, however, proclaimed that 'he ('Jesus of Nazareth') is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead.'¹⁴⁴ And that is what Paul also stated in 2 Cor 5:10 when he spoke of 'the judgment seat of Christ' — as well as what Jesus taught¹⁴⁵ and the early Jewish Christians affirmed in what they wrote.¹⁴⁶ Specifically Christian language breaks through in this first major section of the body middle of Romans in 2:16 for the first time since 1:16–17— though Paul does not elaborate here on his reference to Christ Jesus, but reserves all further christological discussion for later in his letter." [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 281–282.]

¹⁰⁵Note the extensive use of this verb along with its cognates in the New Testament: κρίνω, κρίσις, κρίμα, κριτής, κριτήριον, κριτικός, ἀνακρίνω, ἀνάκρισις, ἀποκρίνω, ἀνταποκρίνομαι, ἀπόκριμα, ἀπόκρισις, διακρίνω, διάκρισις, ἀδιάκριτος, ἐγκρίνω, κατακρίνω, κατὰκριμα, κατὰκρισις, ἀκατάκριτος, αὐτοκατάκριτος, πρόκριμα, συγκρίνω. [Friedrich Büchsel and Volkmar Hertrich, "Κρίνω, Κρίσις, Κρίμα, Κριτής, Κριτήριον, Κριτικός, Ανακρίνω, Ανάκρισις, Αποκρίνω, Ανταποκρίνομαι, Απόκριμα, Απόκρισις, Διακρίνω, Διάκρισις, Αδιάκριτος, Έγκρίνω, Κατακρίνω, Κατὰκριμα, Κατὰκρισις, Ακατάκριτος, Αὐτοκατάκριτος, Πρόκριμα, Συγκρίνω," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:921.]

¹⁰⁶The word is related in root to the Lat. cerno: 'to sunder.'¹ In the basic sense 'to part,' 'to sift,' it occurs in Hom. Il., 5, 500: ὅτε τε ξανθὴ Δημήτηρ κρίνη ... καρπὸν τε καὶ ἄχνας (chaff). This leads to the sense 'to divide out,' 'to select,' Il., 1, 309: ἐς δ' ἐρέτας ἔκρινεν εἰκόσιν, 'to value,' κρίνοντες τὸν Ἀπόλλω ... πρὸ Μαρσίου, Plat. Resp., III, 399e. The most common meaning is 'to decide,' νείκεα κρίνειν, Hom. Od., 12, 440; 'to judge,' 'to assess,' and in the mid. 'to go to law, to dispute with,' Τιτήνεσσι κρίναντο, Hes. Theog., 882; also 'to seek justice,' or 'to be accused,' θανάτου δίκη κρίνεσθαι, Thuc., III, 57, 3, also, from the sense 'to assess,' 'to expound,' ὁ

¹⁰⁴A second matter highlighted in 2:16 is that this final judg-



instances allude to judging actions by the moral elitist in the diatribe, which only serves to get him in greater trouble with God on judgment day. Rom. 3:6 adds one additional insight with the use of κρίνω: ἐπεὶ πῶς κρινεῖ ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον; [how then will God judge the world?](#) The judgment of God at the end encompasses the entire world, i.e., all humanity.

The main target of this divine judgment is τὰ κρυπτά τῶν ἀνθρώπων, [people's secrets](#). This substantively used adjective from κρυπτός, -ή, -όν is found twice (2:16, 29) in Romans with seemingly different meanings. Derived from the verb κρύπτω with the sense of [to cover up or to hide](#),¹⁰⁷ the adjective denotes either what is covered

γέρον ἐκρίνατ' ὄνειρους, Hom. Il., 5, 150; ὄνειροκρίτης, the interpreter of dreams, and, from the more general sense of 'judge,' 'to believe,' 'to decide,' 'to resolve,' Isoc., 4, 46: τὰ γὰρ ὑφ' ἡμῶν κριθέντα τοσαύτην λαυβάνει δόξαν. Hence, though the word is most commonly found in legal terminology, it does not belong here either exclusively or by derivation.

"The LXX uses κρίνειν for predominantly legal words, esp. כִּפַּשׁ, more rarely דָּן and דָּר. Hence κρίνειν means judging, even when this means deliverance or salvation for the oppressed, ψ 71:2: κρίνειν τὸν λαόν σου ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ τοὺς πτωχοὺς σου ἐν κρίσει, Zech. 7:9: κρίμα δίκαιον κρίνατε καὶ ἔλεος καὶ οἰκτιρμὸν ποιεῖτε. In keeping with the sense of כִּפַּשׁ → infra κρίνειν can also have the more general meaning 'to rule,' Ju. 3:10; 4:4 etc.; 1 Βασ. 4:18; 4 Βασ. 15:5.2 At this point the LXX goes beyond ordinary Gk. usage.

"In the NT³ κρίνειν means esp. 'to judge,' e.g., the judgment of God, R. 2:16; 3:6, of men, Ac. 23:3; Jn. 18:31 etc. It is used not merely for official judgment but also for personal judgments on others, Mt. 7:1, 2; Lk. 6:37; R. 2:1, 3; R. 14:3, 4, 10, 13; Jm. 4:11, 12. The mid. is used for 'to be accused,' Ac. 23:6; 26:6, 'to seek justice,' 'to be engaged in a legal suit,' Mt. 5:40; 1 C. 6:6. The sense 'to resolve,' 'to determine,' occurs at Ac. 16:4: τὰ δόγματα τὰ κεκριμένα ὑπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων, 20:16; 25:25; 27:1; 1 C. 2:2; 7:37: τοῦτο δὲ κέκρικεν ... τηρεῖν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ παρθένον. The sense 'to value' is found at R. 14:5: ὃς μὲν κρίνει ἡμέραν παρ' ἡμέραν, ὃς δὲ κρίνει πᾶσαν ἡμέραν, 'the one esteems one day higher than another, the other esteems every day.' We also find the meanings 'to assess,' 'to regard as,' Ac. 13:46; 16:15; 26:8, 'to think,' Ac. 15:19; 2 C. 5:14, in the aor. 'to form an opinion or judgment,' Lk. 7:43; Ac. 4:19; 1 C. 10:15; 11:13. The sense 'to rule' rather than 'to judge' occurs at Mt. 19:28; Lk. 22:30.4 This usage goes back to the LXX and ultimately to the Heb. כִּפַּשׁ.⁵ Since it is alien to non-biblical Gk., we have here another instance of 'biblical' Gk. From the theological standpoint the most important sense is 'to judge,' esp. of God."

[Friedrich Büchsel and Volkmar Hertrich, "Κρίνω, Κρίσις, Κρίμα, Κριτής, Κριτήριο, Κριτικός, Ανακρίνω, Ανάκρισις, Αποκρίνω, Ανταποκρίνομαι, Απόκριμα, Απόκρισις, Διακρίνω, Διάκρισις, Αδιάκριτος, Ἐγκρίνω, Κατακρίνω, Κατάκριμα, Κατάκρισις, Ακατάκριτος, Αυτόκατάκριτος, Πρόκριμα, Συγκρίνω," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:922–923.]

¹⁰⁷Although used 19 times inside the NT, the verb κρύπτω is not used in Romans and only twice inside the Pauline letters (Col. 3:3; 1 Tim. 5:25).

up or the hidden, secret place where the covering up is located. In either case, the dominant NT (17x) usage stresses that God both knows these things/places and on judgment day will expose them to public knowledge for everyone to see. First Corinthians 4:5 is one of the clearest expressions of this:

ὥστε μὴ πρὸ καιροῦ τι κρίνετε ἕως ἄν ἔλθῃ ὁ κύριος, ὃς καὶ φωτίσει τὰ κρυπτά τοῦ σκοτεινοῦ καὶ φανερώσει τὰς βουλὰς τῶν καρδιῶν· καὶ τότε ὁ ἔπαινος γενήσεται ἐκάστῳ ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ.

[Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive commendation from God.](#)

In the use here in 2:16, τὰ κρυπτά τῶν ἀνθρώπων stresses the things covered up in human life that will be targeted for divine exposure on judgment day.¹⁰⁸ What is Paul's point with this emphasis? In line with the emphasis in vv. 28–29 where this adjective is also used, there emerges the point of God's judgment reaching down to include those things we have tried to hide from others and perhaps even from God. We are aware of them and hope no one else is or will be. But on judgment day all these things will be brought out into the open by God and their true nature -- whether good or bad -- will be exposed for all to see.

The translation of τὰ κρυπτά τῶν ἀνθρώπων as ["the secret thoughts of all"](#) by the NRSV is inadequate. The neuter plural spelling τὰ κρυπτά encompasses far more than our τῶν λογισμῶν, [thoughts](#) (note the masculine gender here). This translation falsely contrasts inner vs. outer with the inner centered on thinking. That's a modern mind-set, and not what Paul had in mind with τὰ κρυπτά. The Lexham English Bible is more accurate with ["the secret things of people."](#) The Greek word [includes everything that we have tried to cover up from](#)

¹⁰⁸τὰ κρυπτά τῶν ἀνθρώπων, 'the secrets of men' (that is, all humankind individually). A contrast with what is open, visible is clearly in view, as usual with κρυπτός (see, e.g., Mark 4:22; John 7:4; 1 Cor 14:25; and particularly Rom 2:28–29). The thought that God knows the secrets of men's hearts would be familiar to an audience well versed in the scriptures of Judaism (Cranfield cites 1 Sam 16:7; 1 Chron 28:9; Ps 139:1–2, 23; Jer 17:10; see also, e.g., Pss. Sol. 14:8 and 17:25). Once again then Paul takes up a familiar scriptural theme as part of his mounting warning against his own people's presumption: what the final judgment uncovers will not necessarily work in favor of the covenant people or against the Gentiles (vv 28–29). The emphasis on inwardness is clear, but it should not be taken as a straight inward/outward contrast (they 'demonstrate' what is 'in their hearts' — v 15), rather it is a reminder that inner motives and governing principles are a truer guide in assessing the (outward) relationships between individuals (and races). See further on 2:28–29." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 102–103.]



the awareness of others.

Second, κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου, according to my Gospel. This prepositional phrase with the accusative of reference function of τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν with the preposition κατὰ. The core sense is that the Gospel provides the framework for the judging to take place. What does that mean?

For one thing, judgment day administered within the framework of Gospel stands in contrast to the Jewish Torah framework, particularly with Torah defined in the broadest terms to include the scribal interpretations -- something commonly understood in Jewish circles in Paul's time.¹⁰⁹ Judgment Day within Torah guidelines meant eternal damnation to all Gentiles and non-observant Jews. Circumcision and one's own obedience to Torah was the key to succeeding on judgment day. Differing views as to the exact connection of these two requirements can be found in the Jewish literature of the first century world. But both were essential to avoid Hell.

Judgment Day within the framework of Gospel stresses Christ as doing the judging as God's representative. The anchor point is obedience to God through the demands of Christ Himself. His 'law' is the universal requirement of God Almighty. Although built off of and based upon the Law of Moses, it transcends Torah and goes deeper than Torah in its demands. This Jesus makes unquestionably clear in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7). Central is the unwavering requirement of unconditional faith surrender to God through Christ. Out of the consequent life transformation comes a new life empowered, enabled, guided, and generated by God through His Spirit working in the life of the believer. The obedience becomes a turning over of one's life to all God to totally saturate it with His Presence and dynamism. Living in obedience becomes letting

God live His life in and through your life, as Matt. 5:16 asserts.

This perspective was utterly alien to the moral elitists in first century Rome. Everything depended upon their own disciplined achievements of living by a higher moral standard than their immoral pagan neighbors. Whether philosophical moralists or Jewish moralists, they depended upon an externally established 'law' as the foundation for their superiority. And thus the expectation for exemption from divine judgment for those believing in an afterlife. This νόμος might come through the philosophical reflects of the local sages of their πόλις. Or especially through the scribal interpretations of the Law of Moses. But possessing this law as the basis for their living gave them vast superiority to everyone around them and this would mean exemption from divine judgment after death. This sort of non-sense the apostle shoots down completely here in v. 16.

For another thing, judgment day within the framework of the Gospel means a much more thorough analysis by God of every individual. The terminology used by Paul up to this point in chapter two shares much in common with the Hellenistic apocalyptic Jewish assertions: ἡμέρα ὀργῆς, **a day of wrath** (v. 5); ἀποκαλύψεως δικαιοκρίσιος τοῦ θεοῦ, **a day of disclosure of the righteous decrees of God** (v. 5); a major focus on disobedience (v. 8); **an experience of fury and wrath**, ὀργὴ καὶ θυμὸς (v. 8); an experience of θλίψις καὶ στενοχωρία, **affliction and distress** (v. 9).

But new insights from Paul come as: οὐ γὰρ οἱ ἀκροαταὶ νόμου δίκαιοι παρὰ τῷ θεῷ, ἀλλ' οἱ ποιηταὶ νόμου δικαιωθήσονται, **For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous in God's sight, but the doers of the law who will be justified** (v. 13). The mentioning of hearers versus doers would have had a new wrinkle to the idea of final judgment. Even more radical and shocking next was in v. 14 the claim that Gentiles outside of possessing the Torah could keep a divine law that God approved. This idea being extended in v. 15 asserting a divine law assessable to some Gentiles continued the new perspective that for Jewish elitists would have produced intense negative response. But in vv. 17-29 Paul bursts the door off its hinges with his charge against the elitists of not being authentic Jews. Clearly by this point the Gentile moral elitist is no longer in the picture to any appreciable degree, and the apostle's focus in centered on the Jewish elitist. This was where the major problem was in Rome in connection to the synagogue community and the Christian community.

Then his subsequent claim that the Jewish Torah brings wrath (4:15a) would not have set well with the Jewish elitists in the synagogue either. The Law was life and the path to pleasing God in their view.

¹⁰⁹Eusebius of Caesarea (c. A.D. 260–339), who was a prominent Christian theologian and historian of the early fourth century, believed that Paul's reference to 'my gospel' at the end of 2:16 and at the beginning of 16:25 was an allusion to the canonical Gospel of Luke, which Paul dictated to his friend Luke. But that suggestion is hardly compatible with the nature of the Third Gospel itself. Almost all commentators today hold 'that by 'my gospel' Paul did not mean a peculiarly Pauline form of the gospel but simply the gospel which he preached together with other Christian preachers'¹⁵² — though some would go a bit further to personalize 'my gospel'" somewhat more expressly by defining it as 'the gospel, common to all Christians, which has been entrusted by God to Paul for his preservation and proclamation.'¹⁵³ Joseph Fitzmyer goes even further in his brief statement: 'In using 'my,' he [Paul] refers to his personal way of announcing the good news.'¹⁵⁴ [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 283.]

What Paul claims about Judgment Day being carried out within the framework of His Gospel most likely would thus have seemed rather arrogant to these arrogant elitists. The apostle is motivated to amplify this point in persuasive ways that would help his Christian readers at Rome, both Gentile and Jewish, to be convinced of the correctness of this Gospel message. This amplification could best be made by centering on the role of Christ in God's plan for humanity -- an amplification developed in the remainder of the letter body of Romans in several ways. But he felt first the need to raise the ire of the Jewish elitists further in 2:17-3:8. Then beginning in 3:9 he picks up more directly this point of the framing role of the Gospel in understanding God's wrath (cf. 1:18).

Third, διὰ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, by Christ Jesus. This final modifier of the verb κρίνει, *will judge*, speaks of the secondary agent of judging via the preposition διὰ and the ablative of agency function of Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ.

As earlier alluded to, this Christian view of Judgment Day puts Christ in the role as the representative of God who will do the actual judging of humanity. Some contemporary Jewish speculation about Judgment Day had seen some representative of God in this role. The range of candidates for this job are fascinating to examine.

1 Enoch 45:1-6.¹¹⁰ **1** This is the second parable concerning those who deny the name of the dwelling of the holy ones and of the Lord of Spirits. **2** To heaven they will not ascend, and on earth they will not come. Thus will be the lot of the sinners who have denied the name

¹¹⁰A Hellenistic Jewish apocalypse document, or more precisely, composite document, with a patch work quilt history. Never considered to be a part of inspired scriptures in both the Hebrew scriptures and the LXX traditions, the set of documents enjoyed some popularity in limited circles of Hellenistic Judaism. Five distinct sections make up the work labeled as First Enoch:

- * The Book of the Watchers (1 Enoch 1–36)
- * The Book of Parables of Enoch (1 Enoch 37–71) (also called the Similitudes of Enoch)
- * The Astronomical Book (1 Enoch 72–82) (also called the Book of the Heavenly Luminaries or Book of Luminaries)
- * The Book of Dream Visions (1 Enoch 83–90) (also called the Book of Dreams)
- * The Epistle of Enoch (1 Enoch 91–108)

The book of parables (chaps. 37-71), i.e., the Similitudes of Enoch, most likely dates back to the first century BCE while the other four originally independently composed documents reach back earlier. The only surviving complete texts of Enoch (from 4th century AD) are found in the Ethiopian language of Ge'ez, although originally the document most likely was composed in either Hebrew or Aramaic in the different parts of the independent composition. The document itself claims falsely that the pre-biblical flood character of Enoch is the author. The NT writer Jude reflects awareness of the document in Jude 1:14-15. Whether Paul was aware of it cannot be determined.

of the Lord of Spirits, who will be kept thus for the day of affliction and tribulation. **3** *On that day, my Chosen One will sit on the throne of glory and he will <test> their works*, and their dwelling place(s) will be immeasurable. And their souls will be <distressed> within them, when they see my chosen ones, and those who appeal to my glorious name. **4** *On that day, I shall make my Chosen One dwell among them*, and I shall transform heaven and make it a blessing and a light forever; **5** and I shall transform the earth and make it a blessing. And my chosen ones I shall make to dwell on it, but those who commit sin and error will not set foot on it. **6** For I have seen and satisfied my righteous ones with peace and have made them to dwell in my presence, But the judgment of the sinners has drawn near to me, that I may destroy them from the face of the earth.¹¹¹

1 Enoch 61:8-9. **8** And the Lord of Spirits seated the Chosen One upon the throne of glory; and he will judge all the works of the holy ones in the heights of heaven, and in the balance he will weigh their deeds. **9** And when he lifts up his face to judge their secret ways according to the word of the name of the Lord of Spirits, and their paths according to the way of the righteous judgment of the Lord of Spirits, they will all speak with one voice, and bless and glorify and exalt and sanctify the name of the Lord of Spirits.¹¹²

1 Enoch 62:2. **2** And the Lord of Spirits <seated him> upon the throne of his glory; and the spirit of righteousness was poured upon him. And the word of his mouth will slay all the sinners, and all the unrighteous will perish from his presence.¹¹³

The anonymous author of these texts envisions Judgment Day being presided over by *my Chosen One* (based on mss m,t2β). This person clearly is distinct from God but otherwise unidentified. He presides over judgment on that Day and destroys the 'sinners' from the face of the earth, which is to be the renewed living place of the righteous ones for eternity. This Chosen One is both judge and executioner of the 'sinners.' Most of the depictions of the fate of 'sinners' is cast in terms of the 'righteous ones' as victors over the 'sinners' and basking in taking revenge upon the 'sinners' along with 'angels of punishment' inflicting eternal torment on them

¹¹¹George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 37–82*, ed. Klaus Baltzer, Hermeneia—A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2012), 148.

¹¹²George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 37–82*, ed. Klaus Baltzer, Hermeneia—A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2012), 247.

¹¹³George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 37–82*, ed. Klaus Baltzer, Hermeneia—A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2012), 254.



(cf. 62:10-12). Clearly the role of 'the Chosen One' on judgment day in Enoch is of the commanding general taking out vengeance on 'sinners' for their abuse of the 'righteous ones.' Justice is twisted into petty vengeance unleashed on the sinners.

11Q13 text from Qumran.¹¹⁴ In this Dead Sea scroll fragment, Melchizedek stands as the divine representative inflicting God's judgement upon the wicked.

Col. 2 2[...] And concerning what Scripture says, "In [this] year of jubilee [you shall return, every one of you, to your property]" (Lev. 25:13) and what is also written, "And this" ³is the [ma]nner of [the remission:] every creditor shall remit the claim that is held [against a neighbor, not exacting it of a neighbor who is a member of the community, because God's] remission [has been proclaimed]" (Deut. 15:2):] ⁴[the interpretation] is that it applies [to the L]ast Days and concerns the captives, just as [Isaiah said: "To proclaim the jubilee to the captives" (Isa. 61:1)....] and ⁵whose teachers have been hidden and kept secr[et], even from the inheritance of Melchizedek, f[or ...] and they are the inherit[ance of Melchize]dek, who ⁶will return them to what is rightfully theirs. He will proclaim to them the jubilee, thereby releasing th[em from the debt of a]ll their sins.

This word [will thus co]me ⁷in the first week of the jubilee period that follows ni[ne] jubilee periods. Then the "D[ay of Aton]ement" shall follow at the e[nd of] the tenth [ju]bilee period, ⁸when he shall atone for all the Sons of [Light] and the peopl[e who are pre]destined to Mel[chi]zedek. [...] upo[n the]m [...] For ⁹this is the time decreed for "the year of Melchiz[edek]'s favor" (Isa. 61:2, modified) and for [his] hos[ts, together] with the holy ones of God, for a kingdom of judgment, just as it is written ¹⁰concerning him in the Songs of David, "A godlike being has taken his place in the coun[cil of God;] in the midst of the divine beings he holds judgment" (Ps. 82:1). Scripture also s[ays] about him, "Over [it] ¹¹take your seat in the highest heaven; A divine being will judge the peoples" (Ps. 7:7-8).

Concerning what scripture s[ays], "How long will y[ou] judge unjustly, and sh[ow] partiality to the wick[e]d? [S]el[ah]" (Ps. 82:2),] ¹²the interpretation applies to Belial and the spirits predestined to him, becau[se all of them have rebe]lled, turn[ing] from God's precepts [and so becoming utterly wicked.] ¹³Therefore Melchize-

¹¹⁴The label 11Q13 specifies cave 11 Qumran fragment 13. Cave 11 was the last cave to yield up manuscripts and fragmentation. It was discovered in 1956 And so far 21 lengthy manuscripts have been retrieved and studied. The **11Q13 Melchizedek** fragment is one of the miscellaneous texts to emerge out of cave 11. This is an apocalyptic commentary on the Jubilee year concepts found in Leviticus 25.

More important is a complete Aramaic text of the book of Enoch that has been uncovered in the cave.

dek will thoroughly prosecute the vengeance required by Go[d's] statutes. [In that day he will de]liv[er them from the power] of Belial, and from the power of all the sp[irits predestined to him.] ¹⁴Allied with him will be all the ["righteous] divine beings" (Isa. 61:3). [Th]is is that wh[ich ... a]ll the divine beings.¹¹⁵

Again, this Melchizedek figure who dispenses God's judgment on that day is a similar figure to the one in Enoch. He is to meet out vengeance upon the sons of Belial for their abuse of the people of God. Again the idea of justice is perverted into petty vengeance again covenant Israel. The portrait here stands in sharp contrast to that of Christ Jesus.

Testament of Abraham 13:5.¹¹⁶

XIII. And Abraham said, My lord chief-captain, who is this most wondrous judge? and who are the angels that write down? and who is the angel like the sun, holding the balance? and who is the fiery angel holding the fire? The chief-captain said, "Seest thou, most holy Abraham, the terrible man sitting upon the throne? This is the son of the first created Adam, who is called Abel, whom the wicked Cain killed, and he sits thus to judge all creation, and examines righteous men and sinners. For God has said, I shall not judge you, but every man born of man shall be judged. Therefore he has given to him judgment, to judge the world until his great and glorious coming, and then, O righteous Abraham, is the perfect judgment and recompense, eternal and unchangeable, which no one can alter. For every man has come from the first-created, and therefore they are first judged here by his son, and at the second coming they shall be judged by the twelve tribes of Israel, every breath and every creature. But the third time they shall be judged by the Lord God of all, and then, indeed, the end of that judgment is near, and the sentence terrible, and there is none to deliver. And now by three tribunals the judgment of the world and the recompense is made, and for this reason a matter is not finally confirmed by one or

¹¹⁵Michael O. Wise, Martin G. Abegg Jr., and Edward M. Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation* (New York: HarperOne, 2005), 591-592.

¹¹⁶This document's origin is less well established than the other two mentioned here. It comes as a Jewish writing in the first or second Christian century. It found favor only with Ethiopian Jews but not with any Christian group or other Jewish group.

Two versions, i.e., recensions, of this document have been preserved, one long and the other short. The original text of the long recension was written in Greek, most likely around Alexandria Egypt. The origin of the short recension is not established. Chapter 13 cited here comes from the long recension. But a short recension version adds Enoch as Abel's helper in dispensing out God's wrath in final judgment. Yet in the shorter recension, after Abel is finished judging, then two other groups -- the twelve tribes of Israel and God Himself -- dispense out judgment before the sinners receive their damnation.

two witnesses, but by three witnesses shall everything be established. The two angels on the right hand and on the left, these are they that write down the sins and the righteousness, the one on the right hand writes down the righteousness, and the one on the left the sins. The angel like the sun, holding the balance in his hand, is the archangel, Dokiell the just weigher, and he weighs the righteousnesses and sins with the righteousness of God. The fiery and pitiless angel, holding the fire in his hand, is the archangel Puruel, who has power over fire, and tries the works of men through fire, and if the fire consume the work of any man, the angel of judgment immediately seizes him, and carries him away to the place of sinners, a most bitter place of punishment. But if the fire approves the work of anyone, and does not seize upon it, that man is justified, and the angel of righteousness takes him and carries him up to be saved in the lot of the just. And thus, most righteous Abraham, all things in all men are tried by fire and the balance.”¹¹⁷

In this very fanciful myth, Abel, the brother wrongly murdered by his brother Cain, is elevated to the status of the divinely appointed judge of humanity in final judgment. The picture painted by the author is more interesting and depends upon the ancient commercial patterns of using balance scales for measuring. The scene is narrated as though the arch angel Michael take Abraham in a chariot to this future time and shows him how final judgment will take place. It is a complex process of measuring the sins of humanity on the scales against the righteousness of Almighty God. The pre-determined outcome then means the sinners are passed on to the Twelve Tribes of Israel to be evaluated against, and then finally by God Himself, before they are handed over to eternal damnation.

Apostolic Christianity asserted that Christ is the One authorized by God to dispense His final judgments upon humanity. Note Peter’s words in Acts 10:42, “He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead.” (καὶ παρηγγείλεν ἡμῖν κηρύξαι τῷ λαῷ καὶ διαμαρτύρασθαι ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ὠρισμένος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ κριτῆς ζώντων καὶ νεκρῶν). This is consistent with Jesus’ own words in Matt. 16:27, “For the Son of Man is to come

¹¹⁷Allan Menzies, ed., “The Testament of Abraham,” in *The Gospel of Peter, the Diatessaron of Tatian, the Apocalypse of Peter, the Visio Pauli, the Apocalypses of the Virgil and Sedrach, the Testament of Abraham, the Acts of Xanthippe and Polyxena, the Narrative of Zosimus, the Apology of Aristides, the Epistles of Clement (Complete Text), Origen’s Commentary on John, Books I-X, and Commentary on Matthew, Books I, II, and X-XIV*, trans. W. A. Craigie, vol. 9, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1897), 194–195.

with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done” (μέλλει γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἔρχεσθαι ἐν τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ μετὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων αὐτοῦ, καὶ τότε ἀποδώσει ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὴν πράξιν αὐτοῦ.). The apostle John also echoes this same view in John 5:27; Rev 2:23; 22:12.

So Paul’s assertion here with διὰ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, together with the earlier fully claim in 2 Cor. 5:10, is entirely consistent with early Christian teachings generally. The apostle proposes no deviation from this Christian tradition in his letter to the Romans. But this Christian view sharply contradicts the alternative Jewish views in circulation during the first Christian century.

10.3.3.2.3 Denunciation of Jewish Hypocrisy, 2:17-29

17 Εἰ δὲ σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ἐπονομάζῃ καὶ ἐπαναπαύῃ νόμῳ καὶ καυχᾶσαι ἐν θεῷ 18 καὶ γινώσκεις τὸ θέλημα καὶ δοκιμάζεις τὰ διαφέροντα κατηχούμενος ἐκ τοῦ νόμου, 19 πέποιθάς τε σεαυτὸν ὁδηγὸν εἶναι τυφλῶν, φῶς τῶν ἐν σκότει, 20 παιδευτὴν ἀφρόνων, διδάσκαλον νηπίων, ἔχοντα τὴν μόρφωσιν τῆς γνώσεως καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐν τῷ νόμῳ· 21 ὁ οὖν διδάσκων ἕτερον σεαυτὸν οὐ διδάσκεις; ὁ κηρύσσων μὴ κλέπτειν κλέπτεις; 22 ὁ λέγων μὴ μοιχεύειν μοιχεύεις; ὁ βδελυσσόμενος τὰ εἰδῶλα ἱεροσυλεῖς; 23 ὃς ἐν νόμῳ καυχᾶσαι, διὰ τῆς παραβάσεως τοῦ νόμου τὸν θεὸν ἀτιμάζεις· 24 τὸ γὰρ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ δι’ ὑμᾶς βλασφημεῖται ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, καθὼς γέγραπται.

25 Περιτομὴ μὲν γὰρ ὠφελεῖ ἐὰν νόμον πράσσης· ἐὰν δὲ παραβάτης νόμου ᾖς, ἡ περιτομὴ σου ἀκροβυστία γέγονεν. 26 ἐὰν οὖν ἡ ἀκροβυστία τὰ δικαιώματα τοῦ νόμου φυλάσσης, οὐχ ἡ ἀκροβυστία αὐτοῦ εἰς περιτομὴν λογισθῆσεται; 27 καὶ κρινεῖ ἡ ἐκ φύσεως ἀκροβυστία τὸν νόμον τελοῦσα σὲ τὸν διὰ γράμματος καὶ περιτομῆς παραβάτην νόμου. 28 οὐ γὰρ ὁ ἐν τῷ φανερωῷ Ἰουδαῖός ἐστιν οὐδὲ ἡ ἐν τῷ φανερωῷ ἐν σαρκὶ περιτομή, 29 ἀλλ’ ὁ ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ Ἰουδαῖός, καὶ περιτομὴ καρδίας ἐν πνεύματι οὐ γράμματι, οὗ ὁ ἔπαινος οὐκ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλ’ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ.

17 But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast of your relation to God 18 and know his will and determine what is best because you are instructed in the law, 19 and if you are sure that you are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, 20 a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth, 21 you, then, that teach others, will you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? 22 You that forbid adultery, do you commit adultery? You that abhor idols, do you rob temples? 23 You that boast in the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law? 24 For, as it is written, “The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.”

25 Circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law; but if you break the law, your circumcision has become un-

2.17	δὲ	Εἰ σὺ Τουδαῖος ἐπονομάζη
		καὶ
		ἐπαναπαύη νόμῳ
		καὶ
2.18		καυχᾶσαι ἐν θεῷ
		καὶ
		γινώσκεις τὸ θέλημα
		καὶ
		δοκιμάζεις τὰ διαφέροντα
		κατηχούμενος
		ἐκ τοῦ νόμου,
		τε
2.19		πέποιθᾶς σεαυτὸν
		ὀδηγὸν εἶναι τυφλῶν,
		φῶς
		τῶν ἐν σκότει,
2.20		παιδευτὴν ἀφρόνων,
		διδάσκαλον νηπίων,
		ἔχοντα τὴν μόρφωσιν
		τῆς γνώσεως
		καὶ
		τῆς ἀληθείας
		ἐν τῷ νόμῳ·
2.21	οὖν	
38	ὁ διδάσκων ἕτερον	σεαυτὸν οὐ διδάσκεις;
39	ὁ κηρύσσων μὴ κλέπτειν	κλέπτεις;
2.22	ὁ λέγων μὴ μοιχεύειν	
40	μοιχεύεις;	
41	ὁ βδελυσσόμενος τὰ εἰδῶλα	ἱεροσυλεῖς;
2.23	ὃς ἐν νόμῳ καυχᾶσαι,	
42	τὸν θεὸν ἀτιμάζεις·	διὰ τῆς παραβάσεως τοῦ νόμου
2.24	γὰρ	
43	τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ...βλασφημεῖται	δι' ὑμᾶς
		ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν,
		καθὼς γέγραπται.

circumcision. 26 So, if those who are uncircumcised keep the requirements of the law, will not their uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? 27 Then those who are physically uncircumcised but keep the law will condemn you that have the written code and circumcision but break the law. 28 For a person is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is true circumcision something external and physical. 29 Rather, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart — it is spiritual and not literal. Such a person receives praise not from others but from God.

By this point, Paul's primary target has become the Jewish moral elitist. This person has been in the picture since the beginning of the diatribe in verse one. But

now the language of the apostle unquestionably targets the Jewish elitist. Thus contextually vv. 17-29 continues the discussion of the wrath of God but with sharp criticism of the false elitist thinking often found among Diaspora Jews about being superior to everyone one simply because of having been given the divine Torah of Moses. Paul's depiction of these elitist Jews is blunt and powerful at the point of their hypocrisy. It is somewhat reminiscent of Jesus' extremely blunt criticism of the Pharisees in Matthew 23. Note the summary introduction in v. 3, πάντα οὖν ὅσα ἐὰν εἴπωσιν ὑμῖν ποιήσατε καὶ τηρεῖτε, κατὰ δὲ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν μὴ ποιεῖτε· λέγουσιν γὰρ καὶ οὐ ποιοῦσιν, **therefore, do whatever they teach you**

tice what they teach. The foundational reason for this sharp criticism, λέγουσιν γὰρ καὶ οὐ ποιοῦσιν, is echoed by Paul here in vv. 17-29. His scriptural basis (Isa. 52:5 & Ezek. 36:20) for his criticisms given in v. 24 is even stronger than that which Jesus gave.

Paul points out two essential faults by these Jewish elitists: their disobedience to the Law of Moses (vv. 17-24) and their dependence upon physical circumcision (vv. 25-29). The earlier theme of the obedience to the inner law of God by some Gentiles as more acceptable to God is continued here as the frame of reference. All of this is set against the backdrop of the eschatological day of wrath on Judgment Day.

10.3.3.2.3.1 Jewish failure to obey God's Law, 2:17-24

17 Εἰ δὲ σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ἐπονομάζη καὶ ἐπαναπαύῃ νόμῳ καὶ καυχᾶσαι ἐν θεῷ 18 καὶ γινώσκεις τὸ θέλημα καὶ δοκιμάζεις τὰ διαφέροντα κατηχούμενος ἐκ τοῦ νόμου, 19 πέποιθάς τε σεαυτὸν ὄδηγὸν εἶναι τυφλῶν, φῶς τῶν ἐν σκότει, 20 παιδευτὴν ἀφρόνων, διδάσκαλον νηπίων, ἔχοντα τὴν μὀρφωσιν τῆς γνώσεως καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐν τῷ νόμῳ· 21 ὁ οὖν διδάσκων ἕτερον σεαυτὸν οὐ διδάσκεις; ὁ κηρύσσων μὴ κλέπτειν κλέπτεις; 22 ὁ λέγων μὴ μοιχεύειν μοιχεύεις; ὁ βδελυσσόμενος τὰ εἰδῶλα ἱεροσυλεῖς; 23 ὃς ἐν νόμῳ καυχᾶσαι, διὰ τῆς παραβάσεως τοῦ νόμου τὸν θεὸν ἀτιμάζεις· 24 τὸ γὰρ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ δι' ὑμᾶς βλασφημεῖται ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, καθὼς γέγραπται.

17 But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast of your relation to God 18 and know his will and determine what is best because you are instructed in the law, 19 and if you are sure that you are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, 20 a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth, 21 you, then, that teach others, will you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? 22 You that forbid adultery, do you commit adultery? You that abhor idols, do you rob temples? 23 You that boast in the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law? 24 For, as it is written, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."

Literary Context. The literary setting of verses 17-24 is clear. The literary diatribe begun with the second singular references to a fictional opponent who symbolizes real flesh and blood individuals in Rome is continued. The difference between 2:1-10 and 2:17-24 is that the earlier generalized depiction targeting both Gentile and Jewish moral elitists now is zeroing in on the Jewish elitist for the bluntest and most severe criticism. The general theme of hypocrisy, i.e., non-obedience to the moral codes they possess, is continued but with the Jewish condemnation of their disobedience to the Torah of Moses (vv. 17-24) and false dependence upon physical circumcision (vv. 25-29). Verses 11-

16 represent a transition from the broad to the more specific target in the lengthy diatribe of chapter two.

Literary Structure. The internal arrangement of ideas is dramatically clear from the block diagram below. It entails grammatical / syntactical patterns in ancient Koine Greek completely impossible to reproduce in translation into any of the modern western languages, and particularly into modern English.

An exceptionally long first class conditional protasis is set up covering vv. 17-20.¹¹⁸ This provides the detailed scenario to be addressed by the series of rhetorical questions in vv. 21-22. Then the convulsory summary is set up using a Greek relative clause substantivally (# 42) which is followed by the justifying declaration in # 43 taken as a scripture quote.

The scenario, vv. 17-20. The post-positive conjunction δὲ is the most likely original reading, although a secondary level alternative stream of manuscript tradition uses ἴδε, **behold**, and is followed by the KJV and other English translations.¹¹⁹ The conjunction denotes a slight contrast of what follows to what preceded. But it also ties the two sections together as being connected.

The scenario envisioned by Paul in the lengthy protasis structure, introduced by the subordinate conjunction Εἰ, sets up an assumed situation among many Jews of Paul's day. He is dealing with a real life problem rather than a remote problem. The next level of assertion would have been to name individuals guilty of what he depicts. But the first class conditional protasis

¹¹⁸Some commentators fail to see how the syntax is arranged in this long conditional sentence, which has no modern western language equivalent possible. The presence of the inferential coordinate conjunction οὖν coupled with the incorrect editorial insertion of a Greek semicolon after τῷ νόμῳ is the problem. Both the punctuation and the use of οὖν seems to imply the absence of the apodosis main clause of the conditional sentence. But as the above diagram clearly illustrates the apodosis is the first of several rhetorical questions beginning in v. 21a: ὁ οὖν διδάσκων ἕτερον σεαυτὸν οὐ διδάσκεις; The conjunction οὖν very likely goes back to pick up a perceived implication of vv. 12-16. The one question mark about this understanding is the presence of δὲ in v. 17. But the quality of the grammar in Romans is too high for a bungling grammar error like what is postulated by modern commentators.

¹¹⁹The Textus Receptus, following the later text (Dc L most minuscules syr^h), reads ἴδε (whence the AV rendering, 'Behold'). This reading arose either as an itacism (εἰ and ι were pronounced alike) or as a deliberate amelioration of an otherwise extremely long and drawn out sentence (with the apodosis in ver. 21). In any case εἰ δὲ is strongly supported by the best representatives of the Alexandrian and the Western types of text (ⲛ A B D* K it^{d,g} vg syr^p cop^{sa,bo} arm eth). [Bruce Manning Metzger, United Bible Societies, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, Second Edition a Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (4th Rev. Ed.) (London; New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 448.]



in ancient Greek allowed a writer to make accusations that were broad and inclusive. The use of the singular reference instead of the plural allows Paul to connect into the second singular diatribe figure first introduced in v. 1. This fictitious person represents a group of individuals guilty of the failures leveled at them.

Six second singular verbs, most likely grouped in pairs, creates three essential points about this diatribe Jewish elitist. The final set is expanded substantially for the sake of clarity in the portrait.

σύ Ἰουδαῖος ἐπονομάζη καὶ ἐπαναπαύη νόμῳ. Although the spelling ἐπονομάζη could be passive voice with the sense of *you are being called a Jew*, the more likely meaning contextually is of the middle voice, *you call yourself a Jew*.¹²⁰ The tone of accusation is higher with the middle voice and this fits the blunt context better. But with double accusative type verbs like ἐπονομάζω, the middle voice use would require grammatically that the predicate accusative adjective Ἰουδαῖος be spelled in the accusative case Ἰουδαῖον in order to match the implicit reflexive pronoun σεαυτόν of the direct middle voice usage. The use of the nominative in order to match the implicit second singular subject σύ pretty much locks the expression into the passive voice sense of *"you are being called a Jew."* This is the only NT use of the compound verb ἐπονομάζω (ἐπι + ονομάζω). The passive voice understanding actually intensifies the severe tone of the accusation in that this Jewish elitist has promoted such an image among others about himself. More than just considering himself as Jewish.

The word group ὄνομα, ὀνομάζω, ἐπονομάζω, ψευδώνυμος covers the idea of attaching an identifying label to something or someone. But one must not forget the ancient close association of the name of an individual with the person himself. This had implications not just for the ὄνομα προσηγορικόν (or προσηγορία, *nomen appellativum*), which we label as proper name but also for the ὄνομα κύριον (*nomen proprium*) which we call label or group designation -- to use the widely ad-

¹²⁰The uncertainty with ἐπονομάζη is that the idea of naming requires these kinds of verbs to function as 'double accusatives.' That is, they have a direct object and a predicate object. In English for example, "I call you a boy" means that "you" is the direct object and "a boy" is a predicate object. With no middle voice existing in modern Western languages apart from modern Greek, does the direct object imply the Koine Greek accusative case in the middle voice? In which instance the predicate object would be expected to follow suit and appear in the accusative case spelling. It is well established that the ancient Greek passive voice usage of double accusative verbs means that when the direct object of the active voice verb is switched over to the subject of the passive voice, this subject then is spelled in the nominative case. And also, the predicate object is likewise recast with a nominative case spelling, in order to retain its predicate nature in modifying the former direct object.

opted categories of the Stoic philosopher Chrysippus from Tarsus (c. 279-c.206 BCE). The latter category is what is designated by Ἰουδαῖος, *Jew*, here.

The ancient attitudes toward the power of a name often bordered on the superstitious and played well with magicians who claimed supernatural powers via knowing the secret names and labels of the gods and goddesses. In the NT this surfaces dramatically in the tendency of demons in the synoptic gospels accounts to call Jesus the Son of God in the mistaken notion that knowing and using this special name gave them power to block Jesus' exorcizing of them. Thus for this Jew in Paul's example here to label himself a Ἰουδαῖος gave him the sense of special privilege with God. Embedded in this use is something far deeper than someone in our culture attaching some label to himself, even for bragging purposes. In vv. 28-29, the use of the label Ἰουδαῖος is treated by Paul in terms of legitimate and illegitimate usage. The illegitimate use of the label easily implied the danger of a curse from the deity connected to the label.

The term Ἰουδαῖος from the adjective Ἰουδαῖος, -αία, -αῖον, evolved from an outsider label of a person connected to Judea to a self-designation for connoting superiority to all other groups of people.¹²¹ Interestingly Paul never calls himself a Jew, but rather he uses the

¹²¹"Already for some centuries Ἰουδαῖος had been the name used by foreigners for a person belonging to Judea. But increasingly from the time of the Maccabean period it was also accepted and used by the Jews themselves as a self-designation in place of the older designations, 'Israelite' or 'Hebrew' (TDNT 3:369-75; but see further on 9:4). As such the function of the name was to distinguish Jew from Gentile, or simply from non-Jew — so almost always in Paul (1:16; 2:9-10; 3:9, 29; 9:24; 10:12; 1 Cor 1:22-24; 9:20-21; 10:32; 12:13; Gal 2:14-15; 3:28; Col 3:11); as also in rabbinic teaching (Str-B, 3:96-97). Its emergence as an accepted self-designation was probably tied into the emergence also of Ἰουδαῖσμος in the same period (first in 2 Macc 2:21; 8:1; 14:38) as a designation for the national religion of the Jews in its self-conscious distinctiveness and fierce loyalty to the law and the traditional customs (see also Amir). Ἰουδαῖος therefore would be a name accepted with pride by Paul's contemporaries (cf. 4 Ezra 6:55-59). In addressing a single Jew Paul has in mind no particular Jew, of course, but the typical Jew (TDNT 3:380-81), that is, the Jew per se, conscious of his Jewishness, of his distinctiveness from the nations (see also on 3:1). Subsequently, in Acts and John οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι became established as a designation for the opponents of Christianity. But here the distinction is still simply that between Jew and Gentile, and what is at stake is the status of the new movement in relation to that distinction. For Paul himself it is still a debate between Jews (though noticeably for his own self-designation he uses the older name 'Israelite' — 11:1; 2 Cor 11:22), and the issue is the real meaning of 'Jew' or what being a 'Jew' involves (2:28-29; against Watson, Paul, 113-15, who argues that Paul is attacking primarily the leaders of the Jewish community)." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 109-110.]

older, less biased term Ἰσραηλίτης, **Israelite** (11:1; 2 Cor. 11:22). Thus the label Ἰουδαῖος clearly suggests an attitude of superiority and elitism.

Closely connected to trying to wear the label Ἰουδαῖος is καὶ ἐπαναπαύη νόμῳ, **and finding support in Law**. Paul carefully avoids the idea of obeying or following the Law. Rather, this individual takes comfort in possessing the Law. This is Paul's only use of the verb ἐπαναπαύομαι, along with Lk. 10:6 as the other NT use. The sense of the verb is to give support, enjoy support, discover support. To discover etc. rest is included also. This individual is taking comfort from merely possessing the Law. Such is a dangerous posture!

The two expressions assume a posture of special privilege and benefit by this individual. Of course in the use in the protasis, such an individual is setting himself up for the wrath of God on judgment day.

καὶ καυχᾶσαι ἐν θεῷ καὶ γινώσκεις τὸ θῆλημα. These two expressions continue to paint a graphic picture of falsely assumed privilege with God. The first verb καυχᾶσαι from καυχάομαι connotes the idea of taking pride in something or someone. It also includes verbal expression of this pride.¹²² The word group καυχάομαι

¹²²Again, to boast or glory in God is a thoroughly good thing, if it is the sort of boasting in Him which truly gives Him the glory, a truly humble boasting in His goodness and mercy; but it is an altogether different matter, if it is the sort which is a self-centred boasting in Him as a basis for one's own self-importance. This is the first occurrence in Romans of a word of the word-group καυχᾶσθαι, καύχημα, καύχησις, which has considerable importance in Paul's epistles (in Romans see also v. 23; 3:27; 4:2; 5:2, 3, 11; 15:17; and the two occurrences of the compound κατακαυχᾶσθαι in 11:18). These words are used in the LXX pejoratively to denote boastful self-glorification on the level of human relations (its connotation in classical Greek) and also the pride and self-confidence in relation to God which are the mark of the *nābāl* or 'fool'; they are also used favorably of boasting in God and in His saving deeds, a boasting which is not self-centred but means a looking away from one's self to God. This latter kind of boasting, glorying, exultation, had its place in worship and would be consummated in the coming salvation-time. The use of this word-group in the NT is almost exclusively Pauline.¹ For Paul there is a right boasting in God (5:11: it is here also through Christ); in Christ (Phil 3:3); in the hope of the glory of God (5:2); in the cross of Christ (Gal 6:14); in tribulations (5:3) — not as something meritorious on the part of those who suffer them but as part of the discipline by which God teaches them to wait patiently for His deliverance; in weaknesses (2 Cor 12:5, 9: cf. 11:30) — because it is in the context of His servants' weakness that Christ's power is manifested; and in the faith of one's fellow Christians and the success of the apostolic mission seen as resulting from the work of Christ or of God (15:17f; 2 Cor 7:4, 14; 8:24; 9:2f). But all boasting which is essentially a boasting in man, in flesh, is illegitimate (1 Cor 1:29; 3:21; 4:7; 2 Cor 5:12b). Specially to be noted is the use of καύχησις in 3:27 of the act of asserting a claim on God on the ground of one's works, of claiming to have put God in one's debt, and of καύχημα in 4:2 to denote such a claim upon God. See further R. Bultmann, in TWNT 3, pp. 646–54.²¹

(5x Rom), καύχημα (1x Rom), καύχησις (2x Rom), ἐγκαυχάομαι (0x Rom), κατακαυχάομαι (2x Rom) represents an important concept in the book of Romans.¹²³ Pride in the sense of well being can be either positive or negative, although mostly negative. In 5:11, Paul says καυχώμενοι ἐν τῷ θεῷ διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, **boasting in God through our Lord Jesus Christ**. Clearly boasting in God can be either good (5:11) or bad (2:17).

What's the difference? The elitist is claiming special privilege with God through possessing the Law. See 3:27-29 for elaboration. Paul in 5:11 is praising God for the reconciliation with God achieved through Jesus Christ. Is the pride centered in our assumed status before God or in the working of God upon our life? The first is bad and encores God's anger. The latter is good and redounds to God's glory, not ours.¹²⁴ Even pagan Greeks shied away from bragging about themselves and their successes.¹²⁵ So the Jewish bragging about

[C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 164–165.]

¹²³Rudolf Bultmann, "Καυχάομαι, Καύχημα, Καύχησις, Ἐγκαυχάομαι, Κατακαυχάομαι," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:645.]

¹²⁴"καὶ καυχᾶσαι ἐν θεῷ, 'and boast in God.' καυχάομαι was not a widely used word, but was well enough known in Greek usage (including the LXX). As in the modern equivalent, the sense of 'boast' could have a negative force (boast without due cause, boast in an unworthy object); but it could also signify a justifiable boast (cf., e.g., Ps 49:6 [LXX 48:7] with 149:5 and Sir 11:4 with 30:2). In the NT it is an almost exclusively Pauline word (35 out of 37 occurrences are in the Pauline corpus). For this particular boast of the typical Jew see Deut 10:21; Pss 5:11 [LXX 12]; 89:17 [LXX 88:18]; Jer 9:23–24; Sir 50:20; Pss. Sol. 17:1. Paul of course makes no (implied) criticism of boasting in God. On the contrary, he makes such boasts himself (5:11; 1 Cor 1:31 and 2 Cor 10:17 both citing Jer 9:23). From the context, however, the implication is that such Jewish boasting tends to be nationalistically exclusive: Jewish boasting in God as theirs alone (cf. 3:27–29). Hence it gathers (by implication) the more negative force which Paul uses in criticizing a boasting based on outward evaluation and physical relationship (2 Cor 5:12; 11:18; Gal 6:13; Phil 3:3). Bultmann's understanding of this boasting as 'self-confidence' (TDNT 3:648–49; also NT Theology 1:243) over individualizes the concept and fails to appreciate the nationalistic character of the 'boasting' envisaged here." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 110–111.]

¹²⁵"The sense of καυχᾶσθαι is 'to boast,' usually in a bad sense, which also attaches to καύχημα and καύχησις. If there are occasions for the expression of legitimate pride, to Greek sensibility too loud a trumpeting of one's own renown is a violation of → αἰδώς and the sign of an ἀνελεύθερος.³ Warning against self-glory, and the ridiculing of it, are common themes in popular philosophers and satirists, though we usually find ἐπαινεῖν ἑαυτὸν or ἀλαζονεύεσθαι rather than καυχᾶσθαι. Theophr. Char., 23 describes the ἀλαζών, who is typified in the miles gloriosus of Plautus.⁴ Plut. wrote a whole treatise Περί τοῦ ἑαυτὸν ἐπαινεῖν ἀνεπιφθόνως (*Qua quis*



being superior with their claim to know God would not have been acceptable even to the pagans in Rome who knew Christians in the house church groups.

Closely related to boasting is the claim καὶ γινώσκεις τὸ θέλημα, and know His will. The pivotal importance of knowing God's will is asserted by Paul in 1:10 and 15:32, along with 12:1-2. His entire life was guided and framed by his perception of God's will as the source of direction and ministry.

What the apostle has in mind here in 2:18 is more clearly seen in:

Baruch 4:4, Happy are we, O Israel, for we know what is pleasing to God.

Wisdom of Solomon 15:2-3, 2 For even if we sin we are yours, knowing your power; but we will not sin, because we know that you acknowledge us as yours. 3 For to know you is complete righteousness, and to know your power is the root of immortality.

The frequent Jewish arrogant claim was to know God's will fully through mere possession of the Law of God.¹²⁶

The key question then is grasping the will of God. As Rom. 1:10-15 makes very clear, understanding God's will is not simple nor easily achieved. Coming to such an understanding of God's leading begins with prayer as Rom. 15:30-32 makes clear. Critical to its discovery is unconditional surrender to God's leadership, as Rom. 12:1-2 makes clear. Also in the same text, discovery of God's leadership is a continuing discovery contingent upon transformation of our thinking and understanding of life.

Paul's Jewish elitist being condemned here in 2:18 is typical of many who superficially and falsely

ratione se ipsa sine invidia laudet, II, 539 ff.).⁵ Warning ἐπὶ ῥώμῃ μὴ καυχῶ is among the ὑποθήκαι of the sage, Sosiades (Stob. Ecl., III, 127, 9), and it occurs among other hortatory sayings in the Delphicorum praeceptorum titulus Miletopolitanus (Ditt. Syll.3, 1268, 23)." [Rudolf Bultmann, "Καυχάομαι, Καύχημα, Καύχησις, Ἐγκανχάομαι, Κατακαυχάομαι," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:646.]

¹²⁶"καὶ γινώσκεις τὸ θέλημα, 'and you know the will (of God), or his will.' The absolute use of 'the will' = God's will reflects Jewish usage (Michel). Knowing what God wanted of his people was naturally a matter of concern in Jewish piety, though not so frequently expressed in just these terms (cf. Pss 40:8; 143:10; T. Iss. 4:3). The attitude Paul has in mind is most clearly expressed in 2 Macc 1:3–4. Again Paul makes no criticism of the desire to do God's will; on the contrary, that is fundamental for him too (cf. 1:10 and 15:32). What he sets his sights on is rather the too easy assumption of a privileged knowledge by virtue of being instructed in the law (v 18c; cf. Bar 4:4—"Happy are we, Israel, because we know what is pleasing to God"; Wisd Sol 15:2–3; 4 Ezra 8:12, whereas for Paul such knowledge is possible only at a deeper level, through a transformed mind (12:2)." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 111.]

assumed that having access to the Law provided one with all that was required for knowing God's will. The apostle knocks that down bluntly.

καὶ δοκιμάζεις τὰ διαφέροντα κατηχούμενος ἐκ τοῦ νόμου, πέποιθὰς τε σεαυτὸν ὀδηγὸν εἶναι τυφλῶν, φῶς τῶν ἐν σκότει, παιδευτὴν ἀφρόνων, διδάσκαλον νηπίων, ἔχοντα τὴν μὀρφωσιν τῆς γνώσεως καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐν τῷ νόμῳ. This final pair of accusations provides the clearest picture of where the apostle has been headed in this string of accusations that flesh out the scenario of the Jewish elitist being targeted. They provide important backdrop for proper understanding of the first four accusations in vv. 17-18a.

First, καὶ δοκιμάζεις τὰ διαφέροντα κατηχούμενος ἐκ τοῦ νόμου, and you test out the things that matter by being instructed out of the Law. The exact expression is used by Paul in Phil. 1:10-11 in a positive sense: εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς τὰ διαφέροντα, in order for you to test out the things that matter. This is part of the apostle's intercessory prayer for the Philippians as they anticipate Judgment Day. Determining what matters enables them ἵνα ἦτε εἰλικρινεῖς καὶ ἀπρόσκοποι εἰς ἡμέραν Χριστοῦ, πεπληρωμένοι καρπὸν δικαιοσύνης τὸν διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς δόξαν καὶ ἔπαινον θεοῦ, so that you may be pure and blameless on the Day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.

The expression is very Jewish and denotes important insight into discovering God's leadership from the ancient Jewish perspective. The verb δοκιμάζω denotes both a critical examination for determining genuineness along with drawing a conclusion of genuineness.¹²⁷ We

¹²⁷"a. In the NT the verb διαφέρω is used lit. for 'to carry through' ... ἵνα τις διενέγκῃ σκευὸς διὰ τοῦ ἱεροῦ, Mk. 11:16: 'to drift hither and thither' διαφερομένων ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ Ἀδρίᾳ, Ac. 27:27, and in the pass. intr. for the 'spreading' of the λόγος κυρίου, Ac. 13:49. The transf. sense 'to differentiate oneself' occurs in 1 C. 15:41 and as 'to be better than, superior' in dominical sayings from Q: μᾶλλον διαφέρετε αὐτῶν, Mt. 6:26 and par., πολλῶν στρουθίων διαφέρετε ὑμεῖς Mt. 10:31 and par., and the argument πόσῳ οὖν διαφέρει ἄνθρωπος προβάτου, which is found only in Mt. 12:12. The impers. οὐδέν μοι διαφέρει 'it is of no account to me' is used by Paul in Gl. 2:6 with ref. to the δοκοῦντες in Jerusalem (→ II, 233, 24 ff.) in order to stress that the authority of his apostolic commission and work does not derive from them.

"b. The part as noun is used by Paul at R. 2:18 and Phil. 1:10 in the expression δοκιμάζω (→ II, 260, 1 ff.) τὰ διαφέροντα and denotes the ascertaining of what is essential for the Jew and the Christian,⁶ whether in the Law and in conduct faithful thereto on the one side, or for walking in the love of Christ on the other. As R. 2:18 suggests, this term, which was current in ordinary Hell. speech,⁷ had already found its way into the Hell. synagogue, and meant there much the same as what the νομικός (Mt. 22:36) had in view in his question about the great commandment.

c. When Paul tells the Roman community (R. 12:6) that the χαρίσματα it possesses are διάφορα, the sense he has in mind is



have no English verb with both these senses, thus you will see “test” and “prove” used for emphasizing one or the other of these two aspects. What is being sought in the testing process is τὰ διαφέροντα, *what matters*. Its opposite τὰ ἀδιάφορα functioned as a technical code term in both the philosophies of the Cynics and Stoics of Paul’s time.¹²⁸ These items lay somewhere in the ter-

ritory between good and bad with the philosopher only able to reference them but not evaluate them. Often they pertained to issues, actions etc. having no ethical or moral nature.

simply that of 'manifold' and not of 'outstanding' or 'superior,' for, as the preceding verses show, his concern here as in 1 C. 12 is to check any disparagement of members of the community endowed with less prominent charismata. The word has a distinctly pejorative sense in the expression διάφοροι βαπτισμοί (Hb. 9:10); this is used to describe the practices of the Levitical cult, which are ineffectual in all their multiplicity. But the very same book can use the rare comparative of the word to express the superiority of Christ, to whom is ascribed an ὄνομα διαφορώτερον παρ’ ἀγγέλους (1:4) and who in contrast to the ministry of the Levitical priesthood διαφορωτέρας τέτυχεν λειτουργίας (8:6).

[Konrad Weiss, “Φέρω, Αναφέρω, Διαφέρω, Τὰ Διαφέροντα, Διάφορος (ἀδιάφορον), Εἰσφέρω, Προσφέρω, Προσφορά, Συμφέρω, Σύμφορος, Φόρος, Φορέω, Φορτίον, Φορτίζω,” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 9:63–64.]

¹²⁸a. Of the many meanings the verb διαφέρω can have when taken lit., only the following need be noted in relation to the NT: 'to transmit,' 'to carry through,' Thuc., VIII, 8, 3, 'to spread' news κηρύγματα, Eur. Suppl., 382, ἀγγελίας, Luc. Dial. deorum, 24, 1, and later 'to drive a ship back and forth,' Philo Migr. Abr., 148; Luc. Hermet., 28. Intr. διαφέρω has the transf. sense 'to differentiate oneself,' Eur. Or., 251; Thuc., V, 86 etc. The difference may be either positive or negative, i.e., 'to excel,' 'to stand out,' 'to be more,' Thuc., II, 39, 1; Plat. Ap., 35a b or 'to be less,' 'to fall behind,' Xenoph. Vect., 4, 25. Similarly the impers. διαφέρει means 'it makes a difference,' 'it matters,' Hippocr. Aphorismi, 5, 22 (Littré, IV, 538) etc. and 'it is important,' Gal. Comm. on Hippocr. Acut., I, 2, 7 (CMG, V, 9, 1, p. 118, 12; 122, 15), both also with ref. to a specific person: 'it matters (or does not matter) to me,' Plat. Prot., 316b; La., 187d, 'it is of interest to me,' Eur. Tro., 1248; Thuc., III, 42, 2.

"b. The part. as noun can also mean 'difference,' 'mark of difference,' Thuc., I, 70, 1; Plat. Phileb., 45d, and then 'what is useful,' Antiph. Fr., 31, 'interests,' Thuc., VI, 92, 5, 1 'what is important or significant' σφόδρα διαφέροντα, Plut. Adulat., 35 (II, 73a); cf. τὸ διαφέρον μέρος P. Oxy., 1204, II (299 A.D.).

"c. The same applies to the adj. διάφορος. It means 'different,' 'unlike,' Hdt., II, 83; IV, 81, 1; Plat. Leg., XII, 964a etc. and later 'varied,' 'manifold,'¹² but also negatively 'unwelcome,' 'displeasing,' Plat. Leg., VIII, 843c, and more often positively 'outstanding,' 'distinguished,' Antiph. Fr., 175, 3 and 'useful,' 'advantageous,' with μᾶλλον in Thuc., IV, 3, 3; πρὸς σωτηρίαν διάφορος, Plat. Leg., VI, 779b. τὸ διάφορον means "interest" in P. Oxy., VII, 1040, 10 (225 A.D.); 1041, 9 (381 A.D.); 1042, 28 (578 A.D.) etc.

"d. The negated form of the adj. is of special significance in Aristotelian logic and Cynic-Stoic ethics. By ἀδιάφορον Aristot. means the unity and integrity of a substance as this may be seen in the outward form of a thing ἐν λέγεται τῷ τὸ ὑποκείμενον τῷ εἶδει εἶναι ἀδιάφορον. ἀδιάφορα δ’ ὧν ἀδιαίρετον τὸ εἶδος κατὰ τὴν αἴσθησιν, Metaph., 5, 6, p. 1016a, 17 ff. and also the similarity of individuals belonging to a species (→ II, 373, 28 ff.): (ταῦτόν) εἶδει ὅσα πλείω ὄντα ἀδιάφορα κατὰ τὸ εἶδος ἐστί, καθάπερ

ἀνθρωπος ἀνθρώπῳ καὶ ἵππος ἵππῳ, Top., I, 7, p. 103a, 10 f.; cf. IV, 1, p. 121b, 15 ff. *The Cynics and Stoics call ἀδιάφορον the middle sphere between virtue and vice and the related goods and evils. It is that which the philosopher cannot call good or bad but only ethically indifferent.* Thus the Cynics: τὰ δὲ μεταξύ ἀρετῆς καὶ κακίας ἀδιάφορα λέγουσιν ὁμοίως Ἀρίστωνι τῷ Χίῳ, Diog. L., VI, 9, 105, of whom we read: τέλος ἔφησεν εἶναι τὸ ἀδιαφόρως ἔχοντα ζῆν πρὸς τὰ μεταξύ ἀρετῆς καὶ κακίας μηδ’ ἠντιοῦν ἐν αὐτοῖς παραλλαγὴν ἀπολείποντα, ἀλλ’ ἐπίσης ἐπὶ πάντων ἔχοντα, VII, 2, 160, and Zeno: ἀγαθὰ μὲν ... πᾶν ὃ ἐστὶν ἀρετὴ ἢ μετέχον ἀρετῆς: κακὰ δὲ ... πᾶν ὃ ἐστὶ κακία ἢ μετέχον κακίας, ἀδιάφορα δὲ τὰ τοιαῦτα: ζοῆν θάνατον, δόξαν ἀδοξίαν, ἡδονὴν πόνον, πλοῦτον πενίαν, ὑγίειαν νόσον καὶ τὰ τούτοις ὅμοια, Stob. Ecl., II, 57, 20 ff.; *Zeno censuit voluptatem esse indifferens, id est neutrum, neque bonum neque mature, quod ipse Graeco vocabulo ἀδιάφορον appellavit, Gellius Noctes Atticae, 9, 5, 5.*³¹

[Konrad Weiss, “Φέρω, Αναφέρω, Διαφέρω, Τὰ Διαφέροντα, Διάφορος (ἀδιάφορον), Εἰσφέρω, Προσφέρω, Προσφορά, Συμφέρω, Σύμφορος, Φόρος, Φορέω, Φορτίον, Φορτίζω,” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 9:62. Italics mine.]

¹²⁹The life of the Christian is set under the searching eyes of God, and ethics is determined by the concept of accreditation. In this connexion the NT introduces a special use of the verb δοκιμάζειν. Christians are summoned to a twofold testing, a. They are to test or prove what is the will of God. If they are to be approved, they must do the will of God. But to do it, they must know it by testing. In the new positing of human existence in faith, Christians are enabled to know the will of God: μεταμορφοῦσθε τῇ ἀνακαινώσει τοῦ νοός, εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς τί τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ ..., R. 12:2.¹⁹ They thus have a duty to do so. Hence the prayer of Paul: εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς τὰ διαφέροντα, ἵνα ἦτε εἰλικρινεῖς καὶ ἀπρόσκοποι εἰς ἡμέραν Χριστοῦ, Phil. 1:10. τὰ διαφέροντα is that which is fitting in a given situation. The rule of the Christian life is: ὡς τέκνα φωτὸς περιπατεῖτε ..., δοκιμάζοντες τί ἐστὶν εὐάρεστον τῷ κυρίῳ, Eph. 5:9 f. Or again, there is the general rule: πάντα δὲ δοκιμάζετε, τὸ καλὸν κατέχετε, 1 Th. 5:21. This preserves their actions from meaningless caprice and brings them under the seriousness of the will of God. John demands that Christians should test the different phenomena of religious life: δοκιμάζετε τὰ πνεύματα, 1 Jn. 4:1. b. At the same time, however, Christians are summoned to a test of their own accreditation: ἑαυτοὺς δοκιμάζετε, 2 C. 13:5; cf. Gl. 6:4. In virtue of the immediate presence of Christ in the Lord’s Supper, the Corinthians who celebrate it in an undisciplined and unworthy manner are challenged: δοκιμαζέτω δὲ ἄνθρωπος ἑαυτόν, καὶ οὕτως ἐκ τοῦ ἄρτου ἐσθιέτω καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ποτηρίου πινέτω, 1 C. 11:28. Christ cannot be approached in a careless and disorderly way.²⁰ c. In addition, Jesus demands that we should test the times, and He reproaches the Pharisees for not paying regard to the progress of history under the divine direction: τὸ πρόσωπον τῆς γῆς καὶ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ οἴδατε δοκιμάζειν, τὸν καιρὸν δὲ τοῦτον πῶς οὐ δοκιμάζετε; Lk. 12:56.

διαφέροντα the apostle alludes to determining the essentials of God's will verses those things largely irrelevant to God's will.

Crucial is how this testing is done. For the Jewish elitist it is by *κατηχούμενος ἐκ τοῦ νόμου, being instructed out of the Law.*¹³⁰ This stands over against being taught the Gospel, i.e., the Word: *Κοινωνεῖτω δὲ ὁ κατηχούμενος τὸν λόγον τῷ κατηχοῦντι ἐν πᾶσιν ἀγαθοῖς, Let the one being taught the Word share with the teacher in all good things* (Gal. 6:6). The elitist appealed to possessing the Torah of God and having learned its meaning, as the last trait in vv. 19-20 (below) amplify. He could debate with anyone his superior knowledge of the Torah, and thus of the will of God.¹³¹ Whether he lived by what he

"4. One passage claims special attention. At the conclusion of the parable of the wicked husbandmen, Jesus quotes ψ 117:22 f.: λίθον ὃν ἀπεδοκίμασαν οἱ οἰκοδομοῦντες, οὗτος ἐγενήθη εἰς κεφαλὴν γωνίας, Mt. 21:42 and par.²¹ Jesus applies this to Himself. He is the corner-stone which the builders have rejected but which has become the key-stone, cf. Mk. 8:31; Lk. 9:22; 17:25. These sayings are taken up again in 1 Pt. 2:4, 7. The Christian elected by God is subjected to the testing wisdom and insight of men. This is what exposes the final basis of the Corinthian error. This is the basis of the situation of Christians in θλιψίς and of the manner of their attestation. This is what makes it clear that the attestation of Christians is taken out of all the categories of human judgment and is a matter for God alone."

[Walter Grundmann, "Δόκιμος, Ἀδόκιμος, Δοκίμη, Δοκίμιον, Δοκιμάζω, Ἀποδοκιμάζω, Δοκιμασία," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 2:260.]

¹³⁰"κατηχούμενος ἐκ τοῦ νόμου, 'being instructed from the law.' The phrase probably goes with both preceding phrases (Cranfield). *κατηχέω* had not long become current (BGD), but its sense is already clearly established as 'instruct, teach.' Paul uses it in this sense, particularly for religious instruction, in 1 Cor 14:19 and Gal 6:6 (cf. Acts 18:25), from which comes the English transliteration 'catechesis' (Käsemann is confident that the verb denoted 'the fixed catechetical traditions of Judaism'). The phrase characterizes well the Jewish sense of dependence for their knowledge of God's will and conduct of life both on their instruction in the law as children and in the weekly reading from the law in the synagogue (cf. Josephus, Ap. 2:183). The *ἐκ τοῦ νόμου* probably has something of the same force which we find in 4:14, 16; it is precisely the completeness of the identification between law and people which Paul has reacted against." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 111.]

¹³¹Jewish pedagogy of young boys was centered on instructing them on Torah. The teacher read or cited from memory a portion and asked the boys, What does this mean? Each boy would adopt an opinion on its meaning and vocalize it back to the teacher. Then the teacher would vigorously challenge each opinion to which each boy would have to respond by vigorously defending his viewpoint. This might be done by analyzing the Hebrew text with a verbal explanation in the Aramaic used by the group. More often the student's defense would rest on citation of the interpretation given by a well known Jewish scribe. Usually a defense pointed out the deficiencies of the views of his class mates. Also numerous oth-

knew is another issue. Paul will accuse him of not practicing what he claims to know in the rhetorical questions coming out of this portrait (cf. vv. 21-24).

If this elitist had properly approached the Law of Moses, he could have learned how to obey God genuinely. But such was not the case. Instead the skills in understanding God's law turned into arrogance and elitism for this fellow. He miserably failed to learn τὰ διαφέροντα, even though he claimed to have.

Second, πέποιθάς τε σεαυτὸν ὄδηγόν εἶναι τυφλῶν, φῶς τῶν ἐν σκότει, παιδευτὴν ἀφρόνων, διδάσκαλον νηπίων, ἔχοντα τὴν μόρφωσιν τῆς γνώσεως καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐν τῷ νόμῳ. and you convince yourself that you are a leader of blind folks, a light to those in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children since you have a form of knowledge and truth in the Law. Here the double accusative objects of certain verbs in ancient Greek play a critical role in Paul's elaboration of his point.

πέποιθάς σεαυτὸν

ὄδηγόν εἶναι τυφλῶν,
φῶς τῶν ἐν σκότει,
παιδευτὴν ἀφρόνων,
διδάσκαλον νηπίων,

ἔχοντα τὴν μόρφωσιν

| τῆς γνώσεως

| καὶ

| τῆς ἀληθείας

ἐν τῷ νόμῳ.

The direct object is *σεαυτὸν, yourself*, that is followed by **four predicate objects**. The sense then is 'you have convinced yourself to be a guide..., a light..., an instructor..., and a teacher...'. Note the inner connectedness of these four predicate objects. The elitist wasn't interested in becoming an 'obeyer' of Law. Rather, he put himself in front of and above others in matters of the Law. This final trait identifies the motivation behind the Jewish elitist's handling of the Law of Moses.

The common assumption underneath all four predicate objects is that of a superior knowledge of the Law that enables him to inform others about what it says. The participle phrase at the end (v. 20b) introduced with *ἔχοντα* asserts this false elitist assumption but from a negative critique of what the elitist actually possesses.

er argumentative strategies could be employed. Usually the boys who made the best and most persuasive case for their views were given affirmation by the teacher.

To be sure, such methodology promoted arrogance and pride among the boys who best developed their skills. This essential teaching method prevailed through all four educational levels of ancient Judaism with the last two leading to becoming a scribe among one of the many associations of the Pharisees. In these two final levels the debate skills would be especially stressed.



He isn't nearly as smart as he thinks he is.

πέποιθάς τε σεαυτὸν. The core verb with the reflexive pronoun direct object continue the second person designation of the Jewish elitist.

The fascinating Greek verb πείθω is frequent in the NT with 51 uses, but not so much with Paul in Romans with only 4 of these uses: 2:19; 8:38; 14:14; 15:14. Interestingly the NRSV uses a completely different English word for each of these uses of πείθω. It has one broad track of meaning in all tenses but the Perfect and Plu-perfect tense which follow a different track of meaning. The active voice with the present (πείθω) et als tenses connotes the idea of persuading someone to adopt a specific viewpoint. But the perfect (πέποιθα) and plu-perfect tense usage denotes the idea of being so persuaded that one puts high confidence in a viewpoint or person. This plays off well when the verb is flipped over to the passive voice. In the present πείθομαι et als tenses the passive voice signals being won over by being persuaded. Commitment becomes dominant. But the perfect passive voice πέπεισμαι indicates huge certainty in reference to something.

Paul's use of the perfect tense active voice πέποιθάς signals that the elitist is fully convinced of his superiority.¹³² He has sold himself a bill of goods lock, stock, and barrel! Most likely some satire stands behind Paul's depiction here. As a Pharisee in his pre-Christian days, the apostle himself would have claimed what the elitist claims here. Humility and submissiveness to God were not highly prized traits for these kinds of Jews.

ὁδηγὸν εἶναι τυφλῶν. The elitist is completely convinced that he is qualified to be a leader of the blind. The satire emerges here with the noun ὁδηγός being one of the stinging criticisms of the Pharisees by Jesus (cf. Mt. 15:14; 23:16, 24) out of a total of 5 NT uses. Note τυφλοὶ εἰσιν ὁδηγοὶ τυφλῶν, **they are blind guides of the blind** (Mt. 15:14); ὁδηγοὶ τυφλοὶ, **blind guides** (Mt. 23:16, 24). These Pharisee elitists were fully convinced of their superior knowledge of the Torah which enabled them supposedly to guide the Jews blind in regard to the Law into correct understanding of it. The six woes pronounced by Jesus upon them (Οὐαὶ ὑμῖν) invokes the wrath of God in eternal damnation upon these elitists (Mt. 23). No stronger and blunter denunciation of any group of people than here exists anywhere in the remainder of the Christian Bible.

A certain level of code phrase exists both with ὁδηγὸν τυφλῶν, and φῶς τῶν ἐν σκότει. In Isa. 42:6-7 the **Servant of the Lord** is commissioned by God:

¹³²His use of the active voice verb with the reflexive pronoun πέποιθάς σεαυτὸν, rather than the middle voice verb spelling, not only is clearer but allows for the four double accusative predicate objects to more easily be attached to the stated direct object σεαυτὸν.

- 6 I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness,
I have taken you by the hand and kept you;
I have given you as a covenant to the people,
a light to the nations,
7 **to open the eyes that are blind,**
to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,
from the prison those who sit in darkness.
- 6 ἐγὼ κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἐκάλεσά σε ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ
καὶ κρατήσω τῆς χειρὸς σου καὶ ἐνισχύσω σε
καὶ ἔδωκά σε εἰς διαθήκην γένους,
εἰς **φῶς ἐθνῶν**†
- 7 **ἀνοίξει ὀφθαλμοὺς τυφλῶν,**
ἐξαγαγεῖν ἐκ δεσμῶν δεδεμένους
καὶ ἐξ οἴκου φυλακῆς
καθημένους ἐν σκότει.†

This background injects a national mission of the Jewish people to the rest of the world, i.e., the Gentiles. They were to be a light and a guide.¹³³ But elitism prevented them from fulfilling this divine mandate. To be sure, the apostle saw Jesus as the culmination of that mission and his own apostolic ministry to Gentiles as helping fulfill that divine mandate given by Isaiah centuries before.

But the Jewish elitist here was only interested in superior status, not in any obligation to the non-Jewish world. One would need to acknowledge, however, that Diaspora Judaism was substantially more mission oriented than the Hebraistic Jews back home in Judea. The presence of non-Jewish worshippers in the Diaspora synagogues in contrast to those in Judea, attests to this interest. But as Paul's experience in the synagogues of Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia suggests in Luke's narrative in Acts, the Jewish interest in non-Jews was both economically and politically motivated much more than religiously motivated. When Paul's preaching of the Gospel in those assemblies signaled full status and blessing from God by following Christ, Gentiles enthusiastically shifted away from Torah focus to Christian focus. The very hostile Jewish reaction to losing the inflexional non-Jewish locals signaled hugely threatening losses for them both politically and economically.

φῶς τῶν ἐν σκότει. The image of being a light here

¹³³And such a Jewish self-consciousness appears in a number of writings of Second Temple Judaism — as, for example, in 1 En 105:1: "In those days, he says, 'The Lord will be patient and cause the children of the earth to hear. Reveal it to them with your wisdom, for you are their guides.'" ²²⁸It is also echoed, though in quite an adverse manner, in the characterization of Jews in Matt 15:14; 23:16, 24." [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 302.]

stresses being a source for understanding God to those who do not know Him. Not only is this emphasis for the Jewish people found in Isa. 42:6-7 but numerous other OT passages stress the critical role of being a light to others.¹³⁴ To be sure, most of the Jews in Paul's day saw in the image of being a light to the world the privilege of having been given the Torah for their own enlightenment, as read from Psalm 119:105 (LXX 118:105), Λύχνος τοῖς ποσίμ μου ὁ λόγος σου καὶ φῶς ταῖς τρίβοις μου.† **Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.** The paganism of the Gentile world meant that God withheld His light from the Gentiles, as is reflected in Wisdom of Solomon 18:4,

ἄξιοι μὲν γὰρ ἐκεῖνοι στερηθῆναι φωτὸς καὶ φυλακισθῆναι σκότει οἱ κατακλείστους φυλάξαντες τοὺς υἱούς σου, δὲ ὧν ἤμελλεν τὸ ἄφθαρτον νόμου φῶς τῷ αἰῶνι δίδοσθαι.†

For their enemies deserved to be deprived of light and imprisoned in darkness, those who had kept your children imprisoned, through whom the imperishable light of the law was to be given to the world.

This view stands behind the Jewish elitist whom Paul criticizes in Rom. 2:17-29. The Torah was God's light primarily for Israel. If some isolated Gentile came to his senses and turned toward Torah obedience, then he would be accepted into a secondary status among the Jews. But the illuminating aspect of light was for instruction of Jews by Jews who possessed superior knowledge of the light, i.e., the Torah.

Although existing in darkness, τῶν ἐν σκότει, would logically reference the Gentiles cut off from God's revelation given to Israel, at least the Pharisees turned the image of darkness toward Jews living in ignorance of the Law. Gentiles were in darkness to be sure, but they were beyond the interest of the Pharisees for recruiting followers and supporters, as Jesus' denunciation of them makes so clear in Matthew 23. Instruction in Law by the Pharisees targeted only the Jews. Paul's critique of the Jewish elitist in Rome makes the same assumption about the elitist's interest as well. If any interest in

¹³⁴"φῶς τῶν ἐν σκότει, 'a light to those in darkness.' cf. Isa 42:6-7: φῶς ἐθνῶν ... ἐν σκότει; 49:6. The light which Israel had been given is characteristically and quite naturally thought of as the law: Ps 119:105—'a light to my path'; Wisd Sol 18:4—'your sons ... through whom the imperishable light of the law is given to the world'; Sir 24:27—the law 'makes instruction shine forth like light'; 45:17—'to enlighten Israel with his law'; T. Lev. 14.4—'the light of the Law'; IQSb 4.27; Ps-Philo, Lib. Ant. 23.10; see further Wilckens 1:148-49 and n. 382; and on 13:12. None of these phrases necessarily implies an actively outgoing missionary concern (despite e.g., Bassler, Divine Impartiality, 150), more a sense of superior privilege (see Introduction §5.3.2) and readiness to accept those who acknowledge their blindness and come for light and teaching." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 112.]

Gentiles would be manifested by Jews, it would come only at the end of time, according to 1 Enoch 105.1.

παιδευτὴν ἀφρόνων. Quite obviously this trait and the next one are closely linked with the instruction motif connecting them.¹³⁵ The difference between a παιδευτής¹³⁶ and a διδάσκαλος¹³⁷ would be slight yet important. The παιδευτής emphasized forced obedience to a code of conduct whereas the διδάσκαλος taught a wide variety of topics beyond just conduct. Note the emphasis of Psalms of Solomon 8:29 on the disciplining quality of God as Israel's παιδευτής:

καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐσκληρύναμεν τὸν τράχηλον ἡμῶν, καὶ **σὺ παιδευτὴς ἡμῶν εἶ.** **And (though) we have stiffened our neck, yet You are our chastener.**

The noun ἀφρόνων, from ἄφρων,¹³⁸ denotes those

¹³⁵"These phrases are less easy to parallel from contemporary Jewish literature (though cf. Hos 5:2; Sir 37:19; Pss. Sol. 8:29; 4 Macc 5:34). But the conviction of having received insight into the divine mysteries and responsibility for giving instruction in them is clearly evident in the Qumran scrolls (IQS 3.13; 8.11-12; 9.12-21; IQH 2.13; 4.27-29; IQpHab 7.4-5; see also on 11.25), and in the wisdom tradition there is something of a similar distinction between the self-consciously wise and the νήπιοι (Prov 1:22; 16:22; Wisd Sol 10:21; 12:24; 15:14; IQH 2:9; cf. Matt 11:25 // Luke 10:21 where Jesus is remembered as countering a similar attitude). The two phrases are almost synonymous, the structural pairing (see Form and Structure) here producing a degree of redundancy. But παιδευτής may also have the overtone of 'corrector,' as in its only other NT use (Heb 12:9)." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 112-113.]

¹³⁶Note the related words: παιδεύω, † παιδεία, † παιδευτής, † ἀπαιδευτος, † παιδαγωγός [Georg Bertram, "Παιδεύω, Παιδεία, Παιδευτής, Ἀπαιδευτος, Παιδαγωγός," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 5:596.]

¹³⁷Also related: διδάσκω, διδάσκαλος, νομοδιδάσκαλος, καλοδιδάσκαλος, ψευδοδιδάσκαλος, διδασκαλία, ἑτεροδιδασκαλέω, διδαχή, διδακτός, διδακτικός [Karl Heinrich Rengstorff, "Διδάσκω, Διδάσκαλος, Νομοδιδάσκαλος, Καλοδιδάσκαλος, Ψευδοδιδάσκαλος, Διδασκαλία, ἑτεροδιδασκαλέω, Διδαχή, Διδακτός, Διδακτικός," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 2:135.]

¹³⁸**ἄφρων, ον**, gen. **ονος** (s. φρήν; Hom.+; PFay 124, 12; LXX; En; TestJob 26:6; JosAs 6:6f; GrBar 13:3; Philo; Jos., Bell. 1, 630; 2, 303; Ar. 12, 1) **pert. to lack of prudence or good judgment, foolish, ignorant** (opp. φρόνιμος as Dio Chrys. 73 [23], 3; Pr 11:29; En 98:1, 9; PsSol 16:7; Philo, Poster. Cai. 32) 2 Cor 11:19; 1 Cl 3:3; (w. ἀνόητος) 21:5; (w. ἀσύνητος as Ps 91:7) 39:1; voc. Hm 12, 4, 2—**Lk 11:40; 12:20; Ro 2:20; 1 Cor 15:36; 2 Cor 11:16; 12:6, 11; Eph 5:17; 1 Pt 2:15**; 1 Cl 39:7f (Job 5:2, 3); ITr 8:2; Hm 4, 2, 1; 5, 2, 2; 4; 6, 2, 4; 11:4; Hs 1:3; 6, 4, 3; 6, 5, 2; 9, 14, 4; 9, 22, 2.—DELG s.v. φρήν. EDNT. M-M. TW.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 159.]



who lack good judgment or prudence. Its opposite in ancient Greek was φρόνιμος. The core idea is similar to the modern English idiom of “having / not having one’s act together.” Is this a pejorative reference to Gentiles here? Many commentators take it as such, but the NT use of ἄφρων elsewhere in the 11 uses does not reflect such ethnic bias. Elsewhere it mainly denotes ignorance of God’s will that leads to bad judgment.

The elitist considering himself to be a παιδευτήν ἀφρόνων simply sees himself as superior in his knowledge of the Torah so that he can correct those who don’t understand it and thus don’t make good decisions about living it. Any tones of ethnic prejudice against Gentiles in either noun would be hard to justify here.

διδάσκαλον νηπίων. The figurative image of a child inside the NT can go either positive or negative. For Jesus, the νήπιος, -ία, -ιον represents innocent trust which God honors in the life of His people: Mt. 11:25; 21:16; Lk. 10:21. Paul, on the other hand, uses the image negatively to specify lack of knowledge of God’s will long after one should have matured into spiritual adulthood: 1 Cor. 3:1; 13:11 (4x); Eph. 4:14; Gal. 4:1, 3.

The negative implication of νηπίων here in regard to the Jewish elitist would consistently go with Paul’s other usage to imply lack of understanding long after it should have been acquired. But for the elitist his role as διδάσκαλον νηπίων is to inform ignorant Jews of the will of God as found in his superior interpretation of Torah. Yet, contextually he is not necessary doing any teaching, just qualified to do so due to his superior knowledge of Torah.

ἔχοντα τὴν μόρφωσιν τῆς γνώσεως καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐν τῷ νόμῳ. This participle phrase is linked to the accusative of predicate objects ὁδηγόν, φῶς, παιδευτήν, and διδάσκαλον via the accusative masculine ending attached to ἔχοντα. This connection ultimately reaches back to the direct object σεαυτὸν. The elitist’s arrogant superiority grows out of what he possesses, which is spelled out in the direct object of the participle: τὴν μόρφωσιν τῆς γνώσεως καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας. The language of Paul here has satire in it since what he actually possesses wouldn’t qualify him to do any of the four things he thinks he can do. This statement is the acid test of the hypocrisy of the elitist.

What the elitist actually possesses is τὴν μόρφωσιν τῆς γνώσεως καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας. The precise intention of μόρφωσις is difficult to determine with clear certainty. Its other NT use in 2 Tim. 3:5 is clear: ἔχοντες μόρφωσιν εὐσεβείας τὴν δὲ δύναμιν αὐτῆς ἡρνημένοι, **holding to a form of piety but denying its power.** False Christians will possess a mask of Christianity that gives appearance

of Christian commitment, but the reality is that inwardly it is empty and void of God’s enabling presence.

The sense of μόρφωσις here in 2:19 probably should be taken along similar lines as well. In secular Greek μόρφωσις could designate the outward shape or form of things such as trees for example. This could be understood either as the process of establishing the shape (the forming of a tree) or the result of the process (the form of a tree). It is closely related to μορφή which is used twice in Phil. 2:6-7 to reference Christ as being in the form of God but who took on the form of a slave in the incarnation. Here the inner reality is reflected in the outward appearance. Although similar to μόρφωσις, the noun μορφή has a slightly different thrust in its NT use.

In the Greek philosophical shaping of the meaning of the word group,¹³⁹ the term μορφή at its core meaning was very similar to εἶδος, ιδέα, and σχῆμα, which also stressed outward appearance, just from differing vantage points. For example, εἶδος could designate a human form as a man (category), while μορφή would designate this same form as a distinct individual (unique person). Also, the similarity is evident in the similarity between a living person and a corpse (μορφή τοῦ σχήματος). The μορφή is the connecting link between the two. The Jewish philosopher Philo spoke of Adam’s body formed from dust as ἀνθρωπεῖα μορφή, in which μορφή signifies the body as human in form and distinct from dust (Migr. Abr., 3; Op. Mund., 135).

In the philosophical literature μορφή and μόρφωσις are often pretty much interchangeable with a single meaning of specifying outward form or shape. But distinct angles are maintained between the two words.

Thus Paul’s use of μόρφωσις here in 2:19 with the two genitive (of place) case modifying nouns τῆς γνώσεως καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας generate the sense of a shape or form connoting knowledge and truth. With the adverbial modifying role of ἐν τῷ νόμῳ specifying the place of this possession of μόρφωσις as being in the Law, what the elitist assumed he possessed was knowledge and truth that took on concrete form or expression in the Torah of God. Taking hold of the book of the law of God meant that he held in his hands God’s knowledge and truth. This was the ultimate source of pride for such a Jew.

Interestingly, Paul’s assessment of the Law of God is very different as is reflected in 7:7ff.; 3:31; 9:4; 13:8, et als. It was an important path to discovering God’s will, **but itself was not** that divine will per se. To so elevate it

¹³⁹μορφή, μορφώω, μόρφωσις, μεταμορφώω → σύμμορφος, συμμορφίζω, συμμορφώω [Johannes Behm, “Μορφή, Μορφώω, Μόρφωσις, Μεταμορφώω,” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:742.]



as had the Jewish elitist, representing a common Jewish attitude, bordered on blasphemy of God. Christ Jesus and the Gospel message about Him stood central to discovering both God and His will. The Law of God given to Moses on Sinai had to be properly understood as pointing to Christ for the discovery of the knowledge and truth of God (cf. 3:21-31). The Jewish elitist completely missed the mark by elevating Law as knowledge and truth itself.

Implications, vv. 21-22.

One of the interpretative issues emerging here is the presence of the inferential coordinate conjunction οὖν attached to the first rhetorical question in the series of four such questions. The conjunction is very common with 373 NT uses and 44 uses in Romans alone. The core meaning denotes stating something overtly that is implied in what was previously said. But beyond this core meaning a wide range of alternative meanings are possible as well. It is clear from the context that its use here is not in the normal pattern. The inferential nature of the word is clear. But is it drawing an inference from 2:12-16 or from 2:17-20? If the latter, as seems likely, then the first rhetorical question in v. 21a becomes the stated apodosis with the lengthy if clause in vv. 17-20 standing as the protasis. This would stand as a first class conditional sentence making an assumption of the existence of Jewish elitists in Paul's world among the Roman Jews. The sense of the construction becomes *Since* (Εἰ) there are elitist Jews, *then* (οὖν) what can be observed about them? This grammar assessment stands under the NRSV translation of vv. 17-21a.¹⁴⁰

The exceptionally long protasis developed by the apostle in vv. 17-20 clearly would carry significant implications for Paul's argument in chapter two. The series of rhetorical questions press these implications upon the readers of this letter quite forcibly. And they make the point of severe hypocrisy by the Jewish elitists who claim one thing while something quite different is actually true about them.

The sequencing of the four questions is quite intentional and builds to a climax that is somewhat unexpected.

ὁ διδάσκων ἕτερον σεαυτὸν οὐ διδάσκει; This first question reaches back to the last trait in the protasis, διδάσκαλον νηπίων. **You who teach others, you are not**

¹⁴⁰The postulation of a missing apodosis with the protasis followed by anacoluthon that is given in Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. Edited by I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner. New International Greek Testament Commentary. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 303, is unnecessary and incorrect.

teaching yourself are you? The structuring of the interrogative clause with the negative οὐ assumes the elitist will agree with Paul that he isn't. A sarcastic bite is injected with the use of ἕτερον rather than ἄλλων. Those he is teaching are considered clearly inferior and different from him. As already signaled in the protasis (v. 20a), the elitist considers them to be ἀφρόνων and νηπίων. Probably also τυφλῶν and τῶν ἐν σκότει should be included as well (v. 19). After all, the elitist says he relies on Law, boasts about God, knows God's will, and has established what really matters out of the Law (vv. 17-18).

In spite of all these claims that supposedly qualify the elitist to teach others about God from the Law, he fails to teach himself anything from the Law of Moses. The clear implication is that the elitist is not on the stilted platform of teacher but among the fools and ignorant children that he looks down upon with contempt.

Such an accusation against the elitist as this would have had biting, insulting tones of huge proportions. The apostle's words have a very sharp rebuke of this fellow. Paul would not have gotten any Amens from saying this in any of the Jewish synagogues in Rome. But his sharp criticism of elitism would have caught the attention of Gentile worshippers in the synagogues by raising doubts about the legitimacy of what they were being taught from synagogue leaders.

ὁ κηρύσσων μὴ κλέπτειν κλέπτεις; But the first criticism is only the starter. Three more are yet to come. When choosing accusations to level against the elitist, one aspect becomes clear. Paul goes to the heart of the Mosaic Law for his examples. These three charges are taken directly from the Decalogue, the foundational summary of God's principles upon which the entire sets of codes rest. He doesn't choose code regulations on the periphery of the Law, but major elements from its very foundation: Exod 20:15, 14, 4-5; Deut 5:19, 18, 8-9. These set forth the moral basis for all of the codes, and the apostle goes after the elitist at this central point of hypocrisy.

You who preach not to steal, do you steal? The question here is more open ended. The widespread practice of thievery¹⁴¹ in the world of Paul evidently caught up

¹⁴¹ κλέπτω. a. 'To steal,' 'secretly and craftily to embezzle and appropriate,' Hom. Il., 5, 268; 24, 24. No blame is attached in these passages; indeed, the cunning and skill displayed are recognised, hence gods, demi-gods and heroes steal (Epict. [Diss., III, 7, 13] deduces from Epicurean ethics that stealing is justifiable for this philosophy so long as it takes place κομψῶς καὶ περισταλμένως, 'with craft and secrecy'). Later it is condemned as no less wrong than robbery, murder and other serious offences. κλέπτω denotes the secret and cunning act as compared with ἀρπάζω, which is characterised by violence (βία), Soph. Phil., 644; Aristoph. Pl., 372; Xenoph. Oec., 20, 15 (κλέπτων ἢ ἀρπάζων ἢ προσαιτῶν διανοεῖται βιοτεύειν). The objects may be articles of value, Aesch. Prom., 8



the Jews as well, since abundant Jewish literature of this time admonish even rabbis to stop stealing from others.¹⁴² The verb κλέπτω typically denoted taking things secretly while ἀρπάζω could reference open robbery usually with violence involved. Thus in English to steal verses to rob. The Decalogue commandment οὐ κλέψεις is taken with great seriousness in early Christian teaching.¹⁴³ In First Cor. 6:10, thieves, κλέπται, are

(τὸ πῦρ); Eur. Rhes., 502 (ἄγαλμα); Hdt., V, 84; Xen. An., VII, 6, 41 (χρήματα), animals, P. Oxy., I, 139, 19, or men (in the sense “to abduct”), Pind. Pyth., 4, 445 (Μήδειαν). The ref. might also be to places, Xen. An., IV, 6, 11 (‘to seize with cunning, unnoticed’) or to circumstances, Aristot. Rhetorica ad Alexandrum, 36, p. 1440b, 21 (‘to provide for oneself surreptitiously’), b. More generally the word can mean ‘to deceive,’ ‘to cheat,’ ‘to bewitch (by flattery)’: Hom. Il., 1, 132 (νόω); Hes. Theog., 613; Aesch. Choeph., 854 (οὔτοι φρέν’ ἄν κλέψειεν ...); Soph. Ant., 681; 1218; Aeschin. Or., 3, 35 (κλέπτοντες τὴν ἀκρόασιν); Sext. Emp. Math., ed. Bekker, 39 (τὰς τῶν θεομεινῶν ὄψεις, of conjurers), c. A further meaning is ‘to hold secretly,’ ‘to put away,’ ‘to conceal,’ ‘to hide’: Pind. Olymp., 6, 60 (θεοῖο γόνον); Aeschin. Or., 3, 142 (τοῖς ὀνόμασιν κλέπτων καὶ μεταφέρων τὰ πράγματα). d. ‘To do something in a secret or furtive manner’: Soph. Ai., 189 (ὑποβαλλόμενοι κλέπτουσι μύθους); Plato contrasts this secret action with [βιάζεσθαι: Leg., XI, 933e (κλέπτων ἢ βιάζόμενος); Resp., III, 413b.] [Herbert Preisker, “Κλέπτω, Κλέπτῃς,” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:754.]

¹⁴²Paul Billerbeck brought together a considerable amount of material from the Talmud in demonstration of the fact that Jewish leaders during the first five centuries A.D. were often extremely concerned about Jewish rabbis who (1) proclaimed ‘You shall not steal’ yet stole from others and (2) affirmed the commandment ‘You shall not commit adultery’ yet were sexual offenders themselves.³⁴ And Anton Fridrichsen has called attention to denunciations by Epictetus, the Stoic philosopher of Hierapolis who was active sometime around A.D. 100, against those who called themselves Stoics and espoused high morals but stole from others and committed various sexual offenses.³⁵ But the exposure of such actions vis-à-vis such lofty teachings can hardly be reserved for Jewish teachers or Greek philosophers. Sadly, disparities between principles and practice are all too common in the lives of all too many people, both historically and today — whatever their status or situations in life, whatever their lofty affirmations, and whatever their self-justifying defenses.” [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 305–306.]

¹⁴³The NT knows of a new being of the Christian in the Spirit which works itself out in love. This new being embraces the whole man with his whole duty and capacity, with everyday obligations and the most self-evident moral demands. All the commandments are summed up and fulfilled in love. This means that the requirements of the Decalogue are taken with unconditional seriousness, and the validity of the οὐ κλέψεις as God’s will is thus posited also² (Mk. 10:19; Mt. 19:18; Lk. 18:20; R. 13:9; cf. R. 2:21). What the proclamation of the Law could not do, i.e., overcome inordinate greed, should now be self-evident for believers in virtue of their possession of the Spirit. Hence the thief should not steal

one of those groups of people excluded from inheriting the Kingdom of God.

The probing question of Paul to the elitist challenges him to seriously examine his actions. Not only is it wrong to steal, but to do so while teaching other not to is doubly wrong.

ὁ λέγων μὴ μοιχεύειν μοιχεύεις; The same kind of open ended question is raised here in regard to another widely practiced sin even among Jews.¹⁴⁴

any more, but work with his hands, so that he will be in a position to give to those in need and to help them (Eph. 4:28). κλέπτειν is condemned as a selfish and loveless breaking of fellowship. It is to be replaced by work and service in the new disposition of love.³ Jn. 12:6 characterises the κλέπτῃς as a betrayer of fellowship. 1 Pt. 4:15 groups him with murderers, receivers and criminals. A similar judgment is found in 1 C. 6:10. In Mt. 27:64 the Jews fear that there might be a κλέπτειν of the body of Jesus by the disciples, and in 28:13 they maintain that this has in fact taken place.” [Herbert Preisker, “Κλέπτω, Κλέπτῃς,” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:755.]

¹⁴⁴μοιχεύω. The Attic uses the act. of the man in the abs. ‘I act as an adulterer,’ and with the acc. ‘to commit adultery with a woman,’ Aristoph. Av., 558; Lys., 1, 4, then gen. ‘to seduce or violate a woman,’ Luc. Dial. Mar., 12, 1, fig. ‘to adulterate,’ Achill. Tat., IV, 8, p. 117 (Hercher). Pass. and med. ‘to be, or to allow oneself to be, seduced,’ of the woman ‘to commit adultery,’ fig. of the intermingling of animals and men or of different races, Aristot. Hist. An., 32, p. 619a, 10 f.: τὰ γὰρ ἄλλα γένη μέμικται καὶ μεμοίχευται ὑπ’ ἀλλήλων. The LXX uses μοιχεύειν and derivatives for the root $\eta\kappa\lambda$ and derivatives, abs. Ex. 20:14 (13); Dt. 5:18 (17); Ez. 23:43; Hos. 4:14; 7:4; cf. Test. Jos. 4:6; 5:1; with acc. Jer. 3:9 (fig. ἐμοίχευσεν [sc. Ἰσραὴλ] τὸ ξύλον καὶ τὸν λίθον), also med. with acc. of the man, pass. of the woman, Lv. 20:10: ἄνθρωπος ὃς ἂν μοιχεύσῃται γυναῖκα ἀνδρὸς ἢ ὃς ἂν μοιχεύσῃται γυναῖκα τοῦ πλησίον, θανάτῳ θανατούσθωσαν, ὁ μοιχεύων καὶ ἡ μοιχευομένη, Sir. 23:23 of the woman: ἐν πορνείᾳ ἐμοιχεύθη.

“Cf. also the NT quoting the 7th commandment, Mt. 5:27; 19:18; Mk. 10:19; Lk. 18:20; R. 13:9; Jm. 2:11; in Lk. 16:18 and R. 2:22 the man is evidently meant; with acc. of adultery against a woman, Mt. 5:28, and pass. of the woman with whom it is committed, Mt. 5:32. Jn. 8:4 (ἡ γυνὴ κατεύληπται ἐπ’ αὐτοφώρῳ μοιχευομένη); Rev. 2:22 (τοὺς μοιχεύοντας μετ’ αὐτῆς). V 4, p 730

“μοιχάω, a subsidiary Doric form, ‘to commit adultery,’ fig. ‘to adulterate,’ Ael Nat. An., 7, 39 (τὸ λεχθέν); Xenoph. Hist. Graec., I, 6, 15 τὴν θάλατταν (to bring cunningly and illegally into one’s power). In the LXX (for $\eta\kappa\lambda$ only Jer. and Ez.) and the NT only in the pres. stem of the med. and pass., ‘to commit adultery,’ ‘to be led into adultery,’ of the man in Jer. 5:7; 9:1; 23:14 (μοιχωμένους); Mt. 5:32; 19:9; Mk. 10:11, the woman in Jer. 3:8; 29:23 (Ἰερ. 36:23); Ez. 16:32; 23:37; Mk. 10:12 (ἐὰν αὐτὴ ἀπολύσασα τὸν ἄνδρα αὐτῆς γαμήσῃ ἄλλον μοιχᾷται).

“μοιχεία, ‘adultery,’ ‘illicit intercourse,’ Lys., 1, 36; Plat. Resp., IV, 443a; Leg., VIII, 839a; astrologically. P. Tebt., II, 276, 16 (2nd/3rd. cent. A.D.): ἡ Ἀφροδίτη παρατυγχάνουσα τῷ τοῦ Ἄρεως πορ[ν]ίας <καὶ> μοιχείας κατίς[τ]ησιν, Venus in conjunction with Mars causes fornication and adultery. In the LXX for $\eta\kappa\lambda$ (Hos. 4:2), $\mu\omicron\iota\chi\epsilon\iota\alpha$ (Jer. 13:27) and $\mu\omicron\iota\chi\epsilon\iota\sigma\iota\varsigma$ (Hos. 2:4); also Wis. 14:26. In the NT Mt. 15:19: μοιχεῖαι (along with πορνεῖαι); Mk.



This verb μοιχεύω is a part of a larger word group dealing with the action labeled adultery.¹⁴⁵ The exact meaning as well as stances regarding it depended heavily in Paul's world on the particular culture being addressed. The non-Jewish Greco-Roman world of the city of Rome possessed one definition and attitude toward adultery, which was very different from the Jewish world in Hebraistic Judaism in Judea and again in Hellenistic Judaism in the Diaspora outside Palestine. Clearly Paul is approaching the issue from within the Hellenistic Jewish perspective while speaking to Christians in the imperial city of Rome.

*What was the attitude within first century Roman society?*¹⁴⁶ In the Greek culture of that day, adultery was

7:22; Jn. 8:3 (ἐπὶ μοιχείᾳ κατειλημμένην).

"μοιχός, 'adulterer,' 'lover,' Aristoph. Pl., 168; Lys., 1, 30; Soph. Fr., 1026, 6 (Nock); Plat. Symp., 191d; P. Oxy., VIII, 1160, 26 f. (3rd/4th cent.). In the LXX for הַזָּנָה, Job 24:15; Prv. 6:32; הַזָּנָה, ψ 49:18; Is. 57:3; Jer. 23:10; Sir. 25:2. In the NT Lk. 18:11; 1 C. 6:9; Hb. 13:4.

"μοιχαλῖς, first adj. 'adulterous,' Plut. Plac. Philos., I, 7 (II, 881d), then subst. 'adulteress,' 'mistress,' 'harlot,' P. Masp., 94, II, 42 (6th cent.). In the LXX and NT lit., Prv. 30:20; Hos. 3:1 (both times for הַזָּנָה); R. 7:3; 2 Pt. 2:14; also fig. for the unfaithfulness of Israel to its Husband, Yahweh: Ez. 16:38; 23:45 (הַזָּנָה); Mal. 3:5 (הַזָּנָה) Mt. 12:39; 16:4; Mk. 8:38; Jm. 4:4 (→ 734, 41 ff.)."

[Friedrich Hauck, "Μοιχεύω, Μοιχάω, Μοιχεία, Μοῖχος, Μοιχαλῖς," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 729–730.]

¹⁴⁵μοιχεύω, † μοιχάω, † μοιχεία, † μοῖχος, † μοιχαλῖς [Friedrich Hauck, "Μοιχεύω, Μοιχάω, Μοιχεία, Μοῖχος, Μοιχαλῖς," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:729.]

¹⁴⁶"A mark of the ancient view of marriage is that unconditional fidelity is demanded of the wife alone. The married man is not forbidden to have intercourse with an unmarried woman.¹⁰ In Gk. law μοιχεία is simply 'secret sexual intercourse with a free woman without the consent of her κύριος.¹¹ In face of such violation (ὑβρις) the husband or family (father, brother, son) has the right of private revenge (by killing,¹² maltreatment¹³ or fine¹⁴). In practice the laws were extended to cover a girl of good repute or a widow.¹⁵ The open harlot was not covered by the law of revenge.¹⁶ Public law limited the right of revenge (seizure in the act).¹⁷ Attic law allows a complaint to be lodged (γραφή μοιχείας) if private revenge is waived.¹⁸ If the wounded husband is not himself to fall victim to ἀτιμία he must put away the guilty wife. The adulteress is not allowed to visit the public temple.¹⁹ The best men judged adultery sharply.²⁰ Plato warns against intercourse with the ἑταῖρα, though his words show that this was more or less taken for granted on the common view.²¹

"In Roman law up to the time of the Republic the husband has, in a case of *adulterium*,²² the one-sided right of private revenge against the guilty wife even to putting to death, whereas the wife must accept the adultery of her husband.²³ The father can also put the adulterer to death if he at once strikes down his daughter too.²⁴ The punishment of adultery is thus a family affair (*iudicium domesticum*).²⁵ Only the increasing moral disintegration of

overwhelmingly an issue pertaining to wives, and not husbands. Husbands came into this temptation by sleeping with other men's wives without the husband's consent. All other women were 'open season' for married men with the consent of her master, being it father, husband etc. Guilt (ὑβρις) for adultery put the individual under the 'right of revenge' which provided for execution of the woman, maltreatment of her, or assessing fines (which her father would have to pay). The prostitute (ἑταῖρα) was exempt from such legal liability. If the violated husband chose not to bring public charges against his adulterous wife, he could submit a γραφή μοιχείας to the magistrate but must then divorce his wife in order to avoid official ἀτιμία, dishonor, by the community. Thus from our view, marital infidelity among Greeks in Paul's world was rampant, with most of it being committed by husbands.

The Roman cultural pattern was not much, if any, better than that of the Greeks in the first century world. In the case of *adulterium*, the husband had the legal right of execution of his unfaithful wife, but she had no alternative other than to accept his adulterous behavior. The right of revenge by the husband against his wife did not mandate execution but extended up to this extent. A father could execute any man who violated his daughter, provided he execute his daughter also. At the beginning of the empire, Augustus Caesar passed the Lex Julia de Adulteriis [Girard, 175, 185; Bruns, 112; Suet. Caes. (Aug.), 34; Dio C., 54, 30, 4] which imposed limits on penalties for offending individuals, but also forbid adultery being covered up from public exposure.¹⁴⁷ The husband also

the imperial period led to legal measures by the state. Augustus passed the Lex Julia de Adulteriis.²⁶ This declares adultery a penal offence, punishes offenders by banishment and forbids the husband to pardon or to quash the matter. He may be punished himself if he continues the marriage.²⁷ The law was not followed by an improvement of the situation. This was poor. Divorces were very common.²⁸ Plays,²⁹ banquets (→ ἀσέλγεια)³⁰ and slavery³¹ contributed to moral deterioration. The infidelity of wives was almost an accepted fact.³²"

[Friedrich Hauck, "Μοιχεύω, Μοιχάω, Μοιχεία, Μοῖχος, Μοιχαλῖς," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:732–733.]

¹⁴⁷"Some laws he abrogated, and he made some new ones; such as the sumptuary law, that relating to adultery and the violation of chastity, the law against bribery in elections, and likewise that for the encouragement of marriage. Having been more severe in his reform of this law than the rest, he found the people utterly averse to submit to it, unless the penalties were abolished or mitigated, besides allowing an interval of three years after a wife's death, and increasing the premiums on marriage. The equestrian order clamored loudly, at a spectacle in the theatre, for its total repeal; whereupon he sent for the children of Germanicus, and shewed them partly sitting upon his own lap, and partly on their father's; intimating by his looks and gestures, that they ought not to think it

could be severely punished for continuing the marriage after discovering adultery by his wife. Consequently, divorce was very common among Romans of this era. Another issue, which the Roman historian Suetonius indicates, is the difficulty of enforcing these decrees.

What was the typical Jewish attitude in the first century world? The Jewish world, especially in Palestine, represented some sharp contrasts to the Greek and Roman worlds, although many similarities also existed.¹⁴⁸ Most

a grievance to follow the example of that young man. But finding that the force of the law was eluded, by marrying girls under the age of puberty, and by frequent change of wives, he limited the time for consummation after espousals, and imposed restrictions on divorce."

[C. Suetonius Tranquillus, *Suetonius: The Lives of the Twelve Caesars; An English Translation, Augmented with the Biographies of Contemporary Statesmen, Orators, Poets, and Other Associates*, ed. Alexander Thomson (Medford, MA: Gebbie & Co., 1889)]

¹⁴⁸1. The Decalogue numbers the inviolability of marriage among the fundamental commandments for the community life of the people of Israel, Ex. 20:14 (13); Dt. 5:18 (17).² But adultery is possible only if there is carnal intercourse between a married man and a married or betrothed Israelite, Dt. 22:22 ff.; Lv. 20:10. Adultery is the violation of the marriage of another, Gn. 39:10 ff. Hence a man is not under obligation to avoid all non-marital intercourse (→ πορνεία). Unconditional fidelity is demanded only of the woman, who in marriage becomes the possession of her husband. The adulterer and the guilty woman, if caught in the act, are to be punished by death (Dt. 22:22), since the covenant with the holy God demands the rooting out of everything evil from within Israel. The punishment is usually stoning (Dt. 22:22; Ez. 16:40; cf. Jn. 8:5).³ If there is suspicion against a wife, the husband can demand that she be purified from it by the ceremony of bitter water, Nu. 5:16 ff.⁴ But the husband is not forced to take steps against her, cf. Mt. 1:19.

"2. Hosea, who depicts the relation of Yahweh to His people in terms of his own experience, views this relation as a marriage (2:21f.) and thereby emphasises the exclusive loyalty which Israel owes its God, to whom it belongs as does the wife to her husband. By its apostasy to alien cults Israel is guilty of adultery against God. The religious unfaithfulness of Israel is thereby stigmatised as the most serious conceivable offence (3:1f.; 2:4ff.). The worship of high places is religious adultery (4:12ff.).⁵ Jeremiah, engaged in serious conflict with the admixture of worship of Yahweh with alien elements (Baal, star worship), makes further use of the metaphor of Hosea in 2:1; 5:7; 9:1. Israel breaks the marriage bond, by which it belongs to God alone, to flirt with wood and stone (3:8f.). Faithless Jerusalem will bear the punishment of an adulteress (13:22, 26f.). In exile Ez. applies Hosea's figure of speech to the religious history of Israel (c. 16; 23). By apostasy to alien cults Israel both past and present has soiled itself with whoring and adultery (16:32, 37; 23:37, 43, 45).⁶

3. The many warnings against fornication (→ πορνεία) and adultery in the Wisdom literature show that marital infidelity was common. The adulterer violates the law of God and also attacks the rights of God, before whom his marriage was concluded (Prv. 2:16 ff., cf. Mal. 2:14). He will undoubtedly suffer punishment (Prv. 6:26 ff.). He is a fool who brings ruin on himself (v. 32). He brings down on himself suffering and shame (v. 32f.). The anger of the jealous husband will not spare him (v. 34f.). One should be on guard against the

distinctive is that adultery was an offense committed against God as well as against one's husband. Again, the Israelite woman bears most of the brunt in regard to adultery. Her husband does not have to be faithful to her, even though his choices of women outside of his wife are more restrictive than those of the Greek or Roman husband. During Paul's time, the adulteress

smooth enticement of the strange woman (7:5ff.), who after the act treats it with frivolity (30:20). One should also be on guard against wine, which kindles adulterous desire (23:31ff.) and robs a man of prudence (v. 34ff.). Sir. depicts the serious sin of the adulteress. She does threefold wrong by disobeying the command of God, sinning against her husband and bearing to another the children of adultery. She will be put out of the congregation and her children must expiate her sin. Particularly offensive is the adulterous old man (25:2). In Test. XII Joseph is a model of chastity who resists the temptation to adultery as something which is against God (Test. Jos. 4:6; 5:1) and who overcomes unlawful sexual desire by prayer and fasting (4:8).

Philo describes adultery as μέγιστον ἀδικημάτων (Decal., 121); it is συνητόν και θεομίσητον πρᾶγμα (131). The adulterer fills three families with ὕβρις and ἀτιμία (126, 129). The source of adultery is φιληδονία (122). Not merely the body, but esp. the soul is corrupted by it (124). By his transgression the adulterer sows a blameworthy seed (129), though procreation as such is sacred to the Jew.

4. The Mishnah (esp. tractate Sota) and Talmud give more precise legal definitions of the act and the punishment. So far as possible they seek to evade the death penalty. Only adultery with an Israelite is to be punished. There is no penalty for intercourse with the wife of a non-Israelite. Adultery can only be by adults. There is no penalty if there is no preceding warning and no witness.⁷ Only the wife, who is set apart for her husband alone by the ceremony of qiddūin (→ μνηστεύω), and not the husband, who has behind him the ancient right of polygamy, is exposed to the full threat of the penalties. In the Roman period the death penalty drops away.⁸ The husband is simply forced to divorce an adulterous wife, who forfeits the money assigned her under the marriage contract (Sota, IV, 3), and is not permitted to marry her lover (Sota, 5, 1). Divorce is sufficient protection against an adulterous wife. In Rabb. exposition the ceremony of bitter water acquires an essentially moral sense. The wife must be forced to confess her fault. It is effective only if the husband is free from guilt (b. Sota, 47b). Hence the ceremony gradually disappears. The child of incest or adultery is called *mamzer*, and cannot be a member of the community (Dt. 23:3) or marry an Israelite (Qid., 3, 12).

Along with these legal definitions there are in the Haggadic parts of the Talmud and Midrash many warnings against adultery which oppose this as a serious sin from the moral standpoint, and which warn against any yielding to sensual desire. In contrast to the legal judgment, the sinful thought is repeatedly equated with the act, e.g., Pesikt. r., 24 (124b): "We find that even he who commits adultery with the eyes is called an adulterer, v. Job 24:15." "He who regards a woman with lustful intention is as one who cohabits with her ..." "He who touches the little finger of a woman is as one who touches a certain spot." Tract. Kalla, 1.9 Cf. jChalla, 58c, 48 f. (Str.-B., I, 301). The adulterer is deeply despised. No virtues can save him from hell-fire (Sota, 4b).

[Friedrich Hauck, "Μοιχεύω, Μοιχάω, Μοιχεία, Μοιχος, Μοιχαλίζ," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 4:730-732.]

did not risk execution to the extent that her Greek and Roman counterpart did. Behind adultery, according to Philo in the first century BCE, lies *φιληδονία*, the love of pleasure, which must be resisted at all costs.

Largely, in contrast to the Jewish, Roman, and Greek views about adultery, early apostolic teaching is substantially more radical and demanding.¹⁴⁹ The

¹⁴⁹1. In the Literal Sense. *A mark of the NT is the sharp intensifying of the concept of adultery.* The right of a man to sexual freedom is denied. Like the wife, the husband is under an obligation of fidelity. The wife is exalted to the same dignity as the husband. Marriage (→ *γαμέω*, I, 648 ff.) is a life-long fellowship of the partners. Only thus does it actualise the ideal intended in creation (Mt. 5:32; 19:8). On this ground Jesus rejects the provisions of the Law and the scribes concerning divorce of the wife under the legal form of a bill of divorcement (Dt. 24:1 → *ἀπολύω*, *ἀποστάσιον*). This is in conflict with the will of God (Mt. 19:6 ff.). For this reason the remarriage of a man after divorcing his wife, or the remarrying of the divorced woman, is tantamount to adultery (Mt. 5:32; 19:9; Mk. 10:11 f.; Lk. 16:18; cf. 1 C. 7:10 f.).³³ From the religious standpoint adultery does not consist merely in physical intercourse with a strange woman; it is present already in the desire which negates fidelity (Mt. 5:28). In distinction from the scribes, who as lawyers give definitions and relativise the divine commandment by assimilating it to the actualities of life, Jesus as a religious teacher tries to make men realise how absolute is the divine requirement. The great seriousness of Jesus in face of the sin of adultery goes hand in hand with His mercy for the sinner and His resolute rejection of hypocritical self-righteousness, as is shown by the story of the woman taken in adultery (Jn. 8:1 ff.) which, even if it does not belong originally to Jn., rests on an authentic tradition.³⁴ Against a purely legal view, on which a woman taken in the act (8:4) undoubtedly came under the death penalty, He maintains a moral and religious position. He disarms the human desire to punish — the witness had to cast the first stone — by appealing to the judgment of conscience. He grants the guilty woman a pardon which does not sap the moral demand because it presupposes repentance (cf. Mt. 21:31 f.). He preserves the unconditional validity of the sacred command of God by adding the warning to sin no more (Jn. 8:11).

"The apostolic preaching presupposes the holy seriousness of Jesus in the assessment of adultery. Christian determination was the more significant at this point in view of the degeneration of sexual morality in the Hellenistic world, which regarded offences in this sphere as quite natural (1 C. 5:2) and accepted quasi-marital relations as no less ethically possible than marriage (→ 732). By contrast, it was most significant, both religiously and culturally, that the apostolic message from the very outset made it clear to the churches that the full marital fidelity of both spouses is an unconditional divine command (1 C. 5:1 ff.; 6:9). Adultery is not just a matter of civil law (R. 7:3). It is to be judged in accordance with the holy will of God (1 Th. 4:3; 1 C. 6:18 f.). Women are fellow-heirs of the kingdom of God and are thus worthy of the same honour as men (1 Pt. 3:7). According to the absolute judgment of Paul, adultery excludes from God's kingdom (1 C. 6:9). Marital fidelity is to be maintained intact (ἡ κοίτη ἀμίαντος, Hb. 13:4), even though there are no human witnesses. The omniscient God is the Judge of the adulterer (loc. cit.). The OT prohibition of adultery is not confined to the negative avoidance of the sinful act. It finds its true fulfilment only in the love of spouses who are

stance taken by Paul here in 2:22 is consistent with the views of apostolic Christianity, and here plays off the Jewish perspective of his elitist opponent.

ὁ βδελυσσόμενος τὰ εἰδωλα ἱεροσυλεῖς; The precise meaning of this accusation by Paul is challenging to determine in Paul's world. The subject functioning participle phrase *ὁ βδελυσσόμενος τὰ εἰδωλα* is relatively easy to grasp, given the well established first century Jewish abhorrence of idols. The verb *βδελύσσομαι* is only used here and in Rev. 21:8, where its meaning is not as clear as here in Romans.¹⁵⁰ Here in 2:22, the direct object *τὰ εἰδωλα*, *idols*, makes the meaning of the participle clear: *the one abhorring idols*. The Jewish exile in Babylon marks the decisive turning point among Jews in regard to worshipping other deities beyond God. From that event forward the Jewish people overwhelmingly focused on monotheistic belief exclusively. This is reflected in the claim of post-exilic Jewish writing (probably 1st cent. BCE) Judith 8:18, "For never in our generation, nor in these present days, has there been any tribe or family or people or town of ours that worships gods made with hands, as was done in days gone by."

What is problematic in Paul's statement is the precise meaning of *ἱεροσυλεῖς*, *are you robbing temples?*

joined together by God (R. 13:9).³⁵ Impulsive and uncontrolled desire is sinful even in the lustful glance (2 Pt. 2:14). It is a mark of the inwardly impious and licentious nature of bold heretics, who in doubting the parousia (3:3f.) also undermine belief in the divine judgment (3:5ff.).

"2. In the Figurative Sense. The NT, too, uses *μοιχεύειν* fig. for religious unfaithfulness to God. Thus Jesus calls the evil generation of His time *γενεὰ πονηρὰ καὶ μοιχαλῖς* (Mt. 12:39; 16:4; Mk. 8:38 alongside *ἀμαρτωλός*). Like the people in the days of the prophets, it shows itself to be unfaithful to God by its rejection of Jesus. In Jm. 4:4, too, the sharp term *μοιχαλίδες* refers to the religious unfaithfulness to God implied in *φιλία τοῦ κόσμου*. The feminine seems to be chosen because God is seen as the Husband (→ 731).³⁶ The adultery with the prophetess mentioned in Rev. 2:2 is also a figure for acceptance of her false teaching and the implied infidelity to God. The *τέκνα* of this adulterous relation are the followers of the prophetess."

[Friedrich Hauck, "Μοιχεύω, Μοιχάω, Μοιχεία, Μοῖχος, Μοιχαλῖς," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:733–735.]

¹⁵⁰Rev. 21:8 τοῖς δὲ δειλοῖς καὶ ἀπίστοις καὶ *ἐβδελυγμένοις* καὶ φονεῦσιν καὶ πόρνοις καὶ φαρμάκοις καὶ εἰδωλολάτραις καὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς ψευδέσιν τὸ μέρος αὐτῶν ἐν τῇ λίμνῃ τῇ καιομένῃ πυρὶ καὶ θείῳ, ὃ ἐστὶν ὁ θάνατος ὁ δευτέρος.

But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the polluted, the murderers, the fornicators, the sorcerers, the idolaters, and all liars, their place will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.

The perfect passive participle *ἐβδελυγμένοις*, *abhorred ones*, is roughly equivalent to the adjective *βδελυκτός* which carries with it the sense of being detestable because of polytheistic worship, e.g., LXX Lev. 18:30; Prov. 8:7; Job 15:16 and 3 Macc. 6:9.



This exclusive NT use of the verb ἱεροσυλέω can move either literal or figurative in its thrust here.¹⁵¹ Either meaning can have application to the Diaspora Jewish elitist that Paul is targeting at Rome. Either meaning implies a seriously wrong action against the Law of Moses. If taken literally, the verb then references violation of sacred objects in the pagan temples in the city.¹⁵² This was for non-Jews among the most serious crimes possible in that world. Even among the Hebrews in the OT, Deut. 7:25-26 strictly prohibits saving any object found in the Canaanite temples during the conquest. They were to be totally destroyed by fire, and not precious stone or gold / silver overlay was to be kept back. But by the first century AD a very lax interpretation of Deut. 7:25-26 came into existence that claimed it to be possible to keep the gold / silver/ precious jewels from statues of idols taken from pagan temples IF the statues had first been ‘de-consecrated.’¹⁵³ Later, some

¹⁵¹The adjective, built off the same root, ἱερόσυλος, -ov, found only in Acts 19:37, carries the same ambiguity of meaning as does the verb. But the use of the adjective in the charges brought against associates of Paul by Demetrius and his fellow artisans that are repeated by the city clerk of Ephesus suggest clearly that robbing pagan temples is what the adjective alludes to in Acts 19:37,

Acts 19:37. ἡγάγετε γὰρ τοὺς ἄνδρας τούτους οὐτε ἱεροσούλους οὐτε βλασφημοῦντας τὴν θεὸν ἡμῶν.

You have brought these men here who are neither **temple robbers** nor blasphemers of our goddess.

¹⁵²"The robbery of temples,¹ originally the removal of sacred property from a sacred site, is a. in Greek, Roman and Egyptian eyes² one of the most serious of offences. At times of amnesty, murderers and robbers of temples are often excluded. Temple robbery is generally classified with treason and murder. Those convicted are denied burial in consecrated ground. In Plat. Phaed., 113e criminals of these categories are regarded as ἀνιάτως and are plunged into Tartarus. Philo in Spec. Leg., III, 83 describes ἀνδροφονία as ἱεροσυλιῶν ἢ μεγίστη. Cf. Decal., 133, where the murderer is guilty of robbing the temple, since he has plundered the most sacred possession of God. This mode of expression reflects Philo's view of the nobility of man. But it also testifies to the broader use of ἱεροσυλία. The term sacrilegium, which originally meant temple robbery and then any sacral offence, is now used of religious transgression generally.³ It is impossible to think of anything more heinous." [Gottlob Schrenk, "Ἱερός, Τὸ Ἱερόν, Ἱερωσύνη, Ἱερατεύω, Ἱεράτευμα, Ἱερατεία, (-Ἱα), Ἱερουργέω, Ἱερόθυτος, Ἱεροπρεπής, Ἱεροσυλέω, Ἱερόσυλος, Ἱερεύς, Ἀρχιερεύς," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:255.]

¹⁵³ c. Of particular interest is the treatment of this subject in Josephus. In Ant., 4, 207 he does not scruple to find in the Torah the new law that we are not to scorn the gods of other nations. He adopts a free translation to bring Dt. 7:25 f. under this rule of tolerance, suppressing the true argument of the passage. His purpose is to show to the cultured reader that the Jewish people are tolerant. In Ap., 1, 249, 310 and 318 he is also meeting the slanders of a Manetho and Lysimachus, who accuse the Jews of robbing temples in Egypt, and who allow themselves the witticism that Jerusalem

Jewish sources go so far as to justify Jewish sales of confiscated idols to Gentiles in order to make a profit off the sale.

The question comes around to how relevant this would have been to a first century Jewish Christian and Jewish setting in Rome. Unquestionably the verb in the literature outside this one NT use is mostly in the literal sense of robbing temples.¹⁵⁴ The figurative meaning of defamation of the sacred in a generalized meaning does exist in ancient literature, but is exceedingly rare. If this is what Paul referenced here, then he accuses the Jewish elitist of defaming something sacred inside Judaism. Most likely this would mean a Diaspora Jewish refusal to pay the annual temple tax.

arose out of Ἱερόσυλα, i.e., that it took its name originally from temple robbery.

"d. The attitude of the Rabbis is much laxer than one would expect from Dt. 7. They have no legal term [or intentional temple robbery. Whipping is an adequate punishment. According to b. Sanh., 84a it is only the violation of a prohibition. It is thus judged more leniently than murder. Capital punishment by God, but not by human courts, may also be the punishment. The softening of Dt. 7:25 f. is astonishing. Thus we read in AZ 53b, Bar. that "taking" is if an Israelite comes into possession of an idol, and since it is valuable, he sells it to a Gentile, who will worship it. This is a ref. to Dt. 7. R. Samuel says in 52a that an idol may be accepted if it is deconsecrated. But the Mishnah AZ, 4, 4 V 3, p 256 has the qualification that only a Gentile and not a Jew may deconsecrate it. In 4, 2 the gold, clothing or vessels found on the head of an idol may be put to positive use. 4, 5 mentions the case of a Gentile selling or pledging his idol.⁴"

[Gottlob Schrenk, "Ἱερός, Τὸ Ἱερόν, Ἱερωσύνη, Ἱερατεύω, Ἱεράτευμα, Ἱερατεία, (-Ἱα), Ἱερουργέω, Ἱερόθυτος, Ἱεροπρεπής, Ἱεροσυλέω, Ἱερόσυλος, Ἱερεύς, Ἀρχιερεύς," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:255–256.]

¹⁵⁴"The usage, ἱεροσυλέω, deriving from → ἱερόσυλος, means 'to commit temple robbery.' It occurs also as συλάω τὰ ἱερά, τὸ ἱερόν; Jos. Ant., 4, 207; 8, 258; Ap., 1, 310. It is mostly used a. in the literal sense.⁵ Aristoph. Vesp., 845; Polyb., 30, 26, 9 (with ἱερά); Ditt. Syll.3, 417, 8 and 10 (3rd cent. B.C.); 2 Macc. 9:2 (Antiochus in Persepolis). Jos. Ant., 17, 163, where Herod uses this word for the alienation of consecrated gifts from the temple on the part of the Jews. b. Figuratively, it occurs in Jos. Ant., 16, 45 for Nicolaus' complaint before Agrippa, in which the taking of temple gold from the Jews is called ἱεροσυλεῖν. c. Note should be taken of the usual lists in which ἱεροσυλεῖν is one of the offences: Plat. Resp., IX, 575b, with stealing, breaking in, picking pockets, stealing clothes, kidnapping, cf. Xenoph. Mem., 1, 2, 62; Ps.-Heracle. Ep., 7 (J. Bernays, Die Heraklitischen Briefe [1869], p. 64) with poisoning. Philo Conf. Ling., 163, with stealing, committing adultery, and murder, cf. Leg. All., III, 241. Ceb. Tab., IX, 4 with robbery, perjury etc. Cf. the lists under → ἱερόσυλος infra." [Gottlob Schrenk, "Ἱερός, Τὸ Ἱερόν, Ἱερωσύνη, Ἱερατεύω, Ἱεράτευμα, Ἱερατεία, (-Ἱα), Ἱερουργέω, Ἱερόθυτος, Ἱεροπρεπής, Ἱεροσυλέω, Ἱερόσυλος, Ἱερεύς, Ἀρχιερεύς," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:256.]



The historical and contextual arguments in favor of the literal sense of ἱεροσυλέω here are substantial and convincing.¹⁵⁵ His elitist opponent, while professing hatred of pagan idols, does not hesitate to make money off sales of confiscated, stolen objects out of the pagan temples.

Summary, vv. 23-24.

Although the accusation in v. 23 continues to level charges against his elitist opponent, the apostle switches from the substantival participle phrase subject of the second singular verbs, ... οὐ διδάσκεις, ... κλέπτεις, ... μοιχεύεις, and ... ἱεροσυλεῖς (vv. 21-22), the switch over to the substantival relative clause subject of ἀτιμάζεις provides oral reading signals of a shift in emphasis. It gathers the four previous accusations into a summary basket with the central accusation of such actions dishonoring God Himself. In the hugely honor/shame oriented communal society of both the Romans and especially of the Diaspora Jews of that time, to dishonor anyone was previously offensive. But for a Jew to dishonor God was serious beyond calculation. Yet this is Paul's charge against his elitist opponent, and further, Paul (v. 24) bases this charge on sacred scripture, as found in Isa. 52:5 and Ezek. 36:22.

Additionally the theoretical point of boasting in Law reaches back to gather up the accusations in the protasis scenario if clause in vv. 17-20. One should also note grammatically that the structuring of the four rhetorical questions (vv. 21-22) with the substantival participle clause as the subject of the main clause verb functions conceptually very similar to the if-clause accusations in vv. 17-20. The appositional role of the participle phrases to the implicit singular *you* in the second

¹⁵⁵In R. 2:22 Paul accuses the Jews of despising idolaters and yet of robbing temples themselves. That he is using ἱεροσυλεῖν in the strict sense may be concluded from his association of various sins in a kind of catalogue (cf. especially stealing, committing adultery and robbing temples, → supra). Any contemporary reader would take such a list literally. Moreover, all the other terms have their exact antithesis, so that we have full correspondence only if those who despise the εἶδωλα of the Gentiles are not ashamed to lay violent hands on the same objects. This probably means making profit out of such costly articles, e.g., votive offerings. The pregnant expression ἱεροσυλεῖν is probably used because the stern warning of the Law (Dt. 7:25f.) stands in the background. Chrys., Theophylact. and Oecumen take the word literally for the robbing of pagan temples. In view of the technical term, it is unlikely that there is reference to the Jerusalem temple. The weak suggestion that what is meant is refusal to pay the temple tax, which cuts down the lawful revenues of the temple,⁶ is ruled out by the antithesis: ὁ βδελυσσόμενος τὰ εἶδωλα." [Gottlob Schrenk, "Ἱερός, Τὸ Ἱερόν, Ἱερωσύνη, Ἱερατεύω, Ἱεράτευμα, Ἱερατεία, (-Ἱα), Ἱερουργέω, Ἱερόθυτος, Ἱεροπρεπής, Ἱεροσυλέω, Ἱερόσυλος, Ἱερεύς, Ἀρχιερεύς," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:256.]

person singular verb endings -εις comes very close to the accusatory tone of the σὺ with 2nd singular verbs in the protasis (vv. 17-20). The same thing is also true in v. 23 with the shift to the substantival relative clause also in an appositional relation to the 2nd singular main clause verb ἀτιμάζεις.

Conceptually the accusations in the protasis (vv. 17-20) center on a phony profession of devotion to God's Law. The four rhetorical questions as the apodosis of the lengthy expression bolster that charge by probing four important areas of obeying the Law, which the elitist is not doing. Now the relative clause ὃς ἐν νόμῳ καυχᾶσαι reaches back to the charges in the protasis with some of the same language and makes the strong accusation of dishonoring God through the phony claims of the Jewish elitist in the protasis.

This summary charge is structure twofold: the charge (v. 23) and the scripture proof (v. 24).¹⁵⁶ The causal conjunction γὰρ at the beginning of v. 24 connects the scripture citation in v. 24 back to the accusation in v. 23 as evidence of the validity of the charge that Paul makes.

ὃς ἐν νόμῳ καυχᾶσαι, διὰ τῆς παραβάσεως τοῦ νόμου τὸν θεὸν ἀτιμάζεις· *The one in Law boasting through transgression of this Law God dishonors.* This very literal translation highlights in poor English some points in the Greek text that are important to recognize. The action of boasting in Law as transgression of this very Law is stressed. This very serious transgression equals dishonoring the God who gave this Law. The sequencing elevates this emphasis beyond what can be preserved in translation.

Three segments of this accusation frame the exegesis: a) the relative clause standing as apposition to the implicit σὺ as subject of the 2nd singular verb ἀτιμάζεις; b) the prepositional phrase containing the specific charge leveled against the Jewish elitist; c) and the main clause verb / direct object specifying the impact of the elitist's breaking the divine Law.

a) ὃς ἐν νόμῳ καυχᾶσαι. This accusation builds off the καυχᾶσαι ἐν θεῷ accusation in v. 17 but with the summarizing effect of gathering up the heart of vv. 17-20 with its central focus on divine Law. It picks up the emphasis in Wisdom of Solomon 39:8,

αὐτὸς ἐκφανεῖ παιδείαν διδασκαλίας αὐτοῦ
καὶ ἐν νόμῳ διαθήκης κυρίου **καυχήσεται**

He will show the wisdom of what he has learned,

¹⁵⁶Longenecker fails to correctly understand the syntax of vv. 23-24 by listing only v. 24 as a conclusion. Cf. Longenecker, Richard N. *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. Edited by I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner. New International Greek Testament Commentary. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 308. Dunn (WBC, 115), on the other hand, gets it correctly.

and *will glory in the law* of the Lord's covenant

In the context of Wisdom 39 along with chap. 24, these emerging Jewish picture is of boasting in Jewish possession of divine Torah to the exclusion of others having access to it. This is then deeply linked to *καυχᾶσαι ἐν θεῷ* (v. 17) as the exclusive Jewish possession via the covenant connection. Even though Jews tolerated non-Jews even in proselyte conversion, the non-Jews never could gain equal status with Jews either in the synagogues or especially in the temple at Jerusalem. They were forever second-class members of the Jewish community. The Jews occupied the exclusively unique relationship with God -- in their thinking and boasting. This is the larger context of Paul's accusation here *ὅς ἐν νόμῳ καυχᾶσαι*. Jewish elitism elevated itself to this special place of assumed honor and privilege.

b) *διὰ τῆς παραβάσεως τοῦ νόμου*. With its elevated posture of special privilege came the attitude that such a special person need not worry about obeying what the Law demands. What Paul accuses his elitist opponent is not merely neglecting the Law nor even just sinning in violation of Law. The two nouns *παραβάσις* (7x NT; 3x Rom), *transgression*, and *παραβάτης* (5x NT), *transgressor*, both originate out of the verb *παραβαίνω* (3x NT), *I go beyond*. These carry the idea of intentional stepping outside the path marked by God's Law. This is a very severe charge against the elitist.

Paul's case for violation of Law put the issue in the four rhetorical questions in vv. 21-22 directly on specific acts of violation of divine Law. This prepositional phrase now summarizes these into the singular charge of intentional, deliberate stepping beyond the boundaries of divine Law in misbehavior.

c) *τὸν θεὸν ἀτιμάζεις*. The ultimate impact of such intentional violation is to dishonor God.¹⁵⁷ Modern Asian readers can more easily grasp the profound implications of such an accusation than can contemporary

¹⁵⁷*The culture of the first-century world was built on the foundational social values of honor and dishonor*. Seneca, a first-century Roman statesman and philosopher, wrote: 'The one firm conviction from which we move to the proof of other points is this: that which is honorable is held dear for no other reason than because it is honorable' (Ben. 4.16.2). Seneca claims that his peers regard honor as desirable in and of itself, and dishonor as undesirable in and of itself. Moreover, he understands that the concept of 'honor' is fundamental and foundational to his contemporaries' thinking. That is, he expects them to choose one course of action over another, or to approve one kind of person over another, and, in short, to organize their system of values, all on the basis of what is 'honorable.' From the wealth of literature left to us from the Greek and Roman periods, including the New Testament, it appears that Seneca's analysis of the people of his time was correct.¹¹ [David Arthur deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 22-23.]

western readers.¹⁵⁸ In cultures where one's very existence and sense of worth depends overwhelmingly on gaining honor and avoiding shame in one's society, to be charged with bringing dishonor is a hugely serious charge.¹⁵⁹

In the 7 NT uses of this verb *ἀτιμάζω*, one can begin to sense the seriousness of such a charge: Mk. 12:4; Lk. 20:11; Jn. 8:49; Acts 5:41; Rom. 1:24; 2:23; Jas. 2:6. But here the dishonoring is not of the elitist but of God Himself. And suddenly the ante level shoots through the ceiling! This is profoundly more serious.¹⁶⁰ Some push

¹⁵⁸"Those living or reared in Asiatic, Latin American, Mediterranean or Islamic countries have considerable advantage in their reading of the New Testament in this regard, since many of those cultures place a prominent emphasis on honor and shame. Readers living in the United States or Western Europe may recognize immediately that we live at some distance from the honor culture of the first-century Greco-Roman world (including the Semitic peoples in the East). In our culture the bottom line for decision-making is not always (indeed, perhaps rarely) identifying the honorable thing to do. In the corporate world, for example, the 'profitable' frequently acts as the central value. Considerations of right and wrong are also prominent, but these are based on internalized values or norms rather than values enforced by overt approval or disapproval by the larger society. Typically we do not talk about honor and shame much (the one place where I've recently observed honor as an openly discussed, coordinating value was at a service honoring a newly inducted Eagle Scout), but we do wrestle with 'worth,' with 'self-esteem,' with the push and pull of 'what other people will think.' The vocabulary has greatly receded, but the dynamics are very much still present. We want to know that we are valuable, worthwhile people, and we want to give the impression of being such.³" [David Arthur deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 25-26.]

¹⁵⁹I well remember an earlier encounter with this kind of thinking. In the early 80s I was preparing to go to the university of Bonn for the sabbatical year. The summer and early fall were spent in southeastern Germany at the Goethe Institut getting my skills with German up to a level so as to function at the university. After the major exams at the end of the first of two terms of study, one of the Asian students in the class did not do well at all on the exams. His Asian classmates and the administration of the language school became fearful of him committing suicide because of the perceived dishonor he had brought on his family by failing this exam.

At first it was hard to grasp. After all, it was just an exam. But not to the Asian students. It was infinitely more than just an exam. Failure meant shame not just for the individual but for his entire family back home. Fortunately the young man was talked out of committing suicide, but there was deep concern at first.

¹⁶⁰Interesting the later Christian leader, John Chrysostom has a different way of calculating the severity of Paul's charge:

There are two accusations which he makes, or rather three. Both that they dishonor, and dishonor that whereby they were honored; and that they dishonor Him that honored them, which was the utmost extreme of unfeelingness. And then, not to seem to be accusing them of his own mind, he brings in the Prophet as their accuser, here briefly and concisely as it were in a summary, but afterwards more in detail,

back from the elitist would be inevitable. Should this text have ever been read in the Jewish synagogues of Rome, the Jewish anger against Paul would have hit the boiling point. And indeed, some three or four years later after arriving in Rome, something like this may have been behind the hostility against Paul from within the Christian community at Rome which Paul alludes to in Phil. 1:15-18a.

τὸ γὰρ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ δι' ὑμᾶς βλασφημεῖται ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, καθὼς γέγραπται. The grounds for the accusation now extend to include the prophet Isaiah in Jewish history. His critique of the hypocrisy of the Israelites and its impact on Gentiles in the eighth century BCE is seen as being mirrored by the Jewish elitists of Paul's day. Interestingly Isa. 52:5 from which this statement is derived serves Paul's purpose more sharply in the Greek LXX translation, than in the original Hebrew.

Hebrew: :גָּרַם מְשִׁיבֵי הַיָּם לְדַמְּתֵי

NRSV: *and continually, all day long, my name is despised*
LXX. δι' ὑμᾶς διὰ παντὸς τὸ ὄνομά μου βλασφημεῖται ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν

LES: *Because of you my name is always blasphemed among the nations*

Paul: τὸ γὰρ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ δι' ὑμᾶς βλασφημεῖται ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν

LLC: *for the name of God because of you is being blasphemed among the nations.*

Quite clearly the apostle is following the interpretive paraphrase approach of the LXX, which correctly interprets contextual implications of the original Hebrew text. Some re sequencing takes place in order to elevate the emphasis upon God's name being slandered. An even sharper denunciation of the Israelites at this same point is made in the much more detailed passage of Ezekiel 36:17-23.

Interestingly the normal pre-field formulaic introduction to a scripture citation is placed at the end rather than at the beginning of the OT reference: καθὼς γέγραπται, *as it stands written*. This is unique among the apostle's many scripture citations across all his letters.¹⁶¹ He uses this perfect tense passive voice 3rd

and here Isaiah, and after that David, when he had shown the grounds of reproof to be more than one. For to show, he means, that it is not I who speak these things to your reproach, hear what Isaiah saith.

[John Chrysostom, "Homilies of St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, on the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans," in *Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Romans*, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. J. B. Morris, W. H. Simcox, and George B. Stevens, vol. 11, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1889), 369.]

¹⁶¹[W]hile καθὼς γέγραπται does not appear prior to the quotation by way of introducing it, the phrase does appear at the end of the quotation in appended fashion, which it never does with any

singular spelling γέγραπται some 41 times and 18 times in Romans itself. Although stylistically very unusual to place this at the end, the orally communication impact of this position is very strong in that it leaves in the minds of the reader and listener the lingering reminder of this principle being sacred scripture, and not just Paul's words. To the Jewish elitist is thunderingly says, God says this! And you are guilty!

The causal conjunction γὰρ establishes the connection of this OT text back to the preceding rhetorical question which summarizes the accountability of the elitist to God. The nature of the connection is to assert that the elitist's hypocrisy and disobedience not only shames the Jewish people but brings slander upon God Himself. His covenant people were called to be beacons of enlightenment to the rest of the world about who God is and what He expects from his creation. But they have shamed (ἀτιμάζεις) God before the entire world. Thus this world continues to not understand God and His message of hope for the world. But all the while, the elitist has deluded himself into thinking that his skills in the Torah have made him a beacon of light to that darkened world. To bring shame on God is indeed serious business with eternal consequences.

10.3.3.2.3.2 Real circumcision verses physical circumcision, 2:25-29

25 Περιτομή μὲν γὰρ ὠφελεῖ ἐὰν νόμον πράσσης; ἐὰν δὲ παραβάτης νόμου ἦς, ἡ περιτομή σου ἀκροβυστία γέγονεν. 26 ἐὰν οὖν ἡ ἀκροβυστία τὰ δικαιώματα τοῦ νόμου φυλάσση, οὐχ ἡ ἀκροβυστία αὐτοῦ εἰς περιτομὴν λογισθήσεται; 27 καὶ κρινεῖ ἡ ἐκ φύσεως ἀκροβυστία τὸν νόμον τελοῦσα σὲ τὸν διὰ γράμματος καὶ περιτομῆς παραβάτην νόμου. 28 οὐ γὰρ ὁ ἐν τῷ φανερωῖ Ἰουδαῖός ἐστιν οὐδὲ ἡ ἐν τῷ φανερωῖ ἐν σαρκὶ περιτομή, 29 ἀλλ' ὁ ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ Ἰουδαῖος, καὶ περιτομὴ καρδίας ἐν πνεύματι οὐ γράμματι, οὗ ὁ ἔπαινος οὐκ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ.

25 Circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law; but if you break the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. 26 So, if those who are uncircumcised keep the requirements of the law, will not their uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? 27 Then those who are physically uncircumcised but keep the law will condemn you that have the written code and circumcision but break the law. 28 For a person is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is true circumcision something external and physical. 29 Rather, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart — it is spiritual and not literal. Such a person receives praise not from others but from God.

of Paul's other quotations of Scripture." [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 311.]

2.25 γὰρ
44 Περιτομή μὲν ὠφελεῖ
ἐάν νόμον πράσσης·
δὲ
ἐάν παραβάτης νόμου ᾦς,
45 ἡ περιτομή σου ἀκροβυστία γέγονεν.

2.26 οὕν
ἐάν ἡ ἀκροβυστία τὰ δικαιώματα τοῦ νόμου φυλάσση,
εἰς περιτομήν
46 οὐχ ἡ ἀκροβυστία αὐτοῦ...λογισθήσεται;

2.27 καὶ
47 ἡ ἐκ φύσεως ἀκροβυστία τὸν νόμον τελοῦσα
κρινεῖ . . . σὲ
| διὰ γράμματος
| | καὶ
| | περιτομῆς
τὸν...παραβάτην
νόμου.

2.28 γὰρ
48 οὐ ὁ ἐν τῷ φανερωῖ Τουδαῖός ἐστιν
οὐδὲ
49 ἡ ἐν τῷ φανερωῖ ἐν σαρκὶ περιτομή (ἐστιν),
2.29 ἀλλ'
50 ὁ ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ Τουδαῖος (ἐστιν),
καὶ |
| ἐν πνεύματι
51 περιτομή καρδίας.. | (ἐστιν)
| οὐ γράμματι,
οὗ ὁ ἔπαινος οὐκ (ἐστιν)
| ἐξ ἀνθρώπων
| ἀλλ'
(οὗ ὁ ἔπαινος ἐστιν)
ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ.

Unquestionably the central topic of this subunit of text is Jewish circumcism. To a modern reader it might seem strange to inject a discussion of this topic here. But in the first century world of Paul one could not discuss the issue of Jewish religious practice without dealing with circumcism. For any religious ancient Jew hoping to make it to Heaven, two essential things were critical: commitment to the Torah of God and proper circumcism. Without both there was no hope of avoiding eternal damnation.¹⁶²

¹⁶²One should remember that not all ancient Jews believed in an afterlife. The best known group were the Sadducees who came exclusively from Jewish aristocratic families and who controlled the temple leadership in Jerusalem. For these Jews religion pertained only to this life and nothing lay beyond death. But the Sadducees made up less than 5% of the Jewish population across the Roman empire. The vast majority of Jews followed the teaching of the Pharisees who held to a complex view of life after death with both a Heaven and a Hell. This system of belief was developed in the intertestamental era between the time covered by the Old and New Testaments of the Christian Bible. Apostolic Christianity shared with the Pharisees this core understanding of eternity,

Literary Setting. The place of vv. 25-29 in the larger discussion of chapter two of Romans is clear. When Paul begins to center his criticism exclusively on the Jewish elitist in v. 17, he targets religious hypocrisy at the two critical points of first century Jewish religious practice: commitment to the Torah (vv. 17-24) and religious circumcism (vv. 25-29). The elitist particularly prided himself on possessing God's Torah and of having been properly circumcised. In vv. 17-24, Paul charges the elitist with the hypocrisy of claiming possession but not obeying God's Torah. Now in vv. 25-29, he asserts that this disobedience to Torah nullifies any advantage that circumcism might grant. Thus the elitist in his disobedience to Torah has no better standing before God than the Gentile pagan. In fact, the Gentile who reaches out to God in obeying the 'inner law of God' given to him in creation has advantage before God over the law possessing Jewish elitist.

although the details of the two systems of belief are profoundly different.

Such a claim as this by the apostle was radical to say the least. It would, and did, kindle fires of hostility against Paul that motivated folks to try to kill him. This teaching was severely controversial and often banned in the Jewish synagogues where the apostle traveled on his missionary journeys. It raised the eyebrows of some Jewish Christians in the Christian community at Rome and sparked hostility against the apostle even there (cf. Phil. 1:15ff). These Jewish Christians were more interested in getting along with their fellow Jews in the synagogues (cf. Acts 28:23-28) as well as not creating controversy that would attract hostile notice from the Roman authorities.

Literary Structure. The internal arrangement of thoughts is also easy to identify, especially from the above block diagram.

The causal conjunction γὰρ in v. 25 parallels the γὰρ in v. 24 and indicates a second justification for the summary rhetorical question in v. 23. Thus a close link of vv. 25-29 is set up with vv. 17-24. This is further affirmed with the common assumption of disobedience to Torah between vv. 17-24 and vv. 25-29.

The connection of disobedience to circumcision is developed very clearly in vv. 25-29. First it is set forth in a pair of third class conditional sentence statements in v. 25: statement #s 44 and 45. These are linked together not in the least by placing the first protasis in the post field and the protasis of the second statement immediately following in the pre-field of the second declaration (see above diagram for visual demonstration of this).

Then the inferential conjunction οὖν (v. 26) draws out a pair of implications (vv. 26-27) from the two axiomatic declarations in v. 25: #s 46 and 47. Statement # 46 uses the third class conditional protasis to define the uncircumcised but obedient Gentile to assert his positive standing before God (apodosis of # 46). This is extended in statement # 47 to assert the advantage of this Gentile over the Jewish elitist before God (v. 27).

Such a radical declaration of Gentile advantage over Jew before God needs vigorous defense, which Paul provides in vv. 28-29 with a series of claims in #s 48-53. A repetition of the syntactical structure οὐ... ἀλλ' (not this...but that) forms the structuring of his defense of Gentile advantage before God. The first pair is a doubled 'not this' with οὐ...οὐδὲ...ἀλλ'...καὶ (not...neither...but...and) (statement #s 48-51). The second pair (#s 52-53) builds off the first pair but in ellipsis for more emphasis. Grammatically the apostle makes a very strong case for his contention of Gentile advantage in this unit of defense. It is clear, to the point, and hard to argue with. The underlying assumption against the Jewish elitist is that obeying divine law is far more important to God than the outward ritual of circumcision. It

is rendered meaningless before God by disobedience.

Περιτομή μὲν γὰρ ὠφελεῖ ἐὰν νόμον πράσσης (v. 25a). This first axiom (# 44), couched in a third class conditional sentence structure,¹⁶³ begins with affirming value in circumcision when Law is practiced. The two segments of the conditional statement are as follows:

Apodosis: Περιτομή μὲν ὠφελεῖ, *circumcision is of value*

Protasis: ἐὰν νόμον πράσσης, *if you practice law*

The conditional sentence sets up the thought structure that if something is correct (protasis), then something else is true (apodosis). The apodosis depends upon the protasis. The ancient Greeks had a very intricate way of defining the protasis at various levels of possible occurrence all the way from the first to the fourth class levels. These moved from certainty of occurrence to remote possibility of happening. Here, over against the lengthy first class protasis in vv. 17-20 that assumes reality, the protasis in statement # 44 sets up a possible scenario that might happen but Paul doesn't treat it as though it is happening. The second person singular verb spelling πράσσης in the protasis signals clearly that he still has his Jewish elitist opponent in mind. So with the elitist's practicing of divine law, the apostle is much more skeptical. He doubts that the elitist does. In contrast, in the first class protasis in vv. 17-20 the apostle assumes a series of postures toward divine law by this same fellow. This phony posture becomes then the basis of sharp criticism in the series of rhetorical questions in vv. 21-22 which stand as a functioning apodosis. These assume a pattern of disobedience by the elitist.

In the literary setting of a polemical argument as this lengthy diatribe covering all of chapter two is, the repeated third class protasis in vv. 25-29 tones down the sharpness of the critique of the opponent and turns somewhat into an appeal rather than a condemnation. Therefore to a slight degree, vv. 25-29 as a text unit is paving the way for the discussion in chapter three where the presentation turns more in the direction of an appeal to Jews.

Περιτομή μὲν γὰρ ὠφελεῖ makes an interesting declaration. Paul does not provide any details on advantage until 3:1-8.¹⁶⁴ But here ὠφελεῖ from ὠφελῶ es-

¹⁶³A third class conditional sentence structure in ancient Greek denoted a hypothetical possibility. Unlike the first class conditional protasis which assumes reality, the third class protasis projects only a possible reality. For detailed discussion, see my grammar *Learning Biblical Koine Greek*, Lesson Nine.

¹⁶⁴While some commentators assume that the advantage in view is salvation,¹⁰⁶ membership in the Jewish covenant is more likely in view,¹⁰⁷ with particular reference to the superior position circumcision provides over against the Gentiles.¹⁰⁸ In the words of *Jub. 15.26*, 'Anyone ... whose own flesh is not circumcised on



entially carries the idea of being helpful and useful.¹⁶⁵ Paul's use of ὠφελεῖ is insightful. Here it is circumcism that is treated. It has value, i.e., usefulness, but only when properly utilized.

Jewish circumcism was rather unique in the first century Greco-Roman world. Of the 36 NT uses of the noun περιτομή, all have to do with circumcism. It comes from the Greek verb περιτέμνω "only in the sense: to cut off the foreskin of the male genital organ."¹⁶⁶ Such practice did not exist in either Greek or Roman tradition, and was severely frowned upon by them as uncultured and barbaric. Thus the word group περιτέμνω, περιτομή, and ἀπερίτμητος basically was agricultural in usage for pruning vines etc.¹⁶⁷ Primarily the verb περιτέμνω and

the eighth day is not from the sons of the covenant which the Lord made for Abraham since (he is) from the children of destruction.' A typical expression of emotional revulsion against uncircumcised persons is expressed in the *Additions to Esther*, where the heroine prays, 'you know that I hate the splendor of the wicked and abhor the bed of the uncircumcised and of any alien' (βδελύσσομαι κοίτην ἀπεριτμητῶν καὶ παντὸς ἀλλοτρίου, *Add. Esth.* C 14:15).¹⁰⁹ During the period of the Maccabean struggle, circumcision assumed a crucial role as a 'mark of Jewish national distinctiveness,'¹¹⁰ 'an essential expression of the national religion.'¹¹¹ The Hasmoneans decreed that Gentiles could remain within the territory of Israel only 'so long as they had themselves circumcised and were willing to observe the laws of the Jews' (Josephus *Ant.* 13.257 318–19, 397; 1 Macc 2:46). Marriages with uncircumcised partners were forbidden (Josephus *Ant.* 20.139, 145) because Gentiles bring 'shame' and 'defilement' (*Jub.* 30.7–12). Along with others, the Qumran community taught that circumcision frees adherents from the demonic powers (CD 16:4–6). The good angels, in contrast, were created as already circumcised, and Israel was enabled because of its circumcision to be sanctified, to share in their perfection and to participate in their heavenly worship (*Jub.* 15.27).¹¹² [Robert Jewett and Roy David Kotansky, *Romans: A Commentary*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp, Hermeneia — a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006), 231–232.]

¹⁶⁵The nuances of meaning shift with how the verb is used. With a personal direct object ὠφελῶ σε is the sense of **I help you**. But mostly it is with a double accusative so that ὠφελῶ τινά τι is **I help someone do something**. But when used intransitively without an object, as here, ὠφελεῖ is **It is of value**. With a personal subject the sense becomes **He successfully accomplishes some objective**.

[Arndt, William, Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, and F. Wilbur Gingrich. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000. C.V, ὠφελῶ.]

¹⁶⁶William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 806.

¹⁶⁷1. a. Attested from Hom. in Gk. lit., the verb περιτέμνω originally means 'to cut round,' Hes. Op., 570: οἶνας περιτάμνειν, 'to prune vines,' Hdt., IV, 71: περιτάμνεσθαι βραχίονας, 'to make incisions round one's arms' as a sign of mourning, Dio C., 62, 7, 2: τοὺς μαστοὺς περιτέμνειν, 'to cut the breasts.' b. περιτέμνω then means 'to encircle with a view to taking away,' 'to rob,' so, e.g., in the mid. in Hom. Od., 11, 402: βοῦς περιταμνόμενον ἦδ' οἰῶν

especially the noun περιτομή, when used in reference to humans, refers to the Jewish custom of circumcism, which the Greek historian Strabo attributed to the Jews as having picked it up from the Egyptians.

The LXX stands as the defining source of meaning for the NT usage.¹⁶⁸ The religious meaning of the

πόεα καλά, 'driving away cattle or fine flocks of sheep' (cf. 24, 112); Hdt., IV, 159: περιταμνόμενοι γῆν πολλήν, 'since they were robbed of a considerable territory,' Polyb., 23, 13, 2: πανταχόθεν περιτέμνεσθαι αὐτοῦ ἡ ἀρχή, 'that his dominion should everywhere be cut short,' Diog. L., III, 63: περιτάμνεσθαι πᾶσαν σοφίαν, 'to be deprived of all wisdom.' Militarily Xenoph. Cyrop., V, 4, 8 mentions the capture of chariots (ἄρματα) which were 'encircled by the cavalry,' περιτεμνόμενα ὑπὸ τῶν ἰππέων. c. περιτέμνω occurs as a ritual tt. from Hdt., II, 36, 104, where the mid. περιτάμνεσθαι τὰ αἰδοῖα means 'to circumcise.' At a later period ref. might he made to Diod. S., 1, 28, 3; 3, 32, 4: περιτέμνειν τοὺς γεννωμένους παῖδας, 'to circumcise newborn children,' and among the many pap. refs. P. Tebt., II, 292, 20 (189–190 A.D.), where a strategos is asked for a missive on the basis of which two boys who were to enter the priesthood of Soknebtunis could be circumcised (περιτμηθῆναι).¹

²The noun περιτομή, 'circumcision,' is found in lit. from Agatharchides² and Artapanos (2nd cent. B.C.); for Artapanos cf. the quotation in Eus. Praep. Ev., IX, 27, 10: ἡ περιτομή τῶν αἰδοίων. The plur. occurs in Strabo, 16, 2, 37, who refers to περιτομαί ('circumcisions') as a Jewish custom³ derived from Egypt, → 75, n. 19. Cf. finally P. Tebt., II, 314, 3–6 (2nd cent. A.D.): πιστεύω σε μὴ ἀγνοεῖν ὅσον κάμ[α]τον ἦνεγκα ἕως τὴν [περι]τομῆν ἐκπλέξω, 'I definitely believe you know what trouble I had to carry out the circumcision.'

³The adj. ἀπερίτμητος occurs in the sense 'untoaimed' in Plut. De Amore Proles, 3 (II, 495c) and in the sense 'uncircumcised' in Preisigke Sammelbuch, 6790, 14 (257 B.C.)."

[Rudolf Meyer, "Περιτέμνω, Περιτομή, Ἀπερίτμητος," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 6:73.]

¹⁶⁸"A notable aspect of LXX usage is that not merely the root לָמַד and derivatives are transl. περιτέμνω but all other Heb. terms for 'to circumcise': e.g., Ex. 4:25: περιέτεμεν τὴν ἀκραβυστίαν τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτῆς for בָּנָה לְהַרְפֵּץ-תָּהָא תִּרְבֵּן; Jer. 4:4: περιτέμεσθε τὴν σκληροκαρδίαν ὑμῶν, Heb. בָּרַקְּ לְבַבְךָ עֲרִיבוֹתָ. Even the stem נָתַתָּה, which occurs only once in later parts of the OT, in the sense 'to come over to Judaism,' is rendered in Est. 8:17 by the explanatory περιτέμνεσθαι καὶ ἰουδαΐζειν. This uniform usage is obviously explained by the fact that the vocabulary of the Egyptians, who were regarded as the classical exponents of circumcism in antiquity (→ 75, n. 19), had had a normative influence on the usage of the Jewish translators and effaced the distinctions in the Heb. terms.⁵ There are deviations in the LXX only at Dt. 30:6 (περικαθαρίζειν for the Heb. root מָוַד)⁶ and Jos. 5:4 (περικαθαίρειν for the same original).⁷ The Egyptian-influenced uniformity of the LXX⁸ is broken only by Symmachus, a Jewish Christian of the end of the 2nd century, who sharply distinguishes between the tt. for true circumcism and the transf. use. For the latter, in analogy to Dt. 30:6 LXX, he uses καθαρίζειν, → 83, 36 ff."

[Rudolf Meyer, "Περιτέμνω, Περιτομή, Ἀπερίτμητος," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 6:73–74.]



physical ritual is what became important in Jewish tradition.¹⁶⁹ Although initially intended as a symbol of the covenant of God with Abraham and his descendants, by the beginning of the Christian era, circumcision became the necessary requirement of acceptance by God into Heaven among most Jews.¹⁷⁰ This because the connection to

¹⁶⁹a. Circumcision is usually practised on males (περιτομή), more rarely on females (έκτομή).¹¹ It is of magical or primitive religious derivation,¹² and has two functions, being on the one side a sacrifice of redemption and on the other a tribal or covenantal sign. Both play a role in the OT, though the covenantal aspect gradually comes to predominate. An analogy to the idea of redemption (→ 76, 3 ff.) may be found in the agricultural sphere in Lv. 19:23 f. (Holiness Code). This lays down that for the first three years the fruits of newly planted trees are to be regarded as a foreskin (ηζρη) and are not to be used for food. In the fourth year these fruits are to be dedicated to Yahweh as a thank-offering. We obviously have here the development or influence of an older practice whose original sense has been lost at the stage of the Holiness Code. Acc. to this practice the first fruits were to be devoted to the demons of fertility and spirits of the field to redeem later harvests and secure the protection of the numina. The vocabulary of the circumcision ritual in Lv. 19:23 f. is derived from sacrificial ceremonial. In contrast to the magico-religious understanding of the rite the hygienic aspect is of secondary derivation; the first to speak of this is Hdt., II, 37, → n. 44. Circumcision is partly a puberty rite and partly a marriage rite. But circumcision of the newly born is also widespread. All three forms occur in the OT, though, apart from converts, the circumcision of newly born boys gains the upper hand.

"b. Whereas the Eastern Semites are apparently unfamiliar with circumcision,¹³ the Israelites are not the only Western Semites to practise it.¹⁴ Gn. 17:23 ff. (P) bears express witness to the circumcision of Ishmael, i.e., to circumcision among the Arab tribes; this is also attested in the Hell.-Roman period. That among the Western Semites there were also uncircumcised tribes and federations (cf. Gn. 34:15 ff.),¹⁵ indeed, that the practice was not everywhere continuous,¹⁶ is intrinsically very probable.¹⁷ As far as Israel is concerned the origin of the rite is lost in the mists of pre-history.¹⁸ Ancient West Semitic usage seems to suggest that the rite played a part in the marriage ceremonial of the West Semites. In possible agreement with this is the fact that the OT tradition does not support Israel's derivation of circumcision from Egypt.¹⁹"

[Rudolf Meyer, "Περιτέμνω, Περιτομή, Απερίμητος," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 6:74-75.]

¹⁷⁰Note its importance in Jubilees 15:25-27.

25 This law is for all the eternal generations and there is no circumcising of days and there is no passing a single day beyond eight days because it is an eternal ordinance ordained and written in the heavenly tablets. 26 And anyone who is born whose own flesh is not circumcised on the eighth day is not from the sons of the covenant which the LORD made for Abraham since (he is) from the children of destruction. And there is therefore no sign upon him so that he might belong to the LORD because (he is destined) to be destroyed and annihilated from the earth and to be uprooted from the earth because he has broken the covenant of the LORD our God.

2.28 γάρ
 οὐ ὁ ἐν τῷ φανερωῦ Τουδαῖός ἐστιν
 οὐδὲ
 2.29 ἢ ἐν τῷ φανερωῦ ἐν σαρκὶ περιτομή (ἐστιν),
 ἀλλ'
 50 ὁ ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ Τουδαῖος (ἐστιν),
 καὶ
 ἐν πνεύματι
 51 περιτομή καρδίας... (ἐστιν)
 οὐ γράμματι,

the covenant was deepened and extended well beyond the teaching of the OT. And circumcision defined one as an Abrahamic Jew who alone had access to Heaven. In the midst of severe criticism of the rite, Jews from the Exile on were challenged by others about circumcision.¹⁷¹ The hostile atmosphere of the Jewish practice

27 Because the nature of all of the angels of the presence and all of the angels of sanctification was thus from the day of their creation. And in the presence of the angels of the presence and the angels of sanctification he sanctified Israel so that they might be with him and with his holy angels.

[James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the New Testament: Expansions of the "Old Testament" and Legends, Wisdom, and Philosophical Literature, Prayers, Psalms and Odes, Fragments of Lost Judeo-Hellenistic Works*, vol. 2 (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1985), 87.]

¹⁷¹a. It is only in the age of the Seleucids that the sources begin to speak of circumcision as a sign of the covenant. The religious conflicts under Antiochus IV (176/5-163 B.C.), which were in the last resort caused by the attempts at reform made by certain circles in Jerusalem,³³ led to the prohibition of circumcision. Women who had their children circumcised were executed, and babies marked with the covenant sign were also put to death, cf. 1 Macc. 1:60 f.³⁴ Hence circumcision, as an essential expression of the national religion, came to be regarded as worth dying for. From another angle the same sign was a symbol of victory over subjugated peoples in times when political supremacy was enjoyed.³⁵ In romance form Est. 8:17 LXX (→ 74 2 ff.) describes how many Gentiles, after the victory of the Jews in the party struggle at the Persian court, had themselves circumcised and became Jews for fear of the Jews.³⁶ The Hasmonaean John Hyrcanus I (c. 128 B.C.), in the course of his successful wars of expansion among the Idumaeans, put into effect a policy of mass circumcision and compulsory Judaizing, cf. Jos. Ant., 13, 257: 'He allowed them to stay in the land if they would be circumcised and keep the laws of the Jews.'³⁷ This atavistic procedure, which goes far beyond Gn. 34 and finds an echo in Jub. 30:1-18,³⁸ was not just a secular operation.³⁹ Though we are without more detailed information on the inner motives for these compulsory measures, there would appear to stand behind them the idea of restoring the 'Holy Land,' in which no Gentiles may live. In fact the Idumaeans later regarded themselves as full Jews; the fact that the Jerusalem aristocracy contemptuously described them as ἡμιουδαῖοι did not alter this.⁴⁰ The subjection of the Ituraeans in Northern Palestine⁴¹ by Aristobulus I (104-103 B.C.) followed a similar pattern, and though there is no direct attestation it seems highly probable that when Jewish law was imposed with the Jewish conquests of Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 B.C.) compulsory circumcision was included.⁴² As a basic Jewish law, circumcision was in the Hell. Roman period one of the presuppositions without which intimate dealings with the Jews were not conceivable. This



in general had the effect of heightening the importance of the rite religiously among Jews. Circumcision meant being a Jew who belonged via covenant to God. This

is plain from the attitude of the Herod family to their non-Jewish neighbours. For all that they participated in the life of Hell. Roman society, they would rather forego a politically advantageous marriage than allow an uncircumcised son-in-law into the family circle.⁴³

"b. Though circumcision was highly regarded, the Jews themselves were often aware of problems inherent in the traditional rite. For one thing, even apart from political conflicts and latent hostility to the Jews, the whole of Jewish religion was challenged by the Hell. world, which was no less predominant in Syria-Palestine than in the rest of the Mediterranean basin and contiguous territories. The barbaric rite of circumcision was particularly exposed to Hell. criticism. For both Gks. and Romans the rite was indecorous and even perverse. Hadrian compared it to castratio (→ 80, 9 ff.),⁴⁴ which was punishable as murder.⁴⁵ Where a sense of inferiority brought complete openness to Hell. culture, as in reforming Judaism in Jerusalem at the beginning of the 2nd cent. B.C.,⁴⁶ the ancient rite of circumcision had to go. Hence the scorn of others when circumcised Jews in Jerusalem took part in games often led to ἐπισπασμός the restoration of the foreskin, cf. 1 Macc. 1:15: καὶ ἐποίησαν ἑαυτοῖς ἀκροβυστίας.

"Though this radical course had no serious consequences except in times of persecution (→ 80, n. 64), Jewish apologetic shows that Judaism was continually under pressure to reflect on the rite. One such defence, which in essence obviously follows the traditional line of Alexandrian apologetics, is offered by Philo, Spec. Leg., I, 1–11. In favour of the rite Philo argues that it is hygienically necessary,⁴⁷ that it befits a priestly people (as shown by the example of the Egyptians),⁴⁸ and that it makes the member that produces material life like the heart, which gives birth to higher thoughts and has a richer progeny. Philo also advances two allegorical considerations: on the one side circumcision combats sensuality, while on the other it resists the idea that the power of procreation confers divine likeness.⁴⁹ It would seem that this form of apologetic rather suspiciously omits the covenant aspect of circumcision. In fact, it is at this pt. that the whole ambivalence of the atavistic rite is disclosed.⁵⁰ Circumcision thus constitutes a main obstacle to apologetics in the Hell. Roman world. It also limits missionary activity and propaganda, for many φοβούμενοι or σεβόμενοι τὸν θεόν, who later abandoned their original home for the primitive Gentile Chr. Church, would not accept the obligation of circumcision.

"c. In respect of groups within Judaism, circumcision is, of course, a self-evident presupposition, but it is less important than its figurative understanding. Thus the spiritualising of the ancient rite, which is found from the time of Jeremiah and is attested in Deuteronomistic circles (→ 77, 17 ff.), is mentioned in the Manual of Discipline, 5, 5: 'And men of truth are to circumcise in the community the foreskin of desire and obduracy,⁵¹ cf. also 5, 28, where there is ref. to the uncircumcision of a heart ([עוררת] לבבו) which is hardened against a member of the community.⁵² This example, which comes from Essene circles,⁵³ is of particular significance because, in addition to prior materials, it shows that in NT days the figurative and spiritualised view of circumcision was by no means unknown in Palestinian Judaism."

[Rudolf Meyer, "Περιτέμνω, Περιτομή, Ἀπερίμητος," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 6:77–79.]

was a source of immense pride to most Jews in Paul's day.

But Paul's limitation of the usefulness of circumcision is defined in the protasis ἐὰν νόμον πράσσης, *If Law you practice*. Paul's use of πράσσω some ten times in Romans (1:32; 2:1, 2,3, 25; 7:15, 19; 9:11; 13:4) makes it clear what he intends by this verb. In chapters one and two the sense of πράσσω is to do, practice, or obey either the Law or patterns of immorality. Contextually here the sense of obey is the correct meaning. The opposite is defined below as παραβάτης νόμου, *transgressor of Law*.

ἐὰν δὲ παραβάτης νόμου ᾦς, ἡ περιτομή σου ἀκροβυστία γέγονεν (v. 25b). The limitation on the usefulness of circumcision in the above axiom imposed by Law raises the question of what happens if that restriction is not adhered to. This second axiom in v. 25b addresses this question in a somewhat surprising way. And Paul's point here is essential to his arguments made subsequently. Again the third class conditional sentence structure is utilized, but with the sequential reversal of the protasis / apodosis segments.

Protasis. ἐὰν παραβάτης νόμου ᾦς. Again the slightly less severe criticism in the 3rd class protasis is leveled at the Jewish elitist as is signaled by the second person singular verb spelling. This possibility of a Jew not obeying God's Law was not particularly controversial in Paul's day. But Paul's somewhat technical terminology used here παραβάτης νόμου seems to imply more than occasional failures to live up to the Law's demands. Rather universally among ancient Jewish writings is the view that properly circumcised Israelites who didn't fully live up to the Torah would at the last moment be saved, even though not to enjoy the fuller blessings of their more obedient fellow Jews. Their circumcision would ultimately carry the day for them in final judgment. Jubilees 15:25-27 quoted above suggests this very strongly. Yet later in 9:6b-7a Paul will assert that, οὐ γὰρ πάντες οἱ ἐξ Ἰσραὴλ οὗτοι Ἰσραὴλ· οὐδ' ὅτι εἰσὶν σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ πάντες τέκνα, *For not all Israelites truly belong to Israel, and not all of Abraham's children are his true descendants*. Thus Paul is more controversial here in 2:25b than some acknowledge. Thus he makes an assertion here against the Jewish elitist (ᾦς, *if...you may be*), certain to raise eyebrows in many circles in first century Rome. The elitist's failure to practice Law (νόμον πράσσης) can put him in the very serious status of παραβάτης νόμου whose position then in covenant Israel is in jeopardy within the framework of Jewish teaching. He failure to seriously obey is not some casual, insignificant matter.

Apodosis. ἡ περιτομή σου ἀκροβυστία γέγονεν. But Paul's conclusion from the possible scenario in the pro-

tasis goes a different direction. The elitist's becoming a παραβάτης νόμου means then that his circumcision (ἡ περιτομή σου) has been turned into uncircumcision¹⁷² (ἀκροβυστία γέγονεν).

What is Paul talking about? How can the physical removal of the foreskin be undone? The apostle at this point begins moving to what in v. 29 he will call περιτομή καρδίας, circumcision of the heart, which is performed by the Spirit of God (ἐν πνεύματι). But what is that? And how is this inner circumcision linked to the outward physical circumcision?

The first thought coming the minds of Jewish Christian readers in mid-first century Rome with Paul's statement of circumcision being turned into uncircumcision would have been the somewhat frequent practice of epispasm, especially among Hellenistic Jews. This was the attempt to remove, or at least, conceal physical circumcision.¹⁷³ Remember that it became important because athletic contests in that world were done without any clothes on the athlete at all. But this clearly is not what Paul had in mind. But he does allude to this practice in 1 Cor. 7:17-20.¹⁷⁴

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¹⁷³**1 Macc. 1:10-15.** 10 καὶ ἐξήλθεν ἐξ αὐτῶν ρίζα ἀμαρτωλὸς Ἀντίοχος Ἐπιφανῆς υἱὸς Ἀντιόχου τοῦ βασιλέως, ὃς ἦν ὄμηρα ἐν Ῥώμῃ· καὶ ἐβασίλευσεν ἐν ἔτει ἑκατοστῷ καὶ τριακοστῷ καὶ ἐβδόμῳ βασιλείας Ἑλλήνων.† 11 Ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις ἐξήλθον ἐξ Ἰσραὴλ υἱοὶ παράνομοι καὶ ἀνέπεισαν πολλοὺς λέγοντες Πορευθῶμεν καὶ διαθώμεθα διαθήκην μετὰ τῶν ἐθνῶν τῶν κύκλῳ ἡμῶν, ὅτι ἀφ' ἧς ἐχωρίσθημεν ἀπ' αὐτῶν, εὗρεν ἡμᾶς κακὰ πολλά.† 12 καὶ ἠγαθύνθη ὁ λόγος ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς αὐτῶν,† 13 καὶ προεθυμήθησάν τινες ἀπὸ τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ ἐπορεύθησαν πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα, καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν ποιῆσαι τὰ δικαιώματα τῶν ἐθνῶν.† 14 καὶ ὠκοδόμησαν γυμνάσιον ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις κατὰ τὰ νόμιμα τῶν ἐθνῶν† 15 καὶ ἐποίησαν ἑαυτοῖς ἀκροβυστίας καὶ ἀπέστησαν ἀπὸ διαθήκης ἀγίας καὶ ἐξευγίσθησαν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν καὶ ἐπράθησαν τοῦ ποιῆσαι τὸ πονηρόν.†

10 From them came forth a sinful root, Antiochus Epiphanes, son of King Antiochus; he had been a hostage in Rome. He began to reign in the one hundred thirty-seventh year of the kingdom of the Greeks. 11 In those days certain renegades came out from Israel and misled many, saying, "Let us go and make a covenant with the Gentiles around us, for since we separated from them many disasters have come upon us." 12 This proposal pleased them, 13 and some of the people eagerly went to the king, who authorized them to observe the ordinances of the Gentiles. 14 So they built a gymnasium in Jerusalem, according to Gentile custom, 15 and removed the marks of circumcision, and abandoned the holy covenant. They joined with the Gentiles and sold themselves to do evil.

¹⁷⁴**1 Cor. 7:17-20.** 17 Εἰ μὴ ἐκάστω ὡς ἐμέρισεν ὁ κύριος, ἕκαστον ὡς κέκληκεν ὁ θεός, οὕτως περιπατεῖτω. καὶ οὕτως ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις πάσαις διατάσσομαι. 18 περιτετμημένος τις ἐκλήθη, μὴ ἐπισπάσθω· ἐν ἀκροβυστία κέκληται τις, μὴ περιτεμνέσθω. 19 ἡ περιτομή οὐδὲν ἐστίν καὶ ἡ ἀκροβυστία οὐδὲν ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ τήρησις ἐντολῶν θεοῦ. 20 ἕκαστος ἐν τῇ κλήσει ἣ ἐκλήθη, ἐν ταύτῃ μενέτω.

17 However that may be, let each of you lead the life that

By v. 29 he is talking about an inner circumcision verses an outward, physical circumcision. The language of the circumcision of the heart was not coined by Paul at all. The prophet Jeremiah centuries before had spoken of Israel being uncircumcised in the heart (9:25-26):

25 The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will attend to all those who are circumcised only in the foreskin: 26 Egypt, Judah, Edom, the Ammonites, Moab, and all those with shaven temples who live in the desert. For all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel is uncircumcised in heart.

For the circumcision of the heart, see also Deut 10:16; Jer 4:4; 9:25–26; Ezek 44:9; 1QpHab 11.13; 1QS 5.5; 1QH 2.18; 18.20; Philo, Spec. Leg. 1.305, and the hope of its future realization cherished in Deut 30:6; Jub. 1.23. The promise of God was of a coming day when God would circumcise the hearts of the Israelites.

Thus the link between physical circumcision and inner circumcision is to be found in the religious meaning of both, which is the same. Circumcision by definition was intended to signify that the individual was seriously committed to and submissive to God and to following God's will. Apart from ongoing obedience to God either type of circumcision was meaningless.

Paul's point contextually with "transgression of law turning circumcision into uncircumcision" is that transgressing God's Law even as a Jew means that the Jew loses any advantage that Law might give him before God. And that was indeed serious business for every religious oriented Jew in Paul's world.

The syntactical structure of this third class conditional expression in v. 26 is more complex than the two above statements in v. 25. Here it can be charted out as:

Protasis: v. 26a

Apodosis: v. 26b

Because of the detailed presentation of each, we will artificially divide them into two segments for exegesis purposes.

ἐὰν οὖν ἡ ἀκροβυστία τὰ δικαιώματα τοῦ νόμου φυλάσση (v. 26a). The inferential conjunction οὖν is important here as a connector of the two main clause statements in v. 26 back to the discussion in v. 25. It makes explicit something Paul considered implicit in v. 25. And that is the status of the obedient but uncircum-

the Lord has assigned, to which God called you. This is my rule in all the churches. 18 **Was anyone at the time of his call already circumcised? Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision.** Was anyone at the time of his call uncircumcised? Let him not seek circumcision. 19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but obeying the commandments of God is everything. 20 Let each of you remain in the condition in which you were called.



cised Gentile before God.

The targeted person is ἡ ἀκροβυστία, **the uncircumcised person**. This Greek word referenced both the person and his lack of having been circumcised. This makes for a nice play off the word here in both the protasis (the person) and the apodosis 1 (the status). In the 11 uses of ἀκροβυστία inside Romans 4 of them reference the person (2:26, 27; 3:30; 4:9) with 7 designating the status of being uncircumcised (2:25, 26; 4:10 [2x], 11 [2x], 12). Literally ἀκροβυστία specifies the foreskin, and is found only in biblical and ecclesiastical writings in Greek.¹⁷⁵ Secular Greeks preferred ἀκροποσθία (or ἀκροπόσθιον) derived from ἄκρος and πόσθη over ἀκροβυστία. Interestingly, differing manuscript traditions of the Septuagint (LXX) use both ἀκροβυστία and ἀκρόβυστος as the

¹⁷⁵ ἀκροβυστία (signifying 'foreskin' or *praeputium*),¹ ἀκρόβυστος and ἀκροβυστέω are formed from the adj. ἄκρος (which denotes 'running up to a point,' or 'that which stands on the outer edge'; 'extreme' or 'supreme') and the relatively infrequent verb βύω (meaning 'to stop up' or 'close'), with the related forms βύζω and βυνέω (the latter being specifically Attic).

"Although this etymology seems to be clear and meaningful, it is rendered uncertain by the fact that elsewhere in Gk. the same thing is denoted by a much more pregnant term of similar sound. In Hippocrates, Aristotle and Pollux the foreskin is ἀκροποσθία (or ἀκροπόσθιον) derived from ἄκρος (as above) and πόσθη (or ποσθία, πόσθιον), which is used by the doctors of antiquity like Hippocrates and Galen, as also by Aristotle, to denote the 'foreskin' or 'male organ.' Hence ἀκροποσθία comes to signify the 'extreme foreskin' or the 'foreskin' itself. The possibility has thus to be taken into account that ἀκροβυστία really derived from ἀκροποσθία,² the link with βύω³ playing a primary, or more likely a secondary, role. Perhaps the Greek Jews, who first used ἀκροβυστία for ἀκροποσθία, had special reasons for so doing.

"Cr.-Kö., 109 f.: 'It has thus to be recognised with Winer⁴ that ἀκροβυστία arises as an intentional reconstruction of ἀκροποσθία with a view to expressing the matter in a decorously indirect and veiled manner. The term is obviously fashioned by the Jews in opposition to περιτομή and perhaps in reminiscence of the Gk. ἀκροποσθία, as also with the Heb. נֶפֶשׁ in mind. It is used only by them (cf. Eph. 2:11: ὁμοίως τὰ ἔθνη ἐν σαρκὶ οἱ λεγόμενοι ἀκροβυστία ὑπὸ τῆς λεγομένης περιτομῆς ἐν σαρκί).'⁵ In the attempt to establish a vox mere biblica, Cr.-Kö. seems at this point to read rather too much out of Eph. 2:11. Winer, to whom appeal is made, says of this passage among others: 'Like all euphemistic expressions, it remains general;⁵ those who used it knew what was meant.'

"E. Weidner:⁶ 'It may be that the word *baltu* == *bultu* == *būstu* contributed to the NT ἀκροβυστία ('foreskin'). This term might signify the *membrum virile*.' Weidner⁷ also lists ἀκροβυστία as one of the Semitic words which came into Gk., seeing behind it the Babylonian *būstu* ('shame'). The Heb. נֶפֶשׁ corresponds to the Babylonian *būstu*. My own suspicion is that the similarity of sound played some part for Greek speaking Jews as in other cases like נֶפֶשׁ == ἐκκλησία.⁸"

[Karl Ludwig Schmidt, "Ἀκροβυστία," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:225–226.]

opposites of περιτομή and περιτετεμημένος.¹⁷⁶ In the NT, ἀκροβυστία is always used (20x) to reference either uncircumcision or the uncircumcised, and only in Paul's writings except for Acts 11:3. And 11 of the 19 Pauline uses are in Romans.

Clearly here in v. 26a, ἡ ἀκροβυστία specifies the person who has not been circumcised. Normally in Paul's world this would designate a non-Jew which is also specified by the ethnic based word ἔθνος, **Gentile**.¹⁷⁷ But the religious oriented ἀκροβυστία works better as the opposite of περιτομή in this context.

The scenario depicted in this protasis is of the Gentile τὰ δικαίωματα τοῦ νόμου φυλάσσει, **keeping the just requirements of the Law**. The noun δικαίωμα specifies a regulation defining some action as just. But also it specifies a regulation that itself is perceived as just. Both nuances of δικαίωμα are found in the five uses inside Romans: just requirement, 1:32; 2:26; 8:4 and

¹⁷⁶ Comparison of the different Gk. versions of the OT shows that ἀκροβυστία and ἀκρόβυστος are used both in a literal (physical) and a metaphorical (spiritual and ethical) sense, and that they are the opposites of περιτομή and περιτετεμημένος.

In the LXX it is used 13 times for נְלֵי in Gn. 17:11, 14, 23, 24, 25; 34:14; Ex. 4:25; Lv. 12:3; Jos. 5:3; 1 Βασ. 18:25, 27; 2 Βασ. 3:14; Jer. 9:25 (24, also Α). It also occurs in Gn. 34:24; Jdt. 14:10; 1 Macc. 1:15. In ΑΣΘ it is found in Lv. 19:23 (LXX: ἀκαθαρσία) in conjunction with the verb ἀκροβυστίζω, which is not found elsewhere. In Α it occurs at Dt. 10:16 (LXX: σκληροκαρδία); Ex. 6:12: ἀκρόβυστος χεῖλεσιν (LXX: ἄλογος); Is. 52:1: ἀκρόβυστος (LXX: ἀπερίμητος [καὶ ἀκάθαρτος]); Ez. 32:26 (ἀπερίμητος), 27, 29 (also ΣΘ).

"In the NT it occurs 20 times. Except for Ac. 11:3, it is found only in Paul, R. 2:25, 26 (twice), 27; 3:30; 4:9, 10 (twice), 11 (twice), 12; 1 C. 7:18, 19; Gl. 2:7; 5:6; 6:15; Eph. 2:11; Col. 2:13; 3:11. In early Christian literature it occurs in Barn., 9, 5 and 13, 7, in both cases in quotation of the OT, and more frequently in Justin; ἀκρόβυστος is found in Ign. Phld., 6, 1; Just. Dial., 19, 3.

"The true range and biblico-theological sense of ἀκροβυστία in the linguistic usage of the LXX and NT can be worked out only in connection with its opposite περιτομή, and demands rather more than the lexicographical discussion given in this article."

[Karl Ludwig Schmidt, "Ἀκροβυστία," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:226.]

¹⁷⁷ **GENTILES** jen'tils [גוֹיִם **goyim**; ἔθνος **ethnos**]. When Hebrew and Greek words are translated *gentiles* (from the Lat. word for nations), they refer to all ethnic groups besides Jews, as in Ps 2:1, 'Why do the nations (or gentiles) rage ... against the Lord and the Lord's anointed?' **Goy** [גוֹי] means 'a people,' so it often does refer to Israel, as in Exod 19:6, 'a holy people.' Some NT uses of *ethnos* clearly mean non-Jews (e.g., Luke 2:32; Rom 2:14; 1 Cor 1:23), but others—Matt 28:19, which reads *panta ta ethnē* [πάντα τὰ ἔθνη], 'every nation' - include the Jews. Paul sometimes uses 'Greek' to mean 'non-Jew' (Gal 3:28). [Richard B. Vinson, "Gentiles," ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006–2009), 2:556.]



just action, 5:16, 18. The idea here with τὰ δικαιώματα τοῦ νόμου is that what God demands in His Law is appropriate and consistent with His character and being. Just is measured biblically by God's character, not by human standards. This label τὰ δικαιώματα τοῦ νόμου references the same thing as τὰ τοῦ νόμου, *the things of the Law*, in 2:14. This characterization of τὰ δικαιώματα τοῦ νόμου not only sees these requirements as just but as reflecting God's character. Furthermore, it picks up the additional depiction in 2:15 of τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου γραπτὸν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν, *the work of the Law written in their hearts*. Together the picture of the Gentile having access to a sense of right and wrong reflecting God's character and that matches the requirements of the Torah of Moses in written expression even though the Gentile has no physical access to this written code.

The response of this Gentile to such a code of right and wrong is φυλάσσει, i.e., to keep it, observe it, watch over it to protect it. Contextually the precise sense here is to *conform one's life to the requirements of this Law*. This is very close to φύσει τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν, *by nature they do the things of the Law*, in v. 14. That is, they are motivated by inner desire to keep these requirements, rather than coerced by external demands (cf. v. 15).

In short, the protasis in v. 26a reaches back to summarize the more detailed depiction of this Gentile in vv. 14-16.

οὐχ ἡ ἀκροβυστία αὐτοῦ εἰς περιτομὴν λογισθήσεται; (v. 26b). Thus in the possible scenario of there being this kind of Gentile in the world of the readers of this letter, what would be the religious significance of the actions of such a Gentile? 2:16 has already project the significance to the Day of Judgment and God's favorable posture toward such a Gentile. Now in connection to the religious issue of circumcision against that same Judgment Day (note the future tense spelling λογισθήσεται), Paul astoundingly asserts that God would consider this Gentile's uncircumcision as authentic circumcision. And he casts this declaration in the form of a rhetorical question that expects the reader to agree that this is indeed how God will look at such a Gentile. This means that the uncircumcision of the compliant Gentile gives him advantage over the disobedient circumcised Jew! This uncircumcised Gentile is more acceptable to God than the circumcised Jewish elitist. Verses 27-29 then go on to amplify this essential point that would have been hugely controversial to those in the Jewish synagogues of Rome.

Central to understanding clearly Paul's point in this apodosis is grasping clearly the meaning of λογισθήσεται here. This commercial oriented term of credits / debits from λογίζομαι was a picturesque way

in Paul's world to depict God's evaluation process on Judgment Day. Beyond this, however, Paul's use of this verb here anticipates the LXX use of the same verb in his quote of Gen. 15:6 found in Rom. 4:9, ἐλογίσθη τῷ Ἀβραάμ ἡ πίστις εἰς δικαιοσύνην. The apostle's argument there (cf. 4:9-12) is that God considered Abraham as righteous before Abraham was circumcised, not after. Abraham was in an uncircumcised state when God declared him righteous.

The use of the sixth principle part verb spelling in the future passive λογισθήσεται projects this moment of calculation to a yet to happen Judgment Day. This is the day stated in verse 16,

ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὅτε κρίνει ὁ θεὸς τὰ κρυπτὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου διὰ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ.

on the day when, according to my gospel, God, through Jesus Christ, will judge the secret thoughts of all.

On that day God will make a calculation of the life of every individual and decide who spends eternity with Him and who spends it in the eternal damnation of Hell. What he will examine is not the physical circumcision of the Jew, but the quality of obedience to Him by every person whether circumcised or not. As Paul indicates in v. 16, the thoroughness of this examination will extend down to the hidden things not otherwise known that are a part of our life. God's knowledge of us is just that thorough!

Although inside Hellenistic Judaism many streams of description of God as divine Judge and a moment of final judgment exist, Paul's uniquely Christian presentation here contradicts most of the apocalyptic Jewish depictions. Circumcision, proper physical circumcision, was essential to God's positive evaluation on that day. Obedience to the Law was taught, but limited with God letting through to Heaven every properly circumcised Jew even with minimal obedience to the Torah. The perceived advantage of circumcision in such a teaching is huge. But the apostle totally debunks any such advantage to the circumcised Jew. In fact, the uncircumcised Gentile who obeys God has big advantage over the circumcised Jew. And this, even when he has no access to the written Torah of God. His uncircumcision counts out as equivalent to the perceived value of physical circumcision by Jews.

The particular syntax of the apodosis should be noted as well. The active voice (deponent verb in most principle part spellings) of λογίζομαι with the preposition εἰς is along the lines of I calculate something to be this. But here the so-called divine passive voice is used where the direct object 'something' becomes the verb subject with the resulting idea of 'something' will be calculated as 'this.' Here the 'something' is ἡ ἀκροβυστία

αὐτοῦ, his uncircumcision, and the ‘this’ is περιτομήν, circumcision. So on Judgment Day God will calculate the Gentile’s uncircumcision to be circumcision. Of course, the latter is viewed from the traditional Jewish elevation of physical circumcision as the key to gaining Heaven.

The shocking nature of Paul’s statement to Jewish readers would have been astonishing. But Paul’s subsequent amplification of this declaration had to have cause even greater astonishment and anger against the apostle.

καὶ κρινεῖ ἡ ἐκ φύσεως ἀκροβυστία τὸν νόμον τελοῦσα σὲ (v. 27a).¹⁷⁸ This second main clause statement encompassing v. 27 becomes ‘adding salt to an already open wound’ by Paul. The core elements (S-V-O) of the main clause are ἡ ἀκροβυστία...κρινεῖ...σὲ, **the uncircumcised will pass judgment on you**. The compliant Gentile then will sit in judgment on the Jewish elitist on Judgment Day. Now that did not go well with any Jewish reader of this text. Perhaps especially so the element inside the Christian community that viciously opposed Paul when he arrived in the city a few years after writing this letter (cf. Phi. 1:15ff).

The unusual syntactical sequence of verb - subject - object places heightened emphasis on the action of the future tense verb κρινεῖ. The future judging is stressed above who judges and who is judged. With this verb the apostle reaches back to the beginning in 2:1 where the present tense κρίνεις, **you are judging**, is defined as σεαυτὸν κατακρίνεις, **yourself you are condemning**. The elitist who sits in judgment now on his pagan neighbor is now setting himself up for condemnation on the Day of Judgment. The very pointed question is raised to this elitist in v. 3 about whether he delusionally thinks that he can escape the judgment of God. Instead, his present judging of his pagan neighbor is simply intensifying the coming judgment of God upon him on Judgment Day (v. 5). Now with the focus trimmed down to the Jewish elitist considering that his circumcision will carry the day for him, even if his obedience to Law doesn’t measure up, Paul asserts that his Gentle neighbor who complies with God’s demands even without access to the written Torah and without having been circumcised will by his obedience help bring down God’s wrath upon this circumcised Jewish elitist. The Gentile’s obedience in spite of non-circumcision and absence of the written Torah will serve to heighten the accountability of the

¹⁷⁸The syntax is interesting here with the feminine article ἡ connecting to the participle τελοῦσα, thus marking off the boundaries of the subject of the verb κρινεῖ. Also it links up to the feminine noun ἀκροβυστία here designating a person rather than a state of being. This unusual construction led one copist (mss G) to omit ἡ ἐκ φύσεως ἀκροβυστία in order to smooth out the expression. He understood the implicit subject of κρινεῖ to go back to the explicit stated ἡ ἀκροβυστία in the previous statement.

circumcised Jewish elitist standing before God in disobedience.

The principle here asserted by Paul about divine judgment matches exactly that declared by Jesus in Matthew 12:41-42 (// Luke 11:31-32).¹⁷⁹ The residents of ancient Nineveh and the queen of Sheba (cf. 1 Kings 10 // 2 Chron. 9) function like Paul’s compliant Gentile, while Paul’s disobedient but circumcised Jewish elitist equals ‘**this generation**,’ γενεᾶς ταύτης, in the two scenarios of Judgment Day pictured by Jesus. Both of Jesus’ examples were non-Jewish Gentiles. But both responded positively to the opportunity to discover and obey God, while Jesus’ own Jewish generation with the advantage of the ministry of the Son of Man in their midst (ἰδοὺ πλεῖον Ἴωνᾶ ὧδε; ἰδοὺ πλεῖον Σολομῶνος ὧδε) failed to respond positively and obey God. Their rejected advantage will then turn into huge disadvantage on Judgment Day. Paul makes the exact same point about the Jewish elitist he targets in 2:27.

Clearly Paul’s use of κρινεῖ matches in meaning Matthew’s Greek translation of Jesus’ Aramaic verb with κατακρινεῖ. But Paul made this clear in 2:1 also. The verb κατακρίνω is the same core idea of κρίνω, but just with the negative evaluation heightened. κρίνω, however, is widely used in the NT as a synonym of κατακρίνω as seen in Rom. 3:4; 14:22; 1 Cor. 10:29; Col. 2:16; Jas 4:11-12 et als.

What emerges from this is not that Gentiles will do the judging of Jews on Judgment Day. Not at all! But rather that the positive obedience of disadvantaged Gentiles will serve to heighten the disobedience of advantaged Jews in that coming public event. Their disobedience will be judged by God as even worse given the positive witness of obedient Gentiles. This is the sense behind Paul’s declaration in 1 Cor. 6:2 and that of Jesus in Matt. 19:28 // Luke 22:30.

Note the profile of this Gentile given here in comparison to previous depictions.

2:27, ἡ ἐκ φύσεως ἀκροβυστία τὸν νόμον τελοῦσα, **the circumcised who naturally satisfies the Law’s demands**.

2:14, ὅταν γὰρ ἔθνη τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα φύσει τὰ

¹⁷⁹**Matt. 12:41-42.** 41 Ἄνδρες Νινευῖται ἀναστήσονται ἐν τῇ κρίσει μετὰ τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης καὶ κατακρινοῦσιν αὐτήν, ὅτι μετενόησαν εἰς τὸ κήρυγμα Ἴωνᾶ, καὶ ἰδοὺ πλεῖον Ἴωνᾶ ὧδε. 42 βασίλισσα νότου ἐγερθήσεται ἐν τῇ κρίσει μετὰ τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης καὶ κατακρινεῖ αὐτήν, ὅτι ἦλθεν ἐκ τῶν περάτων τῆς γῆς ἀκοῦσαι τὴν σοφίαν Σολομῶνος, καὶ ἰδοὺ πλεῖον Σολομῶνος ὧδε.

41 The people of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the proclamation of Jonah, and see, something greater than Jonah is here! 42 The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to listen to the wisdom of Solomon, and see, something greater than Solomon is here!



τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν, οὗτοι νόμον μὴ ἔχοντες ἑαυτοῖς εἰσιν νόμος, **for when Gentiles not having the things of the Law naturally do the things of the Law,**

2:15, οἵτινες ἐνδείκνυνται τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου γραπτὸν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν, συμμαρτυρούσης αὐτῶν τῆς συνειδήσεως καὶ μεταξύ ἀλλήλων τῶν λογισμῶν κατηγορούντων ἢ καὶ ἀπολογουμένων, **who demonstrated the work of the Law written on their hearts, their conscience giving witness and against one another their thoughts condemning or also defending.**

In 2:27 the singular Gentile is defined as a clearer opponent to the singular Jewish elitist in the continuation of the diatribe begun in verse one. But in the broader reference in vv. 14-15, the plural Gentiles is used. These are more obviously axiomatic statements in support of previous declarations in vv. 12-13.

The apostle makes use of a variety of terms in order to depict the obedience of the uncircumcised Gentile: τὸν νόμον τελοῦσα (v. 27); τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν (v. 14); τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου γραπτὸν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν (v. 15). These compare to the declarations of acceptable obedience set forth earlier:

θεοῦ ὃς ἀποδώσει ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ· 7 τοῖς μὲν καθ' ὑπομονὴν ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν ζητοῦσιν ζωὴν αἰώνιον, **of God who will give back to each one according to his deeds, to those on the one hand who out of perseverance in good work seek God's glory and honor and immortality comes life eternal** (vv. 6c-7)

δόξα δὲ καὶ τιμὴ καὶ εἰρήνη παντὶ τῷ ἐργαζομένῳ τὸ ἀγαθόν, Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλληνι, **but God's glory and honor and peace will be upon everyone doing the good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek** (v. 10)

The God who is completely impartial in His judging (v. 11) looks at the obedience of the uncircumcised Gentile and sees what He is seeking according to the standards declared in vv. 7 and 10. He ignores any physical circumcision or lack of circumcision. Instead, he looks for real circumcision done by His Spirit on the heart of the individual being judged (v. 29). And how is this known outwardly? By deeds of obedience.

It is this discovery by God brought out into the open for all to see on Judgment Day which gives greater advantage of the uncircumcised Gentile over that of the circumcised Jew.

The Gentile's satisfying the demands of Law (τὸν νόμον τελοῦσα) has been accomplished ἐκ φύσεως, **naturally**. The prepositional phrase here ἐκ φύσεως, inherently an adverbial modifier, goes to the participle τελοῦσα, **carries out**. The NRSV is wrong in linking it to the noun ἀκροβυστία, with the rendering 'physically uncircumcised.' The idea of 'physical' is not in the scope of φύσις, and requires either σαρκικός, -ή, -όν or ψυχικός,

-ή, -όν. See ἐν σαρκὶ περιτομή in v. 28.

What does ἐκ φύσεως mean? The parallel is in v. 14 with φύσει τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν, **instinctively do the things of the Law**. Thus ἐκ φύσεως...τὸν νόμον τελοῦσα, **out of instinct satisfies the Law's demands** (v. 27) means the same essential thing as φύσει τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν (v. 14). Paul's use of φύσις in 1:26 and 2:14 connects it to action rather than existence. Something is done by φύσις, not something exists by φύσις. This argues strongly for connecting it here to the action of the participle rather than the status of the noun, especially when the Greek grammar also favors it. The prepositional phrase literally specifies the source of keeping the Law as φύσεως. This becomes a very Greek and Roman, as well as a very non-Jewish, way of specifying something in divine creation of this Gentile that oriented him toward keeping God's Law. The dative case spelling φύσει in v. 14 specifies the same idea. In v. 29, Paul will further specify this as περιτομὴ καρδίας ἐν πνεύματι οὐ γράμματι, **circumcision of the heart by the Spirit not by letter**. Thus ἐκ φύσεως keeping of Law stands in contrast to having access to the written Torah for obeying. To be sure, the idea derived here is not much different than what is derived from the perceived adjectival role for the prepositional phrase. This uncircumcised Gentile without access to the written Torah nevertheless obeys God's Law, while the circumcised Jewish elitist with access to the written Torah disobeys God's Law. Now who will have the advantage before God on Judgment Day when standing before the totally impartial Judge of humanity?

τὸν διὰ γράμματος καὶ περιτομῆς παραβάτην νόμου (v. 27b). The adjective modifier of the direct object σὲ is τὸν διὰ γράμματος καὶ περιτομῆς παραβάτην νόμου, that is, τὸν...παραβάτην. Literally it is **the through the written code and circumcision transgressor of Law**. Everything else is attached to the noun παραβάτην, **transgressor**. The 'you' equals the 'transgressor'! And of course, σὲ references the Jewish elitist being targeted. Already in v. 25, Paul labels this fellow a παραβάτης νόμου, **transgressor of Law**. In v. 25, it is a milder accusation, while in v. 27 it is assumed. This is consistent with the previous direct accusation in v. 23, διὰ τῆς παραβάσεως τοῦ νόμου τὸν θεὸν ἀτιμάζεις, **you through transgressing the Law dishonor God**. And this is in spite of his boasting about possessing the Law: ὃς ἐν νόμῳ καυχᾶσαι. Here more detailed accusation is leveled at this fellow: διὰ γράμματος καὶ περιτομῆς, **through written code and circumcision**. Both things that the elitist counted on to get him to Heaven have become instead agents making him a transgressor of God's Law. The indirect agency construction with διὰ and the ablative of impersonal agency nouns paint

a graphically surprising picture of something completely unexpected by this fellow.

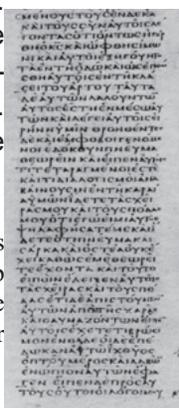
Although at its most precise point of meaning ⁴⁸ γράμμα specifies a letter of the Greek alphabet, it more often specifies a set of written characters ⁴⁹ comprising a document or piece of writing.¹⁸⁰ In ⁵⁰ this context, it clearly designates the written Law of Moses in the Pentateuch. In the 3 uses in Romans γράμμα refers to the written legal code in ⁵¹ 2:27 and 7:6. In v. 29, the circumcision of the heart is not γράμματι. That is, this inner circumcision is not physical circumcision as prescribed by the Law of Moses. Ironically, these were the two exclusive means of gaining Heaven for first century Jews. The apostle here nullifies this kind of thinking. For the Jewish elitist, they become the very means of exposing him as a violator of Law which puts him in an inferior position to the compliant but uncircumcised Gentile on Judgment Day.

Without question, such declarations need supporting arguments, which Paul then supplies in vv. 28-29. The causal conjunction γὰρ sets this up.

This support is accomplished in a single sentence. The core structure is framed around the οὐ... οὐδὲ... ἀλλ'... καὶ use of conjunctions (**not** this...**nor** that...**but** the other...**and** another). Additional contrast is emphasized via ἐν τῷ φανερῷ, **in the open** verses ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ, **in the secret**. Also ἐν σαρκὶ περιτομῆ stands over against περιτομῆ καρδίας, as well as ἐν πνεύματι against οὐ γράμματι. All of this is to highlight the stark contrast between the spiritual situation of the compliant Gentile and the disobedient Jew. The apostle makes a strong difference between the two individuals in his diatribe rhetoric here.

οὐ γὰρ ὁ ἐν τῷ φανερῷ Ἰουδαῖός ἐστιν (v. 28a). The first two negative define who is not a Jew. The common quality is ἐν τῷ φανερῷ that is repeated in both statements. Neither the person nor his physical circumcision is recognized based solely on ἐν τῷ φανερῷ. From the adjective φανερός, -ά, -όν, this substantival adjective has the sense in the idiomatic prepositional phrase of specifying something that is clear and out in the open. The focus becomes the sense of known or clearly understood from open or public exposure. This consequently carries a wide range of nuanced meanings. The NRSV struggles here by translating the first use in v. 28a as 'outwardly,' but the second use (v. 28b) as 'external.'

¹⁸⁰This is more graphic than most moderns might think since documents written in Greek up to and even past Paul's era were written as one continuing row of capital letters after another with no spacing or punctuation marks.



2:28 γὰρ
οὐ ὁ ἐν τῷ φανερῷ Ἰουδαῖός ἐστιν
οὐδὲ
2:29 ἢ ἐν τῷ φανερῷ ἐν σαρκὶ περιτομῆ (ἐστίν),
ἀλλ'
ὁ ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ Ἰουδαῖος (ἐστίν),
καὶ
ἐν πνεύματι
περιτομῆ καρδίας... (ἐστίν)
οὐ γράμματι,

In this first use the adjectivally used prepositional phrase¹⁸¹ sets up the denial that **the in the open Jew is not**. The point is that the Jew who publicly projects himself as a Jew may actually not be Jewish. Although rather shocking to the Jewish readers contemporary to Paul, the apostle actually reaches back into a pool of OT scriptures alluding to authentic Jewishness and circumcision.¹⁸² Even some of the intertestamental writings assert similar ideas out of these OT sources:¹⁸³

¹⁸¹The Greek prepositional phrase inherently is adverbially used and thus will qualify the verb or verbal that it is attached to. But like Greek single word adverbs, the prepositional phrase can be used adjectivally. Two such patterns of construction signal this: a) the prepositional phrase is placed between the article and the noun that has the article (here for instance in **ὁ ἐν τῷ φανερῷ Ἰουδαῖός**, literally **the in the open Jew**). Or b) it can be placed following the noun but with the appropriate article, which here would be set up as **ὁ Ἰουδαῖός ὁ ἐν τῷ φανερῷ**, with the same meaning as the first instance. These two options signaled to the reader and listener just hearing the text read that the prepositional phrase was attached to the noun rather than the verb.

¹⁸²Lev 26:40–42: “If they [the people of Israel] will confess their sins and the sins of their fathers—their treachery against me and their hostility toward me, which made me hostile toward them so that I sent them into the land of their enemies—then when their uncircumcised hearts are humbled and they pay for their sin, I will remember my covenant with Jacob and my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land.”

Deut 10:16: “Circumcise, therefore, the foreskin of your hearts, and do not be stiff-necked any longer.”

Deut 30:6: “The Lord your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and live.”

Jer 4:4: “Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, remove the foreskin of your hearts, O people of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem.”

Jer 9:25–26: “ ‘The days are surely coming,’ says the Lord, ‘when I will punish all who are circumcised only in the flesh—Egypt, Judah, Edom, Ammon, Moab, and all who live in the desert in distant places. For all these nations are really uncircumcised, and even the whole house of Israel is uncircumcised in heart.’ ”

[Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 317–318.]

¹⁸³Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary

Jub 1:23: “After this [Israel’s repentance and confession of sin] they will turn to me in all uprightness and with all their heart and with all their soul, and I will circumcise the foreskin of their hearts and the foreskin of the hearts of their descendants, and I will create in them a holy spirit, and I will cleanse them so that they shall not turn away from me from that day unto eternity.”

1QpHab 11.13 (on Hab 2:16): “Its interpretation concerns the Priest whose shame has exceeded his glory because he did not circumcise the foreskin of his heart.”

Thus this beginning point of the four is grounded in the sacred scriptures of the Jews of Paul’s day.

οὐδέ ἡ ἐν τῷ φανερωῖ ἐν σαρκὶ περιτομή (v. 28b). This second denial continues the point of the first with the denial of physical circumcision as being of any spiritual value before God. The same prepositional phrase ἐν τῷ φανερωῖ is tucked between the article and the noun: ἡ... περιτομή in the ellipsis that picks up Ἰουδαῖός ἐστιν from the first statement. The adjective Ἰουδαῖος, -αία, -αῖον is used as a predicate adjective by implied ellipsis here, although its function in the first instance is that of a substantial adjective in a subject nominate role. Literally reproducing this syntactically in English is not possible, and thus some of the power of the expression is lost in translation. The literal sense of the completed idea is **nor is *the* in the open in flesh *circumcision* Jewish.**

His way of referencing physical circumcision here is ἐν σαρκὶ περιτομή, **in flesh *circumcision***. Ordinarily inside the NT with 36 uses of περιτομή, the term itself assumes physical circumcision. Included in this number are the 15 uses of περιτομή used in Romans by Paul with 14 of these found in chapters two through four of the letter. When used by itself without modifiers περιτομή always refers to physical circumcision.

So when modifiers show up as here in 2:28, one anticipates a contrast of physical circumcision with some other kind of circumcision. Here the alternative circumcision is labeled in v. 29b a περιτομή καρδίας, **circumcision of the heart**. The word καρδία in figurative use designates the interior part of human existence and especially the volitional aspect. That is, we make decisions in our hearts. When the heart has been circumcised it has thus been yielded over to God’s control so that He makes those decisions. In Col. 2:11, Paul speaks of a περιτομῇ ἀχειροποιήτῳ which literally means a **circumcision not done by human hands**.¹⁸⁴ In that same statement

(Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 318.

¹⁸⁴Col. 2:11 Ἐν ᾧ καὶ περιετμήθητε **περιτομῇ ἀχειροποιήτῳ** ἐν τῇ ἀπεκδύσει τοῦ σώματος τῆς σαρκός, ἐν **τῇ περιτομῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ**,

In him also you were circumcised with **a spiritual circumci-**

he also speaks of the τῇ περιτομῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, **circumcision of Christ**. Contextually Paul obviously is not referring to the physical circumcision of Christ. Instead, figurative circumcision is the point as a symbol of complete surrender to God. This applies to both references.

The meaning of the inner circumcision becomes clearer as it stands in contrast to outward physical circumcision. Inner circumcision speaks of a spiritual commitment to God that is authentic and verified by outward acts of obedience to God. In contrast, the physical circumcision of the Jewish elitist here in no way possesses validity because it is not accompanied by acts of obedience. The contemporary Jewish twisting of the meaning and value of circumcision to be contained merely in the act of having been circumcised rather than as expressing inward commitment to obey God means that physical circumcision does not make one Jewish. That is, it does not make an individual a person committed to God.

This reality of being outwardly Jewish and properly circumcised is no indicator of one authentically being Jewish in the definition of Jewish signifying commitment to God. The Jewish elitist took huge pride in being Jewish but he based his pride on outward indications which have no value to or acceptance by God on Judgment Day. What does count before God is obedience which the Jewish elitist doesn’t have but the uncircumcised compliant Gentile does have. Thus his obedience will become greater punishment for the Jewish elitist, since the elitist had access to the Torah and still failed to obey it when the Gentile had no such access. The causal γὰρ sets up this connection of the two declarations in v. 28 to the claim about Judgment Day in v. 27.

ἀλλ’ ὁ ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ Ἰουδαῖος (v. 29a). But Paul is not finished building a case for the assertion about Judgment Day in v. 27. Using the parallel but opposite claims of Jewishness and circumcision set forth in v. 28, Paul not reverses the perspective to claim that the uncircumcised Gentile is the authentic Jew on Judgment Day (v. 29). Both Ἰουδαῖός and περιτομή are referenced, but these are now inner realities instead of meaningless external realities. Here Paul is describing ἡ ἐκ φύσεως ἀκροβυστία τὸν νόμον τελοῦσα, **the uncircumcised who by nature satisfies the Law’s demands**, in v. 27. The sequence of presentation is that of informal chiasmus, charted as follows:

- A the uncircumcised Gentile (v. 27a)
- B **the circumcised Jew (v. 27b)**
- B’ **the circumcised Jew (v. 28)**
- A’ the uncircumcised Gentile (v. 29)

sion, by putting off the body of the flesh in **the circumcision of Christ**;



And this hidden identity is beyond human ability to grasp. It only comes out into the open in final judgment. Our difficulty is with translation here since we have no such adjective or noun in any of the modern western languages that carries this implication. Consequently modern translations will be all over the map in trying to get at Paul's meaning with this expression in Greek.

Thus the authentic Jew is the ὁ ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ Ἰουδαῖος, in the hidden place Jew. Any attempt to equate Jew with the outward appearing Jew is doomed to ultimate failure on the Day of Judgment by God. The authentic Jew will be uncovered in divine judgment on that day.

There is a side to this in Paul's day that has unnerving echoes into our modern world. For the Jewish elitists such as Paul targets specifically here being Jewish was a matter of national or ethnic pride. Having Jewish parents who had you properly circumcised gave you a special identity as God's covenant people. This would be enough to carry you through final judgment and get you to Heaven. The apostle blasts such thinking to pieces. But its modern counterpoint are professing Christians who often claim being American makes one a Christian since America is supposedly a Christian nation. Or, even worse those whose sole hope for eternity is having Christian parents who had their child baptized in the church. "I'm a Christian because of all this," is the devastating claim that dooms one to eternal damnation.

καὶ περιτομή καρδίας ἐν πνεύματι οὐ γράμματι (v. 29b). Also instead of ἡ ἐν τῷ φανερῷ ἐν σαρκὶ περιτομή, the in the open in flesh circumcision, we have περιτομή καρδίας ἐν πνεύματι οὐ γράμματι, a circumcision of the heart in the Spirit not in the written code. The other side of the religious issue for the Jewish elitist was circumcision. Interestingly, Paul's further dependence on the Hebrew background for his contrast is even more obvious to one somewhat familiar with the OT. He uses phraseology with definite OT links. The expression περιτομή καρδίας, circumcision of the heart, matches the LXX language in passages such as Deut. 30:6, καὶ περικαθαριεῖ κύριος τὴν καρδίαν σου καὶ τὴν καρδίαν τοῦ σπέρματός σου, and the Lord will circumcise your heart and the heart of your seed. Also the reverse concept is found in texts such as Jer. 9:25c, καὶ πᾶς οἶκος Ἰσραὴλ ἀπερίτμητοι καρδίας αὐτῶν, and all the house of Israel is uncircumcised in their heart. The Hellenistic Jewish writings such as Jubilees (1:23) reflect awareness of these OT concepts in their projections for the messianic age:

But after this they will return to me in all unrighteous-

50 ὁ ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ Ἰουδαῖος (ἐστίν),
καὶ |
| ἐν πνεύματι
51 περιτομή καρδίας. . . (ἐστίν)
| οὐ γράμματι,
οὐ ὁ ἔπαινος οὐκ (ἐστίν)
| ἐξ ἀνθρώπων
| ἀλλ'
(οὐ ὁ ἔπαινος ἐστίν)
ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ.

ness and with all of (their) heart and soul. And I shall cut off the foreskin of their heart and the foreskin of the heart of their descendants. And I shall create for them a holy spirit, and I shall purify them so that they will not turn away from following me from that day and forever.¹⁸⁸

Thus Paul's readers would hear a definite echo from the Hebrew scriptures when reading this expression in Rom. 2:29. But the apostle is giving a different twist and meaning to the phrase. The heart that is circumcised is not repenting Israel, but the compliant Gentile of their day.

The uniquely Christian defining of the circumcised heart is given in the two other qualifications that follow: ἐν πνεύματι οὐ γράμματι, in the Spirit, not in the written code. Thus the circumcised heart resides within the realm of the work of the Holy Spirit rather than within the parameters of the written Torah. In this he directly contradicts the contention of Jubilees 1:23 that repentant Israel will experience such a profound inner cleansing and transformation that it will never sin again.¹⁸⁹ His apocalyptic projection is quite grandiose.¹⁹⁰ Such will

¹⁸⁸James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the New Testament: Expansions of the "Old Testament" and Legends, Wisdom, and Philosophical Literature, Prayers, Psalms and Odes, Fragments of Lost Judeo-Hellenistic Works*, vol. 2 (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1985), 54.

¹⁸⁹One interesting side note is the expression "the foreskin of their hearts." In Hebrew, לֶבַב לְהָרֶץ, but in Greek σκληροκαρδία. The Greek term is never used in the NT with this literal meaning. Instead, the three NT uses are translated as 'hard-hearted,' 'stubbornness,' and 'hardness.' The 'foreskin' seems to symbolize the evil that lurks within the human heart. It must be removed for the 'heart' to be circumcised, that is, cleansed and made acceptable. This is a rather graphic portrayal of evil. Paul avoids this imagery in his discussions.

¹⁹⁰Jubilees 1:22-25. 22 And the LORD said to Moses, "I know their contrariness and their thoughts and their stubbornness. And they will not obey until they acknowledge their sin and the sins of their fathers. 23 But after this they will return to me in all unrighteousness and with all of (their) heart and soul. And I shall cut off the foreskin of their heart and the foreskin of the heart of their descendants. And I shall create for them a holy spirit, and I shall purify them so that they will not turn away from following me from that day and forever. 24 And their souls will cleave to me and to all my commandments. And they will do my commandments. And I shall be a father to them, and they will be sons to me. 25 And they will all be called 'sons of the living God.' And every

not happen on Judgment Day according to Paul. Instead, the Gentiles will be favored by God over these Jews.

ἐν πνεύματι. In 26 of the 34 uses of πνεῦμα in Romans the Spirit of God, rather than the human spirit is specified. Rom. 2:29 references the divine Spirit. The familiar Holy Spirit label, πνεύματος ἁγίου and πνεύματι ἁγίῳ, is found in 5:5; 14:17; 15:13, 16. He is the Spirit of Christ, πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ: 8:9. As well He is the Spirit of God, πνεῦμα Θεοῦ: 8:9, 14; 15:19. Similar is Spirit of Him (=God): τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ ἐγείραντος τὸν Ἰησοῦν, 8:11; αὐτοῦ πνεύματος, 8:11. The Spirit produces life: τοῦ πνεύματος τῆς ζωῆς, 8:2; τοῦ πνεύματος ζωῆ καὶ εἰρήνη, 8:6; τὸ πνεῦμα ζωῆ, 8:10. He leads: πνεύματι Θεοῦ ἄγονται, 8:14. He gives confirming witness: τὸ πνεῦμα συμμαρτυρεῖ, 8:16. He produces fruits: τὴν ἀπαρχὴν τοῦ πνεύματος, 8:23. And much, much more. The overwhelming richness of Paul's understanding of the Holy Spirit, expressed just in Romans, is profound and awe inspiring.

The work of the Holy Spirit in 2:29 is to circumcise the heart of the individual, here the physically uncircumcised Gentile. That means to open this fellow up to all the richness of experience made available by the presence of God's Spirit in the person. This experience the Jewish elitist does not have because his heart is uncircumcised, even though his physical body is.

οὐ γράμματι. The repeating here of γράμμα from v. 27 makes it very clear that Paul specifies the written code of the Law of Moses with γράμμα. Rom. 7:6 further confirms this meaning for γράμμα in the letter. The NRSV translation of γράμμα here as 'literal' is very weak. The circumcision of the heart then does not happen by the working of the Torah. Paul directly contradicts Jubilees 1:23 which asserts that God does circumcise the heart through the Torah (see larger context). This rejection of the Torah to affect the interior transformation of one's life underscores that such changes can never be accomplished by the individual himself. God alone does this and through the working of His Spirit inside the person's life.

οὗ ὁ ἔπαινος οὐκ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ (v. 29c). The adjectival functioning relative clause goes back to ὁ ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ Ἰουδαίῳ as the closest masculine gender personal designation.¹⁹¹ It is this uncircumcised

angel and spirit will know and acknowledge that they are my sons and I am their father in uprightness and righteousness. And I shall love them.

[James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the New Testament: Expansions of the "Old Testament" and Legends, Wisdom, and Philosophical Literature, Prayers, Psalms and Odes, Fragments of Lost Judeo-Hellenistic Works*, vol. 2 (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1985), 54.]

¹⁹¹This comes out of the genitive of reference functioning of

Gentile who will receive God's praises in final judgment rather than the Jewish elitist.¹⁹² That would have been inflammatory enough to set off rage in the Jewish synagogues of Rome. The elliptical structuring of the relative clause makes it very clear that the Jewish elitist is very much in mind with Paul's assertions here. The contrast of **praise will not be given...but will be given** is the core expression.¹⁹³ The heart of the contrast is where such praise comes from. Not from people but from God is the assertion. This raises the interpretive issue of the nature of this praise from God.

What exactly is ὁ ἔπαινος? Of the 11 NT uses, 9 are found in Paul's writings with 2 of these in Romans. The core meaning of ἔπαινος is not the uttering of positive words about a person. Instead, it is the granting approval to an individual based on some specific reason. The point made here is that human approval is meaningless (first strophe). The only ἔπαινος that counts is the one given by God (second strophe).¹⁹⁴ And this

the relative pronoun οὗ from ὅς, ἧ, ὅ. This carries the literal meaning of "in regard to whom." Because we don't have such a use of the English direct relative pronoun 'who, what' it is difficult to translate over into English.

¹⁹²The relevance of Paul's concluding reference to the proper source of praise has long puzzled scholars,¹⁶¹ evoking some implausible interpretations.¹⁶² A series of commentators suggest a wordplay between the Hebrew words for 'Jew' and 'praise,'¹⁶³ but as Käsemann remarks, such an arcane reference 'would hardly have been intelligible to the Roman community.'¹⁶⁴ Käsemann and others argue on the basis of 1 Cor 4:5 that ἔπαινος refers to an eschatological reward,¹⁶⁵ but how such a reward could have been thought to come ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ('from people') remains thereby unexplained. Fridrichsen points to the parallels in Matt 6:1–8 and in Stoic teachings about living according to an internal standard rather than conforming to the opinions of others.¹⁶⁶ Barclay suggests a 'concrete social correlation' between this final clause and conflicts between Gentile and Jewish Christians in Rome, with particular reference to tensions arising from Paul's argument about circumcision.¹⁶⁷ This would fit the classical understanding of ἔπαινος as 'approval' or 'applause,' which correlates with the competitive social context that Paul exploits throughout this diatribe.¹⁶⁸ It is significant that this pericope ends on the question of gaining honor. While the seeking of praise from fellow humans lies at the root of the perversion of Jewish — and Gentile — advantages, those who receive the gift of the circumcised heart rely on God's praise alone.¹⁶⁹ This prepares the way for Paul's proclamation of grace that comes to all, without reference to achievement or status (3:21–31), and that Christ welcomes all, Gentile and Jew alike, into his realm (15:7–12)." [Robert Jewett and Roy David Kotansky, *Romans: A Commentary*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006), 236–237.]

¹⁹³The ellipse may point to an aphorism with Jewish sources, along the lines of 2:11 and 2:2. But this is highly speculative and impossible to prove.

¹⁹⁴This stands in stark contrast to the seeking of ὁ ἔπαινος from men among Jews in Paul's day. Note Sirach 39:9, where the student of the Torah receives human praise.

Many will praise his understanding:



points toward Judgment Day acceptance by God of this uncircumcised Gentile, rather than of the Jewish elitist. And here the specific reason for the divine approval is the circumcised heart of the uncircumcised Gentile.

This addition to the two core supporting statements that precede should not be considered as an afterthought by Paul, as a few commentators do. To the contrary, the relative clause here brings the segment to a climatic summary that pulls the two declarations about Jewishness and circumcision closer together. The Jewish elitist sought human approval, most likely following the Pharisees' mistaken belief that human approval equaled God's approval (cf. Mt. 6:1-18).¹⁹⁵ Paul's point is that God's approval comes out of what He sees, a circumcised heart, which is not visible to human eyes. Human approval depends upon formal identification as a Jew and physical circumcision. But these are meaningless to God, although central to the elitist.

The application of this emphasis by Paul to our world should be relatively obvious. The apostle asserts the complete worthlessness of a religious profession based solely on outward formal symbols. "We are a church member and have been baptized" -- these are the two that come to mind first. But others would apply as well. To God such have no value either now and certainly not on judgment day. What does matter both now and on that coming day to God is an obedience to Him that stems out of an inner turning of life over to His control. Any individual depending on such superficial symbols of religion should look with terror toward the day of judgment before Almighty God.

10.3.3.2.4 The Situation of Jews Before God, 3:1-20

One of the real challenges for interpreters is the determination of text unit relationships. This becomes for the western mind the compulsion to outline texts. But the first century mind, Jewish, Greek, and Roman, had no such compulsion. For the Jewish mind in particular, the establishment of text unit connections was closer to the modern image of a chain with links. One

it will never be blotted out.

His memory will not disappear,

and his name will live through all generations.

αἰνέσουσιν τὴν σύνεσιν αὐτοῦ πολλοί,

καὶ ἕως τοῦ αἰῶνος οὐκ ἐξαλειφθήσεται·

οὐκ ἀποστήσεται τὸ μνημόσυνον αὐτοῦ,

καὶ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ζήσεται εἰς γενεὰς γενεῶν·†

Who does this praise come to? 39:1 (LXX) identifies him as **the one who devotes himself to the study of the law of the Most High**, τοῦ ἐπιδιδόντος τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ καὶ διανοουμένου ἐν νόμῳ ὑψίστου.

¹⁹⁵The purely Roman craving for public approval in a non-religious setting should not be excluded from Paul's denial of the value with ὁ ἔπαινος οὐκ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων.

link had some connection to the preceding link as well as to the subsequent link. But the image breaks down if the chain is understood as reflecting progression of thought. In the ancient Jewish mind-set, the 'chain' could go in any of many directions, straight forward, in circles, up and down, backward and forward. Often the layout of the 'chain' more closely resembles the tracks of a snake across desert sand, but not necessarily with forward movement. Imposing this kind of thinking into a modern western outline which almost universally assumes a forward progression of thought becomes difficult if not impossible.

Romans 3:1-20 clearly becomes one of such moments in the study of the text. A quick check of the outlines in several western based commentaries on Romans will illustrate this point dramatically.

Where and how does 3:1-20 fit into the grand schema of the letter body of Romans? Is it even a single text unit of thought? Many differing ideas will surface in the commentaries here.

The one clear internal signal of coherence is the use of the idiomatic rhetorical question Τί οὖν at verse one and verse nine. Thus commentary outlines that link 3:1-8 with chapters one and two while beginning a major new section at verse nine are highly suspicious. But the beginning of a major new section with 3:1 has its problems as well, since in content vv. 1-8 especially and vv. 1-20 have clear connections to what preceded. Yet connections to what follows beginning at 3:21 are clear as well. Outlining has severe limitations, even though the compulsion to do one is overwhelming in a western cultural setting.

Clearly 3:1-20 subdivides into two sections as the opening phrase Τί οὖν signals in vv. 1 and 9. What connection is there content wise between the two subunits? Clearly in verse one from the complete compound interrogative sentence, 3:1-8 focuses on Jews: Τί οὖν τὸ περισσὸν τοῦ Ἰουδαίου ἢ τίς * ἡ ὠφέλεια τῆς περιτομῆς; The follow up answer to Τί οὖν; in verse 9 signals that now both Jew and Gentile have sinfulness in common. And in many ways vv. 9-20 bring to a conclusion the discussion begun in 1:18 dealing the humanity's problem with sinfulness before a holy God. The inferential conjunction οὖν in verse 1 ties the subsequent material back to 2:25-29 at least. But οὖν in verse 9 ties vv. 9-20 back to vv. 1-8. Both draw out in explicit declaration ideas assumed to be implicit in what was said previously. This linking device so common in Paul must not be overlooked in trying to piece together his ideas into some kind of coherent pattern of expression. Thus links in 3:1 and 9 forge together the chain links but only in slight forward progression of thought. They do a lot of bending of the chain backwards to pick up earlier ideas

in summary form.

10.3.3.2.4.1 The Jewish advantage, 3:1-8

3.1 Τί οὖν τὸ περισσὸν τοῦ Ἰουδαίου ἢ τίς ἡ ὠφέλεια τῆς περιτομῆς; 2 πολὺ κατὰ πάντα τρόπον. πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ ὅτι ἐπιστεύθησαν τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ. 3 τί γὰρ; εἰ ἠπίστησάν τινες, μὴ ἡ ἀπιστία αὐτῶν τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ καταργήσῃ; 4 μὴ γένοιτο· γινέσθω δὲ ὁ θεὸς ἀληθής, πᾶς δὲ ἄνθρωπος ψεύστης, καθὼς γέγραπται·

ὅπως ἂν δικαιωθῆς ἐν τοῖς λόγοις σου
καὶ νικήσῃς ἐν τῷ κρίνεσθαί σε.

5 εἰ δὲ ἡ ἀδικία ἡμῶν θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην συνίστησιν, τί ἐροῦμεν; μὴ ἄδικος ὁ θεὸς ὁ ἐπιφέρων τὴν ὀργήν; κατὰ ἄνθρωπον λέγω. 6 μὴ γένοιτο· ἐπεὶ πῶς κρινεῖ ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον; 7 εἰ δὲ ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ ψεύσματι ἐπερίσσευσεν εἰς τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, τί ἔτι κάγω ὡς ἁμαρτωλὸς κρίνομαι; 8 καὶ μὴ καθὼς βλασφημούμεθα καὶ καθὼς φασίν τινες ἡμᾶς λέγειν ὅτι ποιήσωμεν τὰ κακά, ἵνα ἔλθῃ τὰ ἀγαθὰ; ὧν τὸ κρίμα ἐνδικόν ἐστιν.

3.1 Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision? 2 Much, in every way. For in the first place the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God. 3 What if some were unfaithful? Will their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God? 4 By no means! Although everyone is a liar, let God be proved true, as it is written,

“So that you may be justified in your words,
and prevail in your judging.”

5 But if our injustice serves to confirm the justice of God, what should we say? That God is unjust to inflict wrath on us? (I speak in a human way.) 6 By no means! For then how could God judge the world? 7 But if through my falsehood God’s truthfulness abounds to his glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner? 8 And why not say (as some people slander us by saying that we say), “Let us do evil so that good may come”? Their condemnation is deserved!

Literary setting. The link called 3:1-8 via οὖν sets forth in explicit statement what Paul considered implicit in 2:17-29. What is this? The advantage of Jews. In 2:17-29, he argued for the advantage of the compliant Gentile over that of the Jewish elitist. Does that mean that Jews have no advantages? Of course not, answers Paul. Then what are those advantages? 3:1-8 provides some of the answers. Chapters nine through eleven go into much greater detail on this topic.

Paul’s answers to Jewish advantages in 3:1-8 provides the basis for raising the question of what possession of the Jewish Torah actually means. In reality it means no advantage when the issue is God’s acceptance. To the contrary, the Torah possessing Jew is a sinner along side his Gentile neighbor and both

are under the wrath of God. So the perceived advantage of Law possession (3:1-8) is in actuality a disaster because this same Law puts the Jew under sin where his pagan Gentile neighbor is (3:9-20). And perhaps even a worse situation since “through the law comes the knowledge of sin” (3:20c). Once again these ‘advantages / disadvantages’ are measured by Paul against the Day of Judgment which means the entire world will be held accountable to God (3:19b).

Literary structure. How is the Jew advantaged? The entire unit is built around Paul’s own response in v. 2a to the rhetorical question in v. 1 with its two-fold thrust. The very short question, πολὺ κατὰ πάντα τρόπον, much in every way, (v. 2a; # 54) requires elaboration by two sets of supporting statements mostly introduced by repeating the causal conjunction γὰρ; see statement #s 55 and 56.

The supporting assertions in #s 55 and 56 are then elaborated by a typical Pauline question / answer pattern repeated in statement #s 57-66. His exceedingly blunt answer μὴ γένοιτο, Hell no!, in vv. 4 and 6 (#s 58 & 64), which provide some signaling of thought shift along with the question that provokes this vigorous response.

The great advantage of the Jews is defined by Paul as ἐπιστεύθησαν τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ, they have been entrusted with the oracles of God (v. 2; #55). But immediately the issue of the unfaithfulness of the Jewish recipients arises and centers on how this will impact the faithfulness of God to carry out His decrees. This becomes the central focus beginning with the framing of the discussion in “we” meaning “we Jews” (vv. 3-5; #s 56-63). Then in vv. 6-8 (#s 64-66) the framing shifts to “I” with the apostle using himself as the Jewish example. Verse 5 (#s 61-63) begin the transition from “we Jews” to “I a Jew.”

Again the logic used by the apostle in making his case is clearly not a post-enlightenment kind of thinking. It is, in fact, very ancient scribal Jewish with both the development pattern of the argument as well as with his use of an OT scripture quote. Unquestionably this presents some challenges not just for understanding the text but more difficultly in applying the text to a modern setting. Such can be done, but much caution should be exercised. The careful interpreter must resist the inclination to grab hold of bits and pieces of the text for reassembling into a modern pattern of applicational expression. The thought pattern of a first century Jewish rabbi, the apostle Paul, must be translated over into a modern western thought structure in making any

^{3.1} οὖν
52 Τί τὸ περισσὸν τοῦ Ἰουδαίου (ἐστίν)
^{3.2} ἢ
53 τίς ἡ ὠφέλεια τῆς περιτομῆς (ἐστίν);
54 πολὺ (ἐστίν)
κατὰ πάντα τρόπον.
γάρ
55 πρῶτον μὲν (ἐστίν)
ὅτι ἐπιστεύθησαν τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ.
^{3.3} γάρ
56 τί;
εἰ ἠπίστησάν τινες,
57 μὴ ἡ ἀπιστία αὐτῶν τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ καταργήσει;
58 ^{3.4} μὴ γένοιτο·
δὲ
59 γινέσθω ὁ θεὸς ἀληθής,
δὲ
60 πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ψεύστης (γινέσθω),
καθὼς γέγραπται·
ὅπως ἂν δικαιωθῆς
ἐν τοῖς λόγοις σου
καὶ
νικήσεις
ἐν τῷ κρίνεσθαί σε.
^{3.5} δὲ
εἰ ἡ ἀδικία ἡμῶν θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην συνίστησιν,
61 τί ἐροῦμεν;
62 μὴ ἄδικος ὁ θεὸς
ὁ ἐπιφέρων τὴν ὀργήν;
κατὰ ἄνθρωπον
63 λέγω.
64 ^{3.6} μὴ γένοιτο·
ἐπεὶ πῶς κρίνει ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον;
^{3.7} δὲ
ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ ψεύσματι
εἰ ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ θεοῦ...ἐπερίσσευσεν
εἰς τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ,
ὡς ἁμαρτωλὸς
65 τί ἔτι κάγω...κρίνομαι;
^{3.8} καὶ
66 (τί) μὴ (λέγε)

application of the text to our world. At the end of this exegetical unit we will endeavor to suggest some possible applications. But first, we must exegete the text.

Τί οὖν τὸ περισσὸν τοῦ Ἰουδαίου ἢ τίς ἡ ὠφέλεια τῆς περιτομῆς; (v. 1) The links of vv. 1-8 to 2:17-29 are signaled not just by the inferential conjunction οὖν but the twofold rhetorical question structure of the sentence reaches back with τοῦ Ἰουδαίου to 2:17-24, while τῆς περιτομῆς goes back to 2:25-29. So both points of the previous discussion are brought together here in a discussion of the implications of being a circumcised Jew.¹⁹⁶

The idea of advantage is set forth first by τὸ περισσὸν τοῦ Ἰουδαίου and then by ἡ ὠφέλεια τῆς περιτομῆς. The core sense of the adjective περισσός, -ή, -όν is to specify something beyond the usual or the norm.¹⁹⁷ This can be something negative or positive, but it goes beyond. The objective genitive use of τοῦ Ἰουδαίου denotes something going beyond in benefit to the Jewish person. The backdrop that gives contextual meaning to this phrase is without question 2:15-24. In this previous text, Paul had ticked off what the Jewish elitist felt went beyond the norm and to his benefit. Then Paul blasted all these as not beneficial at all, but as liabilities that would bring down the wrath of God in more severe fashion on him in final judgment. Against that dark, foreboding backdrop, the apostle now raises the issue again but this time centering on legitimate ‘somethings’ that might go beyond in benefit to the Jewish person. Although the Jewish elitist remains somewhat in the picture by 3:1,

¹⁹⁶Note for non-Greek reader. Τί is the neuter spelling of the interrogative pronoun, while τίς is the masculine and feminine spelling of the same pronoun. The neuter spelling is necessitated by the neuter τὸ περισσὸν. But the feminine spelling τίς is required by the feminine noun ἡ ὠφέλεια. The English neuter gender ‘what’ covers both since both nouns are translated by neuter gender English nouns. Remember that Greek rules of grammar only cover the writing of Greek. The grammar rules of the receptor language control the translation aspect.

¹⁹⁷**pert. to that which is not ordinarily encountered, extraordinary, remarkable** (Pla., Apol. 20c οὐδὲν τῶν ἄλλων περισσὸν πραγματεύεσθαι; BGU 417, 22 περισσὸν ποιήσω=I am going to do someth. extraordinary; En 102:7) τί περισσὸν ποιεῖτε; what are you doing that is remarkable? **Mt 5:47** (cp. Plut., Mor. 233a τί οὖν μέγα ποιεῖς; what, then, are you doing that is so great?—ELombard, L’Ordinaire et l’Extraordinaire [Mt 5:47]: RTP 15, 1927, 169–86). Subst. τὸ περισσὸν the advantage (WSchubart, Der Gnomon des Idios Logos 1919, 102 [II A.D.]) τὸ π. τοῦ Ἰουδαίου the advantage of the Judean (Jew) **Ro 3:1** (s. Ἰουδαῖο 2a). LCerfaux, Le privilège d’Israël sel. s. Paul: ETL 17, ’40, 5–26.” [William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 805.]

the shift is now made to the Jewish people as a whole rather than just on this single individual as a symbol of many Jews in Paul’s world. The apostle seems to be moving at this point to address all his Jewish readers who by now are wondering whether there is any value at all in being Jewish. Thus the English word ‘advantage’ is a good translation word for the Greek term here, even though it skips over the etymological meaning which adds richness of perspective. The more literal sense of this first rhetorical question is “[what is the special benefit for the Jew?](#)”

The second advantage question is ἢ τίς ἡ ὠφέλεια τῆς περιτομῆς; **Or, what is the value of circumcision?** The noun ὠφέλεια (often spelled ὠφελία) is only found in Rom. 3:1 and Jude 16, but the verb form ὠφελέω shows up 15 times in the NT but just once in Rom. 2:25. The adjective form ὠφέλιμος, -ον is used 4 times in the pastoral letters. In Rom. 2:25 circumcision has value only if the Law is practiced: Περιτομή μὲν ὠφελεῖ ἐὰν νόμον πράσσης. The core sense of this word group is something provides aid or assistance. The noun can specify the source of the aid or the aid itself. Here the subjective genitive of τῆς περιτομῆς generates the sense of [the aid produced by circumcision](#). More succinctly put as [What benefit comes from circumcision?](#) In 2:25, the apostle signaled benefit to be derived from circumcision, but only if the Law is consistently obeyed. Now he moves toward defining what this benefit is. Of course, physical circumcision is what is meant here by Paul.

The two rhetorical questions should be seen as essentially a single question about benefit or advantage being derived from being a circumcised Jew. Clearly being physically circumcised is deeply bound up in being a Jew, but being a Jew is defined by Torah. And only in Torah does circumcision have meaning and defined value. This intertwining of Jewishness and circumcision by Torah has been made clear by Paul since 2:1 and especially in 2:17-29. The Torah of Moses defines the meaning of Jewishness and circumcision around the covenant of God made with Abraham. Obedience to law, and especially obeying the command to be circumcised, is central to being a part of the people of God, i.e., the descendants of Abraham. This stood at the core of the Judaism in Paul’s day. So clearly being Jewish and especially being properly circumcised as Jewish would unquestionably have advantage that non-Jews would not possess.

πολὺ κατὰ πάντα τρόπον. (v. 2a) Paul’s answer to these two questions of benefit is a straightforward decolla-

tion of YES. The interrogative τί / τίς is answered with πολὺ. But what does πολὺ imply? Much in the sense of many advantages, or much in the sense of a large single advantage? The adjective πολὺς, πολλή, πολύ can imply either of these ideas. Normally the plural spelling suggests many while the singular spelling means much. But since the singular or plural spellings are dictated by the word this adjective is modifying, this is not an absolute pattern. The neuter singular πολὺ used here substantively in the nominative case and reaching back to the uniform singular τί and τίς would strongly imply a large τὸ περισσὸν and ἡ ὠφέλεια, instead of many such advantages. Also the neuter singular πολὺ gathers up both τὸ περισσὸν and ἡ ὠφέλεια and views them as a single entity, rather than as two ideas.

The prepositional phrase κατὰ πάντα τρόπον, in every way, adds inclusiveness to the large advantage. The use of this identical phrase κατὰ πάντα τρόπον in Num. 18:7 (LXX) illustrates its meaning.¹⁹⁸ Thus the qualification here added underscores that the large advantage of being Jewish and circumcised touches many aspects of these realities.

The interpretive challenge for some is the positive answer given here in contrast to the negative answers given in 2:17-19 and 3:9.¹⁹⁹ But these commentators

¹⁹⁸Num. 18:7 καὶ σὺ καὶ οἱ υἱοὶ σου μετὰ σοῦ διατηρήσετε τὴν ἱερατείαν ὑμῶν κατὰ πάντα τρόπον τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου καὶ τὸ ἔνδοθεν τοῦ καταπετάσματος καὶ λειτουργήσετε τὰς λειτουργίας δόμα τῆς ἱερατείας ὑμῶν· καὶ ὁ ἀλλογενὴς ὁ προσπορευόμενος ἀποθανεῖται

But you and your sons with you shall diligently perform your priestly duties in all that concerns the altar and the area behind the curtain. I give your priesthood as a gift; any outsider who approaches shall be put to death.

¹⁹⁹Paul's response 'Much in every way!' has been criticized as being opposed to both (1) his earlier denunciations of Jews and their dependence on circumcision in 2:17-29, and (2) his later response 'Not at all!' in 3:9. Pelagius, the British monk and theologian who at some time during 406-409 wrote commentaries on all thirteen of the canonical Pauline letters, found it difficult to accept 'Much in every way!' as an affirmation by Paul, and so attributed all of what is said in 3:1-4 to a Jewish objector — with Paul's own view of matters only being expressed afterwards in 3:5-20.³⁸ Likewise, C. H. Dodd argued that 'the logical answer' to the questions of 3:1 should have been 'None whatever!' — in line with the negative response 'Not at all!' of 3:9 — and that here in 3:2 Paul has simply become confused.³⁹ And Heikki Räisänen has expressed similar opinions about what he considers to have been Paul's frequent states of mental confusion, attributing what he views as Paul's contradictory statements here in 3:1-8 to his excessive zeal in attempting to win over his addressees to his own views.⁴⁰ [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Don-

are looking superficially at Paul's words. The apostle was dealing with reality and not theoretical consistency.

Prof. Longenecker responds well to this misinterpretation of Paul's statement here:²⁰⁰

Paul's purpose in 2:17-29 and 3:1-20, however, is not to deny that God granted the Jews certain privileges, which were not given to the Gentiles. Rather, it was to point out that these privileges did not give the Jews any favored status or advantage over Gentiles in matters of divine judgment. For, as Paul declares here in 3:2, it is because "they [the Jews'] were entrusted with the words of God" that they will be judged by God by a higher standard—that is, not just on the basis of (1) their response to God's general revelation in creation, (2) their possession of God's special revelation as given in the Mosaic law, or (3) their acceptance of the rite of male circumcision as a sign of God's covenant, but on the basis of how they have responded in obedience to God's words of instruction (i.e., Torah), which has been entrusted to them in the Jewish (OT) Scriptures, and thus how they have responded to God in matters of personal relationship.

No contradiction, therefore, should be read into Paul's response "Much in every way!" here in 3:2a. It is the appropriate response of both Jews and Christians to the two questions of 3:1, affirming, as it does, (1) that there is, indeed, a real advantage in being a Jew, and (2) that religious value exists in Jewish male circumcision as a sign of God's covenant—though, as Paul has made clear earlier throughout ch. 2 and will insist later in 3:9-20, such God-given privileges do not include any favored status or advantage when judged by God, but, rather, involve a greater degree of responsibility, as well as greater accountability, in matters having to do with a person's standing before God.

πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ ὅτι ἐπιστεύθησαν τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ. (v. 2b) The large advantage given to Jews is opportunity, not privilege or status. Their access to the revelation of God given to their ancestors provided them with the opportunity to bear witness to the rest of the world that God is just and treats all without partiality; that a day of extreme accountability is just around the corner

ald A. Hagner, *New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 340-341.]

²⁰⁰Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, *New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 341.

for every human being, but that δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, **God's righteousness**, means that God will treat all equally on Judgment Day against the standards of His own holy character. Being the first ethnic group to learn that truth is indeed a huge advantage.

Thus the adverb πρῶτον meaning **first of all, most importantly**, highlights the nature of this advantage. It's at the very top. Further, the particle of emphasis μὲν meaning **indeed** stresses this advantage more. The causal conjunction γὰρ sets this response up as supporting the claim of a large advantage being given to Jews. But this coordinate causal conjunction (γὰρ) is immediately followed by the subordinate causal conjunction ὅτι. It's no wonder that later manuscript copyists omitted ὅτι from their reading of the text: **Ν*** G 1241 1505. But what this construction does is signal an ellipsis with the sense of **This advantage is first because...**

What then stands at the top of the list outweighing all other possible advantages is spelled out in the causal ὅτι clause: ἐπιστεύθησαν τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ. **they were entrusted with the oracles of God**. This is the reason for the huge advantage that Jews have.

Two key expressions here: ἐπιστεύθησαν and τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ. The aorist tense passive voice ἐπιστεύθησαν reverses the ordinary thought flow that faith flows from the individual to God. The passive voice reverses that direction: God commits something to individuals. Also one should always remember that πιστεύω is an action oriented verb, never passive in meaning as is the normal English translations of faith and believe. Faith always moves toward; it never is passive accepted. Of the 21 uses of πιστεύω in Romans, this is the only passive voice usage. Also there are only 8 passive voice uses of πιστεύω out of the 241 uses in the entire NT, with 6 of them in Paul's writings.

The sense here is clear. God has given something very important to the Jewish people. But it does not become their possession. Rather, something is loaned to them with heavy stewardship accountability. God retains complete control over what he has given. But He has granted this to the Jews to hold for sharing with others. This is Paul's essential point in using the passive ἐπιστεύθησαν.²⁰¹

²⁰¹"If ἐπιστεύθησαν is intended to evoke Jewish responsibility within the covenant, with reference to the δικαιώματα of 2:26 (as Stuhlman, Gerechtigkeits, 85 suggests), the point is that the δικαιώματα are not conceived in the terms used by Deut 4:7–8 or Ps 147:19–20, but as 'oracles' given to the Jews to hold in trust for others. This is the implication of πιστεύω when Paul uses it in this way of his own commissioning and gospel (1 Cor 9:17; Gal 2:7; 1 Thess 2:4; also 1 Tim 1:11; Titus 1:3), and may be implied in the choice of λόγια to indicate divine oracles whose interpretation

The second expression is more intriguing: τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ. Notice that he did not say that God gave scriptures to His Jewish people. The expression expressively denotes orally made utterances of God. Later in 9:4-5 the apostle spells out what is intended here:

4 οἰτινές εἰσιν Ἰσραηλιταί, ὧν ἡ υἰοθεσία καὶ ἡ δόξα καὶ αἱ διαθήκαι καὶ ἡ νομοθεσία καὶ ἡ λατρεία καὶ αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι, 5 ὧν οἱ πατέρες καὶ ἐξ ὧν ὁ Χριστὸς τὸ κατὰ σάρκα, ὁ ὧν ἐπὶ πάντων θεὸς εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν

4 **They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; 5 to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.**

The phrase τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ was a common expression in the LXX.²⁰² Three out of the four NT uses reflect the same expression of τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ, while Acts 7:38 references the same idea but with slightly different wording. The term comes out of the λέγ- root stem of words widely used through both the LXX OT and the NT.²⁰³ The core meaning of λόγιον is a **"saying which may be traced back to the deity."**²⁰⁴ The fourfold NT

had only become clear through the gospel of Christ." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 131.]

²⁰²"By τὰ λόγια (only here in Paul) Paul means the utterances of God, given through Moses and the prophets (he makes no closer specification) and now constituting the holy scriptures (1:2). This usage is already established in the LXX (Deut 33:9; Isa 5:24; Pss 12:6 [LXX 11:7]; 18:30 [LXX 17:31]; 107 [LXX 106]:11; 119 [LXX 118]:11, 25 (S), 38, etc.; cf. Philo, Praem. 1; VitCont. 25; Josephus, War 6.311; Heb 5:12). But elsewhere in Greek usage λόγιον means an 'oracle' or 'oracular saying' (LSJ, BGD), and this sense of the numinous quality of an inspired utterance is also present in Num 24:4, 16 and reflected in Acts 7:38 ('living oracles') and 1 Pet 4:11 (charismatic utterance). See further Manson, *Studies*, 87–96. For the view that Paul refers specifically to the promises of God see Williams, "Righteousness," 267, and Notes (the debate goes back to the Fathers—see Lagrange). But Paul does not yet so restrict his thought (cf. 9:4–5)." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 130–131.]

²⁰³λέγω, λόγος, ῥῆμα, λαλέω, λόγιος, λόγιον, ἄλογος, λογικός, λογομαχέω, λογομαχία, ἐκλέγομαι, ἐκλογή, ἐκλεκτός [Gottlob Schrenk, Albert Debrunner, et al., "Λέγω, Λόγος, Ῥῆμα, Λαλέω, Λόγιος, Λόγιον, Ἄλογος, Λογικός, Λογομαχέω, Λογομαχία, Ἐκλέγομαι, Ἐκλογή, Ἐκλεκτός," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:69.]

²⁰⁴Gottlob Schrenk, Albert Debrunner, et al., "Λέγω, Λόγος, Ῥῆμα, Λαλέω, Λόγιος, Λόγιον, Ἄλογος, Λογικός, Λογομαχέω, Λογομαχία, Ἐκλέγομαι, Ἐκλογή, Ἐκλεκτός," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:137.

use of the term reflects some of the diversity of LXX OT usage, but with a Christian perspective. Paul's only use of λόγιον here in Rom. 3:2 follows closely the dominant LXX OT usage to designate the revelation of God given orally to Moses by God on Mt. Sinai. The stress on the oral dimension verses the more basic idea of divine revelation varies from text to text in the OT and thus in the NT use as well. For Paul, τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ puts major emphasis upon what God spoke through Moses and the prophets to the Israelites, as divine revelation. Many commentators wrongly diminish the distinction between the orally spoken words of God and the written record of those orally spoken words. While not entirely wrong, the ancient Jewish and apostolic Christian perspectives kept this distinction very strong and clear. Divine inspiration in the biblical definition focuses on the orally spoken and only minimally upon the writing down aspects.²⁰⁵ The orally spoken Word from God and through His prophets always has priority.

Paul's point here is the high privilege of God speaking to and through Moses to grant to the Israelites direct access to His will. Any group of people so blessed has been given advantage without equal.²⁰⁶ The Israelites were granted God's Law through Moses and the record of this has been preserved into Paul's time. This Paul remembers and affirms so that his readers do not think he is completely negative toward the Law given through Moses.

τί γάρ; (v. 3a). The unusual grammar construction

²⁰⁵For a detailed discussion of these see my article "[Inspiration](#)" in the two volume *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* by Garland Press. Also my article "[Revelation](#)" has relevance here.

²⁰⁶Two late but relatively important minuscule MSS, that is, 1739 (tenth century, Category I) and 6 (thirteenth century, Category III), have substituted for πρῶτον μὲν ('first indeed') the phrase πρῶτοι γὰρ ἐπίστεύθησαν ('for they were the first ones entrusted with [the words of God]').⁴² This variant is probably not simply some scribe's attempt to improve the text stylistically. Rather, it was likely theologically motivated in order to support a later Christian view of relations between Judaism and Christianity that held that all the God-given privileges originally accorded to 'national Israel' have been transferred by God to 'spiritual Israel,' that is, the Christian church, whereas all of God's curses on his people Israel as expressed in the OT are still to be assigned to the Jews. On such an understanding, whereas the Jews were 'the first ones entrusted with the words of God,' that privilege has now been given to the Christian church. During the course of church history that understanding of Christian-Jewish relations has frequently been attributed to Paul's statements in 9:6–11:12. That view of the relationship is, however, deficient on other grounds and is only weakly supported by the textual tradition here at 3:2." [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 342.]

poses some challenges at the outset.²⁰⁷ The punctuation adopted by the printed Greek New Testaments inserts a Greek question mark ; after the causal conjunction γάρ and a second one at the end of the verse following καταργήσει. This ellipsis heightens the emphasis on Paul's preceding expression. But it leaves somewhat open ended what is implied.

The conjunction γάρ sets up τί as a second reason for the assertion πολὺ κατὰ πάντα τρόπον, following the first γάρ in v. 2b. But the interrogative pronoun τί functionally serves to set up the following rhetorical question, which is structured as a first class conditional statement assuming the if clause protasis. Given this context, the implied element in τί γάρ; is along the lines of "[What does this imply?](#)" The following conditional sentence answers this question.

εἰ ἠπίστησάν τινες, μὴ ἢ ἀπιστία αὐτῶν τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ καταργήσει; (v. 3b) The translation of the key terms here is the major interpretive issue: ἀπιστέω, ἀπιστία, and πίστις. The first two terms reflect the stance of some Israelites and stands in contrast to that of God with πίστις. All three terms are capable of two distinct tracks of interpretive meaning: unfaithful, unfaithfulness, and faithful. But also disbelieve, unbelief, and faith on the other hand. The phrase τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ unquestionably specifies the faithfulness of God. And as opposites via the alpha privative attached to both the verb ἀπιστέω and the noun ἀπιστία would contextually demand 'unfaithful' as the appropriate meaning. The caution is that Paul three other uses of ἀπιστία (4:20; 11:20, 23) move along the lines of disbelief, rather than unfaithfulness. No other use of ἀπιστέω exists in Romans and only in 2 Tim. 2:13 in the remainder of Paul's writings, where unfaithfulness is the meaning. Yet the weight of the immediate context for 3:2 argues strongly for the sense of unfaithfulness.²⁰⁸ The Jews in spite of the great gift

²⁰⁷What punctuation is to be adopted within the verse? and How much, if any, of the verse is to be assigned to an imaginary objector? It is possible either to put a question mark after γάρ and then to put a comma after τινες, or to put no punctuation after γάρ but a question mark after τινες" [C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 179.]

²⁰⁸One should remember that the strong line of distinction between unfaithfulness and disbelief is primarily a post enlightenment distinction colored by patristic Christian twisting of πίστις from volitional to intellectual meaning. Not ever inside apostolic Christianity did πίστις ever mean accepting what the church teaches about Jesus. Careful study of the Jewish world of Paul's time would not draw such a line of sharp distinction. πίστις and its cognates centers on commitment as a volitional decision far more than belief as an intellectual action. When so understood, not much distinction between lacking commitment to obey and lacking com-

granted to them responded in consistent disobedience to God and His expressed will for them. And this becomes the concern that Paul begins to address in the subsequent rhetorical question.

εἰ ἠπίστησάν τινες, μὴ ἡ ἀπιστία αὐτῶν τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ καταργήσῃ; *Since some are unfaithful, their unfaithfulness does not nullify the faithfulness of God, does it?* The protasis dependent clause εἰ ἠπίστησάν τινες assumes that at minimum some Jews have been disobedient to God and His demands.²⁰⁹ For the modern reader, the apodosis main clause doesn't sound right with its linking God's faithfulness to some Jews unfaithfulness. But the communal culture of Paul's Jewish world, and also in its own distinct way his Greco-Roman world, makes an issue such of this one quite natural and important to address. Particularly when bonds of connection between two groups are established as between God and covenant Israel. For Paul's Jewish friends, the Law stands as the connecting bond between them and God. Although inside the OT itself, circumcision and covenant have little if any direct connection to Torah, the Judaism of Paul's day had made it central to this relationship. Just a little reading in the intertestamental Jewish writings such as the [Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs](#) reveals the bizarre lengths taken to make this connection.

Note that Paul sees the disobedience of just some Jews, τινες, as raising this issue.²¹⁰ Of the 16 uses of τις,

commitment to accept actually exists. Both represent obedience issues and failures. In Paul's mind little difference would exist between the two.

²⁰⁹An alternative punctuation pattern is possible, although not likely:

τί γάρ εἰ ἠπίστησάν τινες; μὴ ἡ ἀπιστία αὐτῶν τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ καταργήσῃ;

Ultimately the composite meaning of the two expressions is not much different than what is achieved by the dominate punctuation pattern of current printed Greek New Testaments:

τί γάρ; εἰ ἠπίστησάν τινες, μὴ ἡ ἀπιστία αὐτῶν τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ καταργήσῃ;

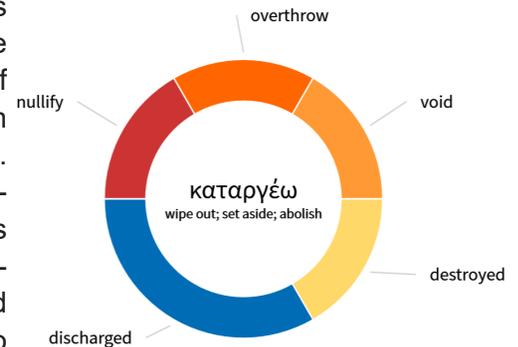
The difference is whether the protasis dependent clause εἰ ἠπίστησάν τινες is attached to what precedes or what follows.

One should remember that in the original writing of these words, only uncial all cap letters were used with no spacing or punctuation marks. These did not begin showing up until well into the later Byzantine era of writing Greek some centuries after the initial writing of the documents. Modern printed editions of the Greek text insert punctuation and spacing to reflect general patterns either in English or German depending on the particular printed Greek text. This is an editorial based learning aid to assist the modern reader who otherwise would have to go through a severe additional learning curve in order to read the original Greek text.

²¹⁰This first question of the second set, 'What if some of them were unfaithful?' is a rhetorical question posed by Paul himself. He

τι, in Romans, some eight of those specify a personal designation of people. Of these, 11:14 is most likely the closest idea of τις to the use here: εἴ πως παραζηλώσω μου τὴν σάρκα καὶ σώσω **τινάς ἐξ αὐτῶν**, **in order to make my own people jealous, and thus save some of them.** Although the English 'some' is commonly used for τινες, perhaps more accurate would be 'a portion.' The quantity implied here is more than just a few individuals.

Critical to understanding this second rhetorical question is the verb καταργήσῃ. From καταργέω, the core idea is to reduce the dynamic of some action down to zero. Thus the action becomes useless, irrelevant, and powerless to function. Consequently a wide range of English words will be used to convey this central idea in a manner appropriate to the context of its use. The idea here in 3:3 moves in the direction of nullify. That is, does the unfaithfulness of the disobedient Jews render useless and invalid the faithfulness of God?



Inside modern western individualism, the tendency is to assume that my actions are detached from yours and are not impacted by them. I will be true to myself regardless of how you respond. But in communal ap-

evidently realized that this question could come to someone's mind when talking about 'the advantage' of Jews being that they were 'entrusted with the words of God,' and about 'the value of circumcision' as a sign of God's covenant. The nominative, plural, masculine, indefinite pronoun τινες ('some of them') could be understood rhetorically as a *meiosis* (i.e., an understatement used to attain greater effect). It is, however, in line with Paul's later statement in 11:17 that God 'broke off some [i.e., not 'all'] of the branches' (τινες τῶν κλάδων ἐξεκλάσθησαν) of the original olive tree. So by his use of τινες ('some of them'), it is evident that Paul is not here in 3:3 (or later in chs. 9–11) arguing that all Jews have been unfaithful to God. He may have been thinking of 'the remnant' within Israel, as he will later throughout 9:6–11:24 (cf. esp. 9:27 and 11:5), who were faithful to God in their Jewish experience and became 'fulfilled Jews' in their acceptance of Jesus of Nazareth as God's Messiah. He does not, however, excuse the 'some of them' who 'were unfaithful,' highlighting rather God's continued faithfulness and abundant bounty toward them. And later in 11:25–32 he will argue that the 'some' will become 'all.'" [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 343.]

proaches to life -- both modern and ancient -- such detachment from one another doesn't exist. The actions of one has great impact upon the rest of the group, no matter what they are. An individual commitment to the others in the group is foundational. Particularly is this true of agreements. When one of parties is God in the agreement, does the unfaithfulness to the agreement then mean that God is released from obligation to keeping His agreement?

The first century communal oriented world would have been very inclined to conclude that if just some are unfaithful, then God would not be obligated to be faithful. In the Greco-Roman religious mentality, the assumption would have been strongly that should humans be disobedient to the gods, they in turn would have no inclination to keep their words toward humans in the least. And thus Paul's non-Jewish Christian readers in Rome very likely would have been wondering about how trustworthy God would be in light of the Jewish disobedience.

Paul's framing of the question with the anticipation of a negative answer that no Jewish disobedience will nullify God's faithfulness begins his own reading of the situation. It will be answered dramatically with his "Hell no" answer in *μη γένοιτο*, which is followed by a series of affirmations in vv. 4-8 providing the most vigorous denial imaginable by Paul.

Now some secondary interpretive observations about his statements in verse three. First, the context makes it abundantly clear that the verb *ἠπίστησάν* means the exact same thing as the noun *ἀπιστία*. Unfaithfulness that equals disobedience relates to *παραβάτης νόμου*, **transgressor of law** (2:25). Also it equals *ἡμαρτον*, sins in law (2:12); *ἀπειθοῦσιν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ*, disobey the Truth (2:8); *τὰ αὐτὰ πράσσεις*, you practice the same things (2:1). In this fuller expression at the end, the Jews are thusly unfaithful as the trustees of *τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ*, the oracles of God (3:2). What Paul has in mind is not some esoteric unfaithfulness, but rather very concrete actions of disobedience.

Second, *τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ*, **the faithfulness of God** relates to *τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ*, **the oracles of God**. While *τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ* can include the promises of God, it would be wrong to equate the two. The idea of oracles is much broader than just promises. The integrity of God is vested in all that He says through Moses and the prophets, not just specific promises made. His reputation is what is at stake here.

The rhetorical question in v. 3b prompts a series of replies which begin in v. 4a.

μη γένοιτο (v. 4a) This idiom reflects the strongest possible negative reaction possible in ancient Greek. Translating it challenges one to find both a cognitive and a matching conative equivalent in the receptor language. This is a favorite expression for Paul: Rom. 3:4, 6, 31; 6:2, 15; 7:7, 13; 9:14; 11:1, 11; 1 Cor. 6:15; Gal. 2:17; 3:21; 6:14.²¹¹ Outside of Paul, the expression *μη γένοιτο* is only found in Luke. 20:16.²¹² The LXX use of the expression, not in absolute form as here, but with additional sentence elements is helpful. For example, Gen. 44:7, *μη γένοιτο* τοῖς παισίν σου ποιῆσαι κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτο, Far be it from your servants that they should do such a thing! This translates the Hebrew, *כְּדַבַּר הַזֶּה לֹא יֵעָשׂוּ לְעַבְדֶּיךָ מַעֲשֵׂוֹת*. Translators of scripture have struggled to find an appropriate expression to the linguistic time setting of their translation.²¹³ The aorist optative mood spelling with the negative *μη* doesn't

²¹¹Altogether Mlt. 194f. [307f.] now counts 38 exx. of the opt. in wishes, of which 15 are *μη γένοιτο* (Lk 20:16, otherwise only in Paul, to express strong rejection [always in response to a question, §440(2)]...." [Friedrich Blass, Albert Debrunner, and Robert Walter Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 194.]

²¹²*μη γένοιτο*, literally, 'may it not be,' is a strong negation, which Paul uses quite frequently after rhetorical questions, chiefly in Romans (3:6, 31; 6:2, 15; 7:7, 13; 9:14; 11:1, 11; also 1 Cor 6:15; Gal 2:17; 3:21; the usage is quite common in Epictetus — 20 times in Diss. [Lagrange]; but it also occurs occasionally in the LXX — Gen 44:7, 17; Deut 24:16; 1 Kgs 21:3 [LXX 3 Kgs 20:3]; 1 Macc 9:10; 13:5). Hence the translation can be flexible in order to bring out the strength of Paul's repugnance at the idea suggested: 'By no means!' 'God forbid!' etc. (BGD, *γίνομαι* 3a); 'Impossible' (Maillot). Here the force of Paul's rejoinder underlines the extent to which he sees (a) God's covenant with Israel as still in force, (b) the current typical Jewish understanding of the covenant as a misunderstanding, and (c) his gospel as continuous with and the fulfillment of God's covenant purpose with Israel. Unless this triple theme is clearly perceived as a determining factor of primary importance in the construction of this letter, Paul's language here and elsewhere will seem like empty rhetoric." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 132.]

²¹³NIV, "Not at all!"; ESV, "By no means!"; TEV, "Certainly not!"; KJV, "God forbid"; The Message, "Not on your life!"; NASB, "May it never be!"; NLT, "Of course not!"; NRSV, "By no means!"; RSV, "By no means!"; HCSB, "Absolutely not!"; Tyndale, "God forbid"; Cotton Patch, "Hell no!"

BA, "¡De ningún modo!"; BJ 2000, "En ninguna manera;" NTV, "¡Por supuesto que no!"; BRV, "En ninguna manera"; SE 1569, "En ninguna manera"; NVI, "¡De ninguna manera!"; NVI, "De maneira nenhuma!"

Elberfelder 1905, "Das sei ferne!"; Luther 1912, "Das sei ferne!"; Luther 1984, "Das sei ferne!"; Luther 2017, "Das sei ferne!"; GNB, "Auf keinen Fall!"; NGÜ, "Niemals!; Memge, "Nimmermehr!"; Einheits, "Keineswegs!"; Zürcher "Gewiss nicht!"; Schlachter, "Das sei ferne!"



render the full force of the conative meaning by itself. It is the established idiomatic meaning that signals the unusually strong, blunt language expressed here. What μὴ γένοιτο expresses here is the strongest possible denial that the Jews' unfaithfulness will in some way nullify the faithfulness of God.

γινέσθω δὲ ὁ θεὸς ἀληθής, πᾶς δὲ ἄνθρωπος ψεύστης, (v. 4b) Here the apostles continues the denial of anything nullifying God's faithfulness to His spoken words. Interestingly, the twice use of the post positive conjunction δὲ with each of these two independent clauses sets up contrastive statements, that add more intensity to the initial negative response of μὴ γένοιτο. The first δὲ continues the negative tone of μὴ γένοιτο, with the twin assertion of let the protasis of v. 3a, εἰ ἠπίστησάν τινες, happen and with every person being unfaithful, but let God be true. That is, every individual could become a liar and God would still be completely true to Himself.²¹⁴

The sense of γινέσθω δὲ ὁ θεὸς ἀληθής with the present imperative verb stresses continuation of the state of being truthful. If a court room scenario is assumed here, then it moves toward God being proven as truthful while also being the Judge. This is the assumption behind the NRSV rendering "let God be proved true."

Then what is the connection between ἠπίστησάν τινες / τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ and ὁ θεὸς ἀληθής / πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ψεύστης? In other words, how are the **unfaithfulness of some** and the **faithfulness of God** linked to **God being true** while **everyone is a liar**? Here is where the Hebrew thinking pattern plays an important role, as signaled by the use of the citation from Psalm 116:11 (LXX 115:2). Being true and being faithful are virtually the same idea in Hebrew.²¹⁵ And being unfaithful and

²¹⁴Some later copyists, with the standard shifts in language usage over a few centuries in the Greek (° κ* G 1241. 1505), omitted the present tense imperative γινέσθω verb, thus making the statements into a full ellipsis where the emphasis upon God's truthfulness to His own character would more easily be understood as a given fact. But the evidence for including γινέσθω is overwhelming.

²¹⁵There is a Hebraic connection of thought between the ἀλήθεια of God here and the πίστις of God in v 3, which would probably be lost on Paul's readers unless they were very familiar with the LXX פִּיִּיִּיִּי, usually translated by πίστις elsewhere in the LXX (see on 3:3), is almost always translated ἀλήθεια in the Psalms, regularly to denote God's covenant faithfulness to Israel (see particularly Ps 89:1, 2, 5, 8, 14, 24, 33, 49 [LXX 88:2, 3, 6, 9, 25, 34, 50]; 98 [LXX 97]:3), with Ps 33 [LXX 32]:4 the interesting exception. In both cases Paul will have had in mind the constancy and reliability of God, but the Greek word allows him to extend the meaning to 'real, true' (see further on 1:18; also Ljungman, 17–21; and note Barr's cautionary remarks, *Semantics*, 187–94), implying once again that 'the Jew' has misconceived the true character and real purpose of the covenant made with Israel. The ἀληθής here

being a liar are deeply linked in the Hebrew mind-set of the Old Testament.

The second strophe, πᾶς δὲ ἄνθρωπος ψεύστης, is taken from Psalm 115:2 (LXX; 116:11 Heb):²¹⁶

ἐγὼ εἶπα ἐν τῇ ἐκστάσει μου

Πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ψεύστης

The strophe Πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ψεύστης is a close rendering of the Hebrew פִּיִּיִּיִּי. The Qal participle פִּיִּיִּיִּי moves toward the idea of **being a liar**, rather than just telling a lie. This idea is present in the Greek noun ψεύστης. Paul's elliptical statement presupposes the verb γινέσθω from the first strophe γινέσθω δὲ ὁ θεὸς ἀληθής. All of the projects an eschatological determination of the truthfulness of God and the human tendency toward lying. The Judgment Day frame of reference assumed all through 2:1-3:20 (cf. 2:2-11, 12-16, 29; 3:5-8, 19-20) becomes that day of vindication of the correctness of these two declarations which assess the traits all through human history. Thus contextually, the sense is

But let God be proven true and let every person be proven a liar.

καθὼς γέγραπται (v. 4c). Here Paul appeals to scripture but not as proof. The adverbial functioning subordinate conjunctions καθὼς and καθάπερ show up on differing manuscript copies.²¹⁷ Roughly synonymous in meaning, the impact of either is very little in terms of difference from the other one.²¹⁸ This formula type

helps link this section of Paul's indictment back into the earlier indictment where he used ἀλήθεια regularly (1:18, 25; 2:2, 8, 20). γίνομαι is often used, as possibly here, simply with the force of the verb 'to be' (BGD, γίνομαι II), though Paul probably uses it here with eschatological force: 'let God become' = 'be seen to be true' (Schlatter, Käsemann)." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 133.]

²¹⁶In such a brief allusion it is quite possible that Paul simply fell into scriptural language without intending a particular reference. But in this case the language is fairly distinct (ψεύστης occurs only in Prov 19:22 and Sir 15:8; 25:2 elsewhere in the LXX)." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 133.]

²¹⁷Nestle²⁶ reads καθὼς despite the superior attestation of καθάπερ, which Paul may well have used as a variant on the more familiar καθὼς γέγραπται elsewhere in Romans (9:13; 10:15; 11:8), though in each case Nestle²⁶ reads καθὼς with the support of P⁴⁶ which is lacking here." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), p. 128, note b.]

²¹⁸The adverb καθὼς ('just as') is widely supported by uncials A D G (also Byz K L), as well as by minuscules 33 1175 1739 (Category I) and 1881 2464 (Category II). The adverb καθάπερ ('just as'), however, appears in uncials κ and B, which are the most highly respected Alexandrian (or 'Neutral') uncials of the fourth century, which most earlier text critics followed here in v. 4a (but



statement introduces a scripture citation from Psalm 51:4 (=LXX 50:6). Rather than as supporting evidence for the previous statement, which would have required ὅτι γέγραπται or γέγραπται γάρ, the καθὼς sets up the scripture reference in a different role with the idea that the scripture now reference completes the idea of the allusions stated just before. The Psalm 116 (LXX 115) assertion sets up a pair of claims of God's faithfulness in the face of every human unfaithfulness has the objective (intended result) which is stated in the quote from Psalm 50:6 LXX (equals 51:4 Heb):

ὅπως ἂν δικαιωθῆς ἐν τοῖς λόγοις σου
καὶ νικήσεις²¹⁹ ἐν τῷ κρίνεσθαί σε. (v. 4d)
so that You may be vindicated in your words
and you will prevail in your judging.

The apostle Paul saw in King David's acknowledgement of the correctness of God judging him for his sin with Bathsheba an example of an Israelite leader convinced of God's justice in his own experience. That same justice will prevail on Judgment Day because it is the same God doing the judging. The second person singular of the LXX text from Psalm that clearly refers

καθὼς in v. 8 [twice] and v. 10) — though text critics today favor καθὼς in all four instances in vv. 4, 8 (twice), and 10. The choice remains difficult, but the difference in meaning is inconsequential since the adverbs are synonymous." [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 326.]

²¹⁹"The future indicative verb νικήσεις ('you will be victorious' or 'prevail') is supported by uncials κ A D, as well as minuscules 81 2464 (Category II) and 6 88 104 326 424^c 1319 (Category III). The aorist subjunctive verb νικήσης ('you may be victorious' or 'prevail'), however, is attested by uncials B G Ψ (also Byz L), as well as minuscules 1175 1739 (Category I), 1881 (Category II), and 69 323 330 365 614 1241 1243 1505 1573 1735 1874 2344 2495 (Category III). The reading of minuscules 33 (Category I) and 1506 (Category II) is uncertain.

"This variation in the tense and mood of the verb probably originated from an early confusion in dictation, since the pronunciations of the future indicative and the aorist subjunctive forms of the verb would have been similar. The external textual evidence for originality is almost equally divided. The aorist subjunctive form of the verb seems to be somewhat better attested and is in line with the Septuagint reading (cf. LXX Ps 50:6b). Yet the future indicative form is the 'more difficult reading' and could be read with much the same sense as the aorist subjunctive. Ultimately, however, the decision between the two readings must be made on a contextual basis rather than a strictly textual basis (see "Exegetical Comments" below)."

[Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, *New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 326–327.]

to God is preserved in Paul's verbatim citing of it here in Rom. 3:4 and also references ὁ θεός, *God*, rather than πᾶς ἄνθρωπος, *every person*.

What is at stake here in Paul's discussion is τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ, *God's faithfulness*. Will Jewish unfaithfulness somehow cause God to be unfaithful in what He as spoken to the Israelites? Paul denies this possibility. Instead, if every Jew proves himself to be a liar, God will remain true, ἀληθής, to His character and being. And Judgment Day will prove this is the case when divine actions then will vindicate that the words God has spoken to Israel will be proven to be consistent with God's just character. This will mean that God's judgments on that day will prevail and not be challengeable at all. Jewish objections to being damned to eternal punishment, even though properly circumcised Torah possessing individuals, will not carry any weight at all. To the contrary, God's justness in judging without partiality will prevail on that day: οὐ γάρ ἐστιν προσωποληψία παρὰ τῷ θεῷ, *for there is no partiality with God* (2:11). Thus David's experience of the justice of God in judging him in his lifetime provides insight into what can be expected from God on Judgment Day.

An alternative modified understanding of the text is triggered by taking the infinitive τῷ κρίνεσθαί σε as passive voice instead of as middle voice. This is questionable in part due to the Hebrew Qal form קָרַב from קָרַב that clearly specifies an intensive active voice expression.²²⁰ The Septuagint translators of this Hebrew text into the Greek τῷ κρίνεσθαί σε can be clearly understood to have used the middle voice form to heighten emphasis upon God doing the judging in order to match the Hebrew text. The resulting sense of the passive voice is *You will prevail while being judged*. The projected scenario by Paul is that the circumcised Jews will challenge God's right to judge them on that day since they are circumcised. Ultimately the meaning becomes virtually the same which ever way the infinitive is taken. It's mostly a matter of how prominent the challenging of God on Judgment Day is seen in the narrative of Paul.

The point made by Paul in using this claim made by King David of Israel is that God is just and will do what is just, especially on Judgment Day. For the Jewish elitist expecting to received favored treatment as a circumcised Jew in that moment, a roud shock awaits

²²⁰Prof. Dunn (WBC, p. 133) is mistaken to argue against the middle voice understanding. Instead of tracing the background of Psalm 50:6 (LXX) to the source text of the Hebrew, he depends mostly on secondary sources of apocalyptic Judaism on God's judgment being challenged in arguing for the passive voice view. He used the wrong evidence for his point. And especially since Paul's use of the LXX text is verbatim, rather than paraphrase.



him. God does not grant special favors to anyone! He treats -- and will treat on that Day -- everyone the same way. What He is looking for is authentic surrender of life to Him that has produced living in obedience to His desires. Both Jew and Gentile will be treated the same exact way. See 2:6-11 for this being laid out in detail.

Jewish writings contemporary to the time of Paul argue for the justness of God's judgment but assume that this means the 'righteous' circumcised Jew will make Heaven with little or no trouble. (cf. Psalms of Solomon Pss. Sol. 2:15; 3:5; 4:8; 8:7, 26; 9:2). The Jewish focus is on God being just in banishing all 'sinners' from the favored presence of the 'righteous' circumcised Jews in Heaven.²²¹ This is the voice of persecuted Jews seeking revenge for abusive treatment from Gentiles. But Paul disavows such thinking completely, and probably to the consternation of the synagogue communities in Rome who would have been familiar to these Jewish writings.

εἰ δὲ ἡ ἀδικία ἡμῶν θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην συνίστησιν, τί ἐροῦμεν; (v. 5a) Paul now raises the issue of Jewish dis-

²²¹This kind of misguided thinking reflected in the Psalms of Solomon probably has its roots in a misinterpretation of Isaiah 43:9-13,

- 9 Let all the nations gather together,
and let the peoples assemble.
Who among them declared this,
and foretold to us the former things?
Let them bring their witnesses to justify them,
and let them hear and say, "It is true."
- 10 You are my witnesses, says the LORD,
and my servant whom I have chosen,
so that you may know and believe me
and understand that I am he.
Before me no god was formed,
nor shall there be any after me.
- 11 I, I am the LORD,
and besides me there is no savior.
- 12 I declared and saved and proclaimed,
when there was no strange god among you;
and you are my witnesses, says the LORD.
- 13 I am God, and also henceforth I am He;
there is no one who can deliver from my hand;
I work and who can hinder it?

Here the prophet calls for a council gathering of the Gentile nations to assemble and try to blame God as being unjust. In this imaginary assembly, no nation can lay charge of God being unjust. Instead, they will be compelled to acknowledge that God is indeed true and just: *καὶ εἰπάτωσαν ἀληθῆ* (v. 9c). What Isaiah was stressing is that the justness of God should be testified to by Israel who have known of His ways for a long time. The witness of the Israelites should convince the nations that God is just and treats all fairly. Isaiah continues and accuses the Israelites of his time of not being able to do this because of disobedience and neglect of God's expectations upon them. The Jews of Paul's era took Isaiah's idea of Israel giving witness to God's justice as a guarantee that they would receive favored treatment by God from just being Jews.

obedience (ἡ ἀδικία ἡμῶν) impacting (συνίστησιν) *the righteousness of God* (θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην). Contextually the rhetorical question in v. 5a grows out of the assertion in v. 4a, *γινέσθω δὲ ὁ θεὸς ἀληθής, πᾶς δὲ ἄνθρωπος ψεύστης*. This scenario is presented in the protasis of a first class conditional sentence structure, which assumes the reality of the protasis. That is, Paul sees the issue of the connection of Jewish disobedience to the righteousness of God as a very real and legitimate issue. He does not dismiss it as irrelevant and false. This would have required a very different grammar structure than what is used here.

Exactly what is this scenario? Here the elements change from previous scenarios. The interaction is between ἡ ἀδικία ἡμῶν, *our unrighteousness*, and θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην, *God's righteousness*. The connecting link between them is defined in the verb συνίστησιν, *brings out*. Introduced as a first class conditional protasis by the conjunction εἰ, the scenario is presented as real and happening. Thus it is intended to reflect situations taking place inside the Jewish religious world of Paul's day. Having been a Pharisee prior to conversion to Christ and having carried on a continual battle with Jewish religious leaders throughout his Christian ministry, the apostle had abundant experience to know what he speaks of here.

The scenario is presented out of a very Jewish perspective that is prompted by his use of King David's declaration as an affirmation of God's character (cf. v. 4). Thus the first person plural "we" in v. 5 means "we Jews." In vv. 6-7 he shifts over to the first person singular "I" but back to the first person plural "we" in v. 8. Interestingly the "we" in verse 8 has shifted to "we Christians," and especially "we Christian ministers of the Gospel." In order to correctly follow Paul's train of thought, these details must be given proper attention.

The verb subject is ἡ ἀδικία ἡμῶν. The noun ἀδικία is used 7 times in Romans out of 25 total uses in the NT. It speaks of wrong doing. But as a derivative from the same root along with δικαιοσύνη, the idea of unjust treatment of others is prominent in its meaning. Remember that inside the NT, just treatment is measured and defined by God's own character and actions. Whatever varies from this becomes ἀδικία. Access to knowing what this is comes through τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ, *the oracles of God* (3:1), quite apart from prevailing Roman law. When we treat others in ways that differ from how God treats them, we commit acts of ἀδικία. In this way, ἀδικία, *wrong doing*, is closely linked to ἀπιστία, *unfaithfulness* (v. 3).

So the producer of the verb action is our wrong doing. But the recipient of the verb action is θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην, *God's righteousness*. Of the 90 NT uses of δικαιοσύνη, 32 of them are found in Romans alone. Clearly from a literary and theological standpoint the letter body of Romans is largely Paul's explanation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as the centerpiece of the apostolic Gospel, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον (1:16-17). Thus to discover it being used quite often throughout the letter body is not surprising.

Thus the impact of ἡ ἀδικία ἡμῶν is upon θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην here in verse 5. That is, upon the justice of God. The Greek word even in secular Greek connoted the essential idea of fair and proper treatment of others. So θεοῦ δικαιοσύνη at its heart spells out that God is innately committed to treating humanity justly and fairly, a point made several times already by Paul in this letter: 2:2-11, 12-16. Plus the apostle links θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην (v. 5) to τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ (v. 3). God is completely trustworthy to always treat humanity with pure justice and equality. In the Psalm 51 quote in v. 4b, that God is true to His character and being will ultimately be vindicated on Judgment Day, when His words will prevail over the objections of others. Even in settling the eternal destiny of all of humanity, He will remain true to what He has spoken.

Now is there anything that could shake God loose from faithfully carrying out His words on Judgment Day? Here is especially where Paul's communal oriented society shows up to the possible puzzlement of modern individualistic oriented western readers. The scenario proposed in v. 5a suggests that Jewish wrong doing might have an impact on God's just handing of humanity in judgment.

In verse three, a somewhat similar first class conditional protasis was presented as an assumed scenario: εἰ ἠπίστησάν τινες, *since some have been unfaithful*. That raises the question asked in the main clause apodosis: μή ἡ ἀπιστία αὐτῶν τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ καταργήσῃ; *That does not mean that their unfaithfulness will render God's faithfulness useless, does it?* In verse 3 the interaction is between Jewish unfaithfulness and God's faithfulness. The verbal action linking these two entities is μή...καταργήσῃ. To put it bluntly, Paul asserts that Jewish unfaithfulness will in no way castrate God's faithfulness. That is God will feel no obligation to allow unfaithful but circumcised Jews into Heaven.

Now in the subsequent scenario of v. 5a, the interaction is between Jewish wrong doing and God's just treatment of humanity. But the nature of the connection

now is συνίστησιν. What is this? And how is it different from καταργήσῃ in v. 3? Clearly the two sets of elements, defining Jews (ἡ ἀπιστία αὐτῶν / ἡ ἀδικία ἡμῶν) and God (τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ / θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην), are closely interlinked out of Paul's scribal Jewish way of thinking. So what is different between μή...καταργήσῃ (v. 3) and συνίστησιν (v. 5)? The verb συνίστησιν comes from συνίστημι with the alternative dialectical spelling of συνιστάνω by some NT writers. The core literal meaning is to stand two things together, side by side. This has an almost endless range of derivative ideas depending on what the two things are. Here two abstract ideas are stood along side each other: Jewish wrong doing and God's justice. Paul's reasoning in using this idea is to raise the theoretical idea that Jewish wrong doing in some way can bring out or show the justice of God better. In the context, this points to Jewish wrong doing forcing God to give special attention and favor to the circumcised Jews before Him on Judgment Day. After all, they are His chosen, covenant people. Only against the backdrop of substantial intertestamental Jewish discussions of how favored the 'righteous,' i.e., the circumcised, Jew will be on Judgment Day can one begin to grasp the Jewish scenario that Paul is alluding to here in the protasis of v. 5. In these writings, God's justice means letting such Jews into Heaven while banishing all others to the fires of Hell. The contemporary Jewish writers would have agreed with the essential premise of Paul here. Sure God is just: he accepts circumcised Jews and rejects all uncircumcised sinners. David's experience with Bathsheba (v. 4) illustrates Paul's point that not even the King of Israel could do wrong and not face the wrath of God even in this life. If true in that earlier day, it remains true into Paul's day and afterwards down to the Day of Judgment. No Jew has automatic acceptance merely based on circumcision and possession of the Torah. From an application stand point, the same will be true for the professing Christian who claims baptism and church membership as granting automatic acceptance. From Jesus' stunning words in Mat. 7:21-23 the bar is set much higher than even these claims. Not even minimal obedience is enough!

Paul's emphatic point made in both scenarios in vv. 3 and 5 is that God is and always will be true to His character no matter how covenant Jews respond to the advantage given them in the oracles of God. His faithfulness and justice is unwavering toward all humanity. For Paul's Christian readership at Rome this was a very important word. Non-Jewish readers accustomed to particular deities favoring their devotees above others

would find great encouragement in the word that God was going to treat them on Judgment Day the exact way that He would treat Jews. Jewish readers would be reminded that their Jewish heritage in no possible way would give them advantage before God on Judgment Day.

But for the Jewish readers, the apostle is not finished. They do have the advantage of having been given τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ (v. 2). But such advantage does not provide advantage of priority acceptance by God. The issue raised in the communal culture of Paul's day than raised the issue: if this is so, then doesn't our Jewish greater sinning enable God to show His justice more?

To this subsequent issue Paul's core answer in the apodosis of v. 5a is τί ἐροῦμεν; *What shall we say?* The apostle likes to pose this question as is reflected in 3:5; 4:1; 6:1; 7:7; 8:31; 9:14, 30. It becomes his way of acknowledging something just said is controversial and thus requires amplification. This is especially the case when the inferential conjunction οὖν is inserted as in Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν that is found in all the other instances inside Romans.

Verses 5b-8 become that amplification that gives through using declarations, rhetorical questions and stated answers. Vv. 5c-7s become more personal with the dominate use of the first person singular "I" frame of reference. Then verse eight returns to the "we" angle but now including we Christians.

μη̄ ἄδικος ὁ θεὸς ὁ ἐπιφέρων τὴν ὀργήν; (v. 5b) This elliptical rhetorical question is framed so as to expect a negative answer. The impact of this is to say in effect: you can't be serious to claim that God is unjust when He imposes His wrath on you. Surely you have more sense than this! If God ignores your claim to favored status and judges you the exact same way that He does all others, you have no basis then to say that He is unjust.

Note that ἄδικος is the adjective spelling from the same root stem as the noun ἀδικία in v. 5. And it carries the same essential meaning of unjust treatment of others. The stinger is contained in the question is the adjectival participle phrase ὁ ἐπιφέρων τὴν ὀργήν, *who brings down His wrath*. While the present tense participle carries ongoing action, the contextual setting is the eschatological Day of wrath defined in 2:5. It is a part of the two pronged presentation of the ὀργή θεοῦ, *wrath of God*, set up as the anchor theme beginning in 1:18 and continuing through 3:20. There is first the temporal expressions of God's wrath in this world (1:18-32) and then comes the eschatological Day of Wrath at the re-

turn of Christ (2:1-3:20).

The sense of the participle ἐπιφέρων from ἐπιφέρω is to carry something and put it on top of something else. When that dumping is negative, the English idea of inflict punishment or harm on someone catches the basic idea. Thus here God's wrath being inflicted on these objectors equals the divine sentence to eternal damnation. And just who are these objectors? Contextually they are the Jews claiming special favor from God and not having it granted to them on Judgment Day. They get dumped into Hell screaming that God is unjust in doing this. But as Paul found in David's acknowledgment from Psalm 51, God's justice will always prevail and be fully implemented. Absolutely no one enjoys special status with Him and particularly on the Day of Judgment.

κατὰ ἄνθρωπον λέγω. (v. 5c) This is another amplification as a part of the answer to τί ἐροῦμεν. This idiomatic expression is also found in Rom. 6:19; 1 Cor. 9:8, and Gal. 3:15. The particular nuanced meaning is derived from the context. The literal sense is to speak completely within the limits of human thinking without the benefit of divine revelation. The contextual sense of Paul's speaking humanly here is to assert that such an idea of God being unjust is so far out of touch with reality that it's just empty human thinking that has no connection to God or to reality. And may even be bordering on blasphemy. For any Jew to claim that God is unjust by not granting him favored status on Judgment Day would be just plain silly and stupid. The apostle is somewhat embarrassed to even have to address this issue.²²²

μη̄ γένοιτο· ἐπεὶ πῶς κρινεῖ ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον; (v. 6) But Paul continues to flesh out a thorough reply to τί ἐροῦμεν in verse six. The ellipsis inserted here is more challenging to grasp than most of those used up to this point. Does the μη̄ γένοιτο, Hell no, address his previous statement of speaking humanity? *Normally* μη̄ γένοιτο is an immediate response to a rhetorical question posed by Paul. The previous assertion here doesn't

²²²Further, he acknowledges by his parenthetical comment 'I am speaking in a human manner' (κατὰ ἄνθρωπον λέγω, literally 'I am speaking according to a man') that such a question is so far removed from reality that even asking it could be considered blasphemous — at least by Jews, Jewish Christians, and those who have been extensively influenced by Jewish Christianity, as were his Christian addressees at Rome. And he had no desire even to appear blasphemous." [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 350.]

easily fit the pattern. It signals that Paul won't speak humanly any more, yet he does so again in 6:19. The intense negation of *μη γένοιτο* makes better sense if it is responding to the rhetorical question just preceding *κατὰ ἄνθρωπον λέγω* that raises the issue of God being unjust. In that connection then *μη γένοιτο* becomes an additional emphatic denial of the possibility of God being unjust on Judgement Day.

The subordinate causal conjunction *ἐπεὶ* provides a reason for it not being possible for God to be unjust: *ἐπεὶ πῶς κρινεῖ ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον*; **Because how will God judge the world?** An unjust judge would have no moral or legitimate basis upon which to hand out sentences upon wrong doing humanity. To the Jewish objector directly Paul's assertion becomes a god who showed favoritism to Jews would have no just basis for sentencing non-Jews to Hell. Thus Paul's assertion here echoes strongly the opening salvo of this larger section beginning in 2:1-4.

Note a very important assumption giving foundation to Paul's thoughts here. **God's justice**, *θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην*, and His faithfulness, *τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ*, rest upon God showing no one favored status or special consideration on Judgment Day. God as Truth, *ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ θεοῦ*, (v. 7a) makes favoritism utterly impossible as One who is ultimate holiness and purity. God cannot violate who He is in His actions for there is perfect correlation between these two aspects. Otherwise He would be nothing more than the empty idols that the people of Paul's day worshipped. A fantasy conjured up in the evil thinking of sinful humans.

Clearly the elements of the dependent clause point to the eschatological judgment day as the point of the question. The noun *κόσμος* has a wide range of derivative meanings coming out of the literal idea of a covering in the 185 NT uses. Paul makes use of some of them in the nine uses found in Romans. These can be translated by the English word "world" but with differing meanings. In 1:8 *κόσμος* specifies the surface territory of the earth across the world of the Roman empire. In 1:20, it designates the material world created by God. In 3:6, 19, *κόσμος* designates the 'people world,' as an alternative to *ἄνθρωπος* and *ἄνθρώπινος*.²²³ Either the material world or the people world becomes the intended meaning of *κόσμος* in the remaining uses found at 4:13; 5:12, 13, 11:12, 15. It is in the Johannine writings

²²³See the Louw-Nida Greek lexicon topics 9.1-9.23 for a full range of ways for designating human beings in the Greek New Testament [Louw, Johannes P., and Eugene Albert Nida. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*. New York: United Bible Societies, 1996.]

that *κόσμος* as people world takes on the strong tone of sinful people world. Paul doesn't use *κόσμος* with such automatic negative meanings.

The subordinate conjunction *ἐπεὶ* can signal either time (when, after et als.) or cause/reason (because, since). The dominant pattern is the latter in the NT usage, and is the sense of Paul's use here. In the ellipsis it presupposes giving a reason for the impossibility of God being unjust in imposing His wrath on sinners (v. 3b). But it do so as a secondary idea via the subordinate conjunction, rather than as a primary idea which would have required the coordinate conjunction *γάρ*. Thus Paul signals that the issue of God's questionable judging of the world is not his main point in amplifying the apodosis *τί ἐροῦμεν* (v. 5a). The shift in verse seven to the first person "I" indicates the most important part of the apostle's amplification.

The interrogative adverb *πῶς* is used in a variety of ways to call a stated issue into question. The issue of God's ability to judge the world while being *ἄδικος*, **unjust**, would be seriously questionable. Granting circumcised Jews automatic entrance into Heaven while condemning everyone else because of being disobedient sinners would destroy every sense of *θεοῦ δικαιοσύνη*. And God could not be God apart from *δικαιοσύνη*. For Him to be *δίκαιος* He is compelled to apply the same standard of judging to every person on Judgment Day. His holy character demands such.

The verb *κρινεῖ* from *κρίνω* is the normal future active indicative 3rd Singular spelling, in distinction to the present tense spelling *κρίνει*. This clearly points to the eschatological judgment day as the primary focus when God will judge the entire world. The core idea of *κρίνω* is to separate out into different groups. The background of a courtroom where the **judge**, *κριτής*, separates out the defendant into either a guilty or innocent category is a part of the meaning. The **decision**, *κρίμα*, that the separation is based on, is the *κρίσις* also. *κρίμα* normally stresses the actions taken, while *κρίσις* usually is the process of deciding. How the judge arrives at a decision is labeled *κριτήριον*. How proper the judge conducts himself is labeled *κριτικός*. Hopefully he has used proper investigative methods, labeled *ἀνακρίνω* (verb) and *ἀνάκρισις* (noun). Although this group of words carries the idea well beyond the ancient court room, the ancient court setting plays a dominant role in providing meaning.²²⁴

²²⁴*κρίνω, κρίσις, κρίμα, κριτής, κριτήριον, κριτικός, ἀνακρίνω, ἀνάκρισις, ἀποκρίνω, ἀνταποκρίνομαι, ἀπόκριμα, ἀπόκρισις, διακρίνω, διάκρισις, ἀδιάκριτος, ἐγκρίνω, κατακρίνω, κατάκριμα, κατάκρισις, ἀκατάκριτος, αὐτοκατάκριτος, πρόκριμα, συγκρίνω*



The image of final Judgment Day is painted more detailed by John in Rev. 20:11-15. In a manner consistent with Paul's world, the emperor of the world, God Himself, sits on a white throne where all humanity comes before Him and has their eternal fate determined with a judgment based on two Heavenly books. Consistent with Paul's statement in Rom. 2:6 (ὃς ἀποδώσει *ἐκάστω κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ*) is John's declaration in Rev. 20:13, ἐκρίθησαν *ἕκαστος κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν*, *each one of them was judged according to their deeds*. The highest, final human judge in John's and Paul's world was the Roman emperor, who ruled the world of that time. Thus final Heavenly judgment would be rendered by the One who actually rules the world, God.

In summary then, the elliptical question posed in v. 6b ἐπεὶ πῶς κρινεῖ ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον; addresses the issue of the impossibility of God acting ἄδικος, *unjust*. It adds to this earlier rhetorical question another rhetorical question implying that if God were ἄδικος He could not judge the world in δικαιοσύνη. This second question in v. 6b stands in support of the point of the previous question μὴ ἄδικος ὁ θεὸς ὁ ἐπιφέρων τὴν ὀργήν; in v. 5b. But additionally it adds support to Paul's emphatic denial in μὴ γένοιτο.

Put another way in simpler terms. Should God let the circumcised Torah possessing Jew into His Presence, i.e., Heaven, while rejecting everyone else as sinners, He would be ἄδικος, and His evaluating everyone in final judgment would not be done in δικαιοσύνη. In such a scenario, God would be denying Himself and His holy character -- something utterly impossible. He would then be showing προσωποληψία, favoritism (2:11). Such a scenario as this is completely impossible and not even worth considering. Thus Paul's very intense denial with μὴ γένοιτο, *Hell no!* in 3:6.

εἰ δὲ ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ ψεύσματι ἐπερίσσευσεν εἰς τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, (v. 7a) But the apostle isn't through yet. So another more personal response is added in the rhetorical question of v. 7. This time the first person "I" becomes the narrative angle. The appeal is less theoretical and more pragmatic, since it comes out of his Gospel ministry experiences. Interestingly, the personal ministry appeal extends to include v. 8 but he reaches out in it to include his associates with the "we"

[Friedrich Büchsel and Volkmar Hertrich, "Κρίνω, Κρίσις, Κρίμα, Κριτής, Κριτήριον, Κριτικός, Ανακρίνω, Ανάκρισις, Αποκρίνω, Ανταποκρίνομαι, Απόκριμα, Απόκρισις, Διακρίνω, Διάκρισις, Αδιάκριτος, Ἐγκρίνω, Κατακρίνω, Κατάκριμα, Κατάκρισις, Ακατάκριτος, Αὐτοκατάκριτος, Πρόκριμα, Συγκρίνω," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 3:921.]

frame of reference.

Two distinct separate scenarios are proposed in these two verses. The protasis in v. 7a sets up the one concerning just the apostle. But the second καθὼς clause in verse eight depicts the second scenario including at least him and his associates. These are different situations and must be kept distinct if we are to clearly understand Paul here. It should be noted also that in their own distinctive way grammatically, they are assumed to come out of actual experiences of Paul in Gospel ministry.

Also important to remember is that both scenarios add additional supporting evidence to Paul's denial of μὴ γένοιτο in v. 6a. This is clear not only from the coordinate conjunctions δὲ (v. 7a) and καὶ (v. 8a), but through the continued use of the rhetorical question pattern in both scenarios, the first one open ended in v. 7 and the second one expecting negative agreement in v. 8.

Due to the extra length of the first rhetorical question in verse seven the protasis (v. 7a) and the apodosis (v. 7b) have been separated into two segments in the commentary:

Protasis, subordinate clause containing the scenario:

εἰ δὲ ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ ψεύσματι ἐπερίσσευσεν εἰς τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ,

Apodosis main clause drawing observation about the scenario:

τί ἔτι κἀγὼ ὡς ἀμαρτωλὸς κρίνομαι;

There is a touch of sarcasm in how Paul sets this up. The first class conditional protasis assumes actuality, but not theoretically. Rather, in Paul's experience of having had the accusations alluded to in the apodosis thrown at him. Critically important to correct interpretation is reconstruction of the precise scenario being set up in the protasis.

Identifying whether these criticisms of Paul had already arisen at Rome, perhaps from the synagogues, or whether this summarizes a collection of criticisms of Paul that evolved out of the duration of his ministry up to this point -- it is difficult to determine the situation with complete satisfaction.²²⁵ The only NT based

²²⁵Exactly what was being said about Paul by the Christians at Rome we simply do not know. But it seems fairly apparent that he is responding here to certain criticisms that had been leveled against him and certain accusations that had been mounted against his Gentile mission by some of his Jewish Christian opponents — which criticisms and accusations, in all likelihood, had 'taken on a life of their own' in their spread from Asia Minor and Greece to Rome. So it may be hypothesized that criticisms and accusations of this type against Paul and his Gentile mission were known—perhaps even repeated with approval—by some of the Christians



insights we have come from Philippians and from Acts 28. But they depict the situation for Paul upon his arrival in Rome as a prisoner some three to four years after these words were written.

In Phil. 1:7 Paul describes his later situation in terms of ἔν τε τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀπολογία καὶ βεβαιώσει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the Gospel. In vv. 12-14 he speaks of how his being in Rome as a prisoner has advanced the Gospel witness and encouraged many in the Roman Christian community. But the attitudes toward him by fellow Christians was a mixed bag: τινὲς μὲν καὶ διὰ φθόνον καὶ ἔριν, τινὲς δὲ καὶ δι' εὐδοκίαν τὸν Χριστὸν κηρύσσουν, **on the one hand some are preaching Christ through envy and jealousy, but others through good will** (v. 15). In verse 17, his opponents in the Roman church further were seeking to cause him physical harm: οἱ δὲ ἐξ ἐριθείας τὸν Χριστὸν καταγγέλλουσιν, οὐχ ἄγνῶς, οἰόμενοι θλιψὶν ἐγείρειν τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου, **the others proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but intending to increase my suffering in my imprisonment**. Could this be the festering sore that exploded at Paul's arrival? And that had been festering for a long time among some in the Christian community? Perhaps.

In Acts 28:17-22, Luke paints a picture centered on interaction of the prisoner Paul with τοὺς ὄντας τῶν Ἰουδαίων πρώτους, **those being leaders among the Jews** (v. 17) in the city. To them he explains and defends his having appealed to the emperor against the Jewish nation. Curiosity about this new sect inside Judaism called Christianity that Paul was preaching was greater than any hostile feelings toward Paul (vv. 21-28) which Paul addressed over several weeks in meetings with not just the leaders but lots of other interested Jews in the city. Some were converted to Christianity, while others were not. Luke ends on a very positive note by saying,

30 Ἐνέμεινεν δὲ διετίαν ὅλην ἐν ἰδίῳ μισθῷ καὶ ἀπεδέχετο πάντας τοὺς εἰσπορευομένους πρὸς αὐτόν
31 κηρύσσων τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ διδάσκων τὰ περὶ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ πάσης παρρησίας ἀκωλύτως. **30 He lived there two whole years at his own expense and welcomed all who came to him, 31 proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.**

at Rome." [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 350–351.]

The protasis in Rom. 3:7 seems to cover a stretch of time leading up to the point of the writing of these words. It is stated as a religious principle deduced from lies being stated about him. The interaction is between ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ θεοῦ, **God's Truth**, and τῷ ἐμῷ ψεύσματι, **my lying**. The singular number ψεύσματι from ψεῦσμα stresses the action of telling/promoting a falsehood.²²⁶ Here is the only time Paul uses the word. ἡ ἀλήθεια is, biblically speaking, the very essence of God Himself that He communicates to humanity through His actions and words. Although to the modern reader setting ἀλήθεια and ψεῦσμα up as opposites may seem unusual, to the first century reader familiar with the OT such was entirely natural. What God communicates about Himself has a powerful connection to whether the spokesman for God communicates that correctly or incorrectly. Remember the action orientation of both Greek terms, especially as used by NT writers. The aorist verb ἐπερίσσευσεν from περισσεύω is used as a intransitive verb carries the idea of ἀλήθεια having been caused to exist in abundance by means of Paul's ψεῦσμα. That is, truth is known much more prevalently by lying than by telling the truth.

The scenario then painted by Paul here characterizes his ministry, as assumed by his opponents, of trying to spread God's Truth by promoting lies about God. Thus Paul's entire ministry is believed by his enemies to be a huge deception of people that tells things that do not correspond to who God is. This assumption by his enemies is what Paul's knows has been happening throughout his Christian ministry. His argument adopts this perspective as the basis of raising the rhetorical question in the apodosis.

The adverbial prepositional phrase εἰς τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, **unto His praise**, is an important signal of who His enemies are. Without it, the logical conclusion would be from the content of the apodosis that they are the Jewish synagogue opponents. Clearly the apostle was charged repeatedly with misleading people about God

²²⁶This third declension noun of action is close to the verb ψεῦδομαι in stressing the action of lying. The lie itself as to content is a ψεῦδος, while the one telling / doing the lie is a ψεῦστης. A massive range of derivative forms are built off the root stem ψευδ-. Just a few of these are ψεῦδος, ψεῦδομαι, ψευδής, ψεῦσμα, ψεῦστης, ἀψευσδής, ἄψευστος. [Hans Conzelmann, "Ψεῦδος, Ψεῦδομαι, Ψευδής, Ψεῦσμα, Ψεῦστης, Ἀψευσδής, Ἄψευστος," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 9:594.]

The opposite of ψεῦδομαι is ἀληθεύω, and especially the idiom τὸ στόμα ἀνοίγω πρὸς, I open my mouth to, which stresses concealing absolutely nothing.

by the leaders of Judaism. This opposition had followed him throughout the duration of his ministry, and while writing these words at Corinth before traveling to Jerusalem he was apprehensive of even more severe opposition awaiting him at Jerusalem (cf. Rom. 15:25-33).

But this phrase redirects the conclusion the identity of opponents to his enemies being inside the Christian community, rather than outside and most likely the Judaizers whom he confronted much earlier in Jerusalem (Acts 15) and then in Galatia (Gal. 3-4). These Christian opponents of Paul wanted the Gospel message to confine Christianity to a sect within Judaism and thus maintain Torah obedience requirements upon all professing Christians. By opening the doors to all and on the same basis without Torah obedience requirements, the apostle continued to be a sinner, i.e., a Torah violator. This was the charge against him.

τί ἔτι κἀγὼ ὡς ἁμαρτωλὸς κρίνομαι; (v. 7b) This is the apodosis which raises a question about a perceived disconnect from the scenario set up in the protasis. Each of the words plays an important role in defining the disconnect.

The interrogative neuter pronoun τί raises the issue as a disconnect that demands an explanation to the readers. Paul's supposed promoting of God's truth by lying doesn't naturally fit him still be a considered a sinner. His ministry had led many more people across the Roman empire to know about the God of Israel. That could not be denied, even by these Romans who only know about Paul indirectly by reputation. This is made clear from the synagogue leaders in their meeting with Paul some years later in Acts 28:22b, *περὶ μὲν γὰρ τῆς αἰρέσεως ταύτης γνωστὸν ἡμῖν ἐστὶν ὅτι πανταχοῦ ἀντιλέγεται*, *for with regard to this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against*. Long before Paul arrived in Jerusalem, Christianity in Rome had gained a bad reputation in the eyes of the Jewish synagogue leaders. Did this create an open door for the so-called Judaizer movement inside Christianity elsewhere to push their opposition to Paul at Rome? Very possibly. Such would then explain the incredibly unchristian opposition to Paul upon his arrival at Rome by some inside the Roman church, which Paul alludes to in Phil. 1:15, 17.²²⁷ Some, perhaps a lot, of the house church groups scat-

²²⁷It seems to be a universal religious trait that holding a belief system which enables one to get along with outsiders for profit and prestige drives a lot of the opposition to leaders calling for a starkly different lifestyle than what prevails in the surrounding culture. The penchant to "have my cake and eat it to" mentality always pushes folks toward compromise for the same of personal benefit.

tered across the city and immediate region were dominantly made up of Jewish Christians who did not want the apostle to come in and rock the boat with regard to their relationships with fellow Jews and the synagogue which they most likely still attended every Friday evening.

The adverb ἔτι, *still*, stands in contrast to ἤδη, *already*, to reference something as continuing on without interruption over a period of time. This meaning is how Paul uses ἔτι uniformly in the five instances found in Romans: 3:7; 5:6, 8; 6:2; 9:19. No implications are contained about when the dynamic began. In essence, criticisms of Paul's ministry continued from at least his Christian conversion, and perhaps predated even this.

Key to the apodosis is the meaning of ὡς ἁμαρτωλός. Is Paul a sinner from a Jewish or a Christian angle? The Jewish view defined ἁμαρτωλός as a Torah violator and thus little better than a pagan Gentile. This strongly prejudicial view came out of the Pharisees of Paul's world, who saw fellow Jews not strictly observing the Torah as they interpreted it as being scum bags and lowlifes among the Jewish people (cf. Mk. 7:1-13).

Christian definition sees ἁμαρτωλός from the broader specter as someone who is at odds with God in lifestyle and commitments. The Jewish view gets to this broader view but through Torah obedience, set up not just by the law of Moses but mostly by the accumulated scribal interpretations of the Pentateuch.²²⁸ This implies that Paul's opponents charged him with being a Torah violator. Such a charge could indeed come from the Jewish synagogues or from the Jewish Christian segment inside the communities of believers which had been influenced by the Judaizing elements coming out of the Christian community in Jerusalem.

The verb κρίνομαι poses some important issues. This present tense passive voice verb from κρίνω carries the core idea of Paul continually being separated

²²⁸The gradual accumulation of these scribal interpretations accelerated greatly after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70 A.D. The scribes took on new levels of importance and came to be known as rabbis. These accumulated interpretations reach back to the second century BCE. They were passed down orally from having been carefully memorized by every Jewish man aspiring to be a teacher of the Law. With shifting cultural orientations in the second century AD, the process of recording them in written form began. The result came first with the biblical text combined with the interpretation appears around 200 AD and has come to be known at the Jerusalem Talmud. Sharp disagreement from the rabbis with roots in the eastern fertile crescent from the Exodus result in the release of a much larger version that came to be known as the Babylonian Talmud around 300 AD. Currently the Babylonian Talmud enjoys greater acceptance by Jews world wide and the English translation of it stretches into almost a dozen volumes.



out and placed into the category of Torah Violator. This was not a spasmodic criticism but instead an ongoing process that had typified most all of Paul's Christian ministry. The courtroom setting for κρίνω recedes into the background and provides only the sense of separating out. But this is not in a formal legal sense apart from being reflected in the hostility directed against Paul during his three missionary journeys by synagogue leaders. See Acts 13-20 for numerous examples. Usually after a favorable beginning of Gospel preaching in the local synagogues, opposition to him would arise mainly from the synagogue leaders who then took actions to ban Paul from entering the synagogue again. Early on in the first journey through Galatia (Acts 13-14) efforts extended to kill him several times. The opposition did not diminish much on the second and third journeys (Acts 16-20), evening though the dominate emphasis on these trips was disciplining already existing Christian communities. In the huge uproar in Ephesus just before arriving in Corinth for three months (when Romans was written), it was not the Jews who forced Paul out of Ephesus, but two years beforehand they had forced him out of the synagogues and into the rented lecture hall of Tyrannus close to the synagogue (Acts 19:8-10). When he arrived in Corinth after the uproar, clearly the apostle could well remember the accusations hurled at him at Ephesus by various Jews.

Paul's reasoning seems then to move along these lines. Assuming that my 'lying' increases the knowledge of God among many more people, why do I continue to be accused of being a violator of Torah? Am I not doing God a favor by my ministry? How could that be wrong?

If Paul is alluding to insider Jewish Christian criticisms here, then he in this declaration is acknowledging continuous criticisms against his ministry and Gospel from segments of Jewish Christian groups who see him as more a trouble maker than as a positive Christian leader. They don't want him to upset their comfortable relationship still with the Jewish synagogue.

If Paul is alluding to Jewish synagogue criticisms of him, then he is targeting the symbolic Jewish elitist that he has had in mind since chapter two. That mind-set sought to claim superiority merely on the basis of Torah possession and circumcision. To such Jewish individuals Paul represented also a trouble maker who was challenging their sense of superiority. Their response was to label him as a Torah violator because of his Gospel message.

Beyond this, it is not possible to know precisely what Paul intended, as Prof. Longenecker asserts in

his commentary on Romans in the WBC page 350 (cf above footnote). What is clear, however, is that this personal assertion is intended as further evidence that in no possible way can God be ἄδικος, unjust, in His judging of humanity on Judgment Day. Just how this becomes positive evidence reflects a specific situation arising out of Paul's mid first century ministry. Modern applications would thus be limited.²²⁹

καὶ μὴ (v. 8a) This final piece of evidence added to the list picks up on the very personal declaration made by Paul of his own ministry (v. 7). But the scope moves from "I" to "we." The Greek construction is both elliptical and complex at the same time.²³⁰ In order to untangle

²²⁹"We have a tangled sentence which can be cleared up in two ways. One is (Lightfoot) to supply γενηται [genētai] after μη [mē] and repeat τι [ti] (καὶ τι μη γενηται [kai ti mē genētai], deliberative subjunctive in a question): And why should it not happen? The other way (Sanday and Headlam) is to take μη [mē] with ποιησωμεν [poiēsōmen] and make a long parenthesis of all in between. Even so it is confusing because ὅτι [hoti] also (recitative ὅτι [hoti]) comes just before ποιησωμεν [poiēsōmen]. The parenthesis is necessary anyhow, for there are two lines of thought, one the excuse brought forward by the unbeliever, the other the accusation that Paul affirms that very excuse that we may do evil that good may come. Note the double indirect assertion (the accusative and the infinitive ἡμας λεγειν [hēmās legein] after φασιν [phasin] and then the direct quotation with recitative ὅτι [hoti] after λεγειν [legein], a direct quotation dependent on the infinitive in indirect quotation. Let us do evil that good may come (ποιησωμεν τα κακα ἵνα ἔλθῃ τα ἀγαθα [poiēsōmen ta kaka hina elthēi ta agatha]). The volitive aorist subjunctive (ποιησωμεν [poiēsōmen]) and the clause of purpose (ἵνα [hina] and the aorist subjunctive ἔλθῃ [elthēi]). It sounds almost uncanny to find this maxim of the Jesuits attributed to Paul in the first century by Jews. It was undoubtedly the accusation of Antinomianism because Paul preached justification by faith and not by works." [A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), Ro 3:8.]

²³⁰"It will be convenient to begin with the question of the punctuation to be adopted (apart from the matter of the parenthesis καθώς, κ.τ.λ., which we shall consider later). The following possibilities have been suggested: (i) a comma at the end of v. 7, another comma after ἀγαθά, and a question mark at the end of this verse; (ii) a comma at the end of v. 7, a question mark after ἀγαθά, and a full stop at the end of the verse; (iii) a question mark at the end of v. 7, a comma after ἀγαθά, and a question mark at the end of the verse; (iv) a question mark at the end of v. 7, a question mark after ἀγαθά, and a full stop at the end of the verse. The effect of (i) is to make vv. 7 and 8 one composite question. It is to be rejected on the ground that, according to it, we should have objections left without any sort of answer, and also on the ground that, if it were accepted, we should have a very awkward combination of the first person singular and the first person plural in the same question. (ii) might perhaps be acceptable, if ὃν τὸ κρίμα ἐνδικόν ἐστίν could be understood as a short, sharp answer to the objections; but (pace Sanday and Headlam,¹ Lagrange,² et al., who maintain that ὃν refers to those who put forward the sort of objection which has been mentioned) ὃν can scarcely refer to any but the τινες,³ in which case ὃν τὸ κρίμα ἐνδικόν ἐστίν is not a reply to the objections but only a condemnation of Paul's calumniators. Both (iii) and (iv)



the one Greek sentence, the NRSV translators broke it up into two English sentences:

And why not say (as some people slander us by saying that we say), "Let us do evil so that good may come"? Their condemnation is deserved!

While not precisely literal, it does capture the essence of the sentence into a relatively easy to understand expression. The two dependent clauses introduced by the adverbial comparative conjunction καθώς complicate the thought flow. The actual core thought flow is simply this:

And why not say, "Let us do evil things so that good things may come?"

The heart of the sentence is the voicing of the criticisms in v. 7 but in a sarcastic tone. If my lies make God better known, then the logic would be to do evil in order to bring on good. But Paul complicates this by shifting from "I" to "we." Why did he do this? This admonition advocated by his opponents is characterized in three ways, with focus on the people advocating this: they are slandering the "we"; they claim that "we" is saying this; and finally their eternal damnation is justly deserved.

First, who are the "we"? It surfaces in the two central verbs βλασφημούμεθα and ποιήσωμεν, as well as with the first person plural personal pronoun ἡμᾶς. This stands in sharp contrast to the first person singular framing of the issue in verse seven: ἐμῶ, κἀγὼ, and κρίνομαι. Far too many commentators ignore this shift as though both verses are framed in the first person singular. The precise meaning of "we" depends in part who is making the criticisms. If these are outsider Jews, then "we" most likely means "we believers." But if the criticisms are coming from insider Jewish Christians, the "we" means Paul and his associates who are preaching the Gospel to local congregations on this journey. The least likely possibility is that "we" is an editorial "we" with the same designation as "I". In a manner so typical of the apostle, when using himself as an illustration of some idea, he normally casts himself in the first person singular, even though the idea may well apply to others associated with him. But then when defending like here criticisms leveled as his work as including that of his associates, the "we" is more appropriate. Although perhaps not considered as good separate v. 8 from v. 7, and make it possible to interpret the verse as a whole as some sort of answer to v. 7. (iv) should be preferred to (iii), as being a more natural punctuation, provided it is not taken to imply any dissociation of ὧν from τινεσ.

[C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 185–186.]

style in modern communication principles, Paul functioned in his own first century world and made use of such shifts in the illustration as helpful to give inclusive signals to his readers.

Second, the continuation of the criticisms is couched in the present tense verbs βλασφημούμεθα and φασίν. What is depicted is that these criticisms were repeated leveled against Paul and his associates.

Now let's look at the remaining individual units of text declaration.

καθώς βλασφημούμεθα (v. 8a)²³¹ This first qualification represents the impact of the push to make the dumb statement. When the critics say that we say to go ahead violating the Torah, they are not being truthful. They are the ψεῦσται, the liars! What they say about me does not line up with God's character, while what I Paul say does. Thus their misrepresentation of us in Gospel ministry brings slander on us. The three uses of βλασφημέω in Romans (2:24; 3:8; 14:16), along with the noun βλασφημία (1x in 1 Tim. 6:4) and the adjective βλάσφημος, -ον (2x in 1 Tim. 1:13 and 2 Tim. 3:2), can reference misrepresentation of God, although for Paul they mostly refer to misrepresentation of individuals. An idiom in English but not in Greek is that misrepresentation of God is blasphemy of God, when of people it is slandering them.

It is the Jewish heritage that injects the utmost seriousness into the action of βλασφημία. In the secular Greek speaking world, the words βλασφημέω, βλασφημία, and βλάσφημος were overwhelmingly what people would sometimes say about other individuals.²³²

²³¹"The conjunction καί ('and') before the second καθώς ('just as') is absent in uncial B (also Byz K), as well as in minuscules 326 629 (Category III). The omission is probably a scribal error that came about because of the similar opening sounds of καί and καθώς." [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 327–328.]

²³²"In secular Gk. βλασφημία is *a.* 'abusive speech' (misuse of words) in contrast to εὐφημία: Demosth., 25, 26: βλασφημίαν ἀντί τῆς νῦν εὐφημίας; Democ. Fr., 177 (II, 97, 3 ff., Diels): οὔτε λόγος ἐσθλὸς φαύλην πρῆξιν ἀμαυρίσκει οὔτε πρῆξις ἀγαθὴ λόγου βλασφημῆ λυμαίνεται. In Eur. Ion, 1189: ἐν χερσὶν ἔχοντι δὲ σπονδάς μετ' ἄλλων παιδὶ τῷ πεφηνότῳ βλασφημίαν τις οἰκετῶν ἐφθέγγατο. J. Wackernagel translates βλασφημία as a 'word of evil sound.' *b.* The word means further the strongest form of 'personal mockery and calumny.' It almost amounts to the same as λοιδορεῖν: Isoc., 10, 45: ἤδη τινεσ ἐλοιδορήσαν αὐτόν, ὧν τὴν ἄνοιαν, ἐξ ὧν ἐβλασφήμησαν περὶ ἐκείνου, ῥάδιον ἅπασι καταμαθεῖν. Mostly, however, it is stronger than λοιδορεῖν and ὀνειδίζειν, e.g., Demosth., 18, 10; 19, 210. The living and the dead can be derided: Demosth., 18, 95: τὰς βλασφημίας, ἃς κατὰ τῶν Εὐβοέων καὶ τῶν Βυζαντίων ἐποιήσατο; Luc. Alex., 4: τὰ



Out of the impact of the Hebrew text on the Septuagint translators the root βλασφημ- ultimately goes back to slanderous actions and statements about God, even when we speak about others.²³³ Out of this rich Jewish χείριστα καὶ βλασφημώματα τῶν ἐπὶ διαβολῇ περὶ τοῦ Πυθαγόρου λεγομένων; Herodian Hist., VII, 8, 9: βλάσφημα πολλὰ εἰπὼν εἰς τὴν Ῥώμην καὶ τὴν σύγκλητον; Demosth., 40, 17: περὶ τεθνεώτων αὐτῶν βλασφημοῦντες. **c.** It then means 'blasphemy of the deity' by mistaking its true nature or violating or doubting its power. Ps.-Plat. Alc., II, 149c: βλασφημούντων οὐν αὐτῶν ἀκούοντες οἱ θεοὶ οὐκ ἀποδέχονται τὰς πολυτελεῖς ταυτασι πομπὰς τε καὶ θυσίας. Plat. Leg., VII, 800c: (εἴ τις) βλασφημοὶ πᾶσαν βλασφημίαν. Myths which presuppose an anthropomorphic form of the gods become βλασφημεῖν εἰς θεοῦς; Plat. Resp., II, 381e. Vett. Val., I, 22 (p.44, 4, Kroll); *ibid.*, II, 2 (p. 58, 12, Kroll): εἰς τὰ θεῖα βλασφημοῦντες; *ibid.*, II, 13 (p. 67, 20, Kroll): πολλὰ βλασφημήσει θεοὺς ἕνεκεν τῶν συμβαινόντων αὐτῷ πραγμάτων." [[Hermann Wolfgang Beyer, "Βλασφημέω, Βλασφημία, Βλάσφημος," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:621.]

²³³"The root βλασφημ- in the LXX² has nothing clearly corresponding in the original. The word is used for the pi of פגל, the pi of פגל and the root פגל or פגל: βλασφημία corresponds to words formed from these roots and βλάσφημος once to פגל, פגל. In the translations of the Hexapla βλασφημ- is also used for פגל, פגל, פגל and פגל. All these terms are rendered variously and with widely varying emphases in the Greek translations, and no firm rules can be distinguished. Alternatives to βλασφημεῖν are particularly ὀνειδίζειν and παροξύνειν, which often occur for פגל, פגל, פגל and פגל. As distinct from these synonyms, βλασφημ- always refers finally to God, whether in the sense of the disputing of His saving power (4 Bas. 19:4, 6, 22), the desecrating of His name by the Gentiles who capture and enslave His people (Is. 52:5), the violation of His glory by derision of the mountains of Israel (Ez. 35:12) and His people (2 Macc. 15:24), all ungodly speech and action, especially on the part of the Gentiles (Is. 66:3; 1 Macc. 2:6; 2 Macc. 8:4; 10:34 ff.; 12:14; Tob. 1:18 s), or human arrogance with its implied depreciation of God (Lv. 24:11 in marg Codd 58, 85, 130 βλασφημεῖν, Codex X in marg ἐνυβρίζειν for פגל, which at 2 Bas. 19:43 LXX is rendered ὑβρίζειν; 4 Bas. 19:22: ἐβλασφήμησας ... ἥρας εἰς ὕψος τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς σου, cf. also Sir. 48:18, where פגל is translated μεγαλαυχεῖν ὑπερηφανία). The very fact that they do not believe in Yahweh makes the Gentiles βλασφήμοις καὶ βαρβάρους ἔθνεσιν (2 Macc. 10:4). With this direct or indirect reference to God, βλασφημ- also occurs in other translations of the OT: Σ 2 Bas. 12:14 (Field, I, 563); ΑΣ ψ 43:16 (Field, II, 159); ΑΣΘ Is. 37:6, 23 (Field, II, 502 f.); 43:28 (Field, II, 519).

The varying significance of the term in Philo is best shown by considering the words with which he associates it, συκοφαντεῖν in Leg. Gaj., 169, κατηγορεῖν in Migr. Abr., 115, κακηγορεῖν in Spec. Leg., IV, 197, ὕβρις in Decal., 86, Jos., 74, διαβολή in Flacc., 33, ἀσέβεια in Decal., 63. βλασφημ- is sharpest when it is linked with κατάρα in antithesis to εὐλογία and εὐχή in Migr. Abr., 117. It here denotes abuse to the point of cursing. The religious sense is predominant, obviously under the influence of the LXX. There is the general statement ὅπως μηδεὶς μηδένα βλασφημῇ in Spec. Leg., IV, 197. But mostly there is reference to the divine: τῶν εἰς τὸ θεῖον βλασφημιῶν, Leg. Gaj., 368; Decal., 63; Fug., 84. The Jew should not blaspheme other gods according to LXX Ex. 22:28 in order that

background where slandering God, the Torah, and a few other items was punishable by stoning, Paul levels this counter charge against his Jewish opponents.

Also establishing a framework for understanding is the NT use of the root βλασφημ-: βλασφημέω (34x); βλασφημία (18x); and βλάσφημος, -ον (3x). The Jewish background and thinking is unquestionably what defines the core idea of **blasphemy/slander** for apostolic Christianity.²³⁴ Paul's use of this group of words con-

the name of God should not be brought into jeopardy: Spec. Leg., I, 53: προστάττει δὲ μὴ ... στομαργία χρήσασθαι καὶ ἀχαλίνῳ γλώσση βλασφημοῦντας οὓς ἕτεροι νομίζουσι θεοῦς. Similarly Jos. Ant., 4, 207 and Ap., 2, 237.³ The real sin, however, is τὸν τῶν ὄλων πατέρα καὶ ποιητὴν βλασφημεῖν, Philo Fug., 84; Vit. Mos., II, 206. In Josephus, with the secular use, blasphemy is equated with attacks on the Jews as the people of God (Ap., 1, 59; 1, 223), or on Moses (Ant., 3, 307; Ap., 1, 279), or on the law of the fathers (Ap., 2, 143).

In the Damascus Document, 5, 11 ff.⁴ it is said of the opponents of the new covenant: "They desecrate the Holy Spirit, blaspheming with their tongue and opening their mouths against the laws of the divine covenant." Here we have the thought, specifically reminiscent of Mk. 3:28 f., that blasphemy is a transgression against the Holy Spirit, who is here viewed as the divinely given inner purity of men.

The Rabbis⁵ in their concept of blasphemy start with the divinely ordained stoning of the blasphemer (Lv. 24:10–16) and the similar saying in Nu. 15:30 f. They find the substance of this capital offence in one "who speaks impudently of the Torah" (S. Nu., 112 on 15:30), in the idolater (S. Nu., 112 on 15:31) and in the one who brings shame on the name of Yahweh (b. Pes., 93b). The formal exposition of the concept by later Rabbinic law, which finds fulfilment of the substance of blasphemy in such things as the clear enunciation of the name of God (Sanh., 7, 5), is not yet present in the time of Jesus.⁶ The decisive thing in the concept of blasphemy is here, too, violation of the majesty of God. βλασφημέω is introduced as a loan-word into Rabb. Heb.⁷

[Hermann Wolfgang Beyer, "Βλασφημέω, Βλασφημία, Βλάσφημος," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:621–622.]

²³⁴"1. In the NT the concept of blasphemy is controlled throughout by the thought of violation of the power and majesty of God. Blasphemy may be directed immediately against God (Rev. 13:6; 16:11, 21; Ac. 6:11),⁸ against the name of God (R. 2:24, quoting Is. 52:5 LXX, → 621; 1 Tm. 6:1; Rev. 16:9), against the Word of God (Tt. 2:5), against Moses and God and therefore against the bearer of revelation in the Law (Ac. 6:11).

Distinctive is the idea of a blaspheming of angelic powers by Gnostic errorists in Jd. 8–10: ὁμοίως μέντοι καὶ οὗτοι ἐνυπνιαζόμενοι σάρκα μὲν μιάνουσιν, κυριότητα δὲ ἀθετοῦσιν, δόξας δὲ βλασφημοῦσιν. ὁ δὲ Μιχαὴλ ὁ ἀρχαγγελος, ὅτε τῷ διαβόλῳ διακρινόμενος διελέγετο περὶ τοῦ Μωϋσέως σώματος, οὐκ ἐτόλμησεν κρίσιν ἐπενεγκεῖν βλασφημίας, ἀλλὰ εἶπεν· ἐπιτιμήσαι σοι κύριος, οὗτοι δὲ ὅσα μὲν οὐκ οἶδασιν βλασφημοῦσιν. The verse is somewhat altered in 2 Pt. 2:10–12.⁹ The blaspheming of heavenly beings ἐπὶ τὰς ἐν οὐρανῷ θείας φύσεις is also found in Philo Conf.



forms to the general pattern throughout the NT.²³⁵ He only uses the verb βλασφημέω in Romans some three times: 2:24; 3:8; 14:16. Only in 2:24 is this slanderous misrepresentation of God. In 3:8 and 14:16, it refers to slanderous misrepresentation of people. But as noted above, inside the Jewish framework, slandering people always implies slandering against God, who created man in His image. While in secular Greek, the βλασφημ- stem of words centers on abusive speech, the LXX was influenced by the Hebrew Bible to see βλασφημία as including actions as well as speech. Paul in Rom. 3:8 uses βλασφημέω to refer to speech actions against him, primarily. But an analysis of how Paul was treated in the Jewish synagogues in his ministry from conversion to the writing of Romans at Corinth would suggest that hostility against him and his associates went well beyond just verbal slandering.

καὶ καθὼς φασὶν τινες ἡμᾶς λέγειν (ν. 8b) What were his opponents saying that constituted blasphemous

Ling., 154; Som., II, 131: ἥλιον καὶ σελήνην καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ἀστέρας βλασφημεῖν. In Jd. and 2 Pt. the reference is undoubtedly to angelic powers.¹⁰ In Jd. 8, and even more strongly in 2 Pt. 2:10, their blaspheming is brought into connection with what the Sodomites did to the divine commandments and with the libertine immorality of the false teachers. By the spotting of the flesh they repudiate the claim to lordship of the κύριος and blaspheme the δόξα, which are here to be understood as powers of good, in close connection with the κυριότης.¹¹ How seriously we are to refrain from such blasphemy (→ the passages from Philo and Jos. supra) is shown by the fact that not even the archangel Michael dares to utter a railing accusation against the devil.

"The NT assumes this strict concept of blasphemy to be that of the Jews — an assumption supported by the LXX, Philo and Josephus (→ 621). It is thus easy to see why Jesus should bring down on Himself the charge of blasphemy, not unjustly from the Jewish standpoint, when He claims to be the Messiah and assumes the prerogatives of God. As soon as Jesus forgives the sins of the man sick of the palsy — the prerogative of God alone — the scribes suspect Him of blasphemy (Mk. 2:7 and par.). The reason for the anger of the Jews is clearly given in Jn. 10:33–36: λιθάζομέν σε ... περὶ βλασφημίας, καὶ ὅτι σὺ ἄνθρωπος ὢν ποιεῖς σεαυτὸν θεόν. The blasphemy which brings about His death is His assertion that He is the Messiah and His statement that He will be seen as the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Almighty, together with His apparent inability to give any convincing proof of His omnipotence to His judges (Mk. 14:64; Mt. 26:65).¹²

[Hermann Wolfgang Beyer, "Βλασφημέω, Βλασφημία, Βλάσφημος," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:622–623.]

²³⁵Note the patterns of usage:

Word:	Form:	NT	Paul	Romans
βλασφημέω	verb	34	8	3
βλασφημία	noun	18	3	0
βλάσφημος, -ov	adjective	3	3	0

slander? This second dependent clause introduced by καθὼς also is linked to the first one by καὶ. The significances of this is to give the essence of the slander charge in the first clause. When Paul accused his opponents of slandering his ministry, he then supplies a summation of what they were saying and doing against him and his associate.

Although very natural Greek, the depiction of the accusation is καθὼς φασὶν τινες ἡμᾶς λέγειν ὅτι..., *just as some are saying that we are saying that...* The use of the Greek infinitive phrase (ἡμᾶς λέγειν ὅτι...) as the direct object of a regular verb is not common in English. But the much wider range of functions in Greek than in all modern western language allows the ancient writer to do things very naturally that either do not exist in modern languages or else that are not good stylistic patterns. For example, the English infinitive to say cannot be used as the direct object of another transitive verb.

The use of φασὶν from φημί is fairly common throughout the NT with 62 uses. This verb is much older than its equivalent later form λέγω (1,269x). It hung on through the Koine era of ancient Greek with pretty much the same wide range of meanings that go well beyond mere verbal speech, which λαλέω (297x) is limited to. Thus we would not be correct with this expression should we try to limit the slandering by Paul's opponents merely to verbally spoken criticisms of him. Clearly it includes verbal abuse, but is not limited to just spoken words. Luke's depiction of Paul's missionary ministry beginning in Acts 13 paints a sordid picture of wide physical abuse of Paul and his missionary associates in almost every synagogue that Paul entered.

If this is the situation that Paul is addressing here, then we have in Acts a good picture of the slandering of Paul and his associates. But if this is an insider slandering of the apostle, our picture is much more limited. The later letter in Philippians chapter one provides limited depiction of the hostile situation from inside the church toward Paul. One has to imagine then that this opposition to Paul from fellow believers was not a spur of the moment action, but had been lingering over a period of time. And probably pre-dated Paul's letter to the Romans which came several years before his arrival there as a prisoner.

Very important here is an exploration of the identification of τινες. Who does this reference? The literal meaning of this plural enclitic, indefinite pronoun from τις, τι is a small number of individuals. The precise number cannot be determined. Similar uses of this pronoun, with a wide range of meanings, are found in 1 Cor

4:18; 15:34; 2 Cor 3:1; 1 Ti 1:3, 19.²³⁶ This directly alludes to specific opponents who are criticizing Paul.²³⁷ But at the same time it remains vague so that Paul does not name names as he sometimes does in such expressions, e.g., 2 Tim. 4:14, 17. Does *τινες* refer to critics at Rome? Probably not, since Paul has not yet visited the church. Nor is there any indication of prior communication from those whom Paul already knew in the church (cf. chap. 16), that would possibly report criticisms of him. The “some” most likely alludes to the critics that he had encountered elsewhere in ministry from either inside or outside the Christian communities. The Letter to the Galatians clearly indicates considerable insider based criticism of him emerging in the Roman province of Galatia. The Philippians chapter one reference to insider criticism of him in the church at Rome comes later. For him to be referencing these critics by *τινες* requires the assumption that such opposition stretched back in time by several years. This is doubtful here since the thrust of Paul’s statements in v. 8 points to accumulated criticisms over a period of time.²³⁸ The apostle succinctly summarizes them with *ποιήσωμεν τὰ κακά, ἵνα ἔλθῃ τὰ ἀγαθά*.

ὅτι ποιήσωμεν τὰ κακά, ἵνα ἔλθῃ τὰ ἀγαθά (v. 8c) The role of *ὅτι* here is to introduce direct discourse, thus *ὅτι* equals quotation marks in modern western languages. It is technically the *recitative* use of *ὅτι*. This statement functions as the direct object of the infinitive *λέγειν*. It

²³⁶William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1008.

²³⁷"The vagueness of the allusion tells against the view that Paul was directing his comment against particular individuals among the Roman congregations. The evidence of his other letters is that Paul was much more direct in his address to those who criticized his teaching. And though the challenge posed is an important one for him (6:1), and had certainly been raised against his teaching elsewhere (but not necessarily just from the Jewish side—e.g., Schlatter, Althaus, and Zeller; against Schlier and Wilckens), both here and in 6:1 it appears as a corollary to his own exposition and not as a question asked by his readers. The fact that he can pose the issue quite so bluntly (does his teaching amount to saying, 'Let us do evil that good may result?') clearly shows the risk Paul was taking in freeing the righteousness of God from its close correlation with the law as delivered to the covenant people: to break the link between covenant righteousness and covenant law seemed to many a slight on God’s own morality. Hence the need on Paul’s part to clarify the ethical outworking of his redefinition of covenant righteousness, in general terms in chaps. 6–8, and in more detail in 12:1–15:6 (see further 12:1–15:13 Introduction)." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 137.]

²³⁸This is especially prominent through the use of the present tense with both *φασίν* and *λέγειν*, which stresses ongoing actions that are frequently repeated.

answers the question of the content of the criticisms by the *τινες*, *some*.

The content of the *ὅτι* clause is structured as a sarcastic call to do evil things. The goal of such actions is so that good things may come. What was this criticism targeting? And how does Paul respond to this criticism? These and other questions arise from this statement that we will attempt to address.

Given how Paul addresses the issue of sinning and divine grace in chapter six, it seems that here Paul is addressing a frequent charge leveled against him since before the Jerusalem Conference (Acts 15) in the late 40s. The connection of divine grace to divine law posed a perceived danger to those inside the Jewish religious tradition. Earlier Paul in his rebuke of the apostle Peter at Damascus had summarized the apostolic Gospel answer to this connection. Note the Gal. 2:15-17 summary:

15 Ἡμεῖς φύσει Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἐθνῶν ἁμαρτωλοί· 16 εἰδότες δὲ ὅτι οὐ δικαιοῦται ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἐὰν μὴ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν, ἵνα δικαιοθῶμεν ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου, ὅτι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιοθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ. 17 εἰ δὲ ζητοῦντες δικαιοθῆναι ἐν Χριστῷ εὐρέθημεν καὶ αὐτοὶ ἁμαρτωλοί, ἄρα Χριστὸς ἁμαρτίας διάκονος; μὴ γένοιτο.

15 We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; 16 yet we know that a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. And we have come to believe in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by doing the works of the law, because no one will be justified by the works of the law. 17 But if, in our effort to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have been found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not!

Paul’s famous slogan *ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιοθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ, out of works of law no flesh will be justified*, summarizes a foundational point of Paul’s Gospel. In the minds of Paul’s Jewish opponents both inside and outside the Christian communities, such a contention was a call to immorality, rather than a call to strict morality. To them, Paul was declaring, *ἀθετῶ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ, I nullify God’s grace!* Something Paul denied by actually saying, *Οὐκ ἀθετῶ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ· εἰ γὰρ διὰ νόμου δικαιοσύνη, ἄρα Χριστὸς δωρεὰν ἀπέθανεν, I do not nullify God’s grace; for if righteousness were through Law, then Christ would have died for nothing (2:21)*. For his opponents, moral standards and behavior required by God could only be achieved through obeying the Torah. *Take away Torah and Antinomianism, lawlessness,*²³⁹

²³⁹"Antinomian = person who maintains that Christians are



results -- this was their logic. This Paul rejects emphatically labeling it as slander that offends God Himself.²⁴⁰ If one sets aside the Torah as requirement for salvation, does that not open the door to pagan living?²⁴¹ It's hard for modern readers to comprehend just how utterly critical was the Jewish possession of Torah in Paul's day.

Yet Christianity has struggled continuously throughout its history with how Law and Grace should work. Most of the time, what has been ignored, not understood, or flat out rejected is the transforming nature of biblical πίστις. The NT picture is that when a person comes to Christ in faith surrender, his/her life is profoundly changed. The transformation begins within, but will, without fail, come to the surface of one's life in reshaping behavior, words, thinking and every aspect. Thus the change is accomplished not by human determination and effort, but by God's Spirit (chap. 8). The initial surrender of control stands as the continuing human responsibility. And if one's faith doesn't bring about such a change, then there has never been the presence of authentic faith surrender to Christ to be in with. In presenting this picture of Christianity Paul gives step by step the piecing together of the portrait in Romans. Yet folks in Paul's era, as well as ever since then, have not been able to grasp this profound truth of the apostolic Gospel, even inside the church.

In Paul's Jewish world, one just could not turn loose of Torah as the instrument of salvation. After all, didn't Moses teach that we must measure up completely in obedience to the perfection of Almighty God? Circumcision is the essential obedience (2:25-29). Pragmati-

freed from the moral law by virtue of grace as set forth in the gospel." [antinomianism. Dictionary.com Unabridged. Random House, Inc. <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/antinomianism> (accessed: September 2, 2017)]

²⁴⁰"St. Paul was accused (no doubt by actual opponents) of Antinomianism. What he said was, 'The state of righteousness is not to be attained through legal works; it is the gift of God.' He was represented as saying 'therefore it does not matter what a man does'—an inference which he repudiates indignantly, not only here but in 6:1 ff., 15 ff." [W. Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of the Romans*, 3d ed., International Critical Commentary (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1897), 74.]

²⁴¹"Both Jewish and Gentile sources denounce slander as a terrible sin; it appears in Paul's list in Rom 1:30. Rumors apparently spread about Paul in the Jerusalem church (Acts 21:21). Attributing the slander to 'certain persons' might follow the common practice of damning some opponents with anonymity. That sin 'demonstrated' God's righteousness (3:5) may be a perversion of Paul's teaching that God "demonstrated" love toward sinners (5:8)." [Craig S. Keener, *Romans*, New Covenant Commentary Series (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009), p. 51, fn. 9.]

cally they would point to the rotten immorality of non-Jews all around them (cf. 2:1). Also, the proselytes and God-fearers who attended the synagogue meetings yearning for a higher standard of morality in Judaism would seem to be further confirmation of the correctness of their opposition to the apostolic Gospel. They found it impossible to turn loose of Torah as the key to their hope of salvation and higher standard of morality in this life. Possessing Torah was everything!

Here Paul provokes a hard reading of his controversial rejection of Torah as the key. In chapter six he amplifies in detail what this means for believers, both Jewish and Gentile. Two pivotal statements provide the organizing structure for the continuation of the issue raised here in 3:8,

Rom 6:1-2a, Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν; ἐπιμένωμεν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ, ἵνα ἡ χάρις πλεονάσῃ; μὴ γένοιτο. **What then are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? By no means!**

Rom 6:15, Τί οὖν; ἁμαρτήσωμεν, ὅτι οὐκ ἐσμέν ὑπὸ νόμον ἀλλ' ὑπὸ χάριν; μὴ γένοιτο. **What then? Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!**

Paul's use of τὰ κακά and τὰ ἀγαθὰ requires some explanation. Both adjectives are used as nouns in the neuter plural spellings. Taken from κακός, -ή, -όν, the first word reflects the core idea of 'lack.' There is a gap, a hole, a missing element in behavior, health etc.²⁴² The

²⁴²"The word κακός, already considered in relation to → ἀγαθός, expresses the presence of a lack. It is not positive; it is an incapacity or weakness. Like 'evil,' it has more than purely moral significance. The wealth of the term is expressed in the developing concepts χείρων, κακίων, ἥττων. Thus κακός means a. 'mean,' 'unserviceable,' 'incapable,' 'poor of its kind,' e.g., κακοὶ νομῆες, Hom. Od., 17, 246; κακὸς ἰατρός, Aesch. Prom., 471. Greater precision is attained by additions: πάντα γὰρ οὐ κακός εἰμι (not in every respect ...), μετ' ἀνδράσιν ὅσσοι ἄεθλοι, Hom. Od., 8, 214; κακοὶ γνῶμαισιν, Soph. Ai., 964; εἶδος μὲν ἦν κακός, Hom. Il., 10, 316; κακὸς μανθάνειν, Soph. Oed. Tyr., 545. It also means b. 'morally bad,' 'wicked,' e.g., ἐν νόστει ἀπόλοντο κακῆς ἰότητι γυναικός, Hom. Od., 11, 384; οὐχ ὁ χρηστός τῷ κακῷ (κακός and χρηστός opposites) λαχεῖν ἴσα, Soph. Ant., 520; κακὸς πρὸς ... Thuc., I, 86, 1. It then means c. 'weak,' e.g., κακὸς καὶ ἄθυμος, Hdt., VII, 11; κακὸς καὶ δειλός, Plat. Menex., 246e; κακοὺς ὄντας πρὸς αἰχμῆν, ἐν δὲ τοῖς λόγοις θρασεῖς, Soph. Phil., 1306. Cf. also the linking of κακοσκελῆς with weak bones, e.g., Xenoph. Mem., III, 3, 4. A final meaning d. is 'unhappy,' 'bad,' 'ruinous,' 'evil,' e.g., κακὸς δαίμων, Aesch. Pers., 346; κακὴ τύχη, Aesch. Ag., 1203; Soph. Ai., 323; ἄτη κακῆ, Soph. Ai., 123; κακὸν ἔπος ἀγγελέοντα, Hom. Il., 17, 701; ὁδὸς δύσποτμος τε καὶ κακῆ, Soph. Oed. Col., 1432 f. This fixes the meaning of the noun τὸ κακόν, τὰ κακά, 'evil,' 'suffering,' 'misfortune,' 'ruin,' e.g., τὰ πολλὰ ἐκεῖν' ὅτ' ἐξέχρη κακά, Soph. Oed. Col., 87 etc." [Walter Grundmann, "Κακός, Ἄκακος, Κακία, Κακῶ, Κακοῖος, Κακοῖθια, Κακοποιέω, Κακοποιός, Ἐγκακίω, Ἀνεξίκακος," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromi-



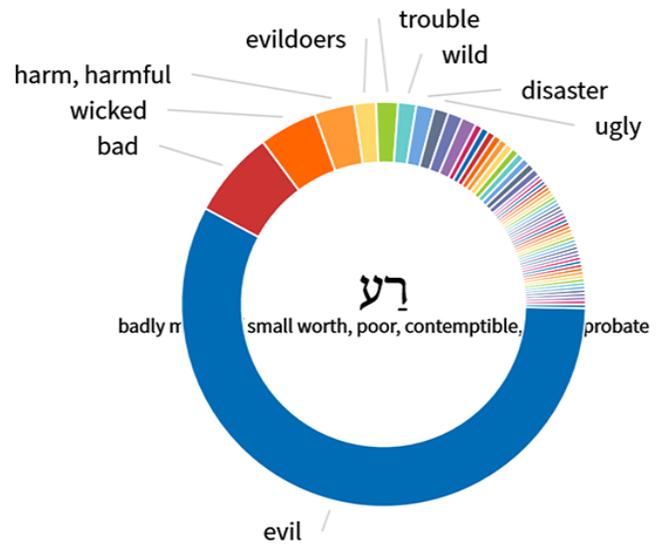
substantival spelling τὸ κακόν, τὰ κακά takes on the inclusive sense of evil, suffering, or misfortune, depending on the context where it is used. A strong Greco-Roman philosophical background exists for this substantival use: the problem of evil, i.e., its origin, purpose, impact on the world etc. This is the problem of theodicy that explores good and evil in human existence in relation to God.

But here clearly τὰ κακά as the direct object of the verb ποιήσωμεν, *let us do...*, is mainly oriented to the moral and behavioral meaning. Also it stands as the exact opposite of τὰ ἀγαθά, *the good things*. The Greek background of these two ideas placed in juxtaposition to one another make it clear that people do τὰ κακά, while God alone grants τὰ ἀγαθά. Plato contended that evil, τὸ κακόν, is a metaphysical principle linked with matter. We are evil and do evil things simply because we are material beings. Aristotle did not agree and argued that evil is connected to human freedom. To do evil is a reflection of ignorance and is the source of evil. Stoicism, that prevailed in Paul's Roman world, extended Aristotle's ideas further in sharp antithesis to ἀγαθόν. Often among the Stoic philosophers κακόν became de-emphasized, since the goal of human existence is ἀγαθόν, which is linked to the divine. Strict self discipline through proper education becomes the key to achieving ἀγαθόν.

While many of Paul's Roman readers would understand this pair of terms against the Stoic backdrop, the Jewish background is more direct since it forms the basis of Paul's argument in this criticism of him. Here the LXX played a formative role in re-defining the Greek away for the metaphysical principle belief in the Greco-Roman culture. κακός is the primary translation word for the Hebrew stem עָרַ. ²⁴³In the OT historical

ley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:469.]

²⁴³κακός is one of the LXX words which in the main correspond to a specific Heb. stem, namely, עָרַ. In numerous cases it is used for synonymous or generally related terms. If it thus misses the particular nuances of the original, it brings out even more strongly the one-sidedness and impressiveness of the moral and religious judgment which Judaism pronounces on evil and wickedness. The translator of Prv. in particular works along these lines. If here the term עָרַ is already frequent in the Mas., the number of κακός passages in the LXX is almost doubled. There are 37128 instances of κακός in the LXX. In 227 cases it is a rendering of עָרַ (293 times in the Mas.) or עָרַ (346 in the Mas.), for which κακία or more often πονηρός (266) is also used. On 33 occasions κακός is used for other Heb. terms. In 20 cases the Mas. has a different text, in 32 there is no Mas. original, and in 61 we have passages in books which have been preserved only in Gk." [Walter Grundmann, "Κακός, Ἄκακος, Κακία, Κακόω, Κακοῦργος, Κακοῦθεια, Κακοποιέω, Κακοποιός, Ἐγκακίεω, Ἀνεξίκακος," ed. Gerhard



books, the sense of κακός is linked closely to God both at His punishment for sin by simply removing His protective hand from human life. But He also is the only way of escaping evil by turning to Him in repentance. ²⁴⁴

Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:476–477.]

²⁴⁴In the whole complex of historical books the LXX uses the term only in the sense of 'evil' or 'disaster' (τὸ κακόν, τὰ κακά).²⁹ In so doing it brings together two thoughts, of which the first is that evils are God's punishment for sin when He withdraws His hand: καὶ εὐρήσουσιν αὐτὸν κακὰ πολλὰ καὶ θλίψεις, καὶ ἔρει ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ· διότι οὐκ ἔστιν κύριος ὁ θεὸς μου ἐν ἐμοί, εὐροσάν με τὰ κακὰ ταῦτα ... διὰ πάσας τὰς κακίας ἃς ἐποίησαν, ὅτι ἐπέστρεψαν ἐπὶ θεοῦ ἀλλοτρίους, Dt. 31:17 f.; cf. 4 Βασ. 21:11 f.; 22:16 f. Here evil is a divine act of punishment. The reason for it is to be sought in idolatry and apostasy. Hence the Wisdom poet can say comprehensively: ἡ γὰρ τῶν ἀνωσύμων εἰδώλων θρησκεία παντὸς ἀρχὴ κακοῦ, Wis. 14:27. The thought is prophetic: ἄκουε, γῆ· ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἐπάγω ἐπὶ τὸν λαὸν τοῦτον κακὰ, τὸν καρπὸν ἀποστροφῆς αὐτῶν, Jer. 6:19; cf. 11:10f.; 16:10ff.; Mi. 1:12 f. Here, too, idolatry and apostasy are the cause of evil. But this leads us to the second thought, namely, that God is the Redeemer from evil. Thus Jeremiah can call on God and pray to Him in relation to the results of ungodliness: κύριε, ἰσχύς μου καὶ βοήθειά μου καὶ καταφυγή μου ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κακῶν, 16:19.³⁰ His prophetic preaching, in accordance with God's gracious will, is directed to the goal: καὶ νῦν βελτίους ποιήσατε τὰς ὁδοὺς ὑμῶν καὶ τὰ ἔργα ὑμῶν, καὶ ἀκούσατε τῆς φωνῆς κυρίου, καὶ παύσεται κύριος ἀπὸ τῶν κακῶν, ὧν ἐλάλησεν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς Ἱερ. 33(26):13, cf. v. 3 and 19. This corresponds to the nature of God, which Jeremiah discloses in the words: καὶ λογιῶμαι ἐφ' ὑμᾶς λογισμὸν εἰρήνης καὶ οὐ κακὰ τοῦ δοῦναι ὑμῖν ταῦτα 36(29):11.³¹ The question of evil is here projected into the national and political life of the people. God and the people — the great theme of the OT — are involved in the question. κακά are the political blows which fall on the people. They come from God as the Lord of history, and they are a punishment for sin, which consists in apostasy and relapse into idolatry. They are the fruit of a walk (Jer. 6:19) which leads away from God. The way from God leads to destruction. God allows men and nations to tread this way to the end. He speeds up the way in order to give knowledge of error and destruction and thereby to move the individual and the nation

His sending of τὰ κακά upon His people is also His plea to them to repent and turn to Him. It is especially in the prophetic materials that the strongly ethical defining of τὰ κακά takes place.²⁴⁵ In the Wisdom literature both inside and outside the Hebrew Bible, τὰ κακά becomes actions by individuals in deliberate rejection of God's ways and expectations.²⁴⁶ Thus the righteous Jew will

to turn from the wrong way. The ruin which consists in κακά, and which is a punishment arising out of God's permission and precipitation, is also a visitation from God, who has thoughts of peace even when He causes and sends κακά, and who pursues these thoughts, which are the ultimate impulses of His nature. Human guilt and divine action are thus combined in the question of the origin of evil. Evils are the response of God's righteousness to the guilt of the people. But as visitations they are also an expression of the merciful seeking of God. This leads us to a highly significant feature which controls the whole view of God in the Bible. God is both One who sends evils and also the One who delivers from them. In His hand they are means to recall individuals and people to true worship. At this point the concept of God acquires a solemn and mysterious character; it becomes a *mysterium tremendum*. The question of the origin of evil finds its answer, not in a metaphysical dualism, but in an ethical monotheism, in knowledge of the God to whom the evil of man is guilt, and who punishes it accordingly. This insight underlies the attitude of Job: εἰ τὰ ἀγαθὰ ἐδεξάμεθα ἐκ χειρὸς κυρίου, τὰ κακὰ οὐχ ὑπόισομεν; 2:10. The prophet relates it to the further insight that the depth of God's being is peace and love. Here are the impulses which lead Him to make evils a visitation. The nature of God is thus *mysterium fascinosum* as well as *mysterium tremendum*. At this point we reach the lonely peak of prophetic proclamation and the prophetic view of history."

[Walter Grundmann, "Κακός, Ἄκακος, Κακία, Κακόω, Κακοῦργος, Κακοήθεια, Κακοποιέω, Κακοποιός, Ἐγκακίεω, Ἀνεξίκακος," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:477–478.]

²⁴⁵"κακόν is an ethical concept in the prophets. Micah speaks of λογιζόμενοι κόπους καὶ ἐργαζόμενοι κακὰ ἐν ταῖς κοίταις αὐτῶν, 2:1; cf. 7:3; Ἱερ. 7:24; 9:13; 51(44):7, 9. We find the same view in the Psalms, ψ 27:3; 33:13 ff. The seat of evil is the human heart, the centre of human existence: κακὴ καρδία, Jer. 7:24; κακὰ ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις, ψ 27:3. This usage of the prophets and the Psalms is also found occasionally in the Wisdom literature, especially in Proverbs." [Walter Grundmann, "Κακός, Ἄκακος, Κακία, Κακόω, Κακοῦργος, Κακοήθεια, Κακοποιέω, Κακοποιός, Ἐγκακίεω, Ἀνεξίκακος," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:478]

²⁴⁶The term κακός occurs 95 times in Prv. In 43 cases it is used for כָּר, חָרָה; in 21 for very different Heb. words; in 13 cases the Mas. has a different text; in 18 cases there seems to be nothing corresponding in the Mas. We have here a deliberate contribution of the translator which has to be evaluated exegetically and in terms of religious history. To some degree the translator allows his own moral and religious principles to affect his work. A few examples will show how this levels down the distinctive and colourful thinking of the Heb. original. At Prv. 1:18 the Mas. speaks of those who, trying to trap the innocent, 'lie in wait for their own blood and lurk secretly for their own lives'; the LXX substitutes a formulation which is in general correspondence: αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἱ φόνου

solicit the help of wisdom to enable him to keep himself from τὰ κακά and thus seize τὰ ἀγαθὰ. But this depends on each person's willingness to seek God's wisdom in Torah.

When Paul asserted earlier to the Galatians δικαιοθῶμεν ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου, [we should be justified out of faith in Christ and not out of works of law](#) (2:16c), one can easily see the firestorm among Jews that this would create. Paul is destroying the Torah was the cry. Take away the demands of Torah and the evil nature of humanity will unleash an endless success of lawlessness -- this was the Jewish objection to the Gospel. Just how deeply this thinking was embedded in the first century Jewish psyche is reflected in the Judaizing movement that emerged in Jerusalem (Acts 15) and plagued the Pauline churches established on the missionary journeys of the apostle. Many insisted on a pivotal role for Torah even as professing believers in Christ. Paul's radicalism made lots of Jewish believers nervous, including most of the Jerusalem leadership of the church there (cf. Acts 21:17-26).

As the opposite of τὰ κακά, τὰ ἀγαθὰ then is closely attached to the divine. In the Greek philosophical circles dominated by Plato, a dualism emerged: κακόν = the material visible realm, including humanity but ἀγαθόν = the eternal, invisible realm). Man is inherently κακόν, but is capable of achieving ἀγαθόν. How to do that was the hotly debated topic among the philosophers.

But in Jewish circles by the beginning of the Christian era, an alternative dualism emerged. There exists in God's creation both κακόν and ἀγαθόν. Humanity

μετέχοντες θησαυρίζουσιν ἑαυτοῖς κακά, ἢ δὲ καταστροφή ἀνδρῶν παρανόμων κακῆ. Again, at 2:16 we read that wisdom can protect a young man from a strange and seductive woman who 'flattereth with her words, who forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God'; the LXX, which is an exposition rather than a translation, and which has influenced interpretation right up to our own times, sees in the strange woman Lady Folly, κακὴ βουλή, the evil counsellor, ἡ ἀπολείπουσα διδασκαλίαν νεότητος καὶ διαθήκην θεῖαν ἐπιλελησμένη. That the LXX here has in view a personification of the opposite of wisdom is shown by what follows, which quite independently of the Mas. maintains that she has her dwelling in death and Hades. At 3:31 the Mas. refers to the οὐκ ἐπιθυμῶμεν οὐδὲ μὴ ἐπιθυμῶμεν whom we should not envy and whose ways we should not choose;³² the free rendering of the LXX is μὴ κτήση κακῶν ἀνδρῶν ὄνειδη (do not heap up blame like evil men [gen. qual.]), μηδὲ ζηλώσης τὰς ὁδοὺς αὐτῶν. Again, at 4:27, where the Mas. simply has ἡ LXX speaks of the ὁδὸς κακῆ, and adds the familiar contrast between the two ways.³³"

[Walter Grundmann, "Κακός, Ἄκακος, Κακία, Κακόω, Κακοῦργος, Κακοήθεια, Κακοποιέω, Κακοποιός, Ἐγκακίεω, Ἀνεξίκακος," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:478–479.]



in the freedom granted by God must choose which of these will orient one's life and living. There is κακόv inside man from Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden. But an even greater κακόv is possible if God lifts His protective hand. The original source of this κακόv was debated by the Jewish scribes. But one cannot ignore the rather well formulated views in Pharseism which the exiled Israelites encountered at the end of the OT era.²⁴⁷ Some influences from this religious influence of Zoroastrianism can be detected in the emerging Jewish dualism, particularly in the area of a dualism based on good and evil. Distance between good and evil is widened and the conflict between the two is heightened. So by the beginning of the Christian era the Jewish dualism is morally based with God on one side and Satan on the opposing side. The question of origins recedes far into the background and the current hostilities between God and Satan become the overwhelming concern.

²⁴⁷In Zoroastrian religion the evil principle takes a special form. The metaphysical dualism of two material principles is here replaced by that of two contending wills which are regarded as deities.

Of these two spirits that which favoured *drug* (falsehood) chose the doing of supreme wickedness, while the most holy spirit chose *asa* (truth). The question of the origin of good and evil in the world is answered as follows. The two spirits fight for mastery in the world and in man. "The two spirits at the beginning, revealed in a vision to be twins, are the better and the worse in thought, word and deed, between which men of understanding have made a right choice," Yasna, 30.²⁴ Thus men have a free choice between two possibilities of existence. This is made in essential, pre-temporal existence, and it is worked out in life.²⁵ All evil comes from the wicked spirit. He effects it through his demons. "Between the two even the *Daevas* have not made a right decision, because, when they deliberated, delusion overtook them, so that they chose the most wicked thinking. They then went over together to *Aešma*, through whom they make the life of man sick" (loc. cit.). Pharesaical eschatology envisages a division of men into good and evil. They will be assigned to heaven or hell according to their works. "When these two spirits met, they first agreed concerning life and non-life, and that at the end of things the adherents of *drug* should have the worst existence and those of *asa* the best" (ibid., 30, 4). This led to the idea of a final conflict and an ultimate destruction of evil and the wicked. "Evil (sc. *drug*) will perish, and the chief captain (Ahriman) will pass away ... the evil mind will be overcome, the good conquers it. Falsely spoken speech will be overcome, that which is rightly spoken conquers it. Perfection and immortality will overcome hunger and thirst. Perfection and immortality will overcome evil hunger and thirst. The evil-doer Ahriman will weakly yield and vanish," Yašt, 19, 90, 96.²⁶

[Walter Grundmann, "Κακόv, Ἄκακοv, Κακία, Κακόω, Κακοῖργοv, Κακοήθεια, Κακοποιέω, Κακοποιόv, Ἐγκακίέω, Ἀνεξίκακοv," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:476.]

Thus every individual discovers two impulses in life: one toward God and good, and the other toward Satan and evil. Life presents the necessity of daily choosing between these. God's wisdom revealed mainly through Torah gives him/her the insights to make the correct choice in each situation. God in the end holds every person accountable for their choices. And these decisions, along with circumcision that seals one's covenantal relation with God, will determine one's eternal destiny. This scenario dominated Diaspora Jewish life where Paul's Gospel ministry was carried out.

Thus Paul's opponents slandered him fiercely by contending that he advocated getting rid of Torah. Although lawlessness morally was the handle used against him, the deeper fear in their hearts was the potential loss of Torah as the key to their salvation. This charge found positive echoes among Jewish Christians who felt it imperative to maintain their Jewish practices along side their Christian commitment. Now to be sure a whole bundle of additional dynamics would come to play in their clinging to their Jewish heritage, but the thought of losing Torah was central to their opposing the apostle Paul.

In the letter body, notice how often the apostle advocates a value for the Mosaic Law. He condemns it when it is propped up as a means of salvation, but otherwise it remains a treasure to him in his own Jewishness. To get this across to the Roman Christian community became a major challenge to the apostle, and his writing secretary Tertius (cf. 16:22).

ὣν τὸ κρίμα ἐνδικόν ἐστιν (v. 8d) Both the grammar and the content of this adjectival functioning relative clause have bothered commentators down through the centuries.²⁴⁸ The block diagram below illustrates how the Greek syntax works. The antecedent of the relative pronoun ὣν can only go back to τινεv. It can't go back to the direct discourse, in which case the singular οὗ would be required. The τὸ κρίμα refers to final judgment by God in the negative sense of condemnation, not to human rejection of words. This latter meaning is not

²⁴⁸Note how easily the clear syntax of the Greek is ignored:

This may mean either 'To condemn such men as these is surely no injustice' (NEB) or 'such an argument is quite properly condemned' (J. B. Phillips). The pronoun translated 'their' may refer back either to the people who say such things (as RSV, NEB, NIV assume) or to the things they say (as Phillips and some others suppose). In the latter case 'refutation' would be a better rendering than 'condemnation'. For a reasoned answer to the accusation see 6:2–23.

[F. F. Bruce, *Romans: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 6, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 102.]

3.8 καὶ
 66 (τί) μὴ (λέγει)
 καθὼς βλασφημούμεθα
 καὶ
 καθὼς φασὶν τινες
 | ἡμᾶς λέγειν
 | ὅτι ποιήσωμεν τὰ κακά,
 | ἵνα ἔλθῃ τὰ ἀγαθὰ;
 |
 ὧν τὸ κρίμα ἔνδικόν ἐστιν.

possible in the NT with τὸ κρίμα.²⁴⁹

The phrase τὸ κρίμα ἔνδικόν ἐστιν, **condemnation is deserved**, must be carefully understood. The predicate adjective ἔνδικος, -ον is found only here and in Heb. 2:2, in the expression ἔνδικον μισθαποδοσίαν, **a just recompense**. Here the setting is of God’s judgments. The idea is virtually identical in meaning to the adjective δίκαιος, -αία, -ον. The main difference is that the latter references an assessment of character or action, while the former literally makes an assertion of justness “based on what is right.”²⁵⁰ Thus the English translation ‘**deserved**’ is correct but omits the idea of correctness corresponding to God’s character. The potential problem with the English rendering “**Their con-**

demnation is deserved!” is that this English expression can have a petty, revenge tone standing behind it. Paul’s statement has none of this. It simply acknowledges that the condemnation to Hell of these people slandering him is appropriate given who God is, a just God who is holy. They have blasphemed not Paul but the very Gospel revealed by God through Christ.

In summary, what has the apostle put on the table for us to digest in 2:1-3:8?

In short answer, a lot! It’s important periodically to pause a moment and catch our breath even in the interpretative process. Now is such a moment. This will get us ready for Paul’s summation of 1:18-3:20 in 3:9-20.

First be reminded that 1:18-3:20 are all operating under the general motif of ὀργὴ θεοῦ ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ, **God’s wrath out of Heaven** (1:18). And this section with its theme of God’s wrath is a part of the larger theme of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, **God’s righteousness** (1:17), which stands as the centerpiece of Paul’s τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, Gospel (1:16). In this message both Jew and Gentile have opportunity to respond εἰς πίστιν, **in faith** surrender to Jesus Christ.

Second, the entire world, and especially the non-Jewish side, is presented as under God’s temporal wrath as they wallow in their despicable sinfulness in 1:19-32. But God’s eschatological wrath is coming to the moral elitist, especially the Jewish ones, for their hypocrisy in 2:1-3:8. Paul’s concludes in 3:9-20 with the assertion of the universal sinfulness of all humanity, which poses very real eternal danger in anticipation of Judgment Day. Thus ὀργὴ θεοῦ, God’s wrath, covers all of this life and leads up to the moment of its most severe outpouring at the second coming of Christ at the end of human history.

Third, the literary devices utilized by Paul in presenting the eschatological wrath of God in 2:1-3:8 revolve largely around an extended diatribe device. At the outset the apostle sets up an imaginary dialogue partner, and proceeds to carry on a conversation with this imaginary partner, often labeled in commentaries as the interlocutor. The Greek second person singular uses set this up unquestionably. Now this imaginary symbolizes in the beginning (2:1-16) the moral elitist who felt his superior standard of behavior gave him special privileges both in this life and, especially for the Jew, would on Judgment Day as well.

Historical identification of this fellow has been debated. But as the literature of this era becomes better known and under-

²⁴⁹These are, Paul implies, simply libelous charges based on sophistic reasoning, which show that those who mount them know nothing regarding the nature of God, the message of the Christian gospel, or the character of those who are Christ’s people—and thus they deserve the κρίμα (“condemnation”) with which God will judge such people. Or as Origen long ago said with respect to this verse:

This is an argument raised by unjust people against the Christian faith. They blaspheme us even more by suggesting that because we believe that God’s truthfulness abounds in the falsehood of men and that his justice is confirmed by our unrighteousness, we also believe that we should do evil so that good may come of it and that we should tell lies so that God’s truthfulness will shine out even more clearly because of it. But in claiming that this is what we think, they are blaspheming us, as if these things were somehow the logical conclusion of our beliefs. But in fact the logic of our beliefs does not accept this line of reasoning, because we understand that God is a just and true judge.⁷⁴

[Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, *New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 351.]

²⁵⁰Arndt, William, Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, and F. Wilbur Gingrich. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.

stood the picture is clearer. The moral philosophers such as [Seneca](#), a contemporary of the apostle Paul, asserted the superiority of the Stoic who through disciplined education, gained control of his dark side on his way to perfection as measured by Stoic principles. Paul's initial readers in Rome would have easily found echoes of an arrogant superiority out of their Roman educational background as well as from being a part of daily discussions in social and business contacts.

Paul begins with the moral elitist representing both Jewish and Gentile elitists who looked with disdain on their pagan neighbors. But by 2:17, the non-Jewish elitist fades into the background and the Jewish elitist stands center stage. His personal interactions had been mostly with the Jewish elitists. The Jewish elitist becomes the target of Paul's condemnation from 2:17-3:8. At times the conversation partner recedes even into the background while Paul speaks more directly to his anticipated readers of the letter. For example in 3:5-8 he targets those Jews who had slandered his preaching of the Gospel, as the use of the first person "I" and "we" clearly indicate. But the apostle swings back to the dialogue partner in most every instance, although the closer to the end of the discussion the more directly the readers are in view.

The Jewish moralist felt superior to the pagans around him in Diaspora Judaism simply because of possession of Torah and proper circumcision. The hypocrisy of mere Torah possession without Torah obedience in any meaningful way is exposed with brute force by Paul in 2:17-29. In stinging rebuttal to the Jewish elitist Paul contends that Law obedience by the Gentile equals proper circumcision in God's eyes while Torah disobedience by the Jew equals uncircumcision before God.

In 3:1-8 the apostle deals with the inevitable question of the Jewish moralist. "Do we Jews then have no advantage before God? After all we are His covenant people!" In the collective oriented society of Paul's world, the character of a deity depends on the character of the people worshiping the deity. If the people are unfaithful, does that not raise questions about the reliability of their deity? With intense bluntness Paul rebuts such contention in regard to Almighty God. God will remain faithful in His just dealings with humanity no matter how unfaithful the covenant Jews become. A powerful affirmation of confidence in God for the non-Jewish believers in Rome.

Although a certain progression of thought can be traced in 1:18-3:20, it would be a serious mistake to

formulate it in modern western patterns of thinking. He carefully makes the case for the universal sinfulness of all humanity, both Jewish and Gentile, to his initial audience in ancient Rome. But the development of that case is predicated strictly on first century patterns of argumentation, and not on modern patterns. The brilliance of the arguments created by both Paul and his writing secretary Tertius measured against the criteria of standards of the first century are unquestionable. But these arguments represent a mixing of Greco-Roman rhetoric and ancient Jewish scribal thinking. The hanging of the presentation of eschatological Judgment Day on an extended Greek diatribe in 2:1-3:8 provided a beautiful framing of his blunt, unrelenting condemnation of those who felt superior to the rest of humanity. With rhetorical questions peppering his readers along with Hebrew Bible allusions and citations he goes after this symbolic figure without mercy. This literary dialogue partner asks questions being raised by Jews especially who were critical of apostolic preaching of the Gospel for all humanity. The apostle shoots down every issue forcefully.

Now! How do we apply this to our world? Several aspects of application are possible. Paul's approach stands as an example of dealing with modern individuals who don't acknowledge their sinfulness and falsely conclude that they are okay with God. And even those who feel no sense of the need of God in their life.

What the apostle did we can imitate to some extent. He depicted the rottenness of first century Roman society in terms undeniable to any person of that time. Most would agree with the immorality and violence of first century Roman society.

But to those feeling superior to their pagan neighbors Paul set up a literary opponent who sought to make their case against Paul. The apostle identified key points propping up their phony superiority stance. Systematically he knocked each one down so that in the end no defense of their superiority was possible. In so using the ancient diatribe device, he was free to demolish the elitism stance without naming names of individuals. Such would have imposed limits on the application made in the minds of his targeted readers. This imaginary dialogue partner enabled a frank and blunt critique of a stance commonly found in the world of Paul's readers in Rome. Here he attacked ideas and not people. To be sure, there were times in Paul's ministry when named opponents needed to be vigorously attacked and in such instances Paul did not hesitate to do so.

In accomplishing this goal of destroying any defense

of elitism, the apostle utilized argumentative skills out of both cultures of the elitists: Greco-Roman rhetoric and Jewish scribal thinking. He knew both cultures well and how to use appropriate arguments to defend his case. In writing to this Christian community that in large part did not know him personally, he carefully made his case for His preaching of the Gospel without being offensive and seeming weak or ignorant. His targeted readers would realize that when he arrived in their city, they would have a capable advocate for the Gospel in their midst. In our modern world, the great challenge of Paul's example is to know well our audience and their culture mind sets. Our presentation of the Gospel must take into account these dynamics if we hope to be persuasive with our audience.

The theological point of 1:18-3:20, ὀργή θεοῦ ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ, *God's wrath from Heaven*, is very central to the apostolic Gospel. *God's righteousness*, δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, depends on it. We cannot grasp a righteous God and ignore His wrath. Such a portrait creates a fantasy idol that has no existence. Our holy God cannot tolerate evil in His presence. But we humans universally are pure evil in all of our being. For those claiming no connection to God, or any deity, their evil is clear in their behavior and interactions with others. But for those claiming some connection to Almighty God and expecting this claim to give them special consideration with God, Paul's message is clear. The righteousness of God, δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, means one thing: οὐ ἔστιν προσωποληψία παρὰ τῷ θεῷ, *no favoritism exists at all with God*.

Our world is virtually ignorant of ὀργή θεοῦ ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ. God's displeasure with sinful humanity is continually being expressed simply by God withdrawing Himself from them in order to allow their destructive passions to bring them to ruin: παρέδωκεν αὐτούς ὁ θεὸς ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῶν καρδιῶν αὐτῶν εἰς ἀκαθαρσίαν τοῦ ἀτιμάζεσθαι τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς, *God handed them over in the passions of their hearts to uncleanness so that their lives would be dishonored within themselves* (1:24). Thus the corruption of modern society represents God stepping back from sinful humanity to allow it to be consumed by its own evil passions.

But ὀργή θεοῦ ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ has another dimension: an eschatological expression at the end to time. The moral and religious elitist becomes the special target here simply because of a false anticipation of special treatment on Judgment Day due to their higher standards. Particularly targeted is the Jewish individual assuming his possession of Torah and circumcision guar-

anteed him passage into Heaven. "Absolutely not!" is Paul's response. Thus in 3:4 we encounter Paul's infamous μὴ γένοιτο, *Hell no!* for the first time in Romans. Such elitist thinking only accumulates more intense divine wrath to be poured out on those with such attitudes. How uncountable are the people in our world who make the similar false assumptions against the Day of Judgment! In their ignorance of the Gospel they are simply intensifying the torments of Hell upon them for eternity. And this especially pertains to professing Christians counting merely upon profession of faith and baptism to guarantee passage into Heaven.

In the theme summation of the letter body in 1:16, the apostle declared Οὐ γὰρ ἐπαισχύνομαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, δύναμις γὰρ θεοῦ ἔστιν εἰς σωτηρίαν παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι, Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἕλληνι, *for I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is God's power leading to salvation for every one living in faith surrender, first to the Jew and also to the Gentile*. All that living in faith surrender means will be spelled out in great detail beginning in 3:21. But it's clear that obedience to God through Christ stands at the heart of that Gospel message. Note 2:5c-7, 10,

τοῦ θεοῦ ὃς ἀποδώσει ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ· τοῖς μὲν καθ' ὑπομονὴν ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν ζητοῦσιν ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

of God who will pay back to each one according to his deeds: to those on the one hand by preserving good work who seek God's presence and honor and immortality there will come life eternal.

δόξα δὲ καὶ τιμὴ καὶ εἰρήνη παντὶ τῷ ἐργαζομένῳ τὸ ἀγαθόν, Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἕλληνι

But the divine presence and honor and peace will be upon the one doing good, first to the Jew and also to the Gentile.

What counts with God, and will determine one's eternal destiny on Judgment Day, is not claiming formal religious possession. Instead, how obedient to God the individual has lived out his or her life is the deciding factor. Thus the elitist expecting favors from God on Judgment Day will be shocked to discover that such does not exist. *God's righteousness*, δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, means simply yet profoundly that everyone will be judged by the exact same standard in final judgment: an obedient faith commitment lived out in daily life. Utterly no one will receive favored treatment in that event that exempts him from this universally applied standard.

This message of the Gospel greatly needs to be proclaimed both inside and outside of church life.

10.3.3.2.4.2 Level ground for Jew and Gentile, 3:9-20

9 Τί οὖν; προεχόμεθα; οὐ πάντως· προητιασάμεθα γὰρ Ἰουδαίους τε καὶ Ἑλλήνας πάντας ὑφ' ἁμαρτίαν εἶναι, 10 καθὼς γέγραπται ὅτι

- οὐκ ἔστιν δίκαιος οὐδὲ εἷς,
11 οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ συνίων,
οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ ἐκζητῶν τὸν θεόν.
12 πάντες ἐξέκλιναν ἅμα ἠχρεώθησαν·
οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ ποιῶν χρηστότητα,
οὐκ ἔστιν ἕως ἐνός.
13 τάφος ἀνεωγμένος ὁ λάρυγξ αὐτῶν,
ταῖς γλώσσαις αὐτῶν ἐδολιοῦσαν,
ἰὸς ἀσπίδων ὑπὸ τὰ χεῖλη αὐτῶν·
14 ὧν τὸ στόμα ἀρᾶς καὶ πικρίας γέμει,
15 ὄξεῖς οἱ πόδες αὐτῶν ἐκχέαι αἷμα,
16 σύντριμμα καὶ ταλαιπωρία ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτῶν,
17 καὶ ὁδὸν εἰρήνης οὐκ ἔγνωσαν.
18 οὐκ ἔστιν φόβος θεοῦ ἀπέναντι τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτῶν.

19 οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι ὅσα ὁ νόμος λέγει τοῖς ἐν τῷ νόμῳ λαλεῖ, ἵνα πᾶν στόμα φραγῆ καὶ ὑπόδικος γένηται πᾶς ὁ κόσμος τῷ θεῷ· 20 διότι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιωθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, διὰ γὰρ νόμου ἐπίγνωσις ἁμαρτίας.

9 What then? Are we any better off? No, not at all; for we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under the power of sin, 10 as it is written:

“There is no one who is righteous, not even one;

- 11 there is no one who has understanding,
there is no one who seeks God.
12 All have turned aside, together they have become worthless;
there is no one who shows kindness,
there is not even one.”
13 “Their throats are opened graves;
they use their tongues to deceive.”
“The venom of vipers is under their lips.”
14 “Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.”
15 “Their feet are swift to shed blood;
16 ruin and misery are in their paths,
17 and the way of peace they have not known.”
18 “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. 20 For “no human being will be justified in his sight” by deeds prescribed by the law, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin.

As the apostle brings his discussion of ὀργὴ θεοῦ ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ, God's wrath from Heaven, to a close in regard to human sinfulness, he pulls the present theme to the central point πάντας ὑφ' ἁμαρτίαν εἶναι, that all are under the control of sin (3:9). Particularly prominent in his emphasis is that this includes the elitists along with the

pagans. The framing of this unit in the second person plural “we” means ‘we Jews.’ Paul contends that the Jews are no better off than Gentiles when it comes to accountability before Almighty God on Judgment Day. They will have absolutely no privileged position when standing before God in final judgment. He then turns to the Hebrew scriptures for justification of this contention. The citations come mostly from Psalms 14:1-3 and 53:1-4. Each set is followed in Jewish scribal fashion by interpretive comments by Paul.

Literary Setting. The inferential coordinate conjunction οὖν, then, defines the connection of this unit as answer specifically the question of Jewish advantage before God that was first raised in 3:1. There the retrocecal question was Τί οὖν τὸ περισσὸν τοῦ Ἰουδαίου ἢ τίς ἡ ὠφέλεια τῆς περιτομῆς; What then is the advantage of the Jew or what is the value of circumcision? His answer to this question was πολὺ κατὰ πάντα τρόπον, much in every way. But in 3:9 the question is raised: Τί οὖν; προεχόμεθα; What then? Are we better off? This time his answer is different: οὐ πάντως, not in any way! This very opposite answer to the second set of questions requires careful understanding. This contextual connection of 3:9-20 to 3:1-8 must be kept in mind if we are to understand Paul's thinking correctly. The precise nature of this connection should be explored in order to better grasp the ideas.

Literary Structure. The unit is presented in two sub-units, as signaled by the first plural verbs προητιασάμεθα (v. 9) and οἶδαμεν (v. 19). The post positive coordinate conjunction δὲ connects the second unit to the first as adding a similar point but with a slightly different perspective. These two sections are presented via γὰρ as a defense of his answer οὐ πάντως, not at all, in response to the rhetorical questions Τί οὖν; προεχόμεθα; What then? Are we better off?

The challenge of vv. 9-20 is substantial for interpretation. Cranfield in the ICC lists these challenges around a) text establishment, b) punctuation, and c) interpretational understandings.²⁵¹ Some are major is-

²⁵¹In view of the interrelatedness of the problems, which concern text, punctuation and interpretation, it will be best to set out the whole range of the main problems before attempting to discuss any of them.

“First, the main textual variations may be shown as follows:

(i) Nearly all authorities attest either (a) προεχόμεθα (x B etc.), or (b) προεχόμεθα (A L), or (c) προκατέχομεν περισσόν (D* G ψ 104 Or(Lat) Ambst and other Fathers).

“(ii) The words οὐ πάντως are omitted by those authorities which have the reading (i) (c), and also by a few attesting προεχόμεθα.1

“(iii) ἠτιασάμεθα is read instead of προητιασάμεθα by D* G pc, supported by lat.

“(iv) γὰρ is omitted by D* syp.

“(v) πρῶτον is added after τε by A.



	3.8	καὶ	
66		(τί) μὴ (λέγει)	
		καθὼς βλασφημούμεθα	
		καὶ	
		καθὼς φασὶν τινες	
		ἡμᾶς λέγειν	
		ὅτι ποιήσωμεν τὰ κακά,	
		ἵνα ἔλθῃ τὰ ἀγαθὰ;	
		ὧν τὸ κρίμα ἐνδικόν ἐστιν.	
	3.9	οὖν	
67		Τί;	
68		προεχόμεθα;	
69		οὐ πάντως·	
		γὰρ	
70		προητiasάμεθα	
		Τουδαίους τε καὶ Ἑλληνας πάντας ὑφ' ἁμαρτίαν εἶναι,	
	3.10	καθὼς γέγραπται ὅτι	
A		<i>οὐκ ἔστιν δίκαιος οὐδὲ εἷς,</i>	
B	3.11	<i>οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ συνίων,</i>	
C		<i>οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ ἐκζητῶν τὸν θεόν.</i>	
D	3.12	<i>πάντες ἐξέκλιναν</i>	
E		<i>ἅμα ἠχρεώθησαν·</i>	
F		<i>οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ ποιῶν χρηστότητα,</i>	
G		<i>[οὐκ ἔστιν] ἕως ἐνός.</i>	
H	3.13	<i>τάφος ἀνεφγμένος ὁ λάρυγξ αὐτῶν,</i>	
I		<i>ταῖς γλώσσαις αὐτῶν ἐδολιοῦσαν,</i>	
J		<i>ἰὸς ἀσπίδων ὑπὸ τὰ χεῖλη αὐτῶν·</i>	
K	3.14	<i>ὧν τὸ στόμα ἀρᾶς καὶ πικρίας γέμει,</i>	
L	3.15	<i>ὀξεῖς οἱ πόδες αὐτῶν ἐκχέαι αἷμα,</i>	
M	3.16	<i>σύντριμμα καὶ ταλαιπωρία ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτῶν,</i>	
	3.17	καὶ	
N		<i>ὁδὸν εἰρήνης οὐκ ἔγνωσαν.</i>	
O	3.18	<i>οὐκ ἔστιν φόβος θεοῦ ἀπέναντι τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτῶν.</i>	
	3.19	δὲ	
71		οἶδαμεν	
		ὅτι ὅσα ὁ νόμος λέγει	
		τοῖς ἐν τῷ νόμῳ λαλεῖ,	
		ἵνα πᾶν στόμα φραγῆ	
		καὶ	
		/-----	
		ὑπόδικος γένηται πᾶς ὁ κόσμος τῷ θεῷ·	
	3.20	διότι	
		ἐξ ἔργων νόμου	
72		οὐ δικαιωθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ	
		ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ,	
		γὰρ	
		διὰ νόμου	
73		ἐπίγνωσις ἁμαρτίας.	

sues while the majority are secondary in nature.

Distinctive to this subunit is the way Paul utilizes OT scriptural based principles as proof for his contention of universal sinfulness.²⁵² The closeness of this particular

"**Secondly**, there are the following questions concerning punctuation, on the assumption that the text printed by Nestle is correct:

"(i) Should a question mark or no punctuation be placed after οὐν?

"(ii) Should no punctuation mark be placed after οὐ and a colon after πάντως, or a comma after οὐ and nothing after πάντως?

"**Thirdly**, there are the problems of interpretation. These are centred on προεχόμεθα and οὐ πάντως. The basic sense of προέχειν is 'hold before'. In the middle it means 'hold before oneself', and so, metaphorically, 'put forward as a pretext or excuse'. In the active it is also used intransitively, meaning 'jut out', 'project', 'have the start' (e.g. in running), 'be superior to', 'surpass', 'excel' (either with a genitive or absolutely). Since προεχόμεθα may be either middle or passive, the following possibilities have to be considered:

"(i) that it is middle with a proper middle force. One would then have expected a direct object to be expressed ('put ... forward as an excuse'), but Paul—it has been argued—could conceivably have used it without a direct object with such a sense as 'excuse oneself', 'make excuses' or 'prevaricate'. The subject might be 'we Jews' or perhaps the same as that of προητιασάμεθα later in the verse, i.e. 'we' meaning Paul himself.

"(ii) that it is middle with an active force. The meaning would then be: 'Have we (Jews) any advantage over them (sc. the Gentiles)?' No other examples of the middle of this verb used in this way have been adduced.

"(iii) that it is passive, the meaning being: 'Are we (Jews) excelled by them?' or 'Are we worse off than they?'

"πάντως (it occurs in the NT nine times in all, four times in Luke and Acts and five in Romans and 1 Corinthians), like the English 'altogether', modifies the negative adverb, if placed before it (thus πάντως οὐ properly means 'altogether not'), but is itself modified by the negative, if placed after it (thus οὐ πάντως properly means 'not altogether'). But there is some evidence of οὐ πάντως being used where one would expect πάντως οὐ (see, for example, Epictetus, Ench. 1:5; and (from a much earlier date) Theognis (Elegiacus), 305); and the Vulgate renders οὐ πάντως here by 'Nequaquam'."

[C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 187–189.]

²⁵²"The carefully constructed catena of scriptural passages which follows (with near contemporary parallel in CD 5:13–17 and 4 Ezra 7:22–24) may be drawn from preformed material (Keeck) and serves again to underpin the claim just made with scriptural proof. The point becomes clearer when it is recalled that all the Psalm citations presuppose an antithesis between the righteous (the faithful member of the covenant) and the unrighteous. The implication is that when that presupposition of favored status before God is set aside, the scriptures serve as a condemnation of all humankind (in suggesting that vv 10–18 are a secondary insertion, Schenke, "Aporien," 885–87, misses this crucial function of the catena within Paul's argument). The point becomes explicit in v 19: the law speaks to those "within the law," that is, to those whose confidence rests in the fact that they belong to the people defined and marked out by the law. Michel sees a strophe structure—vv

list of OT passages similar listings in the Cairo (Genizah text of the) Damascus (Document) 5:13–17 and 4 Ezra 7:22–24, both very Hellenistic Jewish writings of the same general time frame, suggests Paul may have used a piece of pre-formed Christian teaching already in existence at the time of the writing of Romans in 56 AD. The careful way these OT passages are stitched together by the sixfold repetition of οὐκ ἔστιν, **there is no one...**, points in this direction.²⁵³ If so, then even greater weight is attached to these OT passages in the minds of the Roman readers.

With all these preparatory issues in mind, let's dig into the text itself and see what we can find.

10.3.3.2.4.2.1 First reason for the level ground, 3:9b–18

Here Paul gives the initial reason for his answer οὐ πάντως, **not at all**. This is clearly signaled by introducing the answer with the coordinate causal conjunction γὰρ.

But what is the question being asked and answered?

Questions: Τί οὐν; προεχόμεθα;

What then? Are we better off?

Answer: οὐ πάντως.

Not in any way!

The conjunction οὐν ties 3:9–20 back to 3:1–8 as an explicit expression of something deemed implicit in the previous unit. What that is depends upon the exegesis of the questions and response in vv. 9–20.

To begin with, the exact reading of the text must be

10–12 (2 × 3 lines), vv 13–14 (2 × 2) and vv 15–18 (2 × 2)—which is hardly self-evident. More impressive and effective is the sixfold repetition of οὐκ ἔστιν (vv 10, 11, 12, 18; cf. Heil)."

[James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 145.]

²⁵³"In 3:10–18 there appears a catena of biblical passages, which is the most extensive grouping of OT quotations in the entire Pauline corpus. The verses quoted are stitched together by a sixfold repetition of 'there is no one' (οὐκ ἔστιν), and they set out an enumeration of various parts of the body ('throats,' 'tongues,' 'lips,' 'mouths,' 'feet,' and 'eyes') to make the point that all human beings are in their totality sinful. This catena of passages has, in fact, every appearance of being very carefully structured. Further, it appears to have been originally brought together within the Jewish world (see the exegetical comments below), and so may be postulated to have been traditional within Judaism and among the earliest Jewish believers in Jesus and known by Paul's Christian addressees at Rome. And as a traditional collection of OT passages that was probably known to his addressees, it was used by Paul in support of his insistence that 'both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin.'²¹"

[Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 334–335.]



established in light of alternative readings.²⁵⁴ The reading τί οὖν; προεχόμεθα; οὐ πάντως has the best manuscript evidence supporting it. Also, the establishing of two questions by inserting the Greek question mark ; as illustrated above is the most appropriate division of the wording of the text given the grammar used with the words. The grammar wouldn't work by combining τί οὖν προεχόμεθα into a single interrogative statement. The required answer would have to be οὐδέν rather than οὐ πάντως. The present middle spelling προεχόμεθα has much greater mss support than the subjunctive προεχώμεθα.²⁵⁵ Also the evidence is overwhelming for the inclusion of οὐ πάντως.²⁵⁶ Thus the reading adopted

²⁵⁴"We are now in a position to attempt to reach some conclusions. With regard to the textual variations (i) and (ii), there seems to be little doubt that the words προεχόμεθα οὐ πάντως should be read; for they are strongly attested, and their difficulty also tells in their favour. The substitution of προκατέχομεν περισσόν (without οὐ πάντως) for προεχόμεθα οὐ πάντως would be readily understandable, the resulting question τί οὖν προκατέχομεν περισσόν; being so much easier, while the alteration in the opposite direction would be most unlikely. And the reading προεχώμεθα looks like an attempted improvement by someone who understood the verb in its proper middle sense and so felt a deliberative question was required." [C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 189.]

²⁵⁵"The present indicative middle verb προεχόμεθα — which, as will be argued below, is best understood interrogatively as 'Are we superior?' 'Do we surpass/excel?' 'Do we have an advantage?' or, more colloquially, 'Are we [Jews] any better?' — is attested by the fourth-century uncials κ and B (also the later uncials D^c and K), as well as by minuscules 33 1175 1739 (Category I), 81 1881 1962 2464 (Category II), and 6 69 88 181 323 326 365 424^c 436 451 614 629 630 1241 1243 1319 1573 1877 2344 2492 (Category III). It is also reflected in the Latin, Syriac, and Coptic versions. The ninth-century uncial P (025) has the present indicative middle verb προεχώμεθα, but omits the phrase that follows: οὐ πάντως (which we will argue later should be understood to mean 'Not in every respect!' or, more colloquially, 'Not at all!'). The subjunctive προεχώμεθα ('Might we have an advantage?') appears in uncial A of the fifth century and uncial L (020) of the ninth century, whereas the present indicative phrase προκατέχομεν περισσόν ('Do we have excessive possession?') is found in uncials D* (06) G (012) and Ψ (044), as well as in minuscules 104 1505 1735 2495 (Category III). It is also reflected in versions it sy^{p,h} cop^{bo} and Ambrosiaster. The reading προεχώμεθα οὐ πάντως of both Codex Sinaiticus (κ 01) and Codex Vaticanus (B 03), however, is most likely original, with the difficulty of understanding how to interpret that reading evidently generating all the ancient scribal variants (as noted above) and all the modern interpretations." [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 328.]

²⁵⁶"The weight of MS tradition reads οὐ πάντως, 'not at all,' or 'not altogether,' after the verb." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated,

as the most likely original text is τί οὖν; προεχόμεθα; οὐ πάντως. Now let's try to figure out what Paul is saying, in light of a considerable variety of differing opinions among commentators.

A part of the interpretive dilemma is linked to how 3:9 is connected to 3:1. At first glance the apostle seems to give opposite answers to essentially the same question. Note the charting out of the two:

3:1-2a

Questions:

τί οὖν τὸ περισσὸν τοῦ Ἰουδαίου
ἢ τίς ἡ ὠφέλεια τῆς περιτομῆς;
What then is the advantage of the Jew
or what is the value of circumcision?

Answer:

πολὺ κατὰ πάντα τρόπον.
Much in every way.

3:9

Questions:

τί οὖν;
προεχόμεθα;
What then?
Are we better off?

Answer:

οὐ πάντως
Not at all.

What is happening here? At first glance Paul seems to be saying the exact opposite thing to essentially the same questions. Yet to really understand Paul thinking one must thoroughly examine the amplified answers beyond the brief elliptical response to each set of questions. But first a careful analysis of each set of questions has to be made in order to be certain that we both understand exactly the questions along with each initial reaction.

In the above section [10.3.3.2.4.1 The Jewish Advantage, 3:1-8](#), the issue of the first set of questions has been thoroughly analyzed. The essence of what we discovered in this can be summarized as follows.

The advantage for Jews over Gentiles is that [they have been entrusted with the oracles of God](#), ἐπιστεύθησαν τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ. Though modern interpreters often equate this with the Hebrew Bible, Paul actually states that the oral proclamation of God's will by Moses and the prophets is his point. The written record of this into scripture comes only centuries later. But Paul's point does not center on divine entrusting of His revealed will to the "Jew," τοῦ Ἰουδαίου. Instead the apostle focuses on how this divine trust has been handled. In the collective oriented society of Paul's world, how God's revelation was treated becomes critical to the reputation of God who provided it. The scenario is set up as

1998), 144.]



an assumption of actuality that raises the question of unfaithfulness by some of the Jews, εἰ ἠπίστησάν τινες. That does not mean that God will be unfaithful to His side of the revelation, does it. His lengthy reaction to this assumed scenario beginning in verse four is to assert **God's justice**, θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην, no matter how unfaithful the Jewish people may be. That God treats all humanity with fairness and equity is prerequisite to His being able to subject all humanity to final judgment. This faithfulness of God in His δικαιοσύνη doesn't encourage sinfulness by humanity in any way, in spite of Paul's having been accused to promoting it by His preaching of the Gospel. Thus Israel has been given distinct opportunity to both know and do God's will.

Now in this second set of question / answer in 3:9, how does Paul contend that Israel is no better off than the Gentiles? The heart of Paul's οὐ πάντως, **not at all**, answer is seen in first amplifying declaration: πάντας ὑφ' ἁμαρτίαν εἶναι, **all are under the rule of sin**. The amplification of this core declaration will occupy vv. 10-20. Having been entrusted with the oracles of God (ἐπιστεύθησαν τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ) in no way brings divine forgiveness or special status with God by simply being Jewish. Such would nullify God's δικαιοσύνη. And nothing will ever cause this to happen!

Thus when properly understood Paul in no possible way contradicts himself in these two subunits. In fact, the second unit builds on the foundation of the first one in order to make its point of universal sinfulness. This is especially so for vv. 19-20.

Now some observations about the details of the two key words in v. 9a: προεχόμεθα and πάντως. The present tense middle voice προεχόμεθα from προέχω can grammatically be taken as either passive voice, i.e., "are we excelled?" Or as middle voice, i.e., "do we have advantage?" The passive voice understanding would play off the Jewish elitism condemned in chapter two, but stand in contradiction to Paul's point in 3:1-8. More preferable is the middle voice meaning with the sense of holding something before oneself for protection.²⁵⁷ Contextually, this becomes the idea of the Jews possessing something to shield them against the wrath of God. Paul's answer of οὐ πάντως, **not at all**, becomes clear in light of his vigorous affirmation in 3:1-8 of the faithfulness of God to treat all humanity the same way in final judgment. Thus Paul reaffirms his point in chapter two that Jewish assumptions of having special privilege before God in final judgment are delusional.

The answer οὐ πάντως has been understood in a

²⁵⁷Arndt, William, Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, and F. Wilbur Gingrich. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.

couple of different ways. Most common is to take it as roughly equivalent to a more common pattern πάντως οὐ. That is, a very strong negative, "not at all!" Examples of those taking it this way are "Cornely, Lipsius, Sanday and Headlam, Barrett, Murray: cf. RV, RSV, NEB, JB."²⁵⁸ Paul's use of πάντως οὐ in 1 Cor. 16:12 is 'altogether not.' But οὐ πάντως in 1 Cor. 5:10 means 'not altogether.' Probably this is the better understanding here in Rom. 3:9. This understanding sees Paul going in not quite so sharply a different direction as in 3:1-9. Although the Jew has the advantage of holding in trust the oracles of God, little if any additional advantage accrues to him. And at one point especially, i.e., sinfulness, he has absolutely no advantage over the pagan Gentile.²⁵⁹

It is subtle but still important that Paul shifts from the third person, τοῦ Ἰουδαίου, **the Jew**, and -θησαν, **they**, in 3:1-8 to the first person plural -όμεθα, **'we'** in 3:9-20. In continuing to criticize the Jewish elitists mentality in 3:1-8, which Paul does not hold, he objectivies the Jews. But now in affirming all of humanity under sinfulness he affirms his inclusion by **'we Jews.'** Additionally, the shift from first person singular, 3:7-8,²⁶⁰ to first person plural, 3:9, adds a signal of a shift of emphasis to a summarizing of the essential points of 1:18-3:8 that both pagan Gentiles and Jewish elitists are all under the domination of sinfulness.

προητιασόμεθα γὰρ Ἰουδαίους τε καὶ Ἕλληνας πάντας

²⁵⁸ C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 1:150.

²⁵⁹"After long hesitation, we have come to the conclusion that this view should be abandoned, and the interpretation 'Not altogether', 'Not in every respect', adopted.² The fact that in both the other places, in which Paul uses πάντως in conjunction with οὐ, and the meaning is the natural one (in 1 Cor 16:12 we have πάντως οὐ, and the meaning is 'altogether not', while in 1 Cor 5:10 we have οὐ πάντως and the meaning is 'not altogether') strongly suggests that here too his usage is likely to be correct. Furthermore, the meaning 'not altogether' is, as a matter of fact, better suited to the context. Paul has said in 3:2 that the Jew has an advantage which is great and important in every respect. He now indicates that, while the Jews have this altogether great advantage, they are not at an advantage in every respect. (These two statements are not contradictory) There is at least one respect in which they are at no advantage—the matter of sinfulness, of having no claim on God in virtue of their merit."⁴ [C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 190.]

²⁶⁰The first person plural -όμεθα and ἡμεῖς in 3:8 represents narratively an insertion, into the controlling narrative framework of vv. 7-8, of an example of accusation made against him and his associates in their preaching of the Gospel. It is not the controlling narrative framework. The τῷ ἐμῷ and -ομαι set the controlling framework as first person singular.



ὑφ' ἁμαρτίαν εἶναι, for we have contended already that both Jews and Gentiles, all, are under the rule of sin (v. 9). This stands via γὰρ as the first justifying basis for the response οὐ πάντως. And as the dependent clause ὅτι ἐπιστεύθησαν τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ in 3:2b provided the defining amplification for Paul's answer of πολὺ κατὰ πάντα, so also the infinitival phrase πάντας ὑφ' ἁμαρτίαν εἶναι functions the same way for Paul's answer οὐ πάντως in 3:9.

Just how Paul introduces this axiom is interesting also. The direct object functioning infinitive phrase goes back to the verb προητιασάμεθα. Taken from the verb προαιπιάομαι, this is the only use of the verb in the entire NT.²⁶¹ The prefix προ signals the making of an accusation in advance. Or perhaps here the intended sense is 'up to now.' Although possible to see implied in the usual English translation, the existence of some prior writing or orally delivered message before this letter, the best understanding is to see that by προ-Paul is alluding to the universal sinfulness of pagans in 1:18-32 and of the morally elitist Jews in 2:1-3:8. Thus the verb underscores to his Roman readers that these two previous emphases on the temporal and the eschatological outpouring of God's wrath is based upon the common principle of the universality of human sinfulness from beginning to end. As a just God, ὁ δίκαιος θεός, the outpouring of divine wrath is entirely appropriate, and not unfair in the least. Plus God will always be true to His own holy character. Sin cannot stand in the full presence of purity, just as darkness cannot stand in pure light.

Ἰουδαίους τε καὶ Ἑλληνας πάντας ὑφ' ἁμαρτίαν εἶναι (v. 9b)

Paul's construction is emphatic by including absolutely all of humanity. This standard ancient Jewish division of all humanity into two groups, we Jews and the rest of the world, is deeply embedded into the Jewish scribe Paul. He first used this expression in 1:16 and then in 2:9-10. In these instances the singular spelling was used and next in 10:12 the singular will surface again.²⁶² One distinctive here is the absence of the adverb πρῶτον, that is present in the first two instanc-

²⁶¹Neither is the root stem of the verb αἰτιάομαι found in the NT outside of an alternative reading here in 3:9. But the adjective spelling αἴτιος, -ία, -ον is used four times by Luke in Lk. 23:4, 14, 22 and Acts 19:40 in reference to legal charges. The noun αἰτίωμα for charge, complaint is found once in Acts 25:7. Much more common is the noun αἰτία (31x NT) mostly designating the cause or reason for something, especially an action considered to be a basis for legal charges.

²⁶²Cf. Gal. 3:28 and Col. 1:16 for additional examples.

es. Instead, the phrase is completely inclusive without prioritizing one group over the other.²⁶³ Here the appropriate accusative case plural spellings are utilized, thus adding greater emphasis upon inclusiveness.

The grammar structure is uncomplicated for Greek even though in English the infinitive 'to be' can't function as a direct object as does εἶναι. Both Ἰουδαίους and Ἑλληνας are tightly woven together by the two conjunctions τε καὶ. They function as accusative of reference 'subjects' of the infinitive εἶναι. The predicate adjective πάντας is attached to both Ἰουδαίους and Ἑλληνας, thus adding even more emphasis on absolute inclusiveness. Paul goes out of his way to stress that every human being is under sin.

The infinitive with its adverbial modifier goes straight to Paul's point of universal sinfulness: ὑφ' ἁμαρτίαν εἶναι, **under sin to be**. This is the central point of 1:18-3:20. Important to note is that sin is pictured not in the usual designations of deliberate violation of God's laws.²⁶⁴ Instead, sin is a state of being which includes all human beings of all times. This principle stands as a major contribution of the apostle Paul to Christian doctrine.

²⁶³The phrase 'both Jews and Gentiles' (Ἰουδαίους τε καὶ Ἑλληνας) is obviously influenced by Paul's entire inclusive argument in 1:16–3:20. In particular, however, it is influenced by the wording he used in 1:16 and 2:9–10: 'both for the Jew first and for the Gentile' (Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλληνι). Yet the phrase 'both Jews and Gentiles' here in 3:9 does not possess exactly the same nuance as that earlier wording in 1:16 and 2:9–10. For while 'both Jews and Gentiles' here incorporates the inclusive emphasis signaled by the enclitic particle τε ('both') found in both 1:16 and 2:9–10, which emphasis is repeated in other ways at many other places in Paul's letter to Rome,⁸⁷ it does not include the particularistic thrust signaled by the substantival adjective πρῶτον ('first') in 1:16 and 2:9–10 — despite the inclusion of πρῶτον in 3:9 by the fifth-century Codex Alexandrinus (A 02), which is not supported elsewhere in the Greek textual tradition.⁸⁸

[Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 354.]

²⁶⁴The word group is ἁμαρτάνω, ἁμάρτημα, ἁμαρτία, ἁμαρτωλός, ἀναμάρτητος

[Gottfried Quell et al., "Ἀμαρτάνω, Ἀμάρτημα, Ἀμαρτία," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:267.]

[Karl Heinrich Rengstorff, "Ἀμαρτωλός, Ἀναμάρτητος," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:317.]

is filled in Hebrew and Aramaic by a large diversity of terms which the LXX picked up and used the *αμαρτ*-stem words in translation.²⁶⁸ Four Hebrew words pri-

marily stand behind *αμαρτία*. They are **חטא** (to put away sin), **פשע** (to rebel), **עוה** (to bend), and **שגה** (to err).²⁶⁹ The Hebrew idea of sin originates in Genesis 3

times for **וָנָע**, **פָּשַׁע** (3 times each), **זָמָה**, **תִּטְּאָת** (twice each) and **הִבְלָה**, **תִּיַעֲבָה**, **תִּפְלָה** (once). *ἀνομείν* translates **רָשַׁע** (*qal* and *hi* 8 times), **פָּשַׁע** and **שָׁחַת** (*pi* and *hi*) three each. It is also used for **עוה**, **מַעַל**, **חָטָא**, (ΘDa. 9:5?) and some nouns, *ἀσέβεια*, which with *αμαρτία* has the strongest religious accentuation of all the equivalents, is most commonly used for **פָּשַׁע**, (27 times), then for **רָשַׁע** and **רָשָׁעָה** (4 times), more rarely for **הִנָּה**, **זָדוֹן**, **זָמָה**, **מִרְמָה**, **מִרְמָה**, **סָרָה**, **עָלִילָה**, **רָעָה**, **תִּיַעֲבָה** etc. It occurs only twice each for **תִּטְּאָת** and **עוֹן**, and even in these cases there is some textual doubt, *ἀσεβής* is mostly the equivalent for **רָשַׁע** (14 times), other terms being of little significance. The case is much the same with *ἀσεβείν*, except that now **פָּשַׁע** is strongly represented (10 times) and **חָטָא** does not occur at all. Worth noting is **מָרָה** in Lam. 3:42. *κακία* corresponds for the most part to the derivatives of **רָעַע**, but also, though the MSS. differ, to **עוֹן**, in 1 Ch. 21:8; Jer. 16:18; 13:22 (A), to **אָנָן** in Is. 29:20 and to **תִּטְּאָת** in Jer. 15:13 (A). The same is true of *κακός*, for which, with **רָע** etc., the following equivalents deserve mention: **אָנָן** (3 times), **זָמָה** (Prv. 10:23), **עָמַל** (Job 16:2), **רָשָׁע** (Prv. 16:12), **עוֹלָה** (Job 22:23). *κακοῦν*, is used in Is. 50:9 for **רָשַׁע** *hi*, *κακοποιεῖν* in 2 S. 24:17 (A) for **עוה** *hi*. As equivalents for **מָרָה** or **מָרַד** in the religious sense we often find *ἀθετεῖν*, *ἀφιστάναί* (both also for **עָשָׂה**), *ἀμελεῖν* (Jer. 4:17), *ἐρίζειν* (1 K. 12:14f.), *παραβαίνειν*, *παροξύνειν* (for **מָרָה אֶת־פִּי יְהוָה** Nu 20:24), *μη εἰσακούσειν* (Is. 1:20), and esp. *παραπικραίνειν* (Ez. 2:3 for **דָּרַם** and 18 times for **הָרַם**; in Ez. *οἶκος παραπικραίνων* 9 times for **חֵיב**).

"The reasons for these defects in translation are not to be sought only in the methods of the translators but also in the peculiar difficulty of the Heb. usage. It is obvious that among the many words to be considered none was exclusively devoted to religious and theological use and therefore none constitutes an exact equivalent to the English 'sin.' All the Heb. words in question had a secular as well as a religious sense, and, disparate though the relation often is, the very fact of this twofold usage constitutes a warning not to overestimate the purely religious content of the term. On closer inspection all seem to be more or clearly the results of rational reflection which is religious in content. They are *theologoumena* rather than original terms of spontaneous experience, and the meaning falls into different groups. This explains why the subjectivity of the translator plays a more important role than is helpful. Sometimes a religious emphasis is imported where none was meant,³ and sometimes a secular word is used which weakens the religious content.⁴ At any rate, the relatively rich linguistic differentiation in the Hebrew may be very largely discerned of itself by reason of the fact that only with the strongest reservations, if at all, can we count on a uniform and self-contained concept of sin in the authors of the OT; the problem of sin is complicated by a series of detailed questions of linguistic history."

[Gottfried Quell et al., "Ἀμαρτάνω, Ἀμάρτημα, Ἀμαρτία," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:267–270.]

²⁶⁸"The language of the OT gives us four different roots to which the concept of sin is usually attached and which we have usually to render as 'to sin' or 'sin' without being able to bring out the etymologically derived nuances of the Hebrew. These roots are as follows.

חטא. This verb is used 177 times in the *qal* including the

infin. and *part.* forms, 32 times in the *hithpael* and 9 in the *hithpael*. We also find 15 forms of the *piel*, which always have denominative significance in the *privat. sense* 'to put away sin.'¹⁵ Even some of the *hithpael* forms are reflexive in relation to the *privat. piel*: 'to free oneself from sin.' On the whole there are thus 233 examples of the verb, predominantly in a religious sense.⁶ Of the nouns formed from **חטא** the most common is **תִּטְּאָה** (*fem.*, only Gn. 4:7 *masc.* → n. 28), which occurs 289 times and seems to be strongly-preferred to nouns from other roots. In large part,⁷ of course, **תִּטְּאָה** follows the intensive constructions of the verb and has thus the privative significance of means to avert sin or its consequences. It thus denotes in many cases a specific form of sacrifice the occasion and ritual of which are described in Lv. 4:1–5; 13.⁸ Elsewhere it simply means 'sin' unless in certain cases we prefer a legal term like "misdemeanour" or "negligence." The various plural and suffix constructions of **תִּטְּאָה** can all be traced back to the *sing. תִּטְּאָה* which in the *absol. form* occurs only twice (Ex. 34:7; Is. 5:18). We find **תִּטְּאָה** 8 times⁹ and the *masc. תִּטְּאָה* 35 times.¹⁰ The *nomen agentis* **חַטְּאָה** ("sinner") is found in the *sing.* only as a *fern.* (Amos 9:8); but the *plur.* either with or without suffix occurs 18 times.

פשע ("to rebel") is found as a verb 41 times, including 10 instances of the *part. qal*; as the noun **עֲשֵׂפָה** it is found 92 times (*sing.* and *plur.*).

עוה as a verb occurs in 17 forms, of which 6 (*niph* and *pi* forms) have either directly or metaphorically the secular meaning of "to bend" (→ 279). The use of the noun **עוֹן**¹¹ is much greater; this is found in the *sing.* and the *plur.* (**עוֹנוֹת**) 227 times and it has a stronger religious emphasis, the thought of guilt being forcefully asserted¹² (→ 3. and → **δικαιοσύνη**). **תּוֹנָנוּעַ** are faults which establish guilt.

הגש ("to err") occurs 19 times as a verb, with the *par. construction* **גָּשׁ** (4 times), and also 19 instances of the noun **הִגָּשׁוּת**. Together these bring out a further characteristic of sin as creaturely conditioned error.¹³

Apart from **מָרָה** and **מָרַד**, which are particularly close in meaning to **פָּשַׁע**, many of the roots mentioned under a., and esp. **רָשַׁע**, **עוֹל**, or **אָשַׁם** (→ *ἰλάσκεσθαι* and 279 f.) might be added to these four. And the four themselves, for all that they are used in what is essentially the same or a similar theological and religious way, give evidence of such strong qualitative differences among themselves that they alone are enough to prove the rich and varied nature of the thinking about sin either consciously or unconsciously expressed in their use. Hence a comparison of the content enclosed in these four main strands of usage will help us to a more or less accurate understanding of what the Hebrews meant by sin."

[Gottfried Quell et al., "Ἀμαρτάνω, Ἀμάρτημα, Ἀμαρτία," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:270–271.]

²⁶⁹"Apart from **מָרָה** and **מָרַד**, which are particularly close in meaning to **פָּשַׁע**, many of the roots mentioned under a., and esp. **רָשַׁע**, **עוֹל**, or **אָשַׁם** (→ *ἰλάσκεσθαι* and 279 f.) might be added to these four. And the four themselves, for all that they are used in what is essentially the same or a similar theological and religious way, give evidence of such strong qualitative differences among



Judaism emerging from the Exile is moving away from collective responsibility for sin to individual responsibility. The covenant Jew became a dominating focus in being personally responsible to do his part in obeying Torah for the nation in order to not face again the wrath of God for its sinfulness.²⁷³ The universality of sin was widely accepted in the Judaism of Paul's day.²⁷⁴

against God. They are all sin." [Gottfried Quell et al., "Ἀμαρτάνω, Ἀμάρτημα, Ἀμαρτία," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:289.]

²⁷³Yet the idea of general responsibility is not completely dead. This may be seen from the comparison of the sinner with a man who bores a hole in a boat on the sea. When asked what he is doing, he says to his companions: 'What is that to you? Am I not boring under myself?' And he receives the answer: 'This is our affair, for the water will come in and the boat will go down with us' (Lv. r., 4 on 4:1).⁷¹ [Gottfried Quell et al., "Ἀμαρτάνω, Ἀμάρτημα, Ἀμαρτία," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 290–291.]

²⁷⁴As a whole Judaism accepts the view that sinning is general.⁷² All men are sinful, cf. 4 Esr. 7:68f.: 'For all who are born are marred by ungodliness, full of sin and laden with guilt. And it would be better for us if after death we did not have to go to the judgment'; 9:36: 'We who receive the Law must perish because of our sins, along with our hearts in which they are committed.' Ex. r., 31 on 22:24; Lv. r., 14 on 12:2 (on Ps. 51:5): 'Even if a man were the most pious of the pious, he would still have one page of sin'; Philo Vit. Mos., II, 147: παντι γεννητῷ ... συμφυεὲς τὸ ἀμαρτάνειν ἐστίν; also Fug., 158. The Gentiles, too, come under this sinfulness as religious responsibility and guilt before God. According to Jewish theory they have the Adamic and Noachic commands in respect of theft, licentiousness, idolatry, blasphemy and the shedding of blood, S. Lv., 18, 4. Indeed, the Torah has been offered them, but they have refused it. R. Jochanan has stated: 'This teaches (i.e., Dt. 33:2; Hab. 3:3) that God has published the Torah to every nation and language, but it was not accepted until He came to Israel and Israel accepted it' (b. AZ, 2b).⁷³ For this reason they are not without guilt in their sin. On the other hand, this basic principle is not so sharply applied as might have been expected. 4 Esr. 7:48 says that almost all are sinners. Especially distinguished saints like Abraham, Moses and Elijah are accepted as without sin (cf. Test. Zeb., 1; Jos. Ant., 7, 153; Pesikt., 76a, ed. Buber).⁷⁴ This postulate of sinlessness is possible because of the individual freedom of the will and the gift of the Law. The observance of the Law makes possible a pure life. 'Thus God ... has said to the Israelites, My children, I have created you with an evil impulse, but I have given you the Law as a means of salvation. So long as you occupy yourselves with it, that impulse will not rule over you' (S. Dt., 45 on 11:18). The testimony of Paul may be cited in this regard: κατὰ δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐν νόμῳ γενόμενος ἄμεμπτος (Phil. 3:6).⁷⁵ If the sinlessness of isolated saints is maintained, and the possibility of a sinless life is provided by observance of the Law, it can almost be taken for granted that the sinlessness of the Messiah will be assumed. We read already of the Servant of the Lord in Dt.-Is.: '... he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth' (53:9). In Ps. Sol. 17:41 it is said of the Messiah: καὶ αὐτὸς καθαρὸς ἀπὸ ἀμαρτίας; and in Test. Jud. 2:4 (A): καὶ πᾶσα ἀμαρτία οὐχ εὐρεθήσεται ἐν αὐτῷ; cf. also Test. L. 18:9. Linked with this is

It is in apocalyptic Judaism that one begins noticing the idea of sin as a power, in addition to being actions both morally and religiously.²⁷⁵ In Hebraic Judaism, the two impulses given to every person at birth by God remained the dominant perspective. Therefore when Paul speaks of sin as a ruler over humanity in 3:9, he was not expressing an unheard of concept to the Romans Christians, especially the Jewish Christian members.

In seeing ἀμαρτία as a controlling force or power, is Paul pointing his readers to a personified Ἀμαρτία χθόνια, the species of demons in the underworld?²⁷⁶

the expectation of Jewish eschatology that sin will be set aside and the sinlessness of man established in the Messianic kingdom (cf. En. 5:8f.; Ps. Sol. 17:32; Test. L. 18)."

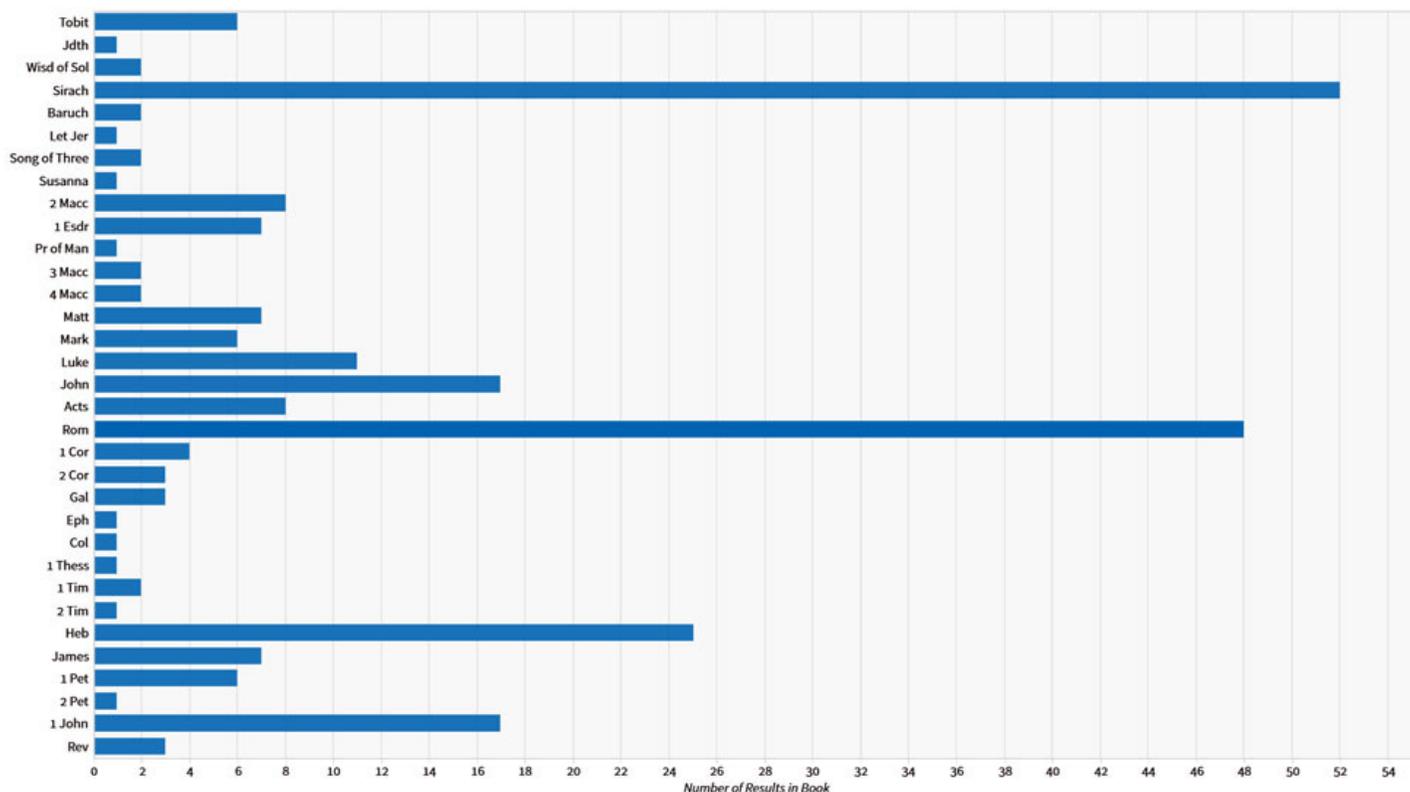
[Gottfried Quell et al., "Ἀμαρτάνω, Ἀμάρτημα, Ἀμαρτία," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:291.]

²⁷⁵Sin derives from Adam⁷⁶ or from Eve, and has spread from them and established its dominion over the whole race. Cor ... malignum baiulans, primus Adam transgressus et victus est, sed et omnes, qui de eo nati sunt. Et facta est permanens infirmitas et lex cum corde populi, cum malignitate radicis; et discessit quod bonum est, et mansit malignum (4 Esr. 3:21f.). Cf. also Sir. 25:24; 4 Esr. 3:26; 7:48f.), esp. 118: 'Alas, Adam, what hast thou done? When thou didst sin, thy fall came not upon thee alone, but upon us thy descendants.' Cf. also S. Bar. 48:42, where sin is derived from Eve; and esp. Bar. 54:15: 'If Adam first sinned and brought premature death on all, each of his descendants has incurred future pain.' In these apocalyptic passages there is a view of sin, largely shared by the NT, as a power which profoundly shapes the world. A variation from the view which attributes sin to Adam is to be found in En. 10:4ff.; 64:1ff. and Mart. Is., 5, 3, in which its origin is found in the fallen angels of Gn. 6:1 ff. Alongside this historical explanation we should set the more basic view that the root of man's sin, the fomes peccati, lies in the evil impulse implanted in him by God. Cf. Sir. 15:14; 37:3; 4 Esr. 3:20; 4:4; 7:48 (cor malignum);⁷⁷ Pesikt., 38b–39a, ed. Buber; Vit. Ad., 19 (ἐπιθυμία ... ἐστὶ κεφαλὴ πάσης ἀμαρτίας)."

[Gottfried Quell et al., "Ἀμαρτάνω, Ἀμάρτημα, Ἀμαρτία," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:291–292.]

²⁷⁶Personifications of sin are found in the Paris Gk. magic papyrus and also in Judaism, the one referring to Ἀμαρτία χθόνια (Preis. Zaub., IV, 1448), a species of demons of the underworld, and the other to the woman of sin as in Zech. 5:5ff.⁹⁰ and also to ἀμαρτία lurking like lions (Sir. 27:10), both within the framework of the currently developing view of a cosmic power of sin.⁹¹ A similar idea is originally presupposed by the personal conception of ἀμαρτία (mostly with the art.)⁹² which is often found in the NT, esp. in R. 5–7.93 The initial reference is simply to the personal appearance of sin; it came into the world (R. 5:12). Originally it was νεκρά (7:8), but ἡ ἀμαρτία ἀνέζησεν through the ἐντολή or the νόμος (v. 9). It receives from this the impulse (v. 7, 11) to deceive man (v. 11; also Hb. 3:13) and to 'beset' him (Hb. 12:1, εὐπερίστατος); it dwells in him (R. 7:17, 20); it brings forth παθήματα (v. 5) and ἐπιθυμία (v. 8); and it thus becomes a demon-





Not likely, but the apostle does envision ἁμαρτία in very personalized tones as an enslaving power over human life. Some have suggested that the apostle moves toward seeing ἁμαρτία as the demon called “Sin.” But again this is hardly possible.²⁷⁷ The wide fluidity of nuanced derivative meanings from the core idea of failure to measure up for ἁμαρτία allows for the concept to be expanded to cover a lot of territory semantically.

ic power ruling over him. Man is ὑφ’ ἁμαρτίαν (R. 3:9; Gl. 3:22; cf. R. 11:32); he is sold to it as a slave (R. 6:16, 20; 7:14; also Jn. 8:34; cf. Gl. 2:17); he serves according to its law (6:6; 7:23, 25; 8:3); he loans it his members as ὄπλα ἀδικίας (6:13). Its sphere of power is the σὰρξ, where it exercises its dominion (κυριεύει, 6:14; βασιλεύει, 5:21; 6:12), which culminates in its giving man the wages (6:23) of death (5:21; 7:11; cf. Jm. 1:15). But through and with Christ man dies to sin (R. 6:2, 10), and is thus νεκρός for it (v. 11) and liberated from it (v. 7, 18, 22). Sin itself is condemned (8:3). Nevertheless, the battle against it must not cease (Hb. 12:4)."

[Gottfried Quell et al., “Ἀμαρτάνω, Ἀμάρτημα, Ἄμαρτία,” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:296.]

²⁷⁷"It is hard to say how far what we have here is the concrete notion of a demon 'sin' (Dibelius) standing in place of Satan, who is not mentioned at all in R. 6 f., and how far it is simply poetic imagery (Feine). How fluid are the boundaries between these NT forms of the ἁμαρτία concept may be seen from John (cf. esp. Jn. 8:34; 1 Jn. 3:5; and e.g., Jn. 8:21 with v. 24)." [Gottfried Quell et al., “Ἀμαρτάνω, Ἀμάρτημα, Ἄμαρτία,” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1: 296.]

As is illustrated in the above chart, to find a fuller development of the concept of sin in Paul, the letter to the Romans is the best document. Hebrews and the Johannine writings are important sources also.

Interestingly in the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus spoke very little directly about sin and its consequences. He acknowledged its reality, and gaining victory over it was central to His earthly mission.²⁷⁸ John’s Gospel develops the image of Jesus helping humanity overcome sin even further than what the Synoptic Gospels present.²⁷⁹ In his letters John provides his own definition

²⁷⁸"In the Synoptic Gospels it is striking how slight is the role of terms for sin as compared with their application in other parts of the NT. If we investigate the terms and their place in these Gospels, we find certain significant features which may be reduced to the twofold statement, first, that Jesus did not speak of sin and its nature and consequences, but was conscious of its reality (e.g., in the Sermon on the Mount) and acted accordingly, and second, that in His acts and sayings He was conscious of being the Victor over sin. These features may be illustrated from the Gospels." [Gottfried Quell et al., “Ἀμαρτάνω, Ἀμάρτημα, Ἄμαρτία,” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:302–303.]

²⁷⁹"In the Christ kerygma of John¹⁴⁴ we again see the fact of the overcoming of sin by Christ as it is first displayed in the picture of the historical Jesus presented by the Synoptists. The significance of this fact is further developed by John. The mission of Jesus consists in the overcoming of sin: καὶ οἴδατε ὅτι ἐκεῖνος ἐφανερώθη ἵνα τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἄρῃ, καὶ ἁμαρτία ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν (1 Jn. 3:5). Christ is the One who takes sin to Himself and bears it away." [Gottfried Quell et al., “Ἀμαρτάνω, Ἀμάρτημα, Ἄμαρτία,”

of sin: πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν καὶ τὴν ἀνομίαν ποιεῖ, καὶ ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀνομία (1 Jn. 3:4) and πᾶσα ἀδικία ἁμαρτία ἐστὶν (5:17).²⁸⁰ The Book of Revelation extends John's concept of sin further in terms of Christ's atoning sacrifice for the sins of humanity.

Against this backdrop we can understand Paul's idea better. But a detailed presentation must await the exegesis of chapters five through eight which contain the most concentrated terminology related to sinfulness that is found in the entire Bible.

Paul's perspective on sin differs from the Greek and Hellenistic world which focused on the idea of the power of fate over human life.²⁸¹ Death was one's fate regardless of his actions in the Greek mind. For Paul death is linked to sin and gained entrance in human life through Adam. It can only be overcome in the Christ event of His death and resurrection. By participating in ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:305.]

²⁸⁰"Sin is action opposed to the divine ordinance, which corresponds to the right. It is thus ἀνομία and ἀδικία. As ἀδικία it is contradiction of what is right, and therefore of God's will, so that it is also ἀνομία. It has its origin, therefore, in opposition to God, derives from human godlessness, and finds expression in sins against one's neighbour. Thus the basic character of the universality of sin is established. It is not merely a human state. It involves guilt and brings about separation from God. The statement: οἶδαμεν ὅτι ὁ θεὸς ἁμαρτωλῶν οὐκ ἀκούει, ἀλλ' ἐάν τις θεοσεβῆς ἦ καὶ τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ ποιῆ, τούτου ἀκούει (Jn. 9:31), necessarily implies that sin separates from God. This separation is absolute: ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστίν, ὅτι ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ὁ διάβολος ἁμαρτάνει (1 Jn. 3:8). In the opposition to God there is manifested the demonic character of man's sin as it binds him to the διάβολος. We can thus understand quite well the familiar saying: ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν δοῦλός ἐστιν τῆς ἁμαρτίας (Jn. 8:34). This is not a general sentence, as we see from the two-fold → ἀμὴν, but a perception of human existence in the light of Christ, namely, that human sin is servitude to demonic power¹⁴⁷ and therefore complete separation from God." [Gottfried Quell et al., "Ἀμαρτάνω, Ἀμάρτημα, Ἁμαρτία," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:306.]

²⁸¹"To the question of the origin of sin Paul gives the answer of Judaism that sin entered the world through Adam. The act of Adam in opposition to God is the beginning of sin. Sin thus derived from the freedom of man. With sin death also came into the world, as we read in the short statement: τὰ γὰρ ὀφώνια τῆς ἁμαρτίας θάνατος (6:23). Sin as the master gives its paid underlings the wages of death. Thus the dominant power of death in the world is attributed to sin (cf. 1 C. 15:56). The world in its being is not determined only by its creatureliness (R. 1:20) but also by sin. Paul differs from the Greek and Hellenistic world in the fact that, though he, too, can talk of the power of fate, for him the power of fate is closely linked with that of death,¹⁵⁵ and human sin is the basis of death's rule." [Gottfried Quell et al., "Ἀμαρτάνω, Ἀμάρτημα, Ἁμαρτία," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:309.]

that event the individual via faith commitment both dies to the power of sin over him and is resurrected into a new existence by which he now can say no to the attempts of sin to regain control over him. This means to die a death so that the yoke of sin is broken through Christ's death (Rom 6:10). Yet as long as he remains in a corporeal body the Adamic nature will constantly tempt and test him. Only in the resurrection at the end will he finally be freed totally from the Adamic body through receiving a new resurrection body in which sin no longer can touch him.

In distinction from Judaism, sin in Paul's thinking is the source of all evil and envelops every human being.²⁸² Not only is it manifested by human actions, sin is a state of being into which every person is born. The prepositional phrase ὑφ' ἁμαρτίαν, under the rule of sin, (3:9) is key to understanding Paul's view of sin. A graphic image of slavery is put before his readers here.

The role of the Mosaic Law becomes very different than the standard Jewish view in Paul's day. For them, the Law is the path to overcoming sin and gaining Heaven. But for Paul, the role of the Law of God is to expose sinfulness in its full destructive nature (Rom. 3:18; 7:13). In such exposure the sinner can flee to Christ who overcame sin and death as the only real solution to his sinfulness.

Paul's inclusion of all humanity is emphatic in two ways: a) first he picks up the Jewish division of humanity into two groups, Ἰουδαίους τε καὶ Ἑλλήνας, and b) the inclusive adjective πάντας, *all*, adds more emphasis.

Ἰουδαίους τε καὶ Ἑλλήνας mirrors a similar employment of this framing of humanity beginning in 1:16. Notice the structuring of this phrase in Paul's usage:

Romans:

1:16, Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλληνι

2:9, 10, Ἰουδαίου τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλληνας

²⁸²"Sin is the author of all evil: ... ἐβασίλευσεν ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ. Here we have a Christian rather than a Greek understanding. But from the sway of death there may also be discerned the universality of sin as hostile striving against God (3:9, 23; 5:9, 10; 8:7; Gl. 3:22). At this point Paul differs from Judaism. For Paul sin does not consist only in the individual act. Sin is for him a state which embraces all humanity. The individual is always in this all-embracing state of sin, and thus he does not have the Jewish freedom of choice which constitutes the Jewish conception of sin (... διὰ τῆς παρακοῆς τοῦ ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου ἁμαρτωλοὶ κατεστάθησαν οἱ πολλοὶ ... 5:19). There is an indissoluble connection between the act of Adam, the fate of death and the general state of sin. This does not mean that a doctrine of inherited sin is presented. It means that a judgment is pronounced on men in their being as such—a judgment which is certainly shaped by human reality but which is possible only in the light of Christ." [Gottfried Quell et al., "Ἀμαρτάνω, Ἀμάρτημα, Ἁμαρτία," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:309–310.]



3:9, Ἰουδαίους τε καὶ Ἕλληνας

10:12, Ἰουδαίου τε καὶ Ἑλλήνου

1 Corinthians:

1:24, Ἰουδαίους τε καὶ Ἕλλησιν

10:32, καὶ Ἰουδαίους γίνεσθε καὶ Ἕλλησιν

12:13, εἴτε Ἰουδαῖοι εἴτε Ἕλληνες

Galatians:

3:28, Ἰουδαῖος οὐδὲ Ἕλλην

Colossians:

3:11, Ἕλλην καὶ Ἰουδαῖος,

Elsewhere in the NT, it surfaces only in Acts and in relation to Paul's ministry.

Acts:

18:4, Ἰουδαίους καὶ Ἕλληνας

19:17, Ἰουδαίους τε καὶ Ἕλλησιν

20:21, Ἰουδαίους τε καὶ Ἕλλησιν

Careful observation uncovers the fact that this expression, especially Ἰουδαίους τε καὶ Ἕλληνας, where τε...καὶ are combined is a bit more emphatic. Thus the NRSV translation pattern of "both Jews and Gentiles". Of the thirteen NT uses five of them are singular. But the contextual usage determines both number and case spellings. The essential meaning is the same uniformly: all humanity across time.

The inclusive adjective πάντας from πᾶς, πᾶσα, πᾶν, also matches the accusative case and stands in apposition as a substantively used word. It adds more emphasis to the universal inclusion of all humanity under the reign of sin. Every person born after Adam and Eve to the end of time is included.

καθὼς γέγραπται ὅτι (v. 10a) This comparative dependent clause, introduced by καθὼς, sets up a comparative basis for measuring the accuracy of Paul's contention πάντας ὑφ' ἁμαρτιᾶν εἶναι. The OT text stands as the standard and thus will provide confirmation that all humanity is under the reign of sin.

The fascinating aspect is how numerous OT texts from different sources, mostly from the Psalms, are woven together in a pattern.²⁸³ The formal structuring

²⁸³"A number of factors—principally, (1) the complex nature of the biblical quotations in this collection of passages, (2) the rather exact correspondences between the wording of these quotations and the wording of these same verses in the oldest versions of the LXX, (3) the obvious compositional care that has been taken in bringing these passages together into one unified catena of texts, (4) the striking coherence of the unit's overall presentation, and (5) the absence in this catena of passages of any distinctively Christian teaching or traits — have alerted a number of NT interpreters to the probability that this group of biblical texts should be understood as an early *testimonia* collection or traditional set piece of texts. Further, it has also been postulated by some NT scholars that such factors as indicated above suggest the possibility that this grouping of passages was formed originally by some Jewish or (perhaps) Jewish Christian teacher prior to Paul, who in all likelihood wanted to highlight the fact of a definite biblical basis for his teaching that no one can claim to be righteous (δίκαιος) before

of these OT citations²⁸⁴ gives evidence of having been previously drawn together before the writing of this letter.²⁸⁵ Whether this was done by Paul or whether in the early church, it has the appearance of catechismal usage for teaching believers, and new converts especially, some of the basics of their new Christian faith. Since none of the citations contain any overtly Christian teachings, it may be possible that the arrangement of these texts reaches back into Judaism, although nothing comparable thus far exists in the Jewish writings of this era. Further, that these texts come overwhelmingly from the Psalms and are supplemented by the wisdom texts from Ecc. and Prov, and only one text from the prophets, stands in noticeable contrast to Paul's almost exclusive use of OT texts from the Law

God on the basis of one's own efforts.^{95"} [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 355–356.]

²⁸⁴"The catena ('chain') of biblical passages in 3:10b–18 constitutes an important feature in support of the conclusion that the apostle has set out in 3:9. Paul evidently believed that this group of passages would be of particular significance to his Christian addressees at Rome, and so he used it to clinch all that he had argued earlier with respect to these matters. The catena of passages (1) draws principally on the Psalms, (2) ties these OT passages together by a sixfold repetition of the expression οὐκ ἔστιν ('there is no one'), and (3) itemizes in the process six parts of the human body ('throats,' 'tongues,' 'lips,' 'mouths,' 'feet,' and 'eyes') as a rhetorical means of highlighting the totality of humanity's lack of understanding, the extent of its unrighteousness, and the nature of its injustice. Further, it is a collection of passages that Paul introduces by his usual introductory formula when citing Scripture, καθὼς γέγραπται ('just as it is written') — thereby laying stress on the fact that this conclusion of 3:9 is backed by the authority of Scripture." [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 354–355.]

²⁸⁵"The catena consists of seven citations of varying lengths, five of them from the Psalms. As can be readily seen, the LXX is followed in every case, with the opening lines modified (but not the sense) to fit the pattern of the catena (vv 10–11), some later lines abbreviated (again without affecting the sense—vv 14–15), and only minor modifications elsewhere (vv 12b, 15, 17). That Paul is drawing on a catalog previously minted by others is possible (van der Minde, 57; Keck; cf. particularly Justin, Dial. 27.3), but the degree to which the verses fit his particular point (Jewish condemnation of Gentiles becomes self-accusation) makes it unlikely (despite Keck, Justin's catena could well have been inspired by Paul's); see particularly Zeller. Of course, the sequence may have been formulated by Paul himself on a previous occasion with the same object in view (the degree of structuring evident suggests a more formal rather than a spontaneous composition while dictating the letter)." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 149–150.]

and the Prophets section of the Hebrew Bible suggest a pre-Pauline composition of this catena of texts.²⁸⁶

The implications of such a use of pre-formed tradition are substantial. We do know from the Apostolic Fathers of the second century that widely circulated collections of texts including the sayings of Jesus were in existence after Pentecost among Christians. These were replaced gradually in the second half of the first century as the letters of Paul and the four gospels began to be extensively circulated as authoritative Christian teachings. Known as *Testimonia*, these uncollected documents were loosely distributed in different regions where Christian communities existed in order to facilitate Christian understanding for both new converts as well as established believers. Acts 20:35, containing a saying of Jesus not found in any of the four gospels, is one such example of the circulation of this material: μακάριόν ἐστιν μᾶλλον διδόναι ἢ λαμβάνειν, *it's more blessed to give than to receive*. Unfortunately, we lack a detailed knowledge of exactly how this process took place in the first century, in spite of having very thorough knowledge of the subsequent centuries. But church fathers such as Tertullian in the second century do allude to these collections being in circulation. The compilation of numerous OT texts together around a central theme was a very Jewish scribal tendency.²⁸⁷ Whether composed by Paul, or used by Paul from pre-existing sources, the catena of OT texts is tightly packed together in a sophisticated manner.

²⁸⁶Possibly of even greater significance in support of this thesis of a pre-Pauline, Jewish (or perhaps Jewish Christian) provenance for this collection of texts are the facts (1) that the passages quoted are drawn principally from the Psalms, which was the hymnal and prayer book of Judaism (as well as, of course, of early Jewish Christianity), with only one passage from the prophet Isaiah and two rather traditional echoes of material in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, and (2) that such a pattern of selection varies from Paul's usual habit in his selection of biblical passages to quote. For when Paul quotes Scripture elsewhere in Romans and his other letters, the great majority of passages are drawn from the Prophets and the Pentateuch—that is, more than seventy from the Prophets and the Pentateuch (as occurs in Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, but also a few times in Ephesians and the Pastoral Epistles) — with only twelve or thirteen quotations, in addition to those here in 3:4 and 3:10b–18 (perhaps also 3:20; see below), drawn from the Psalms.⁹⁶ [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 356.]

²⁸⁷"Among the Rabbis the stringing together of quotations from different books of the OT was a familiar practice, but they did not normally run the quotations together but introduced each one with a formula of quotation." [C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 192.]

LITERARY DESIGN

Rom. 3:10-18

The Group:
3:10-12

1 οὐκ ἔστιν δίκαιος οὐδὲ εἷς,
2 οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ συνίων,
3 οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ ἐκζητῶν τὸν θεόν.
4 πάντες ἐξέκλιναν
5 ἅμα ἠχρεώθησαν·
6 οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ ποιῶν χρηστότητα,
7 οὐκ ἔστιν ἕως ἐνός.

The Person:
3:13-15

8 τάφος ἀνεωγμένος ὁ λάρυγξ αὐτῶν,
9 ταῖς γλώσσαις αὐτῶν ἐδολοῦσαν,
10 ἰὸς ἀσπίδων ὑπὸ τὰ χεῖρα αὐτῶν·
11 ὡν τὸ στόμα ἀράς καὶ πικρίας γέμει,
12 ὀξεῖς οἱ πόδες αὐτῶν ἐκχέει αἶμα,

The Results:
3:16-18

13 σὺντριμμα καὶ ταλαιπωρία ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτῶν,
14 καὶ ὁδὸν εἰρήνης οὐκ ἔγνωσαν.
15 οὐκ ἔστιν φόβος θεοῦ ἀπέναντι τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτῶν

What is the structure of the listing?²⁸⁸ If Cranfield (ICC) is accurate, then we have three sets of assertions: vv. 10-12; 13-15; and 16-18. See charting above right. In the first set (#s 1-7), emphasis is upon not finding a single individual in the group who would qualify as not being a sinner. In the second group (#s 8-12), the entire individual is seen as wicked as body parts are singled out as instruments of wickedness. Finally, in the third group (#s 13-15), the ruinous results of this wickedness are seen on society (#s 13 & 14) and upon relationship with God (#15).

The scripture citations are taken almost entirely from Psalms and Isaiah. The apostle modifies the LXX text only slightly in order to make it fit grammatically into this 'package' of texts.²⁸⁹ We will examine both the citation and its source in one of the older LXX tradition of manuscripts. One should note that these OT texts originally were targeting covenant Israel by drawing a distinct line between the wicked and the righteous. But Paul sees a broader picture of all of humanity being relevant to the principles set forth, and not just covenant Jews. The central theme of the catena is the universal sinfulness of all humanity before a holy God.

Remember that this text is continuing the large

²⁸⁸The catena has been constructed with considerable care and artistry, so as to form a real new unity out of a multiplicity of excerpts. It is arranged in three strophes, the first (vv. 10–12) consisting of two sets of three lines, the second (vv. 13–14) and third (vv. 15–18) each consisting of two sets of two lines. The six times repeated οὐκ ἔστιν (it occurs five times in vv. 10–12—once more than in the original psalm-passage—and once in v. 18) and the πάντες of v. 12 express the theme of the cento, the universality of sin's hold on men, and drive home the πάντας of v. 9. " [C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 191–192.]

²⁸⁹As can be readily seen, the LXX is followed in every case, with the opening lines modified (but not the sense) to fit the pattern of the catena (vv 10–11), some later lines abbreviated (again without affecting the sense—vv 14–15), and only minor modifications elsewhere (vv 12b, 15, 17)." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 149–150.]



	γὰρ	
70	προητιασάμεθα	Τουδαίους τε καὶ Ἕλληνας πάντας ὑφ' ἁμαρτίαν εἶναι,
	καθὼς γέγραπται ὅτι	
A		οὐκ ἔστιν δίκαιος οὐδὲ εἷς,
B	3.11	οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ συνίων,
C		οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ ἐκζητῶν τὸν θεόν.
D	3.12	πάντες ἐξέκλιναν
E		ἅμα ἠχρεώθησαν·
F		οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ ποιῶν χρηστότητα,
G		[οὐκ ἔστιν] ἕως ἑνός.
H	3.13	τάφος ἀνεφγμένος ὁ λάρυγξ αὐτῶν,
I		ταῖς γλώσσαις αὐτῶν ἐδολιούσαν,
J		ἰὸς ἀσπίδων ὑπὸ τὰ χεῖλη αὐτῶν·
K	3.14	ᾧ τὸ στόμα ἀρᾶς καὶ πικρίας γέμει,
L	3.15	ὄξεῖς οἱ πόδες αὐτῶν ἐκχέαι αἷμα,
M	3.16	σύντριμμα καὶ ταλαιπωρία ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτῶν,
	3.17	καὶ
N		ὁδὸν εἰρήνης οὐκ ἔγνωσαν.
O	3.18	οὐκ ἔστιν φόβος θεοῦ ἀπέναντι τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτῶν.

theme announced in 1:18 of Ἀποκαλύπτεται γὰρ ὀργὴ θεοῦ ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ, *for God's wrath is being disclosed...* He has made the case strongly for divine wrath being pouted out on paganism (1:18-32) and also upon the moral / religious elitist, mainly Jews (2:1-3:8) having no loop hole when facing a holy God on Judgment Day. In this context, 3:9-20 bring to a conclusion the first major section of the letter body with pointed assertion that all of humanity is under the influence and control of sin (πάντας ὑφ' ἁμαρτίαν εἶναι, v. 9b). This catena of Jewish scripture texts cited by Paul confirms the universality of sin.

οὐκ ἔστιν δίκαιος οὐδὲ εἷς, there is not a just person, not even one (v. 10b) Most likely this assertion is drawn mainly from Psalm 14:1 (LXX 13:1), οὐκ ἔστιν ποιῶν χρηστότητα, οὐκ ἔστιν ἕως ἑνός, *there is no one showing mercy, there is not even one.* Clearly it captures the essence of Eccl. 7:20 (LXX 7:21), ὅτι ἄνθρωπος οὐκ ἔστιν δίκαιος ἐν τῇ γῆ, ὃς ποιήσει ἀγαθὸν καὶ οὐχ ἁμαρτήσεται, *Surely there is no one on earth so righteous as to do good without ever sinning.* An echo of Psalm 53:3 {LXX 52:4} is present as well: οὐκ ἔστιν ποιῶν ἀγαθόν, οὐκ ἔστιν ἕως ἑνός, *there is no one who does good, no, not one.* Ecclesiastes provided Paul with δίκαιος, which is a virtual synonym of ἀγαθόν going back to the Hebrew דִּיקָו־הַיָּשָׁר. The LXX ποιῶν χρηστότητα, *showing mercy*, of Psalm 13:3 also reflects the Hebrew דִּיקָו־הַיָּשָׁר. The switch to δίκαιος from ἀγαθόν allows Paul to highlight the other theme covering more of the letter body, δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, *God's righteousness* (1:17), which he vigorously defended in 3:1-8. The universal sinfulness of humanity

was commonly accepted by first century Jews, except that they considered the Jewish people to be the righteous ones (οἱ δίκαιοι) Favored by God, while the rest of humanity was wicked.

The literary role of this strophe is as a *leitmotif* that sets the tone and thrust of the subsequent strophes in the catena. The subsequent strophes should be understood as amplifications. They are presented in the standard interpretive methodology of ancient Jewish scribes called *Midrash*. The use of parallel passages to explain and clarify the first passage was widely utilized in the Jewish world of Paul, as a major tool of their interpretive methods. Given Paul's particular concern to address the Jewish attitude here, the use of an interpretive method, which his Jewish Christian readers would be quite comfortable with, reflects insight into the apostle's strategy.

*οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ συνίων,
οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ ἐκζητῶν τὸν θεόν (v. 11)
There is no one with understanding,
There is no one seeking God.*

The second and third strophes represent an adaptation of Psalm 13:2. κύριος ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ διέκυψεν ἐπὶ τοὺς υἱοὺς τῶν ἀνθρώπων τοῦ ἰδεῖν εἰ ἔστιν συνίων ἢ ἐκζητῶν τὸν θεόν, *The Lord looks down from Heaven upon the sons of men in order to see whether there are those with understanding and seeking God.*²⁹⁰ The formulaic οὐκ

²⁹⁰One should not overlook the very similar LXX text in Psalm 53:1-3 (LXX 52:1-3). ὁ θεὸς ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ διέκυψεν ἐπὶ τοὺς υἱοὺς τῶν ἀνθρώπων τοῦ ἰδεῖν εἰ ἔστιν συνίων ἢ ἐκζητῶν τὸν θεόν. *God looks down from heaven on humankind to see if there are any who are wise who seek after God.*



ἔστιν, *there is no...*, is repeated as the header for the citations from the psalms. Note its use six times in vv. 10-18.

The substantival participle ὁ συνίων comes from συνίημι²⁹¹ and contains a built in tone of moral and religious understanding. The substantival participle ὁ ἐκζητῶν τὸν θεόν likewise possessed some ‘code tones’ in Paul’s usage. The righteous are perceived all through the OT as those seeking after God.²⁹² By the use of this well understood phrase the apostle merges both Jewish and Gentile disinterest in God into a single group -- something very radical in the Jewish synagogues in the city of Rome. Psalm 14 is a denunciation of godlessness. Those denying God are deemed לְבָבִי, ἄφρων, *fools*.

*πάντες ἐξέκλιναν ἅμα ἠχρεώθησαν·
οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ ποιῶν χρηστότητα,
οὐκ ἔστιν ἕως ἐνός. (v. 12)*

*All turn aside, together they have become worthless,
There is no one showing kindness,
There is not even one.*

This section stands as an almost exact quote of Psalm 14:3 (LXX 13:4). This Psalm is virtually the same as Psalm 53:2-3.²⁹³

πάντες ἐξέκλιναν, ἅμα ἠχρεώθησαν,
οὐκ ἔστιν ποιῶν ἀγαθόν,
οὐκ ἔστιν ἕως ἐνός

Only two words vary. Paul inserts the article ὁ before the participle ποιῶν. The impact is minimal and adds

²⁹¹ συνίων (from συνίειν, a collateral form of συνιέναι) is used both in the psalm and by Paul with reference to religious and moral understanding. With ὁ ἐκζητῶν τὸν θεόν we have an explicit reference to man’s relation to God. References to ‘seeking’ God are of course to be found very frequently in the OT (compare, for example, Exod 33:7; 2 Chron 15:12, 13, 15; Ezra 8:22; Ps 9:10; 24:6; 27:8 (in Pss examples are specially numerous); Prov 28:5; Isa 9:13; 31:1; 51:1; 55:6; Jer 29:13; Zeph 1:6).³ [C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 192.]

²⁹³ This verse is drawn verbatim from LXX Ps 13:3, which in turn appears to have been adapted from Ps 52:3-4, with the change of a single word.⁶⁴ Here are the two versions, for comparison:

Ps 13:3 and Rom 3:12: πάντες ἐξέκλιναν ἅμα ἠχρεώθησαν· οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ ποιῶν χρηστότητα, οὐκ ἔστιν ἕως ἐνός (“All turned aside; at one and the same time [all] were corrupted; a human who does what is proper does not exist; not even one exists”)

Ps 52:3-4: πάντες ἐξέκλιναν ἅμα ἠχρεώθησαν· οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ ποιῶν ἀγαθόν, οὐκ ἔστιν ἕως ἐνός (“All turned aside; at one and the same time [all] were corrupted; a human who does what is good does not exist; not even one exists”)

[Robert Jewett and Roy David Kotansky, *Romans: A Commentary*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006), 260.]

more emphasis than the LXX rendering. Also instead of ἀγαθόν, *good*, as in the LXX the apostle substitutes χρηστότητα, *kindness*. The original Hebrew בִּישׁוּׁת־הַטֹּב, *doing good*, can be translated equally accurately either as ‘good’ or ‘generously.’²⁹⁴

ἐξέκλιναν in the gnomic aorist function from ἐκκλίνω graphically pictures humanity steering clear of God’s ways, as a nautical term. ἠχρεώθησαν, the aorist passive gnomic aorist verb from ἀχρειόω depicts humanity that has been turned into uselessness. The substantival participle phrase ὁ ποιῶν χρηστότητα, *one showing kindness*, equals the LXX ποιῶν χρηστότητα, *showing kindness*, but is slightly more emphatic.

The final strophe οὐκ ἔστιν ἕως ἐνός, *there is not even one*, translates the Hebrew תְּהִי־אֶחָד which is emphatic. Paul uses the exact wording as the LXX here. The three inner connected lines build to the climatic third one which denies there being a single person genuinely seeking God.

In this section the apostle takes Ἰουδαίους τε καὶ Ἕλληνας, *both the Jews and Gentiles*, and collapses them into πάντας, *all*. This conforms to the teaching of the Hebrew Bible. Humanity as a group thus come under the label of being sinners.

The gnomic aorist tense verb ἐξέκλιναν, taken from ἐκκλίνω, a heavy nautical secular meaning with the idea that one must stay clear of a specified object due to danger being present in the object. For good or evil, the psalmist that Paul cites here contends that humanity has sought to steer clear of God and His will. The gnomic aorist passive verb ἠχρεώθησαν, from ἀχρειόω, is a hapox legomenon, i.e., one time use in the entire NT. It is part of a word group -- ἀχρεῖος, -ον, ἀχρειόω, ἀχρηστος, -ον -- that references things and people as having become worthless and useless. The adverb ἅμα marks the occurrence of both verbs as being simultaneous. Thus while steering clear of God, humanity has lost its sense of purpose completely at the same time. The participle phrase ὁ ποιῶν χρηστότητα denotes the Hebrew idea of showing kindness to others as validating devotion to God. The participle object χρηστότητα, from χρηστότης, reflects the opposite of ἠχρεώθησαν in that showing kindness reflects the divine purpose. Note the Jewishness of the expression. Kindness must be demonstrated for one to claim to be a kind person.²⁹⁵ But there’s not one person doing this,

²⁹⁴ As every bilingual person knows from personal experience, moving from one language to another means translating ideas rather than just words. And the receptor language normally has several optional words to choose from. Plus, if you are recovering an expression written several centuries previously, you well understand that a living language constantly is evolving with other words being more the idea than the original one.

²⁹⁵ χρηστότητα = ‘goodness’ in the widest sense, with the idea



especially within the framework of God's kindness (cf. 2:4, τοῦ πλοῦτου τῆς χρηστότητος αὐτοῦ).

**τάφος ἀνεωγμένος ὁ λάρυγξ αὐτῶν,
ταῖς γλώσσαις αὐτῶν ἐδολιοῦσαν (v. 13ab)**

***Open graves are their throat,
with their tongues they deceive.***

With this pair of accusations the psalmist and Paul turn the microscope from the group (vv. 11-12) to examine the individual. A series of OT texts are drawn together highlighting various parts of the body as tools of humanity's depravity: throat, tongues, lips, mouths, and feet. Foul speech receives particular attention. Both in word and deed humanity shows its true nature. The exact thrust of each of these body part references is usually open to debate beyond either speech or action.

τάφος ἀνεωγμένος ὁ λάρυγξ αὐτῶν, **an open tomb is their throat**. This accusation is taken verbatim from Psalm 5:9 (LXX, 5:10): τάφος ἀνεωγμένος ὁ λάρυγξ αὐτῶν. The image is dramatically clear, especially in a world which did not embalm its dead at [burial](#). But what is the image pointing to? Psalm 5 belongs to the first psalter of David. Its later liturgical use made it suitable for use in the morning worship conducted in the temple. The psalmist asks God for deliverance from his enemies (v. 8) and accuses them of being evil (vv. 9-10). The stench of the evil inside them flows out through their mouths, i.e., words. You most likely have been around people whose talking had the smell of a sewer spilling over.

Thus Paul picks up on this OT image and asserts that such is the character of humanity. What's actually inside a person will find its way up through the throat and mouth to smell up the space around him. As Jesus pointed out, τοῦ περισσεύματος τῆς καρδίας τὸ στόμα λαλεῖ, **out of what abounds in the heart the mouth speaks** (Matt. 12:34).

ταῖς γλώσσαις αὐτῶν ἐδολιοῦσαν, **with their tongues they deceive**. Again this is taken from the same source and reproduced verbatim to Psalm 5:9, ταῖς γλώσσαις αὐτῶν ἐδολιοῦσαν. Thus the same context for this strophe applies **from the above strophe. The gnomic aorist** of 'utility' rather than specially of 'kindness,' as in 2:4." [W. Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of the Romans*, 3d ed., International Critical Commentary (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1897), 78.]

verb ἐδολιοῦσαν, from δολιῶν, is only used here in the entire NT, while the noun δόλος is rather commonly used some 30 times. The charge is that people use deceit to take advantage of others. Taken from the Hebrew יָדָּבַר, meaning to conspire against, this issue of deceit loomed large in Paul's world and was made more difficult in the Greco-Roman part of it due to the lack of integrity and honesty in the judicial system of the Romans.²⁹⁶

**ἰὸς ἀσπίδων ὑπὸ τὰ χεῖλη αὐτῶν (v. 13c),
under their lips is the poison of vipers.**

Once again Paul uses the psalms for building his case of universal depravity. This accusation is taken verbatim from Psalms 140:3 (LXX 139:4), ἰὸς ἀσπίδων ὑπὸ τὰ χεῖλη αὐτῶν. Psalm 140 is a psalm of lament in which the psalmist seeks God's deliverance from his enemies. Of the five strophes in the Hebrew text, v. 3 falls in the first strophe of vv. 2-4. The image of a viper snake poised to spit its poison conveys the idea of sharp verbal attack on others.²⁹⁷

Paul follows up the more direct reference to speech using the tongue which is a graphic image of a viper snake ready to spit its poison out. This image intensifies the reference to the tongue and false speaking dramatically.

ἦν τὸ στόμα ἀρᾶς καὶ πικρίας γέμει, whose mouth is stuffed with pronouncing curses and bitterness (v. 14). Paul turned here to Psalm 10:7 (LXX 9:28). Paul here paraphrases the psalm which states:

²⁹⁶"DECEIVE [נָשָׂא nasha', נִהַר pathah; πλανᾶν planaō, ἐξαπατάω exapataō, φρεναπατάω phrenapataō, δολιῶν dolioō]. A large number of Hebrew and Greek terms express the idea of deceiving and acting falsely. Although some texts state that God is without deceit (Deut 32:4; Heb 6:18), the OT reports that God can deceive (Ezek 14:9). Jeremiah accuses God of deceiving others (Jer 4:10). Job asserts that God is behind those who deceive (Job 12:16). Jesus was also accused of deceiving (John 7:12).

"Persons are admonished against cheating their neighbor (Lev 6:2 [Heb. 5:21]; Jer 9:5 [Heb. 9:4]), even in jest (Prov 26:19). Falsely accusing a person (Ps 69:4 [Heb. 69:5]; Luke 3:14), testifying falsely (Job 13:7; Mark 10:19), or swearing falsely (Matt 5:33) are all serious offenses. Specific individuals who deceive include: Laban (Gen 29:25); Jacob (Gen 31:20, 26–27); Michal (1 Sam 19:17); Saul (1 Sam 28:12); and Abner (2 Sam 3:25). Countries also deceive (Num 25:18; Jos 9:22; Obad 7). Furthermore, humans engage in self-deception (Obad 3; 1 Cor 3:18; 1 John 1:8).

"False prophets and diviners are capable of deceiving people (Jer 29:8; Lam 2:14). Within the NT, sin (Rom 7:11) and Satan (Rev 12:9) can deceive. Wicked people, impostors, and the rebellious deceive believers (2 Tim 3:13; Titus 1:10). New Testament writers exhort believers repeatedly not to be deceived by false teaching (1 Cor 15:33; Eph 5:6; 2 Thess 2:3). See DECEIT; LYING."

[F. Rachel Magdalene, "Deceive," ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006–2009), 2:80.]

²⁹⁷"The phrase in v 3 is a metaphor for verbal attack; one may compare Pss 55:21 (20); 109:3; 120:7. For the figure of sharp, biting speech in v 4a, Ps 58:5 (4) is comparable. Dahood (301) aptly refers to the hissing sounds of the three cases of shin in the first colon." [Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101–150 (Revised)*, vol. 21, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 336.]



οὐ ἄρα τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ γέμει καὶ πικρίας καὶ δόλου,
ὑπὸ τὴν γλῶσσαν αὐτοῦ κόπος καὶ πόνος.

***Their mouths are filled with cursing and deceit
and oppression;***

under their tongues are mischief and iniquity.

This is the third line concerning speech by depraved humanity. Paul restructures the psalmist's declaration but without changing the essential meaning.²⁹⁸ This makes the catena work more smoothly for memorization. Since **deceit, δόλου**, has already been listed, it is dropped off the catena here. One should note that the noun **ἀρά** used by Paul does not designate foul language. This is specified elsewhere in the NT by different words.²⁹⁹ Rather, **ἀρά** specifies pronouncing a curse upon another person or persons. Actually in classical Greek the core meaning of **ἀρά** is "prayer."³⁰⁰ Translators often are careless about the distinct meaning of source language texts in translating them over into the receptor languages.³⁰¹ Is the English word "**cursing**" incorrect? No, but the limited range of meaning that excludes 'cussing' must be understood.

In the ancient world, to place a curse on someone was a very serious action. The essence is to ask God to bring harm and possible or injury or death upon the individual or group being cursed both / or physically and spiritually. Paul will on a few occasions invoke a curse on some individuals or groups in his letters, e.g., **ἀνάθεμα ἔστω, let him be accursed!** (Gal. 1:7-8).

But both Paul and the psalmist of 10:7 signal that

²⁹⁸That is, Paul did this. Or else the original composer of the catena of OT texts that are strung together. Probably the latter.

²⁹⁹See Louw-Nida, Grk. Lexicon, topics 33.470 - 33.475 for a listing. Especially note Eph. 5:4, **καὶ αἰσχρότης καὶ μωρολογία ἢ εὐτραπελία, ἃ οὐκ ἀνήκεν, Entirely out of place is obscene, silly, and vulgar talk.** The double meaning of the English word 'curse' is where the uncertainty about meaning arises. Thus the problem is in translation and not in any any ambiguity of the Greek text.

³⁰⁰**ἀρά**, Ion. **ἀρή, ἦ**, prayer, Il.15.378,598, 23.199, Hes. Op.726, Pi.I.6(5).43; **ἀρὴν ἐποιήσαντο παῖδα γενέσθαι** Ἀρίστωνι offered prayers that a child should be born, Hdt.6.63

[Henry George Liddell et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 233.]

³⁰¹Note some translations of **ἀράς**:

Latin Vulgate:

maledictione

English:

NRSV, NIV, ASV, CEB, HSB, KJV, LEB, NASB, NCV, NKJV, Wey - cursing; BBE, ESV, TEV, NLT, RSV - curses; Tyndale - cursynge

German:

Elberfelder (1905), Luther 1912- Fluchens; Luther 1984, GNB - Fluch;

Spanish:

LBA -MALDICION; NTV - maldición; BJ 2000, BR-V, SE (1569) - maledicencia; NVI - maldiciones

French:

Segond (1910), Ostervald - malédiction

their targeted individual has a mouth to spews out curses at the drop of a pin. The verb **γέμει**, from **γέμω**, asserts that something / someone is filled with something (genitive case object). The emphasis is state of being rather than procedure or action taken. The filling has already taken place previously; now the entity is completely full. The mouth becomes the organ for spewing out the cursing and bitterness that fills the individual's life. But because this filling is perpetual, such a person never ceases to spew out his rottenness. As Jesus stated in Lk. 11:39 concerning the Pharisees, **"Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness,"** **νῦν ὑμεῖς οἱ Φαρισαῖοι τὸ ἔξωθεν τοῦ ποτηρίου καὶ τοῦ πίνακος καθαρίζετε, τὸ δὲ ἔσωθεν ὑμῶν γέμει ἀρπαγῆς καὶ πονηρίας.**

Not only is **ἀράς** filling up the life, but also **πικρίας**, bitterness, is doing the same. **πικρίας** comes from **πικρία** and references something tasting bitter and also someone being bitter. The latter is the sense here. In the vice listing of Eph. 4:31, **πικρία** is closely linked to **πᾶσα πικρία καὶ θυμὸς καὶ ὀργὴ καὶ κραυγὴ καὶ βλασφημία, all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander.** **πικρία** is a trait that has no place in the Christian's life, but is commonly found among humanity. Interestingly, while Christians must not have any bitterness, depraved humanity is full of it.

ὄξεις οἱ πόδες αὐτῶν ἐκχέαι αἷμα,

σύντριμμα καὶ ταλαιπωρία ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτῶν,
καὶ ὁδὸν εἰρήνης οὐκ ἔγνωσαν (vv. 15-17)

Their feet are swift to shed blood;

ruin and misery are in their paths,

and the way of peace they have not known.

Now the focus shifts to a characterization of the Jewish people through the perspective of the prophet Isaiah (59:7-59:8a).

οἱ δὲ πόδες αὐτῶν ἐπὶ πονηρίαν τρέχουσιν ταχινοὶ ἐκχέαι αἷμα·

καὶ οἱ διαλογισμοὶ αὐτῶν διαλογισμοὶ ἀφρόνων,
σύντριμμα καὶ ταλαιπωρία ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτῶν.

καὶ ὁδὸν εἰρήνης οὐκ οἶδασιν,

Their feet run to evil,

and they rush to shed innocent blood;

their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity,

desolation and destruction are in their highways.

The way of peace they do not know.

Here we encounter an abridgment of the prophet Isaiah that expands the characterization of the Jewish people in Isaiah's time to all of humanity in Paul's time. This prophetic text from 2 Isaiah stands as a warning to exiled Israel reminding them of the world they found themselves caught in. Most of chapter 59 is cast in the first person 'we', but vv. 7-9 are framed in the third



person 'they.' The 'they' is the surrounding nations, especially Babylon. The 'we' focuses on the remnant of returning exiles to their homeland. The apostle takes parts of vv. 7-9 that he considers to be relevant for his purpose as further explanation of the universal sinfulness of humanity.

Also in the background of the first part of this string of citations stands Prov. 1:16,

οἱ γὰρ πόδες αὐτῶν εἰς κακίαν τρέχουσιν
καὶ ταχινοὶ τοῦ ἐκχέαι αἷμα
for their feet run to evil,
and they hurry to shed blood.

These proverbs are targeting πάντων τῶν συντελούντων τὰ ἄνομα, *all of those greedy for gain* (v. 19a). The point of these proverbs is to emphasize that such orientation of life will suck the ver life out of the individual, v. 19b. Again they provide Paul with dramatic images for the catena of texts to use here.

ὄξεις οἱ πόδες αὐτῶν ἐκχέαι αἷμα, their feet are quick to shed blood (v. 15). This graphic image stresses the impact of depravity upon sinful human beings. The predicate adjective ὄξεις, from ὄξυς, -εῖα, -ύ, is a Romans' word with all eight NT uses found in this one letter. It can specify either sharpness (7x) or swiftness (1x). In modifying either ῥομφαία, *sword*, or δρέπανον, *sickle*, the idea is of sharpness. But in modifying πόδες, *feet*, the idea shifts to swiftness, which is here in v. 15. Field combat meant how a soldier could manage his feet in standing and running was a matter of life and death, instead of ταχινοί, *quick*, in Isaiah 59:7, Paul uses ὄξεις as a synonym with essentially the same meaning.³⁰²

ἐκχέαι αἷμα means to *shed blood*, as an euphemism for killing another person. The rewording of Isaiah heightens the image and pushes it toward that of a person stalking another with intent to murder. This could be both a military expression and a regular life expression. The aorist infinitive ἐκχέαι comes from ἐκχέω which means to *pour out* something. Here with αἷμα as its object, that something is *blood*, cf. Acts 22:20 and Rev. 16:6. The intent of the image here is that humanity is prone toward violent acts of killing others.

σύντριμμα καὶ ταλαιπωρία ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτῶν, ruin and misery are in their paths (v. 16). Isa. 59:7d is an exact expression to Paul's: καὶ ταλαιπωρία ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς

³⁰²"While all three passages refer to 'the feet' of those who 'shed blood,' the catena is more vivid in using the adjective ὄξυς ("swift") in place of the cumbersome Hebraism 'run quickly to wickedness/evil.' This detail suggests that the creators of the original catena had a well developed sensitivity to Greek style. It seems likely that the association between feet and bloodshed derived from stalking others (LXX Prov 1:11-16; 6:18)." [Robert Jewett and Roy David Kotansky, *Romans: A Commentary*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006), 262.]

αὐτῶν. While depicting the quality of life being experienced, the strophe defines the beginning of the result of the pagan life lived apart from God.

σύντριμμα connotes the idea of *rubbing together until the items are broken and destroyed*.³⁰³ Their lives are shattered into pieces by their sinful lifestyle. But also they are in ταλαιπωρία, *misery*. By ancient definitions, this noun means "hardship resulting in wretchedness—'hardship, wretchedness.'"³⁰⁴ Sinful humanity lives out most of its life with emotional turmoil.³⁰⁵

The brokenness, σύντριμμα, of life produces the experiencing of misery, ταλαιπωρία.³⁰⁶ The prepositional

³⁰³"a. **Strict Use.** συντρίβω, attested from the 5th cent. B.C., is made up of σύν and τρίβω. It thus means by composition 'to rub together' and in this sense it is used for kindling which is heated and catches fire by friction, Luc. Verae hist., I, 32. Another positive use is when the verb is used for 'to grind,' 'to rub,' 'to crush,' Plut. Def. Orac., 47 (II, 436b), e.g., ointments, medications, or means of magic, CIG, III, 2, 5980, 15 ff. (2nd cent. A.D.).³ Then the word means 'to break,' 'to smash,' 'to destroy.' It is used for breaking bones⁴ or smashing the limbs, skulls,⁵ or entire bodies of men or animals, e.g., in battle, Xen. An., IV, 7, 4; Eur. Cyc., 705; Lys., 3, 8; 3, 18, Spears are broken in or after the battle, Xenoph. Hist. Graec., III, 4, 14; Diod. S., 15, 86, 2. A fighting force is smashed or destroyed, Diod. S., 12, 28, 2. *The verbal noun σύντριμμα occurs in the sense of 'rearing,' 'destruction' from Aristot. De Audibilibus, p. 802a, 34.*

b. Looser Use. It is a sign of weakness when something breaks or is crushed and twisted and finally perishes altogether, κλᾶται μὲν γὰρ καὶ συντρίβεται καὶ κάμπτεται καὶ ὄλως φθίρεται, Aristot. Metaph., 4, 12, p. 1019a, 28. This applies in the social and political as well as the psychological sphere. Fear humiliates and wears down a man, Plut. Superst., 2 (II, 165b). In detail trouble, anxiety, or remorse⁶ may be meant, Polyb., 6, 58, 13, or shattered hope, Diod. S., 4, 66, 4; 16, 59, 3. In Demades 7 Fr., 12 (4th cent. B.C.) we read that the misfortune of the dead has destroyed the hope of the living."

[Georg Bertram, "Συντρίβω, Σύντριμμα," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 7:920.]

³⁰⁴Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 243.

ταλαιπωρία belongs to a word group depicting hardships and trials. See L-N Lexicon, topics 22, 15-22.20.

³⁰⁵"as an emotional condition that arises from inner or outer torment misery, wretchedness; plural hardships, miseries (JA 5.1)." [Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Baker's Greek New Testament Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 374.]

³⁰⁶"Rom 3:16: → σύντριμμα καὶ ταλαιπωρία, "ruin and misery" (citing Ps 13:3 LXX; Isa 59:7 LXX) as the result of the actions of sinful people (cf. ἡ ταλαιπωρία τῶν πτωχῶν, 1 Clem. 15:6 [citing Ps 11:6 LXX]). Αἱ ταλαιπωρίαί ... αἱ ἐπερχομέναί in Jas 5:1 refers to the eschatological miseries that will come upon the rich; their wealth and misuse of power (vv. 2ff.) will subject them to judgment and ruin (cf. Isa 13:6; Jer 5:26ff.; Amos 5:7ff.; Mic 2:4; 1 Enoch 94:8f.; 97:8ff.; Rev 3:17). Spicq, Notes II, 875." [Horst Robert Balz and Gerhard Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the*

phrase ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτῶν simply designation the duration of one's life from beginning to end, i.e., from birth to death. Life is the road that individuals follow to the very end. These are some more typical experiences of depraved humanity.

καὶ ὁδὸν εἰρήνης οὐκ ἔγνωσαν, and the way of peace they do not know (v. 17). This line comes from Isaiah 59:8a. Paul only uses the first line of the prophets declaration.

καὶ ὁδὸν εἰρήνης οὐκ οἶδασιν,
καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν κρίσις ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτῶν·
αἱ γὰρ τρίβοι αὐτῶν διεστραμμέναι,
ἃς διοδεύουσιν, καὶ οὐκ οἶδασιν εἰρήνην.

*The way of peace they do not know,
and there is no justice in their paths.*

*Their roads they have made crooked;
no one who walks in them knows peace (Is. 59:8)*

Clearly the result of the violent way of living by humanity means no enjoyment of anything close to peaceful living. Of course, the Greek word εἰρήνη means much more than its English counter point, peace. The English word simply designates a situation without violent conflict. But the Greek word goes well beyond the absence of conflict to put a dominantly positive perspective of enjoying the positive things that enrich one's life.

The aorist plural verb ἔγνωσαν, from γινώσκω, stresses understanding gained mainly through learning from experiences, while οἶδα primarily emphasizes understanding gained from training and intellectual analysis. But the two verbs are used interchangeably a few times in the NT in the Johannine writings. Thus the psalmist that Paul uses here asserts that humanity experiences little, if any, peace while traveling through life. History does indeed assert that man is basically a violent person. Life in the first century was hard and difficult, unless you were born into aristocracy, which meant less 5% of the people.

οὐκ ἔστιν φόβος θεοῦ ἀπέναντι τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτῶν, there is no fear of God before their eyes (v. 18) This line comes from Psalm 36:1b (LXX 35:2b). Again only the second line of this strophe is taken from the psalm, but it is quoted exactly as in the LXX:

Φησὶν ὁ παράνομος τοῦ ἁμαρτάνειν ἐν ἑαυτῷ,
οὐκ ἔστιν φόβος θεοῦ ἀπέναντι τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτοῦ·

*Transgression speaks to the wicked deep in their hearts;
there is no fear of God before their eyes.*

The key concept here is the meaning of φόβος θεοῦ. Does it mean to 'be afraid of God'? Actually in part, yes! Mostly it means to recognize the awesome power of Almighty God and thus give Him proper respect and admiration. There is always in the expression the ap-

prehension of what God can do to us in His anger. This provokes us to mind our ps and qs as we travel through life. Reverence is the key! And not just while we are in church. Rather throughout every day of our lives. To be clear, there is a level of fear that is disabling. And Paul contrasts that in 8:15,

οὐ γὰρ ἐλάβετε πνεῦμα δουλείας πάλιν εἰς φόβον
ἀλλ' ἐλάβετε πνεῦμα υἰοθεσίας ἐν ᾧ κρίζομεν· ἀββα ὁ
πατήρ.

*For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back
into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption*

It is not a matter of quality, but appropriate quantity that we are dealing with here. In chapter 13, the discussion of fear pertains to human rulers, vv. 3, 7, rather than to God. These are the five times when φόβος is used.

What the psalmist and also Paul assert by this declaration is not that all but a few are atheists, or even agnostics. Instead, it is that humanity as a whole does not bend its knee to God in surrender and acknowledge of His sovereignty over His creation that includes them. The Davidic psalmist makes this declaration of the sinner (τοῦ ἁμαρτάνειν ἐν ἑαυτῷ, 35:2 LXX). The Hebrew רָשָׁע (rā·šā') as a masculine noun, here translated by the LXX as τοῦ ἁμαρτάνειν ἐν ἑαυτῷ, speaks of deep rebellion against God's ways and demands, i.e., being wicked. Such a person is defined as ὁ παράνομος, the one going well beyond the law in disobedience. Verses 3 and 4 depict evil dominating in both words and deeds, as well as in their very being.

Is there any observable rationale in the sequencing of these citations? The detectable organizing structure seems to be signaled by grammar. Note οὐκ ἔστιν in v. 11 twice with πάντες followed by οὐκ ἔστιν in verse 12. Either the predicate adjective or noun stands at the beginning of each line in vv.13-17. Two more instances of οὐκ ἔστιν surface in vv. 1b and 18. In vv. 10b and 12b the emphasis falls on not a single person. in vv. 10b-12 the emphasis is upon the individual, while in vv. 13-15 it is upon various body parts. It shifts to negative consequences in vv. 16-18. What should we make of this literary analysis? Numerous conclusions have been drawn over the centuries of interpretive history but none have much persuasiveness. .

Quite clearly vv. 10-18 that affirms universal sinfulness is intended to answer the questions posed in v. 9. The linking of vv. 10-18 to the questions via the conjunction via γὰρ makes this very clear. The thesis needing to be supported by scripture quotations is simply: Ἰουδαίους τε καὶ Ἑλλήνας πάντας ὑφ' ἁμαρτίαν εἶναι, **that both Jews and Gentiles, all are under the rule of sin (v. 9b).** The point being made to the Jewish elitist by the apostle seems to be that all people are sinners, and that includes all Jews. The emphatic denial in v. 10a of

anyone being *δικαιος* targets his opponent especially.

Some hint of Paul's intention here may be gleaned from his application statement in vv. 19-20 (cf. below). The most likely conclusion to be drawn from this literary analysis is that this catena of Hebrew scriptures in vv. 10b-18 reflects a piece of pre-formed Christian tradition that Paul incorporates in his assessment of the Jewish elitist addressed in 3:1-8 especially. In fact it could easily have been composed by Jewish scribes for teaching Jewish boys, since nothing overtly Christian is contained in these scripture selections. If this be the situation, then Paul's incorporation of it here adds dramatic weight to his condemnation of the Jewish elitist.³⁰⁷

The general theme of vv. 10b-18 clearly is of the universal sinfulness of all humanity, including the Jews. This is without serious question.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁷The biblical passages quoted and the traditional materials used in 3:1-20 should therefore most likely be viewed as (1) rooted in a milieu of Jewish and/or Jewish Christian piety and theology, (2) known and appreciated by Paul's addressees at Rome, (3) used by Paul because he believed there was a basic agreement between him and his addressees regarding these materials and what they taught, and (4) given the apostle's own interpretive "spin" at cer-

3.19 δὲ
71 οἶδαμεν
 ὅτι ὅσα ὁ νόμος λέγει
 τοῖς ἐν τῷ νόμῳ λαλεῖ,
 ἵνα πᾶν στόμα φραγῆ
 | καὶ
 /-----|
 ὑπόδικος γένηται πᾶς ὁ κόσμος τῷ θεῷ.
 3.20 διότι
 ἐξ ἔργων νόμου
72 οὐ δικαιωθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ
 ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ,
 γὰρ
 διὰ νόμου
73 ἐπίγνωσις ἁμαρτίας.

tain crucial points." [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 336.]

³⁰⁸Dieter Zeller and Heikki Räisänen, for example, have argued that it is difficult to identify where the apostle in Romans has made such an inclusive assertion and such a damning accusation.⁸⁵ Admittedly here in 3:9 is the first time that he uses the word *ἁμαρτία* ('sin'). But surely he has enunciated, at least in essence, such an all-inclusive assertion ('both Jews and Gentiles') and such a damning accusation ('are all under sin') in what he wrote earlier in 1:18-2:29—that is, in speaking so extensively and pointedly about (1) 'God's wrath' as 'directed against humanity's godlessness and wickedness' in 1:18-32, (2) 'God's condemning judgment' on all 'unrighteousness' and 'injustice' as being 'just and impartial' in 2:1-16, and (3) 'Jewish unfaithfulness and failures' in 2:17-29. As James Dunn has aptly said: 'The force of 1:18-2:29 here becomes

What role does vv. 10-18 play in Paul's larger argument particularly in 3:1-20? In the apostle's argument regarding Ἀποκαλύπτεται ὀργή θεοῦ, God's wrath is being uncovered, in 1:18, he has concluded the sinfulness of paganism (1:18-32) and of Jewish people (2:1-3:8). Thus he concludes for certain that sinfulness has enveloped the Jewish people without exception (3:9-20). Therefore 3:10-18 becomes the scripture proof of the spiritual principle Ἰουδαίους τε καὶ Ἕλληνας πάντας ὑφ' ἁμαρτίαν εἶναι, regarding both Jews and Gentiles, all are under the rule of sin (3:9).

10.3.3.2.4.2 Second reason for the level ground, 3:19-20

19 οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι ὅσα ὁ νόμος λέγει τοῖς ἐν τῷ νόμῳ λαλεῖ, ἵνα πᾶν στόμα φραγῆ καὶ ὑπόδικος γένηται πᾶς ὁ κόσμος τῷ θεῷ. 20 διότι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιωθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, διὰ γὰρ νόμου ἐπίγνωσις ἁμαρτίας.

19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. 20 For "no human being will be justified in his sight" by deeds prescribed by the law, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin.

Here Paul gives the second reason for his answer οὐ πάντως, *not at all* (v. 9). It grows out of the first answer by defining the objective of Torah in declaring all humanity as sinners largely by applying the Law to the Jews, and in particular to his Jewish elitist opponent in the diatribe begun in 2:1. In one sense, the apostle summarizes the central points made in 1:18-3:18 about humans sinfulness. Particular emphasis is given to the Jewish side of humanity being sinful in 2:1-3:18.

fully clear.¹⁸⁶ And it is this accusation that Paul seeks to support by the catena of biblical passages that he sets out afterward in 3:10b-18." [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 353-354.]



οἶδαμεν δέ, and we know. οἶδαμεν comes from οἶδα and asserts an understanding derived to intellectual analysis. The “we” includes Paul and his Jewish opponent in the diatribe. There’s one point on which both could agree. The ὅτι-clause defines what that one common point is. The phrase in Paul specifies something held as common knowledge. No one would dispute this. Compare 2:2 and Gal. 2:16.

ὅτι ὅσα ὁ νόμος λέγει τοῖς ἐν τῷ νόμῳ λαλεῖ, that whatever the Law says it is speaking to those in Law. What does ὅσα ὁ νόμος λέγει include? Crucial here is the inclusion signaled by the quantitative relative pronoun ὅσα that comes from ὅσος, -η, -ον, encompasses for sure the above quoted texts from the Psalms and Isaiah in vv. 10-18. It has the sense of including everything contained within a stated framework.

And that framework here is ὁ νόμος, the Law. Paul is using ὁ νόμος here to refer to the contents of the Hebrew Bible. Remember the different levels of inclusion by νόμος in the 74 uses of the term in Romans alone: (1) the Books of Moses; (2) the Hebrew Bible; (3) the scribal writings, called the Halakhah, interpreting the Hebrew Bible, especially the Books of Moses³⁰⁹; (4) the unwritten Law of God.³¹⁰ These 74 uses constitute the majority of the 121 uses of ὁ νόμος in the writings of Paul. The core concept of νόμος in Paul’s world is that of what is proper.³¹¹ With a religious origin, νόμος be-

³⁰⁹In his statements about the law Jesus did not call for an end to the Mosaic prescriptions; in fact, he denied that such was his intention (Matt. 5:17–20). But he distinguished between the law of Moses and scribal Halakhah ('tradition,' Mark 7:1–8 par.). Rather than calling for an end to the law, Jesus called for a deeper, more radical living by the law, which embodies that which the law intends to produce—justice, mercy, and self-denial (Luke 11:42 par.; 18:18–22 par.).

Allen C. Myers, *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 645.

³¹⁰Here are the listings for the 74 uses in Romans:

(1) the Books of Moses: 2:12 (2x), 13 (12x), 14 (3x), 15, 17, 18, 20, 23 (2x), 25 (2x), 26, 27 (2x); 3:19, 20, 21, 28; 4:15; 5:13 (2x), 20; 7:1 (2x), 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 (3x), 8, 9, 12, 14, 16; 8:4; 10:5.

(2) the Hebrew Bible: 3:19, 20; 7:22, 25.

(3) the scribal writings interpreting the Hebrew Bible, especially the Books of Moses: 3:31; 4:13, 14, 16; 6:14, 15; 8:3; 9:31 (2x); 10:4.

(4) the unwritten Law of God: 2:14 (4x); 3:21 (2x), 27 (2x); 4:15; 7:21, 23 (3x), 25; 8:1 (2x), 7; 13:10.

These should be understood against the image of concentric circles beginning with (1) as the smallest circle and (4) as the largest circle, each building on top of the previous one. The above is mainly an estimate. Paul’s diverse use of ὁ νόμος with or without the article remains a puzzle to most moderns, since he uses an ancient Hebrew reasoning pattern, which remains largely a mystery today. And as the above suggests, he can shift meanings in an instant without any warning.

³¹¹νόμος belongs etym. to νέμω, 'to allot,' and thus has the

came an obvious choice for the OT LXX translators to use primarily for the Hebrew word תורה (*tōrā*) some 200 times out of 220 uses of תורה. For the Israelites, Torah became the basis of their existence. In the Abrahamic covenant with God, the Torah defined not just how to worship God, but rather the prescribed way of living of life in a manner that is pleasing to God.³¹² Torah gives life when obeyed. It came to be viewed as their exclusive possession.

The idea of the abrogation of Torah was utterly abhorrent to the religious Jew in Paul’s world.³¹³ But sense of 'what is proper,' 'what is assigned to someone.' ”

[Walter Gutbrod and Hermann Kleinknecht, “Νόμος, Ἄνομία, Ἄνομος, Ἐννομος, Νομικός, Νόμιμος, Νομοθέτης, Νομοθεσία, Νομοθετέω, Παρανομία, Παρανομέω,” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:1023.]

³¹²The pentateuchal laws encompass all areas of religious and social life, with no absolute demarcation between the two, and treat disparate matters with equal seriousness. Their intent is to establish and preserve the people of God as an ideal just and worshipping community. In this way the Israelite law codes resembled other ancient codes, which often stood not as guides for the actual practice of law but as statements of the ideal of an ordered community—the gift of kings who delivered peoples from oppression and established order.

The history of Israel’s conquest and settled life shows that the detailed codes of the Pentateuch were never completely known or followed. Numerous variations derived from local practices, and the covenant-legal traditions were challenged by forces within and outside Israel. The discovery of “the book of the law,” perhaps closely akin to the book of Deuteronomy, in the reign of Josiah (2 Kgs. 22:8–20) brought about a limited reformation (23:1–25; cf. vv. 31–32), though it may have precipitated a penitential, Deuteronomistic rewriting of Israel’s history (cf. 1–2 Samuel—1–2 Kings) intended to demonstrate that the curses threatened by Deuteronomy had indeed come to pass on Israel and Judah.”

[Allen C. Myers, *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 644–645.]

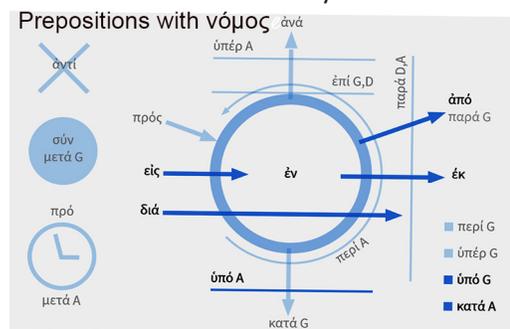
³¹³The abrogation of the contents of the Torah is rather transferred to the time of the Church and for that reason recorded instead in Acts. Thus, the nullification of the cultic food laws takes place in Acts 10–11: God has declared unclean food clean (10:15: ἐκαθάρισεν, aor.), without, however, using the word νόμος (Hübner, *Synoptische Tradition* 189–91). At the synod on the Gentile mission in Acts 15 Gentile Christians were released from the requirement of circumcision “in accordance with the custom” of Moses (15:1: τῷ ἔθει τῷ Μωϋσέως; ἔθος here is nearly synonymous with νόμος; cf. v. 5); the regulations of the “apostolic decree” (15:20f., 28f.), however, remain in effect, i.e., the prohibitions of eating meat offered to idols, blood, and strangled animals and of adultery (→ πορνεία). The entire composition is clearly Lukan and describes a gradual and only partial lifting of the Torah after Pentecost. Along with the fundamental retention of the validity of the law, a partial release was conceded in order to remove unbearable burdens (v. 10). Consequently, the at least partial abrogation of the Torah was more Church-political pragmatism than theological reflection.”

[Horst Robert Balz and Gerhard Schneider, *Exegetical Dic-*



in Paul's discussion here it was basic that when the Law speaks, it is talking to those in covenant relation to God. Every religious Jew of Paul's day would have agreed with Paul's claim. How does the Torah speak? The apostle makes a play on verbs here. The Law which λέγει does then λαλε to the person in the Law. The latter verb is limited to only humans talking, while the first verb includes both humans, animals, and inanimate objects such as books being able to talk, that is, communicate ideas. Thus when the Law wants to communicate its ideas, it does so mainly through the voice of the scribal teacher of Law to the Jewish people. At minimum it speaks when it is read aloud in both family worship and in the sabbath service at the synagogues.

The preposition ἐν is very important in defining the indirect object phrase τοῖς ἐν τῷ νόμῳ, **to those in Law**. Different phrases have different meanings.³¹⁴ The following chart illustrates the variety of constructions. For example,



significant differences exist between being ἐν τῷ νόμῳ, **in the Law** (3:19)³¹⁵ and being ὑπὸ νόμον, **under Law** (6:19). The first use defines people who live within the frame-

tionary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990–), 475.]

³¹⁴PHRASES with νόμος in the New Testament:

βιβλίῳ τοῦ νόμου, Book of the Law

Code or collection of laws read by Moses to the Israelites.

κατήγηται ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου, is instructed by the Law

Law in the NT:

ἔργων νόμου

Works of the law; the requirements of the old covenant.

νόμον τοῦ Χριστοῦ, Law of Christ

A phrase used by Paul in Gal 6:2 and 1 Cor 9:21 to describe humble submission to other people's needs.

νόμον Μωϋσέως, Law of Moses

The OT laws found in the Pentateuch.

νόμος τοῦ ἀνδρός, Law of the Husband

The collection of laws applicable to the covenantal relationship between a husband and a wife.

ὁ νόμος καὶ οἱ προφῆται. the Law and the Prophets

The whole of the Hebrew Scriptures (before the writings of the New Testament were added).

[Source: Logos Systems Inc. with adaptations.]

³¹⁵Note the translation error of the reference in 3:19. It is not "under the law." That would require ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμον. Here it is ἐν τῷ νόμῳ, **within the law**.

work of the Torah. But the second use defines people be ruled by the Torah. It is much more forboding as ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμον. Paul sees νόμος as an animated evil monster seeking to enslave us under its control. It once had us as its slave, but in Christ we have traded masters, from Satan to Christ. And that is liberation. But νόμος still enslaves the Jewish people outside of Christ. And that includes his elitist opponent, who has been his targeted opponent in chapters two and three.

ἵνα πᾶν στόμα φραγῆ, so that every mouth may be shut tight. What is the goal of the Law? The ἵνα clause defines what it is. The two aorist subjunctive verbs φραγῆ and γένηται provide the answer. The first part of this ἵνα clause asserts the intention of the divine law to shut up any critic: πᾶν στόμα φραγῆ, **so that every mouth may be shut up**. This aorist passive voice verb from φράσσω asserts a definite moment in time, the eschatological judgment day, when not a single person will be able to complain of not getting pure justice from Almighty God. Not only will their guilt be overwhelmingly against them, but the divine authority of Law will force them to keep quiet.³¹⁶

καὶ ὑπόδικος γένηται πᾶς ὁ κόσμος τῷ θεῷ, and that all the world may be accountable to God. Although the adjective ὑπόδικος, -ov is only used here inside the NT, Paul's Roman readers would have been quite familiar with the concept of being held accountable in the Roman courts.³¹⁷ His Diaspora Jewish Christian readers

³¹⁶"ἵνα πᾶν στόμα φραγῆ, 'that every mouth may be stopped.' The metaphor is of someone being prevented from speaking (cf. particularly 1 Macc 9:55)—here not simply by the weight of evidence brought in accusation, but also by its authority as the law of God, the scriptures, the sacred oracles entrusted to Israel (3:2)." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 152.]

³¹⁷ὑπόδικος1 (from Aesch. Eum., 260) denotes a person or thing which by reason of certain facts is so struck by penal δίκη (→ II, 178, 18 ff.) that he must be subjected to a trial, to judicial examination, prosecution and punishment: 'guilty' in the sense of having offended against the law, 'culpable,' 'judicially actionable,' 'accountable.' The law says: ἐάν τις φάσκη ἀποβεβληκῆναι, ὑπόδικον εἶναι, 'if someone charges a man with throwing away his shield (sc. in the battle), that man must be brought to trial,' Lys., 10, 9. Of things: οὐχ ὑπόδικα τὰ εἰκότα, 'the (merely) probable is not open to accusation,' Aristot. Rhet., I, 15, p. 1376a, 22, cf. Ps.-Aristot. Rhet. Al., 5, p. 1427a, 13. The thing a person can be tried for is in the gen.: τοῦ φόνου, 'for murder,' Demosth. Or., 54, 25; τῆς κακώσεως, 'for neglect' (sc. of the duty of supporting parents), Isaeus, VIII, 32; ὑπόδικος θέλει γενέσθαι χρεῶν, 'he wants to be brought to trial for his debt,' Aesch. Eum., 260: ὑπόδικος ἔστω τοῦ βλάβους, 'he should be held accountable for the damage,' P. Hal., 1, 241 (3rd cent. B.C.). The dat. is used for the court one comes before or more commonly the person to whom the right of complaint belongs: ἐὰν δέ τις ἀπειθῆ, τῷ τῆς περι ταῦτα ἀσεβείας εἰρημένῳ νόμῳ ὑπόδικος ὀρθῶς ἂν γίγνοιτο μετὰ δίκης, 'if a person does not comply he may rightly and properly come under the law of ungodliness which regulates such matters.' Plat. Leg., IX, 868e–869a;

would have well understood this, even though Jewish law did not work the same as Roman law.³¹⁸ Paul's use of the term within the framework of his Jewish heritage means that the entire world is liable to divine punishment so that there is no other way out.³¹⁹

τῷ βλαφθέντι, Plat. Leg., VIII, 846b; τῷ παθόντι, Demosth. Or., 21, 10; τῷ ἀδικουμένῳ, P. Fay., 22, 9 (1st cent. B.C.)." [Christian Maurer, "Υπόδικος," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 8:557.]

³¹⁸ a. The word does not occur in the LXX. This is perhaps connected with the fact that the OT concept of law is not orientated to abstract δίκη but to the person of God and to human society. Hence we find ἔνοχος (→ II, 828, 16 ff.), which has the responsibility of the guilty in view, but not ὑπόδικος, which expresses rather the ineluctability of condemnation.

" b. Philo has the term in connection with accountability: The owner of an animal which butts or gores people is to be held accountable ὡςπερ αἴτιος ὑπόδικος ἔστω, Spec. Leg., III, 145, and so too the shepherd who leads his flock on to unsuitable land, IV, 25, cf. 37. The ref. in II, 249 is to blood-guiltiness in desecration of the Sabbath: ὑπόδικος ἔστω τοῦ θανάτου; except in the case of premeditated murder the owner is not guilty if a slave he has struck does not die at once μηκέθ' ὁμοίως ὁ δεσπότης ὑπόδικος ἔστω φόνου, III. 142, cf. also 121. In a normal judgment on those who are of noble houses but do not appropriate the virtue practised in them: ὑπόδικοι δ' ὑμεῖς οἱ ἐκ μεγάλων φύντες οἰκῶν 'you are open to, worthy of punishment,' Virt., 197. Of things: ἔτι δὲ ψεκτὰ τὰ ἐπαινετὰ καὶ ὑπόδικα τὰ τιμῆς ἄξια, 'what is praiseworthy (to us) is reprehensible (to others), and what is honourable is deserving of punishment,' Ebr., 194.

"c. Josephus: ὑποδίκου³ τοῦ τὴν δυναστείαν διοικοῦντος, "after the administrator of the kingdom had become subject to punishment," Vit., 74.

"d. In view of the difference between Gk. and Jewish views of law it is hard to find an exact Rabb. par. to ὑπόδικος. The closest is צָרָה 'guilty,' 'responsible,' whose stem came into the OT as an Aramaism,⁴ e.g., Ez. 18:7; Da. 1:10, and which in the later Jewish period expresses the various kinds of legal accountability. It is thus used for the financial accountability of a debtor in BM, 12b, the obligation deriving from a commandment, e.g., to recite the she-ma, Ber., 3, 1, the guilt incurred through transgressing a commandment, Shab., 1, 1, the liability to a penalty, e.g., פָּרְשֵׁי צִדְקָה Qid., 1, 1 (58d, 23). The Syr. transl. renders the ὑπόδικος of R. 3:19 (→ lines 19 ff.) by the etp'al of the corresponding verb.⁵

[Christian Maurer, "Υπόδικος," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 557–8:558.]

³¹⁹ In the NT the word occurs only at R. 3:19 → IV, 1074, 15 ff.; V, 443, 6 ff. 'But we know that the law says what it says to those who are under the law,' ἵνα πᾶν στόμα φραγῆ καὶ ὑπόδικος γένηται πᾶς ὁ κόσμος τῷ θεῷ. ὑπόδικος here denotes more than a general unspecified liability to punishment⁶ but less than definitive condemnation.⁷ It describes the state of an accused person who cannot reply at the trial initiated against him because he has exhausted all possibilities of refuting the charge against him and averting the condemnation and its consequences which ineluctably follow.⁸ Since not merely the Gentiles but the Jews too, who I Thook down on them, are forced by their own divinely given Law to accept this, the result is that every mouth will be stopped and

The τῷ θεῷ, *to God*, specifies the person that the world is liable to. πᾶς ὁ κόσμος, *all the world*, echoes the earlier πῶς κρινεῖ ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον; *How will God judge the world?* in 3:6. Thus Paul's point is made: every person, Jew and Gentile, is accountable to God, and on his own is facing an impossible challenge before God on Judgment Day.

In v. 20, the apostle draws his final conclusion about the roll of Torah: διότι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιοθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, διὰ γὰρ νόμου ἐπίγνωσις ἁμαρτίας. *For "no human being will be justified in his sight" by deeds prescribed by the law, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin.*

The causal coordinate conjunction διότι links the following statement to the preceding one as evidence and reason for.³²⁰ What the Law says is based on the axiomatic principle stated in v. 20. The declaration in v. 20 most likely is an allusion³²¹ to Psalm 143:2 (LXX 142:2). Note the wording in the LXX of the strophes for the reference for this psalm..

καὶ μὴ εἰσέλθῃς εἰς κρίσιν μετὰ τοῦ δούλου σου,
ὅτι οὐ δικαιοθήσεται ἐνώπιόν σου πᾶς ζῶν
*Do not enter into judgment with your servant,
for no living being is righteous before you.*

Clearly Paul doesn't cite the psalm. There is no signal of citation such as the standard introduction of a citation: γέγραπται,, *it stands written*. But he takes the central idea of the psalm, οὐ δικαιοθήσεται ἐνώπιόν σου πᾶς ζῶν, and expands it.

ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιοθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, *out of works of law all flesh will not be justified before Him*. This highly literal translation attempts to preserve the emphasis made by Paul in the Greek. This axiom stands very close to a similar statement of the

the whole world falls under the judgment of God to condemnation, unless God Himself establishes a new right, which is what R. 3:21 ff. proclaims as a reality actually accomplished in Jesus Christ."

[Christian Maurer, "Υπόδικος," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 8:558.]

³²⁰ Διότι is found in the Lucan writings, the Pauline Epistles, Hebrews, James and 1 Peter. In the modern Greek² it takes the form γιατί. Once (Ro. 8:21) some MSS. (W. H. read ὅτι) have διότι in the sense of objective ὅτι ('that') as in later Greek (cf. late Latin quia=quod). Instances of causal διότι may be seen in Lu. 1:13; Ro. 1:19, etc. It is compounded of διά and ὅτι (cf. English 'for that'). In Ph. 2:26 διότι is causal and ὅτι is declarative. In modern Greek διότι survives in ἡ καθαρεύουσα. The vernacular has ἀφοῦ, ἐπειδή, γιατί (Thumb, Handb., p. 194).. [A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Logos Bible Software, 2006), 964.]

³²¹ The label "allusion" is different from "citation." In biblical studies the difference is largely centered on the level of exactness of citing the OT source. If exact or near exact use means that it is considered a "citation." But if only a key idea is used with minimum reproduction of wording, then it is an "allusion."



apostle in Gal. 2:16b, ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιωθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ. The only difference is the prepositional phrase ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ added in Romans, which adds eschatological judgment clearly to the phrase. This stands rather like a theme for the preaching and teaching ministry of the apostle Paul. Most of his theological understanding grew out of the principle expressed in the axiom.

The phrase ἐξ ἔργων νόμου, *out of works of Law*, builds off the reference to the contemporar stance among the Pharisees stance that eternal destiny on Judgment Day would be determined first by proper circumcism and also by the quantity of obedience to Divine Law that one had accumulated during his life.

This phrase along with its repetition numerous time in several of Paul's letters, has occasioned considerable discussion among modern scholars.³²² But the most simple and accurate meaning is that in somewhat coded terms it specifies the perceived path to salvation in first century Judaism. This would have been dominantly by the Pharisees rather than from the Sadducees who did not believe in an afterlife. It is another question as to the matter of this implying religious legalism, which is where much of the modern discussion has centered.

διὰ γὰρ νόμου ἐπίγνωσις ἁμαρτίας, *for through Law comes understanding*. If salvation can't gained through Law, then what can? {Paul's answer is understanding. The divine Torah is intended to serve as teacher, pointing out God's expectations to His people. Note that the term used here is ἐπίγνωσις, which connotes the idea of profound grasping of an idea. Additionally, the focus of this understanding is that of ἁμαρτίας, sin. Paul speaks here mostly out of personal experience. As a Pharisee, he would have boasted that he understood the meaning of sin. But now as a Christian, that understanding has expanded manyfold. Only in Christ, has he come to fully grasp the profound meaning of the idea of ἁμαρτίας. See the above discussion above for the details of Paul's perspective.

Let's pause here and assess how far we have come on Paul's discussion of human sinfulness. Note the following observations:

1. We are still under the broad theme of God's righteousness as the heart of Paul's Gospel (1:16-17). His message of τὸ εὐαγγέλιον is that δικαιοσύνη γὰρ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκαλύπτεται, *for God's right dealings with humanity is being uncovered*. That God is fair in His treat-

ment of everyone is clear, because His character is the standard of measuring what is fair and proper.

2. Also 1:18-3:20 comprises the subtheme of Ἀποκαλύπτεται γὰρ ὀργή θεοῦ, *for being uncovered is God's wrath*. (1:18-3:20). One cannot correctly understand God's righteous apart from God's wrath. The latter is an essential part of the former.

What is God mad about? The answer is ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ἀσέβειαν καὶ ἀδικίαν ἀνθρώπων τῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ κατεχόντων, *against ungodliness and wickedness of people who in wickedness are suppressing the Truth* (1:18b). The raw unfiltered wickedness of humanity is dramatically depicted in 1:18-32. But to make sure that he means all humanity, in 2:1-3:8 the apostle scorches the moral elitist, and in particular the Jewish moralist, who felt that they were superior to the pagans around them (2:9-3:8). In , the apostle pulls that together by focusing primarily on the Jewish moral elitist.

In 3:9-20, the apostle sums up the totality of humanity as sinful and deserving of God's wrath. He makes use of a pre-existing catena of OT quotes in order to establish that πάντας ὑφ' ἁμαρτίαν εἶναι, *all are being ruled by sin* (v. 9b).

The prepositional phrase ἐξ ἔργων νόμου, *out of works of law*, which stands as a key concept for Paul's belief system, signals a source for the verb action. What does Paul mean?³²³

The phrase ἔργων νόμου stands as an aphorism.³²⁴ That is, it was something of a code phrase first in an-

³²³"This phrase ἔργα νόμου ('works of the law') appears eight times in Paul's letters: six times in Galatians, most significantly in 2:16 (three times) and then in 3:2, 5, and 10; twice in Romans, most significantly here in 3:20 and then a few verses later in 3:28.¹⁰⁷ In Paul's earlier letter to his own converts in the province of Galatia, who were struggling with issues regarding commitment to Jesus vis-à-vis observance of the Mosaic law, the expression 'works of the law' appears at a strategic point in the development of his argument, in 2:15-16, which constitutes the opening statement of Paul's propositio or thesis statement (vv. 15-21), which, as Hans Dieter Betz has rightly pointed out, both 'sums up the narratio's material content' that precedes it and 'sets up the arguments to be discussed later in the probatio' that follows.¹⁰⁸ And here in Rom 3:20 Paul uses that same phrase "works of the law" in the closing sentence of the first part (1:16-3:20) of the first section (1:16-4:25) of the body middle (1:16-15:13) of his letter." [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 360-361.]

³²⁴"The words drawn from Ps 143:2 and the phrase 'works of the law' were viewed by Paul as being similar in nature, that is, as traditional religious aphorisms (whatever may have been their difference of origin and dissimilarity of content)." [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 361.]

³²²For the sake of clarity, below is Longenecker's excellent summary of this issue:

ἐξ ἔργων νόμου

cient Judaism, where Paul first learned it in Hebrew, **מעשי התורה**, and especially in Christian use by the apostle.³²⁵ The essential idea is that of one's eternal

³²⁵ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου, “by works of the law, by nomistic service.” The way in which this most striking variation from the LXX text of the psalm brings out Paul’s point is indicated by several factors. (1) Its use here and in Galatians shows that it is a key phrase in Paul’s polemic against what he regards as the typical Jewish misunderstanding of how God’s righteousness manifests itself, since it occurs only in the immediate context of that polemic, with the full phrase either explicit (3:20, 28; Gal 2:16; 3:2, 5, 10; cf. Eph 2:9) or implicit (3:27; 4:2, 6; 9:12, 32; 11:6). The contrast with 2:13 confirms that ἔργα νόμου is thus more narrowly and polemically focused than οἱ ποιηταὶ νόμου. For the different sense of the singular (τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου), though with a complementary polemical thrust, see on 2:15. (2) Paul’s purpose throughout the preceding paragraphs was to show that the Jewish particular should be merged with the human universal as ‘all alike under sin.’; The ἐξ ἔργων νόμου are another example of the Jewish particular. Throughout the preceding paragraphs the Jewish particular consisted of the assumption that God’s covenant with Israel gave them a special ground of justification, a special defense in the final judgment. The ἔργα νόμου are Paul’s concluding summary reference to that special defense. Since ‘works of the law’ are no defense, the verdict of Ps 143:2 is truly universal. (3) As Lohmeyer has argued, the phrase ἔργα νόμου means ‘service of the law’ (‘nomistic service’—Tyson, “Works,” 424–25), service not so much in the sense of particular actions already accomplished, but in the sense of the obligations set by the law, the religious system determined by the law (“Gesetzeswerke”; cf. Schlatter). Lohmeyer’s insight is borne out by the way in which the equivalent phrase is used in the Qumran writings—**מעשי תורה**, ‘deeds of the law’ (cf. Moo, 91). For it was precisely by reference to his ‘deeds,’ his ‘deeds within, or by means of, or with reference to the law,’ his ‘observance of the law’ as understood within the community, that an individual’s membership in the covenant was tested (1QS 5.21, 23; 6:18; cf. similar phrases, particularly **מעשי (ה)עדקה**, ‘deeds/works of righteousness’ — 1QH 1.26; 4.31; and **מעשיהם באמתכה**, ‘their deeds in your truth’ — 1QH 6.9). Likewise **מעשי תורה** were what marked out the community of the end days in its distinctiveness from the outsiders and enemies (4QFlor 1.1–7). The precisely equivalent phrase **מעשי התורה** apparently occurs in an as yet unpublished 4Q scroll in the hands of J. Strugnell. Cf. also 2 Apoc. Bar. 57.2: ‘the works of the commandments.’ The phrase therefore as used also here refers to a religious mode of existence, but a mode of existence marked out in its distinctiveness as determined by the law, the religious practices which set those ‘within the law’ (v 19) apart as the people of the law. (4) This is what we would have expected anyway in the context here and in Galatians. The concluding summary of the first main stage of the argument must refer back to what Paul had been attacking for the last chapter and a half, particularly Jewish pride in the law, and especially in circumcision as the most fundamental distinctive marker of the people of the law (see on 2:25). Just as in Galatians the phrase is introduced (Gal 2:16) immediately following and in clear reference to the preceding controversies regarding circumcision and food laws (2:1–15) — two obligations laid upon the devout Jew which most clearly functioned as boundary markers, distinguishing him clearly from the Gentiles. See also Introduction §5, on 9:32 and 11:6, and, further, Dunn, “New Perspective” and “Works of the Law.” Gager, *Origins*, 200, 222, follows M. Barth, *Ephesians* (AB [New York: Doubleday, 1974] 244–48), in arguing

destination depending on the circumcised Jew adequately obeying the Torah. It was a “pick myself up by the bootstraps” approach to salvation. God in theory provided salvation, but whether we maintain that deliverance depends entirely on our keeping God’s commandments. This the apostle totally rejects. Rather, if God has truly justified us in conversion, that justification **will be** lived out in obedience to God’s ways and demands. If it isn’t, then God has not actually justified us in conversion. Ultimately this will be proven in eschatological judgment when the true condition of our lives will become known publicly.

The verb phrase οὐ δικαιοθήσεται reflects a future passive verb from δικαιοῶ that references being acceptable to God on the Day of Judgment. Of the 39 NT uses of this verb, 27 are found in Paul’s letters, with 15 of these in Romans. It is closely connected to δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, **God’s righteousness** (1:17), which is the general theme of this material. The idea of justification is both a past, present, and future experience. At conversion the believer is justified (aorist passive ἐδικαιώθη, 5:1), are being justified (present tense, δικαιοῦμενοι, 3:24), and will be justified (future passive, δικαιοθήσεται, 3:20). Historically most of Protestantism has erred by stressing only the future aspect and understanding it against a forensic courtroom background.

Although the courtroom backdrop is possible for eschatological judgment day, it clearly is inadequate for the past and present tense uses of the verb. The alternative understanding for δικαιοῶ instead of to justify is to make righteous. This lays the foundation for the idea of vindicate. In conversion, God makes us righteous thus vindicating His own δικαιοσύνη. Throughout our journey, our obedience to God through Christ, in becoming more like Him, vindicates the correctness of God’s saving action in conversion. All of this will then be vindicated on Judgment Day when we stand before Almighty God in final judgment. The Jewish problem that Paul opposes in Rom. 3:20 was laid out by Jesus in His criticism of the Pharisees of whom He said this: **You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of others,**

that Paul’s polemic against ‘works of the law’ is not directed against the Jews and that the phrase itself never occurs in Jewish texts and refers only to the adoption of Jewish practices by Gentiles. But this ignores the DSS evidence cited above and the clear implication that ἔργα in 3:27; 4:2, 6; 9:12, 32; and 11:6 is shorthand for the ἔργα νόμου of 3:20 and 28. Gaston, “Works,” surprisingly ignores the same data and argues the idiosyncratic view that the work(s) of the law are the law’s ‘work’ of wrath (4:15); though why then Paul should bother to deny that justification comes through wrath (3:20) becomes rather baffling. Contrast also Cosgrove’s dubious distinction between justification by means of and on the basis of works (“Justification”).”

[James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 153–154.]



ὁμοίως ἐστε οἱ δικαιοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀνθρώπων (Lk. 16:15b).³²⁶ The aorist passive δικαιωθήσεται in 3:20 underscores that God is the only one qualified to judge and declare innocent. We may declare ourselves to be okay spiritually, but only God's verdict carries any weight in determining eternal destiny.

The verb subject is πᾶσα σὰρξ, *all flesh*. It is often translated “no flesh” due to the limitations of English grammar with the negative οὐ, no in front of the verb. “No flesh will be justified” is stylistically better than “all flesh will not be justified.”

This phrase πᾶσα σὰρξ is but one of many ways found in the NT to designate all of humanity, past, present, and future (cf. Mat. 24:22; Mk. 13:20; Lk. 3:6 fr. Isa.40:5; Jhn. 17:2; Acts 2:17 fr. Job 3:1; 1 Cor. 1:29; Gal. 2:16; 1 Pet. 1:24 fr. Isa 406).³²⁷ Other figurative ways of designating all of humanity include αἵματος καὶ σαρκός, flesh and blood, (cf. 1 Cor. 15:50; Heb. 2:14).³²⁸ In also

³²⁶A distinct but closely related error of the Pharisees that Jesus targets here is their assumption that the approval of men represented God's approval. The Lord blasted such false thinking repeated throughout His public ministry.

³²⁷This variety is illustrated in the beginning paragraph of the article on σὰρξ in the TDNT

Contents: A. σὰρξ in the Greek World: 1. σὰρξ as the Muscular Part of the Human or Animal Body; 2. The Origin of Flesh; 3. σὰρξ as Body; 4. Special Meanings; 5. σάρκινος; 6. The Corruptible σὰρξ in Distinction from the Incorruptible Part of Man; 7. σὰρξ as the Seat of Emotions in Epicurus; 8. The Influence of Epicurus. B. Flesh in the Old Testament: 1. :רֶשֶׁת a. Flesh in the Strict Sense; b. In an Extended Sense; רֶשֶׁת-לֶבַד .c; d. As a Term for Blood-Relationship; e. Euphemistically; f. In a Transferred Sense; g. Metaphorically; 2. רֶשֶׁת: a. Flesh in the True Sense; b. As a Term for Blood-Relationship; c. In a Transferred Sense; 3. Translation of the Hebrew Terms in the Septuagint; 4. Texts not in the Hebrew Canon. C. Flesh in Judaism: I. The Concept in the Dead Sea Scrolls: 1. The General Concept; 2. A Term for the Person; 3. The Collective Use; 4. Man's Corruptibility; 5. The Relation to Sin; 6. Flesh and Spirit; II. The Usage in the Targums; III. Flesh and Body in the Talmud and Midrash; IV. The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha; V. Philo and Josephus. D. Historical Summary. E. The New Testament: I. The Synoptic Gospels and Acts: 1. The Synoptics; 2. Acts; II. Paul: 1. σὰρξ = Body; 2. σὰρξ as the Earthly Sphere; 3. σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα, πᾶσα σὰρξ; 4. σὰρξ as an Object of Trust; 5. κατὰ σάρκα with Verb; 6. σὰρξ as the Subject of Sin; 7. The Vanquished σὰρξ; 8. Summary; III. Colossians, Ephesians, Pastorals: 1. Colossians; 2. Ephesians; 3. Pastorals; IV. John: 1. The Gospel; 2. The Epistles; V. Hebrews; VI. The Catholic Epistles; VII. σάρκινος, σαρκικός. F. The Post-New Testament Period: 1. The Post-Apostolic Fathers; 2. Apocryphal Acts; 3. The Apologists; 4. Gnosticism.

[Eduard Schweizer and Friedrich Baumgärtel, “Σὰρξ, Σαρκικός, Σάρκινος,” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 9: 98.]

³²⁸For a detailed listing see Louw-Nida, *Greek Lexicon Human Being*, topic 9:1-9.23. [Louw, Johannes P., and Eugene Albert

following the pattern of the OT, ψυχή can be used to designate the entire person: Acts 2:41; 27:37; Rom. 13:1; 1 Pet. 3:20. ψυχή tends to refer to the individual, while σὰρξ more naturally refers to groups of individuals giving human traits to each member of the group. Most importantly, in Platonism the σὰρξ is the corrupt part of the individual.

It also had a negative connotation, as the slogan ἡδονὴ σαρκός, *desires of the flesh*, served as “anti-epicurean slogan, esp. popular in Hell. Judaism. It was constantly regarded as a summons to the crudest forms of pleasure.”³²⁹ This provided the apostle Paul the key to interpreting σὰρξ as the way evil and Satan gain entrance into our existence. So when Paul uses the phrase πᾶσα σὰρξ, he depicts humanity negatively as enslaved to evil. This is central to the premise of their being completely unable to justify themselves before Almighty God.

The adverbial prepositional phrase ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, *in his sight*, locates the place where justification takes place. Here Paul appropriately modified the psalmist's ἐνώπιόν σου, *before You*, to ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, *before Him*. This phrase ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ amplifies the formal tone of humanity coming before the throne of God in Heaven for judgment.

The causal coordinate conjunction γὰρ provides the rationale for why works of Law cannot justify. The Law was not intended to provide a means of salvation. Rather, διὰ γὰρ νόμου ἐπίγνωσις ἁμαρτίας, *for through Law comes full understanding of sin*. The grasping of both the full range of sinful actions, as well as the very essence of sin, is taught us through the law. The noun ἐπίγνωσις highlights full comprehension of something. The law is our disciplining teacher, or better still, our παιδαγωγόν, *disciplinarian*, as Paul affirmed in Gal. 3:25.

The law teaches us about ἁμαρτίας, *about sin*. Of the 172 NT uses of ἁμαρτία, 64 of them are in Paul's writings, and 48 of these are in Romans.³³⁰ While the word was used in the Greek speaking ancient world, it

Nida. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*. New York: United Bible Societies, 1996.]

³²⁹Eduard Schweizer and Friedrich Baumgärtel, “Σὰρξ, Σαρκικός, Σάρκινος,” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 9:104]

³³⁰The word group is ἁμαρτάνω, ἁμάρτημα, ἁμαρτία, ἁμαρτωλός, ἀναμάρτητος.

[Gottfried Quell et al., “Ἀμαρτάνω, Ἀμάρτημα, Ἀμαρτία,” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:267.]

Karl Heinrich Rengstorff, “Ἀμαρτωλός, Ἀναμάρτητος,” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:317.



early Christian meaning was basically established by the LXX of the OT. **חָטָא** is primarily the Hebrew word translated as ἁμαρτία (238x).³³¹ The secular Greek meaning of the term based on the root idea is that of missing the objective and had no religious meaning.³³² The closest to a religious sense of ἁμαρτία in the Greek world of Paul is the use of the verb ἁμαρτάνειν in a purely negative sense of doing something which is not ὀρθόν, i.e., to miss doing what is correct, morally, legally, intellectually. But this idea had no religious overtones.³³³ To Paul's Jewish Christian readers, ἁμαρτία, out of the Gk. ἁμαρτ-concept, would have been easy to grasp due to their familiarity with the Septuagint. But his non-Jewish readers would be learning something very new. In this statement in v. 20,

Paul thus affirms the essential importance of the OT: it teaches us with discipline the meaning of sin. Thus ἁμαρτία, and the other words from the ἁμαρτ-concept, can be understood primarily by knowing the OT teaching on sin.

The LXX translators faced a real dilemma in bringing the Hebrew text over into Koine Greek two centuries before Christ. The concept of sin in the Hebrew Bi-

³³¹ ἁμαρτία is mostly used for חָטָא (238 times) and חָטָא (70 times). Of the other derivatives of חָטָא, חָטָא is translated by it 28 times, חָטָא 8 times, and חָטָא, חָטָא, and the inf. חָטָא once each. In the case of other Heb. equivalents, it is used for חָטָא 19 times, for the verb חָטָא twice, for חָטָא, חָטָא and חָטָא 4 times, twice and once. In addition, it is used twice for חָטָא and חָטָא, and in what often seems to be a 'theologisation' it is used once each for חָטָא (Is. 53:4); חָטָא (Is. 65:2); חָטָא (Jer. 14:7); חָטָא (Ez. 36:19); Aram. חָטָא (Da. 6:5); חָטָא (Prv. 26:26); חָטָא (Lv. 14:19); חָטָא (1 K. 22:53); Aram. חָטָא (Da. 6:23) and חָטָא in hi (Da. 11:32). [Gottfried Quell et al., "Ἀμαρτάνω, Ἀμάρτημα, Ἄμαρτία," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:268.]

³³² The Christian view of sin is not found in classical Gk. In this we have no sin in the sense of man's enmity against God consisting in his refusal to understand and will the right.⁹⁴ In this section, therefore, it is as well not to use the term sin, but to introduce the Gk. conception of defect and guilt, since the stem ἁμαρτ (→ 293) means 'missing a definite goal,' whether mistakenly or guiltily, or by a mistake which is itself guilt." [Gottfried Quell et al., "Ἀμαρτάνω, Ἀμάρτημα, Ἄμαρτία," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:296–297.]

³³³ "No matter what the field in which it is committed, such ἁμαρτάνειν always rests on ἄγνοια (for the ethical field, cf. Eth. Eud., VIII, 1, p. 1246a, 32 ff.; Pol., III, 11, p. 1231b, 28). The word group is totally divested by Aristotle of its association with moral guilt. 'The word or word group does not belong ... at all to the moral sphere, but to the intellectual.'¹²⁴" [Gottfried Quell et al., "Ἀμαρτάνω, Ἀμάρτημα, Ἄμαρτία," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:300–301.]

ble is built around covenantal obedience to the Torah. Sin represents a failure to obey God. Ingenuously, the non-religious idea of missing the goal in ἁμαρτία corresponded reasonably close to **חָטָא** in Hebrew in its root meaning. ἁμαρτία became the primary translation word for the Hebrew word.

Although the secular meaning for both the Hebrew and Greek words corresponded, only the Hebrew had an inherent religious meaning, along side the non-religious meaning. The religious sense had to be picked up from the surrounding context of usage. This urges a lot of caution against reading too much religious meaning into the word as it shows up inside the LXX. Also the OT chiefly provides four different "roots to which the concept of sin is usually attached and which we have usually to render as 'to sin' or 'sin' without being able to bring out the etymologically derived nuances of the Hebrew."³³⁴ These root words are **חָטָא** ("to miss"), **פָּשַׁע** ("to rebel"), **עָוָה** ("to bend"), and **גָּלָה** ("to err"). The translator and interpreter must always determine whether the action specified by each word is secular or religious in its usage in each text. The context of usage is the determining aspect each time.

Therefore Paul, in this letter of introduction called Romans, will need to amplify his understanding of sin built on the foundation of the Hebrew Bible. This he does rather thoroughly, especially in the first eight chapters of Romans with 46 of the 48 uses of ἁμαρτία, along with several uses of the other words in the ἁμαρτ- word group.

The final question about sin is this; What did Paul believe about sin? The Pharisee Paul saw sin only within the framework of Torah. But the Christian Paul saw sin wrapped around the work of Christ whom he encountered on the road to Damascus. Sin becomes personified as a demon in an ongoing opponent to humanity with its own identity apart from human action.³³⁵

³³⁴ Gottfried Quell et al., "Ἀμαρτάνω, Ἀμάρτημα, Ἄμαρτία," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:270

³³⁵ It has already been noted that sin is here personified as a demon (→ 296). Sin has a demonic character. This demonic character emerges quite clearly in the fact that it uses the holy will of God to increase its power: ἡ ἁμαρτία, ἵνα φανῇ ἁμαρτία, διὰ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ μοι κατεργαζομένη θάνατον, ἵνα γένηται καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ἁμαρτωλὸς ἡ ἁμαρτία διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς (7:13). That is to say, the function which we assert the Law to have in the divine plan for the world is finally achieved when sin is unmasked in its demonic character as utter enmity against God. The state of the world and each individual since Adam has a demonic character as directed against God. Hence the situation of man is quite adequately described when Paul says of him: ἐγὼ δὲ σάρκινός εἰμι, πεπραμένος ὑπὸ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν (7:14). Man is a slave sold under sin, and therefore even before his physical death he is delivered up to the power



Sin is discussed in detail in chapters five through eight.
³³⁶ It infects humanity with its deadly presence. It pos-

of death (καὶ ἡμᾶς ὄντας νεκροὺς ... ταῖς ἀμαρτίας ὑμῶν, Eph. 2:1). This situation of man emerges clearly in the inner conflict of man in his action—a conflict which is to be explained by the fact that he is possessed by demonic power: ... ὁ μισῶ τοῦτο ποιῶ· εἰ δὲ ὁ οὐ θέλω τοῦτο ποιῶ, σόμφημι τῷ νόμῳ ὅτι καλός ... εἰ δὲ ὁ οὐ θέλω ἐγὼ τοῦτο ποιῶ, οὐκέτι ἐγὼ κατεργάζομαι αὐτὸ ἀλλὰ ἡ οἰκοῦσα ἐν ἐμοὶ ἀμαρτία (7:15, 16, 20; cf. also v. 17). Man is under the Law as God's claim. But he cannot fulfil the Law. He is possessed by the demonic power of sin. Sin controls him and finally gives him the reward of death.¹⁵⁷ This train of thought introduces an essential feature in Paul. As we have seen above that the dominion of death is based on the reality of sin, so we now recognise that the demonology and satanology of Paul is not dualistic speculation, but a way of expressing the fact of sin. The demonological and satanological statements are all determined by the view of sin."

[Gottfried Quell, Georg Bertram, Gustav Stählin, et al., "Ἀμαρτάνω, Ἀμάρτημα, Ἀμαρτία," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:311.]

³³⁶"How does Paul see the reality of sin in detail?"

"This question leads us to a presentation of the thoughts contained in R. 5–8, where from the purely lexical view we have the most frequent occurrence of the terms for sin in the NT. The Christ event is first depicted in the words: συνίστησιν δὲ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἀγάπην εἰς ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς ὅτι ἔτι ἀμαρτωλῶν ὄντων ἡμῶν Χριστὸς ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἀπέθανεν (R. 5:8). What this means we are told in 5:12ff. in connection with what precedes: ... ὡσπερ δι' ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου ἡ ἀμαρτία εἰς τὸν κόσμον εἰσηλθεν, καὶ διὰ τῆς ἀμαρτίας ὁ θάνατος, καὶ οὕτως εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους ὁ θάνατος διήλθεν ἐφ' ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον. To the question of the origin of sin Paul gives the answer of Judaism that sin entered the world through Adam. The act of Adam in opposition to God is the beginning of sin. Sin thus derived from the freedom of man. With sin death also came into the world, as we read in the short statement: τὰ γὰρ ὀψώνια τῆς ἀμαρτίας θάνατος (6:23). Sin as the master gives its paid underlings the wages of death. Thus the dominant power of death in the world is attributed to sin (cf. 1 C. 15:56). The world in its being is not determined only by its creatureliness (R. 1:20) but also by sin. Paul differs from the Greek and Hellenistic world in the fact that, though he, too, can talk of the power of fate, for him the power of fate is closely linked with that of death,¹⁵⁵ and human sin is the basis of death's rule. Sin is the author of all evil: ... ἐβασίλευσεν ἡ ἀμαρτία ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ. Here we have a Christian rather than a Greek understanding. But from the sway of death there may also be discerned the universality of sin as hostile striving against God (3:9, 23; 5:9, 10; 8:7; Gl. 3:22). At this point Paul differs from Judaism. For Paul sin does not consist only in the individual act. Sin is for him a state which embraces all humanity. The individual is always in this all-embracing state of sin, and thus he does not have the Jewish freedom of choice which constitutes the Jewish conception of sin (... διὰ τῆς παρακοῆς τοῦ ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου ἀμαρτωλοὶ κατεστάθησαν οἱ πολλοί ... 5:19). There is an indissoluble connection between the act of Adam, the fate of death and the general state of sin. This does not mean that a doctrine of inherited sin is presented. It means that a judgment is pronounced on men in their being as such—a judgment which is certainly shaped by human reality but which is possible only in the light of Christ." [Gottfried Quell, Georg Bertram, Gustav Stählin, et al., "Ἀμαρτάνω, Ἀμάρτημα, Ἀμαρτία," ed. Gerhard Kittel,

sesses power greater than that of any human being. Both the physical and spiritual death of individuals is its ultimate objective. It manipulates the divine Torah as an important part of its strategy.³³⁷ But in the Christ event sin meets its superior, Christ, who defeats sin and makes this victory over sin available to all humanity.³³⁸

Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:309–310.]

³³⁷"Paul speaks expressly of the interrelation of sin and Law in R. 7. The experience of Paul is stated generally in the sentence: ὅτε γὰρ ἦμεν ἐν τῇ σαρκί, τὰ παθήματα τῶν ἀμαρτιῶν τὰ διὰ τοῦ νόμου ἐνηργεῖτο ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν ἡμῶν εἰς τὸ καρποφορῆσαι τῷ θανάτῳ (7:5). The carnal reality of man is his sinful reality, yet not for Paul in such a way that sin and the flesh are identical and sinfulness is constituted with corporeality (→ σάρξ, σῶμα), but rather in such a way that man is determined by sin in his carnal being, and has firmly linked himself to it. This union is disclosed by the Law: ... τὴν ἀμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔγνων εἰ μὴ διὰ νόμου· τὴν τε γὰρ ἐπιθυμίαν οὐκ ἤδεν εἰ μὴ ὁ νόμος ἔλεγεν· οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις· ἀφορμὴν δὲ λαβοῦσα ἡ ἀμαρτία διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς κατηργάσατο ἐν ἐμοὶ πᾶσαν ἐπιθυμίαν· χωρὶς γὰρ νόμου ἀμαρτία νεκρά· ἐγὼ δὲ ἔζων χωρὶς νόμου ποτέ· ἐλθούσης δὲ τῆς ἐντολῆς ἡ ἀμαρτία ἀνέζησεν, ἐγὼ δὲ ἀπέθανον, καὶ εὐρέθη μοι ἡ ἐντολή ἡ εἰς ζώην, αὕτη εἰς θάνατον (7:7–10). Different expressions are used to bring out the one fact that actual sin is by way of the Law. The Law awakens slumbering desire. At this point → ἐπιθυμία is not to be taken as merely a specifically carnal, i.e., sexual desire, but in a more comprehensive sense (πᾶσα ἐπιθυμία) as the yearning of man, kindled by the Law but opposed to it, for self-assertion against the claim of God. This is the nerve of every individual sin from the failure to acknowledge God, which is for Paul the original sin (R. 1:21), to that in which he sees the punishment of sin on the part of the God who punishes sin with sinning, i.e., to sexual perversity and expressions of the hatred which destroys fellowship (R. 1:24–31; 1 Th. 2:16). From this standpoint every individual sin committed by and against men acquires its significance before God and has before Him the character of guilt.¹⁵⁶"

[Gottfried Quell, Georg Bertram, Gustav Stählin, et al., "Ἀμαρτάνω, Ἀμάρτημα, Ἀμαρτία," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:310–311.]

³³⁸"It is in this reality that the Christ event strikes man.¹⁵⁸ This event is the overcoming of sin ... ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ υἱὸν πέμψας ἐν ὁμοιώματι σαρκὸς ἀμαρτίας καὶ περὶ ἀμαρτίας κατέκρινεν τὴν ἀμαρτίαν ἐν τῇ σαρκί ... (R. 8:3). The aim of Christ's sending by God is to judge and destroy sin. This is the meaning of the incarnation. Paul states this graphically in the words: τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἀμαρτίαν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἀμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν ... (2 C. 5:21). The sinlessness of Jesus is the presupposition of His mission. According to Paul's description of the mystery of the Christ event, this sinless Jesus became sin. All the sin of man rests on Him, whether past or present: ὃν προέθετο ὁ θεὸς ἱλαστήριον ... εἰς ἐνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ διὰ τὴν πάρεσιν τῶν προγεγονότων ἀμαρτημάτων ἐν τῇ ἀνοχῇ τοῦ θεοῦ (R. 3:25). For the sake of Christ and His victory over sin there has been and is the day of God's grace and the postponement of judgment. Christ's victory over sin is described as expiatory or propitiatory atonement. For this reason His death is essential. It was on the cross that there took



The individual who reaches out to Christ in faith surrender experiences this victory over sin that gives him/her a new beginning now insulated from the power of sin to dominate one's life. A constant warfare will begin where sin seeks to control, but the believer possesses both redemption and the indwelling Spirit of Christ which both mandate resistance to sin and enable victory against its onslaught.³³⁹

place, in a way which is valid for all ages, the conquest of sin: ὁ γὰρ ἀπέθανεν, τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ ἀπέθανεν ἐφάπαξ (R. 6:10; cf. 1 C. 15:3; Gl. 1:4). For this reason the cross is the sign of triumph over sin, over the dominion of death and demonic power. Hence the preaching of the cross is the δύναμις θεοῦ and the σοφία τοῦ θεοῦ (1 C. 1:18 f.). The cross cannot be separated from the resurrection. The mission of Christ would have been in vain without the resurrection: εἰ δὲ χριστὸς οὐκ ἐγήγερται, ... ἔτι ἐστὲ ἐν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ὑμῶν (1 C. 15:17). This total event is representative or substitutionary (ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, 2 C. 5:21; 1 C. 15:3; Gl. 1:4). Because in virtue of the deed of Adam there is a fatal nexus of sin and death within humanity; because for Paul men are not individuals who can be considered in isolation but a society with a common destiny, this representation or substitution on the part of Christ is possible. The Christ event means for humanity the overcoming of sin and the beginning of the dominion of life. This is the cosmic alteration brought about by Christ: ... ὡς περ ἐβασίλευσεν ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ, οὕτως καὶ ἡ χάρις βασιλεύσῃ διὰ δικαιοσύνης εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον διὰ Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν (R. 5:21). [Gottfried Quell, Georg Bertram, Gustav Stählin, et al., "Ἀμαρτάνω, Ἀμάρτημα, Ἀμαρτία," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:311–312.]

³³⁹"This Christ event comes to man as an event which releases him from the reality of sin and constitutes him anew. The content of the Gospel is that man is justified by faith and baptism, that he is made a new creature risen with Christ, that he is redeemed and reconciled, in short, that he has attained the remission of sins¹⁵⁹ (cf. Eph. 1:7). Through fellowship with Christ in His destiny (→ σύν), which is fulfilled in baptism and of which there is awareness in faith, it may be said of the Christian: ἀπεθάνομεν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ (R. 6:2). This is the theme of Romans 6, which deals with the question of Christ and sin. There is first laid down the basic insight that the Christian is freed from sin. This is brought out in different ways throughout the chapter. Christians are dead with Christ and have thus died to sin. In this the Christ event achieves its purpose: ἵνα καταργηθῇ τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας (6:6). There is fulfilled in Christians the old and familiar thesis: ὁ γὰρ ἀποθανῶν δεδικαίωται ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας (6:7).¹⁶⁰ Moreover: ἁμαρτία γὰρ ὑμῶν οὐ κυριεύσει· οὐ γὰρ ἐστε ὑπὸ νόμον ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ χάριν (6:14). Redemption is simultaneously liberation from the Law and from its function as that which evokes sin. Finally, Christians are ἐλευθερωθέντες ... ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας (6:18, 22), i.e., they are freed by Christ from the bondage to sin in which they found themselves—... δοῦλοι ἦτε τῆς ἁμαρτίας (6:20). The Christian has to realise this fact: λογίσεσθε ἑαυτοὺς εἶναι νεκροὺς μὲν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ ... (6:11). He must draw the deductions from it according to the insight: δοῦλοί ἐστε ᾧ ὑπακούετε, ἥτοι ἁμαρτίας εἰς θάνατον ἢ ὑπακοῆς εἰς δικαιοσύνην (6:16). There is no more possibility of remaining in sin and sinning as if nothing had happened (6:1, 15). The only possible conclusion is to this effect: μὴ οὖν βασιλευέτω ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐν τῷ θνητῷ ὑμῶν σώματι εἰς τὸ ὑπακούειν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις αὐτοῦ (6:12). By libera-

Thus the role of Law is that of an instructor and not that of a savior. Or it could be summarized as the role of a mirror that reflects back to the individual exactly who he is before Almighty God.

*****Summary*****

Romans 2:1-3:20 stands as a continuation of the larger unit begun at 1:18. The central theme focuses on ὀργὴ θεοῦ, God's wrath (1:18). The pagan world experiences that wrath both in this life, as well as on Judgment Day (1:18-32). The second part of ὀργὴ θεοῦ is the eschatological Day of Wrath in final judgment (2:1-3:20). The apostle repeatedly hammers in the point that there are no exceptions and absolutely all of humanity will face the wrath of God on that day. And that especially includes the moral elitist who feels he has a loophole around this day because of moral superiority, particularly if he is Jewish.

Through exceptional use of the Koine Greek language, the apostle builds his case against the moral

tion from sin, man is given the possibility of resisting the claim of sin, of not living to it and thus asserting himself against God, but rather: λογίσεσθε ἑαυτοὺς ... ζῶντας ... τῷ θεῷ ἐν χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (6:11). To live to God is to be dead to sin and liberated from it. Paul describes this new possibility in various ways: μηδὲ παριστάνετε τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν ὅπλα ἀδικίας τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ, ἀλλὰ παραστήσατε ἑαυτοὺς τῷ θεῷ ὡσεὶ ἐκ νεκρῶν ζῶντας καὶ τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν ὅπλα δικαιοσύνης τῷ θεῷ (6:13; cf. v. 18: ἐδουλώθητε τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ; 19: παραστήσατε τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν δοῦλα τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ εἰς ἁγιασμόν etc.). → ἁγιασμός, the life dedicated to God, is the goal of the Christ event (cf. the ἵνα in R. 8:3 f. and 2 C. 5:21). This ἁγιασμός is the life of faith. Freedom from sin is fulfilled in the obedience of faith (R. 14:23: πᾶν δὲ ὁ οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως ἁμαρτία ἐστίν). The life for God as a life of faith is manifested in love for the brethren which is the fulfilling of the Law, for: ἀμαρτάνοντες εἰς τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς ... εἰς χριστὸν ἀμαρτάνετε (1 C. 8:12).

"The Christian stands in the tension of a double reality. Basically freed from sin, redeemed, reconciled and sinless, he is actually at war with sin, threatened, attacked and placed in jeopardy by it. He must be called to ἁγιασμός.¹⁶¹ The tension of this double reality is finally manifested in his life as follows: εἰ δὲ χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, τὸ μὲν σῶμα νεκρὸν διὰ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ζωὴ διὰ δικαιοσύνην (8:10). In his somatic life the Christian is given up to death. This is the final outworking of sin. But the Christian has also a new pneumatic life deriving from the pneuma of Christ and received by death and resurrection with Him. He now lives his life in a new and pneumatic possession (διὰ τοῦ ἐνοικοῦντος αὐτοῦ πνεύματος ἐν ὑμῖν, 8:11; cf. in contrast 7:18, 20). This pneumatic life has overcome death and derives from the dominion of life which has commenced with Christ and which will be consummated with His coming again, when sin in its final outworking in death will be completely abolished (R. 8:11; 1 C. 15:26). The tense double reality is thus a state of expectation πρὸς τὴν μέλλουσαν δόξαν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι εἰς ἡμᾶς (8:18)."

[Gottfried Quell, Georg Bertram, Gustav Stählin, et al., "Ἀμαρτάνω, Ἀμάρτημα, Ἀμαρτία," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:312–313.]



elitist. Both Jewish terminology and religious heritage as well as creative use Greek literary devices, Paul stresses the accountability of the moral elitist before Almighty God. He targets both the religious Jew and the non-Jewish elitists who felt themselves against the immoral pagans around them.

Then in 3:9-20 all of this is pulled together in summation by τί οὖν; προεχόμεθα; οὐ πάντως· προητiasάμεθα γὰρ Ἰουδαίους τε καὶ Ἑλληνας πάντας ὑφ' ἁμαρτίαν εἶναι, What then? *Are we any better off? No, not at all; for we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under the power of sin.* This lays the foundation of human need for divine intervention on man's part in order to come out from under the enslavement to sin which necessitates God's wrath. Rom. 3:21 will begin the depiction of that deliverance provided by Christ through His death and resurrection.

Everyone who has ever lived comes under the scope of Paul's depiction in 1:18-3:20. And that certainly includes all of us alive today. Thus the application of this text is total and vital to our perception of human existence, particularly from the religious angle. To deny this is to doom oneself to that coming Day of Wrath completely without adequate preparation to survive it and not face the awesome reality of eternal banishment to Hell. That preparation can only be found in faith surrender to Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer. This will be the focus beginning in 3:21.